

*Dialectic of the Enlightenment in America:
The Woman Suffrage Debate 1865-1919*

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To Thomas
also known as
the Bavarian Diva and my husband

I. Introduction

I. 1. Aim of Study

“First let me speak of the Constitution of the United States,” Isabella Beecher Hooker, eminent advocate of female suffrage addressed her audience in 1888, “and assert that there is not a line in it, nor a word, forbidding women to vote; but properly interpreted, that is, interpreted by the Declaration of Independence, and by the assertions of the *Fathers*, it actually *guarantees* to women the right to vote in all elections, both state and national” (Hooker 1). “Woman’s right to be a woman,” writes Justin Dewey Fulton, a Baptist preacher and feverous opponent of the vote for women, in 1869, “implies *the right* to be loved, to be respected as a woman, to be married, to bring forth to the world the product of that love; and woman’s highest interests are promoted by defending and maintaining this right” (Fulton 228).

If we compare the rhetoric of the two we will see that Hooker stresses the importance of securing the right to vote just as Fulton affirms women’s disenfranchisement and strictly prescribed apolitical role in the nineteenth-century U.S. as a matter of rights. Both positions utilize the concept of individual, natural rights going back to the ideological ensemble of the Enlightenment written into the U.S. Constitution of 1787. What we come across here are basically two self-excluding notions of female political inclusion and emancipation, vs. exclusion from the democratic processes – both supported by one and the same concept of (as shown in this case) rights.

In the early twentieth century, the public debate over the enfranchisement of U.S. women, suffragists (the proponents) and anti-suffragists (the opponents) shared not only ideas for their respective purposes. They both knew very well the importance of winning the public. The two adversarial camps put great effort to convey their messages to society. Suffragists and anti-suffragists organized in extensive nation-wide organizations to gain grass root support and lobbied Congress and Presidents to popularize the vote-for-women issue. Both groups knew that going public and prodding the nation to give its opinion on female suffrage was vital. Both sides

created a dialogue, a public debate, and did their best to win society's endorsement. They believed that not merely the exchange of arguments between the two camps, but also their dissemination to the people would be the key to success. Both sides were convinced, ideas had to go hand in hand with practice. Thus ideology and public communication were the two main pillars of the female suffrage debate.

In a sense, suffragists and anti-suffragists also debated a bigger question: What defined citizenship? From the outset of the U.S. state, the eminent historian in women's studies, Linda Kerber reminds us, "rights and obligations have generally been stated in generic terms incumbent on all citizens male and female" (Kerber 18, *A Constitutional Right*). "But," she points out, "they have been experienced differently by men and by women" (Kerber 18, *A Constitutional Right*). Linda Kerber draws our attention to the fact "that American tradition and precedent sustained the practice of defining the ingredients of citizenship differently on the basis of gender" (Kerber 17-18, *A Constitutional Right*). Around 1900, suffragists and anti-suffragists prodded the public to discuss the very linking of the meaning of rights to gender (Kerber 18, *A Constitutional Right*). This makes us consider the question of female suffrage as defining the substance of U.S. citizenship at that specific point in time.

During the Progressive Era, the social debate over votes-for-women was lead predominantly by white, Protestant, native born, middle and upper-middle class women in the Northeast. These women had the time, the money and the education to do so. Accordingly, the cultural concepts in focus here, separate spheres, cult of domesticity, etc., were restricted to this specific group of women. They bore little importance to immigrant women, or women of color, to name two groups, whose experience was completely different.¹ The Progressive Era affected women's lives in many ways and brought about a

¹ Historians today are prodded to define as precisely as possible which women they are dealing with. The field of American women's history has witnessed changing theories and paradigms, ever since its outset, back in the 1970s. There is no such thing as the "uniracial universal woman" any more. Accordingly, historians have to be aware of factors such as race, ethnicity, class background, sexual orientation but also level of education and individual experience. A comprehensive study, sensitive to these issues is: Ellen DuBois, and Vicki Ruiz, (Eds.) *Unequal Sisters: An Inclusive Reader in U.S. Women's History*, (4th ed.) New York : Routledge, 2008.

push in their politicization. Women took part in and were influenced by numerous developments. Technology infiltrated the households, sparing housewives time and energy that they could devote to social activities. Colleges produced more and more female graduates, who studied the social sciences and were prepared for social service work: the skills needed to be a social reformer. Women organized and added to their agendas topical issues such as child labor, housing, temperance and, last but not least, suffrage. “If we had a snapshot,” Kathryn Kish Sklar suggests, “male and female reform activities would have seemed united and equal behind common goals” (Sklar 36, *Two Political Cultures*). Yet, at that time, the meaning and obligations of citizenship were tied to gender. Women were given an unprecedented opportunity for political activism, but they were also restricted by very clear boundaries (Sklar 37, *Two Political Cultures*). Women’s organizations in the Progressive Era sought to, and for the most part, gave answers to questions of child education, wage-earners exploitation and social security measures. “Women did not reside at the margins of progressive social reform,” Sklar makes it clear, “they occupied it’s center” (Sklar 62, *Two Political Cultures*). On the basis of their new position, female organizations claimed political power. That power gave them the opportunity to bring the issue of suffrage to the political agenda with new importance. And with it, the question of defining U.S. citizenship and its relation to gender was at dispute again.

It was not only the suffragists who were organizing and beginning to communicate their views to the public. Their opponents too, organized and fired their convictions to the public sentiment, trying to defend women’s disenfranchisement and their strictly apolitical role. As suffragists united through the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890, anti-suffragists hurried to organize through the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women in 1895, which laid the foundation for a national association in 1911. If suffragists saw the need to issue their own publicity organs such as newspapers to go along with the dissemination of millions of printed material, antis did not wait long to act accordingly. They answered with the weeklies and monthlies: *The*

Remonstrant, Woman Patriot, etc. and spread millions of pamphlets around the country. If suffragists investigated the conditions of women and provided facts and statistics to fortify their demands, anti-suffragists did the same. They reached out to the Era's institutionalization of science, and argued not only with statistical data, but with state of the art research in biology, psychology and social science. Thus, anti-suffragists provided new forms of justification for the social exclusion of women directly linked to the Enlightenment's scientific fervor. If suffragists lobbied lawmakers on local and federal levels, delegates and petitions from anti-suffragists poured into the legislators' offices as well. However, if suffragists paraded, climbed soap-boxes and spoke at subway stations to canvass supporters from all walks of life, anti-suffragists did not. They were Boston Brahmins and old New York stock women, who stuck to a lady-like ideal of true womanhood, away from publicity and politics – the male domain.² The written word was their dominant mode of expression and remained (with few exceptions) their method of reaching the public.

In the early twentieth century, U.S. society opened the women's suffrage debate with unprecedented ardency and impact. Throughout the course of the debate, the Enlightenment was enacted as a practice of communication and its ideological ensemble served as a rhetorical framework to both sides involved. The notion of the public sphere was endowed with an even more decisive role and meaning by the progressives. They believed that society should aim for open discussion on every important matter, in which a thesis and an antithesis were delivered to public criticism. The debate was over as soon as the public agreed upon a certain action, such as passing a reform, thus reaching social consensus. By 1919 the debates over the female vote had not only redirected themselves, yielding their ideology and rhetoric to the pending First World War, but women were also granted suffrage with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, thus putting an end to the public debates and, to a great extent, the anti-suffrage movement.

Yet the fact that suffragists and anti-suffragists shared key Enlightenment ideas, and communicative practices is intriguing. What are we

² See also Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 17-58.

to make of it? How can we explain it? A dialectical approach can help us here. It would imply that the Enlightenment in the U.S., and more so its instrumentalization, had not only emancipatory potential, but also a “dark side” leading to social discrimination. Most importantly, however, this dark side, according to the dialectical approach, is no less part of the Enlightenment than the bright one — liberalism. This notion confronts the sociologist Ralph Dahrendorf’s idea of America as “the land of applied Enlightenment,” which excludes racism and any social discrimination by calling them unreasonable.³ Nevertheless the Enlightenment-based ideologies of social exclusion are also a phenomenon of U.S. history. Does then a concept of explaining two opposites — democratic inclusion but also exclusion and discrimination within the same Enlightenment concepts not evoke the idea of a dialectic of Enlightenment in America? And wouldn’t this in turn make us rethink the whole notion of America as a “land of applied Enlightenment,” as described by Dahrendorf and other scholars?

With my study, I am expanding the notion of “America as the land of applied Enlightenment” to the idea of dialectic of Enlightenment – an idea that was developed by the German philosophers of Jewish origin, Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the European experiences of World War II in the twentieth century. My definition builds on a central aspect of Horkheimer and Adorno’s famous study *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947): the utilization of reason by certain social groups which, despite its liberating self, led to subjugation and terror. *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* criticized the Enlightenment heavily, but did so, within the very same Enlightenment-framework. I do not draw historical parallels between the Holocaust in Europe, the experiences of World War II and historical events in the U.S. I do, however, partially build (I take one aspect) upon a critical approach developed for the first time on the basis of European post-global war experience. For my purposes I go beyond Horkheimer and Adorno’s point and

³ “Mir scheint es,” Dahrendorf writes, “bei jeder Erörterung Amerikas unumgänglich, das Prinzip der angewandten Aufklärung, in diesem Sinne der Rationalität, gewissermaßen vor die Klammer zu stellen. Der Versuch, die Wirklichkeit nach dem Bilde der Vernunft zu machen, gibt auch den *unvernünftigen Zügen Amerikas*, dem Rassenhaß, dem McCarthyismus, [...] noch ihren Stellenwert im Ganzen dieser Gesellschaft” (Dahrendorf 20).

define a distinct dialectic of Enlightenment in America. It reveals the utilization of reason for both emancipation, and social marginalization and subjugation under the conditions of American democracy. The primary challenge now is *how to define* the dialectic, which was developed by the Enlightenment in America?

In the end, we have a dialectic of the Enlightenment in America, which is inherently different from Horkeimer and Adorno's. The Enlightenment in the U.S., I believe, has developed its own dialectic. On the one hand, as written in the founding documents of the American Revolution, liberal concepts laid the foundations of the American democracy, and thus bore a socially emancipatory and inclusive potential. On the other hand, however, according to the dialectic, the exclusion of certain social groups from democratic participation was also rationally argued for, referring to the founding documents, and was even commensurate with the American claim for freedom. My aim is to define this dialectic in its constitutive parts.⁴

In a way, there is also the ambiguity with the periodization of the Enlightenment. On one hand, scholars such as Jonathan Israel and Frank Kelleter firmly believe that the Enlightenment set the basis for modernity as we know it in the Western world. On the other hand, however, most studies, including their own, stop exploring the Enlightenment around 1800. The example with the suffrage debate, however, prods us to consider the Enlightenment as an ongoing process, rather than merely as a time-limited historical age. Its political ideas and practices of communication live on. They shaped political reality in the votes-for-women debate, much more than we are aware of. Although patterns of inclusion and exclusion can be traced back to the Colonial period, the dialectic needs the American Revolution as a precondition for the clear formation of an American Enlightenment. Since then it has played a vital argumentative role. Even if the dialectic can be traced back to 1776, I feel compelled to deal with the period between 1865 and 1919.

⁴ See Volker Depkat. "The Double Dialectic of the American Enlightenment," Kristina Monika Hinneburg, Jurewicz, Grazyna, (Eds.) *Das Prinzip Aufklärung. Zwischen Universalismus und Partikularem Anspruch*, Paderborn: 2013, 137-167, 138.

By "rationally argued" scholars such as, among others, Robert F. Fergusson, Frank Kelleter, Volker Depkat, and I mean ideology and rhetoric predominantly based on reason or one of the ideas that could be traced back to the ideological ensemble of the Enlightenment.

Within it, the Enlightenment based argumentative ideas, the pragmatics of communication, and the understanding of the public sphere, shared by suffragists and the anti-suffragists prove to be especially vivid.⁵

The significance of the above reproach is a new, dialectical understanding of the Enlightenment principles and the social debates at that time. It becomes no longer possible to distinguish between ‘a good’ or ‘a bad Enlightenment’. Looking at social debates from the perspective of the dialectic of Enlightenment in America adds to the research situation on women the fact that they both — suffragists and anti-suffragists — used the Enlightenment as an ideological ensemble and practice. Hence, both (not only the winners, i.e., suffragists) are to be considered modern phenomena — a product of our time. On a larger scale, this leads us to the conclusion that social inclusion and exclusion alike are to be seen dialectically as constitutive of the American democracy, since they built their argumentation on one and the same basis. Further on, my study aims to offer a transnational perspective on the Enlightenment in America. The dialectic of Enlightenment in America is, in essence, a further development of a European critical approach, specifically to the American conditions in the above period. By transnationalism, I mean the ongoing shift in American Studies, not only with regard to variations in carrying out and understanding American Studies introduced from an external standpoint, but also foreign perspectives of scholars outside the U.S. A transnational take on a specific phenomenon of American history would also mean following its intertwining as well as any potential relationships with a context outside of the U.S. A dialectic of the Enlightenment in America would hopefully provide an outside (transnational) perspective on the American Enlightenment, but also, hopefully, follow its entanglement with Europe, and eventually help shed light on the Enlightenment as a whole — as a philosophical, political and cultural phenomenon in its transnational variants.

As to my understanding of the Enlightenment: I sympathize with authors such as Ernst Cassirer, Reinhart Koselleck and Frank Kelleter. Unlike Jonathan Israel who most recently, has focused on the Enlightenment’s ideas

⁵ Especially Gordon Wood sees the Enlightenment and the American Revolution as an ongoing process. See: Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, New York, 1993.

and manner of thinking, they see the Enlightenment as an ideological ensemble (a set of ideas), a norm as well as a process and practice simultaneously. An ideological ensemble which is comprised of centrality of reason as a criterion for humanity and truth defining the individual in his rights; belief in method and planning; strong belief in education and the concept of empiricism — the apotheosis of progress and makeable future (each present is ‘better’ than the past and each future is ‘better’ than the present) through the development of education. A norm being the utilization of reason for distinguishing between good and bad, true and untrue — all legitimacy must be proven by reason. A practice or process being, above all, public communication and the struggle to apply reason to all matters of life — progress to more rationality and freedom.

Most of all, however, the Enlightenment in this study is understood as what scholars, such as Gertrude Himmelfarb called “roads to modernity” or Jonathan Israel, “the making of modernity”.⁶ The Enlightenment is seen here as the very process of modernity itself: the transition from traditionalism, feudalism and agrarianism to rationalism, democratization and individualism, secularization, capitalism and industrialization (Barker 444).⁷

In this way, the Enlightenment is the “breakthrough of modern rationalism and secularization to predominance in western civilization” (Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* 20). Provided the fact, of course, that we cannot see the Enlightenment as a homogeneous entity. If it began as a scientific revolution and a radical rethinking of knowledge, the Enlightenment soon became a transnational phenomenon. Its cultural and intellectual agenda set on its basis empirical provability and mathematical logic as the standards for truth and a certainty, which went beyond the possibility of doubt (Depkat, *The Double Dialectic*, 138).

Through the improvement of technology and the fading constraints of society, the Enlightenment fortified and diversified communication as the instrument to arriving at social justice. Religion and state authority were

⁶ See Gertrude Himmelfarb. *Roads to Modernity. The British, French, and American Enlightenments*, New York 2004. Jonathan Israel. *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750*. New York, 2001.

⁷ See Chris Barker. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: 2005.

publicly monitored by the common reasoning of society. With this new mighty impetus, the Enlightenment developed an emancipatory power, which not only turned feudal-monarchical societies upside down, but also took the very individual in focus. Individuals were to be set free from legal, social and political restrictions. The Enlightenment dared individuals to think for themselves, define and pursue their own happiness, and not be ruled but governed by a government that represents them.

The Enlightenment set in motion the permanent urge to improvability. Human condition is not given but changeable. Societies were no longer static but in constant transformation, meeting the demands of the ongoing process of modernization. Life could and should be made better, by rendering social conditions according to rationalization and self-determination. Thus rationalization went hand in hand with modernization (Depkat, *The Double Dialectic* 138).

The above definition of the Enlightenment reveals itself to us, when dealing with the texts from the suffrage debate. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists embraced the Enlightenment's set of ideas. They called upon the reason of their audiences to either endorse or refute the vote. Suffragists and anti-suffragists alike argued for the enfranchisement and disenfranchisement of women as a matter of rights. They anchored their claims in science and empiricism, and provided facts on the merits and perils of the ballot. Both sides believed in and spurred public communication as the only way to solve the issue. And above all, both sides saw themselves as part of a bigger process — U.S. and global modernization.

I. 2. Research Situation

My project relates to and evolves out of the following ongoing scholarly discussions: the research situation on (2.1.) female suffrage, (2.2.) discussions on the Enlightenment in America, (2.3.) and the dialectic of Enlightenment in America.

I. 2.1. Scholarly Situation on Female Suffrage

Female enfranchisement had occupied scholars mostly from a sociological perspective. These were mostly studies of feminist and women's movements, especially the suffrage movement (Olivia Coolidge, *Women's Rights: The Suffrage Movement in America, 1848-1920*, Sharon Hartman Strom, *Women's Rights*). When the rhetoric of the movement began being examined more closely, it was primarily from an analytical and reconstructive perspective of its ideas, per se. It has not been related to other rhetoric, let alone to that of their opponents. My focus on the suffragists' rhetoric, aims to relate it to its adversary, in order to broadly contextualize the social debates and overall patterns of the time. That suffragists appropriated the Enlightenment for their cause is a fact greatly acknowledged by scholars. Monographs such as Susan Marilley's *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920* or Sara Graham's *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy*, together with the landmark *When Hens Crow* by Sylvia Hoffert, and Frank Kelleter's chapter "Vernunft und Geschlecht" in *Amerikanische Aufklärung* analyze, in depth, the various influences with which the Enlightenment provided women. Such studies clearly put suffragists on the Enlightenment's side. But what about their opposition?

Suffragists were the heroines and the winners; the opposition, or the 'losers' did not really seem to matter for quite a long time. If the anti-suffragists were mentioned at all, it was only through the prism of the suffragists. Gradually, however, scholarship became aware of the insufficiency of the situation. Studies such as Jane Camhi's *Women Against Women*, 1979, Thomas Jablonsky's *The Home, Heaven, and the Mother Party*, 1994, or Susan Marshall's *Splintered Sisterhood*, 1997 (from a sociological perspective) take anti-suffragist actions seriously as the most powerful resistance to the vote for women in terms of their organization, self-understanding and practices. The anti-suffragists were also examined from the perspective of social history, and organizational and institutional history. A good example, and thus far the only one, is Anne Benjamin's *A History of the Anti-Suffrage Movement in the*

United States, 1895-1920. When their rhetoric has been discussed (in the studies mentioned above; I have, so far, not come across a study focusing exclusively on the anti-suffrage rhetoric), it has been done with the aim of reconstructing it and analyzing it on its own, just as in the case of suffragists. It has not been contextualized, related to any other rhetoric, and again, let alone to that of their opponents. This challenge offers itself to scholars. The anti-suffragists also had another problem: it is often somehow implied that the opposition, since antis were against the extension of rights and lost, believed less in (if not opposed) progress and simply were unenlightened (Camhi 1). Based on what we saw from the example of anti-suffrage rhetoric at the beginning, however, the Enlightenment was expressed as clearly as within the rhetoric of their opponents. A broader contextualization of the rhetoric of both camps will show that they both were Enlightenment-generated, and not only in terms of arguments, but also the very form of presentation of these arguments.

What the research situation on suffragist rhetoric boils down to is similar to the situation of the anti-suffragists. The emancipatory rhetoric of suffrage activists has been in focus, reconstructed and analyzed on its own according to the premises of social, organizational and institutional history. The rhetoric of the opponents, the anti-suffragists, has only recently emerged on the scholarly landscape, only to be approached (technically) in the same way as suffragists. In whatever way the rhetoric of the two may have been approached thus far, they have not been compared with each other, as part of a larger social debate on the meaning of American revolutionary principles and, thus, on the Enlightenment and the U.S. By taking the above scholarly achievements to the next level, I will attempt to form the dialectic of the Enlightenment in the U.S. by relating the aim to their broader contextualization, which in turn would reveal the thinking patterns of the time.

In the mid 1980s, the linguistic turn in the social sciences, the rise of French post-structuralism, and above all the now academically institutionalized former activists of the women's movement of the 1960s triggered a new field in U.S. women's history: gender studies. Gender studies has deconstructed the socially institutionalized differences between the sexes and has generated

sensitivity to sexual differences in analyzing women's history. The dialectic of Enlightenment in America cannot be seen as a classical investigation in gender studies. Yet, it still does its bit in the field. On the one hand, it exposes Enlightenment based discourses, which also define female rationality on the basis of the female body, as in the case of the anti-suffragists, who viewed women as rationally and socially inferior due to their female anatomy and psyche. On the other hand, it shows how the particularly male-centered discourse of the Founding Fathers was not only challenged but also seized by the suffragists. The same rhetoric that was used to define male rationality and power was appropriated by the votes-for-women activists to build up female claim of reason and political authorization.⁸

I. 2.2. The Enlightenment in America

Above all, the scholarship on the American Enlightenment has asked itself these questions: What is the relationship between the Enlightenment and the U.S.? Can we think of the U.S. as a land of applied Enlightenment? Can we speak of a distinct American Enlightenment, just as we can speak of a Scottish Enlightenment or the German Enlightenment, and if so, what are its characteristic features? What is the role of the Founding Fathers as philosophers of the American Enlightenment? Together with a number of scholars, I believe that the scholarly discussion on the Enlightenment in America has, so far, avoided the other, darker side.

Most recently, Jonathan Israel in his seminal *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution and Human Rights* (2011) sees the two confronting understandings of the role of reason as the rift between two Enlightenment streams. The Radical Enlightenment preached that reason, as derived from physical and mathematical empiricism only is "the sole criterion of truth, the exclusive guide in our affairs and, sole means of understanding human condition" (Israel 19). Supporters of moderate thought, countered this

⁸ On gender studies: Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York : Columbia University Press, 1999. Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar, (Eds.), *U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. On methods in gender history: Kathleen Canning. *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class & Citizenship*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006.

lone hegemony of reason and maintained that there are “two fundamental and distinct sources of truth, namely reason and religious authority (or alternatively tradition)” (Israel 19). The balance between these two pillars was the key to the Enlightenment. When it comes to the American Revolution, Israel points out “its very close, intimate relationship with the international Enlightenment” (Israel 443). More specifically, he argues similarly to Henry F. May, it was the British Moderate Enlightenment that appealed to most Americans in the colonies around 1775. It provided the main pillars for the American Revolution. A historic event, which Israel sees as “one of the greatest, most formative events of modern history” (Israel 443). Yet, Israel is aware of the “inconclusive legacy” of the American Revolution (Israel 461):

“Many scholars have noted that the Revolution produced in America a wider acceptance of the idea that men of different backgrounds could live together in harmony on the basis of equality and striving for the common good. What have been less explored are the politically, socially, and culturally extremely divisive and contested reverberations of this embracing of Enlightenment and the prolonged and bitter clashes arising from rival ideologies generated within the bosom of the American Revolution” (Israel 461).

In this way, Jonathan Israel indicates the potential of a study looking at the Enlightenment in America and a dialectic it could be seen through.

When his *Enlightenment in America* came out in 1976, Henry F. May lamented that “wild statements” were made about the Enlightenment in America. Those statements, May criticizes, either confined Enlightenment thought to an exclusive powerful upper class, or saw it as an all pervasive phenomenon, or even becoming flesh and blood in America (May xii). As a reaction to these extremes May offers a “systematic treatment of the Enlightenment in America” (May xii). Similarly to Jonathan Israel, he points to the “the compromise between a belief in moral certainties and a belief in the desirability of change and progress” (May xi). May explains this compromise by a double core of the Enlightenment in America comprised of the “doctrines of Protestantism and particularly Calvinistic Protestantism [...] and the Enlightenment in seventeenth- and eighteenth century Europe” (May xii). The relationship between these two major idea systems, May is persuaded, “are basic to the understanding of America in any period” (May xii). The above balance May sees as a result of the various Enlightenment streams, which played a role in America. The influence of the Moderate and the Revolutionary

Enlightenments gave birth to this reconciliation of reason and religion, characteristic of the Enlightenment in America. The Moderate Enlightenment, dominant in England in the time of Locke and Newton, propagated “a balance, order and religious compromise,” believing that “the divine revelation could not establish truths which were contrary to reason” (May xvi, xv). The Revolutionary Enlightenment, although being received with mix feelings, also left its mark in America. Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson are its most famous champions. Yet the radical thought, social chaos, tumult and terror, which surfaced with the French Revolution shadowed the Revolutionary Enlightenment. The majority of Americans were not only reluctant but also feared its atheistic message and violent consequences (May 222). This makes May conclude that the Moderate Enlightenment formed a steady opposition to the Revolutionary Enlightenment during the 1790s and eventually suppressed it. Ironically, “the first revolutionary nation of modern times” did not allow the Revolutionary Enlightenment to set “deep roots” on its soil (May 223).

As if in a reaction to May’s complaint that there was “no good book on the Enlightenment in America, indeed no general book at all” (May xii) before his, Henry Steele Commager answered only a year later with *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America realized the Enlightenment* (1978). The author exemplifies how in the U.S. the principles of the Enlightenment were written into law, crystallized into institutions, and sanctified by use. Although democracy was not absolute, the disfranchisement of women remained constitutionally unquestioned. The reasonable formation of an exclusive elite group on the basis of the very same emancipatory Enlightenment principles under the conditions of the American democracy is not dealt with in Commager’s pivotal study. Gender discrimination is a fact taken for granted, which could not stop the development of the American Enlightenment. With him scholars grew more and more affirmative of the American Enlightenment. Commager did publish a general book on the Enlightenment in the U.S. He did so, however, only about the Enlightenment’s bright side. His systematic answer only petrified Ralph Dahrendorf’s conviction of institutionalized reason from 1963: “daß Amerika als soziales

und politisches Gebilde ebenso wie Haltung der meisten seiner Bürger durch den Gedanken der angewandten Aufklärung sinnvoll beschrieben werden kann” (Daherendorf, 13,19). With this, the dark side of the Enlightenment is not featured enough or is even missing.

How do we explain social exclusion against the backdrop of a triumphing Enlightenment? The American scholar Daniel Boorstin, if I may present a polarized, exceptionalist opinion, points exactly to these parallel phenomena of experience (racial, ethnic and gender exclusion) in order to reject the Enlightenment in America as a whole. The Enlightenment had nothing to do with the U.S. It was the specific experience on the American continent, which shaped the new nation (Boorstin 65-78). Further noteworthy scholars, such as Donald H. Meyer, Peter Gay and Robert Fergusson point to the crucial role the Revolution played in an effort to define, and even although being aware of the risks of comparison, show the uniqueness of the American Enlightenment. Meyer moves beyond merely defining the American Enlightenment and underlines its uniqueness in comparison to other Enlightenments “faith and reason, in harmony, [is] the central theme of the American Enlightenment,” Meyer concludes (Meyer 166).

The studies mentioned briefly above describe the Enlightenment mostly as an ideological entity. What prodded my work though, is seeing the Enlightenment in America, not only as a set of ideas, but also as a political practice. A profound study on the American Enlightenment is *Amerikanische Aufklärung: Sprachen der Rationalität im Zeitalter der Revolution* 2002, by the German scholar Frank Kelleter. In 852 pages Kelleter not only extensively defines the Enlightenment as a rational project – as a process of modernity – , he also shows what rhetorical, ideological and political practices have derived from its foundations in eighteenth-century America. As to the existence of the American Enlightenment as such and the prejudice that it “beschäftige sich mit einer derivativen Schwundform der europäischen Philosophie” (Kelleter 430) he believes that if there is indeed an Enlightenment tradition in the U.S., “dann erlangt sie mit der Revolution ein Bewusstsein ihrer selbst” (Kelleter 382), and for him it is clear “die Amerikanische Aufklärung ist die Revolution” (Kelleter

430). Although he follows the rational thread of argumentation which bars women, African American males and Native Americans from being participant in the social and governmental processes, he does not explicitly see and explain them as “Sprachen der Rationalität” – as rational languages originating from the Enlightenment but having a different purpose. They, despite being described in depth, are more taken for granted than problematized.

So far scholars of the Enlightenment in America have done profound and multifaceted research, which is of extreme value to me. The inclusive liberal promise of the Enlightenment embraced by Americans and its only partial translations to reality is a fact well known by scholars, yet, nevertheless, it has not gained the needed attention. They have skirted around the issue of the American Enlightenment’s own dialectic, despite the clarity the approach brings to American social processes. What is still lacking is a systematic evaluation of adversary – Enlightenment-generated discourses weighed against each other.

I. 2.3. Dialectic of Enlightenment in America

Scholars have mostly been reluctant to embrace the idea that the Enlightenment in America could be described through its own dialectic. In a way, Horkheimer and Adorno’s seminal work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), could be seen as a one-sided account on the mere reduction of reason to an instrument used to dominate the individual, control nature, and justify devastation. Horkheimer and Adorno speak of the failure of rationality in Western civilization. Such harsh denial of Enlightenment thought seems to have scared away scholars on the Enlightenment in America to consider its dialectic for quite a while. Indeed, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* is a product of a time, which Eric Hobsbawm has seen as an “age of extremes”.⁹ Also, the newest research has been good-willed, even defensive, towards the Enlightenment in general: Jonathan Israel and, also Tzvetan Todorov in his *In Defense of the Enlightenment* (2009), stress again the greater importance of the

⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* London: Abacus, 1995.

Enlightenment's ideological core for today's Western civilization.¹⁰ In the U.S. context, the emancipatory, liberating effect of the Enlightenment has, in a way, mesmerized scholars. In her *Roads to Modernity* (2004), Gertrude Himmelfarb praises the enduring legacy of the Founding Fathers' Enlightenment-anchored ideas. Their contribution did improve the political reality and not only in the U.S., she argues. Scholars have only gradually come closer to a dialectical approach to the Enlightenment in America.

Some examples are Robert A. Ferguson in his *The American Enlightenment 1750-1820* (1997), Frank Kelleter in *Sprachen der Rationalität* and Volker Depkat's essay "Angewandte Aufklärung?" which have clearly sensed the potential for a dialectic of the Enlightenment in America. In this sense, for example, Robert A. Ferguson has taken Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* (1791) and the German scholar Volker Depkat President Andrew Jackson's 1830 *Address to Congress* on Indian Removal as representative for the utilization of Enlightenment premises and ideas and as evidence for the dialectic. "[S]uch writings make it clear," Ferguson writes, "that *the Enlightenment must be understood in dialectical form*. Reason, the original calling card, *resides in both* the liberation that it promises and the kinds of domination that it provokes" (Ferguson 24). Depkat, in turn, states that the dialectic of the American Enlightenment is a process, which can be traced back to 1776 and is still going on. To him, not approaching the Enlightenment in America from the standpoint of its dialectic is "erstaunlich, hat doch die Aufklärung in den USA eine ganz eigene Dialektik entwickelt" (Depkat, *Angewandte Aufklärung*, 232), and concludes, opening the door for future research, "Viele der Paradoxien der USA sind ihr geschuldet" (Depkat, *Angewandte Aufklärung*, 241).

Frank Kelleter has shown that the universal languages of reason used by the Founders mirrored their status as white-male Anglo-Saxon property owners. These universal languages were used to justify their position, turning them into a self-proclaimed Enlightenment elite. Accordingly, they were the ones to decide on the availability of reason, or put simply, who was in or out of

¹⁰ See Tzvetan Todorov, *In Defense of the Enlightenment*, London: Atlantic Books, 2009.

the Enlightenment. African Americans, Native Americans and women found themselves, Kelleter shows, put out of it. Decisive for my argumentation on behalf of the dialectic is Kelleter's illustration of how exactly those marginalized groups appropriated the very same principles, which excluded them, to take their place within the American Enlightenment. On their way to inclusion, Kelleter points out, they produced their own "African American Enlightenment" and a "feminist Enlightenment."¹¹

The above is just a brief outline of two huge topics. Yet it makes us aware of the following: There has been a discussion on the dialectic of Enlightenment and there has been a lot of discussion on the American Enlightenment as well. These two fields, however, have not been analyzed in relationship to each other. In this sense, the dialectical approach has an innovative potential, as a criticism of the American social processes, which has only been hinted at but not really analyzed systematically. Therefore it appears reasonable to reveal the dark side of the utilization of Enlightenment ideas in America and trace its implications. Hence, the question: how to define the dialectic of the Enlightenment in America?

I. 3. Methodology and Sources

I. 3.1. Methodology

This study deals with two social movements. Social movement being a form of organized group expression, consisting of campaigns, repertoire (political action, founding of organizations and associations, meetings, processions, public protests, pageantry, petitions, communication through public media, and pamphleteering), and what Charles Tilly calls WUNC displays — the group's public demonstration of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitments to society (Tilly 3-4).¹² Women at that time could express

¹¹ See Keller, 688-702, and 726-734;

¹² See Charles Tilly. *Social Movements, 1768-2004*, Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004. Sidney Tarrow. *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

themselves most significantly through organized groups. In Chapter 1, *Pragmatics of Communication*, I will look in depth at suffragists' and anti-suffragists' associations, meetings, public appearances, campaigns, repertoire, and their claims for recognition. Through these, they conveyed their message. It is noteworthy to mention, that in the face of the suffragists we have a reform movement: the advocates of the female vote aimed at a change of laws and social norms. Anti-suffragists on the other hand, represented a countermovement, having emerged solely to oppose the suffragists.

When I look at the pragmatics of communication of the two camps, I use what is known by sociologists as resource mobilization theory. It takes into consideration the social networking and creation of organizations by those who were barred from direct participation in political life. This is the case with both suffragists and anti-suffragists. Through the creation of their own associations, they were able to have their voice considered by the public. The resource mobilization perspective highlights the interrelatedness of the social movement's tactical and organizational components with its rhetoric. Strategy and structure reinforce or act upon ideas. Meaning that the goal-orientation, confrontation with the opponents, recruitment methods, and competition to win public opinion, in short — the public interaction of the movements and its institutionalization in organizational organs mirror their ideology and self-understanding. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists organized and mobilized their resources to express themselves. When I deal with the tactical and organizational components, the very competition to win the public, I believe that these factors bespeak the Enlightenment-anchored premises of the debate. This viewpoint is valuable especially for the anti-suffragists. Countermovements, and their typically conservative ideologies, have been paid less

attention to as they were believed to be traditionalist, reactionary and static. In other words, they were unable to keep pace with modernity.¹³

The methodology of this study is based on Jürgen Habermas's theory of the "soziale Selbstverständigung" in the public sphere (being part of a larger one that he defines as "Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns") and conceptual history, Begriffsgeschichte, shaped by Reinhart Koselleck.

Jürgen Habermas developed a notion of the bourgeois public sphere, which has influenced tremendously the scholarly discussions on the public sphere and public communication. Habermas defines the bourgeois public sphere as the sphere of "private people come together as public" (Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 27). According to Habermas however, this bourgeois public sphere, since it consists of private people, takes place outside of power structures and is free from them. These private people gathered to form an audience in order to discuss, or reason openly on the interests and goals of their social standing, as a social group. The bourgeois public sphere emerged in the eighteenth century as a reaction to, and gradually replaced the public sphere in which the power of an absolutist ruler would be solely manifested. In the bourgeois public sphere instead, state authority and statements would be transformed into common concern observed and kept under systematic review based on debates and discussions (Habermas *The Structural Transformation*, 27). Emerging initially as a platform of literary criticism, the bourgeois public sphere broadened its spectrum and began dealing with economical and political issues, as the eighteenth century progressed. In the course of the eighteenth century, the bourgeois public sphere gained such power that at some point state authority had to prove its legitimacy to public opinion (Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, xi). The suffrage debate, during the Progressive era, enacts exactly this

¹³ On resource mobilization theory: Anthony Oberschall. *Social Conflict and Social Movements*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973. William A. Gamson. *A Strategy of Social Protest*. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1975. John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (May 1977): 1212-41. For a reconsideration of the scholarly neglect of countermovements in general and anti-suffragists in specific: Tahi L. Mottl. "The Analysis of Countermovements." *Social Problems* 27 (June 1980): 620-35. Susan E. Marshall. *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage*, Madison, WI.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.

understanding of the public sphere. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists acted upon the conviction that the issue of votes-for-women be made public, and be discussed and reasoned upon by society. Eventually, both groups labored at the publicly legitimized approval or denial of the vote.

Habermas confined the bourgeois public sphere as mostly a homogeneously active political entity, tied to a specific social class. It stood in permanent opposition, lead by different interests, to state authority. Yet, recent scholarly work has begun to question this antagonism between the bourgeois public sphere and state authority. Above all scholars question the solely critical nature of the public sphere and public opinion against authority and power. Scholars have shown that, towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, public opinion was, in fact, the sum of competing claims of power. These claims were not homogeneous and did not have a critically, reasoning impetus per definition. ¹⁴

Niklas Luhmann exposes the theoretical tools developed by Habermas as insufficient when analyzing power relations. Luhmann rejects the idea of a public sphere, as a space void of power, which hosts debates aimed at reaching a consensus. Luhmann's rejection is based on his understanding of communication and the public sphere, which breaks away from Habermas and his focus on consensus, based on rational argumentation. To Luhmann the public sphere is based on systems' theory. A system is a functional entity of signs, institutions, actions and processes, which is in a constant struggle with the surrounding environment and aims at self-development and self-preservation. Such systems are for example politics, economy, law, etc. Each of these systems is tied to its own public sphere. This view confronts a homogenous public sphere, with a variety of public spheres. These public spheres fluctuate and may even overlap, but according to Luhmann, they never form a uniform public sphere, the way Habermas saw it. Rather, various actors,

¹⁴ See Andreas Gestrich. *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit: Politische Kommunikation in Deutschland zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Göttingen: 1994. Falko Schneider. *Öffentlichkeit und Diskurs: Studien zur Entstehung Struktur und Form der Öffentlichkeit im 18. Jahrhundert*. Bielefeld 1992. Nick Crossley, John Michael Roberts (Eds.), *After Habermas. New Perspectives on the Public Sphere*, Oxford/Malden, Mass. 2004. Craig J. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Mass./London 1992; Ralf Hemming, *Öffentlichkeit, Diskurs und Gesellschaft. Zum analytischen Potential und zur Kritik des Begriffs der Öffentlichkeit bei Habermas*, Wiesbaden 1997.

actions and processes come together and overlap, engaging in a process of communication, specific for one certain system, i.e. one certain public sphere. To Luhmann communication is permanently tied to and characterized by systems of power.¹⁵

Building on the above criticism of Habermas's theory I also believe, that the public debate on female suffrage did not take place solely as an antagonism between public opinion and state authority. Rather, the public sphere became an arena where power interests of the suffrage and anti-suffrage camps, labored to make the issue a common concern in the first place. Subsequently, they entered a competition in the public sphere over public opinion. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists reasoned, discussed and debated according to their own interests and thus claimed power over public opinion. This angle allows us to move beyond the polarized juxtaposition of suffragist and anti-suffragists, or the isolated description of the two. We can leave behind terms like "right" or "wrong" or "progressive" and "backwards." Instead we can focus on the very discourse lead by the two sides, which defined the issue and assess its meaning and impact for the historical reality of the time.¹⁶

I use Habermas' notion of communication, which plays a central role in the development of a society. To him communication is interaction, based on and coordinated by language, between those who are capable of using language and of taking actions. They engage in potentially endless debates of argument and counter-argument, over the validity of certain statements or actions. It is noteworthy, however, that this interaction is not reduced only to language or to a sender and receiver situation. It is an interaction (also involving non-linguistic elements) of at least two debating sides whose acting intentions evolve out of their definition of their respective positions. This is what Habermas calls "soziale Selbstverständigung". Thus, for Habermas, communication has three functions: understanding (Verständigung),

¹⁵ See Niklas Luhmann. *Die Realität der Massenmedien*, 2nd Ed., Opladen 1996. For a critical analysis of Luhmann's theory, see Jürgen Gerhards, Friedhelm Neidhardt. "Strukturen und Funktion moderner Öffentlichkeit. Fragestellungen und Ansätze," In: Steffan Müller-Doohm, Klaus Neumann-Braun (Eds), *Öffentlichkeit – Kultur – Massenkommunikation. Beiträge zu Medien- und Kommunikationssoziologie*, Oldenburg 1991, 31–90.

¹⁶ Volker Depkat. *Amerikabilder in Politischen Diskursen. Deutsche Zeitschriften von 1789 bis 1830*. Stuttgart: 1998, 28.

coordination of actions and socialization (building, or making a society). In the end, Habermas's "Teorie des kommunikativen Handelns" aims at reconstructing social action through the intentions, values and norms of the actors. This also presents my final aim when dealing with my selected debate. I focus on the struggle, on the very debates themselves, and I see them as mirroring power and the power structures from which they derive. In these debates, the public sphere serves both as a battleground, where the actors interact, and as a tool, either to attack or defend the status quo.

The aim is to reveal the embedding of the texts in the Enlightenment. In this sense, looking at the text-pragmatic of the documents proves helpful. By text-pragmatic I mean the analysis of historical documents based not only on their content but also on their communicative setting.

Inspired by the Anglosaxon linguistic philosophy, and specifically the speech-act-theory, the communicative text-pragmatic approach sees a text as more than a grammatically connected entity of signs and sentences. Instead, a text is a linguistic action, through which a speaker or a writer aims at establishing a specific communicative relationship with a listener or with a reader.¹⁷ Central to the communicative text-pragmatic approach is the question about the purposes for which texts are put in communicative situations (Brinker 15). The communicative function of the text defines their content and form. This means, the meaning a specific text reveals to us is not confined within its linguistic, grammatical structure: it unfolds from the communicative context in which it has been created but also in the communicative context in which the text is intended to leave an impact. The text-pragmatic compels us to see texts as artifacts of historical processes of communication. As such they help us reconstruct not only historical realities, but also the value systems as well as the cultural mind maps of the time. The *Where?* and *How?* in terms of scene of action and communication and ways of communication are in focus here. The *Where?* of the debate is the public sphere of the American society between 1865 and 1919, and specifically the Progressive Era. The *How?* is the modes

¹⁷ See John L. Austin. *How to do things with Words*, Oxford 1962. John R. Searle. *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge 1969. Wolfram Bublitz. *Englische Pragmatik. Eine Einführung, (Grundlagen der Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Vol. 21)*, Berlin 2001.

and practices of communication which include not only verbal written interaction, but also visuals and various forms of pageantry: collective public appearances, meetings, conventions, hearings and parades.

In order to expose the strong Enlightenment influence on those acts of communication, it is not enough to consider merely their historical context or the fact that we are dealing with some of the most circulated pamphlets, essays speeches, sermons, etc. during the female suffrage debate. Applying the text-pragmatic approach, we also need to analyse those linguistic tools which the author uses in order to create a communicative interaction. Specifically, I ask: How does he see himself as a speaker? What is the author's communicative role(s) in the text? How does he or she situate him- or herself in historical time and space? What perspective on reality is revealed in this way in the text? What are the blind spots, of a certain authorial self-image and its perspective? Who is the intended recipient and how does that influence the linguistic and thematical structure of the text?

Considering the temporal aspect: What is the conception of past, present and future in the text? What are the linguistic tools and how are they used? And what does that say about the historical reality at the time of the creation of the text? I will provide empirical evidence to the above analytical steps.

Specifically with the text by the anti-suffragist Justin D. Fulton, for example, we have at hand a lecture converted into a pamphlet and circulated by an organized interest group such as the anti-suffrage movement. Like many other texts coming from both movements, the document has undergone a transformation of its communicative range of action, moving from the lecture, or most likely congregation hall, to the general public sphere, aiming to reach as many readers as possible. In this case, as in many others in the debate, the situation of communication is defined by the mode of interaction. We do not have face-to-face communication, as would have most likely been the case in the church, where the preacher addressed the believers.

The documents enact the debate in a written mode of interaction, and, turned into pamphlets, they support a new purpose – to communicate with the general public. Accordingly, the texts were widely distributed and, presumably,

widely read. Keeping in mind the propagandistic nature and the main proposition, we can classify their function as informative. They request the readers to adopt an attitude for or against votes-for-women. Even more, they summon the carrying out of a certain action — to vote for or against female enfranchisement. The pleading function of the documents, together with their situational aspect (being conveyed in a written way), determines the evolving of the theme as well as any thematic restrictions. The written mode itself enables a re-reading of the content without altering it and, possibly, a deeper analysis of its thesis and arguments. Serving a specific cause, the documents do not present the adversarial position in a non-partisan manner simply to inform the public, leaving them to decide which side to take. The texts not only inform on the matter of the female ballot but also urge its adoption or opposition. Any facts or notions, such as, for example, positive achievements of female-or male-exclusive suffrage, which could doubt or undermine the demand of the authors, are left out. Their main themes are unfolded in an explicative and argumentative manner – explicative, because the authors explain the causes and consequences of a woman's role and, in doing so, simultaneously aspire to broaden the readers' knowledge on the issue; and argumentative, because the texts are coherently structured by a thesis, a presentation of arguments, their logical backup and a conclusion. Understandingly, the main theme, the backing up of arguments and the conclusion are founded on a basis of values and beliefs, which I am going to reveal as Enlightenment-based.

By conceptual history, I mean Koselleck's approach to analyze the meaning of concepts through the course of history. This method unravels the understanding and the usage of certain concepts in a specific historical context. In so doing, it is possible to reconstruct value systems and self-image of the historical actors. In my case, I look at the meaning suffragists and anti-suffragists endow ideas such as *rights*, *progress*, etc.. This in turn compels me to ask: What do these meanings of Enlightenment concepts say about the image

they had of themselves? What does their understanding of concepts say about the historical reality of the period, as a whole?¹⁸

Methodically, conceptual history combines text and context analysis in a historically critical way. It points at the meanings of certain concepts, which were characteristic for a certain historical period. The author of the text, the intended recipient, or audience, its scope is also in focus of the analysis. Borrowing from linguistics, conceptual history directs analysis from the word to meanings as well as from the meanings to the specific word. In Koselleck's work, the concepts were dealt with during a key period, which the authors see as marking the formation of the modern world ("Entstehung der modernen Welt") between 1750 and 1850.¹⁹ The history of a concept is seen as the sum of individual, period-related analysis through time. Conceptual historians track the innovative moments or turns, which triggered the modern meaning of a concept, and replaced old, or simply became hard to grasp.²⁰ In this way, the analysis is tied to vast timeframes, such as antiquity, middle ages, modernity, etc.

In my case, I do not follow the evolutionary development of Enlightenment concepts through historical periods, nor do I strive to present their genesis. Rather, I am concerned with the meanings the Enlightenment

¹⁸ The following monumental, eight-volume lexicon is one of the most crucial on the history of historical concepts: Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhard Koselleck, (Eds.) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*. 8 Vols. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972–1997. Reinhard Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichten. Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache*. Ulrike Spree (Ed.), Frankfurt am Main: zeilenabst, 2006 offers practical, analytical tools on how historians dealing with intellectual history could analyze their sources in order to use them as windows into the respective social and political realities. See also: Hans Erich Bödeker (Hg.): *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*. (Göttinger Gespräche zur Geschichtswissenschaft 14) Göttingen: Wallstein 2002, is a study which follows the development of the history of concepts within European historiography.

For critical assessments on Koselleck's approach to the history of concepts: Carsten Dutt (Ed.), *Herausforderungen der Begriffsgeschichte*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter 2003. Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht: *Dimensionen und Grenzen der Begriffsgeschichte*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink 2006. Ernst Müller (Ed.), *Begriffsgeschichte im Umbruch?*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner 2005 as well as Kari Palonen, *Die Entzauberung der Begriffe. Das Umschreiben der politischen Begriffe bei Quentin Skinner und Reinhart Koselleck*, Münster: Lit 2004.

¹⁹ Einleitung, in: Brunner/Conze/ders. (Hrsg.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart 1972, S. XIII-XXVII.

²⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, Vorwort, in: Brunner/Conze/ders. (Hrsg.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Bd. 7, Stuttgart 1992, VI.

concepts had already developed by the dawn of the Progressive era. As a further step, I take a snapshot of the understandings of Enlightenment concepts as used by suffragists and anti-suffragists. But also vice versa: I am interested in the understandings we gain for the suffragists and anti-suffragists, based on their usage of Enlightenment concepts.²¹

Conceptual history sees historical processes as being mirrored by linguistically expressed ideas in texts. This is also one of the major points of criticism on the method. Scholars such as Clemens Knobloch accuse conceptual history's methodology, for it focuses only on the concepts explicitly mentioned through language. At the same time, it turns its back on those concepts which were not mentioned on the level of language, or which are implicitly coded in texts.²² The other source for criticism builds on the fact that Koselleck's lexicon for conceptual history derived its concepts predominantly, if not exclusively, from high-level texts, read mostly by the social elite. At the same time, they doubt the ability of those texts to reflect the historical reality of the time, since their scope was limited.

While critics do have a point here (Koselleck's sources were dictionaries, encyclopedias, scholarly writings from philosophy, theology, etc.), this does not apply to the suffrage debate in full scale. Whereas some of the writings were indeed first published in political or scientific journals, they were soon reprinted by women's journals, which targeted mainly housewives and college graduates. Most of the texts however, both by suffragists and anti-suffragists, were even printed as leaflets and given out on the streets, reaching the native-born, but also immigrant women of all classes. This makes me believe that the writings by the two camps reached a wider audience, which was not confined to a certain class. As to the concern that conceptual history only focuses on the explicitly mentioned ideas: Plenty of the texts in the suffrage debate, use and reinforce Enlightenment concepts even without

²¹ See Kathrin Kollmeier, "Begriffsgeschichte und Historische Semantik Version 1.0" in *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. Begriffe Methoden und Debatten der zeithistorischen Forschung* 16.07.2014 <http://docupedia.de/zg/Begriffsgeschichte_und_Historische_Semantik_Version_1.0_Kathrin_Kollmeier/Text#cite_ref-17>.

²² See Clemens Knobloch, "Überlegungen zur Theorie der Begriffsgeschichte aus sprach- und kommunikationswissenschaftlicher Sicht," in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 35 (1992), 7-24.

explicitly mentioning them as key words. My textual analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 illustrates this point.

Despite a tendency towards close reading, description and interpretation go hand in hand with the historical context. I use an analytical concept that will guide me throughout my analysis. The above theoretical background, specifically Habermas's notion of the public sphere, compels me to ask questions such as: How, and in what way, do the selected texts embrace the Enlightenment in order to fulfill their goals? And, more specifically: How is the Enlightenment to be recognized as an ideological ensemble (which ideas, specifically), as a functioning norm, or as an ongoing process towards social betterment? How do the texts address the public, and which strategies of persuasion do they use? How do they form a discussion, a dialogue in the public sphere? How do they respond to each other? And, most importantly, what parallels and direct links can be drawn on this basis between the two self-excluding positions on female political involvement? In order to answer these questions and to reconstruct Enlightenment discourses, it appears reasonable to focus on those passages in the texts, which directly display Enlightenment concepts. Bearing in mind Koselleck's history of concepts, I will look for key terms, which are simultaneously key concepts that lead me to the Enlightenment, and how they are functionalized by the respective camps, not only as mere wording but also in forming their self-understanding, such as rights, progress, reason, freedom, laws, order, knowledge and education, forms of empiricism (such as experiments) and measurement, etc. Habermas's understanding of public debate also suggests that considering communicative practices such as addressing a real or imagined audience, strongly criticizing the existing order, and directly responding to what has been said by an opponent etc. also embody principles of the Enlightenment. My aim is to show how these texts strive to define their concepts and self-understanding in accordance with the Enlightenment, aiming to make their cause more convincing. This, in turn, will enable me to prove that they respond to each other within the same framework. All this I do with the chief goal of contextualizing the social debate within the Enlightenment and thus

reconstructing the overall patterns of the time, which I believe to be much more Enlightenment-generated than previously thought.

The backbone of this study is formed by the following four chapters. My case study begins with *Chapter 1: Pragmatics of Communication*. It presents the debate on female suffrage as embodying the Enlightenment as a practice – specifically, as a practice of communication. The “*Where?*” of the debate will be characterized as the public sphere during the Progressive Era together with the specificities that galvanized the debate. How did the two camps participate in the debate? How did they try to mold public opinion? Which tactics did they use to win over the minds of the public? Suffragists’ and anti-suffragists’ communication was shaped not only by their respective self-images but was also dictated by the Enlightenment as a norm.

With Chapters 2 and 3: *Enlightenment and Inclusion* and *Enlightenment and Exclusion*, I show the dialectic of the American Enlightenment at work. I chose to structure these two chapters identically. In this way I hope to expose and highlight the common ground, which the Enlightenment provides both camps with. In *Enlightenment and Inclusion* I let suffragists raise their voices in the debate. Here I take texts written by eminent suffragists and treat them as representative of the overall suffrage argumentation with the Enlightenment on behalf of broadening U.S. democracy: Isabella Beecher Hooker’s “The Constitutional Rights of Women in the United States” from 1888 and “Will of the People” by Carrie Chapman Catt (1910). First, I characterize their documents as acts of communication within the larger debate, by defining them in their text-pragmatic. I narrow down their argumentation to three major recurring pillars: modern, i.e. enlightened, self-understanding; the idea of rights; and the notion of social progress by means of the female vote. To prove the pervasiveness of these Enlightenment concepts, I enlist further suffrage voices. Accordingly, these voices are also structured around these three argumentative pillars.

In *Enlightenment and Exclusion*, I let the anti-suffragists raise their voices, responding to their opponents. Again texts, by well-known anti-suffragists serve as the best examples for the widely used pattern in anti-

suffrage argumentation. This time, however, using the Enlightenment on behalf of retaining the exclusive status quo in the U.S. democracy: Justin Dewey Fulton's "Woman as God Made Her: the True Woman: to Which is Added: Woman vs. Ballot" from 1869 and Josephine Dodge's "Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights" from 1914. Again, I characterize these documents as acts of communication within the larger debate by defining them in their text-pragmatic. Here I also narrow down the argumentation to the same three major reoccurring pillars: modern, i.e., enlightened, self-understanding; the idea of rights; and the notion of social progress, albeit *without* the female vote. To prove the pervasiveness of these Enlightenment concepts I enlist further anti-suffrage voices. Accordingly, these voices are also structured around these three argumentative cornerstones.

The suffrage debate is tied up in Chapter 5. Here I focus not only on the passage and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which sealed the public discussion on votes-for-women. World War I did not leave the suffrage debate untouched. Both camps adjusted their rhetoric and pragmatics of communication according to the all-engulfing event. Suffragists, although divided in their war politics, did not forget their agenda. On the contrary, they used this extraordinary situation, purposefully and sometimes inadvertently, to galvanize their cause. Anti-suffragists on the other hand underestimated the moment. They believed that the issue on the female vote would dissolve itself against the background of national emergency. Rhetorically, the suffragists remained strictly within the scope of the Enlightenment. Anti-suffragists, however, decided to deviate from its formulas. Each harvested the fruits of their actions. So, did one side become the winners in history, and the others the losers? As historians we relativize such terms. The dialectic of the Enlightenment in America will hopefully do so.

I. 3.2. Sources

About 100 texts build the source basis for my analysis: newspaper and magazine articles, editorials, essays, pamphlets and pamphleteered speeches,

essays and addresses. All of them can be described as public documents, meant to contribute to the debate on female suffrage. The texts are writings by eminent suffragists, like Carrie Chapman Catt, Susan B. Anthony, Max Eastman, and those of anti-suffragists such as Josephine Dodge, Alice Chittenden and Lymon Abott. The writings strived to be generally understandable and addressed the educated but also the widely literate public.

The texts can be found in collections such as those in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington DC, USA: *The National American Woman Suffrage Association Records*, *Carry Chapman Catt Papers*, *Susan B. Anthony Papers* and *The Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1987-1911*. The library of the John F. Kennedy, Institute in Berlin, Germany offered the *American Women's Diaries*, *The Bibliography of American Women*, *Pamphlets in American History* as well as *The Woman's Party Papers*, and especially *The Cornell University Collection of Women's Rights Pamphlets*. Surprisingly unknown holdings, even to the library staff, were newspapers such as the suffragist *The Woman Voter*, and *The Woman Protest*, and the anti-suffragist *The Woman Patriot*. I owe special thanks to the Bavarian American Academy, Munich, Germany for funding my research at the Library of Congress as well as to Professor Maria Thurmair at Regensburg University, for granting me a research scholarship from the John F. Kennedy Institute.

II. Suffragists and Anti-Suffragists Pragmatics of Communication

Simply to reconstruct key ideas is not enough if we want to grasp the Enlightenment character of the suffrage debate. We need to analyze it in its public patterns of communication. Having the characteristic features of the Enlightenment and its specificities in the case of the American Enlightenment in mind will help us understand the mechanisms of public dialogue on votes-for-women. Dealing with the pragmatics of communication gives us insights into the environment that surrounded and influenced the dispute. Here not only both parties' behavior in the public space, and the shaping of their rhetoric is meant. Their social organization, and subsequently, the institutionalization of the suffrage and anti-suffrage movements are also a vital aspect of the contextualization of the debate. After all, the main purpose of those two camps was to communicate the suffrage or anti-suffrage message to the public. To mold the social sentiment, both parties built up their organizational structure extensively and elaborately. In this respect, suffragists were the forerunners and engaged in a much greater effort. Their counterparts, the anti-suffragists, however, diligently tried to keep up the pace. The *Where?* and *How?* in terms of scene of action and communication and ways of communication are in focus here: the public sphere of the American society between 1865 and 1919, specifically the Progressive Era and the wide range of communication practices, from written peaces to flamboyant parades. Vital for my argumentation is the following: The institutionalization of the movements, the practices of interaction within the public sphere, the very understanding of its function to filter the best argument, the effort itself to spur and lead on communication with society are essentially Enlightenment characteristics of the debate. This makes me believe, the Enlightenment defined the debate not only as an ideological soil but also as a practice of communication.

II. 1.1. The Progressive Era, Women and the Enlightenment

“Could a man of the last century [...] have seen, in a vision of the future, the steamship taking the place of the sailing vessel, the railroad train of the wagon, the reaping machine of the scythe, the threshing machine of the flail; could he have heard the throb of the engines that in obedience of human will, and for the satisfaction of human desire, exert a power greater than that of all the men and all the beasts of burden of the earth combined; could he have seen the forest tree transformed into finished lumber – into doors, sashes, blinds, boxes or barrels, with hardly the touch of a human hand; the great workshops where boots and shoes are tuned out by the case with less labor than the old-fashioned cobbler could have put on a sole; the factories where, under the eye of a girl, cotton becomes cloth faster than hundreds of stalwart weavers could have tuned it out with their handlooms...could he have conceived of the hundred thousand impoverishments which these only suggests, what would he have inferred as to the social conditions of mankind” (George, n.p.)?

Almost twenty years before scholars marked the beginning of a new, distinct period in American history and society, the political economist and writer Henry George foresaw the dawn of an age known to us as the Progressive Era. Unprecedented and systematic technological improvement replaced the sailing boat with the steamship, the wagon with the railroad, the scythe with the reaping machine. It elevated human will to rule over engines and the engines’ power was to satisfy human desire. The exploitation and, in the eyes of most contemporaries, the cultivation of nature – forest trees into furniture and cotton into cloth – was unboundedly set in motion. Everyday life itself, in the city and on the farm, was revolutionized – in fact, to such extent, that the boldest dreams of eighteenth century man could not have envisioned it.

This hitherto unimaginable advancement not only christened the Era. George’s above reflections hint at a wide spectrum of irreversible and rapid changes in U.S. society; population growth, industrial boom and the rise of business consolidations to mention a few. Parallel to these transformations, George’s last remarks point at the obvious discrepancies that joined. At the beginning of the twentieth century, U.S. society faced new problems which seemed paradoxical to its development. Ample poverty, poor labor conditions and concentration of wealth were probably the most serious ones. Society began looking for solutions, for social reform. In this respect, women organizations and reform aspirations gained visibility and significance. Public communication took up a new meaning and scope. Exactly this rise, and new

impact of communication stimulated the pragmatics and intensity of the suffrage debate. Sketching the social changes, the problems they spurred, the political solutions offered, as well as the Enlightenment nature of the Era's public sphere and its communication, aims to provide the suffrage debate with deeper understanding of the context it took place within. The notion that the Enlightenment is not only a set of ideas and rhetoric but also the very conditions, context and process of their exchange, will guide me hereby.

Growth seems to be characteristic of so many aspects of the Progressive Era. Population growth was one of the most striking ones. From 1877 to 1893 it grew from 47 to 67 million, owing one third of its increase to immigration. Inner migrations also took place. Part of the newly arrived immigrants moved to the Midwest and the West. A considerable portion of them however, settled in their first destinations, the East coast metropolises. The best example of which was New York City. The city of New York reacted to the speedy urbanization by increasing the number of tenant houses. Tenements, though, became the focal point of severe problems such as unsanitary living conditions and overcrowded accommodations. Diseases began to spread (Straughan 11). Jobs became hard to find, due to the constant influx of new immigrants. Welfare programs were few and could not cover these issues properly (Straughan 12).

And yet against the background of the above, the U.S. economy was getting unprecedentedly stronger. The newly manufacturing nation was quickly turned into the biggest manufacturing nation worldwide. The national railroad became transcontinental enabling a much faster mobility of people and goods. The extensive tapping of electricity was a key factor for increasing productivity of various goods (Ginger 159). Those goods began to be exported at a very rapid pace. Wealth began to flow into the country. Around 90 percent of its prosperity however, was shared by only 10 percent of the population at the turn of the twentieth century.²³ This was also due to business consolidations, creating monopolies on the markets of their specific industries. Small businesses were endangered. Consolidation left its mark on the image of

²³ Elizabeth Burth, V., *The Progressive Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1890-1914*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004;

business as huge, impersonal and hierarchical corporations began to dominate the landscape (Bremner 14).

Rural America was not spared the changes and the problems they brought with them. The country's economy was no longer exclusively reliant on farming. Urbanization, industrialization and consolidation reduced the number of farmers and concentrated land and farming goods in the hands of the few big companies. These trends were so powerful that they could not be countered, despite better transportation on railroads and roadways, reliable mail services and free public schooling. The impoverishment of the American farmer was a grim fact. What may have been even more devastating was the loss of farming's status as the backbone of the economy, and being a farmer lost its status as a noble profession (Goldman 38).²⁴ Medical care was scarce which caused high mortality rates. Textile and spinning mills provided the new income of the population. Yet one third of these new job opportunities were taken up by children, opening the most serious wound of the early industrialization period — child labor (Straughan 14).²⁵

Society realized, that the tackling of these matters needed to be the nation's primary task and especially that of its government. It called upon strong government intervention, distribution of wealth and a welfare system. These ideas seemed to be embraced more and more by the population. Socialism's solutions to the many problems reached a popularity peak in the Progressive Era. Labor organizations such as Farmer's Aliances or Knights of Labor were among the most ardent socialist supporters. Entering a labor union seemed to be a reasonable attempt at workers' self-protection. By 1905 the American Federation of Labor attracted more then 1.6 million members. The Ladies' Waist Makers' Union was one of the largest in the clothing industry and drew its membership mostly from female immigrants. Most importantly, their strikes were covered by the media and raised sympathy. The public seemed to be open to women's pleads (Straughan 15).

²⁴ Eric Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

²⁵ Dulcie Murdock Straughan, "Rousing the Conscience of a Nation," *Women's Use of Public Relations for Progressive-era Reform: Rousing the Conscience of a Nation*, Dulcie Murdock Straughan, Ed., Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007, 9-35;

This seemed to give the green light to female reformatory organizations, who felt called upon. Ever since the 1800s, a considerable number of women entered clubs and associations, targeting social reform. Often allied with other groups working on child labor, health care, female labor etc., they created coalitions across class and ethnicity (Sklar xiii).²⁶ The General Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Association of Colored Women, which also developed a vast network on a local level, are examples of the accelerated increase in female organizations the early 1900s witnessed. This development was also attributed to the general (technical) modernization that society experienced in the Era. Improved and affordable household conveniences spared middle class women more time, which they willingly invested in civic work and activities outside of the home (Straughan 21). The Hull House of Chicago and the Henry Street House in New York, one of the most famous settlement houses, aiming to relieve housing problems were founded by women. The National Consumers' League and the U.S. Children's Bureau also fostered the project (Straughan 17). In this way, American women placed themselves within the public sphere. In that context, women suffrage too, surfaced as a viable way to social betterment. Although the issue of the female vote had been discussed ever since the 1840s, up until the twentieth century it had not reached a wide audience. This means that quick and cheap communication was simply restricted (Thelen 339).²⁷ This was about to change.

During the Progressive Era, not only the problems were new. The very approach to them was something unpracticed before, but envisioned by the Enlightenment. Poverty, labor conditions and big business began to be written about, documented, investigated, and analyzed. Most importantly, the gathered information began to be circulated, to be delivered to the public. Jacob Riis, a newspaper reporter, devoted his focus to those who lived in the tenement houses. Already in 1890 with his book *How The Other Half Lives*, he drew

²⁶ Katherine Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelly and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1955.

²⁷ David P. Thelen, "Social Tensions and the Origins of Progressivism," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 56, No. 2 (Sept., 1969) 323-341;

public attention to the tenements' misery, poor health conditions and the outbreak of diseases. He set the path for research on social conditions on behalf of reforms.

Most women reformers, being college graduates, studied sociology and were trained in social service work. A central method of approaching social problems that they took from college, was the usage of social science and research skills. Problematic issues were investigated in field-work, studied by close examination and integrated in systematic inquiries. The data gathered on poor working conditions, infant mortality or housing served as the basis for reform action (Straughan 18). Projects like the settlement houses offered themselves perfectly to the growing general interest in social science research. Reform activists lived among their subjects of investigation, scrutinizing and documenting them. Hull House Maps and Papers, for example, was a study of the Hull House settlement residents in Chicago. Inquiries were made from door to door, city areas, including information on the residents' nationality, occupation, income, and number of family members living in a dwelling, which were mapped by trained staff, many of whom were women (Straughan 19). They testified the Era's "increased faith in the value of factual data as the foundation for advocating reform" (Straughan 18).

The early 1900s witnessed several "fact-finding agencies," followed by investigatory commissions on a federal and local level (Straughan 18). They collected data on topical issues (Bremner 161). The reform activists themselves were the strongest proponents of gathering facts, so that issues could be dealt with adequately. The historian Dulcie Straughan points out the rationale behind this: "Simply claiming that changes should be made because it was 'the right thing to do' did not carry much weight" (Straughan 20). Hindy Lauer Schacter, notes in her article "Women, Progressive Era-Reform, and Scientific Management" that empirically collected data, on the other hand, claimed to be "supported by science and conducive to efficiency" (Schacter 575).²⁸ The Era's revived thirst for knowledge and rediscovered passion for practical knowledge is also captured by Robert Bremner: "It was a time when the will to

²⁸ Hindy Lauer Schacter, "Women, Progressive Era-Reform, and Scientific Management" *Administration Society*, 2002, Vol. 34:5, 563-578;

improve conditions was guided and strengthened by knowledge gained from factual inquiry, when the zeal to do good was marked by eagerness to learn how and what to do” (Bremner 163).

Women reformers were no exception. In fact, the female historian Kathryn Sklar clarifies, these approaches illustrated in the eyes of the public, “*women’s ability to investigate* economic and social change, speak for the welfare of the whole society, devise policy initiatives, and oversee their implementation” (Sklar 69). Even at that time prejudices of sentimentality and lack of logical thinking were still shadowing the public view on female intelligence. Yet, it seemed that women were determined to testify their intelligence. By being able to use the same scientific methods as their male counterparts they aimed to show that their mind was not inferior. Women’s efforts were conveying the implicit message: Female reason could just as professionally and impartially engage in investigations and soberly argue on their basis.

These methods of studying the problem first, and then attempting to solve it, directly tie in with the Enlightenment scientific fervor and specifically its measurement ardency. The passion for factual and not metaphysical or emotional argumentation, as a tool of persuasion seemed to be revived in the Progressive Era, with new fervency and astonishing resemblance to the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment launched the gospel of facts as a way to impartial, transsubjective reason. Exactly in this spirit, the (predominantly female) staff of the Hull House proclaimed the gathered information (on the basis of which a series of services were offered) as “impartial and dispassionate, regarding the welfare of humanity as the one end of life” (Bennett, 75).²⁹

The gathering, measuring and classifying of data, by implication, was a tool for accomplishing social change. The next and no less important step, therefore, was to pass it on from one to another, to the public and to the political elite. To “rapidly *communicate* ideas across virtually the entire United States,” became a priority for most female civic organizations operating at

²⁹ Bennett, Helen C. *American Women in Civic Work*, New York: Dodd, Mead Co., 1915;

federal, state and local level (Skocpol 692). Nation-wide organizations soon became “powerful agenda setters” (Skocpol 692). Reformers themselves realized that if they want to see their envisioned improvements become reality, they had to “influence public opinion and motivate people to act” (Straughan 22). They had to canvass broad public support and communicate with a variety of audiences ranging from voters to government agencies and opinion leaders, to business and social services organizations (Straughan 23). And they did. Ever since then scholars have been asking ‘how could they do it?’ or rather “[h]ow could they do it so effectively” (Straughan 22)?

The very audiences themselves and ways of communication increased and diversified. In addition, developments in philosophy, sociology and social science emphasized the importance of “the power of public opinion and the need for public approval to make major social changes” (Straughan 23). These streams, although new for the Era, obviously drew their rationale from the Enlightenment ideological ensemble. Gabriel Tarde, a French philosopher, widely read and admired by Americans at the time, saw a positive symbiosis of mass media and the public leading to improvement. Mass media, newspapers, pamphlets, “could help tame crowds [or interests] into a public bound and ordered by shared, constructive goals” (Ewen 37).³⁰ Tarde’s notions reveal some of the implications which followed: Thanks to the mass media, people could go beyond their local borders and engage in a virtual dialogue with others on a state and national level. And most importantly, Dulcie Straughan analyzes Tarde’s thoughts: “Those media ties could be used to help create public consensus for positive social action” (Straughan 24). Exactly this Enlightenment concept of public consensus, as a result of debates in the public sphere, is what I am after when dealing with the suffrage question. The Progressive Era reinforced this understanding, and mass media was a significant tool in its enactment.

The reformers were some of the first to realize the growing importance of the press. After all, most of them were themselves journalists, like Riis or Ida Tarbell and Ida B. Wells. In addition, the unprecedented boom of print

³⁰ Stuart, Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin*, New York: Basic Books, 1996.

media, specifically newspapers, catalyzed a series of changes. Due to the invention of better and faster printing presses, the costs per issue were lowered. The press attracted advertisers and circulation was made easier and faster thanks to advanced transportation services. These factors led to the following: Alone the English language newspapers jumped from 850 in 1880 to 2,200 in 1910. A phenomenal growth was witnessed by the weekly, bi-weekly and semi-weekly magazines and papers. More than a million circulations were reached by big metropolitan daily newspapers, bringing the overall number of daily circulation figures from 3.1 million to 22.4 million, in a time span of about twenty years. Accordingly, the competition among publications, especially the urban dailies, became fierce. In this sense, not only advertisers but catchy stories, uncovered by reliable and scientifically based investigations, were what the papers were after (Straughan 25, Burth 9).

What is much more interesting for my purposes however, was the role that mass media attributed to itself – be it because some newspaper editors themselves were devoted to a certain reformatory movement. Fact is, that historians observe not only an “apex of [newspapers’] influence during the Progressive Era” (Straughan 25). Their self understanding went from simply informative to “active in national discussions of controversial issues. They brought these issues to the public’s attention, promoting debate by publishing the positions of opposing sides, acted as both moderators and participants in many of these debates, and generally served as facilitators of public discussion” (Burth 13, Straughan 25). This context and new self understanding of media is what makes me focus on the suffrage debate exactly during the Progressive Era. The ardent belief of the age that, only through a rational, factual debate, society would reach betterment was more than tangible at that time. More than any other period (probably after the Revolution) the Progressive Era was guided by and saw to implement the ideas of the Enlightenment. The growing number of print media undoubtedly affected women and their organizations. Not only their growing number and circulation linked women across the United States. They gained popularity and influence, often bringing about the success of campaigns such as infant mortality, reforms

in the medicine industry or federal passage of mothers' pensions. Female-hosted mass media understood that "one of the outstanding characteristics of the modern world is the increasing part played by public opinion in the various affairs of life" (Straughan 27, Wilder 3).³¹

Indeed, many women who lead reformatory movements prioritized their relationship with their own audience. To promote the organization's goals however, as well as, to accomplish a permanent solution to an issue and to unite with other "key publics" with whom they had worked together, they had to care for their relationship to the media public. A good example was the cooperation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and The National Association of Colored Women. In an effort to secure legislative support for mothers' pensions, both organizations publicized numerous stories in their widely circulated newsletters. Print media on a local and national level was besieged with reports on specific issues, factual data, surveys, background information and further materials sent to them by both organizations. Their success in the legislative passage of mothers' pensions, according to Skocpol, was predestinated by their skillful "[creation of] sudden nationwide groundswells of public opinion" which lead to direct action by the legislators (Straughan 30).

The understanding of the public sphere, the power attributed to public opinion, the investigative techniques by progressive social reformers, and the dissemination of information, all were decisive factors for winning the suffrage debate. To make best use of them, suffragists and anti-suffragists organized professionally in institutions.

³¹ R.H. Wilder and K.L. Buell, *Publicity: A Manual for the Use of Business Civic or Social Service Organizations*, New York: Ronald Press, 1923;

II. 1.2. The Communication of the Suffrage Debate:

The Institutionalization of the Movements

The institutionalization of the suffrage and anti-suffrage movements is probably the most decisive move towards communication with the American public. They incorporated their groups into structured and highly formalized systems. There are several reasons for this. First, to respond to or to counter each others moves. Second, to endow their cause with seriousness, and simultaneously, to win more supporters. Third, to raise interest for their campaign. And fourth, to claim constituency and ensure communication with the public. For, as we saw above, to convince the nation in the righteousness of their beliefs was their primary goal. Thus the last two reasons were the official ones and both organizations claimed adherence to them.

The very act of professional organization and its aims, as formulated by the movements, are an inherently Enlightenment based practice. In fact they, to use Kant's words, by communicating, enact the Enlightenment. The propositions of female suffrage on the one hand, and its ban on the other, are thrown back and forth in a public debate in which the participants claim to transcend their own subjectivity in the name of common reason. The Progressive Era also played a role in the spurring on of the organizations. After all, the age saw the development and diversification of various female-led associations and voluntary societies. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists took their cues from women's clubs in terms of organization. Furthermore, women's clubs enjoyed veneration and the affiliation with them adorned the causes with respectability. The age of progressivism was vital not only when it comes to the proliferation of the above social movements. The big question of the application of democracy to the U.S. context formed the frames of a larger debate within which the matter of suffrage was discussed (Graham 11-13).

The method and the nature of institutionalizing the suffrage and anti-suffrage movements shared many similarities (which hint at the Enlightenment's role as a norm) but also differed quite seriously. Emerging from the old abolitionist movement, suffragists continued practices of

communication learned from their former allies. The early twentieth century witnessed the proliferation of various pressure groups, which became even more active in gaining publicity and grass root support. Militancy, in the extreme case, and publicity stunts became part of the daily routine. Militant suffragists, organized in Alice Paul's Woman Party, reached for those practices. For conservative anti-suffragists, however, public presence was a taboo that became reluctantly but gradually broken. In fact, anti-suffragists were more dragged into the public sphere than entering willingly into it. Nevertheless, at some point they reached a level of public presence that prevented decisive suffrage victories. We still may not forget that women in U.S. society, even after Reconstruction and at the beginning of the Progressive Era, were not used to acting publicly. It was still considered not ladylike and both suffragists and anti-suffragists needed their time to become publicly visible. Yes, suffragists had their Seneca Falls Convention back in 1848. Yet, it was met with such a ridicule and stigma, that public speaking and organization was reduced only to a few individuals, usually leading suffragists.

II. 1.3. Organized, Public Suffrage Communication

The public relations historian Sarah Lynn Farmer describes the suffragists' communication with the public throughout the history of their campaign as "One of the largest and lengthiest public relations campaigns ever undertaken in the United States, [...] conducted from 1848 to 1920" (Farmer 35).³² Farmer's observation hardly sounds exaggerated, having in mind the campaign that rallied thousands volunteers nationwide, was established professionally and specialized its functions in the form of press, publicity, education and propaganda committees as well as congressional canvassing. It was behind the publishing and spread of over 50 million pieces of literature and provided all national newspapers with headlines. Suffrage communication with the public culminated in a federal amendment added by Congress to the

³² Sarah Lynn Farmer "Communicating Justice: The National American Woman Suffrage Association's Use of Public Relations to Win the Right to Vote" *Women's Use of Public Relations for Progressive- era Reform: Rousing the Conscience of a Nation*, Dulcie Murdock Straughan, Ed., Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007, 35-62;

Constitution of the United States. “It was a 72-year-long public relations campaign on an unparalleled scale, yet it remains largely overlooked,” writes Farmer (Farmer 35).

Activists in favor of female enfranchisement and broadening of female rights had organized in different ways before they gained homogeneity in terms of public communication. The National American Woman Suffrage Association was preceded by two major suffrage organizations: National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) (Flexner 208-217). Shortly after the Civil War women’s rights supporters were divided over the issue of advocating both African American and female rights, or focusing solely on women’s rights. Whether to promote universal suffrage, granting the ballot to all citizens was also a matter of dispute. The gaps between those two paths of thinking became unbridgeable. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, forming the NWSA camp and Lucy Stone together with her husband Henry Browne Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe were the AWSA camp. The NWSA hoped to convince the federal government in adopting an amendment that would grant the ballot to women. The AWSA, on the other hand, believed that chances were higher if they succeeded in convincing state and local legislators of passing women favorable legislation (Flexner 136-148).³³

Although the success of suffrage public relations largely, and rightfully so, contributed to NAWSA, early suffrage activism put no less value on communicating its views to society. After all, let us not forget, that the hour of birth of suffrage was marked by a public statement against women’s political and social marginalization — the Declaration of Sentiments of 1848. It prodded a public women’s rights convention as soon as the following week. Being well aware of the significance of public opinion, the organizers (Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Martha Wright, and Jane Hunt) reached out to the Seneca County *Courier* asking for publication of an informational note. From July 19 to 20, it stated, an open, public meeting would be held. Its purpose, as the women’s studies historian Aileen Kraditor recognizes clearly, was nothing less than “to discuss the social, civil and

³³ Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman’s Rights Movement in the United States*, Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.

religious condition and rights of woman” (Kraditor 2).³⁴ With the very sole purpose of the event to discuss the conditions and rights of women, Seneca Falls activists acted upon the Enlightenment understanding of public exchange of reason, as the way to truth. In this sense, they enacted the Enlightenment as a practice of arriving at reasonable solutions and implementing reason to reality. The fact that the convention was literally packed with interested men and women, and, for it was such a daring act, with onlookers spoke for the right historical moment. As to the impact of the event on suffrage public communication, Farmer states insightfully: “The public relations campaign *to educate and persuade* American men and women to accept women’s suffrage was born at this conference, and it continued for more than seven decades” (Farmer 36). Already at this point of suffrage outreach to the public, it becomes clear that this was done in the way the Enlightenment had envisioned it. The advocates for women’s rights gathered to discuss, and not just make statements. They tried to educate, and not impose, and aimed at persuasion rather than forcing their cause upon society.

Due to successful promotion, the first convention on a national level followed in 1850. The organizers, lead by Lucy Stone, organized their efforts primarily to publicize the event. As a result, a written call for attendance, which was sent out throughout the country, was signed by 89 men and women from six states. In the end, the Brinley Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts witnessed more than one thousand attendees. The New York *Tribune* noted that, had there been a larger place, thousands more would have attended (NAWSA, *Victory* 37).³⁵ The media’s attention was drawn. It passed on the suffrage cause to society, converting more followers. By diligently implementing strategies like these, suffragists spent decades building public relations and setting society’s mindset for the reform. As soon as 1860, by the 10th National Woman’s Rights Convention, suffragists even managed to dwindle the ridicule and prejudices of the press and public, and were believed

³⁴ Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920*, NY and London: Columbia UP, 1965;

³⁵ The National American Suffrage Association (NAWSA), *Victory: How Women Won It*. New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1940;

to have “*grave debate*” on the matter (NAWSA, Victory 44 and Farmer 36-38).³⁶

Yet, in terms of professionalism in public communication and clarity in goals, suffragists reached maturity and bordered on perfection only after the unification of the two competing organizations in 1890. The newly formed NAWSA had Elizabeth Cady Stanton as its elected president. By the 1890s the suffrage cause had started to take shape, and after a series of negotiations, the new umbrella association emerged on the political landscape. Although race and class continued to divide opinions, even in the new movement, its president highlighted a unifying mission, improving conditions of all women across race and ethnicity. “Colored women, Indian women, Mormon women, and women from every quarter of the globe,” Stanton summoned “have always been heard [...] and I trust they always will be” (Stanton, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony* 226).³⁷

NAWSA also aimed at rallying suffrage troops and developing its own active system for public communication. Scholars of suffragism as a social movement, such as Sara Graham, call this concentration and crystallization of rhetoric and public persuasion decisive for the progress of suffrage in the twentieth century (Graham 6). Already at its first national convention, NAWSA introduced tactics of public information and persuasion. Delegates were trained in organizing and holding state conventions. Instructions in public speaking and knowledge of parliamentary proceedings were distributed.

After the creation of the new single goal movement, suffragists’ well-organized system across the country was yet to be founded. Despite the fact that suffragists had been agitating for forty years, they hardly managed to convince the states where they were represented in their cause, with the exception of a few western states. With the Progressive Era, however, suffragists’ efficiency in public persuasion would reach a peak. The new beginning of woman’s vote inspired young followers. This was the time of

³⁶ Emphasis added

³⁷ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony Reader: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches*, Ed., Ellen Carol DuBois, Boston : Northeastern University Press, c1992.

Carrie Chapman Catt's debut on the suffrage scene. Converted to the cause, since 1885 and being an active officer in Iowa, she demonstrated her excellent organization skills by proposing a new, strictly organized spread of the movement. This expansion aimed at a gradual and steady conversion of public opinion at a local level first, and at a state level second.³⁸

Sara Graham believes that, already at that point, suffragists had the characteristics of a pressure group by adopting outer and inner strategies of converting public sentiment. Mass constituency and grass root support by means of propaganda, publicity and pageantry formed the outer strategy, in Graham's words. Contacts to politicians, constant provision with information on the matter and possible commitment to the mission built the inner strategy, also known as political lobbying by means of letters, to politicians, addressing local and state legislations, press work and so on (Graham xv). Graham's distinction of the suffragists' mode of communication, being outer or inner, ties into the Enlightenment rationale of communicating a thesis to society in order to test its validity in front of the altar of universal reason. In addition, the more membership increased, the cause became, if not all the more respectable, at least hard to ignore. In this respect, mass constituency and grassroots propaganda served as evidence when negotiating with politicians.³⁹

That spirit of expansion and professional public communication became tangible with Catt's proposition of a three-point plan that distinguished financial, organizational, and professional training of state and national organizers for state campaigns. A specific committee was established for raising money for state campaigns targeting at an amendment. Another committee was occupied solely with the coordination of suffragists on state and national levels. And a distinct third committee was devoted to the professional realization of state campaigns by developing special training for individuals called organizers (Graham 7).

³⁸ Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1987, Chapters 2 and 3;

³⁹ Martha M. Solomon, Ed., *A Voice of Their Own: The Woman Suffrage Press, 1840-1910*, Tuscaloosa, AL.: 1991, iii;

Catt's own vigorous engagement to public communication included trips to twenty-one states and fifty-one lectures (*History of Woman Suffrage* vol 4, 387-388). This remarkable personal activity is due to the Enlightenment conviction, as expressed in suffragists' words, to set "our entire people aglow with woman suffrage sentiment" (Graham 8). Still we need to consider that at the time suffrage public communication, despite an existing press organ – The Press Committee, raised little interest in the cause, and attention from other clubs and associations (Graham 9). A more troubling matter, was the fact that the very image of suffrage at the beginning of the twentieth century was still related to radicalism and anomaly. Experimental clothing, such as the bloomers, and provocative feminist rhetoric were among the first things associated with suffragists. The developing anti-suffrage movement and the improvement of its communication with the public contributed a great deal to creating this image.

Accordingly, suffragists had no success in winning new states for the vote, and suffrage in general made little significant progress. For some historians, such as Flexner, when it came to measuring suffrage's success, the period between 1896 and 1910 was a standstill (Flexner 256). For others, such as Sara Graham, however, focusing on the emergence of suffrage constituency and improvement of public communication, this very period is seen as "The Suffrage Renaissance" (Graham 33). It was a crucial period of rejuvenation, of reconsidering the past and making it usable for the future. Indeed, as we follow the evolution of suffrage communication, we will see that after the standstill or during the renaissance, suffragists developed a full-fledged system of public persuasion. Back then, being aware of their negative image but simultaneously realizing the importance of their pioneers for the suffrage identity, suffragists sought to create a new tradition. A new tradition meant a new image and a new past, that they very well knew would lead them to a new future. This transformation of view-point was a creation of new identity – using the past in their favor, as known to us from the Enlightenment.⁴⁰ So were pioneer

⁴⁰ See Van Wyck Brooks. "On Creating a Usable Past" *American Literature, American Culture*, Gordon Hutner, Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 213-16. Casey Nelson Blake, "The Usable Past, the Comfortable Past, and the Civic Past: Memory in Contemporary America" *Cultural Anthropology* Vol. 14, No. 3 (Aug., 1999), 423-435.

suffragists endowed with heroic and visionary character, and this heroic past was linked to a mission-loaded present on the way to becoming a glorious, enlightened future. And suffragists' first task was to convey the above realizations to the public. In fact, it could also be said that this transformation happened because of the need to better communicate with society (Graham 35).

Now, that need was, as is often the case, prompted by a specific event; a turning point that shattered suffragists and woke them up. In 1895, after four years of pressing with requests the Massachusetts Assembly decided to hold a mock referendum on the issue of women's suffrage. Both men and women had to vote on the referendum. Suffragists were infuriated by the inconsequence of their vote, for the referendum was just a test, and in suffragists' eyes, void of any seriousness (Flexner 230). The outcome was more than disappointing. Low female turnout and excellent anti-suffrage agitation proclaimed the suffrage defeat. Alice Blackwell's efforts to stress the amount of women who did vote was not enough to declare a suffrage victory (*History of Woman Suffrage* vol. 4, 738). Indifference on the part of the public, suffragists' most feared enemy, seemed to have won. As a result, many suffrage clubs in the state were shut down or suffered severe loss of members. The referendum however, I share Sarah Graham's view, yielded suffragists to reconsider their organization, and, most importantly, their public communication (Graham 35).

Not only the significance of solid financial support and the increase of followers were reassessed. Suffragists realized that it was high time to respond to the image of militants and radicals brilliantly conveyed by anti-suffrage propaganda. The most important turning point for the suffragists, as Graham has observed, was "[the] new awareness of the importance of public opinion. [...] Suffragism of old, shaped by the dedication of a few faithful friends, was to become the movement of the masses, and, as such, it had to be packaged in a form more attractive to a wider audience" (Graham 36). For again, most suffragists were convinced that not anti-suffragists, but sheer indifference was their biggest enemy.

"In a suffrage campaign," suffragists wrote in the *Woman Voter*, in 1914, "the great problem is never the conversion of those who are actually opposed to Votes for Women. The great

difficulty is in reaching those who are not sufficiently interested even to attend a first suffrage or anti-suffrage meeting. (The Woman Voter p 9. 1914 *Plays for Propaganda*).

And as time passed, suffragists proved inventive in developing various propagandistic tactics.

As a plea for broadening propaganda tools and diversifying the methods of communication with the public, suffragists discussed the potential for a new medium – drama – in

“reaching these indifferent people and awakening in them an initial interest, that the theater affords such remarkable opportunities. Many who cannot be induced to attend their maiden suffrage meeting, will be interested in seeing a play [...]. The drama is a particularly effective avenue for stirring to new consciousness that large group whose inherited emotional prejudice inhibits their power to think on the question. They must first *feel* through new channels, before their minds are freed for any thoughtful or impartial consideration of the subject.

The communicative power of theater is wrapped in Enlightenment understanding. Feeling the issue first; perceiving an unencumbered impression on the matter, according to suffragists, opened the minds of the audience to further reasoning. That reason, and eventually the revelation of truth, are preceded by an intuitive and unmistakable feeling as a notion known to us from the Enlightenment’s common-sense philosophy. Drama too, was to be involved in the suffragists’ “exorcis[ing] the demon of indifference by converting the apathetic masses to the idea of distaff democracy,” to put it in Graham’s words again (Graham 36).

Fighting indifference meant for suffragists also, attracting the elite of society. Elite women in local clubs and organizations, had the time and the money to devote to the suffragists’ reform. The goal was not only prestige but also to create trust for their cause. This tactic was also introduced by Carrie Chapman Catt, upon her election to the NAWSA presidency. A general supporter of Catt, Susan B. Anthony, embraced the idea. She delegated a list with the names of all prestigious attendants to be included in the annual convention program and to be exposed in a noteworthy manner.⁴¹

In addition to converting wealthy citizens, suffragists did not underestimate the significance of luring middle class support. At the 1904 convention, a plan that fostered charitable, educational and civil activities,

⁴¹ Susan B. Anthony to Rachel Foster Avery, January 22, 1900, Papers of Susan B. Anthony, reel I, Library of Congress

went along with the endorsement of the above society plan. Because suffragists, just as anti-suffragists, claimed to be the movement that truly represented the will of the majority of the people, the charitable, educational and civil work was far more emphasized than that devoted to converting elite Americans. The custom gatherings of the middle class, parlor meetings, were a place for suffrage conversions. Conservative settings enjoying the privacy of the home were judged proper and estimable even by the most humble Victorian women. There, suffragists sought to win traditionally-viewed followers who normally avoided public hearings, meetings or debates (Gluck 45-46).⁴² Although the days of stigmatization of women who spoke publicly were long past, those who dared to do it at the beginning of the Progressive Era were also few (Graham 38). Parlor meetings offered themselves as a safe and intimate setting for the consideration of new, recent issues, such as suffrage, without exposing oneself to criticism. This was done carefully by preparing schedules, which would deal with traditional topics such as art, history or religion one day, and female suffrage, history of women, or birth control on the other. Such a program was offered to the attendants of the Monday Club of Richburg, New York, for example.⁴³ The newly elected president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs proclaimed: "Dante is dead, [and] has been dead for several centuries, and I think it is time that we dropped the study of his *Inferno* and turned our attention to our own" (Graham 38, Gluck 12-13). Her urge marked the definite infiltration of the suffrage issue in predominantly conservative women's organizations and clubs. It did not take long until prominent ladies subscribed openly to the cause. Some committed seriously and even founded their own suffrage societies, such as the wealthy New Yorker, Mrs. Clarence McKay.⁴⁴ Great grand daughters of Jefferson and Madison were also among the new converts (Graham 39).

⁴² Sherna Gluck, *From Parlor to Prison: Five American Suffragists Talk about Their Lives*. New York: Vintage Books, 1976;

⁴³ Monday Club of Richburg, New York, calendar for 1912, NAWSA Papers, reel 48, LC

⁴⁴ Carrie Chapman Catt to Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, October 19, 1909, Catt Papers, reel 3 LC

With prestigious women on their side, respectability was a new characteristic feature that suffragists added to their image. By that time, they had also realized the immense importance of public opinion, and of their own image in the eyes of society. This gave reasons to the NAWSA to “legitimize their organization through creation of a formal suffrage historical tradition” (Graham 39). Sara Graham rightfully recognizes the significance and impact of such a decision, in terms of identity building and the vehement persuasive and communicative power of a historic tradition and this, please note, during their time of activism. This was a decisive point of difference between suffrage and anti-suffrage communication with the public. Apart from individual essays, such as Caroline F. Corbin’s *Woman’s Rights in America*, which give a chronological survey of anti-suffrage activities, antis never developed a fullfledged historical description of anti-suffrage heritage.⁴⁵ That is why, when it comes to the usage and creation of tradition, the focus will be on their opponents.

Suffragists understood that a history of the movement would not only unite the several ideological trends within their camp it would also better convey their message. Moreover, a history would testify the common acceptance of suffrage achievements. Documenting and spreading suffragists’ own history meant to pass on the continuation, the inheritance of suffrage thought to following generations. And, most importantly, a historical tradition presented suffragism not only as a product, but as a contributing factor to the general progress of American society. Eric Hobsbawm rightfully remarks the usage of a historical tradition as a technique to justify present activities (rhetoric, events, personalities, even rituals) by linking them to a historical past and thus presenting them as its continuation (Hobsbawm 1-12).

As a result, suffragists pointed at the absence of American women in the history of the U.S. as a demanding gap. Through the landmark *History of Woman Suffrage*, launched in 1881 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, suffragists sought to offer an accredited answer to the neglect of American history writing towards its women. This was

⁴⁵ Caroline F. Corbin. *Woman’s Rights in America. A Retrospect of Sixty Years, 1848-1908*. Chicago: The Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women.

the official mission of the monumental work. On the level of communication, however, suffragists invented a brilliant propagandistic tool. It manipulated past suffragists' events and behavior in order to suit present goals. Thus, the supposedly general history of American women was presented through the prism of suffrage activism and backed up contemporary practices and rhetoric. In this light, historians speak of a “new” suffrage tradition; and the quotation marks are absolutely necessary here, having in mind its purposeful coinage character. Everything – rhetoric, symbols, practices, events – was introduced as a legitimate derivation from the history of American women. The changing nature of the movement customized its history accordingly until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment (Graham 40). Above all, however, suffragists labored on their history in order to present themselves as part of, and even contributing to, the general progress of American society. Thus, they emphasized the logical inevitability of their reform. Votes for women were presented as the downright progress of reason.

As an inseparable part of its communication with the public, the NAWSA made the placement of the work one of its primary tasks. Acting upon the Enlightenment belief in the power of education, suffragists founded a specific organ solely devoted to education — the NAWSA's Committee of Education (Graham 41). Organized that way, they turned to libraries as a further focal point of their tactics in the conversion of public sentiment. Circulating suffrage libraries were established, offering the history of the women's rights movement, feminist literature along with biographies of prominent female activists. (Graham 40). The very *History of Woman Suffrage* reports the donation of woman suffrage literature to college libraries, as a part of the NAWSA's 1903 working plan (*History of Woman Suffrage* vol. 5, 60 and Graham 40-41). The dissemination of suffrage history and literature was a communicative tactic also dear to Carrie Chapman Catt's heart. Known for her organizational talent, she commissioned specific committees, belonging to local suffrage associations, to foster social interest in women's history. The diligent spread of suffrage literature by 1908 gave her the courage to predict

that one day the history of suffragism would be a venerated part of the nation's Library of Congress in Washington D.C.⁴⁶

Systematically and scientifically, by doing field research, suffragists exposed the omission of women in school history books. The Committee of Education commissioned a study of communal and school textbooks, used in public schools. It was carried out by the head of the committee, Pauline Steinem herself, in 1909. Four hundred schools and twenty-six publishing houses answered her inquiry. Some considered the female representation in the face of prominent women, such as Betsy Ross or Martha Washington to be sufficient. The majority, however, admitted that the problem had not been considered so far. This study was a prerequisite to another, very skillful, suffrage tactic of communication (*History of Woman Suffrage* vol. 5, 263 Graham 40). The infiltration of schools with suffrage literature and history was under the pretense of filling a gap in the history of the U.S. As a matter of fact, however, the Committee of Education knew its job and enabled early education from school age on in female suffragists' significance to society, making them a part of the progress of the U.S. as a whole.

May Gray Peck's words, included as part of the report of the headquarters' secretary documented in the *History of Woman Suffrage*, gave somewhat of a slogan to that sort of suffrage communication with the public: "get the young people involved and you [will] catch mothers" (*History of Woman Suffrage* 5, 266-68). Already in 1910, classrooms throughout the U.S., equipped with suffrage literature, were the setting for debates on the votes for women. Encouraging interest at a very young age, and simultaneously popularizing the movement, suffragists fostered Enlightenment practices of communication. They created the conditions for and carried out debates — the Enlightenment's most beloved way of reaching trans-subjective, universally valid reason.

This act of suffragist propaganda did not go unnoticed by the anti-suffragists. In fact, the female opponents of the votes for women were infuriated by the injection of suffrage thought into the classroom. Since the

⁴⁶ Carrie Chapman Catt to Alice Stone Blackwell, November 6, 1908, Catt Papers, reel 2, LC

matter was not settled among the parents, schools should refrain from taking a stance, they insisted. Through a press release by the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, Antis maintained: “The woman suffrage question has no place in the schools,” (Graham 41).⁴⁷ Antis’ protests against suffrage propaganda made sense. It was one-sided information, presented as a general truth to a perceptive and unencumbered audience such as school children. These objections, however, had little impression on suffragists. The embedding of their tradition within the larger democratic tradition of America was such an important matter, that the targeting of schools seemed the best strategy to follow. Schools were the ideal setting and moment to inscribe into the minds of the upcoming generations the merits that the women’s rights movement gave to American society. Suffragists invented and manipulated their history in order to present themselves as products of evolution, of Enlightenment under the American conditions. This image of suffragism was translated to the level of rhetoric. Widely circulated pamphlets and articles traced the arguments for enfranchisement of men in the U.S., from colonists to newly enfranchised African Americans. They also pointed at the advancements women had made and urged their audiences, not to endanger the natural march of democracy and give the vote to women. My detailed analysis of Carrie Chapman Catt’s essay *Will of the People* (see Chapter 3) serves as a fine example of the above line of thinking.

The president of Bryn Mawr College, M. Carey Thomas, wrote: “Women lived in a twilight life, a half-life apart, and looked out and saw men as shadows walking. Now [...] we have gone so far; we must go further. We cannot go back” (Thomas n.p.).⁴⁸ The very invention and spread of their history as a way of persuasion was meant to show the gradual transition from the unenlightened past into the well lit, enlightened future, and, as Sarah Graham observes, “the women of unwritten history were made to march, and their suffragist creators made the most of their progress” (Graham 42). Making

⁴⁷ Press Release, *Anti-Suffrage News and Comment*, n.d. New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.

⁴⁸ M. Carey Thomas, *A New-fashioned Argument For Woman Suffrage, Made by M. Carey Thomas At the Opening of the Equal Franchise Society of Pennsylvania held at the Acorn Club, Philadelphia*, April 30, 1909, New York: 1909;

the most of their progress reveals seeing the past usable for the present – a strategy especially tangible ever since the Enlightenment. *The History of Woman Suffrage* quickly gained the canonical status, providing suffragists with a democratic heritage to draw upon. The leaders of the movement, borrowing from the hagiography of the Revolution, were named pioneers. The long years of activism were turned into a heroic struggle and the Progressive Era-suffragists linked themselves directly to this background, vowing continuation (See also Graham 42-43).

In terms of rituals, suffragists celebrated their past, centered mostly around lauding their pioneers. This is not surprising, considering the almost saint-like status of some early suffragists. Since *The History of Woman Suffrage* was a witness of the Enlightenment of American women, its pioneers were also endowed with the status of philosophers of the movement. If Elizabeth Cady Stanton was regarded a brilliant theorist, Susan B. Anthony was the embodiment of the practical philosopher, known to us from the Enlightenment in America. Suffrage conventions included programs such as, “Evenings with the Pioneers” or “Decoration Day of Our Heroines” (Anna Howard Shaw, Letter to *Progress*, March 1910). The veneration of Susan B. Anthony was especially lavish. Tributes were read by young members, praising her work with deep gratitude. Anthony herself delivered speeches on the contribution of early advocates. The celebrations found their place in the *History of Woman Suffrage* and acquired the status of an unending tradition (HWS 5, 30-31, 219-220 and Graham 46-47).

This suffragist self-staging bore fruits. Being raised with suffrage literature, and lured by the ‘new’ respectful image of the cause, college women felt especially attracted to the movement. The recruitment of college converts seems to be the second most significant suffrage tradition, after the veneration of their pioneers. Among themselves, college women founded their own suffrage organizations, which proved to be a driving force in the battles to come. The Massachusetts College Equal Suffrage League, for example, was founded by the Radcliffe College students Maud Wood Park and Inez Haynes Gilmore in 1900 (HWS 5, 660-62). Soon, a National College Equal Suffrage

League followed. College evenings were held at theaters and universities as well as at the NAWSA conventions. A strategic emphasis was made on linking the pioneer suffragists and the new recruits through the celebrations, serving also as a source of inspiration (Graham 45-46).

Logically, the boom of suffrage enrollment, the presence of the suffrage question in the public sphere and the general fast-growing support for the reform by 1906, came as a deserved reward. As soon as 1910, new organizational reform took shape, championed by the new and energetic president Catt. The college-educated women provided an army of diligent and persistent agitators, called organizers. They were active throughout the country. Suffragists did not forget the importance of political lobbying. By 1914 they had a serious lobbying system, which targeted a federal amendment passed by the Congress. The rethinking of their financial politics proved fruitful too, and the suffrage budget experienced unprecedented growth, reaching 100,000 dollars early in 1916 (Graham 52). The financial stability enabled suffragists to open further local associations, sub-organizations, committees and leagues devoted to a specific function (such as the college league, for example).

The very form of organization also matured. The suffrage movement developed into a federal organization, based on a democratic basis of government. In New York State, for example, there was an elected chairman for each of the twenty-two senatorial districts. They, in turn, were in charge of electing chairmen for each assembly district. For matters of transparency, senators and assemblymen would be interviewed personally by the assembly district chairman. One year later, a district convention was held, which would elect a chairman and nominate delegates to a city suffrage convention. So, for example, 804 delegates, each representing a district, were sent to the 1909 New York State suffrage convention. As a result of the debates, it was unanimously resolved to demand a popular vote for women in an Amendment to the New York State Constitution. A further decision was the public and definite approval of a federal amendment.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See, Mary Gray Peck, *The Rise of the Woman Suffrage Party*, Woman and Government Series, ed. Myra Hartshorn, ser. V-H. Chicago: Soul Brothers, 1911.

This elaborate scheme of suffrage organization, mirrored an Enlightenment understanding of eliciting the voice of the people and, on that basis, endorsing a cause. Most importantly, with such a dense form of representation, suffragists modeled their organization after the concept of representative democracy, where the people chose the one who they regarded as most fit to represent them. With the structure of their movement, suffragists highlighted their image of an advanced and advancement-bringing institution, which had a sound understanding of democratic organization. They took their obvious cues from the Revolution and the very democratic manner of popularizing and passing a reform, such as independence for example. Just as the colonies ratified the Declaration of 1776, so was the federal suffrage amendment to be endorsed by each state suffrage organization. According to the same democratic procedure, the federal states were envisioned to approve, one by one, a suffrage amendment to the Federal Constitution.⁵⁰

The professional organization, tight in structure but broad in impact, along with the reliable and generous financial support were the most significant preconditions for developing a mature and effective system of communication with the public. Innumerable publicity campaigns were funded, including stunts and pageantry activities, from voluminous literature and pamphlets to flamboyant parades, and suffrage souvenirs. They all were organized and carried out by the local suffrage representation. Thanks to this multifaceted and all-embracing pragmatics of communication, suffragism became part of mainstream America. Let us take a more detailed look into its persuasive communicative practices.

True to their understanding that representations of the NAWSA throughout the country were first and foremost political settlements being “*center[s] of education* for those who have been to college and those who have not” (Graham 56), suffragists acted clearly upon their Enlightenment understanding of winning public opinion through education. Noteworthy is the

⁵⁰ Despite its democratically envisioned structure, NAWSA’s scope became more and more exclusive over time. African American women and their agendas found themselves outside the organization’s main subject of concern. So did working women and socialist sympathizers. This course defined NAWSA as white, upper middle class and protestant. It could be rightfully considered as the establishment within the suffrage camp. See also Graham 109-110 and Kraditor 250-8.

dedication not only to the already learned part of the population. The target of suffrage teachings was seen to be every citizen, regardless of stand and education. Everybody was educable in the merits and necessity of suffrage — a democratic, all embracing understanding of a reform approval inspired by the Enlightenment.

As a consequence of growing membership, suffragists opened to more direct political activism that came in addition to educating the public. Practical politics was a new mode for communicating the suffrage message (Graham 57). The NAWSA moved away from being an organization, which relied on volunteer support for a noble cause. It hired its own workers and trained them in various forms of public agitation. The communication with the public became specialized. Suffragists envisioned as many municipalities, cities and states as possible, densely supplied with suffrage propaganda: “Together the workers shall know every voter and his wife, mapping out the wards of the city among them” (Graham 56). In the hands of the Woman Suffrage Party, a professional organizational organ of the NAWSA, political settlements hosted suffrage schools. Those schools offered classes, study groups and hands on trainings in public communication. Suffrage schools were aimed not only at educating the public. They were also the academies and training centers of suffrage converttees, which made suffragists professional communicators. Newly won suffragettes were taught rhetorical skills on debating, organizing, fundraising, press work, and last but not least, public speaking. Well-known politicians and community leaders were attracted as instructors. They emphasized the importance of persuasion skills, and trained the activists from their first hand experience in debating and oratory eloquence (Graham 57, 59).

In the spirit of evoking a reasonable debate, suffragists preached in their schools, “Don’t try to force your opinion, you are teaching people to give [one]”.⁵¹ They strived to create the conditions for the unfolding of public discussions. Every single individual was urged to make use of his or her reason and to take part in the discussion. Even hostile, indifferent and provocative audiences were to be animated in the common reasoning on the question. Such

⁵¹ Sara Algeo “Notes Taken on Organization” by, NAWSA Papers, reel 25, LC.

audiences were carefully studied. Suffrage agitators were specifically trained in catching and converting their opinion on a more emotional than didactical basis. For a specifically didactical approach, suffragists had their educators, who were trained in persuasion. The audience was carefully studied in seminars such as “The Psychology of an Audience” taught by Anna Howard Shaw and in handbooks such as *Debaters Handbook*. To put the audiences in their favor, however, suffragists relied first on written communication. With the developed system of traveling suffrage libraries or book loan programs, suffragists highlighted the multivolume *History* of the movement. Provisions with suffrage literature enabled local clubs to create study groups and debates. Thus, public reasoning on the female vote was kept alive and on going. Strategic moves like these cultivated suffrage enthusiasm and support on a local level (Graham 62). In this way, early and local suffrage education made the audience ready for the arrival of speakers, which gave the matter an additional push.

Furthermore, professional, civil and church groups, business organizations, reform movements, trade unions and immigrant circuits were invited to join the debate. “Speaking engagements” were arranged with numerous organizations. Speakers addressed organizations such as the Council of Jewish Women or the Nurses’ Association. Male activists were also involved both as speakers in front of associations with predominantly male membership and as professional speechwriters for the NAWSA. Drawing organizations and clubs into the debate proved to be an especially clever tactic. The members of various associations were already trained in organizing and committed to a specific cause. Bearing this in mind, some suffragists joined a specific club to inject their ideology, or to endorse the cause of a reform group, simultaneously committing it to support suffrage (Graham 66-67). The outreach to various organizations illustrates that the public dialogue involving various groups mirrored the numerous interests of society. According to the Enlightenment, everyone needs to be given a voice and be heard. Various groups should be given the chance to express their views openly and publicly. Moreover, society must be convinced of the righteousness and objective rationality of their

arguments. With suffragists enabling this public exchange of opinions, we have the Enlightenment at work.

Canvassing door to door was another strategy that was a result of the Woman's Party vision of organization, which relied on personal effort, the establishment of suffrage groups according to place of residence, and finally converting every adult resident (Graham 62). The army of organizers that the NAWSA trained locally was the main carrier of this plan. Armed with lists of voters for their specific district, organizers began their daily canvassing missions early in the morning and usually did not return home before dusk. Visiting every voter's home within their ward, they sought to talk with the woman in the house and left suffrage literature (Graham 63). Canvassing at the homes of potential supporters of the cause was a newly emerged facet of suffrage tactics pointing to the turn towards a more direct public activism.

A further step was the even more bold parades, open-air meetings and street meetings. In these cases the audience was the very 'man on the street,' the passer by, the unconvinced one, who would walk away from a suffrage meeting but listen to a speech in the park or on a street corner which seemed nonbinding. The organization was simple and the entrance fee was spared. A bench or a soapbox was the only stage that the organizers needed to address their audiences in a busy place in the late afternoon. Even the foreign born, whose English was not good enough, were addressed at their wards in their mother tongues, Yiddish, Italian, etc., by means of an interpreter. While a speaker would deliver a speech, another organizer would give out flyers and gather donations for local suffrage representation (Graham 64). Yet, the more moderate suffragists saw their role as educators, rather than any sort of agitators. This form of unmediated communication with the public, however, won ardent practitioners within the suffrage camp by 1910. At this time, the chairman of the Open Air Committee of Pennsylvania had just come back from a militant suffrage campaign in England. To her, immediate confrontation was the only fast and steady way of success. Her name was Alice Paul. Her figure in the suffrage movement would become one of the most controversial ones, and her methods would spur on heated disputes throughout the nation.

Suffrage parades and large-scale spectacles were probably the most self-assertive way of interacting with the general public. Flamboyant self-staging and marching through the streets of the country's most important cities were techniques to deliver the message for votes for women. At the beginning there were small tours in carriages (for example) around the countryside of New England dedicated to the anniversary of the first woman's rights convention. Then urban suffrage representations, such as the one in Boston, gathered floats and several marches in a small-scale parade on Columbus Day in 1913. Widely shared interest in the event motivated the Bostonian suffragists to put in an effort in organizing a larger event. Marching bands, parade marshals, and embellished floats were present at the 1914 parade. Pioneer suffragists waved with handkerchiefs from open cars followed by marchers ordered in rows and wearing colorful costumes. To emphasize the advancement the women's rights movement had brought to society, groups of professional women were adorned with banners naming their professions such as lawyer, judge, doctor, and teacher. In another parade in Cambridge, according to reports, the number of marchers reached a thousand. Suffragists enjoyed the quick and rewarding publicity that parades brought to the cause. They went on organizing public extravaganzas such as a one-hundred-car procession, accompanied by dances and artistic arrangements. They included the Parthenon and female embodiments of Nature, Motherhood, etc. at a 1915 May Day celebration in Nashville. An estimated six-thousand spectators were reported to be fascinated by the show and impressed by suffrage professionalism in large-scale spectacles. Political parties also served as a source of inspiration for suffrage publicity stunts. The NAWSA invested a considerable amount in propaganda marketing items such as badges, ribbons, stationery, calendars, seals and stamps available at street corners, in subways and even at factory gates (Graham 65-66).

The suffragists' tactic was not only marked by the publicity measures described above. State referenda campaigns were a strategy that was just as ardently supported. Despite the impressive publicity measures that suffragists employed in their communication with society, by 1910 only five states had

won the female vote. Referenda were the cause behind the victory in three of them, Colorado (1893), Idaho (1896), and Washington (1910). Yet in 1911, the state referendum in California enabled full suffrage. The California victory turned suffragists' attention to the state referenda as a successful tactic, and encouraged them to devote more time and energy in pursuing it. In the following year, referenda campaigns were launched in Wisconsin, Ohio, Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon, but success was moderate.⁵² Often the results of the campaigns in Ohio, Wisconsin and Michigan were overshadowed by the work of the suffragists' unpleasant counterparts, prohibitionists. They believed that suffragists backed temperance and took care to divert public attention from female enfranchisement. As a consequence, suffragists lost precious votes. Yet, they continued to spur on the dialogue with audiences in referenda campaigns in Wisconsin and Ohio. Together with the College Equal Suffrage League, organizers addressed business meetings, college audiences, union gatherings and conferences, reaching the impressive number of all-in-all seven thousand addresses. The Michigan suffragists learned the significance of winning public opinion the hard way after losing the first state referendum. Although their campaign failed again, this time they fought especially ardently in winning public sentiment. Home-to-home canvassing was activated, done in teams comprised of a professional speaker, organizer and a financial expert – called missionary teams. Publicity stunts and the distribution of printed propaganda were also carried out by the teams. As a result, Michigan was literally covered with a blanket of suffrage, as 75 out of 83 counties hosted suffrage committees.⁵³ On a larger scale, however, the know-how in public relations and shaping public opinion, won in the referenda campaigns, bore fruits, and not only in winning the vote for Oregon, Kansas and Arizona later on. It gave suffragists a new confidence in being professional in the spurring on and winning of debates, molding opinion in their favor, which often left their anti-suffragist opponents far behind.

⁵² Fact Sheet, n.d., NAWSA Papers, reel 11, LC

⁵³ Virginia Ann P. Caruso, "A History of Woman Suffrage in Michigan." Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1986, 198-203, 206-7;

To Sara Graham, the suffrage movement “completed its evolution into a single-issue pressure group” (Graham 83) with the presidency of Carrie Chapman Catt. Especially so after 1915, when she reshaped the movement organizationally by centralizing it, and the NAWSA became directly involved in the educational, organizational and financial work of state campaigns. Publicity tactics began to target politicians at federal and state levels more and more. At the annual suffrage convention in 1916, Catt presented, as one of three platforms for the future development of the movement, a far reaching program of publicity, education and financing.⁵⁴ When a federal amendment became the primary goal, its passage was seen through “a nationwide campaign of agitation, education, organization and publicity.” This meant specifically: fully fledged presswork in the face of a national press bureau, and a centralized publicity council with representation in each state. Campaigns in every state had to be carried out by a council of four directors who directed units of two-hundred organizers. Professional congressional lobby was made a primary objective and put in the hands of a distinct organ, the Congressional Committee. Its Chairman, Ruth McCormick, well connected to the Progressive Party, was successful in attracting the wives of congressmen among the suffrage rows. The Committee had its own publicity director, also taken from progressive circles, who offered his connections in service of the reform. The Congressional Committee divided its tasks in publicity work, activities in the Suffrage House and office work. This in turn meant in practice to

“keep our friends in the Congress active for the Amendment, to direct pressure of every sort upon doubtful or opposed men, to make an accurate poll, [and also to] study the floor situation and be ready to take advantage of favorable opportunities and to avert threatening action, to keep in touch with friendly politicians and with leaders of the political parties, to bring delegations from the states [and] to stimulate the sending of letters and telegrams at the right moment”(Park, n.p.)⁵⁵

Lobbyists had their own headquarters directly in Washington D.C., a run-down sixteen bedroom mansion that became known as the Suffrage House, where they lived and worked. On the one hand it served as a shelter and a shared office of the congressional activists, where they gathered to distribute

⁵⁴ “The Three Platforms,” NAWSA annual convention, 1916, NAWSA Papers, reel 32, LC

⁵⁵ Maud Wood Park, “Congressional Work for the Nineteenth Amendment: Supplementary Notes,” February 1943, WRC, folder 730, LC

assignments, and coordinate daily tasks. It housed permanent residents and accommodated state delegates who occasionally came to DC for lobbying. On the other hand, however, the house itself was turned to a quasi-living propaganda tool, inviting citizens to visit and hear, see and feel the suffrage message. In 1916 the house was officially opened to the public. The occasion was purposefully used to formally dedicate a Susan B. Anthony room, embodying the great pioneer-aspect of the suffrage tradition. It included memorable belongings, portraits and essays by the sanctified suffragist. The house also functioned as a venue for conversations, and common reasoning on the issue. Mabel Willard, known as the housemother, lured eminent women to serve as guest hostesses. Even the wives of anti-suffrage minded politicians were skillfully convinced into passing cakes and sandwiches while engaged in informative and pleasant conversations.⁵⁶

Further organs of the front door lobby tactics included the Leslie Woman Suffrage Commission, founded in 1917, “to educate the people on the principles and operation of woman suffrage by means of literature and presswork” (Young 61-64, 85).⁵⁷ The Commission founded, in turn, the Leslie Bureau of Suffrage Education, which took the role of “news purveyor, publicity expert, and propaganda carrier.” The Bureau was comprised of six departments with twenty-five professional journalists and publicity experts hired as its staff. Its activities featured daily interviews with reporters. Along with the weekly issuing of a bulletin, it was in charge of a clipping, photography and news service. Moreover, as part of the image building of the movement, the Leslie Bureau provided magazines and journals with interviews, biographical information and noteworthy stories. As a result an unsurprising 250,000 words of suffrage propaganda infiltrated the national newspapers and magazines. Not to be forgotten is the political magazine, the *Woman Citizen*, which the Bureau prided itself on (Young 71-73). An important speech in Congress by a lawmaker, for example, was a significant enough moment for the Leslie Bureau to act. Free copies of the speech were almost

⁵⁶ Maud Wood Park, *Front Door Lobby*, Boston: Beacon, 1960, 33-35, 178-179;

⁵⁷ Rose, Young, *The Record of the Leslie Woman Suffrage Commission, Inc., 1917-1929*, New York: Leslie Woman Suffrage Commission, 1929;

instantaneously distributed to his electoral district. In another instance, Maud Wood Park described the following situation, which would draw immediate action from the Leslie Bureau. At times when votes in Congress were needed for a significant decision, state press workers were alert. The local newspapers and magazines were literally flooded with articles on suffrage. These, in turn, were taken over by other state activists, who sent the clippings to the congressmen whose votes were especially needed. As you can imagine, this double tactic was more than persuasive, as the targeted congressmen were convinced that their voters favored the reform (Park 28-29).

All of the above tactics were envisioned in the Winning Plan. Its significance, as Sara Graham noted, united suffragists across the nation by a single political goal: the passage of the federal suffrage amendment (Graham 89). As a consequence, state association presidents received detailed instructions on implementing the publicity part of the Winning Plan. Ostentatious informational events such as “The Federal Amendment Days” were planned, the results of which had to be reported to the national headquarters. County and local activists were provided with explicit sample letters explaining the Plan. After carefully studying the Plan, state associations were instructed to address audiences of urban and rural residents, church and union leaders, as well as business circles. Suffrage activists contacted members of state legislatures, ward chairmen and county officials, personally. Larger publicity operations were put in the hands of an Efficiency Squad consisting of not only press directors, but also field and headquarters directors, who coordinated the funding and organization of the events. In this way suffrage communication with the public became standardized and semi-mechanized.⁵⁸ This overwhelming precision in organization and all-embracing public dialogue, made anti-suffragists call the movement of their opponents “the suffrage machine.” (Graham 99) The new, Progressive-Era generation of politically active suffragists was armed with an arsenal for educating and winning over the minds of the public.

⁵⁸ Carrie Chapman Catt to Presidents of State Auxiliaries, September 18, 1916, NAWSA Papers, reel 17, LC and Carrie Chapman Catt to Presidents of State Auxiliaries, October 20 1916, NAWSA Papers, reel 17, LC

II. 1.4. Organized, Public Anti-suffrage Communication

Anti-suffragism emerged as, and for the most part remained, a response movement. After all, antis were not the ones who wanted a reform. They labored for preserving the status quo for politically marginalized American women. The first voices against suffragists came from those who could raise their voices in the first place — men, and they did so from the pulpit. At that time, male clericals were renowned for their apparent wisdom in delivering the word of God and universal reason to the people. In fact, opposition from the pulpit continued to play an important role for anti-suffragism, throughout antis' history. Upon its founding later on in antis' history, the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women (MAOFESW) knew the potential for opposition from the pulpit in public communication. That is why, when antis started building constituency and professional public relations, they advised: "it is wise to have a representative from every church in the community in [every] committee, as thereby *the communication with the whole people* is more easily established" (Camhi 81). Aware of their position, converted anti-suffrage clericals used their position to communicate opposition to suffragism to their congregations. They skillfully intertwined religious beliefs with Enlightenment principles, thus enacting the peculiar nature of the American Enlightenment. Justin Dewie Fulton's sermon *Woman vs. the Ballot* 1869, aims to serve as a fine example of the above (see Chapter *Enlightenment and Exclusion*).

When it comes to the first female steps of anti-suffragism, we go back to 1868-69 in New England and specifically the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As a counteraction to a pro-suffrage petition brought before the Massachusetts legislature, about two hundred women objected to the suffrage effort. Antis called upon the legislative body of the state to offset this proposal. They saw in it as an attempt to enforce the vote upon women. The opponents of enfranchisement said they were acting in the name of purity, dignity and the moral influence of woman. Antis answered, but found it necessary to excuse themselves for doing it. They saw themselves as being forced to take this step,

for they defined themselves as the incarnation of female ideals. They followed piety and purity, and avoided public appearances and publicity, as they saw them to be the utter opposite of these values (Jablonsky 2). Their medium of communication was the written word. In the form of petitions to legislative hearings (read by male antis that were members of the legislative body), but also the mailing of anti-suffrage pamphlets to lawmakers (Camhi 86). Male speakers were even employed to speak on antis' behalf at hearings. Francis M. Scott addressed the Constitutional Convention of New York City in 1894 on behalf of female antis. He insisted that the group of women he represented was genteel. They denounced the behavior of suffragists and, in contrast to them, boldly claimed, through Francis M. Scott, that they did not hold meetings, made no speeches and refrained from any form of campaigning (Camhi 83). When antis themselves had to appear before legislative bodies, it was considered an unpleasant duty. To make the situation bearable, antis often appeared lead by a male anti as their main spokesperson. Alternating male and female speakers was another method of conducting anti-suffrage public appearances (Jablonsky 10). When it came to debating the franchise issue with suffragists in person, antis firmly refused to do so in public. Debates, other than those in a written form, violated female modesty.

Understandingly, suffrage behavior, such as Lucy Stone's, who spoke to the assembled guests of Oberlin College in 1846, was condemned as "unwomanly and unscriptural." How couldn't she feel "out of place up there on the platform among all those men?" (Jablonsky 1). This explains why antis' first steps were kept in secrecy. In fact, their behavior remained secretive throughout the 1880s. Even when the Massachusetts antis achieved success in their early years, they introduced themselves as "an informal ladies' group" at hearings or in newspapers, and members' names were not made public (Chamhi 79). When they sent one male speaker, Mr. Wardwell, to a Massachusetts hearing on extending municipal suffrage to women, antis found themselves in a humorous situation when asked about the identity of their organization:

Mr. Wardwell (Opponent) – I appear here this morning for a lady who, I understand, has occupied a position as chairman or secretary of an organization that has for some time been an active Opponent of woman suffrage.

Henry Blackwell [a leading suffrage activist and thinker] – May I inquire what the organization is that the gentleman refers to? We have never been able to find out much about this organization against woman suffrage. We hear that there is one, but if so it is a secret society. What is the name of it?

Mr Wardwell – I do not know the name of it, sir. [Laughter.] (Leatherbee, n.p.)⁵⁹

This episode illustrates antis' insistence on their public invisibility. Initially, they tried to act anonymously, adhering to their rules of conduct. And yet, their participation in hearings, such as the one above, be it even through a male speaker, prodded them into a paradoxical situation. They tried to testify their visibility in the eyes of the public, by being invisible and anonymous. The Era's methods of public communication, and tactics used by the suffragists compelled antis to rethink their strategy. In this respect, the Enlightenment shines through as a norm, for it limited the ways that public sentiment could be won. Open communication and visibility were, in a sense, imposed upon antis, in their quest to defend their views on the female role in society.

Until 1895, antis acted sporadically and only in response to the suffrage offensives. Soon after their counter attack they usually disappeared, believing that suffragist sentiments were short lived and would subsequently be silenced forever. This organizational behavior made antis' reactions to suffragists all the more cumbersome. They screamed alarm only after suffragists had achieved a decisive success which, by the time antis mobilized, was mostly irreversible (Jablonsky 1-15, Camhi 78-80). The Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association was founded in 1870 and quickly gained momentum. It labored regularly for an amendment to the state constitution. Accordingly, antis were urged to raise their voices more often. Not until the state legislature decided to bring up the question of municipal suffrage (raised by the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association) in a referendum to the citizens of Massachusetts, had antis matured enough and realized the need for

⁵⁹ See Mrs. Albert T. Leatherbee, "Why? Why Should Any Woman Be an Anti-Suffragist?" Library of Congress, Records of the NAWSA, Box 41; and Anne M. Benjamin, *A History of the Anti-Suffrage Movement in the United States, From 1895 to 1920. Women Against Equality*. Lewston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991, 2

permanent and systematic organization. With the clear goal of defeating the referendum, Massachusetts antis drew up an official constitution, established a treasury, launched a membership campaign and thus officially founded the Massachusetts Association Opposed to Further Extension of Suffrage to Women (Camhi 80). The aim of the new female association was to provide “a more systematic resistance [...] to the appeals and claims of Woman Suffragists” (...). The most interesting part of their endeavor for us is how they decided to do this: “[*by increasing*] *public interest* in the great question of the extension of Suffrage to women,” and by steering “public opinion in opposition to it” (Camhi 78). This form of organization and purpose is already known to us from the suffragists. Antis’ obvious imitation of their rivals’ organization started with the Massachusetts Association and continued until the demise of anti-suffragism. In this way, antis, just as suffragists, established a three point plan of action including: launching and maintaining correspondence throughout the state, holding parlor meetings at the homes of members of the Standing Committee and, last but not least, circulating pamphlets to the wider public (Camhi 78). With this said, the three major functions of the association became clear: legislative, educative, and constructive. The legislative activities involved communicating anti-suffrage views to the members of legislative bodies by sending them written material and assembling a counsel to counter suffrage petitions. Furthermore, antis took care to pass on to lawmakers the anti-suffrage sentiments of their electors. When necessary, antis also appeared in person before selected legislative committees. The educational efforts were directed towards increasing the interest of the general public in the matter of female suffrage. Moreover, antis believed that through educational work, they could encourage public opinion “to an opposition based on *intelligent conviction*” (Camhi 81). For this purpose, they drafted and disseminated articles in major newspapers, magazines, leaflets, pamphlets and books that addressed select audiences. To expand the organization by increasing the number of members throughout the state was specified as constructive work (Camhi 81).

Antis became visible, but in their own way. They assured all new members that their names would not be made public and that no undesired publicity would be imposed upon them. Members were also not required to pay a membership fee – donations were stimulated. The only thing demanded of them was a pledge of support to the cause. Antis also distributed directions on how to start new committees. The first step was to invite a few women to a member's home, to which an anti speaker would be sent. Should at least three attendants become interested, a new Branch Committee was given a green light (Camhi 81). The tactics of these gatherings, even in small chosen circles, aimed at attracting attention to the suffrage question. Antis followed the Enlightenment rationale of creating a dialogue through common reasoning, and then steering opinion in their favor by presenting arguments. As a result, they attracted more members. The point is that they did it in accordance with the Enlightenment by creating conditions for collective usage of reason as in their meetings. The effort to appear as a strong and widespread movement in the eyes of the public, speaks towards antis' understanding of the public sphere of their time. They realized they had to leave behind their style of silent and invisible opposition, which they had been practiced up until then. The Era's emphasis on the power of public opinion demanded that an interest group such as the antis make itself visible in the eyes of society and communicate its views. These were the rules of the game to winning public sentiment. By forming the Massachusetts Association and specifying its aim (to sway public views in their interest) and functions, antis showed themselves to historians to be by no means retrograde. After all, they began with one tactic, that of being anonymous and invisible, and evolved to the point of abandoning it, making a decisive and modern turn. The Enlightenment's function as a norm in this case is obvious, for it set the rules for winning public opinion.

Other states organized professionally as well. There were hesitant anti-suffrage organizational attempts in Vermont, Ohio and the District of Columbia. Associations from New York to California followed in making anti-suffragism a national opposition to the vote. Every further anti-suffrage state organization borrowed tactics, structure and ideas from their Massachusetts

colleagues, but also from their pro-suffrage counterparts. The states of Colorado, Nebraska and South Dakota adopted the early strategy of the Massachusetts antis and acted only through print, sending petitions and newspaper articles to legislators and the press. Thomas Jablonsky notes that that mode of communication remained dominant for most state associations, even when “anti-suffragism had matured into a more sophisticated political enterprise” (Jablonsky 16). In terms of organizational structure, state chapters were a “carbon copy” of the Massachusetts Association, with reference to president, executive committee, secretary and treasurer. Their goals and functions were the same — raising awareness on the ballot issue and molding public opinion against it (Camhi 77-101).

State organizations acted with intensity dependent on the respective suffrage activity. Where advocates of the vote were most energetic, antis were forced to keep pace. Accordingly, where suffragists were rather dormant, antis responded spiritlessly. In the cases of Oregon, Wisconsin, Michigan, Nebraska, Montana, Nevada and Oklahoma, antis managed to organize only after the state legislators had appointed a suffrage referendum (Jablonsky 16). Few of the state associations expanded beyond their city of origin. Although their leaders envisioned anti-suffrage posts in every city, state associations lacked not only dedicated followers but also know-how, and, above all, necessity to organize professionally. Antis’ state representations rarely felt the need to present accurate membership statistics. If more women wanted to join, they were welcome. The emphasis was not on numbers but on elite women who were “prominent” and “some of the best known leaders” (Jablonsky 19, Jablonsky 18-19). They boasted names like Mrs. William Howard Taft, or the widow of Grover Cleveland and Mrs. Thomas J. Preston, Jr. The latter was celebrated as a vice-president in the New Jersey Association. In their Pennsylvania Association, antis prided themselves on their female president whose husband’s family controlled the American Steel and Iron Works. Antis rationale was that these names enjoyed the respect of all Americans regardless of their gender. Their prominence and respectability, antis believed, would transfer to the very anti-suffrage cause as well (Jablonsky 19). Anti-suffragists were much

more than suffragists acting upon the notion of natural aristocracy. It marked social structures and public reputation in the American society of the time.⁶⁰ The ones on top, in the possession of property and influence were the progressive ones, the visionary and the wise. They were considered to be the men (and women) to teach people the ins and outs of prosperity and wisdom. They were the ones regarded as enlightened, for they made the most of their usage of reason. For anti-suffragists, the commitment of elite citizens to the cause meant, in the eyes of the public, attracting the people of reason.

With the launch of the campaign for a suffrage amendment to the Federal Constitution, the focus of the debate shifted to the halls of Congress and the White House. In 1911, California enfranchised its women through a referendum and elated suffragists. They embarked on a new drive, this time “East!” Antis responded accordingly. They formed the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in 1911. Antis, from eight anti-suffrage clubs, gathered at the New York-home of the chairman of the New York executive committee, Mrs. Josephine Dodge. The attendees resolved to appoint their hostess as the president of the National Association. In an effort to provide a national resistance, the antis chose their fields of action to be the ones already selected by their opponents. Although the association had officially aspired to unite and aid antis throughout the U.S., its primary aim was to counter what would become the Nineteenth Amendment in Washington DC. The bureaucracy of the association was simple, but the membership figures were sloppy. Nevertheless, Josephine Dodge and Minnie Bronson (the Association’s secretary) delivered enough public testimony so that membership reached over 105, 000 during the first year – a 100 percent increase. In terms of tactics and communication with the public, the National Association adopted many traits of the New York and the Massachusetts Associations – thus playing an important role in the visibility of the antis’ cause (Jablonsky 83-94).

Anti-suffrage sentiments could be detected in every corner of the U.S., yet the focal point of their activity could be found in the industrialized,

⁶⁰ For a thorough analysis of the anti-suffragists as a social movement, see Susan Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood, Gender and Class in the Campaign Against Woman Suffrage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

densely-populated, urban North East. The most dynamic leaders, such as Josephine Dodge were active here. Their chapters were structured most professionally and achieved financial stability and high membership figures. These were the preconditions for developing a fulfilled communication with the public. In this respect the Massachusetts Association lead the way, followed by the New York chapter, and, in terms of congressional lobbying, The National Association in Washington DC followed.

While preparing for opposing referenda in their respective states, first and foremost the Massachusetts, but also the New York antis, reached a peak in their communication with the public and with legislators. On one hand, they efficiently persuaded legislators by conveying to them the anti-suffrage support, i.e. the public opinion of their electors. These lawmakers in turn opposed and eventually defeated suffrage petitions in various legislative bodies. On the other hand, antis' participation in a written form in the public dialogue with suffragists was successful in convincing much of the press that only a bunch of, as Camhi calls them, "unrepresentative women" were demanding suffrage. From that point on, antis officially and professionally claimed that they were truly representing the will of the public. As a result, between 1890 and 1915, antis had their moments of success. They showed suffragism to be against the will of the majority and defeated municipal suffrage in Massachusetts on four occasions.

Keeping in mind its modest beginnings, anti-suffragism developed rapidly. Antis fully recognized the importance of public opinion to the success of their cause. Certain antis' tactics of invisibility continued to be practiced: the mailing of pamphlets and leaflets to legislators and the sending of petitions to the legislative bodies read by converted anti-suffrage lawmakers (instead of by female antis in person); members' names were still kept secret. Antis hired solicitors to gather names on their petitions rather than doing it themselves. Yet, antis made their steps toward public visibility. They did so, it is important to note, in accordance with their rules of conduct.

After employing a counsel to represent their case, and applying their plan of action as stated by Massachusetts antis, anti-suffragism gained strength.

This gave confidence to their leaders and some dared to appear in person before hearings. The wife of Francis M. Scott, who introduced herself in a typical conservative manner with her husband's name, Mrs. Francis M. Scott, did not wait long and delivered public testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee. After all, antis acknowledged that one of their strongest weapons was the rejection of the vote by women themselves. Still they pointed out that this was a "necessity most repugnant to all their instincts and habits" (Camhi 86). During the middle of the 1880s, when antis painstakingly avoided publicity, a decisive precedent for their communication with society took place. A well-known figure among the New England women's club movement and an ardent anti, Kate Gannett Wells, broke the venerated tradition of invisibility. She boldly marched along with male anti-suffrage converts, without being apologetic about it. "A milestone had been reached," Thomas Jablonsky assessed her act and stated, "any lingering remorse over this violation of what earlier remonstrants had considered 'female modesty' was soon forgotten" (Jablonsky 5).

Taking their cues from their suffrage counterparts, antis also employed female lobbyists – and not only this. Thomas Jablonsky observed that "by the late nineteenth century, anti-suffragists were exploiting the benefits of political lobbying as frequently, if not always as effectively, as the suffragists" (Jablonsky 5). In addition, it may be added that they did so in person. One of the most active among lobbyists was the MAOFESW's Alice George. Although her husband was against her public testimony, George paid little attention to his protests and became one of the pioneers and virtuosos of anti-suffrage oratory. The Wellesley graduate became the most popular speaker among Bay State antis. The fact that she communicated anti-suffrage views in person to both parlor meetings and legislators made her the most prominent antis' speaker. Her oratory skills made Massachusetts antis place their trust in her, even in Congress. Being aware of the revolutionary character of their actions, a Massachusetts anti called Mrs. George's appearance "the most important public step this Association has ever taken" (Jablonky 11). Despite the fact that antis realized the importance of their personal appearance in

public, they still dreamed of winning legislators to the extent that antis could afford to be represented merely by means of a petition or by counsel (Camhi 86).

Nevertheless, antis yielded their modes of communication with society to the standards of the Era. In this sense, they broadened their spectrum and turned to the general public – in old anti manner – the written form, but while still keeping pace with the times. They began publishing through one of the most powerful pieces of media at the time – newspapers. Newspapers represented a serious part of the vast amount of printed matter that was produced and disseminated by antis, such as periodicals, books, pamphlets and short-lived materials such as campaign fliers, advertisements and handouts. The earliest anti periodical was *The Remonstrance*, followed by *The Anti-Suffragists*, *The Woman's Protest*, *The Woman Patriot*, and *Woman and the Republic* (Camhi 89).

The MAOFESW launched *The Remonstrance* in 1890. Starting as an annual, the newspaper began to appear as a quarterly in 1908. The organ of the antis employed a male as editor in chief who was also employed as a secretary of the Association. The Williams college graduate gathered editing experience at the *Boston Journal* before he joined the antis. Being one of their most productive writers, Frank Foxcroft, converted more men to antis' views and appeared at numerous hearings. He also played a leading role in *The Remonstrance* aspirations to unite antis in the eastern states. The target audience was, above all, legislators, congressmen, and newspapers. It was spread nationwide with the objective of informing them about anti-suffrage sentiments. It also cooperated with the British *London Anti-Suffrage Review* on the efforts of their British colleagues. *The Remonstrance* made known to its readers the legislative hearings and committee meetings in which antis participated. A special interest was put on those events at which antis made a break-through in the national press. A favorite tactic was to pick up extreme suffrage statements, cite them (often out of context) and thus show their absurdity, i.e., their irrationality. These maneuvers were directly influenced by the Enlightenment, in its strive for open argumentation, by incorporating

adversary argumentation into its own, in order to prove it wrong. An example would be the quote by Carrie Chapman Catt, supposedly saying that the time of the homemaker had run out and that soon the reality would be that: "... every American woman who does not earn her own living will be considered a prostitute" (Camhi 90). *The Remonstrance* turned out to be the most long lasting antis newspaper having begun publication in 1920.

The Albany, New York Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage began publishing *The Anti-Suffragist* as an eight-page quarterly. Its editor was another prolific anti writer, this time female – Mrs. Winslow Crannell. The first issue sealed the pursued agenda: "The aim of this paper is to put before its readers, in concise form, the various arguments against the ballot for women; to disseminate a knowledge of such facts in the case as can be substantiated; to make public such ideas [...] in short to be the mouthpiece of a no longer silent majority" (Camhi 90).⁶¹ With this credo and by means of this medium, antis showed themselves as equally anchored in the contemporary understanding of the role of the media in terms of facilitating the education of the public. They also pledged their allegiance to the Enlightenment by claiming to base their information on empirically and systematically gathered facts. They aspired further to objectively deliver them and let them speak for themselves, so that the public would be educated and eventually take a side in the debate. Their new self-understanding is also publicly stated. They were no longer the silent. With this said, antis were by no means inferior to public communication about suffrage.

When the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage appeared on the public landscape and gained momentum, it launched the monthly *Woman's Protest* in April 1912, replacing *The Anti-Suffragists*. The *Woman's Protest* turned out to be one of the most voluminous anti organs. It started at twelve pages and reached sixteen by 1918. It took up the role as the pace-setter of anti-suffrage opinion. It reported on the advancement of state campaigns, and was quasi specialized in emphasizing the relationship between socialism and suffragism. It also did away with the anonymity of anti members and gave

⁶¹ Emphasis added. *The Anti-Suffragist*, vol. 1, no. 1, July 1908;

a voice to eminent women, publishing their statements on why they opposed the ballot. It also prided itself on drawing tables juxtaposing the laws of suffrage and non-suffrage states. Their aim in so doing was to prove that the female ballot brought no advantages to women.

The weekly *Anti Suffrage Notes* published by the Massachusetts antis fused with the *Woman's Protest*. This merger resulted in the *Woman Patriot* in 1918. Clearly acting upon the antisocialist/anti-suffrage rationale of the antis, the *Woman Patriot* considered itself a voice of genuine female Americanism (Camhi 91). Edited by two well-known New York antis, the newspaper served the national association up until 1920. Jane Camhi describes it as super-patriotic and ultraconservative, especially in its efforts to malign the work of liberal female organizations (Camhi 91).⁶² Helen K. Johnson's *Woman and the Republic* gave birth to another short lived anti newspaper, amid the heyday of antis' productivity – *The Reply, An Anti-Suffrage Magazine*, published between 1913-1914. It exposed and condemned suffrage militancy and linked it to socialism (Camhi 91).⁶³

Anti-suffragists broadened their scope of publications beyond newspapers. Pamphlets and books comprised a second major category. Propaganda materials could be seen as the third largest group of anti-suffrage printed matter, enabling communication with society. Members and supporters of the movement contributed to the writing and distribution of pamphlets. Ever since 1895 the Massachusetts Association had led the way in producing the most voluminous pamphlet material in addition to books. Their partner publisher was Houghton Mifflin Co. Jane Camhi's explanation of the bond between the publishing company and the Massachusetts antis seems logical. One of their most ardent activists, Elizabeth Houghton, was the publisher's daughter (Camhi 92). Backed by such a renowned publisher, antis circulated their pamphlets with no less intensity than suffragists.

Antis' pamphlets usually included lectures and addresses on numerous events, abstracts delivered to legislative counsels and reprints of supportive

⁶² See also William O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969, 228-229;

⁶³ See also *The Reply*, May 1913, 1-2.

articles from the popular press. Antis also began publishing personal thoughts of prominent activists as to why they opposed the female ballot. This, of course, was another step in antis' characterization in the eyes of the general public. Through their pamphlets, they dared not only publicly testify their names but also personally proclaim their views. Acting upon the spirit of the Progressive Era, antis also reached out to scientific studies, and distributed them as pamphlets. Also, often in the form of scholarly monographs, scientists, i.e., men of reason, proved the sickness of female suffrage from the standpoint of various fields of science. The importance of pamphlets in antis' communication with the public is enormous. Jane Camhi notes that antis, in contrast to suffragists, did not go out into the streets, let alone carry out any acts of militancy. Instead, they always countered their rivals with "pen in hand" (Camhi 92). At times most productive, they even compiled sixty of their valued pamphlets in a volume entitled *Why Women Do Not Want the Ballot*.

Propaganda materials were a valuable means of reaching out to the general public. Anti-suffrage poems or pictures were printed on postcards and anti-suffrage calendars delivered a distinct anti-suffrage message for every month. In addition they created posters, stamps, cartoons, fliers, graphs and pin back buttons. Enumerations of reasons for becoming an anti were distributed as one-page leaflets (on the left). Antis even came up with their own song called "The Anti-Suffrage Rose" available in sheet music (Camhi 92). With such propaganda materials, antis testified their awareness of the importance of the visibility of their cause in society. After all, suffragists were leading the way in propagandistic tactics and publicity stunts. Antis felt pressured to offer an adequate answer. In this respect, the Massachusetts and New York referenda play a key role.

In 1913, when antis detected pro-suffrage sentiments in the state house, they sounded the propaganda alarm. This time their reaction did not end with legislative petitions and the circulating of alarming pamphlets. With a new, less cumbersome name – the Massachusetts Anti-suffrage Association – antis put on publicity stunts. They ordered an anti-suffrage banner with the slogan "We Win in 1915!" (the year of the referendum) engraved on it. Another move was

to place antis' adds in the Harvard Freshmen Red Book. Local nickelodeons showed an anti-suffrage slide show, accompanied by their theme song "The Anti-Suffrage Rose" as the musical background. Shop windows were covered with posters or decorated with the anti symbol — the red rose. Sports were also infiltrated by anti-suffrage propaganda. Antis' essays mingled with pictures of baseball stars and sports equipment in the season schedules of the Boston Red Sox and Boston Braves. Antis also prepared schedules for New England's minor league teams, as a move away from snobbery. Thomas Jablonsky reports that the Massachusetts antis also discussed the production of their own "moving picture." The idea, however, was abandoned, due to estimated high costs (Jablonsky 12-13). Showing slides between theater shows was what antis pursued instead. According to Jane Camhi, though, they did realize an anti-suffrage play (Camhi 92). Theater attendees were handed out booklets with domestic, cleaning and cooking hints intertwined with antis' messages entitled "Household Hints." Men were also given take-home reminders with the motto "Measure the menace, do you want women on juries?" (Jablonsky 13).⁶⁴

Antis also put greater emphasis on showing themselves in person to the wider public. During the flamboyant suffrage Columbus Day parade in Boston in 1914, where at least a thousand men and women marched for suffrage, antis were there as well. They sent a vociferous group to testify resistance to the parade. Antis mingled with the crowd, giving away one hundred thousand red roses to onlookers. They also insisted that the ones wearing a red rose were twice as many as the parading suffragists. Antis also hired parade marshals to counter suffrage marshals followed by marching bands playing "The Last Rose of Summer," another anti song. The collision between the adversary camps, visible to the wider public, triggered what both sides wanted: a never before seen amount of newspaper coverage. Anti-suffragists as well as suffragists considered the parade a success (Graham 65-66).

By 1915, with the Massachusetts referendum approaching, Thomas Jablonsky points out, "antis were ready to streamline their entire campaign machinery" (Jablonsky 12). Anti-suffrage speakers poured into the legislative

⁶⁴ See also Kenneally, 474, 489, 490; "Household Hints," NAWSA Papers Box 40, LC.

halls, crisscrossing even country fairs and rural crossroads, urging their audiences to seriously consider the consequences of the female vote. In urban settings, antis organized luncheons and meetings attracting attendees up to 2,500 people. To be well prepared, and deliver a professional, political performance, antis, just as suffragists, offered special classes to new converts in antisuffrage oratory (Jablonsky 12).⁶⁵

The New York referendum in 1915 witnessed the most well organized and highly dynamic antisuffrage campaign. The precondition was professional administrative organization. The campaign tactics of the New York State Association divided the city into subchapters facilitating the establishment of local antisuffrage clubs – a tactic first introduced by suffragists. Leaflets and antisuffrage literature were pinned on the windows of the headquarters on Fifth Avenue and Broadway in Manhattan. Various leaflets and buttons were handed out to people passing by. A flag representing their cause was designed: a rose on a black background with the word “Anti-Suffrage” in white. In addition came roses, papers, enrollment cards and flyers, all in pink, distributed all over New York City. The public was addressed in person, in parlor meetings and assemblies. Subway station kiosks and trains featured slogans describing the advantages of women under male suffrage (Jablonsky 27). This strategy of direct agitation was not the only method of communicating with the public. A wider and more organized support from various social groups was needed as well.

Antis, realizing the importance of communication with society, (and again taking their cues from suffragists) began to specialize their organization and activities. How did they do that? They created their own anti-suffrage spin-off organizations, also known as front organizations, and opened for communication with like-minded groups. The front organizations represent, in Jane Camhi’s words, “one of the more intriguing aspects of the anti-suffrage movement” (Camhi 94). Indeed, it is quite an interesting feature demonstrating the intricacy of organized anti-suffragism. Generally, these spin-offs functioned as an enticement, disguised in civil, cultural and educative work. They

⁶⁵ See also “Invitation to Luncheon and Annual Meetings,” NAWSA Papers, Box 40, LC and Kenneally, “Massachusetts,” 472, 500-502.

typically stemmed from a state association and took over a specific task, and were sometimes the result of individual efforts, preferring to deliver the anti-suffrage message in a seemingly non-political and less manifest way (Camhi 94). Examples of both follow.

First of all, antis took care, just as suffragists did, to secure their constituency with up-and-coming anti-suffragettes. The College Anti-Suffrage League is a spin-off that emerged out of arranged meetings before university audiences. It aimed at spreading the anti suffrage message by “secur[ing] hearings before alumnae associations and before undergraduates”, i.e. by spurring a debate in a university setting and trying to mold the minds of the attendees (Jablonsky 10). Antis were convinced they were teaching their college audience “sane ideals” (Jablonsky 10). The anti’s understanding of themselves as the ones to bring sanity to the upcoming generation of active citizens ties directly into the Enlightenment’s claim of all-pervading rationality and progress of reason. Antis saw themselves as securing the further Enlightenment of society, no less than suffrage did. The College Anti-Suffrage League was present at elite universities such as Harvard, Radcliffe and Mount Holyoke (Jablonsky 10).

The College League was followed by the Massachusetts Public Interest League; an organization that was founded by the MAOFESW. It focused solely on improving and professionalizing better anti-suffrage organization and propaganda. Its publicity campaigns featured what antis considered womanly tactics of communication such as charity. Fundraising for the Volunteer Aid Association, an organization that aided hospitals, is one example (Jablonsky 10). The Maryland League for State Defense, in turn, was organized and ostensibly devoted to the opposition to a female suffrage amendment to the state constitution. The American Constitutional League, as a further example, was founded in Washington DC and appeared to be established to counter the ratification of a federal woman suffrage amendment in the halls of Congress. The National League for Civic Education of Women and the Guidon Club are examples of the second type of anti-suffrage spin-offs, designed by prominent

anti-suffrage activists, such as Mrs. Gilbert E. Jones and Helen Kendrick Johnson (Camhi 96-97).

What is decisive for both kinds of anti-suffrage front organizations is wrapping not only their names but also their objectives and respective self-understandings in Enlightenment concepts and, thus, enjoying special attention during the Progressive Era. The renaming of the former Men's Anti-Suffrage League of Maryland into Maryland League for State Defense took the opposition to the female vote to a higher level. It showed, in the eyes of the public, that the matter was not solely to oppose suffragism, but a fight against forces that put the public good and integrity of the state at stake. The American Constitutional League brought its objective to the highest level by vowing to "uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all foreign and domestic enemies" (Camhi 95). Obviously, the domestic enemies were the Constitutional League's primary concern, and suffragism specifically exhausted its efforts. The important part is that antis conveyed to the public a sentinel function, a watch dog of the most sacred document to the U.S., a product of the Enlightenment in America enabling its ongoing progress. It was not the female vote that they were fighting but the assault on the American social order, which, according to antis, suffragism proved itself to be.

Again, the very name of the National League for Civil Education of Women, with branches in every state, is another telling example of the positioning of anti-suffrage activity and identity in the framework of the Enlightenment's set of values. According to its founder, Mrs. Jones, it labored to "give women of the country the best possible means of obtaining information bearing on their rights, responsibilities and economic position in the community" (Camhi 96). That the League "stud[ied] these civic questions from an anti-suffrage point of view" somehow seems to fade away on the background of the above objects, approved by society in general (Camhi 96). After all, the organization facilitated what hardly anyone would oppose, the communication of information to the public sphere, so that society could make up its mind on the issue. They did this to so that the issue is not explicitly named suffrage, but bundled up in concepts that are widely desired to be

fulfilled in reality, such as individual rights, contribution to the community, and financial security. To promote these aims, the National League for Civic Education arranged lectures and talks which were kept informal and presented information through the prism of anti-suffragism. A similar organization in this category was the Guidon Club. Like previously mentioned anti-suffrage spin-off organizations, the Guidon Club did not include anti-suffragism in its name, but, in contrast to them, it revealed it in its mission: “An intelligent opposition to Woman Suffrage, based on study of woman’s right relation to the Republic, to social life, and to the home” (Camhi 97). It served “an Anti-Suffrage Educational Study Club,” not for establishment women defending their privileged status quo but, “for Progressive, Patriotic and Studious Women” (Camhi 97).⁶⁶ The club operated in small meetings featuring study groups and discussions, practicing an Enlightenment understanding of arriving at conclusions based on careful study and collective exchange of reason.

The more visible antis put themselves in the eye of the public, be it directly or with the help of front organizations, the more noticed they became by other groups. To antis, the most undesirable relationship formed between them and the American brewery industry. Antis sort of automatically found themselves next to the liquor interests, as the suffrage and the prohibition movements formed a symbiosis in regard to personnel, rhetoric and public communication, thus, leaving the liquor industry and antis, almost by a reflex, in the opposition. Antis unwillingly attracted another ally, which made old stock Brahmins and New York old stock women feel at odds with themselves and the Roman Catholic Church. On one hand they considered themselves the elite of society and genuine Americans – an attitude that made antis one of the strongholds of nineteenth-century nativism.⁶⁷ They despised the influx of immigrants, which was new at that time. The immigrants’ catholic faith was seen as a threat to true Americanism, which the antis’ W.A.S.P.-background

⁶⁶ *The Anti-Suffragist*, vol. 1, no. 2, December 1908;

⁶⁷ On nativism in the U.S.: Thomas J. Curran, “Assimilation and Nativism,” *International Migration Digest*, vol. 3, No. 1, 1966. 15-25; George E. Pozzetta, *Nativism, Discrimination, and Images of Immigrants*, New York: Garland, 1991; Leonard, Ira M, *American Nativism, 1830-1860*, Huntington, N.Y. : R.E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1979; Ray Allen Billington, *The Origins of Nativism in the United States, 1800-1844*. New York, Arno Press, 1974;

presumably embodied. That is why antis were embarrassed by the pledge of support by the Catholic Church in America. Catholics, on their part, saw a threat to their values, and specifically family unity, as suffragists agitated for female individualism and divorce rights. Catholics, at that time, were also trying to get rid of their image of backwardness as reflected by the overly traditional new immigrants. As a consequence, Catholics reached out to the public in support of anti-suffragism, believing that it would contribute to the progress of the American society. For example, the Catholic Encyclopedia featured an article on women, which stated that the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage “should be regarded by Catholics as, *at least, the voice of common sense*” (Jablonsky 68).⁶⁸ A statement such as this one clearly shows how Catholics embraced the dominant, Enlightenment discursive framework of the Era. They highlighted their position in the way of reaching truth considered for self-evident and utterly true - common sense philosophy – a concept known to us from the Enlightenment’s ensemble of ideas.

On the other hand, however, antis had to bring themselves to communicate with catholic male immigrant voters, being fully aware of the significance of communication with as many social groups as possible in order to claim wide support for their cause. Massachusetts antis, for example, made a call for the Catholic anti-suffrage vote against suffragism on state referenda. Despite the fact that this appeal eventually proved ephemeral, antis printed out brochures, giving a voice to eminent Catholic leaders in their opposition to female equality. Among them were the Archbishop Messmer of Milwaukee, Archbishop Moeller of Cincinnati and, above all, the dean of American bishops, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore. The latter served not only as the most prestigious Catholic voice, but also as one of the most prolific writers on the opposition to female emancipation (Jablonsky 68-69). My analysis of anti-suffrage voices, (Chapter 4) includes Cardinal Gibbons’ views in support of anti-suffragism as a clear example of how two very different groups, anti-suffragists and Catholics, embraced the Enlightenment framework of

⁶⁸ Emphasis added. See also Catherine E. Beecher. *Woman Suffrage and Womans’ Profession*, Hartford: Brown and Gross, 1871, 16.

argumentation and communication, thus aspiring to belong to the modern development of society. At the level of public communication, it remains to be said, however, that antis did not take full advantage of cultivating the immigrant and catholic communities. After all, they remained true to their nativist and racial convictions and treated the above groups with scorn.⁶⁹ Thomas Jablonsky observes, in this respect, that it is exactly this snobbishness and unwillingness to shape the opinion of these unwanted allies that lead to decisive losses, despite professional, and for anti-suffrage standards, flamboyant agitation (Jablonsky 70).

The efforts by the anti-suffragists, triggered by referenda in crucial states in the North East such as Massachusetts and New York, did not go unnoticed by the public. In 1915, 295,939 Massachusetts men voted against female suffrage versus the 162,492 who voted in support of the female ballot. For antis, this was a clear sign that they represented the will of the majority in this state. Anti-suffragism experienced unprecedented success, but it would not be repeated. After this peak, suffragists would regroup and antis would find themselves on the demise. Their victory was indicative of the intensity, professionalism and modernity of their campaign. Their campaign proved to be modern in terms of an adequate understanding of the function of the public sphere in the American society at that point in time for the approval of political decisions. Moreover, through the institutionalization of their movement and its public relations campaign, antis showed themselves to historians as taking full advantage of the modern means and tactics of communication.

Yet, to put it in Thomas Jablonsky's words, "the loss of political innocence did not signal a complete abdication of 'responsible' female modesty" (Jablonsky 11). Anti-suffrage history never witnessed real (according to the suffrage scale) anti-suffrage street demonstration, marches or automobile tours. let alone militancy. These practices of agitation remained at a standstill. Antis understood themselves not only as genuine ladies, and pointed out their renowned backgrounds as genuine Americans. Thus, mass demonstrations were

⁶⁹ It is important to note that at that time both the suffrage and the anti-suffrage camps were home to nativist and racist beliefs. Suffragists made the pivotal difference in their communication with the public, for they reached out to and put a much greater and systematic effort into converting exactly the immigrant community.

suggestive of “proletarian mob rule” a tactic used by the rivals of true Americanism, socialists and anarchists (Jablonsky 11). In this sense, antis viewed themselves as superior, even more civilized. Anything more than polite flyers and convincing pamphlets were considered not only off limits and unapt, but also in a way barbaric (Jablonsky 9). Although, later in the anti ballot campaign, antis in New York would dare to break these rules – they were characteristic of the general anti-suffrage public communication, for, antis believed, they had moved beyond, mob rule, the method of communication and persuasion of old Europe. They saw themselves employing more advanced, Enlightenment-based tools of communicating with the public. The same attitude is also visible in their rhetoric.

III. Enlightenment and Inclusion: Suffrage Voices

So far we have seen how the Enlightenment was instrumentalized as a practice of communication to promote and oppose the vote. Let us now see how both sides used the Enlightenment in terms of rhetoric, as a set of ideas, to define the basis of their respective causes. I first concentrate on the usage of Enlightenment principles on behalf of the suffragists and their fight for women's inclusion in U.S. democracy. My analysis here is divided into two parts. First, I will examine two suffrage documents, Isabella Beecher Hooker's *The Constitutional Rights of Women* from 1888 and Carrie Chapman Catt's *Will of the People* from 1910. The first author was one of the most prominent and active leaders in the suffrage camp, and the second was President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. These two texts disclose reoccurring discourse patterns in suffrage rhetoric such as argumentation with the Founding Documents, view of rights, progress and advancement of civilization, empiricism, etc. In the second part of my analysis, I am going to deal with those patterns and support their omnipresence by giving voice to further suffragists. The additional suffrage actors (among others) Ida Husted Harper, Francis Minor, Anne Fitzhugh Miller, Max Eastman, etc., are briefly contextualized biographically and by their involvement in the cause. The structure of my analysis will illustrate how suffrage voices, from various socio-political settings, appropriated an Enlightenment-based set of ideas to promote their cause in the debate on woman suffrage.

The two suffrage texts chosen here are compelling for the following reasons: Firstly, they derive from crucial stages of the suffrage struggle. Secondly, they are chosen for their representativeness of the suffrage usage of a variety of Enlightenment ideological premises in the public debate on the enfranchisement of women. *The Constitutional Rights of Women* is one of the first documents of the second stage of female responses to Reconstruction and its constitutional changes, leaving women and their demands behind. Hooker's document describes a time when women became aware of the fact that it was impossible to share the voting freedom granted to African American males.

That is why suffragist decided to argue utilizing text already in the Constitution. This ideological technique became known as New Departure and Hooker's document would serve as an example here. *The Will of the People* derives from the subsequent and final rhetorical era of the movement. When arguing that the female ballot was already an inherent part of the Constitution led to a dead end, the suffrage movement entered the political debates in the Progressive Era demanding a federal amendment. *Will of the People* precedes what was to become Catt's 'Winning Plan': gaining suffrage state by state, and thus pushing major political parties towards fully endorsing a national amendment. The 'Winning Plan' was an organizationally tactical move. The cornerstones of rhetorical strategy however, kept utilizing Enlightenment rationale, in order to induce the public to implement that plan.

The two suffragist documents are representative not only in terms of their rhetoric. Their text-pragmatism is wide spread in the suffrage camp as well. Even if we know that the texts are one of the most well-known suffrage contributions to the debate, we also need to characterize them in their communicative setting, function, thematic development, and the imagined audience which the author addresses. With Hooker's document, for example, we have at hand a speech turned into a pamphlet and circulated by an organized interest group such as the suffrage movement. Like many other texts in the debate, the document has undergone a transformation of its communicative range of action, moving from the congressional hall to the wide public audience. In the case of Catt's text, we deal with a generic formula for the suffrage camp type of text: an essay published in a magazine and subsequently distributed as a pamphlet by the movement, to broaden the scope of its readers.

III. 1. Isabella Beecher Hooker:

“The Constitutional Rights of the Women in the United States” (1888)⁷⁰

Dating from the Seneca Falls convention, the historian Ellen Dubois rightfully noticed, the women’s rights movement has used the products of Enlightenment in America, the foundational documents and especially the Constitution, as “a historically contested arena” (Dubois 863). From the Worcester Convention onwards — building on the experience from Seneca Falls – suffragists stated with a stable Enlightenment basis: “we do not seek to protect woman, but rather to place her in a position to protect herself,” (The History of Woman Suffrage 1:825). Female advocates sought emancipation as individuals in a progressive society. The Federal Constitution was sealed with the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Although they canvassed political support for a Sixteenth Amendment in their favor, suffragists had to admit that amending the law of the country one more time was politically out of the question. Faced with this new situation, suffragists, despite being divided in two competing organizations, re-emerged on the political landscape and transformed themselves from a broad woman’s rights non-governmental social movement to “a single-issue political movement for women suffrage” (Marilley 66). This single issue set suffragists on a new course, which they would call in their *History of Woman Suffrage* “an independent strategy” (Buhle 281). This meant that women, decided to argue with what was already in the Constitution rather than trying to complement it. This new rhetorical strategy, I am going to demonstrate, was an ardent continuation of using the Enlightenment’s ideological pillars. The speech by Isabella Hooker is perhaps the most famous, deriving from the above suffragists’ rhetorical period. The document selected here used the Enlightenment simply and boldly as its major argumentative framework, by relying on one of the products of the Enlightenment in America, the Federal Constitution. Before illustrating that, let

⁷⁰ More on Isabella Beecher Hooker: Mary Kelley. *The Limits of Sisterhood: The Beecher Sisters on Women's Rights and Woman's Sphere*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988. Anne Throne Margolis, Ed. *The Isabella Beecher Hooker Project*. Hartford: The Stowe-Day Foundation, 1979.

me describe Hooker's biography and take into consideration the text-pragmatic of her document.

Isabella Beecher Hooker originated from one of the most renowned New England families, the Beecher family. Among its most famous members were preachers, authors and social activists. From the Beecher family also came another anti-suffragist, Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was one of the strongest proponents of domesticity and Isabella's half-sister. Isabella often used Harriet's arguments to reinforce her position. Isabella Beecher Hooker sympathized with suffragism and eventually dedicated herself wholly to the cause of rights for women.⁷¹ By the end of the 1880s she had become one of the most prolific and influential suffragists. She organized suffrage associations and authored numerous publications. As a valued public speaker for the cause, Hooker delivered her address "The Constitutional Rights of Women in the United States" at the founding sessions of the International Council of Women (ICW) in March 1888. At the time of her speech, she served as the president of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, and brought to life the New England Woman Suffrage Association.⁷² The ICW was a multilateral initiative primarily between North America and Europe. For its founding, 53 international women's organizations with 49 delegates and 80 speakers gathered in Washington DC. Participating also were trade unions, professional and philanthropic organizations and arts groups. The U.S. women were represented at that time by two suffragist associations: The National American Woman Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association.⁷³ The ICW was set to be the first female international organization dedicated to pursuing human rights for women worldwide. The organization was brought to

⁷¹ "Isabella Beecher Hooker" *An American Family: The Beecher Tradition*. Web. 1 Nov. 2010. <<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/2001/beecher/>>.

⁷² "Isabella Beecher Hooker (1822-1907)" *National Women's History Museum*, Web 25 Nov. 2011 <<http://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/isabella-beecher-hooker/>>. "Hooker, Mrs. Isabella Beecher" *American Women Fifteen Hundred Biographies with Over 1,400 Portraits: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of the Lives and Achievements of American Women During the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Mast, Crowell & Kirkpatrick, 1897, 390-91.

⁷³ "Susan B. Anthony: Celebrating a 'Heroic Life', *Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester*. Web 25 Nov. 2011 <<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?page=4115>>. *Report of the International Council of Women Held in Washington DC, March 25 to April 2, 1888*. Washington DC: National Woman Suffrage Association, 1888.

life and sustained largely by U.S. suffragists – a fact that influenced not only its structure but also its rhetoric and mission. The setting of Hooker’s document gives us precious information on its text pragmatic – specifically, in terms of her own role, the temporal and spatial orientation, the intentions of her document, and the nature and method of her interaction with her audience.

The fact that Hooker’s document, before being turned into a pamphlet, was initially a speech is significant for the text pragmatic. We have at hand a formal address, on a formal occasion, which addressed a formally gathered audience. Given it was the founding session of the ICW, the speech aimed to give an identity to the organization and set standards for its argumentation across boundaries and cultures. It defined its universal human mission. Hooker’s speech, however also carried educating, explanatory and argumentative functions. Hooker assumes the position of the speaker, which determined her role in the communication process. As one of the pioneer suffragists, she performed as an educator and instructor. Her experience in the struggle for the U.S. female vote gave her confidence to assume that role. The fact that she addressed an international audience is also telling. Hooker’s position characterizes her as someone who believed that what she had to say is universally valid and all humanly applicable. This context makes the spatial orientation of her speech intriguing. On one hand, her argumentation is deeply anchored in the U.S.-American experience, as she argues with the products of the American Enlightenment, the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. On the other hand, however, given the international meeting it was delivered at, this speech aims to go far beyond the borders of the U.S. and embrace the world community. Despite her privileged position as a speaker, however, she does not dictate her ideas to the audience. Hooker makes a polite request to her listeners to follow her logic. The suffragist positions herself on the same level as her audience, by calling them “friends“ (Hooker 1). Her opponents, the male ruling class, she calls “brothers“ thus making them her peers, who can learn from her (Hooker 2). Hooker aspires to present facts for consideration “May I ask your patient attention while I attempt to show...” and demands her listeners to learn “commit this to memory, learn it by

heart” (Hooker 2). She teaches them the right meaning of the Federal Constitution, and the true implications of the social contract. Hooker explains what “truth is,” to her “friends” (Hooker 2, 3). And, on this basis, she demands the female vote by emphasizing that now is the right moment – a call which also illustrates the temporal orientation of her speech, and later, pamphlet: now, the very present, “it is high time“ (Hooker 3) and “women today are ready“ (Hooker 6). Hooker also dedicates her speech to the future. She uses future tense, when vowing to every new immigrant in the U.S. to share the freedoms and rights of this country with her (Hooker 19).

In support of her argument, Isabella Beecher Hooker goes through the Enlightenment product, the Federal Constitution, and specifically its preamble and the Articles I, II, IV, IX. Hooker interprets their meaning in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and on behalf of female enfranchisement. What makes her speech of special interest is its liberal analysis of the then recently passed Fourteenth and Fifteenth constitutional Amendments. On a more general basis, the document is exemplary due to its bundling up of the most common and central suffragists’ arguments deriving from the Enlightenment. To illustrate their wide reach, I will give voice to further suffragist pamphlets sharing those lines of thinking. Let us now follow how exactly “The Constitutional Rights of the Women in the United States” represents suffrage rhetoric and utilizes the Enlightenment, thus pointing at the first part of the dialectic.

Hooker opens her address with: “First let me speak of the Constitution of the United States, and assert that there is not a line in it, nor a word, forbidding women to vote; but properly interpreted, that is, interpreted by the Declaration of Independence, and by the assertions of the *Fathers*, it actually *guarantees* to women the right to vote in all elections, both state and national” (Hooker 1). The very idea of defining a struggle for political recognition as a matter of rights, and here specifically for the right to vote, goes back to the Enlightenment’s ideological ensemble. Also, Hooker’s usage of “guarantees” instead of, for example, “gives” to women the right to vote is noteworthy. This deliberate selection of wording reveals a belief developed by

Locke and Rousseau and legalized in the United States by the foundational documents – the right to participate in the lawmaking process of a society as innate and preceding governments; a right which women as independent individuals already have, and which, they believed with the Enlightenment, the established governments needed to secure.

Also, Hooker's approach of demanding the voting right, – "May I ask your patient attention while I attempt to *show*" – borrows Enlightenment premises and techniques. She does not state her claims unfoundedly but elicits them from a written document, a product of the Enlightenment in America, which also serves as the highest law of the land. Hooker turns her statements into facts and subsequently into proofs on behalf of her cause. To interpret a legal document, such as the Constitution, together with a political and a philosophical one, such as the Declaration Independence of 1776, seems to be to Hooker self-evident. And let us not forget – the very act of *interpreting* in its essence is an empirically oriented dissection of the written document, guided by reason. The results are then to be considered by reason as a standard for right and wrong.

"Under proper interpretation of the Constitution of the United States" – Hooker stresses again – "women have a right to vote today. *On precisely the same terms as men*" (Hooker 1).⁷⁴ These terms for the ballot, she is convinced, have long since been fulfilled by women: they are reasonable, and have inscribed themselves into the Enlightenment's framework, and possess the practical knowledge to contribute to a developing society. But arguing with the Enlightenment also implies that women have the right to vote even without fulfilling all of the above-mentioned conditions. Women, being reasonable individuals, should be enough. They are born with these rights, which equate humanity.

Precise argumentation with the Constitution, as a matter of fact, was a new strategy, which the women rights movement came up with after the Reconstruction period. It was known as New Departure, and Francis Minor together with his wife Virginia, who were part of the suffragist movement in

⁷⁴ Emphasis added

Missouri, are considered its inventors. Dubois calls their alternative method of argumentation “an activists’ strategy for winning woman suffrage that relied on what was already written in the Constitution, rather than requiring an additional Amendment” (Dubois 852). The Minors, just as Hooker and suffragists in general in that period, focused on the preamble of the Constitution, underlining popular sovereignty as preceding constitutional authority.⁷⁵ Although this extreme reverence of the Constitution was considered new, it was in fact the “combination of natural rights, popular democracy, national sovereignty” (Dubois 852) well known to us from the Enlightenment. In other words, New Departure was a new technique used to argue with the Enlightenment. New Departure’s newest feature was probably its militancy. Susan B. Anthony (another key suffragist figure) voted on the basis of New Departure in Rochester, New York in 1871, an act so shocking to the public that Anthony and her companions were arrested and tried in court.⁷⁶ Virginia Minor tried to vote too and even went to court in the landmark trial *Minor vs. Happerset* (Strom 87-8).

Acting upon New Departure, (and thus again upon the Enlightenment) Hooker and suffragists at that period focused on the preamble by calling it “the key to what follows” and “the concrete, general statement of the great [Enlightenment] principles which subsequent articles express in detail” (Hooker 2). She quotes the preamble in its fullness with a close reading of it. Such is its vehement importance that she urges her audience to “commit [it] to memory, learn it by heart” (Hooker 2). Once the preamble had been comprehended and inscribed into people’s minds, Hooker believes that what

⁷⁵ A close analysis of the Minor’s argument is given by Angela G. Ray & Cindy Koenig Richards, “Inventing Citizens, Imagining Gender Justice: The Suffrage Rhetoric of Virginia and Francis Minor,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* Vol. 93, No. 4, November 2007, 375-402. More on the Minor’s activism: Lee Ann Whites, “The Tale of Two Minors: Women’s Rights on the Border,” in Whites, Lee Ann, Mary C. Neth, and Gary R. Kremer, *Women in Missouri History: In Search of Power and Influence*, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2004, 101-118.

⁷⁶ Susan B. Anthony’s attempt to vote is probably the most well known case of direct action under New Departure. In fact, believing to be enfranchised under the existing laws, several cases of attempted voting are known. Over 170 women in Vineland, New Jersey claimed to have voted in separate boxes just for them, denied the privilege of voting together with men. In Hyde Park, Massachusetts, about 40 women lead by the Grimké sisters, did the same a year later. Between 1871-2 some 150 women tried to vote in seven states, including D.C.. (Buhle and Buhle 281).

follows from it is clear: “I should have no need to argue the question before you of my right to vote” (Hooker 2). Self-evidence here, just as with the Declaration of Sentiments, emerges as a convincing Enlightenment technique. The innate sense of what is true, dictated by reason, is at work here.

Central to Hooker’s argumentation is the phrase “We the people” and the goal “in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice [and] insure domestic tranquility.” To her, women are *naturally* (i.e., self-evidently) included as the “people.” As such, they then share common and equal responsibilities with men: the law-making process and the formation of a government belong, as Hooker is convinced, to those responsibilities. Being “the people” women also have a right to representation and the protection of themselves and their property as individuals, for they “bare equality with yourselves and all the burdens of society” (Hooker 2). Furthermore, Hooker clarifies, these responsibilities and rights follow the same goals set by the Fathers (and also by the Enlightenment) to be pursued in a process of molding society, aiming at their fulfillment: “surely [women] desire, as much as men, to say the least, to establish justice and to insure domestic tranquility” (Hooker 2).

Hooker alerts the ruling elites: “brothers, you will never insure domestic tranquility in the days to come unless you allow women to vote” (Hooker 2). Hooker presents the dire necessity of female enfranchisement. She calls on men’s sense, in the name of the foundational ideas, to let women contribute to their realization. Should they, however, continue to be kept subjugated to men, politically and privately, they will act against this injustice. In a democratic, liberal society, Hooker argues, there could not be “political masters, as [men] now are” (Hooker 2). Convinced of the Enlightenment ideas as formulated in the Declaration of Independence, Hooker reminds the public: it is women’s — just as every citizen’s — duty to fight mastery. Guided by the liberal notion of equality, and having the *bonum commune* in mind, she urges: “the sooner men understand this and graciously submit to become *political equals* with their mothers, wives and daughters [...] the sooner this precious domestic tranquility will be insured” (Hooker 2).⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Emphasis added.

The conviction in the efficacy of female suffrage for the realization of the republican ideal of society is indeed one of the suffragists' and Hooker's central arguments. Yes, women can undoubtedly contribute to a better America, but – and this is the Enlightenment part of her and suffragists' argument — by thinking of themselves and following their own needs. For this reason Hooker turns to women. She stresses that it is up to them to take the first step toward their own emancipation. Women need to begin with a change of their own self-understanding: “it is high time women [...] secured the blessing of liberty to themselves and their prosperity” (Hooker 3). Kant's call for sovereign thinking of every citizen, together with the ideal of pursuing one's own happiness, which would in the long run enable common progress, are evident ideological foundations reaching back to the Enlightenment. Isabella Beecher Hooker, building on the significance of the vote described above, proceeds to criticize the present state of government turning its back on half of the population as women felt it: “our brothers, the best of them are at their wit's end today, and so appalled at the moral corruptions of the body politic that they are ready *to [...] go back upon the whole theory of our government of the many, of the people [...] and to ask for the government of the few once more — the few rich, the few wise, the few educated*” (Hooker 3).⁷⁸ The Enlightenment is at work in two ways here; firstly, as a criticism of hitherto unjust order and, secondly, through the inclusive democratic idea of government as opposed to the exclusive hierarchical one. American society, Hooker and suffragists lament, has turned its back on the benefits it could have gained by letting women contribute to the general welfare. It will soon tolerate a self-established elite, a minority, which does not, and cannot, truly represent the people of the United States. The “theory of the government of the many” as we know it from the Enlightenment is at stake. If this status quo continues to be perpetuated, Hooker warns, the whole Enlightenment belief system, which America prides itself on adopting, would prove inefficient. In this situation, Hooker sees female suffrage as the key to saving the democracy and securing the people's sovereignty.

⁷⁸ Emphasis added.

Subsequently, Hooker goes on to discuss the four articles of the Constitution: I, II, IV, IX. In each of them she focuses on the word “people” and describes women’s rights and responsibilities and, like many suffragists of her time, is convinced they should be included. Article I of the amendments: “The right of THE PEOPLE to peaceably assemble and petition for a redress of grievances” (Hooker 3) – a right which, ever since the Declaration of Sentiments, was articulated by the suffragists. In an enlightened form of protest, Hooker reminds that the women’s rights movement had been peaceably petitioning Congress and the State Legislators “to take down the political bars which men have put up, contrary to the national Constitution” (Hooker 3); However, Hooker laments, suffragists appealed and petitioned so far only to be ridiculed. “No one doubts,” she says on their behalf, “women have that right equally with men,” The issue is, though, that it is not taken seriously. If it had been, women would have long been allowed to “become active coworkers in promoting the general welfare” (Hooker 3). Hence she is forced to conclude, this was among the few rights that women enjoyed at that time only to be silenced and sent away.

Article II provides for “the right of THE PEOPLE to keep and to bear arms.” This right too, Hooker claims, “women assuredly have equally with men” (Hooker 4). A right that they would be compelled to use if their exclusion perpetuated. They would be “*compelled to use it in self-defense* as never before” – Hooker’s link to the Founding Fathers’ situation is obvious — “for the crimes against woman in her very womanhood are becoming unendurably frequent all over our land” (Hooker 4).⁷⁹ Ever since the Seneca Falls manifesto, the above right is among those which Enlightenment thinkers ascribed to each individual member of society, and which governments committed to protect.

“The right of THE PEOPLE to be secure against *unreasonable* searches and seizures” is granted to women by Article IV, reminds Hooker. Here she uses the Enlightenment as a law for every action in the public lives of individual citizens to be proven by reason. Irrationality is to be fought against. In her discussion of Article IX: “the enumeration in the constitution of certain

⁷⁹ Emphasis added.

rights shall not be construed to deny others retained by THE PEOPLE” (Hooker 4). Hooker states that if the ruling elites truly believe in the Constitution, and that this supreme law of the land is open to alterations dictated by the experience of the people, now is the time in which such alternations should be made.

Hooker concludes her analysis of the selected articles by calling upon the Enlightenment’s core notion of common sense: “Is it not perfectly clear that all these are the rights of women equally with men, and that the term ‘people’ as used here was intended to embrace both” (Hooker 4)? Hooker reminds her audience that the preamble and the Constitution, which the U.S. government as a protective institution is based on, “plainly embraced women in all its provisions” (Hooker 4). It declared, according to the Enlightenment spirit, the blessings of liberty and the protection of prosperity for universal: “It surely did not mean to secure to men alone and their prosperity these blessings of liberty, to the half of ourselves and the half of our prosperity, but to the whole people, women as well as men” (Hooker 4).

Noteworthy in the above quote is the notion that women are not just a minority, a group that might be easy to ignore, but that they represent half of the people. If the governors believe in a true union, they cannot simply dismiss one half of the population. Further Hooker focuses on the word “secure” in the preamble, which, for her, is equally consequential as the word “people.” Hooker ardently argues that the Fathers purposely chose “secure” since they, just as she, believed in the rights, prosperity and protections of the people as reasons for establishing a government. In her view (being aware of her exclusion but also aiming to reaffirm her subscription to the Enlightenment foundational ideas) they did not see themselves as autocrats but as servants of the people and chosen to protect what the people already had “by its own free nature” (Hooker 5). The Fathers insisted, Hooker explains, that freedom was not the right of the few, but of the many. And to protect the majority from the power of the few, who might attempt to abridge the rights of the many to their individual life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, they created a government.

To support her reasoning, Hooker reaches out to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration of 1776 “utters no uncertain voice on the question as to who are the ‘people’ meant in the preamble and the articles following” (Hooker 5). To her it is of a special consequence that the truths in the Declaration are self-evident and require no proof. It is an axiom that all men are created equal in their endowment by the Creator with certain inalienable rights. Moreover, here is a decisive point in her argumentation “that to secure these rights,” – “not give, grant, or bestow,” she adds – “governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed” (not from the consent of the half governed — the consent of the male half,” Hooker clarifies, “*but the governed*” (Hooker 5).

The latter argument is one of the most powerful which is at the core of the woman’s movement Enlightenment-based discourse. It was originally launched in the Declaration of 1848; we see it in Hooker’s pamphlet and we will discuss it in connection with Catt’s article. The power of the “consent of the governed” is fortified by the sacred documents of American national thought. This makes it unquestionable and compelling: there is no doubt that women are governed; but do they consent, as the Enlightenment teaches, to the way in which they are being governed?

Early women’s decisive strategic move to appropriate the ideology of those who excluded them is, it would turn out, what would secure them their inclusion. They brilliantly enacted the universalism of the foundational documents, a great surprise to those who formulated but did not expect to see it turning against themselves. Suffragists, by using Enlightenment concepts and practices, made the status quo face the fact that they cannot simply “proclaim over the whole earth that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed and that taxation without representation is tyranny” (Hooker 5), and yet deprive one half of the people of representation.

On the background of the above, Hooker proves that women being shut out from participation in the lawmaking process is unreasonable. This means, she uses reason as a norm and institution of what is right and just: “You tell me that I must submit to conditions before I can vote; I who am a free-born citizen

of the United States” (Hooker 6). Hooker makes it clear that women defy the “assumption of power on the part of the men of this country” (Hooker 6). Following the tradition of the Declaration of 1848, Hooker also turns the Founding Fathers’ exact, Enlightenment-fostered ideas to serve her argumentation: “women today are ready to pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, to the maintenance of their rights as free-born citizens of this Republic” (Hooker 6). As such, they follow their duty to prevent desecrations of the Constitution. Women are recognized by many other laws through the usage of the masculine pronoun: she pays taxes, can be fined, imprisoned and sentenced just as him. How can it then be, Hooker asks, that she is not recognized in her right to vote, although it is being formulated just as inclusively as the other rights? “It is simply absurd and wicked to tax and hang a woman by one statute and deny her the right to vote by another, when the phraseology is precisely the same in both” (Hooker 7). Hooker puts the female status through severe criticism. In the courtroom, where reason resides as the supreme judge, womens’ subordinate position is found a crime.

Isabella Beecher Hooker’s address is consequential, for it provides us with a representative example of another aspect of the New Departure tactics and, respectively, the usage of Enlightenment thought for the women’s cause – her positive interpretation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Their passage, on the one hand, was considered by many suffragists a severe crisis in the women’s struggle. The fourteenth Amendment put “male” into its wording and the Fifteenth granted African American males the right to vote. Most suffragists were disappointed by the passage of only African American voting rights instead of universal suffrage. On the other hand, the amendments were also seen to galvanize the female cause. Women, acting upon the Enlightenment rationale, decided to adhere ardently *to the inclusive wording* contained in them. This ideological move also derived from the New Departure strategy of positively, i.e. liberally interpreting the whole Constitution, even its Reconstruction Amendments.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Scholars have been debating the impact of the Reconstruction amendments on the pro-suffrage cause. For different opinions see: Strom (77-89) and Dubois (852-61).

The first part of the Fourteenth Amendment was interpreted in accordance with Enlightenment liberalism and the centrality of the individual. In this sense, the sentences of the Fourteenth Amendment's state that "all citizens born or naturalized in the United States are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside" as well as, "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of the citizens of the United States" enabled suffragists' positive interpretation (in Dubois 852). For Hooker (under New Departure and thus under the Enlightenment), the fact that women are citizens of the United States is hardly deniable. Being citizens as the simple logic that Hooker dictates makes their individual autonomy and right to vote unquestionable. Again, this reasoning was advocated despite the word "male" which appears later on in the Amendment's text.

The Fifteenth Amendment outlaws the denial of the right to vote to the citizens of the United States "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude". To Hooker this means, "this fifteenth Amendment does not by implication authorize a denial on other grounds" (Hooker 10). If it did, she goes on, a minority may at any time be discriminated against and disenfranchised by a majority. Should then, Hooker asks, any physical particularity but black skin be a criterion for disenfranchisement? Following this logic, every voter should be disenfranchised if he has gray hair or blue eyes, or is over forty years of age, or belongs to the temperance party, she concludes (Hooker 10). By this, Hooker shows the irrationality of the exclusion rationale. It simply does not make sense to discriminate against women on account of a physical characteristic such as sex. Would reason (as a canon), she urges, not confirm this clear logic? According to the liberal idea of the democratization of rights, to Hooker it is clear that the Fourteenth Amendment says that all persons born or naturalized in the U.S. are citizens and the fifteenth recognizes those citizens' right to vote. In her view, the wordings of both the Reconstruction amendments and the whole Constitution undoubtedly embrace all the people of the United States.

Following the Enlightenment's concern for the future, as expressed in the foundational documents, Isabella Beecher Hooker concludes her address, expressing suffragists' thoughts on the upcoming generations. Considering the right of women to their suffrage as unquestionable (and its social usefulness), Hooker urges women to serve their duty and demand their elective franchise. Men, in turn, ought to listen to reason and remove the obstacles in the way. Women and men together ought to do this *now*, in this present, in order to enable the progress of the nation and of humanity as a whole tomorrow (Hooker 19). Also having the future in mind, Hooker invites "every new comer to our land to share our liberties [...] and responsibilities" (Hooker 19). She believes in the pursuit of self-improvement, which turns the future into a makeable one: "they [the new comers], with us, may grow into the stature of perfect men" (Hooker 19). Taking part in the Enlightenment project in America to accomplish its envisioned concepts, Hooker, as well, in the name of suffragists, impels, "may our country realize at last the dreams of the great souls who, 'appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions, 'did 'ordain and establish the Constitution for the United States of America' – the greatest chapter of human rights that the world has yet conceived" (Hooker 19). With Hooker's closing remarks the skillful affirmation and brilliant adoption of the Enlightenment as a set of emancipating ideas, a rational law and a never-ending process of their execution, becomes evident in suffrage rhetoric and self-understanding. Let us now take a look at how these are recognizable in Catt's article.

III. 2. Carrie Chapman Catt: “Will of the People” (1910) ⁸¹

Meanwhile, the two separate suffrage camps had united under the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890, with Susan B. Anthony as its president. By 1910, the NAWSA had grown tenfold, attracting membership beyond class and ethnic boundaries (Strom 227). The association enjoyed generous funding. Seeking grass root support, it developed a new political tactic. Flamboyant open-air speaking, spectacular parades as well as skillful political lobbying ensured wider visibility — one of the association’s major concerns.⁸²

In terms of ideology, the New Departure strategy, for which Hooker’s address served as an example, proved insufficient. In the late nineteenth century, the Supreme Court was still constrained by sexual prejudices. As a result of sexual conservatism, courts refused to interpret the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments broadly (Strom 92-223). After being arrested for voting under the New Departure rationale Virginia Minor went to court. Her landmark case *Minor v. Happersett* (1875) ruled that the two amendments did not intend to enfranchise women. The important part of the case’s decision, though, was that women would need a constitutional amendment in order to vote. Picking up exactly on this, two years later, Susan B. Anthony drafted the wording for what was hoped to become the Sixteenth Amendment, but eventually would be ratified – with the exact wording as in 1878 – as the Nineteenth Amendment in

⁸¹ More on Carrie Chapman Catt: Nettie Rogers Shuler. *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1923. Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. *Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1800-1925: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*. Westport, CT : Greenwood Press, 1993. Patricia Ward D’Ittri. *Cross Currents in the International Women’s Movement, 1848-1948*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999.

⁸² For more on the suffrage movement: Sharon Hartman Strom, *Women’s Rights*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003. Suzanne M. Marilley. *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996. Buhle, Mari Jo and Paul Buhle. *The Concise History of Woman Suffrage*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005. Sara Hunter Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy*. New York: Binghamton, 1996.

1919. The text did not make any general assumptions about the right to vote, but simply aimed to outlaw disenfranchisement on the basis of sex.⁸³

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the women's suffrage movement had found its new central goal — the passage of a constitutional amendment. Succeeding Anthony as a president of the NAWSA, Carrie Chapman Catt of Iowa officially launched the amendment campaign. Carrie Chapman Catt almost personalized the movement at that time, being an energetic leader and influential thinker. The reaching of the suffrage political potential, based on Enlightenment pragmatics and rhetoric, led to the creation of vivid public momentum and gave seriousness to the United National American Woman Suffrage Association, which Catt headed. As a result, their pleas for congressional support were taken more seriously. The effective organization of the state suffrage associations created a favorable climate for winning public opinion on a national level.

Catt could be called a self-made woman. When her father refused to pay for further education after high school, she financed her studies herself. As a young energetic suffrage officer, she earned the trust of the suffrage pioneers, and Susan B. Anthony chose her to be the successor of the NAWSA presidency. When Carrie Chapman Catt wrote her essay *Will of the People*, she had served her first term as a president of the NAWSA from 1900 to 1904.⁸⁴ Her essay *Will of the People* first appeared in *The Forum* magazine in June 1910. From its very conception in New York in 1866, *The Forum* magazine was meant to rival the *North American Review*. This is a fact that sheds light on its audience and, respectively, on that of Catt's article. It was the highly educated, intellectual social strata that formed its readership. The magazine dealt with topical issues including politics, religion, science, literature and education. As its title shows, the magazine was committed to launching a

⁸³ "The Susan B. Anthony-Amendment" was introduced at the NAWSA's Tenth Washington Convention, saying "[...] The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex" (qtd. in Strom 89). See also *U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee on Woman Suffrage. Report*. Washington D.C.: 1882.

⁸⁴ Informative biographies on Carrie Chapman Catt are: Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1987 and Mary G. Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Biography*, New York, Wilson Comp., 1944.

public discussion on a certain issue, and voiced both sides of a debate.⁸⁵ This is why it featured the suffrage president Catt in its June issue in 1910. Catt wrote her article during her retreat from the NAWSA, taking care of her ill husband. *Will of the People* was presented to a wider audience, appearing two years later in *Selected Articles on Woman Suffrage*, a volume that featured both rivalry camps. The content remained unaltered.

The text pragmatic of Catt's document is defined by its type. Being an essay, the article by the suffragists' President puts the concept of the will of the people on trial. Catt unfolds her thesis argumentatively, in a narrative about the grounds upon which the right to vote had been granted in the U.S. up to the present day (Catt 44-45). Subsequently, she delves into an insightful explanation of those grounds. Catt teaches her readers what these arguments targeted, which was not the mere right to vote as it may seem at first glance. She instructs her audience that it was the enactment of the people's will (Catt 44-45). She clarifies the present situation of the U.S. government by exposing the violation of people's will (Catt 44). By doing so, Catt offers a profound analysis and backs up suffragist demand for the female ballot. In view of Catt's language, its style is plain and clear, but profound in meaning, for it strives to put concepts of government, freedom and progress simply. Her sentences are short and her vocabulary understandable. This makes the educative intentions of her essay obvious. As an author, Catt does not use first person singular to refer to her views. Similarly to the anti-suffrage president Dodge, she covers her identity behind the concepts she deals with – a maneuver, which aims at presenting her statements as trans-subjective and generally valid. In this way Catt performs as the impartial observer, as a critical spectator of present events – a position that ties into the Enlightenment's understanding of the critical citizen's role, who shares his observations with the public. Although she does not address her audience directly, she does reach out to and includes the arguments of her opponents when she mocks antis' fears (Catt 46). Thus she positions her essay in a larger debate, as an answer to what had been said

⁸⁵ Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, Volume IV: 1885-1905*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957. 511-23. Richard E. Clear, *Old Magazines: Identification & Value Guide*. Lakeville: Astragal Press, 2006.

before. Taking into account the spatial orientation of her essay, Catt juxtaposes the world community and the U.S. in regard to the female ballot (Catt 46). On the other hand, however, her orientation moves from the American West to the East, describing a movement of steady, inevitable progress launched by full female suffrage (Catt 47). As to the temporal orientation, it begins with the past, explaining how the colonists won their elective franchise (Catt 44), and stretches to the present, exposing the unjust situation of the recent government (Catt 45-46).

By the year Catt wrote her article, the states of Wyoming, Colorado and Idaho had already granted women full suffrage. What makes this historical document especially contributive in presenting the first part of the dialectic is Catt's reference to the Enlightenment in terms of rhetoric and ideas as a process toward a more just democracy. It represents main pillars of suffrage rhetoric that are anchored in the Enlightenment. The suffrage movement entered the political debates of the Progressive Era with the only demand for a federal amendment. *Will of the People* precedes what was to become Catt's "Winning Plan": gaining suffrage state by state, and thus pushing major political parties towards fully endorsing a national amendment. The "Winning Plan" was an organizationally tactical move. The cornerstones of Catt's and suffragists' rhetorical strategy in this case are a firm belief of natural rights and liberalism together with the concept of universal human progress through the progress of reason and the backing up of those notions with empiricism. They show how suffragists kept sourcing Enlightenment rationale, in order to induce the public. Let us now follow how Carrie Chapman Catt did that specifically in her essay *Will of the People*.

Even the title makes it clear, that Catt relies on the inclusive message of the word "people." As in the case with Hooker and other suffragists, its embracing character and sovereignty are taken for granted here and serve as a point of departure for Catt's argumentation. The suffrage president begins by retracing the historical development of the Enlightenment as a rational project of emancipation in the U.S. Catt brings her readers back to colonial America. When the Founding Fathers were fighting for their right to vote, she points out,

they were required to point to their property as a precondition. “No taxation without representation” was the only strong argument the colonists had. “The colonial battle cry did not mean the ballot,” Catt clarifies; “rather, it meant the collective right of the American settlements to representation” (Catt 44). With the formulation of the “new constitutions,” this right of representation became valid for individual men. Upon that basis, the vote was extended to men in the United States. With the adoption of a more liberal notion of enfranchisement, Catt explains the gradual process of democratization. The tax qualification was dropped (Catt 44).⁸⁶

Describing the colonial struggle for enfranchisement, Catt shows the development of the voting rationale as the embracement of liberal inclusive principles, a process that parallels the gradual dismissal of those justifying exclusion. In this sense, Catt clearly states “That argument [no taxation without representation] still holds truth today” (Catt 44). “Women are taxed,” she reminds her readers and points out that a considerable portion of women in the state of New York hold property of higher value than that of the colonists at the time of the Revolution, and yet those women are not enfranchised. How can that be? Is this not “a manifestly tyrannical discrimination to take from citizens that which is theirs for the purpose of creating a common fund to be expanded for the common good, when some citizens are permitted to vote upon that expenditure and others are not” (Catt 45)?

Catt rationally questions the disenfranchisement logic. She borrows her arguments from the colonists back then — who, in turn, borrowed from the Enlightenment to support their claims — and applies it to the case of female suffrage. Quite in the spirit of dialogical reasoning, Catt presents the arguments of her opponents: minors and foreigners are taxed and may not cast their ballot. She points to a well-known fact: “True, but boys vote at twenty-one years, and foreigners may do so after a five years’ residence” (Catt 45). As background to the above statement she proves the political passiveness imposed on women to

⁸⁶ Similarly, Charles Austin Beard and Ida Husted Harper compare the situation of women to the one of all disenfranchised men in history and demand the vote as part of the general progress of society. See *The Common Man And The Franchise*, New York: Men’s League for Woman Suffrage, 1912 and “Why Women Cannot Vote in the United States.” *North American Review* 179 (July 1904): 30-41). See also Matilda Joselyn Gage *The Dangers of the Hour* The Women’s National Liberal Convention, 1890.

be perpetual. All hitherto disenfranchised have become included at some point, whereas women are kept aside from participation in the democratizing process. Catt's guiding thought here is that the development of a democratic society is a result of its appropriation of emancipatory Enlightenment ideas of equality.

"Evidently" — she goes on, supporting her stand with self-evidence — "the Colonists were not equal at the beginning to *the enforcement*" — i.e., appropriation — "of the second and bolder principle of the Declaration of Independence (i.e. the Enlightenment), 'Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed' (Catt 45). So far we have analyzed the consent-of-the-governed argument in the "Constitutional Rights of Women". The fact that this notion is still one of the major argumentative pillars for female suffrage is quite telling. Throughout its ideological development and argumentative diversification, the red thread of Enlightenment-based argumentation does not merely remain. It proves to be effective and – what Catt's article makes us realize — its efficacy, proven by history, is still applicable to the advanced stage of the female struggle. Indeed, "that [the consent of the-governed] argument still holds truth."

The suffrage leader, borrowing from the Enlightenment, understands the notion of "consent of the government with the governed" in the following way: "every man has a stake in the government, and therefore he must have a corresponding ballot's share in the lawmaking and law-enforcing power of the nation, in order to defend his stake" (Catt 45). The acknowledgement of each citizen's individual interests, a core Enlightenment belief, is evident here. Democratic, individual interaction takes place for the sake of the public interest. Logically, Catt goes on, "every man must be equally interested with every other to develop the common welfare to the highest degree possible" – and here comes the importance of the vote for this purpose: "therefore he must have his opinion counted" (Catt 45). Continuing Hooker's and suffragists' general line of thinking, Carrie Chapman Catt asserts that women, just as men, have their own interests and reasoning that entitles them to the right of self-protection.

She reminds her readers: “These arguments — ever since the American Revolution — “[have] won, and for this reason all white men not yet enfranchised received the vote” (Catt 45). Thanks to the revolutionary arguments, an ongoing process of extending the liberal promise had also ever since been taking place in America, illuminates Catt in the name of her movement: “A century ago, government by the ‘will of the people’ in the country *meant* the rule of the rich white males over poor white males and black males. Later it meant the rule of white, Negro and Indian white males, born or naturalized in the United States, over all women” (Catt 45).⁸⁷ In Catt’s article, the wide-spread interpretation of the foundational documents also comes into play again. Expanding the emancipatory *meaning* of the Constitution, she shows, has become the goal of every hitherto marginalized group in the United States. The more its liberal nature was comprehended, Catt implies, the more democratic American society has become. This is how, according to her, the Enlightenment as a process progressed in the U.S. up to that point.

Drawing directly on Hooker’s central assertion that the word “people” unquestionably includes women, Catt writes: “But women are people;” and proceeds, “they are taxed, they are governed, and they have an interest in the common good to be defended” (Catt 45). Women are now in the same situation as all those formerly excluded used to be: the colonists, black and Indian males. To all of them the right of inclusion had been acknowledged upon the embrace of core liberal beliefs. Following rational progress, the suffrage leader believes, women’s time had finally come. To Catt’s eyes it is obvious: “Every [Enlightenment] reason ever urged for the enfranchisement of men speaks as logically for the enfranchisement of women” (Catt 45). The universality of the principles is a fact, which cannot be twisted. Thus, the male ruling elites, Catt urges, should act upon their common sense and give women the ballot.⁸⁸

If indeed the powers of the government are only just when based upon “the consent of the governed” and “this plea gave the vote to men,” Catt adds,

⁸⁷ Emphasis added.

⁸⁸ On the common sense-argument, see also: Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Common Sense about Women*, Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1882, 303-403. Mary Putnam Jacobi, *Common Sense Applied to Woman Suffrage*. G. P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1894.

“these powers are now unjust, since they had been founded on the consent of the half governed” (Catt 46). Due to women’s lack of voice in the process of building a government, for her, it is logical that the body politic now does not truly enact the will of the people. In Catt’s subsequent words the Enlightenment’s technique of criticism and fundamental questioning is skillfully applied. Women are now asking the question that the colonists, African Americans and Indians asked earlier: “How does it happen that men are born to govern, and we to obey? Are men divinely ordained to be perpetual hereditary sovereigns, and women to be hereditary subjects?” (Catt 46).

Catt is suspicious of unfounded claims of authority attacking women without rational questioning. The order of things themselves, i.e., women’s position should be challenged. The impatience with imposed laws is central here, along with the scorn for perpetual subjugation and hereditary tyranny. All of these sentiments are known to us from dealing with the Enlightenment.⁸⁹ Clearly acting upon the Enlightenment’s rationale, Catt challenges the status quo: “If this is the order, where is the *proof*? When, where and to whom, did God or Nature reveal the fact?” (Catt 46). The present form of government needs to prove its legitimacy before the laws of reason. If the governing body indeed is not an ignorant vassal it ought to point to convincing facts and persuade, not impose its authority. According to Catt, the only possible response to this fundamental question which women ask is: “The revelation is found in the instincts of men and women” (Catt 46). Instincts, however, she cautions, have nothing to do with conscientious reasoning. They are not logically founded but impulsive. Individuals who have emerged from their self-imposed immaturity and have dared to use their own understanding have long set aside instincts for logic: “Natural instincts have been overturned so often by the progress of civilization [towards more rationality], that little respect for such authority remains” (Catt 46).

Carrie Chapman Catt however, identifies the underlying reason for opposing women’s suffrage: “universal distaste for new things [and] time-

⁸⁹ For more examples of strong suffrage criticism to the ordained order, see also: Benjamin Barr Lindsay, *If I Were A Woman*, New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1912.

honored fear, which makes us rather bear these ills we have, than fly to those we know not of” (Catt 46). It is fear of an organic change, which the opponents of women’s enfranchisement share with the “Czar of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, the Shah of Persia” (Catt 46). Anti-suffragists are compared to archaic, centuries-old monarchies, which countered any advancement of liberty within their reigns out of fear for their own power. Catt also compares the unfair position of women in the U.S. to those in tyrannical monarchies – just as the Fathers did with theirs and the despotic governments of the Old World. She demonstrates the contempt typical of the Enlightenment in America for self-imposed power. Her opponents, Catt’s words make us realize, almost superstitiously fear that the highest order of society might be overturned.

Thinking of female enfranchisement as a matter of reasonable progress, Catt further elaborates, “The American would not hesitate to pronounce the fears of China and Turkey to deny personal liberty to woman as [...] brutal barbarism”(Catt 46). On the other hand, however, from the perspective of the Australians, already having enfranchised women, Americans, who had granted the voting right to African Americans, Indians, and immigrants from all over the world but not to women, would seem as “mere democratic masquerader[s]” (Catt 47). In support of the above comes a statement, which literally reveals the adherence to the Enlightenment as a process: “*Such divergences do not arise from intuition, but from difference in enlightenment*” (Catt 47).⁹⁰

For the sake of objectivity, the suffrage leader states, the process of progress has embraced “one fifteenth of the globe” (Catt 47). All those countries deliver “the same overwhelming testimony” — women’s suffrage is an established fact. Moreover, women vote “as independently and as intelligently” (Catt 47).⁹¹ None of the allegations against the female ballot have

⁹⁰ Emphasis added.

⁹¹ That Suffragist put a great effort in presenting women suffrage as an unstoppable pace of progress in the world community is obvious in their coverage of every country that enfranchised their women: “Sweden Gives Women Parliamentary Franchise,” *Outlook*. March 13, 1909. 91: 573. Lady Holder, “Women’s Suffrage in Australia,” *Independent*, 56: Je. 9, 1904, 1309-11. Irene M. Ashby-Macfadyen, “Woman Suffrage in South Africa,” *Independent*. Ag. 19, 1909, 66: 1056-70. George Allan England, “Leaven of Woman Suffrage ’Round the World,” *Lippincott’s*. Ja. 1910.85:123-5. Ida Husted Harper, “Woman Suffrage Throughout the World,” *North American Review*, 1907, 186: 55-71. Paul Kennaday, “Wehre the WomenVote,” *Outlook*. 95: May 21, 1910, 117-22.

held true in those countries. On the contrary, Catt specifies, it has had a positive effect. By positioning Americans in the global community, Carrie Chapman Catt puts pressure on her countrymen. The world is gradually doing away with its retrogressive thinking, and embracing reason and establishing and expanding democracy. Catt asks the implicit question, where is the United States in this situation? Would America, which defines itself as the champion of democratic progress in the world family, let itself be left behind? In Catt's mind, the woman suffrage movement has provided the answer long ago, in the name of the whole nation. No, America, with its unprecedented social order, will not only keep pace with progress but will also lead the way. Considering the power and support of the suffrage movement — “nor is there a single instance of a man suffrage movement, so persistent, uncompromising and self-sacrificing as the woman suffrage movement” (Catt 47). Hence, Catt is convinced the suffrage movement gives voice to the majority of citizens, thus giving voice to the will of the people.

Falling into line with the ideology of universal human progress, the NAWSA president describes the detractors of female enfranchisement not as mere antagonists but as retrogressive: “those who now protest against the extension of the suffrage, have opposed with equal vigor every step of progress in the women movement” (Catt 47). Among these steps are: the protection of married women's property, their involvement with the press and pulpit as well as “the bitter condemnation of the early women college graduate”, physicians and public speakers. In Catt's view, the opponents do not simply obstruct the female vote but the march of progress in general. Pro-suffrage women, she seeks to convince us, are on the side of reason and have made their way through. Carrie Chapman Catt's article, too, assures us, together with all citizens of the U.S., women serve their duty to enable progress towards more rationality and liberty. It is an ongoing process, just as the Enlightenment envisioned it.

III. 3. Further Suffrage Voices

The documents by Isabella Beecher Hooker and Carrie Chapman Catt offered us insights into reoccurring themes in suffrage rhetoric. Their documents also served as examples of the commonly shared text pragmatic of public suffrage writings. Even though suffragists tried out different tactical moves, from arguing with what was already in the Constitution to trying to amend it explicitly for their cause, the origin of their convictions was always the Enlightenment

They argued that with or without those amendments women had always meant to be enfranchised – provided you read the Constitution properly. And the advocates of the vote offered the general public, what was in their view, a proper reading of the Constitution. Suffragists felt compelled to remind society of the sheer importance of the vote – in terms of rights but also for the bonum commune. They presented female enfranchisement as a part of the inevitable march of general human progress. Thus, a modern, progressive and visionary image of suffragists and their cause was projected to the public. The advocates of the vote took care to present their opponents as static, backward and doomed. The fact that antis never saw themselves as such things was up to them, and became inscribed into the minds of the general public. Suffragists were believed to be the forerunners of the all-embracing and never ending advancement of U.S. and other global societies. This progress was achieved by putting ideals to reality. In the U.S., suffragists believed, this process began in the western states who were the first to fully enfranchise women. They offered proofs, acting upon the Progressive Era's emphasis on investigative journalism through empiricism. Taking their clues from the Revolution, suffragists summoned the public that the time to act was now. For, without the vote, society was prone to demise, and the discontinuation of the inevitable march of progress was at stake. All these arguments that suffragists used were anchored in the Enlightenment. In the following sections suffrage voices are united through three major pillars of suffrage rhetoric: their self-understanding, their concept of rights and their idea of progress.

III. 3.1. Suffragists' Self-understanding

Suffragists saw their mission as one securing the progress of humanity. This bold agenda was triggered by a self image that was no less bold. Suffragists saw themselves as delivering the tenants of the Enlightenment to the nation. They themselves were, according to their writings, products of the Enlightenment. Catt's pamphlet gives fine example of these claims. By means of comparison and portraying their opponents as backward, suffragists aimed at creating a more developed and contemporary image of themselves. For example the defenders of suffrage called themselves "the new women" as opposed to its antagonists, who they named "old", or "old-fashioned".

“Those who are able to see the full and true relation of woman to modern economical conditions, and the relation of such conditions to political power and action, very sensibly demand political equality. This demands the old-fashioned woman and the old-fashioned man meet with the dictum ‘woman cannot be a soldier,’ or ‘I believe in a division of labor between the sexes, (Phelan 76)’

writes Raymond V. Phelan, a prolific author on women suffrage, discussing the *Division of Labor and the Ballot*. Phelan insists, following general logic, that the opponents of suffrage cannot demand division of labor without demanding also suffrage for women (Phelan 76). Since women were participating in the workforce, they also need to be able to influence their working conditions, Phelan explains. All further arguments are elicited from arguments of the opponents and form a conversation, taking place within the larger debate. Interestingly enough, he introduces his statements with “‘But,’ protests the old fashioned woman, ‘woman's place is in the home;’” (Phelan 78). And answers by a contrast “[...] *the progressive woman* wants a community fit to live in,” and she can contribute by being able to protect the home by the power of the ballot (Phelan 78).⁹² For, politics and law more than anything, in the eyes of suffrage, had a direct influence on the home and community, and by the voting women, they will be truly represented. In accordance to the general suffrage sentiment, Phelan concludes, the electorate will become more intelligent because more intelligent and progressive women will vote.

⁹² Emphasis added.

Anne Fitzhugh Miller had been a dedicated suffragists ever since 1894. The foundation of one of the most publicly active local suffrage organizations, The Geneva Political Equality Club was on her merits. Having Miller as its president, the organization went on to become the most powerful suffrage society in the state of New York.⁹³ Anne Miller was also a public speaker who saw the opponents of the vote as doomed in the face of modernity's unstoppable progress. To illustrate antis' backwardness, Anne Fitzhugh Miller compares anti-suffragists' attitude with her own initial attitude opposing telephones. She admits that she was an anti towards the use of a telephone in her house. Although she was aware that life would be incomplete without it one day, she thought to put off that day. After all, life had been hitherto comfortable and successful without it. This is the same attitude, she points out, that the antis had at that moment towards the ballot. At some point Miller realized however, that there were others to whom the telephone was a necessity. She enjoyed being free from the added responsibility of communication with life outside the home, yet she knew that the days of her conservatism were numbered. Her eyes were eventually opened, she confesses, on the selfishness of her position. Daily life awoke her for the needs of the others. When becoming a trustee of board on female higher education, she was the only woman. The others, all male trustees, frequently sought her opinion by using the telephone. She decided she had to have one. By the time she delivered her speech, she says, she had two telephones. At an anti-suffrage hearing, Miller shares, against the extension of suffrage on tax propositions, she was reminded of her own former attitude against the telephone. For Miller explains antis' objections seemed to be based the same way as hers at one time: "1st – On an entire satisfaction with the old way. 2nd – On a reluctance to open a new avenue of responsibility, in a life which seemed already filled" (Miller n.p.). "The telephone," she says, "is a necessary tool of the civilization of our time – through it we get together and do all sorts of things" (Miller n.p.). "The ballot," in her view, just as the telephone, is

⁹³ "Anne Fitzhugh Miller" *Winning the Vote*, Web. 8 Nov. 2011 <<http://www.winningthevote.org/F-AFMiller.html>>; James, Edward t., Janet Wilson James and Paul S. Boyer, (Eds.), *Notable American Women, 1607-1950*, Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press (Harvard University), 1971, 541.

“a special tool of the Government or our country (at a present quasi-democracy) and the moment we decline its use either for ourselves or for others we are cutting ourselves and others off from the legitimate use of a necessary means to the creation of a better civic condition (Miller n.p.).

The comparison with a technological device is deliberate. Technology is a symbol of modernity, a symptom of the developing society on the basis of research and science. Technology also has to do with inventions that help to simplify life and work and make every day easier. And, as in Miller’s words, it is everyday life, here and now, that makes a technological device like the telephone necessary. This practical necessity and the ever-existing option to improve conditions ascribed to technology is also ascribed to the vote. Both are tools of the civilization of the age. And by tools suffragists mean significant instruments by the means of which civilization functions. The very fact that she describes this realization of hers as an awakening brings with it a symbolic reference to a kind of Enlightenment that she underwent. And of course, she points simultaneously at the kind of Enlightenment that suffragists underwent, realizing the urgent need of society to embrace their cause. The anti-suffragists are presented in stark contrast to the civilization of the time, feeling comfortable with “old ways” and afraid to commit to something that might change their complacent way of life. With this implied description, antis are portrayed as a status quo establishment. As such, they are naturally not interested in the advancement of overall conditions but rather in keeping things just as they are. However, Miller explains, it is only a matter of time until the vote would become just as indispensable as the telephone. And it is only a matter of time until antis’ arguments would sound absurd and be wiped out by the advancement of everyday life.

Documents such as the one described above clearly reveal suffragists’ self-understanding in the debate on female enfranchisement. They aimed to persuade their audience by arguing with techniques and symbols from the Enlightenment. If such a principle supported their cause, it supported the progress of civilization and enabled the march of modernity, which the U.S. had launched globally. They saw themselves as forward, new, and above all else as keeping abreast with modern times. As Alletta Korff, a journalist from

the *National Geographic Magazine*, concludes, suffragists demanded the vote as “a natural step in the evolution of modern society” (Korff 111).

Suffrage was in the interest of mankind as a whole. In that sense, supporters referred to countries, which had already enfranchised women despite still being monarchies. So countries like China for example were called “progressive” and the “progressive character of the people” there found a special place in an article of the suffragists’ organ, the *Woman’s Journal* (*Woman’s Journal*. 43: 97. March 30, 1912, 36). When Catt asks the question, “How does it happen that men are born to govern and women to be governed?” she positions her criticism in the modern context of her time by specifying “[...] women are asking the old [revolutionary] question with the modern application” (Catt 45). Max Eastman, writer on philosophy and literature, became one of the most well-known representatives of what authors like Cynthia Schmidt would call socialist feminism. The fact that his mother was among the first women to be appointed as American ministers of the Congressional Church might explain his dedication to female suffrage. In 1907, together with other left-wing writers, he helped found the Men’s League for Woman Suffrage.⁹⁴ In Eastman’s words it was the development of modern society and the simplification of the home through technological advancement that had gradually liberated women – and, as a consequence of modern life, women would be eventually enfranchised (Eastman 52). The Republican Senator and pacifist champion from Idaho, William E. Borah, is well known mostly for his shaping U.S. neutrality on the eve of World War I. In domestic affairs, he became one of the first highly-ranked politicians to embrace female suffrage.⁹⁵ Borah, referring to the anti-suffrage argument that the vote would put an extra burden on women, wonders “It is a little difficult here to determine

⁹⁴ On Max Eastman and socialism: Melissa Nickel, *Max Eastman and the Greenwich Village Left, 1900-1929*, Thesis (Ph. D.) University of California, Irvine, 1996, 221-226. On Max Eastman and socialist feminism: Cynthia Bolger Schmidt, *Socialist-feminism: Max Eastman, Floyd Dell and Crystal Eastman*, Thesis (Ph. D.)--Marquette University, 1983. The Lilly Library Manuscript Collection offers an extensive collection of Eastman’s correspondence and works: <<http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/lilly/mss/index.php?p=eastman>>, 1 November 2011.

⁹⁵ On William Edgar Borah: Marian Cecilia McKenna, *Borah*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961; “William Edgar Borah,” Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <www.usa.gov>, October 20, 2011.

whether this argument arises out of sympathy for the women or out of a desire to protect the chivalry of men in these modern days” (Borah 62). He hints that, chivalry and the antis’ association of a system, spirit, and customs of a quasi-medieval knighthood coming with it, are doomed in the face of modernity. And Clifford Howard, mayor of Flint City, Michigan summons the public:

“Now, again, are we come upon *pioneer days*. We are Standing today upon the frontier of a *new social world*, a *new democracy*, faced with new and menacing problems, with tasks and duties untried and unprecedented, and upon the proper Performance of which depends the fate of our Republic (Howard 68).⁹⁶

Suffragists showed themselves to be in the process of making another historical novum, a social world even newer than the U.S. was at that point already – a completely new form of government that had only been dreamed of, but never attempted to be realized. Now was the time when this new social order was only a step closer to becoming a reality. The situation was introduced as dire and unique. The proponents of the vote thought of themselves as the transformers, the ones bringing future and Enlightenment to the nation. They beckoned the contemporary public to shape the future and write history. Suffragists reminded the people that it was their and not the government’s power to modify conditions, and used this as a rhetorical device to push the debate surrounding enfranchisement in their favor.

Female omnipresence in the nation’s past and present, suffragists insisted, provided them with rightful ground to demand what belonged to them by the Enlightenment in America: rights. Specifically, those rights considered unalienable and granted to every citizen by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The right to vote was seen as the key to realizing further essential rights, such as the right of representation, right of peaceful assembly and protest, and freedom of expression. Suffragists claimed those rights in the following ways.

⁹⁶ Emphasis added. More documents insisting on the modern character of suffragism and the backwardness of their opponents: Earl Barnes, *Woman in Modern Society*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1902; I. D. Pearce, “Awakening Womanhood,” *Westminster Review*. 169: 444-51.. April 1908. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *Enlightened Motherhood* - November 15, 1892; C. M. H., “Problem of the Intellectual Woman” *American Magazine*. Ja. 1009. 67: 288-90. Jane Addams, “Women Who Know that They Need the Ballot,” *Public*. My. 29, 1908, 11:205-6.

III. 3. 2. Rights

What the suffragists' president Catt describes in her essay is a democratic evolution of the American nation, and, as other suffragists would specify, it included a democratic evolution for women. This evolution included the enactment of rights, inherent to the Constitution, but denied to women in reality.⁹⁷ Susan B. Anthony, in her essay *Woman's Half-Century of Evolution* that was widely published in 1902, sheds light on the development that women underwent in the eyes of the suffragist. She especially refers to the right to assemble, a core demand of the American Revolution (and thus the American Enlightenment) that was something women had to struggle for, especially in the eyes of the public:

In that day, when the simplest rudiments of education were deemed sufficient for women; when only a half-dozen enumerative employments were open to them and any work outside the home placed a Stigma on the worker; when a woman's right to speak in public was more bitterly contested than her right to the suffrage is to-day. The storm of ridicule and denunciation which broke over the heads of the women who took part in this Convention never has been exceeded in the coarsest and most vituperative political campaign ever conducted. The attacks were led by the pulpit whose influence fifty years ago was far greater than at present and whose power over women was supreme. The press of the country did not suffer itself to be outdone; but, taking its cue from the metropolitan papers of New York, contributed its full quota of caricature and misrepresentation (Antony 10).

The individual rights, inherent to the Constitution, that Hooker and other suffragists saw as inalienable to women were claimed but seriously limited in their enactment. Further education was considered unnecessary, or, more precisely, female intelligence was considered unfit for development. The public expression of opinion was undermined by sexual prejudices and broad public disapproval. The convention Susan B. Anthony refers to is the first Woman's Rights Convention in 1848, which set the broad women's rights agenda, and was organized by Mrs. Stanton, Lucretia Mott and the Grimke sisters. When it comes to the opposition, the pulpit and the press are mentioned as examples of

⁹⁷ The amount of texts arguing for female inclusion in the national democracy as a matter of rights is enormous. Here are some examples: George William Curtis, *Right of Suffrage: Remarks on the Report of the Committee on the Right of Suffrage, Delivered in Convention, July 19, 1867*. (n.p., n.d.); Clara T. Leonard, *Woman Suffrage* (n.p. 1884). *A Joint Memorial, By the Second Legislature of Wyoming...* February 1893; Sara Winthrop Smith, *Suffrage A Right of Citizenship; An Address before the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association*. Washington D.C.: Stormont & Jackson, 1893. Mrs. McIlquham, *The Enfranchisement of Women: An Ancient Right, A Modern Need*, London: Woman's Emancipation Union: 1894; Susan B. Anthony, *On Women's Right to Vote*, Philadelphia, 1872.

what will be observed in the chapter on anti-suffrage voices. The appropriation of revolutionary arguments and practices, such as the freedom of assembly or public speaking, as Anthony illustrated, brought the expansion of the democratic promise to women. To be more specific, suffragists claimed that they had triggered the expansion of the democratic promise. Throughout their campaign, suffragists would emphasize their usage of the right to assemble and speak in public. At the Eleventh National Woman's Rights Convention, the delegates were also reminded that suffragists had raised their voice publicly as they "... have already appeared many times during the present session before your honorable body, in petitions, asking the enfranchisement of woman; and now, from this National Convention we again make our appeal" (Address To Congress 226 Buhle).

"And now," suffragists ask, claiming another right – to revolution, "think you we have no souls to fire, no brains to weigh your arguments; that, after education such as this, we can stand silent witness while you sell out birth-right of liberty, to save from a timely death an effete political organization" (Address Buhle 229)? Armed with intelligence from experience and education, women showed themselves as determined to fight the decaying ruling society of masters. As the essay by Carrie Chapman Catt shows, suffragists made use of their right to change unjust conditions, just as the colonists did at the time of the Revolution, and also on behalf of a cause larger than themselves for "as we respect womanhood," they say, "we must protest against this desecration of the magna carta of American liberties" (Address 1866, Buhle 228).

The right of representation to all citizens of the U.S. was another right, according to which suffragists demanded the vote.⁹⁸ The principle of the consent of the governed, was seen as one of the "first principles" and was considered to be "the real basis of the ballot" (Phillips 41). At a hearing before

⁹⁸ The argument of the consent of the governed continued to play a vital role in the Progressive-Era suffragism: May Johnson, *To The House of Governors, An Address Delivered Under The Auspices of the National American Woman Suffrage Association At The Meeting Of The House of Governors in Richmond, Virginia, December 1912*, New York: NAWSA, 1912. Ezra Hervey Heywood, *Uncivil Liberty: An Essay to Show the Injustice of Ruling Woman Without her Consent*. Princeton, Massachusetts: Cooperative Pub. Co, 1873; Frank Parsons, "Shall Our Mothers, Wives and Sisters Be our Equals or Our Subjects?" *Atlantic Monthly*. 102: August 1902, 196-202;

a joint committee on the judiciary and woman suffrage, Elsie C. Phillips, explains:

Now, the right to vote is based, first and foremost and primary, on the democratic theory of government, the theory of government to which this country was committed in the great phrase that 'The just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed' (Phillips 41).

An organizer for the National Association of the Women Workers, Phillips further clarifies the liberal understanding of the above concept that suffragists adopted:

Does it not mean that there is no class so wise, so benevolent that it is fitted to govern for any other class, no matter how wise or benevolent that ruling class may be? Does it not mean that, in order to have a democratic government, we must be sure that every adult in the Community has an opportunity to express his opinion as to how he wishes to be governed, and to have that opinion counted? (Phillips 41).

Elsie Phillips was a Progressive-Era reformer laboring on social welfare, especially in regard to child-care and the education of mothers. Phillips, together with her husband Wilbur, designed the Social Unit Plan, which encouraged citizens' active engagement in community affairs.⁹⁹ To her, the inclusion of women in the electorate was an obvious necessity. The right of representation and the democratic legitimacy of a government were good reasons to support such a cause. Relying on self-evident answers, Phillips and suffragists revealed the democratic meaning of the consent of the governed-formula that they used. Following the Enlightenment's egalitarian call, they proclaim that in a democracy there cannot be an exclusive ruling minority standing for the rest of the people. They count on the individual freedom of thought, and insist on giving women the political ability to express their opinions. By arguing on these grounds, suffragists demand practical implementation of the consent of the governed principle. "In order to have a democratic government," means in order to implement a democratic government and the enfranchisement of such a huge group of individuals as women are is a key to the fulfillment of the democratic ideal. Practicality, an idea itself known to us from the Enlightenment, is also a reoccurring theme in suffragists' reasoning. They often call for sober consideration of the issue

⁹⁹ David Klaassen and Louise Merriam, "Wilbur C. and Elsie C. Phillips Papers, 1849-1965: Biographical Note: Elsie La Grange Cole Phillips." *Social Welfare History Archives*, Web. 21 Nov. 2011 <<http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/xml/sw0094.xml>>.

saying, “We propose no new territories. We simply ask that you secure to ALL the practical application of the immutable principles of our government, without distinction of race, color or sex” (Address 1866 Buhle 227).¹⁰⁰

Since the above rights were granted to individual citizens, suffragists emphasized in the eyes of the public that women are individuals and urged them to see themselves as such. This aspect too reveals the Enlightenment thinking of the suffragists. Here their explanation of the individual’s relationship to the nature of a government:

The democratic hypothesis is that a state is good, not when it conforms to some general eternal ideal of what a State ought to be or do, as the Greeks thought, but when it conforms to the interests of particular concrete individuals—namely, its Citizens (Eastman 50).

As to the question of whether women were individuals, Eastman answers:

Not only have *the thinkers* of the world waked up to the fact that *women are individuals*, and so to be counted under this theory of government, but the world itself has so changed that the practical necessity of applying the theory to them drives itself home (Eastman 50).¹⁰¹

By justifying women’s individuality as an undisputed fact and drawing from the world’s thinkers Eastman obviously refers to Enlightenment philosophers and their authority for the debate. But what is the importance of the ballot for the female individuality now? Joseph V. Denney clarifies:

In the progress of legislation and judicial Interpretation concerning women and their rights and Privileges, one fact Stands out in prominence. Each concession has been an acknowledgment of individual personality. At the time when our forefathers declared that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, it was not recognized anywhere in law or in human society that a woman is a complete and self-competent personality. Now that fact has been so far established in human society and law as to warrant full governmental recognition. The mark and badge of full governmental recognition of personality is the ballot (Denney 38).

Joseph V. Denney was a theorist on rhetoric and pedagogy, who wrote together with Fred Newton Scott *Composition-Rhetoric: Designed for Use in Secondary School*, 1897. They provide in, “Essays, Speeches, Sketches“ of Appendix C with instances of female roles outside the traditional women’s sphere. In this way, his work was an exception in contemporary pedagogy, prodding reforms

¹⁰⁰ More suffrage documents explicitly stressing Rousseau’s theory of the consent of the government with the governed:

Resolutions and Debate, First Annual Meeting of the American Equal Rights Association, New York City, May 10, 1867, in Buhle & Buhle, 237-245. *United States Centennial Celebration and the Declaration of Rights*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 4, 1876; Nathaniel Schmidt, *Government by the People*. New York: Sold at National Suffrage Headquarters, 1909. National League for Civic Education of Women. Season of 1910-11; *Preliminary Program*. New York, 1910; Carrie Chapman Catt, *An Appeal For Liberty*, January 1, 1915.

¹⁰¹ Emphasis added.

in the traditional female education.¹⁰² Together with Denney, suffragists explain the gains of female political emancipation in a legislative and judicial aspect as a sign of society's advancement. By the refinement of the political process, woman's Enlightenment-founded recognition in her individuality bespeaks the level of civilization of the nation. Now that the U.S. has reached a state of civilized development, where women's individuality was unquestioned in its eyes, suffragists point out that such a development is incomplete without the vote. This is how enfranchisement becomes such a fundamental pillar of the suffragists' rhetoric and ideology, and gains importance by being backed up by Enlightenment concepts.

In a hearing before the legislators of the state of New York on *Hearings on Tax Suffrage for Women Taxpayers* in 1906, Anne Miller underlines the principle of individual representation. She expresses suffragists' wish: "We ask that as taxpayers women should be treated as taxpayers when taxpayers vote" (Miller 66). In the 1908-*Annual Appeal of Woman Suffragists*, in Albany the same activist, Anne Miller appears in the name of "3,714 signed suffragists in Ontario County, where she lives. Miller addresses the Governor by confronting him with women's situation as tax payers:

"For over half a century the women of our state have come to Albany year after year to remind the legislators of their duty to help change the laws that force us to pay taxes and, and forbid us to say by vote, whom or what we want. In tones of appeal, in tones of warning we repeat the grand and awful phrase 'Taxation without representation is tyranny.' (Miller Annual Appeal, n.p.).

Miller emphasizes womens' Enlightenment practices of argumentation by using the right "to peaceably assemble and petition for a redress of grievances," as quoted by Hooker from the Federal Constitution. Women had done this persistently and sticking to central revolutionary dictum. As most suffragists do when borrowing revolutionary formulas, Miller too, explains its practical meaning for women and the community, but this time in not more than three words "Something for Nothing" (Miller, Annual Appeal, n.p.). "You are our uncrowned sovereigns – likewise our employees — employed by the voters of the state, but paid in part by women," Miller enfolds her argument (Miller, Annual Appeal, n.p.). She even dares to ask: "Do you realize that a part

¹⁰² See, Suzanne Bordelon, *A Feminist Legacy: The Rhetoric and Pedagogy of Gertrude Buck*, Southern Carbondale: Illinois University Press, 2007, 113-114.

of every dollar you receive from the state, is forced from citizens who are prohibited by the state from giving their consent that you receive and disburse their money?" (Miller, Annual Appeal, n.p.). She puts it in simple words – the something is the taxes women pay, the nothing is the vote that is withheld from them. They see only the ballot as the "just equivalent for the taxes we pay" (Miller, Annual Appeal, n.p.). Her plea is also strengthened by the belief that women are just as rational a part of the citizenry as the legislators themselves by asking, "Are we not, like yourselves, fairly intelligent and wholly responsible citizens?" (Miller, Annual Appeal, n.p.), and concluding "All we ask is a fair play – Something for Something" (Miller, Annual Appeal, n.p.).

Suffragists deliberately positioned their demands as an outgrowth of the Revolution, even at that advanced stage of the campaign. To reinforce the power of the enlightenment discourse of the Revolution, they highlighted their borrowing of it and its one-to-one application to their case. Catt insists that during the Progressive Era these reasons still hold true, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton puts it even simpler: "There are no new arguments to be made on human rights, our work today is to apply to ourselves those so familiar to all" (Stanton 250 Suffrage 1869). To suggest that the situation for women is no different than the universal call for liberty that the revolutionists made, Stanton makes it understandable:

"When the women of this country surveyed the situation in their first convention, they found they had precisely that number [of grievances – eighteen], and quite similar in character; and reading over the old revolutionary arguments of Jefferson and Patrick Henry, Otis, and Adams, they found they applied remarkably well to this case" (Stanton 250 Buhle 1869)

Yet, despite all the simplicity and similarity to the Revolution, women, reveal an act out of rhetorical and political genius. They described their call for rights as an act so daring, as portrayed by Susan B. Anthony below, that mankind had not witnessed an upheaval, and issuance of the Enlightenment of that kind before:

In the light of the present, it seems natural that she should have made those first demands for women; but at the time it was done the act was far more revolutionary than was the Declaration of Independence by the colonial leaders. There had been other rebellions against the rule of kings and nobles; men from time immemorial had been accustomed to Protest against injustice; but for women to take such action was without a precedent and the most daring innovation in all history. Men of old could emphasize their demands by the sword, and in the present Century they have been able to do so by the ballot (Anthony 7).

Suffragists not only contextualized their cause within the American Revolution to demand their rights. True, they used the same arguments as the Fathers. It was exactly this use of argumentative weapons that emancipated the colonists, and that suffragists described as an act so audacious and unequalled. They even claimed to have exceeded the revolutionary character of the colonists' Revolution, in terms of newness and uniqueness. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's contemporaries were innovative and unique because they did not use the only means known for defense — the weapon and physical force. At this advanced stage of their campaign, suffragists highlighted their enlightened spirit. At the time of the Progressive Era, when the ballot was the primary means of individual protection and expression of opinion, women felt prodded to being ingenious again. They were trying to convince the public to support their agenda using revolutionary arguments and building on the Enlightenment's call to change unjust conditions. The fact that suffragists ascribed a Promethean touch to their motives indicates that they thought of themselves as modern. They maintained to be the ones to whom the future belonged, the ones who foretold and kept pace with modernity. Taking advantage of the Enlightenment's value of the future, not only did they attribute to themselves a progressive image but also positioned themselves in stark contrast to their opponents.

III. 3. 3. Suffragism and Progress

The documents by Isabella Beecher Hooker and Carrie Chapman Catt exposed, among other things, two central themes in suffrage rhetoric – the significance of the vote for women as a program and a mission, and the Federal Constitution as a basis for argumentation on behalf of female enfranchisement. Both lines of thinking, as the suffrage voices are about to tell us, were widely shared, and most of all, nourished by the Enlightenment. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, one of the designers of the Fourteenth Amendment, responded reluctantly to suffrage pleas to delete the word 'male' in the Constitution. He feared that the alternation might jeopardize the mission of the

amendment to secure equal rights for freedmen, after the Civil War. Nevertheless, Senator Sumner served as a source of argumentative inspiration for suffragists – especially when it came to the significance of the vote. A gifted orator and energetic fighter for equal rights for newly freed slaves, Sumner often used universally formulated liberal rhetoric in his speeches. In their *Address to Congress*, adopted by the Eleventh National Woman's Rights Convention, held in New York City in 1866, suffragists were so convinced by Sumner's interpretation of the voting power that they quoted him in their address directly. The ballot was seen as "the great guarantee; and *the only sufficient guarantee* — being in itself peacemaker, reconciler, schoolmaster and protector — to which we are bound by every necessity and every reason" (Sumner in Address to Congress 1866 in Buhle 226). Senator Sumner culminates the universal significance of the vote, and not only for the political situation or women:

"The ballot is like charity, which never faileth, and without which man is only as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The ballot is the one thing needful, without which rights of testimony and all other rights will be no better than cobwebs, which the master will break through with impunity. To him who has the ballot all other things shall be given – protection, opportunity, education, a homestead. The ballot is like the horn of Abundance, out of which overflow rights of every kind, with corn cotton, rice and all the fruits of the earth. Or, better still, it is like the hand of the body, without which man, who is now only a little lower than angels, must have continued only a little above the brutes. They are fearfully and wonderfully made; but as is the hand in the work of civilization, so is the ballot in the work of government. Give the ballot and I can move the world." (Sumner in Address to Congress 1866 in Buhle 226).¹⁰³

For suffragists using Sumner's words, disfranchisement is a dangerous passiveness metaphorized as a tinkling cymbal, an instrument which only echoes sounds but does not produce its own. All other rights are endangered and even pro forma without the ability to protect them. A society, which does not guarantee the protection of every citizen in his or her rights, spurs mastery and hierarchy, suffragists believed. Protection, opportunity and education belong to the essence of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness – the basic needs of a democratic citizen living according to the ideals of the Enlightenment. To

¹⁰³ Charles Sumner's *Equal Rights of All*, is the document used here by the suffragists. See Charles Sumner, "Equal Rights of All," *The Works of Charles Sumner* Boston, 1870–1883, 10:164. For biographical data on Charles Sumner, see "Charles Sumner," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <www.usa.gov>, October 20, 2011. On the influence of the American Enlightenment on Senator Sumner, see Anne-Marie Taylor, *Young Charles Sumner and the legacy of the American Enlightenment, 1811-1851*, Amherst : University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.

suffragists, the vote prodded the profusion of rights and security, compared with staples of a life-sustaining diet. The ballot was believed to raise the spirits of man to the level of angelic refinement, in terms of morals but as well as protection. Despite the partially sentimental tone and figurative sense of Sumner's wording, it reveals a rhetorical presentation of the vote as a program, as an ongoing movement towards general advancement. Suffragists didn't want the vote merely for women. Through female enfranchisement, the U.S. would make the final and indispensable step toward actually living upon the revolutionary ideals. Thus, Americans would do their part in bringing to the world community better, more complete and more modern conditions. By the time Isabella Beecher Hooker delivered her speech at the International Counsel of Women, voting rights had become the embodiment of the female liberal progressive mission. With "the duty of the women of this country to secure their sacred right to the elective franchise" (Stanton 2036), the ballot turned into the "cornerstone of women's rights" (Marilley 50) with the Second Annual Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1851. It began to be seen as inclusive of more rights, and not merely female suffrage; it aimed for wide-ranging social and democratic goals. Put simply, suffragists sent the message to the public: enfranchise women and make the U.S. and the world a better place.

As further voices will show, suffragists believed that exactly this mission of the female ballot was already launched by the Federal Constitution. For it supported, or was even inclusive of, the female vote.¹⁰⁴ As its secretary, Max Eastman addressed the Men's League for Woman Suffrage in 1912 stating similarly to Hooker, "It appeals, before the theoretic side, to those fundamental principles of popular government which underline our constitution, the principles of rule by the majority — that there is no majority with the right to rule, until after a single vote is the property of every single citizen" (Eastman

¹⁰⁴ Suffrage Argumentation with the Federal Constitution and specifically that women had always been enfranchised by the Constitution, simply for being citizens of the U.S.: Sara Winthrop Smith, "Suffrage A Right of Citizenship"; *An Address before the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association*. Washington D.C.: Stormont & Jackson, 1893. Carrie. S. Burnham, *Compilation... By Order of Citizen's Suffrage Association, To Show the Difference Between Those Laws That Men Make for Their Mothers, Wives, Sisters and Daughters*. Philadelphia: Citizen's Suffrage Association, 1874; C. C. Stopes. "Constitutional Basis of Women's Suffrage," *Fortnightly Review*. 90: 445-57. S. 1908.

3). Eastman, just as Hooker, believes it to be essential to interpret the Constitution properly. He underlines the ban of ruling minorities, inherent in the Constitution, and simultaneously insists that by debarring women from the ballot box the country is governed by an exclusive minority. In an address to Congress in 1866, directly following the Civil War, suffragists positioned their argumentation within the framework of the Constitution right in the opening part, “We urge you to lay no hand on that ‘pyramid of rights,’ the Constitution of the Fathers, unless to add glory to its height and strength to its foundation” (Address to Congress, 1866, Buhle 226). Suffragists reveal not only their adherence to the Founding Document, but also its for their rhetorical argumentation. The bundle of rights already legally guaranteed by the Constitution would be an especially crucial aspect for the development of their rhetoric in the years to come. In 1886, Francis Minor gave voice to suffragists’ determination and displays slight annoyance at having to prove something so obvious as the female ballot inherent in the Federal Constitution:

“It is commonly but erroneously supposed that the right to vote... is remitted by the Federal Constitution of the United States” (Minor 352). “My proposition is,” he goes on “that in the United States and under the Federal Consitution, suffrage, whether for men and for women, is an attribute of their federal citizenship; that is one of the essential privileges of a citizen of the United States, inhering in the status or condition of such citizenship (Minor 352).

Francis Minor proceeds, just as Hooker did, with a detailed interpretation of the Constitution that includes the debates around its ratification and quotes its architects including James Madison. Just like Hooker, he too argues with the Fourteenth Amendment on behalf of women.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, suffragists strived to show that the Founding Fathers had good reasons to include female voting rights in the Constitution. As if illustrating indisputable facts, they pointed at female contributions ever since the genesis of the American nation.

“With man,” they say, “woman shared the dangers of the Mayflower on a stormy sea, the dreary landing on Plymouth Rock, the rigors of New England winter, and the privations of seven years’ war. With him,” they go on “she bravely threw off the British yoke, felt every pulsation of his heart for freedom and inspired the glowing eloquence that maintained it

¹⁰⁵ Along with *The Constitutional Rights of Women*, two documents by Victoria Woodhull were considered groundbreaking in the New Departure strategy. *Memorial and Petition to the Judiciary Committee* of December 19, 1870 and January 11, 1871 by the main publisher of Woodhull & Claflin’s, Victoria Woodhull, who later in the campaign was considered a radical, advocating free-love. She maintained in front of Congress that under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments women were already enfranchised. See also: William Ingersoll Bowditch, *Taxation of Women in Massachusetts*, Cambridge, J. Wilson, 1875; Hamilton Wilcox, *New York State Laws, Statutes, Etc.: Women are Voters!* New York: J.W. Lovell & Co., 1885;

through the century.” Even to the very recent back then trial of the American experiment, the Civil War, women claim to have equally “passed through the agony and death, the resurrection and triumph, of another revolution” (Address Buhle 228).

In order to rhetorically and factually emphasize that women did share the same common interest for the good of the nation as men, suffragists often accentuated that they faced hardships no smaller than those of men and reached glory in common endeavors.

The concept that the vote would be beneficial not only to women themselves, but to the prosperity of society as a whole was a central theme in the suffragists’ rhetoric. It too, was anchored in the Enlightenment’s strive for betterment and advancement. Suffragists believed that when given the vote, more educated native-born female citizens would vote and outnumber the uneducated and foreign-born. Moreover, suffragists stated that women would “increase through them of the average intellectual culture and acquaintance with American institutions in the electorate” (Eastman Is Woman Suffrage 48). Governments, beginning to focus on the essential concerns of humanity, face moral and social problems of various natures but equal importance. The preservation of health, labor conditions, business and poverty issues face the electorate, and its ability and intelligence to elect a government capable of facing those challenges. Exactly at this moment suffragists believed, the female vote could play a decisive role. They argued that it would do no less than bring the government to a whole new level:

“This civilizing of government is a process which we must further with all our might, that ultimately even the greatest questions of democratic equality, which are still only agitated by a hand-full of noteworthy idealists, may become the substance of party platforms and the fighting-ground of practical politics.” (Eastman Is Woman Suffrage 49).¹⁰⁶

By cultivating the political system through the female vote, suffragists imagined not an idealistic, inoperable, or theoretically perfect form of state organization. Rather, they envisioned a practical, feasible and functional one, just as the spirit of the Enlightenment in America preached it, and the philosophers of the American Enlightenment prided themselves on being above all things practical while implementing ideas into reality.

¹⁰⁶ Emphasis added.

In *Why I am for Suffrage for Women?* William Borah gives examples of the practical application of the ballot in order to prove the civilizing effect of female enfranchisement mentioned above. Assessing the results of female suffrage in Idaho, he argues how the female experience in the home and their competence in social work have influenced the electorate to make better decisions for the community. “But we do declare it to be our deliberate judgment that her presence in politics armed with the power to enforce her demand, has been substantially and distinctively for the benefit of politics and of society” (Borah 59). This gives Joseph V. Denney, the confidence to declare that: “[t]he movement to secure equal suffrage is part of the larger movement to realize the democratic ideal in human society. Its growth is coincident with society's growing esteem for the individual” (Denney 38). Clearly, suffragists summoned their audience to grasp that this issue is not only about women and not even only about U.S. politics, but about a matter having direct consequences for mankind. Not acting merely on women's or on American's behalf, but of universal human advancement, suffragists urged: “[It] is of vital importance to the advance of civilized life” to enfranchise women (Eastman, *Is Woman Suffrage Important* 51). By universalizing their cause, they endowed their audience with a sense of mission. This sounded flattering to the general American public, at the time, which was easily attracted to the notion of American exceptionalism and its self-imposed purpose to better humanity.¹⁰⁷

Progress of female suffrage particularly in the Western states bespoke suffragists' vision of Enlightenment ideals and universal perpetual progress. Ida Husted Harper, founded the woman suffrage society of Indiana in 1887. As a journalist and writer, she joined the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1896. Eventually, Harper assumed the position of the movement's historian. Together with Susan B. Anthony, she worked on the

¹⁰⁷ The following pamphlets emphasize the vote's social mission and its contribution to the advancement of the home and community. See also Frederick Alanson Randle, *Woman Among the Illustrious. A Lecture.* (2nd Ed.) Chicago: The Lever, 1886; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Matriarchate or Mother-Age* 1891; Ellen Henrietta Richards, *The Relation of College Women to Progress in Domestic Science. A Paper Presented to the Association of Collegiate Alumnae.* October, 1890. Albert Jeremiah Beveridge, *A Tribute to The American Woman*, Francis E. Willard. Indianapolis, Indiana: Levery Bros. 1905; Mrs. Barclay Hazard, *How Women Can best Serve the State; An Address before the State Federation of Women's Clubs*, Troy N.Y., October 30, 1907.

voluminous *History of Women Suffrage*. With diligence, she reported on the international enfranchisement of women, but also on the domestic march of the female vote.¹⁰⁸ The progressivism, the future orientation of those states was underlined in every possible way – from the advanced legislation that had been passed to its practical effects in life. “The first recognition of the principle [of universal] suffrage by any state,” suffragists point out, “was made by progressive Kansas,” which entered the Union with school suffrage in its Constitution in 1861 (Harper, *Six States* 27). Wyoming’s determination to civil equality is glorified by reference in a telegram to the fact that the legislators of the state had fired upon their admission to the union: “We will remain out of the Union a hundred years rather than come in without woman suffrage” (Harper 28). “Washington with 1,142,000 population, and California with 2,377,000, have shown their desire to put the political equality idea into practice,” Ida Harper, an Indiana suffrage committee head who later became a reporter and historian on the whole movement, praises the advancement of Washington and California. She mentions their populations as a repudiation of often pledged accusations that the vote was given only to lowly populated states. Due to this, the opponents said, they cannot be taken as successful experiments of suffrage. Yet, suffragists were convinced that the voting West would exercise “pressure behind [the ballot and it] will become more acute and the larger and older states will have to take more serious notice of its existence” (Harper 26 *Six States*). Colorado was cited as a successful example of full suffrage. Its women were ardently involved in political life, even taking up offices and helping to pass laws that clearly bettered social hot spots such as child labor, general labor safety, poverty and so on. Idaho did not even go through a great struggle for the female vote. According to suffragists, and shortly after becoming a state in 1890, it appointed three women for the

¹⁰⁸ Further works by Ida Husted Harper promoting the progressive and civilizing effect of the female vote: *The World Movement for Woman Suffrage*, New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1911; *How Six States Won Woman Suffrage*, New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1912; “Woman Suffrage Throughout the World,” New York: *The North American Review*, September, 1907; Biographical information: “Ida A. Husted Harper.” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2011. Web. 31 Oct. 2011, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/255744/Ida-A-Husted-Harper>>; Nancy Baker Jones, “A Forgotten Feminist: The Early Writings of Ida Husted Harper, 1878-1894,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 73, no. 2 (June 1977): 79-101.

Legislature, one State Superintendent of Instruction, fifteen county superintendents and four county treasurers. The impact of the female voters was tangible since they “constitute 42 per cent of the population and by the official statistics they cast 40 per cent of the vote in Boise, the capital, and over 35 per cent in the rest of the State” (Harper 30). The resoluteness of Idaho’s women to exercise their right of elective franchise is illustrated by the “hardships of getting to the polls thru the snow and over the mountains [which] can hardly be described. Women sometimes ride twenty miles on horseback to vote” (Harper 31).¹⁰⁹

Empiricism, as I am going to show in several examples, was used to fortify suffragists’ claims as in the case of the success of the vote in the West. Suffragists prepared careful statistics and gathered opinions from first hand experience. They aimed at letting the facts speak for themselves. In 1900, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Gail Laughlin to the U.S. Industrial Commission. This prompted NAWSA to hire Laughlin as a field organizer in the West, managing state suffrage campaigns. Later in life, she championed the Equal Rights Amendment and served in the state Senate of Maine. As part of the Commission, however, the New York lawyer, specializing in tariff law, dedicated herself to the working conditions of immigrant female domestic laborers.¹¹⁰ Her pamphlet titled *Measuring up Equal Suffrage or Women Suffrage and Prosperity* gave detailed descriptions of the achievements made possible by the help of the female ballot. Laughlin enumerates accomplishments and supports them with numbers from the Census. In an answer to the antis’ accusation that suffrage, where introduced, was retrogressive, Gail Laughlin fires back statistical data:

¹⁰⁹ See also: Thaddeus Peter Thomas, *Why Equal Suffrage Has Been a Success: Part of An Address Delivered to The Equal Suffrage League of Baltimore*. New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1912; “How the Vote Has Affected Womanhood in Colorado,” *Westminster Review*, March 19005, 163: 266-71; “Woman Suffrage in Colorado,” *Public* 14: 981-2. 1908, 22. George Creel and Ben B. Lindsey, “An Authoritative Estimate of Results in Colorado,” *Era*. October 1902, 10: 409-16; Frank Stauffenberg, “Woman Suffrage in Idaho,” *Harper's Bazar*. 33: 220-1. May 26, 1900.

¹¹⁰ “Women Wielding Power: Pioneer Female State Legislators: Gail Laughlin (1868-1952)” *The National Women's History Museum*. Web. 31 Oct. 2011, <<http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/legislators/Maine.html>>; The only study on Laughlin’s support of the Equal Rights Amendment: Ruth Sargent, *Gail Laughlin, ERA's Advocate*, Portland, Me.: House of Falmouth Publishers, 1979.

“Reference to the United States Census Report for 1900 reveals the absolute falsity of these statements. The census figures show that there has been a large percentage of increase in population and in amount of capital invested both in manufacturing and in farm property in every one of the equal suffrage States since the granting of suffrage to women,” she writes and provides her statements with numbers (Laughlin 1).

The success of suffrage in the western states was claimed by the movement as a clear example of the successful application of Enlightenment thought. Not only were ideas of popular rule put into practice, the implementation of the laws passed was done scientifically and most beneficently to the population. Benjamin Barr Lindsey was a juvenile judge based in Denver Colorado, and a Progressive Era reformer. He made a name for himself advocating the passing of child labor laws. Ben Lindsey, as he was known, was certain that female suffrage through those laws had a much greater impact.¹¹¹ In his words, the laws were considered to be the triumph of reason in the world community:

Colorado has *the sanest, the most humane, the most progressive*, most scientific laws relating to the child to be found on any Statute book in the world. And of these laws which drew such praise from impartial sociologists, not one but has come into Operation since Colorado's adoption of equal suffrage in 1893; not one but owes either its inception or its success to the voting woman (Lindsey 89).¹¹²

When suffragists measured the results of the vote, they defended their success in terms of refinement and the intellectualization of the family and community. No more chit-chat or gossip was present in the minds of women, but rather rational conversations with their spouses on the betterment of social conditions. When it comes to the home itself, women's approach to their obligations had been met with more energy and intelligent interests due to their participation in public affairs. Women's and “culture clubs,” as well as political clubs thrived in almost every town of the state. Their goal was the intelligent study of measures, conditions and remedies for community issues (Lindsey 89). The achievement of suffrage gradually state by state was the organizational strategy of the winning plan. Rhetorically, however Catt's “Will of the People” reveals the same Enlightenment features that can be identified throughout suffrage

¹¹¹ D'Ann Campbell, “Judge Ben Lindsey and the Juvenile Court Movement, 1901-1904,” *Arizona and the West*, 1976, Vol. 18 Issue 1, 5-20.

¹¹² Emphasis added.

argumentation. This in turn helps us to follow the Enlightenment principles embedded within the debates.

Along with emphasizing the importance of the vote as a right and a matter of representation, suffragists simultaneously argued that enfranchisement was the natural, just and inevitable consequence of the nation's liberal progress. "The new-fashioned woman demands such power as a final Step in her gradual emancipation" writes Phelan in 1910. Denney, for example, draws attention to the fact that if full political recognition was not the logical end, what would have been the reason for granting women partial rights. To expose the irrationality of suffrage opponents, Denney presents their arguments as inherently illogical. Suffragists demonstrated that concept in this debate. Antis' arguments cannot pass the exam by universal reason. If the vote was not the culmination, gradual steps towards it should have been denied to women. She should not have been admitted to higher education, she should have stayed in complete subjugation when united with a man, and "the humane progress of legislation and legal interpretation" should not have given women specific rights within the marriage (Denney 38). "Logically," Denney demands, "the granting of partial suffrage calls for the granting of complete suffrage" (Denney 38). To suffragettes, the vote was the completion of a process they so often claimed to be a part of — the application of revolutionary / Enlightenment ideas to reality. That is why according to Denney:

It is no wonder that American women, who have been given a partial franchise, also want the logical process completed. They have been given rights in larger and larger measure; they have been permitted a more public sphere of ordinary activity; economic pressure has turned millions of them into bread-winners; and the social Status of all of them has been so altered that the last step must now be taken or all previous Steps are meaning-less. They have been educated up to the very point when the last prize is just before them, and it must not be denied. They have been permitted to attain a State of self-competency, and the one mark of self-competency—the badge of sovereignty, the highest governmental recognition of individual personality—must now be conferred.

Without the vote, the development of women and society as a whole would be imperiled, or in Denney's words would lose its meaning. The only further natural and logical step is full political participation now that women have the education, the experience,,have become wage earners and very often breadwinners. They need to be recognized both in their individuality and their entirety. The sign of this recognition is the vote. The suffragists' president, Catt, also uses this common practice of exposing antis' argument on behalf of

partial suffrage as contrary to reason. She points out, that it is not only logic that the antis' rhetoric lacks. Fear, not reason, is the driver of their thoughts and actions:

The fears of Mrs. Humphry Ward tell her it is consistent with the natural and divine order of things that women should vote in municipal elections, but contrary to God and Nature for them to vote for members of Parliament. An anti-suffragist not long since made a public plea that the Board of education in the City of New York should be elective, and that women as well as men should elect its members; yet her fears told her that the highest order of society would be overturned should the same women vote for mayor (Catt 46).

Catt ridicules the statements of her antagonists who are shown to argue with metaphysical claims. The anti-suffragette referred to is the president of the Anti-Suffrage League – a brilliant English intellectual who was tremendously influential in American anti-suffragism. Although the promotion of higher education was one of her major concerns in life, Mrs. Humphry Ward campaigned against the female vote. She is shown here by Catt to be representative of the contradictory political views of the antis. There is even ridicule that can be felt in Catt's words, when commenting on antis' inconsistency. This inconsistency, however, is instrumentalized by suffragists as a source of self-confidence. They boldly declared “we are holding the Gibraltar rock of reason on this question,” as Elizabeth Cady Stanton claims to be on the side of the Enlightenment, addressing the National Woman Suffrage Convention in Washington DC (Stanton 250). After exposing such an illogical contradiction within the antis' argumentation, suffragists address another claim of their opponents using a pamphlet written by their president that declared — women are truly represented in the present government. To this Carrie Chapman Catt answers, armed with a core Enlightenment understanding of state power.

Having named their claims, suffragists call on action. The emphasis on the present as a unique chance to shape the course of the future is a further rhetorical tool, going back to the American Revolution, favored by suffragists. “And we urge our demand *now*, because you have the opportunity and the power to take this onward step in legislation,” suffragists call upon decisive action, addressing the members of Congress (Address 1866 Buhle 227). And likewise: “We ... conjure you to act not for the passing hour, not with reference to transient benefits, but to do now the one grand deed that shall mark the

progress of the century — proclaim EQUAL RIGHTS TO ALL (Address 1866 Buhle 229). In an astonishing resemblance to probably the most powerful revolutionary pamphlet, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, suffragists link the mission and cause to the significance of the present moment, as we saw it in earlier references: "The nations of the earth stand watching and waiting to see if our Revolutionary idea, 'all men are created equal,' can be realized in government. Crush not, we pray you, the million hopes that hang on our success" (Address 1866 Buhle 227).

Suffragists warn that the preamble's sacred principles are at stake. Their fulfillment in the U.S. may not be accomplished. They liked to position themselves in the context of the Revolution, also reminding the public that the American form of government, being new and unprecedented, is an experiment. A social experiment, that still needs to be proven as apt for American conditions. In that sense, they also fired warnings in their pamphlets and emphasized the testing of the character of their society. The ballot was another part of that trial. In Max Eastman's words, when he discusses the importance of the female vote referring to the American Revolution and its political products, he traces the significance of female suffrage back to the "greatest hypothesis in the history of moral and political science [which] was set up in this laboratory [the U.S.], and our business is to try out the experiment until the last breath of hope is gone out of us" (Eastman, *Is Woman Suffrage Important* 50). And the present situation is a serious threat to this venture: "Now to discriminate against an approximate half of the Citizens [...] is to betray our hypothesis and destroy our experiment at its crucial point" (Eastman, *Is Woman Suffrage Important* 50).¹¹³

Isabella Beecher Hooker's and Carrie Chapman Catt's documents were two of many suffragist voices in the votes-for-women debate. They represented two notable stages of suffrage ideology. Initially, advocates of the vote demanded it as something that was promised to them by the Enlightenment in America and legalized by the founding documents. With the dawn of the Progressive Era, however, they yielded their demands to the spirit of the time

¹¹³ See also: Matilda Joselyn Gage. *The Dangers of the Hur*; The Women's National Liberal Convention 1890.

and presented female enfranchisement as a natural feature of the development that society was undergoing. Suffragists went a step further and argued that the vote would improve the nation on its way to progress. The voicing of further suffrage actors aimed to illustrate the pervasiveness of these ideas. Suffragist voices were united here in three argumentative pillars: their own modern and enlightened image, their concept of rights and their firm belief of the female vote as a precondition for the further advancement of American society. In doing so, suffragists hoped to reform the present day political system. They embraced ideas, which were articulated in the American Revolution and simultaneously characterized the Enlightenment in America. The advocates of female enfranchisement realized the powerful potential of Enlightenment rhetoric and used it in full scale to gain their full social inclusion and political recognition. With this, suffragists serve as a fine example of the first part of the dialectic of Enlightenment in America. Dealing with the other side of the debate, the anti-suffragist voices will show, however, how those Enlightenment ideas also gave fertile ground for arguing the opposite.

IV. Enlightenment and Exclusion: Anti-suffrage Voices

So far we have dealt with the first part of the dialectic: the utilization of Enlightenment principles on behalf of the women's suffrage movement and their fight for inclusion into U.S. democracy. A little known fact is that the Enlightenment was also instrumentalized for the ideology of opposition to women's suffrage. In other words, the dark side of the Enlightenment, which so far has not been approached on its own, will be presented through the discriminatory but rationally supported notions of anti-suffrage rhetoric. My analysis here is also divided into two parts. First, I will examine two anti-suffrage documents in an exemplary manner, Justin D. Fulton's, *Woman vs. The Ballot* from 1869 and Josephine Dodge's *Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights* from 1914 – the first being a Baptist preacher and the latter, President of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. These two texts provide general discourse patterns in anti-suffrage rhetoric, such as the perception of rights, progress, science and advancement of civilization, common sense, etc. In the second part of my survey I am going to identify those patterns and support their pervasiveness by giving voice to further anti-suffragists. The additional anti-suffrage actors, (among others) Cardinal James Gibbons, President Cleveland, Emily Bissell, Annie Riley Hale, etc., are concisely contextualized biographically, and by their actions for the cause. This structural approach will show how anti-suffrage voices from myriad socio-political backgrounds unanimously reached out to the Enlightenment's set of ideas to galvanize their agenda.

Similar to Jane J. Camhi, my research makes me believe that pamphlets, such as those written by Fulton and Dodge, are excellent sources for eliciting antis' beliefs. They were circulated on behalf of the local anti-suffrage association and mirrored the official position of the movement. This enables me to easily generalize when dealing with anti-suffrage ideology. It was centered on major arguments that kept being revisited throughout the history of suffrage opposition. That is why what may seem to be a big leap between the dates of the two texts does not omit any rhetorical development or

diversification. Due to the fact that writings were reprinted and re-disseminated regardless of their age, with a new date and publisher, makes it almost impossible to determine the exact original date. For this reason, the following antis whom I give voice to are united by their line of argumentation and cannot appear in a chronological order. They take up again, and thus confirm, the omnipresence of notions stated in the documents by Fulton and Dodge. Rhetorically, anti-suffrage voices serve to exemplify the second part of the dialectic of Enlightenment in America: the usage of the Enlightenment as a set of beliefs, a norm and a process – just as we have defined it here and seen it applied to the suffrage documents — leading to the opposition to and the actual exclusion of women from their right to vote and, thus, from participation in U.S. democracy.

The reason why I chose Fulton's and Dodge's texts as examples rests not only with their representative argumentation. Their background in terms of text-pragmatics was also widely borrowed within the anti-suffrage camp. Justin Dewey Fulton's document derives from the early opposition to the vote. It came from the pulpit and was delivered by male speakers who were often clerical. Although opposition from the pulpit accompanied antis throughout their campaign, they saw the need and managed during the Progressive Era to organize professionally and deliver their views to society publicly. Josephine Dodge's text originates from that ripe stage of anti-suffrage activism. When antis not only wrote and even spoke in person, but were also backed by a serious organization headed by women.

IV. 1. Justin Dewey Fulton:

“Woman as God Made Her: The True Woman: To Which is Added: Woman vs. Ballot” (1869)

Reverend Dr. Justin Dewey Fulton was an actively engaged pastor of the Union Temple Baptist Church in Boston, who founded several churches in the Northwest. He was a devoted foe of Catholicism and female suffrage. His lecture “Woman vs. Ballot,” was an outgrowth to his lecture series *Woman as*

God Made Her. Those series were expanded with *Woman as God Made Her: The True Woman*, elaborating on the genuine qualities of a woman according to the Protestant-Victorian tradition within which he stood.¹¹⁴ As someone probably compelled by the ever more frequent demands for female enfranchisement, Fulton expanded his lecture series one last time by addressing the problem directly in the extension “Woman vs. Ballot.” The expanded lecture series emerged in its full length in 1869 without an exact note in the preface as to when the previous parts were published. *Woman vs. Ballot* made it on its own, becoming a pamphlet circulated by the anti-suffrage movement. Looking back to 1869 helps us to temporally profile the document in its historical context. We are at the time when anti-suffragists were called remonstrants and had not yet adopted the designation of anti-suffragists, pointing at a more professional organization.¹¹⁵ As Susan B. Anthony pointed out, early opposition to the female vote came from the pulpit. *Woman vs. The Ballot* is a testament to those early anti-suffrage voices. Later, anti-suffrage clerics from various denominations built on the Enlightenment based tactics of their predecessors. Among numerous documents from the period, this pamphlet is of special consequence for presenting the dialectic here. It illustrates most vividly one of the evident oppressive instrumentalizations of the Enlightenment in order to prevent women from asserting their right to vote. Moreover, the text will also prove representative of religious argumentation, typical for the Enlightenment in America, where ministers interweave the Enlightenment into their rhetoric by drawing on experimental reasoning, turning the voice of reason into the voice of God, and even directly using Enlightenment terminology. A further instance of this rhetorical technique by other clericals, such as the Catholic Cardinal Gibbons, will also be given.

¹¹⁴ Information on J.D. Fulton is scarce. A short biography, focusing on his involvement with his church can be found in Baillie, Lauren. *American Biographical Index*. London: Saur, 1993. A search in *The New York Times* archives also offer various articles on Fulton’s political activities, from his fierce opposition to catholicism “Fulton Warns Catholics” (1894), to temperance “The National Temperance Society” (1869), *The New York Times*, <<http://www.nyt.com>>. October 10, 2010.

¹¹⁵ “Remonstrants” is the technical term used to refer to opponents of the female ballot in the Nineteenth century. It took a while for the antis to organize an opposition. Considering themselves women of virtue, they despised public speaking and activities outside of their proper sphere (Jablonksy 123).

If we take the text-pragmatics into consideration, the very type of document is revealing. A lecture, be it in a written form as in this case, is a talk, an address given before an audience. It aims, above all, at instructing. Put simply, a lecture is in its essence a lesson, literary or figurative, in front of a class or audience. This communicative situation characterizes both sides involved. Fulton here is the lecturer and teacher. As a lecturer, he enjoyed higher education, gathered more experiences, and had arrived at more profound conclusions than many others. This background qualifies him, so to speak, to give this lecture. For him to take on the challenge of a lecture, means that he sees himself as someone who has broader and deeper knowledge on the matter than others. He structures his lecture logically into three parts – a narrative technique, which exposes the explanatory and simultaneously the educative character of his document. He does not postulate, however. Rather, Fulton asks his audience to “inquire,” i.e. to explore along with him the present position of women (Fulton 251). “Having found it, we shall see,” Fulton sketches a collective investigation, together with his readers (Fulton 251). Together, they will “look at the facts,” (Fulton 247) consider what “[a]natomists tell us,” (Fulton 241) and “think of Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton” (Fulton 253). At the end, they will be able to see, i.e. to understand, female suffrage better than they did before. As a lecturer, furthermore, Fulton is confident in his skill to explain a complicated matter understandably: “[t]he ballot box is an expression of power,” he writes. But being a lecturer also means that Fulton is able to pass on, to communicate that knowledge to a wider audience. Thus, he integrates his audience in a reasonable discourse, in which he evidently plays the role of the educator. These characteristics make him, in the eyes of his audience, a person of reason. He tries to convey his rationale to them. In other words, Fulton, as a lecturer, aspires to make his audience more reasonable, more intelligent and even more enlightened, if you will. Fulton’s document shares the spatial and temporal orientation of Hooker’s and Catt’s texts. He compares the position of women around the world with the American reality at his time. The preacher guides the listeners through time describing the civil

evolution of women under Christianity, moving temporally from the past to the present.

The situation of a lecture is also indicative of the audience. It could be aimed at literate citizens, who are able to take political action, i.e., voters – at that time only white and newly enfranchised black males. The very fact that they take part in a lecture turns them, ideally, into a group of intrigued and curious citizens. They are interested in the topical issues of their society. Attending a lecture or a lesson shows them as people willing to learn and go deeper in the discussed matter. Just as the lecturer aspires to pass on reason and intellect to them, they in turn aspire to take it on and understand the matter deeply while possibly arriving at higher levels of reason. Essentially, they are engaged in a lesson and in an act of being taught. Very often lectures spur a discussion or raise questions. This in turn, intensifies the communication and the exchange of reason. These aspects speak for a lecture, first and foremost, as an act of communication — a fundamental act of Enlightenment.

Even the first sentence of the introduction to Fulton's lecture has it: "Three facts stand in the way of Woman's being helped by the Ballot – God, Nature, and Common Sense" (Fulton 215). At the beginning he presents the structure of his lecture, which characterizes its explicative and argumentative function. The three main arguments logically complement each other, making up the lecture's three parts. They also reveal the argumentative development of the main thesis. While the introduction asserts God as the chief point of reference and the universal source of truth, the other arguments derive from the initial will of God – who Fulton interestingly enough, calls the "Omniscient Mind", (i.e., God as reason). God being equated with reason alludes to the Enlightenment as a basis for the author's values. He founds his thesis not on something mystical and ambiguous such as what the mere idea of God may be, but on reason as something that any one of his audience members can grasp. This attitude hints at Fulton's modern worldview.

With this modern self-understanding in his time, Fulton, follows the Omniscient Mind and invites his readers to "inquire what sphere God assigned to woman. Having found it, we shall see that Nature and Common Sense unite

in making manifest the wisdom in adhering to the Divine Plan” (Fulton 215). The organization of Fulton’s lecture resembles a deliberate, almost scientifically prepared study geared at rational persuasion rather than an emotional speech by a cleric expounding passionate assumptions. Just as the suffragists’ writings intended to persuade their audience with plausible and tangible facts, so does Fulton, inviting his audience to follow his logical train of thought and arrive at the same conclusion with him – a strategy that Enlightenment philosophers invented.

The catalyst for investigating the causes, which brought women to their present condition is typical for the explicative evolution of a thesis. Fulton simultaneously aims to educate and broaden the horizons of his audience. In this way he does not only state his upcoming arguments but develops them together with his audience. Undoubtedly, this technique of communication strives to make his thesis more convincing. The explicative evolution of the thesis, together with Fulton’s obvious aim to educate, profiles his self-understanding one step further. It does not dare to say that Fulton, just as the anti-suffragists mentioned above as well as many others, saw himself as an educator of the public who brings Enlightenment to society and shows the right and reasonable path.

In the first part, “The Scriptural Argument,” Fulton draws on the Old and New Testaments in order to explain why and how woman was positioned in her own sphere by the will of God. He then goes on to discuss her position within Christianity. What makes Fulton’s line of reasoning so intriguing is that he does quite a liberal, Enlightenment-influenced reading of and argumentation with the Scripture. First he explains how, in the Old Testament, God ordained woman in her sphere. In Eden, Fulton argues, woman enjoyed equality with man, but ever since she committed transgression and “opened the gate to the enemy of souls” (Fulton 221), God punished her with pain in childbearing: “henceforth she should be subject of the will and pleasure of man, sinking her own individuality, and merging it in that of her husband” (Fulton 222).¹¹⁶ For

¹¹⁶ Fulton supports his point by quoting from the Bible: “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Fulton 221).

Fulton, this position of woman has endured and is still valid in his days. Moreover, it had been ordained by the “Omniscient Mind” - “[I]t does not become to us to discuss it. It is right because God did it” (Fulton 222). It is noteworthy that the reference to God bears a striking resemblance to the one to universal reason as a criterion and single source of truth. From this follows that woman’s position has been preordained ever since the days of the Old Testament by *God, the supreme intellect*. The reference to *reason* (equated with God) as a norm and active canon is telling. Moreover, Fulton here also exposes the limits of the Enlightenment. The Enlightened critique of itself ends at this moment, when the postulates stated by reason are not to be questioned but undoubtedly followed.

Moving on to the New Testament, Fulton states that even “Christ made no attempt to break down these original arrangements” (Fulton 222). Asking why Christ did not make any changes in her condition, Fulton comes up with a direct response (Fulton 222): “He knew that without *a change in woman herself*, no external changes in her condition could be of any benefit to her. He recognized the great fact that *she herself must be educated to a better life*, that she must have a character which in itself would command respect, and make her worthy of a higher place and a larger liberty.” Notice the following reference to the foundational documents of the American Revolution: “Truly has been said, ‘Institutions, of themselves, can never confer freedom upon a people. They must be free men, capable of liberty, and then they will be able not only to make their own institutions, but keep and defend them also’” (Fulton 224).

Kant would have loved the above lines of reasoning, especially coming from a preacher, for they draw exactly on his assumptions (as the suffragist writings do), in a step toward autonomous thinking paving the way towards liberty. In Fulton’s lines we can see a belief in the individual emancipation of woman (“a change in woman herself”). In other words, the transformation to a free person cannot be the result of “external changes.” It should be a woman’s conscious decision. Following the Enlightenment tradition, the crucial role which education plays in this process of emancipation is also vital for Fulton’s

scriptural argumentation, let alone the allusion to the foundational documents' liberal beliefs of people's sovereignty over governments that these governments reflect. Moreover, Fulton's liberal reading of Scripture presents Christ as the enlightened figure: "In this direction [i.e., the emancipation of woman on her own account by breaking the bonds of her supposed ignorance] Jesus labored" (Fulton 224).¹¹⁷

Proceeding with his persuasion, he focuses on the role of the father as the head of the family: "The recognition given to man as the head of the household, involves the loss of woman's individuality [...] God made man in his own image, and woman was created to be his helpmeet" (Fulton 227). Quite remarkably, this old-world view of patriarchic social order is now rationally justified by the American social theory of paternalism. Dominant in the nineteenth century, paternalism ties back to the concept of a reasonably supported natural aristocracy quite typical of the Enlightenment in the U.S. that takes social inequality and inequality within the family for granted.¹¹⁸ As a consequence, hierarchy was shown to be self-evident on the grounds of property and status. The household and the family were seen as key elements of society, which ensured its stability and moral virtue. As a whole, communities relied on interdependent human relations, i.e., a system of reciprocal obligations. Women were regarded as members of the household, beneath male supremacy. The best part of rationalizing this oppressive ideology was its consideration as a "positive good," or, in Fulton's words, "a glory" (Fulton 228). Fulton's document gives us a window to the reality of nineteenth century-America, where the father, as the educated enlightened patriarch, provided for the financial and virtuous progress of his family. His

¹¹⁷ Equating God to reason, Fulton stands within the tradition of liberal and natural theology. Some examples are:

T.S. Preston, *God and Reason: Lectures upon the Primary Truths of Natural Religion*, New York: Robert Coddington, 1884; Regis Jolivet, *The God of Reason*, New York: Hawthorn Books, 1958;

Scholars who examine the perception of God as reason: Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982; John E. Smith, *Reason and God: Encounters of Philosophy with Religion*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961; Ed L. Miller, *God and Reason: A Historical Approach to Philosophical Theology*, New York: Macmillan, 1972;

¹¹⁸ Louis de Bonald, *On Divorce*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993.

wise and merciful guidance, according to this notion, secured the prosperity of its members, which included his wife.

In this sense, Fulton continues, paternalism has granted woman the right to be a woman. This argument, as a matter of fact, is one of the essential factors of the remonstrants and later the anti-suffragists in favor of the status quo. We have it in the early document at hand and we will see it again in Josephine Dodge's text, which was penned in the heyday of the anti-suffrage movement. "Woman's right to be a woman implies the right to be loved, to be respected as a woman, to be married, to bring forth to the world the product of that love; and woman's highest interests are promoted by defending and maintaining this right" (Fulton 228).

Does this not sound like quite an Enlightenment way of affirming women's strictly prescribed role and its obligations as a matter of rights? In support of this stance is the idea of protecting this right (to be a woman) as the highest priority, just as suffragists stress the importance of securing the right to vote. The formulation is not only rhetorical but also ideological and practical. As the representative documents have shown, suffragists argued for the ballot and for representation as a matter of *rights*. However, it turns out, as we see from Fulton's text, that their opponents appropriated for themselves the same idea of rights in order to defend women's confinement to a restricted sphere of action for the sake of a putative divine order of things. With regard to the rights argument, the Enlightenment resides in both camps. If the same ideas are used to justify mutually exclusive contentions, this points to the dialectic at work.

Antis do not view this female social position as oppressive or backward, stating, through Fulton's text that "no charge could be more absurd" (Fulton 228). On the contrary, they, and in our instance Fulton, claim Christianity has always secured women's development: "Woman owes to Christianity all she enjoys," Fulton postulates (Fulton 228). To prove his point, he embarks on a diachronic survey of the condition of women in different religions and societies. Fulton's firm belief in progress as we know it from the Enlightenment is tangible in the words, "In old savage and pagan tribes the severest burdens of physical toil were laid upon her. She was valued for the

same reasons that men prize their most useful animals” (Fulton 228). Thus, in uncivilized (unenlightened) societies woman is not even acknowledged in her humanity, but reduced to hard work and no education — “the education of her mental faculties is neglected” (Fulton 228). Not only this – Fulton then enumerates all possible kinds of “humiliations” that women in those “savage, pagan tribes” are forced to endure, running the gamut from not being allowed to walk or eat with him, to being obliged to worship him as a God on earth, or being burned alive should she outlive him (Fulton 228). It is the denial of acquiring knowledge, however, which for Fulton constitutes the harshest of all humiliations: “Women are not allowed to learn to read, as a result there can be no solid foundation laid for future influence” (Fulton 230). The firm confidence in the spread and power of knowledge for improving life is what distinguishes civilized from uncivilized societies. The contrast is deliberate: Fulton’s self-understanding as an enlightened educator of women, as opposed to the unenlightened, obscure pagan tribes, mirrors the general wisdom of U.S.-American society in the nineteenth century.

If in “pagan India,” Fulton contends, women are permitted to worship along with men, “in Mohammedan countries it is a popular tradition that women are forbidden paradise” (Fulton 230), which he sees as “a horrible and blasphemous tradition” (Fulton 230). In China, he reminds his audience, a woman is nothing but a beast of burden. He moves then on to the Occident, but “even in the refined shining ages of Greece and Rome” — the civilizations which nourished the American republic, during their intellectual and artistic zenith, “even then and there,” he stresses again, “woman was but the abject slave of man, the object of his ambition, avarice, lust and power” (Fulton 231). Fulton does not even spare from criticism the social conditions of women in Great Britain, where lower-class women were being exploited in industry.

“Do we turn to America,” – Fulton reaches the logical climax of his survey – “we find that in the providence of God her fortune has been advanced and improved by the extension of the area of free government, and by the diffusion of the principles of the Gospel of Christ [the omniscient mind BM]” (Fulton 233). No doubt Fulton thinks of Christianity and the American

social order, with their strictly assigned sexual roles, as the most liberal and advanced ones. Though admitting the poor situation of African American women, he is also convinced that under the aegis of Christianity and in America they will inevitably prosper (Fulton 231). Fulton sees his present time as the moment of fulfilled Enlightenment at its climax in the American context. He believes in the moldable future. Upcoming generations, building upon the present achievements, will ensure steady progress of reason for all, even for African American females. At the end of his survey, Fulton even boldly concludes, “Nothing more surely distinguishes the savage state from the civilized, the East from the West, Paganism from Christianity, antiquity from the Middle Ages, the Middle Ages from modern times, than the condition of woman” (Fulton 232). And the condition of women hitherto established in America, remonstrants like to believe, bespeaks the advancement of civilization.

The United States as a country and Christianity as a religion are supposed to lead the world community, for “in all this land, woman’s right to be a woman is recognized” (Fulton 233). This right is not regarded as an imposed measure, but rather as an innate one belonging to woman by birth. In other words, the exclusion from political life is here stated as an inalienable right to stay out of the lawmaking process. That is why Fulton argues, “The right which exempts her from certain things which men must endure, grows out of her right to be a woman” as well as “We feel that it is *her right to be relieved* from the necessity [...] of doing many things which it is manly in man to do” (Fulton 235).¹¹⁹ Needless to say, among these “manly things” which women were supposedly *freed from* was voting. By using the Enlightenment’s concepts, remonstrants transformed disenfranchisement into liberation. The enlightenment-grounded rationale of exclusion makes an inalienable, fundamental right out of the imposed protective benevolence towards women.

Throughout his scriptural argument we saw understandings ordained by God, which Fulton convincingly backs up with core Enlightenment principles in a reading of the Bible clearly influenced by liberalism (and on behalf of

¹¹⁹ Emphasis added.

female exclusion from U.S. democracy). Fulton however, does not culminate his argument with the Bible. The Baptist preacher proceeds by referring to Nature (another major pillar in the Enlightenment cosmology) to empirically reinforce his religious assumptions. According to him, it is Nature, which compels society to adhere to the divine plan. Fulton borrows the scientific fervor of the Enlightenment, as described earlier, in its full power in order to provide empirical proof for female exclusion from the public sector. The old religious beliefs now seem evident in woman's physiology:

"Anatomists tell us that in the frame or skeleton there is a marked difference of general conformation in the two sexes; that in the male there is a larger chest and breathing apparatus, which affects the whole organization, forming a more powerful muscular system, and producing *a physical constitution, which predestines him to bold enterprises and daring exploits. The woman, being differently constructed, finds it natural to contest herself in the house*, removed from the gaze of the world, and from rude contact with its jostling cares" (Fulton 241).¹²⁰

Citing advancements in medical science, Fulton explains in detail the differences between the sexes.¹²¹ The greater they are the easier it is to develop the rationale of female exclusion. Fulton's words testify this. Remonstrants believed that masculinity and femininity predicted a two-part professional structure in which the sexes are matched according to the assessment of their physical and intellectual gifts. That is why, Fulton argues, male physicality predestines man to be bold outdoor and daring and woman, true to her own nature, to stay at home and be protected (Jablonsky 37).

Fulton, and antis in general, used scientific references to support what was the most powerful ideology concerning gender roles of the nineteenth century, the separation of male and female spheres: "There is an outside and an inside world. God assigned to man the out-door work, and to woman the home and the housework" (Fulton 11). And if men and women "fill well their

¹²⁰ Emphasis added.

¹²¹ His standpoint is representative of a dominant pseudoscientific discourse in the Nineteenth century. Various experiments and medical checks were made on women, bias toward finding those differences and physical "disadvantages" which were seen as obstacles for their emancipation. The conviction that their intellectual inferiority was as well "proven" by physicians (Camhi 17-9). Further examples of antis' texts employing this scientific rationale: Mary K. Sedgwick, "Scientific Aspects of the Woman Suffrage Question," *Guntton's Magazine*. (1901) 20, 333-44. Gilbert E. Jones, Impediments to Woman Suffrage, *North American Review*. (1909 August) 190: 158-69. Annie N. Meyer, "Woman's Assumption of Sex Superiority," *North American Review*, (1904 Jan.) 178: 103-9.

separate spheres, there is harmony and happiness” (Fulton 241). He toils and provides the needs for the household, and builds the house; she creates the home, she is the homemaker. She cares for the healthy and virtuous raising of the children, for the morals and respectability of the whole family. Due to her duty, remonstrants believed, woman is unique (Fulton 242).

Antis’ understanding of woman’s sphere, ridiculed in a suffrage caricature: a wife being confined and reduced to gossip and fashion as the only occupations suitable for her mind.

The rationale of female physiological uniqueness, and the uniqueness of her obligations, reinforces women’s confinement in a separate sphere. The area exclusively reserved for her is aestheticized and spiritually elevated. The separate female sphere is the basis of a cult – the cult of domesticity.¹²² It rests on four virtues, which the true woman should embody: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Education again comes into play for the purpose of beautifying women’s confinement: A woman needs to “cultivate her mind” (Fulton 242) in order to fulfill gracefully the obligations of her sex. Thus, diligently working and developing herself within her own sphere, woman will be ascribed a high degree of would-be influence: “The home is her kingdom, and the heart of husband or brother is her throne, in that sphere of influence is the most potent instrumentality on earth” (Fulton 246). This rationale becomes even more focused on the anti-suffrage movement as we will see later in the text by Josephine Dodge.

Fulton’s argumentation with Nature compels us to consider the following (as formulated by Thomas Jablonsky): “The separate but equal worlds of men and women grew out of the inevitability of natural law and were desirable in progressive civilization” (Jablonsky 37). Indeed, Jablonsky provides us with a significant point in following the second part of the dialectic. Female isolation in a distinct realm, by arguing with the Enlightenment, is seen as advancement from the simple to the complex. The sharply defined sectors of action were the result of the physiological and

¹²² For more on the cult of domesticity, see: Mary P. Ryan, *American Society and the Cult of Domesticity, 1830-1860*, (Ph.D.) Santa Barbara: U California P 1971., B. Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860”. *American Quarterly* (1966).18:2, 151–174. Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860,” In *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective*, ed. Michael Gordon. 2nd. Ed. (New York: St. Martin’s 1987) 313-33.

rational progress of mankind. As Jane Camhi has noticed, remonstrants and later antis, “counted themselves progressive for applying evolutionary terminology to their cause [...] they claimed to accept the demands of civilization” (Camhi 31). Women’s sphere has become theirs, not by the politics of oppression, but by the divine command, and verified by evolutionary progress (Camhi 31-2).

After nature and the repressive instrumentalization of science, common sense is another routine anti argument and features as the last argumentative part in J. D. Fulton’s lecture. He calls upon facts (“Look at the facts”) (Fulton 247) from everyday life and well-known situations. Fulton also asks who actually wants the ballot and calls for a sober, common sense outlook on reality. He reminds his audience that reverent wives and mothers do not concern themselves with politics and elections. Respectable young ladies do not even want to hear the question being discussed, being afraid of losing their right to be women and the noble duty of the female helpmeet (Fulton 248). Fulton also presents the arguments of the opposition. Suffragists want the ballot to increase female political involvement and take part in the lawmaking process. He puts them on trial to be judged by reason and common sense in order to proclaim their political notions as mistaken. Fulton argues again with women’s aestheticized existence in a parallel sector of society, along with the influence they are said to exert, which in his view, “pervades society” (Fulton 248). With the advancement of her education in the home, – “She is the educator of the home, for she is its soul” (Fulton 255) a woman may contribute and simultaneously influence society in a way that only she is capable of. This is the long-lived ideology of republican motherhood: women serving their duty to the state by rearing up honorable citizens. Once more the Enlightenment fervor for education plays a crucial role: As Fulton puts it: “Very few sons [i.e., reliable citizens] ever grew to be learned whose mother cared not for books” (Fulton 255).

Further on, he undermines another decisive pro-suffrage argument: since the United States is a democracy, what counts is the will of the majority, i.e. the will of the people. In this respect the female ballot will not stand a

chance, he believes. Fulton underlines that, even the advocates of the vote are compelled to follow their common sense and confess that the vast majority of women are not interested. In short, the majority of the people do not wish for the ballot. In essence, this is exactly the way in which Fulton and the anti-suffragists employ the will-of-the-people argument already discussed when dealing with the suffragists. This cornerstone Enlightenment concept — people's will — would become central to the anti-suffrage movement throughout its existence.

Fulton precedes his common sense persuasion with a warning against the possible harmful effects the female ballot might have and suggesting that it might imperil steady progress and even throw society back to a less advanced stage in history. "Give to woman the ballot, and this country is hopelessly given up to Romanism" (Fulton 250). Romanism is not only an offensive reference to Roman Catholicism, but in Fulton's words a quasi pre-democratic, pre-enlightened condition, which the U.S., together with protestant Christianity had already left behind. This line of thinking also exposes the hitherto achieved level of Enlightenment as nourishing American national identity. This also profiles the Enlightenment as a distinctively American Enlightenment. The U.S. is already so progressive that the female vote is not needed. If, however, the vote were to be introduced, the whole advancement of the American Enlightenment would be swayed back to dark, pre-civilized conditions. This is how Fulton sees this happening. Women, he fears, would be easy to manipulate due to their fragile psyche. Cunning interests would direct their votes behind the scenes. Legislation on behalf of the Bible or of the Sabbath, the school system, temperance — i.e., traditional social morality — would be in danger (Fulton 253). In fact, Fulton points out, women's suffrage as a movement jeopardizes democracy and the advancement toward more liberty in the country (i.e., a fuller enfolding of the Enlightenment as a process).

"Think of Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton. [L]et it not be forgotten that they sided against the ballot for the Negro in hopes of getting it for themselves" (Fulton 253). With which he addresses an actual rationale within the suffrage movement. Indeed some women, with a clear racial bias, thought

themselves worthier of the ballot than African American males. Bearing these facts in mind, Fulton reasons on behalf of common sense, “Had woman possessed the ballot, and had the course pursued by the leaders of this movement [...] this wonderful victory over the rebellious spirits of the land had not been achieved” (Fulton 254). Fulton’s latter statement denies the suffragists’ ability to foster progress.

The right to vote also implies the right to defend the vote (another core anti-suffrage assumption), the right “to legislate, to go to Congress, and to take the Presidential chair” (Fulton 250). Fulton wants to make his audience aware of what the franchise actually means. It is a guide through the implications of the ballot in practice. It is common sense (and quite an Enlightenment notion) to take popular ideas (such as the vote for women), as nice as they may sound, and attempt to prove them valid in sober reality. Due to the female lack of physical power and as undeniable lack of experience in all the practical aspects connected to suffrage, it would not be common sense, remonstrants insisted, to enfranchise women totally inexperienced in the matters of the state as they were (Fulton 250). In so doing so, Fulton also reveals the suffrage claim to be irrational and absurd, as if asking somebody to imagine a woman in the presidential chair, having in mind her nature, acting as commander-in-chief (Fulton 250).

Fulton rounds off the “Common-Sense” part, and his lecture, with the Enlightenment’s concepts of freedom and restricted power on behalf of female exclusion: “She is not in captivity.” – he states clearly, unequivocally for a woman’s pursuit her liberty consists “in making [the] home more and more like heaven”, and in this sense, “woman has an open door set before her” (Fulton 259). As to the demand for greater female political influence, Fulton reassures his audience that in the home she has an immense impact, which “in the conflicts of life [...] is felt from the cradle to [the] grave, and the sphere of it is the whole region of humanity” (Fulton 258). “The ballot box,” he cautions, “is an expression of power, but it has its limit. The moment power is all expressed [which would happen if women were enfranchised], however great it be, it becomes contemptible” (Fulton 259). Guiding society without directly

expressing power is another notion which gives away Fulton's argumentation as being based on Enlightenment thought. "Reserve power is omnipotent" and "every wise [i.e., reasonable] general relies more upon the moral power he reserves than upon the strength of the forces in actual collision." A woman sitting on her supposed throne at home does not use power but rational influence. Fulton elevates her position to "the repository of the reserve power of political society" (Fulton 258). Considering the concluding arguments of his lecture, the conviction in female freedom and the belief in restrained power as the best power, it is indispensable to face the following fact. These appropriated concepts speak for the second part of the dialectic of the Enlightenment in America, as they serve to rationalize and justify old, well-known assumptions of female exclusion from participation in the democratic process. Let us now leave behind the time, when antis were invisible and conveyed their protest to the public through male figures. Let us take as an example another anti-suffrage pamphlet. It originates from the time when the rationalization of exclusionary notions was done en vogue with the Progressive Era's all-encompassing program, inspired by the Enlightenment.

IV. 2. Josephine Dodge:

"Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights" (1914)

Many of the notions expressed in the early years of anti-suffragism by individuals such as Fulton, which prevented females from democratic participation by opposing their enfranchisement endured. In fact they formed a red thread that runs all the way through the anti-suffrage ideology. Even when the movement became a statewide professional organization and its arguments varied, the Enlightenment still played a fundamental role. One of its most eminent leaders, whose name has become an epitome of anti-suffragism, was Mrs. Josephine Dodge. Daughter of an American ambassador to Russia and a senator's wife, Dodge was an energetic leader of the New York Association. She was elected president of the national organization, whose foundation she wholeheartedly aided (Marshall 46-51). Following the example of the

Massachusetts anti-suffragist organization, an “Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage” was founded, incorporating several powerful state organizations.¹²³ Meanwhile, woman suffrage had become a national issue that was decisive for both political parties and presidential candidates. Suffragists followed with passionate vigor what would prove to be their winning strategy — the campaign for a constitutional amendment. Around 1914, when the document was drafted, the women’s anti-suffrage movement was in its heyday. Dodge’s editing of *The Woman Protest*, the second nationwide anti newspaper, and writing more than any other author on the progress of women under the existing system, were decisive reasons for analyzing this document.

From the point of view of pragmatics of communication, the essay appeared for the first time in the *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.¹²⁴ Considering the nature of the *Annals*, Dodge’s article was not initially directed at wider audiences, but rather at lawmakers, intellectuals and citizens of higher education. The very fact that Josephine Dodge was able to publish her essay directly in the *Annals* points to her privileged position and interconnectedness in high levels of government. Yet, its language is also simple and understandable, and aspires to give deeper explanations. Dodge’s essay could be taken as the anti-suffrage counterpart to Catt’s article from the standpoint of the author. Both were presidents of popular movements, and both engaged in a very similar text-pragmatic through their respective documents. Dodge’s document, later pamphleteered and turned into a piece of propaganda, fits within the communicative approach of both movements and of course, shares communicative features with Fulton’s text.

Dodge’s text was initially written not only to convince statesmen to oppose the female ballot. Several times, she refers to the arguments of the suffragists when she demands solid evidence for suffrage statements on the

¹²³ The following studies provide useful insights into the formation, organizational structure, and leadership profiles of the anti-suffragist movement: Marshall, Susan. *Splintered Sisterhood, Gender and Class in the Campaign Against Woman Suffrage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. Camhi, Jane Jerome. *Women Against Women. American Anti-Suffragism, 1880 – 1920*. New York: Carlson, 1994. Jablonksy, Thomas. *The Home Heaven, and Mother Party. Female Anti-suffragists in the United States. 1868-1920*. New York: Carlson, 1994.

¹²⁴ See “Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman’s Rights.” American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals*, Nov. 1914.

disadvantaged social female position (Dodge 100) for example, or when she points at the lack of proof on the positive social effect of the vote (Dodge 101). This enables us to look upon her article as an answer to her opponents' views, in an ongoing public debate. The very type of document exposes its intentions and functions. Just as Carrie Chapman Catt did by writing an essay, Dodge puts to test the question of women's suffrage, beginning her text with: "Equal suffrage awaits a trial" (Dodge 99). She offers an analytic, interpretative and critical point of view. Similar to her suffrage opponents, and to her counterpart Fulton, she seeks to educate, broaden the horizon and raise the level of criticism of her audience. The main theme evolves argumentatively.¹²⁵ Throughout her article, Dodge tries to explain the governmental terms that are being brought up in relation to the suffrage question. She makes clear what "equal" vs. "unequal suffrage" means (Dodge 1). The anti-suffrage president fires a warning of how suffrage "menaces the stability of the state" (Dodge 99). The anti-suffrage president interprets for her readers "woman suffrage in its last analysis" (Dodge 100) and demands proof for betterment with the female ballot (Dodge 101).

In contrast to Fulton, who engages his audience in his survey and assures them at the very beginning that together they will arrive at the same conclusion, Dodge takes a distanced approach. There is no address and no interaction. Thus, the document with its plain language could later easily be offered to a variety of literate audiences. Dodge aims to provide an impartial and objective observation based on factual data when she argues with "a survey of the wage earning women of the United States" (Dodge 102), for example, or when she refers to the results of an investigative commission in Massachusetts (Dodge 102). In this way she hides herself behind the intended universality of her arguments. By disguising her role as an author, just as the suffragist president did, Dodge denies the subjectivity of her thoughts as if she seeks to open the minds of her readers instead of passing on her own interpretations. Similar to the documents written by the suffragists and delivered by Fulton,

¹²⁵ The chapter "Pragmatics of Communication" explains why the term propaganda is used to describe suffrage and anti-suffrage communication with the public.

Dodge's authorial behavior characterizes the spatial orientation of her text. It begins with the U.S. context. She compares the unsurpassed welfare advancements of the Eastern states to the insufficient and semi-developed Western states (Dodge 102-3). This becomes evident when Dodge describes the advancements of women under the existing system, or when she warns to not treat men and women equally for the sake of human civilization (Dodge 99). Her temporal orientation is anchored in the present when she praises the privileged position that women already enjoy (Dodge 102-104). But the warning to her readers, that women should stay out of politics or else societies will crumble down, is directed towards the future (Dodge 104). Her monitoring, followed by her breaking down of key concepts of power and universal human advancement, give her a special position. Josephine Dodge stages herself as an arbitrary analyst and as a watchdog of the political system. Such a position is, in the sense of the Enlightenment, necessary for political life. Critical views that are well reasoned and shared with the public foster a process of refinement. The goal here is not only to raise awareness, but to win support for the cause and to change opinion. The anti-suffrage movement, using opinionated written propaganda, provided the most considerable resistance to the female vote. Moreover, as Dodge's text will show, the antis continued to use the Enlightenment as a framework of argumentation.

The very title of Dodge's address is revealing: "Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights." There is hardly a better example of the Enlightenment at work in antis' argumentative strategies. It is thrilling to see both the claim for an extension of the franchise and the exclusion from it argued with one and the same concept — the concept of rights. At the very beginning, clearly invoking the Enlightenment's concept of civil equality, the anti-suffrage president states one of her primary concerns — female suffrage is actually not equal but unequal suffrage. Once adopted, it would destroy the equilibrium of the electorate. Dodge gives the reasons for her concern and presents one of the antis' central arguments: "The voting woman has retained most of the special rights and exemptions accorded her under the man-made laws, while she has failed to discharge the obligations which the voting man

assumes with the elective franchise” (Dodge 99). As the suffragists adopt the idea of citizens’ equality in favor of enfranchisement, so do antis appeal to this core liberal notion in order to block the extension of the ballot. Suffragists believed that inequality was being deprived from the franchise. To antis, there would be nothing more unequal and unfair toward the rest of the electorate than giving women the ballot. Voting (seen by antis as an exemption of power) and simultaneously retaining all protective rights given to her by the benevolent male governments is perceived to be unjust and unequal towards the rest of the citizenry (Dodge 1). The ballot, Dodge argues, entails obligations which women would be unable to fulfill. Those Western states, which have already introduced equal suffrage, according to her, affirm her point. Moreover, the would-be scientific assumptions on female unfitness for public government, which we dealt with in Fulton’s example of antis’ rhetoric still hold true: “Certainly,” Dodge is convinced, “it is unequal suffrage while women retain the *exemptions demanded by their physical nature*, and exercise political power without political responsibility” (Dodge 1).¹²⁶ She maintains that “Such inequality menaces the stability of the state” and jeopardizes the Enlightenment principles as hallowed by the republic (Dodge 99).

After considering the danger for society lurking after the female vote, Josephine Dodge elaborates on the idea of equal suffrage and its practical implications. Equal suffrage, the way suffragists imagine it, the antis’ president is convinced, is an assault on a woman’s most sacred right (to be a woman). “It would be a brutal interpretation of woman’s rights to insist that the *hard-won body of legislation*, which protects woman because she is the potential mother, be abolished and the vote given to woman in exchange” (Dodge 100).¹²⁷ Dodge reassures her audience: “Yet this and this only is *equal suffrage*” (Dodge 100).

With the hard-won body of legislation protecting woman as the potential mother, Dodge addresses a central political and ideological concept of the Progressive Era – maternalism. The term incorporated a set of reforms taking precursory measures for working women or those lacking a male

¹²⁶ Emphasis added.

¹²⁷ Emphasis added.

member of the family to supply financial support. Those measures were financial funding and the setting of a maximum number of working hours for female workers. Sociological and scientific study was used to legitimize court decisions, stating the legal interest of the state for securing favorable conditions to women since their unique physiology allowed them to bear children. The other two powerful contemporary ideologies of the republican motherhood and the cult of domesticity only accelerated the materialist reforms, and smoothened the way to their public acceptance.¹²⁸

Dodge sums up antis' sentiments: "To treat women exactly as men is to deny all the progress through evolution which has been made by an increasing specialization of function" (Dodge 100). Without bringing clarity to what is actually a female right to be treated equally or separately, supporting her opinion with evolutionary advancement and social progress, Dodge reveals the major role the Enlightenment plays in her and antis' argumentation. To her, in the last phase of opposition to the enfranchisement of women, as for Fulton in its initial period, "woman suffrage in its last analysis is a retrogressive movement toward conditions where the work of man and woman was the same because neither sex had evolved enough to see the wisdom of being a specialist in its own line" (Dodge 100).¹²⁹

In her valuable study on anti-suffragism as a social movement, *Splintered Sisterhood*, Susan E. Marshal provides us with an insightful

¹²⁸ For more on maternalism and its social consequences for the welfare state and for women specifically:

Miriam Cohen, "Regulating a New Society: Public Policy and Social Change in America, 1900-1933" *Journal of Social History*, December, 1995. Seth Koven., Sonya Michel, *Mothers of a New World, Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, Routledge, 1993; Sandra Barney, "Maternalism and the Promotion of Scientific Medicine During the Industrial Transformation of Appalachia, 1880-1930. *NWSA Journal* 11 (1999) 68-92.

Martha Patterson, *The American New Woman Revisited: A Reader, 1894-1930* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2008) 127-160.

Muller vs. Oregon is the landmark case, which gave the green light to the maternalist reforms. See Nancy Woloch, *Muller v. Oregon: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's, 1996).

¹²⁹ Further documents supporting the notion that female suffrage is a step backwards in the development of civilization: Lyman Abbott, "Assault on Womanhood," *Outlook* (1909) 91, 784-88; Virginia B. Le Roy, "Should Women Vote?" *World To-Day* (1908) 15, 1061-6. C. H. Norman, Economic Criticism of Woman Suffrage, *Westminster Review*, (1911) 175, 91-103; Herbert Lyman, "The Anti-Suffrage Ideal" *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*, 118-122; Edward Cope, 'The Relation of the Sexes to Government,' *Popular Science Monthly*, (1888) Oct., 721-730; Lyman Abbott, "Answer to the Arguments in Support of Woman Suffrage," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* (1909 May), 28-32;

understanding of Dodge's and the antis' words above. It affirms the Enlightenment as a foundational framework for the antis identified with the Darwinian human social organization, and its specialization of function as an indicator of social progress. Thus, separate spheres were compared to the efficiency of the modern industrial system (Marshall 120). Dodge applies the evolutionary theory to the question of gender differences. Accordingly, antis in twentieth century continued to believe that high gender differentiation was an indicator of a society's level of civilization. Again we see the belief, or even the duty to effect progress, in the need to scientifically test ideas and to offer new ones deriving from unquestionable experience. The above-mentioned concepts clarify the importance of the Enlightenment in an attempt to comprehend the struggle for women's suffrage. These techniques and concepts, as Fulton and Dodge's documents specifically show, are also employed in order to keep women out of the country's liberal promise and point to the second part of the dialectic pursued here.

Antis employed their understanding of democracy in order to prove the suffragists' democratic vision wrong. "In a democracy," Dodge explains, "the people are bound to obedience under what is undoubtedly the will of the majority" (Dodge 100). We have seen the majority, i.e., the will of the people, presented as an argument in both camps so far. As simple as it was for the antis, in a democracy the minority has to obey the majority. Moreover, just as suffragists did, antis thought themselves to be the majority and to truly convey the will of the people. Yet, following the Enlightenment rationale of her argumentation, Dodge states in the name of the antis: "*It has yet to be shown that the majority of women are behind this demand for political activities*" (Dodge 100).¹³⁰ Just as suffragists do in their writings, Dodge demands proof for the credibility of her opponents' notions. This is how Jane Camhi breaks down the antis' will-of-the-people argument. "Whenever the majority of women would ask for the vote," Camhi clarifies, "they would get

¹³⁰ Emphasis added. That antis truly gave voice to the will of American women is also the subject of the following documents: Ann Watkins, "For the Twenty-Two Million; Why Most Women Do Not Want to Vote," *Outlook*, May 10 1912, 26-30; Arthur M. Dodge, "The Case Against Woman Suffrage," (New York: The New York Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1915); "Extraordinary Protest against Woman Suffrage," *Literary Digest*, 26 October 1895, 5.

it. *The fact* that they did not get it was *only further evidence* that [the majority – i.e. the people] was not in favor of it” (Camhi 39).¹³¹ This simple reasoning also backed up by obvious self-evidence and solid reference to plausible logic was among the antis’ strongest Enlightenment-nourished points. The call upon reason and common sense as criteria for what is right and wrong is also shared in Dodge’s argument. “If women are intelligent enough to vote, are they not intelligent enough to know whether or not they are ready to assume the responsibilities of government?” (Dodge 99).

We have seen so far that the advocates of the vote considered it a matter of following simple logic and common sense to see the necessity of female enfranchisement, and thus female inclusion in the democratic process, as self-evident. Looking at both sides through the dialectical lens enables us to see the same arguments utilized for the opposing stand. The anti-suffrage president, exemplary of the Enlightenment-based rationale of exclusion, calls upon reason as a law and measure for truth as she tries to justify women’s separate position. If political justice is what the proponents of the female vote are after, according to Dodge, first and foremost they “must recognize the right of woman to say whether or not she shall be drafted into political activities” (Dodge 100). Indeed, she admits, the U.S. inherited from the British common law restrictions, which have caused woman inequalities. However, Dodge points out, “under man-made laws these inequalities have been gradually reduced until the statute books of most states recorded the legal rights and exemptions of women - *laws which discriminate in favor of women* in regard to such matters as [here is the direct reference to a well-known experience] dower rights, alimony, and personal property laws” (Dodge 101).

Let us consider Dodge’s latter words. First of all, it is quite a liberal view to argue for a right especially if it is a right to be what you choose to be. So, if a woman chooses to be a woman who wants to live up to the expectations of society and stay out of politics, she has the right to do so. According to the anti-suffragists’ rationale, however, once women are enfranchised they will be inevitably compelled to take part in the political

¹³¹ Emphasis added.

process. This, they were afraid, would cause them to neglect their families and womanly obligations and even worse: it would abridge the above-mentioned right. Antis were convinced that women were by no means victims of unfair governmental policies. Rather, as a result of the advancement of U.S. society, they “[have] been given special protection under the law in recognition of the fact that as a woman she has *a special service to perform for the state* and the state must surround her with protective legislation in order that *she may be most efficient where the state demands her highest efficiency*” (Dodge 101). Antis justify the man-made legislation, which barred women from direct participation in the U.S. democracy by turning it from discriminatory to protective and necessary. Most importantly, this kind of benevolent legislation, antis argued, guarantees a woman’s primary of all rights — to be a woman, in her own parallel sphere.

The reference to “[a] special service to perform for the state” is another rationalized argument for exclusion. The strict duties which women were expected to perform, being rationalized, were turned into *special* ones. Accordingly, the sphere in which they were supposed to perform these obligations was argued to be not imposed but exclusive. And the very obligations themselves became a “special service.”

In this sense, Jane Camhi truthfully recognizes: “Antis endowed their sphere [and obligations] with a sense of *mission* that only they were capable of undertaking” (Camhi 29).¹³² Thus, acting upon the Enlightenment rationale, antis express concern for serving their duty in shaping the nation’s future. Just like the suffragists, they saw their service as a process, a mission of applying their ideals to real life. The ballot, antis believed, would be a serious obstacle to that mission. Women, antis contended, played a decisive role in shaping the state’s better future. Her mission, as Dodge also shows, is to ensure “that the motherhood of the race may be protected and that the future citizens shall have the birth right and the inheritance of a strong and a vigorous

¹³² Emphasis added.

childhood” (Dodge 101). Through these words the republican motherhood ideology comes to light, but is expressed in Enlightenment terms.¹³³

The pseudo-scientific analysis, which determined woman’s physiology to be inferior and feeble did not fade away with the turn of the century. Rather, it remained firmly in place well into the early twentieth century and provided a solid point of reference for the opposition to female enfranchisement. Even amidst the Progressive Era Josephine Dodge believes, “Because of her lowered physical and nervous vitality, woman [...] has to be protected in her industrial life in order that the state might conserve her value as the woman citizen” (Dodge 101). Moreover, calling (just like Fulton did) upon her readers’ common sense, she urges for greater awareness for the ballot: “Merely dropping a piece of paper in the ballot box is not a contribution to a stable government unless that piece of paper be followed up by persistent and of times aggressive activities in the field of political strife” (Dodge 101).

Presenting the act of voting as an overwhelming activity is another rationalized discriminatory strategy. Antis frequently described how women as voters would need to keep in touch with the recent and problematic issues of political life. This would involve paying attention to councils, primaries, conventions, caucuses, as well as maintaining familiarity with economics, law etc. Antis were convinced that woman not only lacked the necessary knowledge but also the physical power to keep up with the stressful pace of politics; not to mention the care for the home would be severely neglected. Enfranchisement would be a demanding, unnecessary burden added to woman’s already numerous and important obligations. In this respect, Jane

¹³³ Seminal work on republican motherhood: Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic. Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980. Theoretical studies on republican motherhood: Sarah Robbins, “‘The Future Good and Great of our Land’: Republican Mothers, Female Authors, and Domesticated Literacy in Antebellum New England,” *New England Quarterly* (2002) 75:4, 562-591; Rosemarie Zagari, “Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother,” *American Quarterly* (1992), 44:2, 192-215; Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980). Further documents disclosing antis’ embracing of the republican motherhood ideology: Horace M. Davis, “The True Function of the Normal Woman,” *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*, Bernbaum, Ernest, ed. (Boston: The Forum Publications of Boston, 1916) 123-27. Herbert Lyman, “The Anti-Suffrage Ideal” *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*, 118-122. Thomas Allen, “Woman Suffrage vs. Womanliness,” *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*, 77-80. Grace D. Goodwin, “Non-Militant Defenders of the Home” *Good Housekeeping* 55 (1912): 75-80. “Do You, as a Woman, Want to Vote?” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, 28:17 (1912): n-p.

Camhi offers a helpful insight to understanding antis' rationalization of this argument: "According to the antis' formula, not only was government the rule of force (and therefore man's work), but political life, in which the business of government was carried out, was "modified war" (Camhi 39). Camhi's assessment takes us back to the scientific specialization of women (anchored in the Enlightenment) in the inner sphere due to their weaker physiology and the overall development of civilization. The stronger sex goes out and fights on the political battlefield, and the weaker one stays and supports him from there. "Politics was an aggressive, warlike business, unfit for the sensibilities of a woman" (Camhi 41). "The attention they lavished on depicting the horrors of political life," Camhi clarifies, "is understandable given their belief that suffrage meant more than voting" (Camhi 39).

The advancements that women had won for themselves throughout the years provided the antis with an interesting line of argumentation. At the beginning of the twentieth century they were convinced that all the advancements women enjoyed to that day did not result from female enfranchisement. Experience, Dodge writes employing the Enlightenment's notion of empiricism, had not proven it: "[I]t may be stated that wherever the votes of women have been added to the votes of men there has been *no evidence* of initiative in legislation distinct from the normal trend of such legislation in the male suffrage states" (Dodge 101).¹³⁴ This lack of empirically proven facts, and not merely biased assumptions, lead antis to conclude, "While the cry for political equality (which we contend is political inequality) has gone on, the civil and legal rights of women have been established without the woman's vote" (Dodge 3). Hence, for antis, man-made legislation and government do appear to be discriminatory but have so far successfully

¹³⁴ Antis scrutinized the political situation in the western states which implemented female suffrage. The following pamphlets deny, based on facts, any social advancement to have taken place after female enfranchisement: "Views on Woman's Suffrage," *Outlook* 97 (1911): 143-44; A. J. George, *Address before the Brooklyn Auxiliary, April 30, 1909*. (New York: State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1909); Adeline Knapp, *Do Working Women Need the Ballot? An Address to the Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees of the New York Legislature, February 19, 1908* (New York: State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1908); Adeline Knapp, *Problem of Woman Suffrage* (New York: State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, n.d.); Richard Barry, "What Women Have Actually Done Where They Vote" *Ladies' Home Journal* 27 (1912): 15-16, 68-69;

enabled the steady movement of progress for all in the republic, including women.

Josephine Dodge furnishes her latter position with examples. Female enfranchisement, she argues, *has not* been necessary to “open the opportunities for higher education for her” (Dodge 101). Dodge has in mind the considerable and ever-rising number of female college graduates at the turn of the twentieth century. Those young women owe their access to knowledge not to suffragists but to male suffrage and to “women like Mary Lyon, Emily Willard and Catherine Beecher, who had no concern with the woman suffrage agitation (all leading anti-suffrage activists and ideologists), did their splendid pioneer educational work and the woman of today reaps the harvest” (Dodge 101). The democratization of knowledge has begun and will gain more ground, Dodge assures us, due to the advantageous practical work of “true women” and not of the female ballot’s proponents. In this sense, antis saw themselves as the truly progressive and inclusive ones.

“The right of woman to enter the trades or professions has been won independent of her political activities” (Dodge 101), the anti-suffrage president states, citing the fact that women were allowed to practice not only average jobs, but also become physicians, lawyers or judges (Strom 93-2). Josephine Dodge is aware that there are still considerable restrictions. However, they are again turned into protective measures dictated by reason: “It is true that a dozen or more trades are closed to her, but her participation in these threatens her welfare as a woman and the state reserves the right to limit her activities therein” (Dodge 101). Again, the woman’s right to be a woman, for the antis, enables the state to bar her from the process of direct policymaking. And, intriguing to us, this exclusion on the state’s side is justified as a matter of rights. Put simply: women have the right to be excluded and the state has the right to exclude.

Male suffrage, according to the antis, has provided for inclusion and progress not only of the society but also in female rights and liberties – in particular, “The right of woman to protection in the courts, the right of our women to claim the protection as citizens under the United States flag, is

established on an absolute equality with man's similar right, without woman's political activities. The married woman has the right to hold property separately to make contracts, to control her wages" (Dodge 103). Employing the Enlightenment's concept of rights, Dodge aims to show how male suffrage already guarantees the administrative and legislative pillars of just government, ensuring its stability (Camhi 36). As Camhi best puts it, "the evolution of democracy is the final result of man and not woman suffrage" (Camhi 45), and "*for antis democracy at that high level of civilization was inclusive enough*" (Camhi 34).¹³⁵ Hence, the female vote was seen as obsolete.

As to the advancements in democracy and social welfare enumerated above, Dodge clarifies, "Public opinion in which the work of women played a noble part has urged their enactment and the votes of women have not been necessary" (Dodge 5). Her statement reveals one of the major ideological premises employed in order to keep women away from the electorate: the importance of shaping public opinion via the ballot. Following this line of thinking, the campaign for the vote being only a tool of public opinion is created and controlled mostly by women (Camhi 38). Thus, public opinion was elevated to be a cornerstone of government; but women do not need the ballot to be heard in public. Influencing a voter or shaping public opinion, antis believed, is in fact the woman's task in the lawmaking process. Male voters are endowed with her interests, which are subsequently mirrored in state laws (Camhi 38).¹³⁶ That is why, Dodge explains,

"[t]he hideous white slave traffic and the dread social evil must be corrected by education rather than by political propaganda. Laws must follow as the knowledge of the extent of the evil awakens the public conscience and the moral sense of the people is aroused. Woman will find her work as the educator who develops a trained scientific opinion, not as the politician who must control votes" (Dodge 103).¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Emphasis added.

¹³⁶ Similarly approached by Thomas Jablonsky and Susan Marshal.

¹³⁷ Further documents clearly revealing anti's belief in education for women, which is only to be applied in her female sphere: Emily Bissel, *A Help or Hindrance*. (New York: New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, n.d.). Cardinal James Gibbons, "Relative Condition of Woman under Pagan and Christian Civilization" *American Catholic Quarterly*, October 1886, 651-65. Mathew Hale, *Why Women Should not Vote*. Albany: Anti-Suffrage Association of Albany, n.d.. Anne Rilley Hale, *An Article on the Biological and Sociological Aspects of the Woman Question*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1917. Frances Abbot, Colledge "Women and Matrimony, Again." *Century*, March 1896, 796-97.

Moving in a well-known Enlightenment framework (the belief in education, science and usefulness of knowledge), Dodge presents the supposed power of female influence – An influence, however, which, as Susan Marshall's thorough study on anti-suffragism has shown, only the well-established white Protestant women could use. The powerful notion of female influence is nourished by a rationale of opposition toward the expansion of the voting right to women that might be described like this: As the ballot was just the tool for public opinion to operate, so was mere legislation seen as insufficient to affect the necessary changes in human nature, which were to reform society (Camhi 38). By bearing children, woman is given the "special service" of educator of the public sentiment strengthening individual morals and character. This is how, in the antis' view, improvements in society could be guaranteed. The stress on the unique specialization and role of women is crucial, for the progressive changes desired "could be achieved only by the unrelenting efforts of mature and well-intentioned women to instill in their children the necessary ingredients for proper moral growth" (Camhi 37). The valuable training of citizens cannot be provided by laws, antis believed, for human character cannot be legislated (Camhi 37). Hence, in the long run it would not be the ballot but the molding of individuals inside the home that would change society. "Political power would militate against their usefulness in the large field of public work in which so many [women] are now doing noble and helpful service" (Dodge 6). "This service," Dodge is convinced, "is far more valuable than any voting power could possibly be" (Dodge 6). With her concluding words and as mentioned throughout her essay, the anti-suffrage President Josephine Dodge sketches a variety of central Enlightenment-based arguments of the opposition to the female ballot. Let us now follow up on them across the anti-suffrage camp.

IV. 3. Further Anti-suffrage Voices

Fulton and Dodge's documents are windows into the prevailing social world-views, which surrounded the debates. They help us grasp the powerful

meaning of ideologies such as the female sphere and to understand that the ballot was a pending danger to these centuries old beliefs. As the analysis of such documents has shown and the linking of them to others will also show: antis were definitely not afraid of being old-fashioned, backwards or retrogressive. It seems that they used the Enlightenment's argumentation in the increasingly heated debate beyond its normative character. Their publicly distributed writings reveal that antis used the Enlightenment to underline their modern self-understanding.

With the empowerment of the suffrage movement and the popularization of its ideology, notions such as the female sphere, or even republican motherhood became seriously questioned. Still, they continued to define anti-suffrage ideology and were at the center of debate. Yet, being drawn into a public debate, antis experienced the normative character of the Enlightenment. They had to move away from the silent opposition and engage in a merciless cross fire with pro-suffrage arguments. Texts like Fulton and Dodge's are signs of that transition, and the change in the communicative setting. Such transitions forced them to present their convictions in an Enlightenment-styled way – publicly. They also had to put them through the prism of the Enlightenment's premises of argumentation, which they did. Antis wrapped notions of the female social role that had been around for centuries in a modern package and put them on the market of opinions — the public sphere.

So far, I have examined in depth two exemplary anti-suffrage texts in their full length and accounted for their text-pragmatics. Antis targeted the general public with a modern image of themselves, confidence in science, and, on that basis, assertiveness in the operating political system. They testified that this system and exactly this female position manifested the highly developed, in their eyes, Christian-American, Progressive-Era society of their day. And it was exactly this putatively advanced order they vowed to defend. Antis turned to common sense philosophy to alert not only the public against the voting woman as a "menace to civilization." They gave an effort to warn women against the hazards of the ballot. The popularity of these notions within the

antis' camp will be demonstrated by giving voice to further opponents of the vote, united by their line of argumentation.

IV. 3.1. Anti-suffragists' Self-understanding

As Fulton's document shows us, anti-suffragists and suffragists alike referred to themselves modern and enlightened throughout their political existence. In an anonymous document written just two years before Fulton's 1867 lecture, anti-suffragists describe their ideal woman, which they aspired to embody as a measure for the level of Enlightenment in a society, by emphasizing "the natural and inalienable tenderness, gallantry, and respect with which the woman inspires the man in every enlightened time and country" (*An Appeal Against the Anarchy of Sex* 3). This was one of the first appeals that antis fired in resistance to the vote. While veiling themselves in anonymity, they pleaded the legislators of the State of New York "[a]gainst the anarchy of sex," that would immediately take place with enfranchisement and would be the enforcement of women to enter into politics. Alice Hill Chittenden, daughter of a wealthy Brooklyn attorney and granddaughter of a Republican member of the House of Representatives exclaimed that at a moment when the anti-suffrage movement could pride itself on a serious organization: "It has remained for the *enlightened* 20th Century to witness the birth and development [...] of a well organized movement among an unenfranchised class against having the suffrage forced upon them" (Chittenden 134, *Inexpediency*).¹³⁸ The New York Anti-suffrage Association, circulated Chittenden's thoughts on the "[i]nexpediency of granting the suffrage to American women" in a pamphlet, presumably ever since the association's foundation in 1897. The author herself was a high ranked anti-suffragist. Alice Chittenden had devoted herself to the opposition of the female vote in her early twenties, after accompanying her mother to anti-suffrage gatherings. She went on to become the president of both the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage and the Women's National Republican Club. The latter was

¹³⁸ Emphasis added.

another antis' spin-off organization which, predominantly served the anti-suffrage congressional lobby (Goodier 22).

IV. 3.2. Rights

Just as Fulton and Dodge did in their documents, Emily P. Bissell, a welfare activist and promoter of child labor laws, breaks down woman's existence to "an individual, a member of a family, and member of the state" in terms of not only duties but, most of all, rights (Bissell 145). Emily Bissell believed that women had already achieved an equal status with men, since nearly all professions were open to them. Especially contributive to anti-suffragism during the Progressive Era, Emily Bissell was a renowned speaker and author, whose works were pamphletized by the movement. She also published under the pseudonym Priscilla Leonhard.¹³⁹ A further opponent of female enfranchisement calls upon, as a matter of interest, children's rights to present woman's position as just: "A child has the right to have one parent" claims Annie Bock, "from whom to inherit the further qualities of being" (Bock 10). Simultaneously Bock expresses her concern for the future of society, since she sees children's task to carry on the civilization as an endangered right.¹⁴⁰ Interestingly enough, the prominent anti-suffragist senator Elihu Root, later secretary of war, secretary of state and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, addressing the delegates of the New York State Constitutional

¹³⁹ A like minded friend to the President of the National Woman Anti-suffrage Association, Emily Perkins Bissell, took active part in public speaking in front of congressional committees across the country. As many other wealthy antis, she was active in several public welfare organizations. Her essays were widely circulated by the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (Camhi 238) and the Historical Society of Delaware, *Emily P. Bissell, 1861-1948*, <http://www.hsd.org/Women_AntiSuffragist_Bissell.htm> (02.06.2011).

¹⁴⁰ Anti-suffrage pamphlets resting on natural rights discourse for their argumentation: James Cardinal Gibbons *Relative Condition of Woman under Pagan and Christian Civilization*, *American Catholic Quarterly* (1886 October) 651-55. Lyman Abbott, "The Right of Suffrage" *Outlook*, (1901, 27 July) 711-12; Lyman Abbott, "The Right of the Silent Woman," *Outlook* (1912 May) 105-06; Lyman Abbott, "Woman's Rights," *Outlook* (1912 February) 302-02; Horace M. Davis, "The True Function of the Normal Woman," *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*, Bernbaum, Ernest, ed. (Boston: The Forum Publications of Boston, 1916) 123-27. Edith Melvin, "A Business Woman View on Suffrage," *Anti-Suffrage Essays*, 38-42;

Convention in 1894, feels that the female ballot would abridge his *rights as a male*:

Mr. President, [Root addresses the President of the Convention] in the divine distribution of powers, the duty and the right of protection rests with the male. It is so throughout nature. It is so with men, and I, for one will never consent to part with the divine right of protecting my wife, my daughter, the women whom I love and the women whom I respect, exercising the birthright of man, and place that high duty in the weak and nerveless hands of those designed by God to be protected rather than to engage in the stern warfare of government (Root 120).

So far we have seen in antis' rhetoric that not only women have rights as women, but also children have rights as children, and men have rights as men. Let us consider the text-pragmatics as well. The two exemplary documents and those of the additional antis are mostly addresses or appeals delivered on a high political level. Before being distributed as pamphlets the choice of rhetoric is considerably influenced by the setting. Addressing legislators of a state, such as in New York for example, requires wording that would be closest to their own reasoning. In this situation the context of rights seems like a formula, which if it does not bring success, can at least raise awareness. Moreover, considering their communicative and discursive premises, they applied relatively modern strategies to promote their cause.

IV. 3.3. Anti-suffragism and Progress

Fulton's and Dodge's documents already alluded to antis' diligent employment of scientific research from the areas of medicine, psychology and sociology to verify several of their main objectives against enfranchisement. This took place in accordance with the scientific fervor of the early twentieth century. They circulated pamphlets, the most striking of which were *Biological and Sociological Aspects of the Woman Question* from 1917, or the authorless *A Famed Biologists Warning of the Peril in the Votes for Women*, from 1912. Mrs. Annie Riley Hale, the author of the first document, is on record in anti-suffrage history for being one of the few antis who appeared in person in a public debate against a suffragist in Knoxville Tennessee in 1913. She asks: "But what says science to this bold [suffragists'] program?" (Hale 4). Hale reveals to her audience "the deeper significance hidden in certain underlying

principles of biology and sociology [and psychology]” (Hale 5). Hale quotes well known scientists of the time, such as the psychologist Dr. S. Weir Mitchell: “‘The best of the higher evolution of mind will never be safely reached’, said Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, ‘until the woman accepts the irrevocable degree which made her woman and not a man. Something in between she cannot be’” (Hale 5).¹⁴¹ Hale even takes the question to the level of the scientific theory of evolution by referring to Herbert Spencer, a scientist of Darwin’s rank “who first popularized the scientific theory of the evolution” (Hale 4). Hale explains, by quoting the man who would later inaugurate the term “survival of the fittest” and thus popularize social Darwinism:

“[---]the physical handicap sex imposes upon woman on the theory that ‘there is a positive antagonism between the higher evolutionary tendency and reproduction,’ that the more extensive organic expenditure demanded of the female by the reproductive functions, limits the female development to a notably greater extent than the masculine.’ This ‘Spencer’s Biological Law’, as it was called” Hale specifies, “had the endorsement of such authorities such as Darwin, Huxley, Lombroso, Milne Edwards, Iwan Bloch, Havelock Ellis, and a score of others who might be named” (Hale 5).¹⁴²

Hale demonstrates her intense study of the latest research on the female nature. In this study, similar to Fulton, she exhibits the antis’ usage of reason as an instrument for the truth about female physiology. Furthermore, Hale firmly secures the credibility of her movement’s convictions in the empiricism and arbitrary measurement, which the mentioned scientists claim to have conducted. Thus, she aims at removing any doubt that antis may be unprofessional in their argumentation or going against contemporary science.

¹⁴¹ The impact of Dr. Mitchell’s views on intellectuality and education being destructive of female health were immortalized in American literature by Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* from 1892. Gilman, also a suffragist and a writer, describes her emotional suffering by not being allowed to read or write and being sentenced to rest. The so called rest, away from any intellectual activity, was Dr. Mitchell’s therapy to what he thought were hysterical and deranged women, in consequence of their would be mental exhaustion. See S. Weir Mitchell, “When the College Is Hurtful to a Girl,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, June 1900, 14.

¹⁴² On social Darwinism in the American context: Lester F Ward, “Social Darwinism”. *American Journal of Sociology* (Chicago: (1907). 12:709–10. Robert C Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1979). Peter Dickens, *Social Darwinism: Linking Evolutionary Thought to Social Theory* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000).



Figure 1: Anthropometry was an empirical approach, using instruments, which were highly developed for their day, for the exact measurement of human proportions. The results were to define character and mental capacities. Women were also the subject of such experiments. Anthropometry provided a scientific basis for the discrimination of social groups and for racist theories, which culminated in the twentieth century in the study of eugenics, providing grounds for national socialism in Europe, and white supremacy in the US.

Source: Werner Bartens. "Missbrauch einer Idee," *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* Nr. 268, Seite 16, Freitag 20 November, 2009.

The reference to science was also used to dictate what is normal, healthy and sane, but also to present the suffragists as not normal, unhealthy and insane – as an anomaly, and a social disease. The authorless *Famed Biologist Warning* rests on the conclusions of “the distinguished British biologist and student of physiology Sir Almroth Wright” (*A Famed* 59). “He cannot shut his eyes to the truth that there is mixed up with the present woman’s movement [more specifically the militant suffragists] much mental disorder, and he cannot conceal from himself the physical emergencies which lie behind” (*A Famed* 59).

Sir Wright, according to the document, is a witness to the tendency of woman to “morally warp when nervously ill” (*A Famed* 59). Those women suffer “upsettings of [their] mental equilibrium that a woman has most cause to fear” (*A Famed* 59). The stigmatizing of suffragism as a diagnosis with its specific set of symptoms is a way to warn the ‘normal woman’ against it, as if

it were contagious like a virus. The supposed causes: strangers to joy, long suppressed instincts and sexual embitteredness (*A Famed* 59).

Women infected with that sickness can “fully resort to physical violence” (*A Famed* 59). “The methods of these women,” specifies the author, “[are] not very different from those of the ordinary suffragist woman” (*A Famed* 59).¹⁴³

Josephine Dodge’s text alluded to anti-suffrage reliance on empiricism and factual data. In their eyes, empiricism and statistical knowledge of facts supported the political importance of their maternalist reforms. Besides that, they also played a decisive role in supporting further anti-suffrage statements as well as demanded precision for suffrage claims. “It is a mistake to suppose that the great majority of women want to vote. They do not. In proof of which we state the following facts, which can easily be verified” (*Facts and Fallacies* 140), antis claim. They provide themselves evidence on their position in a pamphlet entitled *Facts and Fallacies about Woman Suffrage* and go on to defend their views. They argue that only four percent of all women want to be treated equally, that only a few women voted on school suffrage in Ohio and, in the election for university trustees in Chicago, only 243 out of 490 registered women voted (*Facts and Fallacies* 141). Even a petition to the U.S. Congress, claiming to have been signed by one million women, turned out, according to antis, to contain less than half a million signatures and had to be dismissed as unclassified (*Facts and Fallacies* 142). So does Priscilla Leonard, alias Emily Bissell, in 1917 in discussing the effectiveness of the vote for the question of male and female wages state:

The suffragists make a point of assuring us that the ballot will raise the wages, shorten hours and equalize conditions; and if this were true, the ballot would certainly be a good thing for the working-woman. But, is it true? Is it backed up by facts? or is it just a mere catch word? The only way is to study up the facts, and see for ourselves” (Leonard 2, *Help or Hindrance*).

Here the Progressive Era’s emphasis on the unbiased delivery of facts plays a central role in Leonard’s argument. Her conviction that the public has to be provided with factual, empirically-proven information on a matter in order to discuss it and take a stand is typical of the Enlightenment’s emphasis on solid

¹⁴³ Another pamphlet worth mentioning for its treatment of suffragists as an anomaly of nature is *An Appeal Against the Anarchy of Sex to the Constitutional Convention and the People of New York, by a Member of the Press*, New York: J.A. Gray & Green, 1867.

evidence. In another document expressing antis' *Views on Woman Suffrage* they specify, "No one expects woman's suffrage to be refused in any country where *popular self-government* prevails whenever the majority of women themselves make it clear that they desire to vote." (*Views on Woman* 151).¹⁴⁴ Meaning, women themselves had not yet delivered provable public testimony on behalf of the ballot. The moment women did so they would have it. With statements like these antis deeply anchored their rhetoric in principles such as popular rule and self-government, known to us from the Enlightenment. Furthermore, antis defended their stands very well by acting upon the Era's factually proved data as a basis for political decisions. Empirical study was used for perpetuating the political marginalization of women. As for reasons why women did not want the ballot, antis said — they were indifferent, and were already represented well enough.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, after the introduction of female suffrage in the West, antis hurried to assess its achievements in bettering social conditions. In response to the latest publications in the suffrage newspaper *The Woman Voter*, antis boldly asked: "Would women with the ballot have accomplished more for child labor [for instance] in these states than they have accomplished without it?" (*Views on Woman Suffrage* 153). After presenting a thorough compilation of empirical evidence on the matter, they undoubtedly state: "The experience of equal suffrage states disproves it," antis form their final judgment on suffrage in the West in a pamphlet, circulated by the Albany Anti-suffrage Association (*Views on Woman Suffrage* 153).

The reliance on empiricism and facts, justified the passage of the protective laws, which the anti-suffrage president Dodge referred to in her essay. Such warnings also explain why antis saw in the maternalist reforms, a protective shield not only for women (in a way against women themselves), but

¹⁴⁴ Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁵ That women enjoyed sufficient representation in the US republic is also argued in: Annie Bock, *Woman Suffrage Address to the Committee on Woman Suffrage. United States Senate, 63d Congress, Document no 160.* (Washington D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1913); "Objections to Woman Suffrage," *Harper's Weekly* (1911) 55:6, n.p.; Caroline E. Stephen, "Representation of Women: A Consultative Chamber of Women". *Nineteenth Century* (1908) 64, 1018-24; Edward A. Goulding, "Representation of Women" *Nineteenth Century* (1908) 64:12 1025-29; Ethel B. Harrison, "Then and Now" *Nineteenth Century* (1909) 66, 1051-57. William F. Scott, "Woman's Relation to Government," *North American Review*, (1910) 191, 549-58;

for the whole political system. The understanding of the state as a protector of women might elicit the British common law and its covertures, since women's social function was narrowed down to that of the mother. During the Progressive Era, however, legal measures aimed at supporting women by limiting their roles to homemakers, were seen as a novum and as a positive development of a future welfare state, and anti-suffragists willingly intertwined their rhetoric of female exclusion around it:

“That a hundred years ago women suffered under legal limitations which worked injustice is undoubtedly true. Some of them were framed for woman's protection; others of them were a relic of an earlier barbarism. Both have disappeared with advancing civilization,” clarifies Lyman Abbot (Abbott 29).

These laws were a result of the scientific fervor of the Era. Antis hastened to refer to laws that had been justified by experimental studies proving the physical and mental political unfitness of women:

“[A] recent decision of the Supreme Court in which was decided that a law limiting the hours of woman's labor in the factory is constitutional and that she has a special right to protection by the law because of her special disadvantages, a right which the man working at her side does not possess (Abbott 29).

Again this sorting out of women from the work force is wrapped in the prevailing Enlightenment-influenced discourse of the time, and presents it as a matter of rights. Additionally, it is pointed out that this right of protection is not shared with man, which fosters a false sense of privilege. Generally though, according to antis in the U.S., the equality of the sexes was distributed as follows:

Men and women are both Citizens and enjoy exactly the same Privileges of governmental administration, such as gas, light, police, schools, sound money, protection of life and property, sewers, paved streets, transportation, hospitals, courts, judges, law and order, and what not? (Jones 116).

Mrs. Gilbert E. Jones, who lacked experience as a journalist, provides her readers with a common ground of comparison between the sexes in her pamphletized essay, “Some Facts about Suffrage and Anti-Suffrage.” Jones, being married to a son of the founder of the *New York Times*, served as an important bond between the antis and influential mass media.

She threw the unprecedented advancement of U.S. society in those years against the suffrage call for female progress:

In no other country, and at no other time has the world seen such material progress, such social and moral advancement, as in our own land during the last 130 years; and investigation shows

that woman's progress has been no less marked than that of population, wealth and industry (Jones 116).

A contradiction within antis' ideology becomes apparent from the above quotes. On one hand they claim that due to the advancement of the U.S. state, women enjoy a privileged status in comparison to men. On the other hand, however, they insist that gender equality is a fact in every aspect. Ironically, considering the dialectic, they use the Enlightenment as a basis for each of their arguments. On the one hand, she has the right to be singled out, but on the other, she is equal with men and thus enjoys equal rights. In both cases, she has rights, made possible only by the progress of U.S. society.

Resting on the ideology of maternalism, Jones concludes:

We find in the general advancement of women, in the improvement of her economic Position, in her social and civic influence, and in her opportunity for culture, a thing without parallel in the history of the world. And we anti-suffragists can say with pride that all this has been accomplished without granting women the ballot (Jones 116).

To antis, laws based on maternalism in fact aided the unprecedented advancement of American women. The emphasis that this was done without the female vote implies that if society wants to see women progress, it is in their best interest to be kept out of politics and have decisions made on their behalf.

The reference to science and the passage of maternalist laws modernized the conservative eighteenth century Victorian outlook. Antis believed that social life, as an outcome of the development of the Anglo-Saxon civilization, was divided into two separate spheres: male and female. This division, just as with maternalism, was in antis' eyes a sign of higher advancement. It was dictated by higher reason, by the omniscient mind that Fulton refers to in his lecture. Corresponding to Fulton's rationale of God as reason, no other but President Grover Cleveland himself explains in 1905:

"It is a mistake to suppose that any human reason or argument is needful or adequate to the assessment of the relative positions to be assumed by man and woman in working out the problems of *civilization*. This was done long ago by a *higher intelligence* than ours. I believe that trust in the *Divine wisdom*, and ungrudging submission to Divine purposes, will enable dutiful men and women to know the places assigned to them, and will incite them to act well their parts in the sight of God. (Cleveland n.p.)¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Emphasis added.

The President defends the ennobled and beautified formation of two gender spheres as a matter of social advancement by referring to objective reason, and calling it “higher intelligence” and “the Divine wisdom.”

“It should be also easy for such as these to see how wisely the work of human progress has been distributed, and how exactly the refining, elevating influence of woman, especially in her allotted sphere of home and in her character of wife and mother, supplements man’s strenuous struggle in social and political welfare” (Cleveland n.p.)

Cleveland goes on, advocating that female social isolation is a public good, and a result of human advancement. He expects it to be a matter of self-evidence to understand woman’s role in the betterment of the community and a quasi precondition to man’s successful performance in political life. Anti-suffragists prided themselves on attracting the President as their ally. This, in turn, speaks not only for the elitism of their movement, but also for the successful communication of their views. By 1905, they raised awareness of anti-suffragism enough to compel the president to take a stand on it. Rev. Lyman Abbott from the Plymouth Congregational Church was editor in chief of the *Outlook* (formerly *Christian Union*) and acted as another prolific male anti-suffragist influential in shaping public opinion in favor of the opposition to suffrage through the mass media. The magazine he created was devoted to public affairs and literary criticism, and addressed the native born, protestant upper middle class of the North East. Abbott was initially a supporter of equal rights for women and propagated higher female education. Later, converted by his wife to anti-suffragism, he was sent by antis to lecture in colleges. Abbott authored a great number of anti-suffrage writings, editorials, articles and essays. He described the mission of his magazine as “opposed to woman suffrage primarily because it is an advocate of women’s rights” (Marshall 83-84). Lyman Abbott too, in 1910, quotes another US President:

“President Roosevelt,” Abbott writes, “in his address before the Mother’s Meeting in Washington said ‘The primary duty of the husband is to be [...] the breadwinner for his wife and children (and, may I add, to be her protector from violence); the primary duty of the woman is to be the helpmeet, the housewife and the mother ‘ The call to woman to leave her duty [and sphere] to take up man’s duties [and sphere] is an impossible call” (Abbott 32).

Referring to the high authority of the Presidents of the U.S., antis not only demonstrated the popularization of their cause, but also reached the highest levels of government. The exchange of areas of influence of men and women is

called “an impossible call,” making it also irrational and unrealistic. In this way, antis nourish the notion that abandoning the gender spheres, to which the ballot would eventually lead, would cause turmoil, sex, war or even ‘anarchy of sex.’¹⁴⁷ Antis conviction in the legitimacy of these predictions is shown in a pamphlet from 1917 by the New York State Association Opposed to the Extension of the Suffrage to Women:

“She supplements man best by keeping in her own higher, more disinterested sphere of love, sympathy, purity and righteousness in daily life and thought, and leaving him to translate that influence of action upon the world outside, into whose work she never throws herself except from necessity, and from which she returns gladly, as soon as she can, into her *higher life* of the home again (Leonard 8).

Fulton’s and Dodge’s documents give us fine examples of how antis strove to convince their audience that republican motherhood was not just a prescribed and dominant way of female development parallel to the political processes of the country. They wanted their audience to believe that by being a mother, a woman is not merely a mother of her own children, but a mother of the republic. Thus, she serves a special service to the state, just as men in their professions and legislators in their offices do. This supposedly unique service is often compared to the one of men, to underline its exclusiveness with other fields or work for the state:

But why should anyone argue [...] that woman is in anywise inferior to man, or that her work in the world is of less importance? [...] Is the building of railroads and telegraphs more valuable to the nation than the physical and moral improvement of the race?

Yet this is woman’s special mission because to her is entrusted the life force in a peculiar manner; into her hand is given the guardianship and training of the race in its early plastic stage. Not only as mother, but as the teacher, at the time when teaching counts for most, she is given supreme control of the two greatest forces in life — nature and nurture (Hale 5).

The Lockean idea of the home, or as antis saw it “the home government” antedating the state in every case, shines through the above thoughts (Hale 8).

¹⁴⁷ See *An Appeal Against the Anarchy of Sex to the Constitutional Convention and the People of New York, by a Member of the Press*, New York: J.A. Gray & Green, 1867. Antis claimed to foresee even the physiological degradation of the sexes, since the ballot would lead to masculine women and feminine men, as in this document by Alice Chittenden: “It is patent that feminist ambition to duplicate all men’s activities — and in some cases their prerogatives — in the lives of women, if pursued to its ultimate conclusion, will make of us in due season a race of mannish women and womanish men, and this in the judgment of all medical authorities, past and present, spells racial degeneracy. Ask your physician what transvestism means — or look it up in a medical dictionary — if you would properly interpret the woman who is proposing to measure arms with man in every field of endeavor. You will see that [...] she is in reality the apostle of decadence, and the herald of moral and social chaos.” (Chittenden 27).

Home government is believed to determine the character of, if not mirror, the state government. Following the logic that the republican mother is the head of the home government, her influence is transferred to the state government with no less importance. At the background of this putative overwhelming significance of the female impact on the state through the home, any suffrage complaint against woman's political isolation is made to seem ridiculous and even absurd. The female function of not only giving birth to the nation but also educating it, is in accordance with the strong belief in education's role in shaping social conditions. The insistence on the task of "moral improvement of the race" makes the mother part of that bigger process of constantly enhancing better morals and virtues in the way the Enlightenment pictured the path of society. Antis were convinced that "On the good, intelligent [i.e. reasonable] woman in the home, rearing her children with a sense of responsibility and duty, depends the welfare of the Nation" (Bock 10). Furthermore, what is to come depends on this seemingly crucial female role, or as another anti would put it:

The measure of woman's responsibility for abuses, social and governmental, is the measure of her opportunity for preventing them. Much good remedial legislation passed by male electors and legislators fails of enforcement because women have neglected their foundational task to training an enlightened, responsible public sentiment, which is essential to the enforcement of any stationary law (Hale 5).

It is also interesting to note that while not mandatory for women, they do have the "opportunity" for free choice, free will and, none the less, the ability to prevent social evil. Additionally, antis believe that laws lose their importance and fail in their application if citizens have not been raised with a consciousness to obey them. In other words, women's mission extends beyond bringing Enlightenment to the nation. Endowing the citizenry with this "enlightened, responsible public sentiment" also means that woman, in her function as the republican mother, is in charge of applying the Enlightenment to social reality.

"Thoughtful women who are engaged in the highest enterprises of womanhood, home making and soul building, the work of social amelioration, and the care of the poor and unfortunate, cannot see how they would be the gainers by possessing the ballot (*Why The Home Makers Do Not Want the Vote* 144),

declares a pamphlet titled *Why the Home Makers Do Not Want the Vote*, distributed by the Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women. Women of reason, with a special function, as the above documents show, do not see the advantages of the vote. Calling mothers of the republic “thoughtful women” builds on the scientific sentiment that women make the best use of their rationality at home. Moreover, a sense of would-be superiority is suggested by implying that only women engaged in housekeeping, “in the highest enterprise of womanhood” are thoughtful, i.e., are women of reason. In a sense, the putative special service of the mother elevates her and endows her with wisdom and intelligence, which she can in turn give back to the nation.

The modern image that anti-suffragist actors had of themselves, and their confidence in science, which turned the separate spheres of “specialization of function” and maternalism into a legal novum, endowed them with a certain level of assertiveness. That assertiveness enabled them to promote the issue to such a level that female disenfranchisement and all of its implications were presented as a matter of civilization’s advancement. Some even did this on religious grounds just as the Baptist preacher Fulton. In this respect, J.D. Fulton touches on a widespread argument used by antis and even more so by clerical opponents of the ballot – American conditions, together with Christianity, have brought civilization and Enlightenment to American women.¹⁴⁸ The rationalization of religious arguments, typical for the Enlightenment in America, is a common theme that antis brought into the suffrage debate.¹⁴⁹ As devoted a foe of Catholicism as Fulton was (he was

¹⁴⁸ Further anti-suffrage documents employing this line of argumentation: Helen Kendrick Johnson, *Woman’s Progress vs. Woman Suffrage* (New York: The New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1912); Francis Scott, *The Legal Status of Women* (New York: The New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1912); Alice Hill Chittenden, *The Inexpediency of Granting Suffrage to American Women* (New York: The New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1910); *Suffragist Desert Philanthropy*, (New York: The New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1910); *New Zealand and Australia from an Anti-suffrage Point of View*, (New York: The New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1912).

¹⁴⁹ Antis gained the support of further well known clericals of their time across denominations and religions. Their essays and statements, employing Enlightenment premises of argumentation, were compiled in pamphlets as in: *An Appeal to the Electors of the State of New York to Vote against Woman Suffrage on 6 November 1917*, (New York: 1917) Here, antis compiled statements against suffrage from high-ranked catholic, protestant and Jewish priests; See also *Woman Suffrage Unnatural and Inexpedient*, (Boston: Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women, 1894).

known for launching several missions for converting Catholics to Protestantism in the Northeast), he must have been pleased to see his liberal reading of the Scripture and his arguments adopted by Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore and head of the Roman Catholic Church in the US (1877-1921).

Although many catholic prelates opposed suffrage, the Cardinal was especially well respected by antis. The native-born elite of the Northeast seldom shared catholic views when it came to immigration restriction, prohibition and the labor movement. Yet, antis saw giving voice to the Cardinal as a way of reaching the newly-arrived immigrant catholic population. Cardinal Gibbons did not attend any anti-suffrage gatherings he was invited to in person. Rather, he expressed his position on female enfranchisement in the written form. Some of his writings were even translated into Italian and distributed to various anti-suffrage state associations – with the effect that some catholic priests in the U.S. anathematized the female ballot in their Sunday sermons (Marshall 82-83).¹⁵⁰

Cardinal Gibbons' essay "Relative Condition of Woman under Pagan and Christian Civilization," which initially appeared in *The American Catholic Quarterly Review* in 1886, was widely reprinted by antis. Reaching out to rally the opposition of the female vote, the catholic clergy embraced the Enlightenment-based discourse as well. Here the addressed audience is presumably educated, upper middle class, native-born Catholics. Please note that the title itself aims to explain Christianity to the imagined audience as more than a mere religion. The author offers deeper insight, as a higher level of cultural and scientific development, and as a successfully undergone process of refinement of thought, manners, morals and taste — as a civilization; and specifically the Christian civilization of women. This is the basis for statements such as: "The history of women in Pagan countries has been, with rare exceptions, an unbroken record of bondage, oppression, and moral degradation" (Gibbons 651). And the adoption of the Enlightenment, and

¹⁵⁰ Following a fast career as a talented catholic priest who climbed the latter of the clerical hierarchy at a young age, Gibbons is known to be respected by both Catholics and Protestants – especially for his devoted Americanism. He labored on the integration of newly arrived catholic immigrants. His feverish engagement with the anti-suffrage cause is only noted in antis' sources. General sources on Gibbons as a well known American do not pay attention to his support of anti-suffragism. See <www.catholic-hierarchy.org/gibbons> 20.09.2010.

especially its peculiarities in the U.S. context, is the basis for statements like: “She had no *rights* that the husband felt bound to respect” (Gibbons 651).¹⁵¹ The Baptist cleric Fulton’s Catholic counterpart perceived the condition of women, specifically those in different civilizations, in terms of rights.

Following Fulton’s argumentative evolution of his thesis, Gibbons too invites his audience to join him on a diachronic survey of the condition of women in “the ancient empires of Asia, notably in Babylon, India, Thrace and Lydia, where wife was bought like meat in the shambles, or like slaves in the market place” (Gibbons 651). For his position, he argues in more scholarly manner than Fulton and makes references in his footnotes to works of early historians, the most famous of which was Herodotus, who is also known as the father of history. Gibbons gives examples of the dreadful treatment of women by other would-be civilizations. The cardinal writes: “They are treated as mere servants by their husbands, who have the right to scourge them as their caprices may dictate” (Gibbons 651) and makes us understand that the most intriguing feature for the second part of the dialectic is the discourse of natural rights having become a pillar of argumentation in antis’ usage of the Scripture. In other countries her “conjugal rights were violated,” Gibbons complains (Gibbons 652). And not only this, he measures the situation of women in the different civilizations in terms of their social progress “[...] the same law obtains in [these] countries [and religions] even to this day” (Gibbons 651), pointing out that there is no progress that took place. According to Fulton and Gibbons, Christianity was the most flourishing soil for equality and equal rights. In their reading of Scripture, influenced by the Enlightenment, both clericals see evidence for the above:

“‘Ye are all, says the Apostle, the children of God by faith which is in the Christ Jesus... There is neither Jew or Greek; there is neither servant or freeman; there is neither male or female.’ The meaning of that is in the distribution of His gifts God makes no distinction of person or sex. He bestows them equally on bond and free, on male and female,” explains the cardinal (Gibbons 657).

Considering the Christian civilization to be most advanced and modern one, he goes even a step further than J.D. Fulton in his liberal interpretation of

¹⁵¹ Emphasis added.

Christianity. Since to him “[t]he world is [...] influenced more by living, concrete models than by abstract principles of virtue. [T]he model held up from the very dawn of Christianity to women is the peerless Mother of our Blessed Redeemer” (Gibbons 656). Gibbons’ urge to use tangible models rather than metaphysical ones exposes his use of the Christian image of Mary in a manner swayed by the Enlightenment. Gibbons, in fact, calls on practicality just as the Enlightenment did. Why is this a step further? The cardinal sees not only Mary’s amiable and tender qualities but dwells sufficiently on “the strong and robust points of her character” (Gibbons 656). “What does the Holy Ghost especially admire in her?” Gibbons asks, “Not her sweet and amiable temper or her gentle disposition, though of course she possessed these virtues, for no woman is perfect without them. No; He admires her valor, courage, fortitude, and *sturdy virtue of self-reliance* (Gibbons 656).¹⁵² Based upon the above perception of the Holy Mother, it becomes clear that the catholic Cardinal Gibbons regards the Virgin Mary as nothing less than a strong-willed, self-reliant individual. In this way, the Holy Mother is taken out of the mystic realm – which religion represents for some. By turning Mary into a realistic role model, Gibbons rejects all things visionary and impractical. His reading of Mary’s character and role is a modern one, anchored in the values of the Enlightenment present today. In that aspect, he goes a step further than his protestant colleague Fulton and testifies the daring and contemporary self-understanding of the antis — be it even a catholic archbishop.¹⁵³

“In the mind of the Church, however, equal rights do not imply that both sexes should engage promiscuously in the same pursuits, but rather that each sex should discharge those duties which are adapted to its physical condition and sanctioned by the canons of society” (Gibbons 657). As well as: “equal rights are not similar rights” as misinterpreted by some, in his eyes, militant suffragists such as Amelia Bloomer (Gibbons 658). Gibbons hastens to

¹⁵² Emphasis added.

¹⁵³ On liberal feminist theology see, as well as interpretations of Mary as a model in Catholicism and Protestantism, see: Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk. Toward a Feminist Theology*, Boston: Beacon Press 1983, 102-105; Carol Marie Engelhardt, “Mother Mary and the Victorian Protestants,” R.N. Swanson, Ed., *The Church and Mary. Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Historical Society*, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2004, 298-307;

specify in a manner true to the Enlightenment-based rationale of exclusion that is interwoven in a liberal reading of the Bible.

Anti-suffragists generally, as we saw in Fulton's and Dodge's documents, and similarly to the suffragists, pledged to the general public to protect all the social advancements mentioned above. In their own unique ways, both camps evoked a common sense philosophy in their rhetoric. In accordance with the Enlightenment belief in the innate discovering of truth and following one's own reason, *antis* explain how women should make up their minds on the ballot question: "If our natural instincts or intuitions revolt against any notion or scheme that comes up in the activity of *curious minds*, we ought to consider the probability that such notion or scheme is contrary to the laws of our nature, and subversive of our instincts" (*An Appeal Against the Anarchy* 4).¹⁵⁴ Following this inborn human urge to pursue what is right *antis* show themselves to be liberal enough to believe that it was the predecessor to legislature and government building:

If we could deeply enough, and be divested of the sophistry and effervescence, this very feeling, so natural and unavoidable, would decide the question, and anticipate legislative or other action upon it; because the instincts or intuitions [...] are divine or spiritual, and correspond to the laws of our nature (*An Appeal Against the Anarchy* 3).

Alice George, a devoted anti-suffragist serving as a field secretary of the MAOFESW, authored numerous essays, articles and pamphlets supporting the above rationale in her essay "Suffrage Fallacies" (Camhi 241). In it she concludes that the answers which one would discover in that way are "truths [that] are elementary and self evident, yet all are negated by the votes-for-women movement" (George, *Suffrage Fallacies* 25).

Antis relied on common sense philosophy, as opposed to common sense and elementary basic reason, to prove the suffrage issue. But they also played on that line of argumentation not only to negate the female ballot but also to warn women against politics.

To emphasize not only the putative uniqueness but also the safety of the female sphere and the service of the republican mother, *antis* portrayed the outer sphere and political life as its complete opposite. Just as their President

¹⁵⁴ Emphasis added.

Dodge, antis tried to explain politics to the public as an uncontrolled, unpredictable menacing business – a kind of war even. Indeed, antis themselves used this term to scare potential female voters away, as for example Elihu Root does and whose wording is almost meticulously repeated in the document by the anti-suffrage President:

I think so because suffrage implies not merely the casting of the ballot, the gentle and peaceful fall of the snow-flake, but suffrage, if it means anything, means entering upon the field of political life, and politics is modified war. In politics there is struggle, strife, contention, bitterness, heart-burning, excitement, agitation, everything which is adverse to the true character of woman (Root 120).¹⁵⁵

Root took that position on behalf of the antis, addressing the New York Constitutional Convention in 1894. His speech was often reprinted. Another female anti, Edith Melvin, who had been left to manage business and engage in political life on behalf of her dead father, presented politics as Jane Camhi puts it “aggressive warlike business, unfit for the fine sensibilities of women” (Camhi 41). Melvin was a well-known lecturer against female suffrage in Concord, Massachusetts. Speaking from her own experience and repeatedly regretting her misfortune at having to deal with the cruel world of business and politics. she writes:

“For myself I should regard the duties and responsibilities of thorough, well-informed, and faithful participation year after year in political matters as a very great misfortune; even more of a misfortune than the certainty of being mixed up in a bitter strife, the falsifications, and publicity often attendant upon political campaigns” (Melvin 40).

Emily Bissell, who grew up in the home of a member of the House of Representatives, warns women too based on her own experience. In a pamphlet circulated by the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, in 1909, she observed: “Politics to me, does not mean unearned power, or the registering of one’s opinion on public affairs — it means hard work, incessant organization and combination, continual perseverance against disappointment

¹⁵⁵ See also Bock, Annie *Address Opposing the Amendment to the Constitution of the United States Extending the Right of Suffrage To Woman*, 1913. Antis also believed that women would unsex themselves upon entering politics. They would become harsh, unlovable and subversive to the domestic harmony. See Elihu Root, *Address before the New York State Constitutional Convention, August 15, 1894*. Edith Phelps, *Selected Articles on Woman Suffrage* (Minneapolis: The H.W. Milton Company 1912) 120-121. *Facts and Fallacies about Woman Suffrage* (Chicago: Illinois Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 111). A. J. George, *Address before the Brooklyn Auxiliary, April 30, 1909*. N. Y. (New York: State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1909).

and betrayal, steadfast effort for small and hard-fought advance” (Bissell *A Talk to Every Woman* 150). And to strengthen the war imagery of political participation, Bissell adds, “I have seen too many friends and relatives in that battle to want to push women into it. And unless one goes into the battle the ballot is of no force” (Bissell *A Talk to Every Woman* 150). By means of such a quasi-military figurative language, anti-suffragists equated political participation with the strictly male ability and fitness to go to war. According to this logic women were automatically excluded. For it was a generally accepted fact at that time that women could by no means be soldiers and go to war. But since war and politics share the same level of danger, if women are considered unfit for one it would follow that they are unfit for the other.

Anti-suffrage voices have been presented here by two exemplary documents, *Woman vs. the Ballot* and *Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights*. The authors of these texts, Justin Dewy Fulton and Josephine Dodge, have served as typical anti-suffragists, each in their own time. Justin Dewy Fulton's document exemplifies the standards of the anti-suffrage rationale, which emerged right after the Civil War, parallel to the rise of the suffrage cause. This rationale was often presented publicly, and even in written form by male clericals. Josephine Dodge's document derives from the final stage of the suffrage struggle (the Nineteenth Amendment would be passed five years afterwards) and reflects the fierce opposition to it provided by anti-suffragists — women themselves. The anti-suffrage leader's words serve as the best example of a rationale for exclusion grounded in the concept of fundamental rights: “*It is woman's right to be exempt from political responsibility* in order that she may be free to render her best service to the state” (Dodge 104). Taking into consideration further anti voices, we face the vehement power with which the Enlightenment shaped the anti-suffrage cause and self-understanding. My survey of further anti-suffrage voices of the votes-for-women debate has strived to show their own modern image, their understanding of the concept of rights, and their concern with the advancement of society. The opponents of the vote saw themselves as the most advanced opposition to the drawing of women into politics against their own will. For

antis it was also a clear matter of rights that women stay home and refrain from taking part in the political process. They proclaimed themselves as guardians of children's rights and male rights. Anti-suffragists made best use of the scientific fervor of Progressivism. They substantiated their views of a separate female sphere, a putative republican mission of every mother, and restrictive female legislation with state of the art research in biology, psychology, sociology and religion. This, in turn, enables us to see the second part of the dialectic, which the Enlightenment developed in America: the utilization of emancipatory ideals for subjugation and oppression.

V. World War I and the Closure of the Suffrage Debate

World War I was an event that had a decisive impact on the women's suffrage debate. The Great War, as it came to be known, influenced the suffrage debate in its pragmatics and content. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists adjusted their communication practices and rhetoric to the changing political climate. In fact, the very question was raised differently by those who advocated it. Suffrage began to be promoted as part of the progressive reforms that swept the country, and with Wilson's presidency were meant to sweep the world. The individuals who opposed female enfranchisement confronted it on another basis as well: as a threat to the genuine American system by un-American interests such as socialism, bolshevism, etc. Eric Hobsbawm's understanding of World War I as a "total war" explains this new direction the suffrage debate took.

World War I was a product of the twentieth century. Given the circumstances of a world embarking on a political, economical, ideological and eventually military entanglement, the U.S. entered not only the twentieth century but also its first world war. World War I was a modern military conflict on a global stage. Its novelty, however, was not merely in terms of warfare and weaponry, the mobilization of huge human masses, or of industrialization and production. Its novelty lay within its embrace of the participating nation in its entirety, fully infiltrating its society. The first Great War was in fact one that set a precedent for the way war was lead on the battlefield; but what is decisive for my case is what took place on the home front. Society was absolutely engrossed by the war, and the war had a commanding influence on society (Hobsbawm 44). "Speaking in the most general terms," Hobsbawm offers a bird's eye view, "total war was the largest enterprise hitherto known to man, which had to be consciously organized and managed" (Hobsbawm 45).

This scenario was the exact case of U.S. society shortly before and during the war. This overwhelming enterprise of organizing and managing such a war was the task of the government. The war had rapidly become "industry"

or a complex economic activity (Hobsbawm 45). This is when American women became involved regardless of their opposition to or support for suffrage. They felt needed. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists offered their institutionalized movements to the service of war. To stay true to the facts it would be incorrect to speak of the suffrage movement as a homogeneous group when it comes to attitudes and actions with respect to the U.S. role in the global conflict. The war polarized the suffrage camp into idealistic, diplomatic war workers (NAWSA under Carrie Chapman Catt) and realistic, militant pacifists (National Woman Party under Alice Paul). The initial suffrage controversy later proved to be symbiotic for their cause. The solid anti-suffrage unity, however, behind an overly patriotic position and lacking any self-criticism is what scholars believe doomed their agenda.

At the dawn of the twentieth century in the U.S., George Washington's Farewell Address from 1796 seemed to still define an American foreign policy of neutrality, even against the backdrop of the looming European conflict.¹⁵⁶ Initially, President Woodrow Wilson labored for peace, thus serving the nation's vastly shared pacifist attitude. In 1917 events culminated overseas. Germany's advanced submarine warfare and diplomatic efforts to win Mexico as an ally against the U.S. on the North American continent poured oil onto the fire. These events pushed the President in the opposite direction. Wilson saw the U.S. entry to the war as inevitable on the following grounds, and deeply anchored in the liberal tradition going back to the Enlightenment.

On April 2nd, 1917, Wilson addressed Congress in a special session, asking it to pass a War Resolution which brought the US to the war. In his war message, Wilson asked for war in order to "end all wars" and make "the world safe for democracy."¹⁵⁷ Being a prolific scholar on American history and politics but also a product of his time, Wilson based his ideological position on the war on his scholarly experience. He justified the American war entry based

¹⁵⁶ See George Washington, "Farewell Address (1796)" *Our Documents*, <<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=15&page=transcript>>, 19 June 2012.

¹⁵⁷ Woodrow Wilson, "Joint Address to Congress Leading to a Declaration of War Against Germany (1917)," *Our Documents* <<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=61&page=transcript>>, 19 June 2012.

on a set of values that would become known as liberal internationalism. That is: national self-determination and democratic national self-government, a notion of global interconnectedness and the striving towards a collective, national and human security in promotion and severe guardianship of human rights and popular sovereignty. Wilson was obviously inspired by the American Revolution. With what the Wilson-specialist Lloyd E. Ambrosius among historians would call in retrospect Wilsonianism, the de facto President began with the export of the American Revolution. In this respect, the U.S. was supposed to assume the task of sharing the democratic American experience and renewing the world community to bring it to the next level and even civilize it.¹⁵⁸ This sense of mission seemed appealing to the nation, and both sides on the suffrage debate subscribed to it in their own way.

V. 1. Suffragists and the War

The Forty-ninth National Suffrage Convention held in December in Washington, DC proved historic. NAWSA described the circumstances at the time as “the most difficult conditions that ever had been faced in the long history of this annual gathering” (Buhle 435). The convention’s Call was dedicated to the “all-engulfing World War” (Buhle 435). The NAWSA suffragists were aware that the situation had a touch of faith. It set the tone for their war agenda, both in terms of rhetoric and communication with society: “Ominous clouds rest over the earth,” they informed their followers of the present global situation, “obscuring the vision and oppressing the souls of mankind” (Buhle 435). “Yet out of the confusion and chaos of strife there has developed a stronger promise of the triumph of democracy than the world has ever known” (Buhle 435). They summoned their constituency for the urgency of the moment.

¹⁵⁸ See Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and his Legacy in American Foreign Relations*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 1-7. Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals*, Chelsea, Michigan: Book Crafters, 1997, 410-470. Tony Smith, *America’s Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton, UP, 1994.

It is not surprising that NAWSA suffragists quickly identified with President Wilson's universal call for democratic justice. The great effort they put through their rhetoric to present suffrage as a kind of organic global movement now seemed to match Wilson's view of the universal and natural advancement of democracy perfectly. They quickly subscribed to the "we" of Wilson's War Message, by quoting him in their convention's Call: "we are fighting for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government" (Buhle 435). Indeed, Wilson's words fit within suffragists' self-understanding, as part of a bigger, almost natural, movement of progress and the emancipation of the unjustly subjected. Their struggle was not just theirs, but for all mankind. The war galvanized NAWSA's Enlightenment generated rhetoric. NAWSA suffragists felt convoked to join the President's crusade. They diplomatically approached the government to live up to its ideals at home, showing hope that "our own Government will soon follow the example of other allied nations and will also pledge to its women citizens as an earnest of its sincerity that in truth we do fight for democracy" (Buhle 435). Again, reaching out to revolutionary rhetoric typical of the Enlightenment in America, they announced, "We are faced with new problems, and new issues and the nation is realizing its dependence upon women as never before" (Buhle 435). NAWSA declared its approach in this critical hour, "The Government must be *convinced* (...) of an amendment to the Federal Constitution" (Buhle 435). And: "Men and women, who believe that the great question of world democracy includes government of the people, by the people and for the people in our country, are invited to attend our convention and *counsel with us* on ways and means to attain this object at the earliest possible moment" (Buhle 436).¹⁵⁹ It seemed that at the dawn of this new challenge NAWSA suffragists chose a more careful approach. They still appeared to believe in the power of persuasion and common dialogue with the government. But against the background of such a demanding event as the world war, suffragists felt they were on a mission. They vowed not only to convince and counsel, but also to bear part of the government's burden.

¹⁵⁹ Emphasis added.

Reverend Anna Howard Shaw was renowned for her inability as a speaker to utter a sentence in moments of overwhelming joy. In times of crisis and mobilization, however, she had the enviable ability to rouse her audience. At that same historic Forty-ninth convention, Dr. Shaw gave exact directions to the NAWSA on war-time politics. Subscribing to the international march of democracy, she gave her followers a new identity: “We talk of the army in the field as one and the army at home as another,” she lamented (Buhle 438). “We are one – absolutely one army – and we must work together” (Buhle 438). The NAWSA suffragists proclaimed themselves to be the army at the home front. Praising the move of the Wilson administration to use women’s potential to strengthen the nation at home, she says: “it was wise to mobilize not only the man power of the nation but the woman power” (Buhle 438). Shaw believed that “women could be mobilized and made serviceable in the war” (Buhle 438). As a matter of fact, NAWSA suffragists did a great job convincing the government that of all women’s organizations, theirs was the one that should be put in charge of the preparation and organization of the war work at home. Indeed, with its vast network across the country and numerous sub-organizations tightly held to the center, NAWSA was a sought-after promoter and supporter of governmental mobilization plans. Not surprisingly, the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense was put in their hands. Dr. Shaw was selected as its chairman – a move that infuriated anti-suffragists. Obviously flattered, and supposedly surprised by the responsible task, Anna Howard Shaw claimed to have no idea what was expected of women. Personally instructed by the Secretary of the Navy, she passed on the Committee’s assignment: “I learned that the Women’s Committee was to be the channel through which the orders of the various departments of the Government concerning women’s war work were to reach the womanhood of the country; that it was to conserve and coordinate all women’s societies in the United States which were doing war work in order to prevent duplication and useless effort” (Buhle 439). Shaw explained this governmental step as “very necessary, not because our women are not patriotic but because they are so patriotic, that every blessed woman in the country was writing Washington, or

her organization was writing for her, asking the Government what she could do for the war and of course the Government did not know; it has not yet the least idea of what women can do” (Buhle 438-9), (Graham 102).

“The soldiers at home,” as the NAWSA members called themselves, of course knew exactly what was to be done when they spearheaded the Women’s Committee. Almost two months before America’s entry into the war, in late February 1917, the Executive Board and Council members gathered to discuss the NAWSA’s position in case of war. This meeting proved turbulent, for NAWSA’s camp was split in two halves – the war workers and the pacifists. Initially, Catt, along with a few board members, opposed war preparedness. Nevertheless, the two groups met in the middle and a double mission was set upon NAWSA’s shoulders: patriotic service and suffrage work. The organization began converting its suffrage societies into a military of volunteers ready to act at Wilson’s command while continuing to push their agenda.¹⁶⁰ So when the Women’s Committee was established, NAWSA set in motion its prepared constituency. Their work focused on three major pillars: Americanization classes for the newly arrived immigrants, food production and distribution campaigns, programs targeting waste reduction and an extensive partnership with the Red Cross (Graham 100).

The National American Woman Suffrage Association knew how to make use of Anna Howard Shaw as the chairman of the Women’s Committee. Building on her experience in the suffragists’ organizational scheme, Shaw established branches to coordinate female war work in every state. Under the auspices of the Women’s Committee in New York State, for example, suffragists sold Red Cross booths in department stores, supported the organized effort to raise money for the United War Work, and donated cardigans to the Red Cross. However, the most impressive war work effort proved to be the conduction of the military census for the state. For this enormous task, suffragists put in charge their tightknit municipal and county organizations

¹⁶⁰ The History of Woman Suffrage gives an extensive account of the February meeting, HWS 5, 721-22; See also Peck, Carrie Chapman Catt, 267-68. A letter by Elizabeth Hauser to Mary Gray Peck reports on debate over preparedness and pacifism, February 24, 1917, NAWSA Papers, reel 9, LC.

(Graham 103).¹⁶¹ In Boston, the Boston Equal Suffrage Association for Good Government offered classes on American history, literature and English, employment counseling, and child care lectures to the immigrant population in the North End. In addition, BESAGG ran a hospital for recuperating soldiers.

What was most precious to NAWSA's leadership were large-scale war related campaigns promoting the suffrage cause. In Kentucky, inventive activists made their own ambulance and called it "Laura Clay" after the state's pioneer suffragist. Evoking admiration through size, quality and skill was the NAWSA's overseas hospital, a result of the historic 1917 convention. The hospital was comprised of two fifty-bed hospitals in France and equipped with a gas unit – a modern response to newly introduced German gas warfare. State and local suffrage representations injected \$125,000 into the venue. By the end of the war, seventy-four women had served as doctors, nurses and medical staff. The NAWSA leadership couldn't have wished for more patriotic publicity, when one of the hospitals was bombarded three times during wartime. Three surgeons and the head nurse were decorated for bravery with the Croix de Guerre, a decoration introduced for the first time by the French president in World War I (Graham 103-104). These jobs, on behalf of the government, gave NAWSA suffragists renewed confidence. The movement's historian, Ida Husted Harper, proclaimed that their war effort "has not been equaled by that of any organization of Women in the United States."¹⁶²

Not every blessed woman was favored war work, and certainly not every suffragette. As proud as NAWSA was of its impressive war organization, the association could not rally all suffrage advocates behind its war work policy. The most severe criticism that NAWSA had to deal with over the war years did not come from the antis, although they were very active opponents. The Women's Party (WP), founded by Alice Paul in 1916, disapproved most

¹⁶¹ Mary Garrett Hay, Report of the New York State WSP for 1918, NAWSA Papers reel 38 LC; Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association News Bulletin, February 8, 1917, NAWSA Papers, reel 35, LC.

¹⁶² Ida Husted Harper, letter to the editor, Dallas Evening Journal, June 4, 1917, Catt Papers, reel 3 LC.

harshly of NAWSA's preoccupation with patriotic service.¹⁶³ To the Women's Party activists, every agenda other than the immediate enfranchisement of American women by a Federal Amendment to the Constitution was a betrayal of the cause (Graham 102). The WP became the hardliner in the suffrage debate, ideologically and in terms of public communication. Taking cues from British militant suffragists, the WP launched partisan attacks on Wilson's government. Activists of the party, headed by Alice Paul, began protesting, i.e. picketing, in front of the White House. Their banners voiced their dissenting position from NAWSA and from the government. Alice Paul's followers did not pick up Wilson and NAWSA's tone of universal liberalism. Their response to America's global democratic mission was a sober one. In stark contrast to NAWSA's diplomatic efforts to convince the government by supporting it, the WP did a kind of reality check. In a one-paged pamphlet handed out in front of the White House, the WP explained "Why We Picket":

The fact is that the appeal of women for democracy at this time is highly embarrassing to the Government. Politicians are asking the people to sacrifice everything and everybody "for democracy;" and many men and women are ready to sacrifice everything for democracy; but they are not willing to permit the Government to spend the life-blood of the nation for democracy somewhere in Europe while that same Government refuses to assist the peaceful and orderly establishment of democracy in their own country (*Why We Picket* 1).

Exercising their right to protest, militant suffragists pointed at the discrepancies between the government's ideals and its practices. They confronted Wilson with the argument that if liberal tenets were to be taught to nondemocratic Europe, the U.S. had to do its homework first. Through the public communication of their stand, their critical bird's eye view of the situation, and by exposing self excluding paradoxes of Wilson's policy, the Women's Party remained within the scope of the Enlightenment – for they cried havoc for the sake of those liberal principles and conveyed their concern to society.

¹⁶³ www.HerStoryScrapbook.com is a precious online source, juxtaposing Carrie Chapmann Cat and Alice Paul. The differences and simultaneity of their actions are documented by *The New York Times* Articles from the last four years, before passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. See also: Mary Walton, *A Woman's Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle For the Ballot*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

As a matter of fact, to even call the Women's Party militant seems overdone. The WP was labeled after their British counterparts – the suffragettes. The latter, however, resorted to violence by throwing stones and breaking windows. What the Woman's Party followers did adopt from the British, however, was political tactics to make the present government responsible for female disenfranchisement. Despite the fact that the NAWSA condemned the WP's picketing, and even blocked coverage of the protests through its connections, the young women surrounding Alice Paul and Lucy Burns raised sympathies (Graham 102). After all, they protested peacefully and silently, publicly communicating their critical opinion, which was politically uncomfortable but justifiable. The awkward and clumsy reaction of the government to their imprisonment and made-up allegations made public sympathy stronger, even so by historians today. Ellen Kraditor points out that the activists of the WP deserve to be credited for bringing the issues of freedom of speech and freedom to protest into the suffrage debate (Kraditor 239-241). Yet NAWSA, which by that time had become the establishment in the suffrage position, distanced itself from the WP. In a letter to President Wilson, Anna Howard Shaw declared: "We greatly deplore any act in the name of women suffrage which mars the record of dignity, lawfulness, and patriotism which has marked the conduct of the champions to obtain political justice from women in the United States" (Shaw, n.p).¹⁶⁴ There were reasons, which caused NAWSA averseness towards the WP. The most prominent of which was NAWSA's fear that the assault on the party in power would alienate the suffrage cause from the government and thus discredit the long lasting congressional lobby (Kraditor 243). However, the lack of a systematic clarity in NAWSA's opposition to the WP has led Elen Kraditor to believe that they opposed it on principle. A core difference may be that NAWSA did not believe in partisan politics. It had always instructed its lobby in Congress to see the individual senator as an opponent of suffrage and not a whole party (Graham 106). NAWSA leaders did not want their cause to be linked to any of the parties. This understanding was deeply rooted in NAWSA's rhetoric and ideology that

¹⁶⁴ Anna Howard Shaw to McCormic, July 8, 1914, Box 196, Suffrage Archives, LC.

female suffrage is the organic, inevitable product of the natural advancement of democracy. Or, to put it in Kraditor's words, NAWSA saw themselves as a part of the "replacement of force by reason as the basis of government, (...) (and) relied on persuasion and on the skillful organization of existing pro-suffrage sentiment to achieve the inevitable victory" (Kraditor 245-6).

Ironically, despite the distaste the two suffrage organizations had for one another from today's perspective, their tactics complimented each other. The Women's Party's persistence and pointed commentaries on Wilson's policies unnerved the President. Initially he ignored the pickets. Pressure escalated, however, when they burned Wilson's speeches in front of the White House upon the entrance of the Russian delegation. Despite the effort to shut media coverage of the pickets by the powerful NAWSA ally, the Creel Committee, every major newspaper in the North East reported on the protests (Graham 106-9). Publicity mounted with hunger strikes and the imprisonment of picketers. These circumstances have made many historians credit the WP for speeding up the suffrage agenda and making it so President Wilson could no longer ignore the issue (Graham 114). While NAWSA did its part by skillfully converting the President to votes-for-women ever beginning in 1915, it was the Women's Party that stressed the urgency of the reform. In retrospect, even NAWSA leaders like Catt admit that without Women's Party intervention the introduction of woman suffrage would have been delayed (Kraditor 247).

V. 2. Anti-suffragists and the War

Always mimicking the tactics of their opponents, anti-suffragists also tried to use the war in their favor, and not only by trying to offer more war work to the government or embracing its universal liberalism. The war swayed their rhetoric and increased their focus on ideology as well. As early as 1916, antis considered the possibility of war preparation. The failure of five suffrage referenda, the weak initial position of the Women's Party, and the fact that they still had Wilson on their side, all boosted antis' self esteem. Suffragism seemed

doomed. Elated by these circumstances, antis decided to hold their first full-scale, suffragist-like national convention in Washington DC. Before delegates from twenty-five state chapters, the antis' president, Josephine Dodge tied anti-suffragism to Wilson's mission for omnipresent democratic peace and stability. Dodge was followed by a representative of General Wood, a Major General of the US army. He called upon antis to take the cause of military preparedness seriously and aid the government in any way they could. A representative of the Red Cross expressed gratitude for antis support (Jablonsky 89-90). Antis felt flattered.

The June issue of *The Woman's Protest* informed the public of the vast war preparedness that antis were orchestrating. The tone was set by an address delivered at the patriotic mass meeting at Cooper Union on April 30th, 1917. Through his speech titled "The Patriotism America Needs," Rabbi Joseph Silverman, a steadfast opponent of the votes-for-women, describes the present situation. In a resemblance to Dr. Shaw's address at the notable suffrage convention, that same year Silverman states: "The die has been cast. America has entered the lists for the preservation of its own rights, privileges and liberties as an independent nation, as well as for the defense of the rights of humanity against all aggression" (Silverman 3). It seemed that antis did everything in their power to be perceived as the group truly promoting the presidential ideology of international liberalism. In this sense, Silverman's claim that "this is a war for civilization and for world peace" is not surprising (Silverman 3). Pacifism had become intolerable and neutrality had come to equate to treason (Silverman 3). Silverman urges: "The patriotism of the hour demands great sacrifices of men and women" and asks: "Are we a nation of heroes and heroines, as were the builders of this great republic? (...) Has America the heroism to utter the battle cry of 1776, 'Give me liberty or give me death!'" (Silverman 3). Just like the suffragists, antis invoked the revolutionary moment of destiny. Facing the Great War, antis too felt that they were on a mission for the sake of humanity and believed in the export of the American Revolution. Silverman demands all anti-suffrage supporters, without mentioning them explicitly, join Wilson in his duty "if America is to take its

place among the nations of the world as a buffer against oppression and an active champion of humanity rights (Silverman 3). For this the co-operation of every citizen is demanded,” he writes (Silverman 3). “Wait not to be drafted,” he urges, “but volunteer to do some service that may be valuable to your country” (Silverman 3). Borrowing Shaw’s one army imagery, Silverman rallies his anti-suffrage readers: “Every citizen, whether at the front or at home, should consider himself a part of the American army, and as such should realize that all soldiers are equal, that they stand under the same banner and are fighting for the same country” (Silverman 3). In conclusion, he sets an ambitious task in front of his fellow anti-suffragists: “Let us democratize our democracy and present to the world an ideal American Republic fighting for the universal Republic” (Silverman 3).

Antis followed the call. Similar to NAWSA suffragists, they arranged their own umbrella organization and aided Wilson’s administration. In February 1917, together with other groups, antis founded the National League for Woman’s Services (Graham 103). The League entered a fierce competition with NAWSA. Antis used their lobby in Washington to make officials choose their joint organization over the suffragists’ Women’s Committee. Anti-suffragists understood very well the potential of promoting their agenda through governmental support. They were well-positioned within the Red Cross. Antis hoped to be nominated by the government as the chief organization coordinating female war work. It was therefore all the more bitter for them to find out that Anna Howard Shaw was appointed president of the Women’s Committee, and, with this, female war work was laid in suffragists hands. Nevertheless, antis had both hands full. They donated warm clothing and money for refugees, and covered the shipping costs for the relief. Aiding the Red Cross, antis in Baltimore, for example, offered classes in surgical dressings, home nursing and first aid. The vice president of the Baltimore association offered her home to the government to support a hospital. Interestingly enough, antis also offered Americanization classes. They organized lectures and showed short films on American ideals and principles of

government to immigrants.¹⁶⁵ Antis also claimed to be much better represented in the charitable, social and religious societies, and other clubs carrying out war work.¹⁶⁶ Despite committing to war preparedness and bitterly competing with suffragists, antis interpreted the war as a factor for the suffrage question in their own way. They speculated that with the nation at war with Germany, both President and Congress would have much more urgent issues at hand than the female vote. The President's initial blanking out of the Women's Party protests gave antis confidence in their position. The whole suffrage campaign was expected to take a break for the time of the war, or at least be a concern of the states rather than the federal government. Antis thought it was a good moment to add a fresh touch to their organization. In July 1917, their time-honored President, Josephine Dodge, at the age of sixty two, stepped down from the anti-suffrage leadership. The antis' headquarters followed its new leader, and was relocated from New York City to Washington DC. As a resident of Washington, the new president, Alice Wadsworth, was supposed to keep a close watch on the government and conduct anti-suffrage activities throughout the country accordingly. Following the change in the presidency, antis also renewed their key positions in leadership (Jablonsky 95-97). Still elated by the grandeur of the national convention, the new generation of antis were unaware that anti-suffragism was entering its final stage. The change in rhetoric signaled the demise.

While suffragists' opinions on the war were divided, antis fully embraced military measures. The new wave of leadership, in fact, coincided with the shift in anti-suffrage rhetoric against the backdrop of the Great War. *The Woman Protest*, in its September issue of 1917, comments on "Anti-Suffragism and the War" by Mrs. A. J. George, in *The Woman Protest* September issue of 1917, 6-7). The article condemns suffragist war work, for its sole goal was only the vote, rather than honest, patriotic service. They quoted the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale Italiano*, which supposedly caught

¹⁶⁵ See Emily E. Lanz "Anti-Suffragists Busy With War Work" *The Woman Protest*, Vol 11, No. 2, June 1917, p11-12. National Association Opposed To Woman Suffrage, New York.

¹⁶⁶ See "Anti-Suffragists Lead In Philanthropy" *The Woman Protest*, Vol 11, No. 2, June 1917, p.9. National Association Opposed To Woman Suffrage, New York; "Anti-Suffragists in War Relief Work" *The Woman's Protest* Vol. 11, No. 2, June, 1917, 8-9.

suffragists distributing shirts to the wounded on behalf of the Red Cross. Each shirt was allegedly stamped with “Votes for women.” These shirts were refused, *antis* report.¹⁶⁷ Mrs. A. J. George analyzes this suffrage behavior, “The demand of the Suffragists for the ballot as a reward for their loyalty to the nation in its hour of greatest peril, is crowning evidence of their failure to appreciate the meaning of government.” (George, *Anti-Suffragism and the War*, 6).¹⁶⁸

The reshaping of three major anti-suffrage periodicals illuminates, as well, the transformation of rhetoric. In March 1918, *The Woman's Protest* announced in its last issue that together with *Anti-Suffrage Notes* and *The Remonstrance*, it was to be replaced by the *The Woman Patriot*.

While the *Women's Protest* followed a straight-forward goal in its subtitle: “Against Woman Suffrage,” the newspaper, which emerged in its place had a broader agenda. In an article entitled “For Home And National Defense, Against Woman Suffrage, Feminism and Socialism” in the last issue of *The Woman Protest*, the new president Wadsworth sets the tone of the following periodical. She argues that all three influences are sinister to the fundamentals of American society. Opposing one, means opposing all of them.¹⁶⁹ With Wadsworth taking over the presidency of the national association, her article became a program.¹⁷⁰ With the nation at war, *antis'* new leadership felt that a course of rigid patriotism would expose suffragists, specifically with respect to the Women's Party war opposition, as unpatriotic and even un-American.

Thomas Jablonsky blames that transition in rhetoric on the new leadership and assesses its consequences. According to him, “Although Alice Wadsworth and her cohorts represent only the final stage of the remonstrant movement, they do represent the worst.” (Jablonsky 98). He observes the reshaping of *antis'* main arguments “from conservative but not-vindictive

¹⁶⁷ See “Women and the War Work” *The Woman's Protest*, Vol. 11. No 4, September 1917, 7.

¹⁶⁸ See “Anti-Suffragism and the War” *The Woman's Protest*, Vol. 11. No 4, September 1917, 6.

¹⁶⁹ *The Woman's Protest*, February, 1918, p 7;

¹⁷⁰ See “The Woman Patriot,” Vol. 1. No.1, April, 1918, 1;

articulation of the female role in society to one filled with innuendo and character assassination” (Jablonsky 98). A glance through the new *Woman Patriot* illustrates his point. Titles like “Treason and Sedition” (Vol. 1. No. 1, April, 1918) or “Germany behind Feminist Moves To Obtain Peace”... (Vol. 1, No.28, 2 November 1918, Washington DC) or “Suffragists Officially Indorse Soviet System and Help To Put Socialism’s ‘Feet On the Ground’” (The *Woman Patriot*, Vol. 2, No 12, 22 March, 1919 Washington DC) pour out of its pages.

Covering a hearing before the House Committee on Judiciary in Washington DC where both suffragists and anti-suffragists took part, *The Woman Patriot* reports on a heated debate. Outraged by Lucy Burns’, the vice-president of the Woman’s Party, refusal to aid Red Cross work, the newly-elected national president “made a strong and dignified argument against suffrage,”(...) ‘We women who oppose suffrage are fighting solely in self-defense, personal and patriotic. (...) But we must fight for the preservation of our country, of its ideals, its traditions. We must fight against this feminine army of invasion which comes hammering at our doors’” (Richards, 8).¹⁷¹

The military imagery of defense, fighting, invasion, and a feminine army is new to the antis' rhetoric. One could think that they were trying to respond to the present situation of war and wrap their argumentation accordingly in order to gain public attention. With the advance of the war, and deeper U.S. entanglement, antis intensified their war focus. In “Treason and Sedition,” antis believed to show the true identity of a newly-formed People’s Council, an organization backed up by suffragists, trying to promote peace: “America is menaced by a propaganda of treason and sedition. Our Lenines and Trozskys have formed a pro-German ‘pacifist’ organization. (...) Will the American People weakly tolerate this German propaganda until its deadly work is done (*Treason and Sedition*, 3)?” An aversion to socialism had been sneaking into antis’ rhetoric. With the Soviet revolution taking its toll, many conservative Americans of the day thought that the wave of socialism would sweep the U.S. Antis equated socialism to mob rule, to unreasonable,

¹⁷¹ See Richards, “Washington News and Notes” *The Woman Protest*, Vol 11, No. 2, June 1917, 8.

unrefined, dictatorship of the masses. Large-scale suffrage parades served as a fine example of the above in the eyes of the antis.¹⁷²

Between 1918 and 1919, antis' preoccupation with socialism and bolshevism even reached a state of paranoia. A shift from defending the conservative female role in society to libeling, innuendo, and character profiling became obvious. Instead of the sober and factual argumentation that was preferred by Josephine Dodge, antis seemed to have slipped into a red psychosis. During the time of war, their mission appeared to be cleansing the red stripes of the Star-Spangled Banner. And in so doing, they believed to wipe out the suffragists. In "Parlor Bolshevik!" they report:

"Officials of the committee said yesterday that a complete list of 'parlor Bolshevik' would be made public as soon as clerks have finished the work of going over books taken in recent raids. (...) The authorities in Boston also have announced that the names of rich women who have been financing Bolshevism are known; but *nowhere* are these names made public. Suspicion is beginning to be general that as these women are, of course, also suffragists, they are protected by the fear on the part of politicians" (*Parlor Bolshevik* 3).

Compiling lists of names with supposed foes of America, frantically warning against a lurking and invisible danger, and the character assassinations that took place in the antis' camp, all seemed to be grim precursors to the socialist schizophrenia of the McCarthy years. Wadsworth repeatedly fired public accusations of treason against the NAWSA leaders. She even called upon the public to examine the war records of Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Shaw. After 1917, any suffrage victory was attributed to pro-pacifism and pro-Germanism (Jablonsky 99). Another example would be the presentation of suffragists practicing a kind of 'red' cult. Supposedly exposing how suffragist meetings turned into bolshevist conventions, antis write "Mrs. Blatch, with other distinguished suffragists, was also on the platform of the great Bolshevik meeting in New York on November 10 (1918) in celebration of the second anniversary of the Bolshevik destruction of the Russian Constitutional Assembly and assumption of unlimited power by Lenine and Trotzky." In support of their observations, antis interpreted the local press in their favor:

¹⁷² See "The First Socialist-Suffragists Invasion of Washington - Suffrage Parade, 1913" *The Woman Patriot*, Vol. 2. No. 6, p.1 Washington, DC, February 8, 1919.

“The Boston papers, for the first time, were forced to admit the *demonstrated affiliation* between the woman suffragists and the ‘Reds’” (*Suffragists Meeting Turns into Bolshevik Convention* 3).

With antis increasingly losing their focus on the role of women in society and becoming obsessed with painting suffragists red, they appeared to also lose perspective on the final and decisive stage of the votes for women debate. Suffragists, despite having to regroup, kept their primary goal well in perspective and carried out the last two major but final pushes of their Federal Amendment strategy: congressional passage and ratification.

V. 3. Passage and Ratification of the 19th Amendment ¹⁷³

As vigorous as the suffrage campaign had been in the Progressive Era, World War I did leave its mark on the pace of suffragist actions. In 1917 NAWSA was forced to instruct its Front Door Lobby to cancel the federal amendment drive. Suffragists hoped to bring up the issue of votes for women in early April. At that time, Congress planned to deal with all non-emergency issues, which had been dropped because of the war. The question of whether to do any suffrage work in a time of national emergency was highly debated, even within the NAWSA camp. Yet, suffragist leaders met in the middle. They saw the necessity of suspending the front door lobby for the time being. A preparation of a back-up plan, however, was also set in motion. NAWSA concentrated its efforts on the congressional committees in every state. In the days of active Front Door Lobbying, these committees were designed to create home pressure to congressmen and thus aid the lobby. With the nation at war, state congressional committees were instructed to solely keep the issue alive

¹⁷³ The passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment had been well covered historically, among others, by: Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1996, 300-18; Judy Monroe, *The Nineteenth Amendment: Women's Right to Vote*, Springfield, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 1998; Eleanor Clift, *The Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment*, New York: John Wiley & Sons 2003; The accounts by Sara Graham on the suffragists (128-147)) and Thomas Jablonsky on the anti-suffragists (95-113), however, capture the drama of the moment in a brilliant way. In addition to a sequence of events, both historians offer an almost psychological analysis of the two rivalry camps, by assessing the consequences of rhetorical and communicational changes that characterized the closure of the women's suffrage debate.

until Congress picked it up for debate again (Graham 100-1). Alice Paul's pickets also did their job in reminding the President of the disenfranchised women in front of his house. Although condemning them at first, the chief executive pardoned the protesters and aided their release from prison. Suffragists seemed able to move Wilson slowly but surely toward supporting their position. If, for example, in April 1917 he refused to take a stand in a debate on the Maryland legislature over the suffrage bill, three weeks later Wilson enthusiastically encouraged the creation of a committee on woman suffrage in the House of Representatives. The President softened. The major newspapers of the country began predicting Wilson's official endorsement of a federal amendment to the Constitution (Jablonsky 93).

In the meantime, in May 1919, the House passed the federal suffrage amendment and delegated it over to the Senate to debate in early June. Suffragists could feel their victory was not far. Still, they anxiously awaited the Senate's vote. Carrie Chapmann Catt did not come to Washington to attend the Senate deliberations. No member of NAWSA even asked her to do so because they knew it was torture for Catt to hear endless roll calls and painfully well-known anti-suffrage arguments. When the woman suffrage amendment was passed by a vote of 56 to 25, Catt was not present at the celebrations on the congressional victory. The news reached her in her New York home. Her reaction reflects the suffragists mood one step closer to the final victory "she danced all over the place and then settled down to think" (Catt).¹⁷⁴ For the NAWSA president knew, as important and as exuberating the congressional victory had been, ultimately it did not yet give votes to women. Ratification by three-fourths of the states was next on the suffragists' schedule. NAWSA leaders realized that the amendment had to be ratified as soon as possible, or they risked the seventy-year-old suffrage campaign being put to an end (Graham 127).

It somehow had been assumed that as soon as the congressional battle was won, ratification by the states was the formal last step before enfranchisement. Indeed, compared to the campaign for congress, ratification

¹⁷⁴ Clara Hyde to Mary Gray Peck, June 5, 1919, NAWSA Papers, reel 16, LC

took only a year and a half. A critical assessment of the ratification process, such as the one by Sara Graham, shows that this final battle was by no means taken for granted by the suffragists. In fact, it was a whole new test on its own. After all, the legislatures of thirty-six states lay ahead. Each and every state had its own political agenda, its own unions and caucuses, its leaders and, overall, its own character. Some, like the western states, had been practicing female suffrage for decades. Others, such as the South and the North East, had been trying to avert it. And, of course, female suffrage was far from being the central issue. To be able to achieve a quick victory would have been impossible without the diligently organized suffrage network. It operated, equally well organized from the halls of Congress to the state legislatures to the town halls. This structure enabled a broad but extremely efficient campaign. In each of those states supporters of the female vote rushed to collect signatures, disseminate suffrage literature in public places, attract trade unions, women's clubs and, above all, create state ratification committees. All these activities and their results were carefully and skillfully passed on to the state legislatures (Graham 128-130).

NAWSA knew of its poor organization in the Deep South and in the Border States. Texas retaliated vigorously against woman suffrage. The Texas woman suffrage amendment was lost in May 1919 by a considerable majority. Fraud and dubious circumstances accompanied the campaign. Anti-suffragists were also active and fought back relentlessly. Suffragists however, managed to shake off the defeat of the state amendment and focused on the ratification of the federal amendment in the lone star state. It came in June 1919 with a vote of nineteen to ten. In Oklahoma, as another example, the local suffrage association refused to endorse the federal amendment approach at all. It took pressure on the governor and state party leaders to achieve victory there. Marked by racial bias, most states in the Deep South heavily opposed the amendment because it would also enfranchise African American women. Not surprisingly, most suffragists pinned their hopes on the West where women already voted. Indeed, ratification there came much easier compared to other

states. When in June 1919 it became clear that Tennessee of all states would have the last word, few were confident (Graham 130-31, 32, 34, 37, 39).

Although the same legislature was presiding, which granted women municipal and presidential suffrage, public opinion on the matter was divided. Due to the geography of the state, canvassing proved almost impossible with no railroad or dirt roads. Anti-suffragists also had strong positions in the state so both camps had an equal chance of winning. The state legislature was reluctant to call a session since there seemed to be no consensus on the issue of votes for women. NAWSA realized that the obstacle lay within the Tennessee state constitution. It strongly favored state rights in its requirements on ratification of state and federal amendments. Before Tennessee even became the state of the showdown, suffragists challenged the issue at the Supreme Court and won. President Wilson was left with no other choice but to telegraph the governor, who, too, hardly had any other option but to call the state legislature into special session on August 1920. Campaigning had started already a month ago. Carrie Chapmann Catt had occupied her temporary home in Nashville, the Hermitage Hotel. She, together with suffrage organizers, travelled the state and spoke at conventions in both rural areas and urban centers. Suffrage literature and propaganda flooded the state. Suffragists even patrolled the train stations trying to prevent anti-suffrage legislators from breaking quorum by leaving the city. Suffragists knew how to exercise pressure (Graham 141).

It took two weeks of debate in the hot and humid summer for the amendment to pass the senate. Yet, the house members of the state senate were still yet to be won over. The fierce debates continued. Tension reached a peak when a poll showed that the amendment needed two more votes to pass. Some legislators changed their pro-, or anti-suffrage position from one day to the other. In an attempt by the Speaker, an anti-suffragist, to postpone the consideration of the amendment due to a missing representative, suffragists brought the representative in question from the hospital to cast his vote. During the very last roll call, the hall was packed with women agitators from both camps. They all waited to hear each and every single vote in stunning silence.

Legislators were still changing their initial positions on the matter, from anti- to pro-, making the setting highly dramatic. When the last legislator, Harry Burn voted “Aye!” instead of, as expected from an anti-suffragist, “Nay!” present suffragists could not react and remained stunned in their dismay. Moments like these were too much to handle for Carrie Chapman Catt, who sat alone in her hotel room, hearing the cheering and booing going on in the hall. The suffrage President did, however, join the celebrations of the ratification in New York City. In the meantime, the ratification certificate had reached Washington DC to be signed by the secretary of state on August 26, 1920 (Graham 142-145).

The preoccupation of Congress with the war, and the apparent fading of the suffrage issue in Washington comforted antis. The opponents of the votes-for-women were also confident in President Wilson’s anti-suffrage position. They kept seeing him as a gentleman and cavalier of the South who would never endorse a feminist position. All the more surprising it must have been for them, when, in 1918, President Wilson issued a declaration in support of the federal amendment. When it was obvious that the amendment would pass the House of Representatives, antis could not respond properly. In October 1918, the Senate was fully occupied with the suffrage issue and pro-suffrage support had been growing considerably. Antis tried to be present at as many hearings as possible. As the wives of senators and their friends, they applauded and cheered the speakers who appeared in their favor. However, antis had failed to woo the President and had underestimated the seemingly calm situation while the world war was on the minds of the legislators. It was not enough to be an animated audience at hearings. It was not enough, even, when antis’ supporters on Capitol Hill were their own husbands – as in the case of Alice Wadsworth, whose husband Sen. James Wadsworth, Jr. fired a series of addresses and speeches confronting the suffragists. When the Senate sealed the issue by approving the federal Amendment and passing it on for ratification to the states, the antis lacked vigor. Alice Wadsworth believed it was pointless to confront the ratification since there was no deadline. Antis stood once again, in the final battle, in a stark contrast to the highly efficient and quick thinking

suffragists. Most antis even retreated to their homes, leaving the active opposition to the male opponents of the vote. Their presence, in a debate that was becoming predetermined, was expressed only through their writings. Their rhetoric had also been losing its scope, resembling a frenzy more than a factual argumentation. Antis had assumed the role of onlookers. Their dynamics of conservative organization opposing the female vote were gone. The combative, well-directed and energetic suffrage campaign had given them that role (Jablonsky 101-110).

Alice Wadsworth resigned, passing the almost unachievable task of confronting ratification to the next president of the battered national anti-suffrage association, Mary Kilbreth. Her attempt to revive the old anti-suffrage passion included relocating the headquarters of the national association back to New York and calling for a national conference to rally what was left of the organization. These moves also aimed at slowing the diminishing number of members and supportive legislators. Rhetorically, Kilbreth shifted the focus to an emphasis on state rights as opposed to the power of the central government. Antis under Kilbreth tried to make state rights the motto of their drive against ratification. Their argument was that the amendment was the will of the federal government being imposed over the unwilling states. While antis were busy reinventing themselves, five states including Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Kansas and New York, ratified the amendment under their noses. Yet, the new president, Kilbreth, was still optimistic that there had to be thirteen states in the U.S. that would want to strengthen their rights as states and thus reject the ratification. With this thought in mind, she toured the states in the Mid-Atlantic and New England, calling meetings and delivering speeches. Kilbreth also pinned her faith on the two major parties and tried to convince them that the Nineteenth Amendment would be an abridgment of state sovereignty. She accused each of the major parties of risking a violation of state rights by trying to enfranchise women (Jablonsky 101-110).

As a further tactic, antis intensified written correspondence with the states distant from the New York headquarters. Their hope was to better coordinate the activities in each of the states where ratification was looming.

By sending a considerable amount of telegrams, letters and bulletins, antis targeted local legislatures. They tried to prevent the state legislatures from calling special sessions on the amendment. If that was the case, despite the warnings, antis aggressively accused legislatures of serving a minority (of pro-suffragists) and thus ignoring the will of the people, an anti-suffragist majority. Antis even wrote to legislators of the debating states telling them to ignore hitherto ratifications because they were considered invalid. Such correspondence went from Maryland to Iowa, to New York and Washington and from the Carolinas to New Jersey.¹⁷⁵ In some cases, such as in Delaware, antis also appeared in person at the same spot as their opponents. They took parts in debates in front of the legislature and tried to win state senators by pinning a red rose on their coats. Their tactics and argumentation bore fruits in some states, such as Maryland and Georgia. In Ohio, antis brought the case of the passage of the federal amendment for revision to the Supreme Court. Instead of fortifying the rights of the individual states, as antis had hoped, the Supreme Court ruled that state legislatures did not have power over federal amendments – a decision that crippled the antis in their final struggle (Jablonsky 101-110).

If the West was the place that nourished suffragists' hopes, antis turned to the South as their like-minded stronghold. In June 1919, they founded a spin-off organization to battle the amendment throughout the region: The Southern Women's League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, also known as the Women's Rejection League. Founded and based in Montgomery, Alabama, the Women's Rejection League aimed at communicating the opposition of the amendment to legislators. The league argued that the measure would be an abridgment of the state rights, which would inevitably enfranchise African-Americans and undermine white domination. The organization, aided by politicians, succeeded in states such as North Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama (Graham 136-141).

¹⁷⁵ *The New York Times*, September 12, 1919, p. 12, 1919; *ibid.*, February 15, 1920, p. 8; *ibid.*, February 25, 1920, p. 17; *ibid.*, April 2, 1920, p. 9; *ibid.*, July 24, 1920, p. 12; *Woman Citizen*, March 27, 1920, p. 1036.

Yet, even to the anti-suffragists it was a surprise that the final battle was to be decided in a fairly irrelevant spot for the female suffrage debate: Tennessee. Here antis did not wait long and flooded the state with their supporters. The Volunteer State was the chance to tilt history in their favor. As faith would have it, antis became the victims of their own weapons. It was their challenging of the Ohio ratification before the Supreme Court that sealed the jurisdiction of a federal amendment over the state legislation. The Court's ruling compelled the Tennessee senate to call a special session. Actually, Tennessean statesmen had been trying to avoid the issue. So, in August 1919, the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville also became the Tennessee headquarters of the anti-suffragists. From there, antis spread out their propaganda literature. Posters, leaflets, newspapers and articles urged the public to defend their rights as citizens of the state and to fortify the political discrimination of African Americans.

Thomas Jablonsky sees the final battle in Nashville as a "mixture of carnival, convention and revival" (Jablonsky 110). Indeed, the last chapter of ratification resembled a little bit of all of that. Antis, armed with their symbol, the red rose, tried to buttonhole every legislator, thus leaving no senate representative free for the suffragist yellow rose. The spectacle became known as the "War of the Roses" (Jablonsky 110). Antis also organized demonstrations in front of the capitol. Together with suffragists, they witnessed the final counting of the votes. Antis were electrified by the change of opinions of the state representatives. When it was Harry Burn's turn, antis again, firmly believed they had an anti-suffragist stronghold in his face. As a matter of fact, the senator had pledged his allegiance to the antis by entering the hall with a red rose on his jacket. His steadfast white supremacist convictions also made antis confident in his decision. But political convictions could not hold up to a mother's plea. Burn's mother beseeched him to cast his vote in favor of the voting woman. When Harry Burn shouted "Aye!" he saw himself as women's liberator. He justified his unexpected decision within the overall Enlightenment

context of the debate: “I believe we had a moral and legal right to ratify” (Jablonsky 101-110).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Harry Burn, “Remember the Ladies!”: Women Struggle for an Equal Voice“, *Tennessee State Library Archives* <<http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/exhibits/suffrage/beginning.htm>> 19. June 2012.

VI. Conclusion

Antis continued to organize several mass meetings to denounce ratification in Tennessee. In Massachusetts, the state anti-suffrage organization attempted in vain to call a referendum to repeal ratification. In 1922, the same organization challenged the Nineteenth Amendment in the Supreme Court. Antis hoped to counter the amendment through the courts. In the case known as *Leser vs. Garnett*, they beseeched the court to declare the Nineteenth Amendment unconstitutional on the basis of abridgment of state rights. Yet, the court declared the amendment the law of the land. The failure compelled The Massachusetts Association Opposed to Further Extension of Suffrage to Women to dissolve (Camhi 142-143). The paranoid behavior of antis around the last anti president, Kilbreth, persisted well after the ratification. It did not have female suffrage on its agenda, but any “ism” that they saw threatening what they considered to be real Americanism: socialism, bolshevism Germanism, etc. Behind almost every new social reform, be it the Sheppard-Towner Act, introducing federal funding for maternity and child care, or the Child Labor Amendment, outlawing child labor, Kilbreth saw a communist plot.¹⁷⁷ In her eyes, the state was intruding into individual matters such as child bearing. After 1920, the Kilbreth sympathizers regrouped in right-wing organizations like the Sentinels of the Republic. The group saw itself on a mission to ensure that the general welfare clause of the Constitution would not be misinterpreted in a socialist way. In the twenties, they opposed the Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.), the establishment of the department of education, and of the children’s bureau, the nationalization of the coal industry, and almost every act of the federal government stepping in as a regulator. In the thirties, they were against the international recognition of the Soviet Union.

¹⁷⁷ On the Sheppard-Towner Act see: United States. Congress. House. Committee on Labor, *Hygiene of maternity and infancy. Hearings before the Committee on Labor, House of Representatives, Sixty-fifth Congress, third session, on H. R. 12634, a bill to encourage instruction in the hygiene of maternity and infancy, and to extend proper care for maternity and infancy ; to provide for cooperation with the States in the promotion of such instruction and care in rural districts ; to appropriate money and regulate its expenditure, and for other purposes. Wednesday, January 15, 1919, Tuesday, January 28, 1919.* Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919. Lemons, J. Stanley, “The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s,” *Journal of American History* 55 (4) (March 1969): 776–786.

Kilbreth was active against the recent stream of American politics well into the 1940's (Jablonsky 115-116).

Despite these last pushes, the majority of antis behaved surprisingly calmly. In the presidential election of 1920, historians see women in general to have accepted their new political role. The disbelief in the voting woman seemed to have dissolved sooner than expected. Former antis were no exception. The majority of antis seemed to have given up their opposition of the enfranchisement *per se*. In fact, they called upon the newly born female electorate to take its new responsibility seriously, even encouraging them not to miss any election. In New York, Mrs. William F. Scott, a founding anti in that state, became the first policewoman of Yonkers. Suffragists applauded and gladly reported on converted antis, which were hoped to serve as an example to follow. The Republican Warren G. Harding won the presidential election of 1920. He attracted the female vote, as he was quicker to embrace the suffrage cause than his opponent James M. Cox. Even antis in the South voted for him. Antis were accommodating female voting, which became actuality in 1920 (Jablonsky 115-116).

With the achieving of ratification, suffragists were the ones to perform. They held high expectations. The proponents of the vote had impressed society and politicians to such a degree that when suffrage was granted they expected a powerful and unanimous women's movement. Some even imagined that women would form a massive pressure group promoting female interests and blocking politicians if they were reluctant to do so. Considering the gigantic suffrage organization and its powerful lobby, those fears were tangible for some politicians – especially the ones who did not endorse enfranchisement prior to ratification feared losing their positions in a suffrage revenge. Reasons for that were also given by the formation of the Women's Joint Congressional Committee (WJCC) as a permanent lobby in the halls of Congress. One could also imagine the more idealistic amongst the suffrage supporters, such as Ida Husted Harper, to have expected a sort of a new millennium to be ushered in with the introduction of the female vote. Women were foreseen to rush to the polls in a way of long awaited liberation, eager to cast their vote and enact

change. It was supposed to bring new, just and progressive legislation, ethics and morals, which would profoundly change social reality.

After the 1920s, most of these suppositions had either failed to come or were only partially coming into being. The Women's Joint Congressional Committee did indeed help push through that same bill, the Sheppard-Towner Act on infant and maternal care, that antis around Kilbreth were so ardently opposing. The feared female blockade to policies, which did not embrace the women's agenda, never came to be. The firm and constant decrease in voter participation that had begun in the 1890s overshadowed the expected female rush to the polls. Skeptics proclaimed the prediction of the non-voting woman to have been fulfilled – a notion anchored back in the day of active anti-suffragism, which argued that once women were granted the vote they would be unwilling to use it for the simple fact that they did not know what to do with it. This assumption blamed the general low voter turnout on women for decades. Historians have not registered any politician being voted out of office due to opposition to any female agenda – simply because ex-suffragists failed to formulate any notable program (Graham 152).

The women's movement, the powerful engine of which was suffragism, began losing pace. In this sense, former suffragists shared the faith of their earlier opponents. Similar to antis, the suffrage camp broke apart forming militant and moderate wings. This is a split that had been long evident while agitating for the vote and enduring ratification. Former proponents of the enfranchisement could not find a common goal, arguing over ideology, tactics and political programs. The women's lobby in the face of the WJCC chronically lacked activists and funding. These circumstances caused historians such as William O'Neil to name the 1920s as the "failure of feminism." To him the vote did not do any good to women once they had won it. It did not help women to improve their own political status, let alone society as a whole (Graham 157-8).

In a way this extreme stand makes sense considering the political situation women were in the 1920s, regardless of whether they were former suffragists or antis. NAWSA's non-partisan position throughout the votes-for-

women campaign was one of the major keys to success. After ratification, however, this alienation from the political parties proved disadvantageous. As soon as the two parties on the American political landscape realized that there would be no suffrage vendetta to fear they took little interest in the newly enfranchised electorate. They did not educate women as a target group in their policies. There was no effort by the government to inform them on how to cast a ballot, party programs, or on the complicated procedure of the selection of delegates. Washington was far from encouraging the parties to include women equally as their representatives. Not until the 1940s did the newly empowered citizens take part in conventions, campaign activities or run for office (Graham 154). The overall low voter turnout could be blamed not only on gender, but also on the much more powerful factors of race, education, employment and region. Woman suffrage, together with other party-alienated Progressive Era reform movements, such as the Anti-Saloon League for example, found themselves outside of parties' politics. They were challenged to continue their political involvement parallel to them. The period between the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment and World War II seemed like a black hole for women. The fading Progressive Era itself and, most importantly, the rising criticism of the Enlightenment values were a prerequisite to this vacuum.

The very principles on which both suffragists and antis built their argumentation and communication are: informing and educating the public in the values of reason itself, the importance of its exchange and purification in a public debate, the significance of education, science and technology in ameliorating the living conditions and thus opening the door to higher morals, and, in suffragists' case, the broadening of democracy by including as many participants as possible on the basis of direct representation. Before the war, the further development and institutionalization of these values had been taken for granted. More precisely, they were considered inevitable and organic. The aftereffects of the Great War bespoke what Eric Hobsbawm calls "the fall of liberalism" (Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* 109-111). The values and institutions building the Enlightenment core of the Progressive Era were challenged once the atrocities of the first great war of humanity began to surface. On the one

hand, science and technology were not seen in one dimension any more. Their abuse, resulting in the abominations left by modern warfare, disclosed their own devastating potential. On the other hand, the quasi-undoubted refining power of public opinion, together with the merits of informing the public in order to prepare it for decision-making, was attacked. Towards the end of Wilson's presidency the war became increasingly unpopular and resented. In the eyes of the critics, the propaganda machinery masterminded by the Creel Committee of the Wilson administration had misled the public by manufacturing its opinion in support of the war. This criticism was brought a step further, casting aspersions on the powers of public reason, on the intelligence of the broader public and its very ability apt for decision making.¹⁷⁸

Yet, the criticism of the Enlightenment, as veneered and practiced by the progressives, should not be seen as a break with the Enlightenment values and practices – a sort of end of modernity and a fall back into barbarism. The critical voices, culminating in Horkheimer and Adorno's seminal work, were, after all, themselves Enlightenment-based. The Enlightenment gave them the instruments and techniques on what to criticize and what to protect. They illustrate the assault on the Enlightenment using its own weapons – the criticism of the Enlightenment within the Enlightenment and the cleansing of modernity from its errant self. Thus, they bring to light the two-fold nature of Enlightenment ideas and practice: to liberate and emancipate but also to subjugate and marginalize. The public debate on female suffrage in American society during the Progressive Era proved to be a good example of the issue above. Analyzing the pragmatics of communication and the rhetoric of the two major camps has helped us to see them as indicative of the dialectic of Enlightenment in America.

Viewing the Enlightenment not only as a set of ideas but also as an ensemble of practices has made dealing with the debate's pragmatics of communication inevitable. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists believed in the

¹⁷⁸ See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 109-142; Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*; Vaughn, *Holding Fast* 347-48; C.H. Hamlin, *The War Myth in the United States*, New York: Vanguard Press, 1927, 92; Peter Odegard, *American Public Mind* New York: Columbia University Press, 1930, 197.

value of public reason as a sieve of truth. They knew that in order to sway the public to decide in their favor, they had to inform and educate them. That is why both camps began in their own way, with their own means, and according to their own rules of conduct to communicate with society. They both understood the public sphere very well as the scene of action for their cause. Both parties were aware that people had to be persuaded and mobilized. Their own time not only enabled, but encouraged them to do so. With the dawn and peak of the Progressive Era, women had reached a point where they were much more informed on political and social matters than their predecessors. The Era witnessed an unprecedented industrial and technological boom, which directly affected the lives of women. Household devices and quicker modes of transportation saved female homemakers considerable amounts of time. Improvements in communication, and especially the growth, diversification and affordability of the press turned women into a part of the informed public. Due to the rise of investigative journalism, and statistical and documentary fervor, women became aware of the social controversies that accompanied their rampant time. The press took on the task of creating and stimulating public debates on topical issues. It thus acted upon the Enlightenment belief in a rational and factual dispute, which would lead to the best resolution. In response, women organized, wrote and agitated. White middle class women received education and entered the professions. Their involvement in the shaping of social conditions had begun – from community projects to labor unions. Women became reformers. From that experience women learned the value and power of shaping and winning over the minds of the public. Among a variety of social causes they were devoted to, women discovered their own. Enfranchisement and its opposition turned to their central issue and most topical reform.

Both suffragists and antis began a massive communication with the public. By so doing, they enacted the Enlightenment as a practice. Both parties involved in the suffrage issue realized (one earlier than the other) the importance of pushing the issue into the public sphere. By provoking a debate they hoped to win over the minds of the public. Both factions acted upon the

general rationale of the Progressive Era that societal discussion on an issue would solve it most justly – a conviction that progressives adopted from the Enlightenment and meticulously stuck to. The two camps organized their supporters professionally in a movement. As a second step they institutionalized their movements. They did so by building a constituency and establishing organs to convey their view: newspapers, engaged tactics of public visibility and direct contact. In this respect suffragists led the way. In a way they set the standards for communication and interaction with the public. Anti-suffragists felt initially droned into but consequently did their best to confront suffragists at eye level.

Suffragist communication with society reached such professionalism, pedantry and perfection that their opponents called it a “machine.” Their fast organization was affected by the experience gained in earlier involvement in abolitionism. The moment suffragists announced their cause to the nation they began a public campaign. Ever since the Seneca Falls convention and its manifesto, all the national conventions were above all other public events. The advocates of the vote invited the citizenry, sought out the press, and labored to achieve nationwide attention. Suffragists made sure that every one of their acts would be a public one. Passing ideological and organizational chasms within their own faction enabled them to even better convey their message to the public. Already with a strong foundation, the National American Woman Suffrage Association set as its primary objective to persuade the people of the votes-for-women idea. It specialized and professionalized its tactics of communication. The Press Committee took care of sufficient press coverage and media relations, suffrage schools trained agitators (organizers) for grass root support, the *History of Woman Suffrage* gave tradition, the Committee of Education focused on girls in school and college, and the Congressional Committee served the cause in the halls of Congress. State chapters were founded all over the country, diligently sub-divided into county-, town-, and neighborhood representations. They aimed at mass constituency, organization and performing of state wide conventions. These chapters orchestrated suffrage communication on all levels. The energetic suffrage president Carrie Chapman

Catt was the quasi-evil genius behind the above plan as she called it, and it eventually proved to be a winning one.

NAWSA was resourceful with a variety of tactics of public persuasion, which were rightfully called suffrage propaganda by scholars. They used grass roots techniques to target common people, the elite, and especially the indifferent, from whatever social strata they may come from. Since the advocates of the vote believed to voice the people's will, they emphasized their grass roots support. Organizers, trained in rhetoric, went door to door and canvassed adults. The 'man on the street' was caught by elaborate street parades, open air meetings, badges and buttons, banners and roses. The amount of printed matter that poured from the NAWSA and its supporters is almost impossible to gauge – newspapers, magazines, periodicals, leaflets, pamphlets, cards and posters. All these documents targeted the public and conveyed the suffrage idea. Elite women were talked into the votes-for-women reform even without noticing it. For suffragists made sure to infiltrate the strongholds of conservative women – the parlor meetings. With elite women on their side, respectability of the cause became the hidden message. On a more profound level respectability was also the message behind the *History of Woman Suffrage*. Written by the historical figures themselves in their time of action, the *History* was needed in the suffragists' present. By creating a usable past, suffrage used the *History* to justify current and upcoming tactics, rhetoric, symbolic actions and political figures. Founding suffragists were the founding mothers, the U.S. 'les philosophes' in skirts. Suffrage history was made the history of women in America. And the progress of U.S. women was turned into suffrage progress. Female advancement was turned into the advancement of the U.S., of which enfranchisement was only the next step. The *History* was to be imprinted on the minds of young school girls and college women, and planted into public libraries. The usable past and its invention of tradition in all its aspects were an Enlightenment phenomenon that suffragists understood very well and utilized.

In return, their membership boomed. The cause gave meaning, purpose and identification for those educated young females (Graham 119). The cohorts

of female organizers were made up of them. When the Amendment, its upcoming congressional passage, and state ratification crystallized as the final goals the suffrage machine had the right people in the right place at the right time to conduct the hitherto most powerful public campaign of education, publicity and persuasion. As challenged as these extensive suffrage efforts were after the Progressive Era, they deserve recognition – for the seventy-two-year old votes-for-women public relations campaign had reached its long-awaited only goal. Suffragists were the architects of an all-embracing, book-like societal interaction that defines the Enlightenment as a practice of communication.

Against the backdrop of the unsurpassable communications campaign described above, the campaign of the opponents may be easily proclaimed as unworthy. Yet, anti-suffragists too knew very well the significance of winning public opinion. This anti-suffrage understanding was no less than the suffragists' product of the Progressive Era's and the Enlightenment's emphasis on a social debate in the public realm. When anti-suffragists began conveying their message to the public they did so in a manner very different from their opponents. Antis' initial evasion of public visibility should not be seen as an inability or disbelief in social dialogue. It may be that the first voiced opposition against the female vote came from cleric males. But women disapproving of female enfranchisement did not need long to take the issue in their own hands. And they did so in accordance with their own standards. When they sent male speakers to represent them in front of legislations and refused to face suffragists in a hearing while instead firing written anonymous petitions to law makers they were communicating. According to the image of piety and lady like behavior that antis identified with, they came up with a way of voicing their opinion and passing it on without severely breaking with their rules of conduct. It should not be forgotten, however, that antis emerged and for the most part remained a response movement. They had to counter suffrage actions in order to preserve the status quo. With respect to the pragmatics of communication, suffragists were the trendsetters. When suffragists made public communication the primary objective of their national association, antis

regrouped as well. Led by the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, antis too institutionalized their movement by opening state, regional, and local chapters. A chapter was quickly brought to life as soon as a committee of at least three people met and discussed at an anti's home. A College Anti-Suffrage League was shaping young recruits. These tactics bespeak an adequate anti-suffrage understanding of the mechanisms of the public sphere even if members' names were kept secret.

With the advancement of the Progressive Era, antis realized that they had to become visible in the eyes of the general public. With the nationwide spread, anti-suffragism reached organizational and communicational maturity. The National Association made the opposition of the Nineteenth Amendment its primary objective. Therefore, antis' communication was sub-divided into congressional lobbying, press relations through their own periodicals, and reaching the general public through printed matter such as: pamphlets, leaflets, posters, plays and even motion pictures. Antis began facing suffragists in public hearings and even appeared at their parades. Spin-off organizations began conveying the antis' message, which was wrapped in commonly accepted Enlightenment-based values such as: intelligent opposition in a public debate, guarding of the Federal Constitution and the promotion of civic education. Antis tried to reach out to other sympathetic groups such as Catholics despite not liking them. Through their transformation, antis achieved public visibility and offered considerable opposition to the votes-for-women campaign.

In fact, at the peak of the Progressive Era, antis presented themselves just as effectively in their communication as suffragists do – and, remarkably, mostly with the pen in hand. The written word remained antis' main communicational tool, which does not in any way make their societal persuasion less enlightened. And yet, antis lost eventually. As effective as their campaign was, they did not take full advantage of the 'man on the street'. Being a movement of the social elite, antis took pain in attracting the masses. In fact, they never wanted to. What was considered the decisive weakness of

their societal communication, the mobilization of the vast citizenry was in antis' opinion a reflection of their superiority. They regarded parades and large-scale gatherings as uncontrolled socialist mob rule. They believed to have evolved and moved beyond such primitive practices, known from the Old World. Through their newspapers they thought to offer modern, factual and quick information. Through their pamphlets, antis were convinced that they conveyed the rationale of the most distinguished, i.e. most reasonable citizens of their time: scientists, presidents, clerics, etc. Antis saw themselves as the intelligent opposition, targeting an intelligent audience in an intelligent discussion. In their own eyes, antis lead the more American, more civilized, even more enlightened debate on behalf of exclusion from democracy.

When it comes to embracing the Enlightenment in terms of rhetoric, antis and suffragists show remarkable similarities. My dealing with suffrage and anti-suffrage rhetoric picked two representative voices from both camps. The documents by Isabella Beecher Hooker and Carrie Chapman Catt on the suffrage side, and Justin Dew Fulton and Josephine Dodge on the anti-suffrage side, presented the reoccurring ideological concepts in the votes-for-women debate. The usage of these concepts is indicative of the dialectic of Enlightenment in the U.S. Since then, these documents are regarded, also here, as testimonies of communication. They are also approached with regard to their text-pragmatics. Hooker's text, *Constitutional Rights of Women* was delivered at an international convention and addresses a wide, multinational audience. In spatial terms, it positioned the suffrage cause as a global one. Anchored in specificities of the American experience, Hooker's authorial position is simultaneously directed towards friends of suffragism, the global family. The prominent suffragist instructs the audience in the true meaning of a social contract between the governed and the governing using the U.S. Constitution. Transformed into a pamphlet and widely circulated, her document aspired to also teach the home audience in the right interpretation and application of the Enlightenment ideas as inscribed in the founding document – in the sense of the text-pragmatics.

Catt's document was a typical one for suffragists. Before it made its way as a pamphlet, *Will of the People* appeared first as an essay in a magazine. It addressed an educated and intellectual audience and informed on the present situation of the U.S. government. Structured argumentatively, and similarly to Hooker's, Catt's text strives to explain the true meaning of the people's will. From the position of a critical observer, Catt seeks to expose discrepancies between ideas and practice. Spatially, the text moves from West to East, and, temporally, from past to present. Thus, it illustrates the progressive development of U.S. society from the Western States towards the Eastern ones, and from the colonial past to the progressive present. Marking her text as another answer to the opponents, Catt positions her document within the larger debate on the votes-for-women.

Constitutional Rights of Women and *Will of the People* testify three major argumentative pillars of suffrage rhetoric. They, in turn, point at the first part of the dialectic: the usage of reason to emancipate – the very self-understanding of the suffragists, their idea of rights, and the vote as a matter of a general human progress. The advocates of the vote saw themselves as products of progress and modernity, as products of the Enlightenment. They proclaimed themselves to be making a historical novum, and summoned the citizens to act and change their unjust present for a just future. Suffragists re-invoked ideological techniques, which are known to us from the Enlightenment in America: the emphasis on the present moment, the concept of usable past, improvable present and an ever better future. They positioned themselves in stark contrast to anti-suffragists and labeled them as opposing not only the female vote, but progress in general. The ballot was presented as a natural move towards social refinement. Suffragists demanded the vote as a matter of rights, which was tightly linked to the expanding meaning of the Constitution. Broadening the scope of the constitutional promise to all hitherto marginalized has been the march of the Enlightenment in the U.S. In their eyes, it meant a process of gaining rights: most importantly of representation, of protest, of speech and to assemble. The vote guaranteed women those rights, suffragist voices argued. The advocates of the female ballot moved the matter to a higher

level insisting that the enfranchisement was simply part of natural human advancement. For the U.S. specifically, suffragists believed enfranchisement meant a program for social development and promised the fulfillment of a wide range of democratic goals. The female vote was supported by the U.S.'s core text and it had a mission. A mission launched by the federal Constitution upon a proper reading, suffragists insisted. The vote would civilize the electorate and the government itself. It would put ideas into practice. Suffragists believed to be pushing a practical reform in accordance with the Fathers', i.e., Enlightenment's ideal of practicality. Enfranchisement in the Western states was given as evidence for this practical implementation of the vote's mission. Western states were proclaimed to be practicing the Enlightenment in terms of legislation and civil equality. Empirical knowledge, factual data and specific examples were used to certify the above. Enfranchisement was successful, necessary and unstoppable just like the progress of humanity. The vote was argued to be the final step of completing the Enlightenment process in the U.S.

The fact that suffragists relied practically and rhetorically on the Enlightenment and were its product is fairly recognized by scholars. Some examples are: Sylvia Hoffert, *When Hens Crow* (1995), Suzanne M. Marilley, *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States 1820-1920* (1996), or Linda Kerber's *Toward an Intellectual History of Women* (1997). To see anti-suffragists as part of the Enlightenment in the U.S. has been difficult, even when antis practiced the Enlightenment in terms of communication or argued with its ideological ensemble. The examination of two typical anti-suffrage public documents, Justin D. Fulton's *Woman vs. The Ballot* and Josephine Dodge's *Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights*, hoped to prove the opposite. In terms of text-pragmatics, antis' public documents kept up the pace with their suffrage counterparts. The text by the Baptist preacher, Justin Dewey Fulton, for example, was part of a lecture series before it was pamphleteered. This fact points at the position of the author, as a lecturer and a teacher. In this position, Fulton is not only a man of God but also a man of knowledge and experience, a man of reason. On the one hand, his document aspires to educate the audience. On the other hand, the audience

becomes drawn into interaction to discuss and share their thoughts. The author addresses the audience directly and interacts with it, just as Hooker did with her audience. By creating this communicative setting, which enables the public exchange of reason, Fulton's lecture fits within the communicative impetus of the Enlightenment. The spatial and temporal orientation of Fulton's document is familiar to us from the suffrage documents. Fulton surveys the position of women throughout time, from past to present, and in space, around the world and at home. He hopes to convince his audience that women had never been more advanced than under the Christian religion, and nowhere more privileged than in the U.S.

If we look at the document by the antis' president, Josephine Dodge, the situation is hardly any different from a text-pragmatic point of view than the one by the suffrage president Catt. *Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights* initially appeared as an essay addressing a selective, highly-privileged audience – the lawmakers and intellectuals reading the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Just as Catt does, by dealing with the matter in an essay, Dodge puts on trial and tests the question of woman suffrage. She positions herself as an objective, impartial observer. She hides her subjectivity behind generally formulated statements. Thus, Dodge attempts to stress the universality of her arguments in the eyes of her readers. Her document also provides a spatial response to Catt's West to East orientation. Dodge highlights the higher level of civilization of the Eastern states, as opposed to the putative barbarism of the Western suffrage states. To her, and her fellow anti-suffragists, progress moves in the opposite direction and has already reached its peak in their day. Temporally, Dodge's text is also anchored in the present. The present, for Catt as well as for Dodge, is the time to act. But for antis, it is the time to act in order to preserve the status quo and the high advancement of their society. The future also plays a role. In antis' eyes, Dodge's document shows us, it was endangered by the suffragists' radicalism. The hitherto hard-won advancement of society was at stake.

Fulton and Dodge's documents sketched antis' most vital arguments. The usage of these arguments bespeaks the second part of the dialectic: the

Enlightenment was deployed for social marginalization. After all, let us not forget that antis defended the belief in separate male and female spheres – of womanhood as motherhood and a female, subordinate and apolitical position that had been around for centuries. What the Enlightenment provided them with, however, was the modern, rational basis for their argumentation. Here I have tried to present antis' rhetoric around the same pillars that have been decisive for suffrage argumentation: their own, anti-suffrage self-understanding, their idea of rights and their concept of social and civil progress. The ladylike, domestic and republican ideal of woman, which antis believed they embodied, was argued to be the measure for the level of Enlightenment in a society. Their own transformation from a silent, invisible opposition to a professionally organized, publicly active organization was also pointing at their modern self-understanding. Antis claimed that they were in the midst of a time of Enlightenment. They declared themselves to be the manifestation of an enlightened emancipation and self-determination of the female opposition to votes-for-women. To antis, the idea of rights played a central role in their reasoning. Interestingly enough, they not only defended women in their right to refrain from suffrage. Antis proclaimed their, what they saw as liberal, understanding of children's' rights to have a responsible parent from whom they would learn how to bring society forward. That parent could only be the mother. Men also had their rights, which antis claimed to observe. Theirs was the right to protect the mother, sister, daughter, and wife that they were related to. Antis' concept of rights fortified their theory of the general progress of civilization. To the opponents of the vote, civilization had advanced so far only because it had preserved and improved notions like separate spheres and republican motherhood. Antis attached these notions to the scientific and technological fervor of the Progressive Era and Enlightenment. The state of the art medicine, psychology, physiology, biology and sociology being written about was proudly pamphleteered and sourced. The verdict of science was used to sentence the female mind, body, psyche, and society as a whole as unfit for the ballot. Scientists did experiments, measured bodies, studied social structures and dynamics to depict suffragists and feminism as a social decease,

mental illness and physical deformation. The emancipated woman who wanted the vote was colliding with the headway of civilization, antis warned. Hence, women were scientifically and thus rightfully determined to be the mothers of the republic.

In fact, it was not only science that antis stuck to. Fulton's text revealed clerical anti-suffragists from various religious backgrounds introduced the voice of reason as the voice of God. Standing within the tradition of the American Enlightenment, Baptist preachers and Catholic cardinals alike argued that Christianity, and the U.S. conditions specifically, had brought about the highly developed specialization of function among men and women. In a reading of Scripture that was obviously influenced by the Enlightenment, clerical antis fortified the above beliefs. Evoking the rhetoric of Common Sense, both clerical and civil antis summoned women to search inside themselves and find 'no' as the right answer to enfranchisement. For the world of politics and the male the outer sphere was portrayed to be in a constant state of war: dangerous and cruel. Women were unfit to survive in it.

Women were endowed with a special, exclusive mission, antis insisted – to raise cultivated citizens and refine the nation. The female homemakers were women of reason, enlightening the nation from home. This notion culminated in what antis saw to be the most advanced stage of society, which distinguished the U.S.: the maternalist laws. With these laws, antis argued that the state enabled and protected the special female mission to be a mother of the republic. What may appear to us as reminiscent of the law of coverture, as part of the British Common Law, was declared by antis to be the most successful step towards the welfare state that the turbulent Progressive Era envisioned. And since these laws were a product of the latest scientific studies they were proclaimed to be another indicator of highly developed and unparalleled civilization that had been created over the past 130 years. The Enlightenment had been fulfilled. What more do suffragists actually want, antis asked implicitly.

The suffrage debate had been characterized rhetorically in the above spirit. If World War I did not change the prevailing rhetoric abruptly, it did

make both camps yield their rhetoric to the demands of the turbulent times of war. The very nature of the global, modern conflict was so demanding that it engulfed the involved nations entirely in all aspects of social life. Accordingly, women on both sides of the debate found themselves compelled to respond to it. President Woodrow Wilson set the tone rhetorically. His vision of universal liberalism: the war gave the U.S. the chance to make the world free for democracy and plant natural rights, liberalism, and popular and individual sovereignty in the global garden. Considering the purely Enlightenment based nature of his vision, it at least initially seemed appealing to the two debating camps. Suffragists, and especially those affiliated with NAWSA, were quick to subscribe to this universal mission. It fit perfectly well with their rationale of suffrage for general, all-humane progress based on enfranchisement. Antis also found that the President's vision corresponded to their own. They summoned their followers to promote the American revolutionary promise worldwide no less than their counterparts.

Both movements pledged their allegiance to the President and proclaimed themselves to be the army on the home front. They competed to be the most hard working and reliable partners of the government. By so doing, each party hoped to win Wilson for their cause. Yet, despite NAWSA's immense capacities, it was hard to rally all suffrage supporters on behalf of presidential support and extensive war work. The Woman's Party, headed by Alice Paul, exposed the inconsistency of Wilson's notion to emancipate the world while simultaneously marginalizing women politically at home. They refused to do war work and entered into a bitter rivalry with NAWSA triggered by Woman Party's methods of communication – the picketing in front of the White House. Antis on the other hand did not experience any split. Instead, they unanimously embraced a new rhetoric directly influenced by the war. Natural rights liberalism gave way to political frenzy and paranoia against all forms of current movements that seemingly jeopardized the genuine Americanism that antis thought themselves to embody. Indeed, their privileged social stand and strong nativism fostered that rhetorical transformation, which was masterminded by a new anti-suffrage president, Marry Wadsworth. The

ideological split within the suffrage camp, however, proved helpful to their cause – the pickets prompted the President to consider the issue seriously and urgently. In antis' case, the unquestioned embracing of overdone patriotism and mistrustful labeling sealed their agenda with failure.

When congressional passage and subsequent ratification of a suffrage amendment to the Federal Constitution became the decisive closing issue of the debate, suffragists and antis were not equal rivals as they had been prior to the outburst of the war. Suffragists never neglected their primary objective while being submerged in extensive governmental aid or public criticism. Despite dropping their front door lobby, they managed to keep the issue alive in Congress. Simultaneously, suffragists, be it from NAWSA or the Woman's Party, never allowed President Wilson to slip out of their sight and labored incessantly for his support. Antis, however, underestimated the political situation during the war dramatically. While believing that Congress and the President were too busy with the military conflict, they chose to relax in the wrong moment. Before they knew it they had lost their strong holds in an order indicative of the relentless pace of the amendment campaign carried out by their opponents. First, Wilson turned his back on the Southern chivalry that antis counted on and eventually endorsed female suffrage officially. Congress then adopted the Federal Amendment, and, as ardently as antis tried to oppose it in their speeches, passed it on to the states for ratification. While suffragists took ratification as a challenge on its own and gave every one of the thirty-six states its full organizational and diplomatic attention, antis had to react to the ambush. Ironically, they saw their last strong hold, the South, collapse in front of their eyes. The last avid anti-suffrage legislator in the Tennessee state senate had succumbed to suffragists' brilliant communicational and rhetorical offensive. He felt obviously flattered to be the one to technically enfranchise women.

From a bird's eye view, giving meaning to a distinctive dialectic of Enlightenment in America has hopefully helped us see the debate on female suffrage from a different angle. Historians such as Gerda Lerner in *The Woman in American History* (1971) or Eleanor Flexner in *Century of Struggle* (1975)

have seen suffragists as inescapably progressive and anti-suffragists as unavoidably doomed. Yet, their juxtaposition on the basis of the Enlightenment in terms of practice and a set of ideas has hopefully relativized the above labels. If suffragists are seen today as the signifiers of democratic advancement, is because they put in a great deal of effort to create this image during the very time of their activism. What suffragists understood noticeably well were the mechanisms of communication and argumentation. These were defined ever since the birth hour of the Enlightenment in America – the American Revolution. Suffragists seem to have grasped how crucial it was to stay within this framework. If antis were considered retrogressive and barely worth studying for a long time it is because the massive suffrage machine stuck that label to them. If historians have initially seen anti-suffragists as a group of paranoid, wealthy female establishment, is because they too often looked at the final, but as Thomas Jablonsky calls it, “worst” stage of their campaign (Jablonsky 98). Antis were also very well aware of these prejudices and did their best according to their standards and morals to fight back. Yet, it is almost impossible to name the reasons why they failed to do so. Maybe their rules of conduct and own nativist prejudices kept them from fully using the Enlightenment as a practice, i.e. to communicate fully with the broader public? Maybe it was their failure, towards the end of the debate, to stick to the Enlightenment’s rhetoric of progress based on natural rights liberalism? Instead, they drifted into supposedly protecting the U.S. from all sorts of ‘isms’ that were allegedly lurking behind. Did antis sway from the path of practice and ideas, normatively set by the Enlightenment in the U.S.? Was their loss, thus, logical?

Still, the dialectic of the Enlightenment in America provides the debaters on female suffrage with a common ground. Although the camps respectively labored for the inclusion or marginalization of women, they both seemed to deploy the same practices and ideas for their opposing positions. Put simply, they had an equally modern self-image and common goals (individual rights, just representation, social advancement, etc.) but very different solutions. This may be explained through their different Enlightenment-

generated notions of history and democracy. To suffragists, history had to be written and developed by the present social actors. Suffragists saw themselves as the ones enabling this transition from the past and preparing the present for a better future (Kraditor 250). Their notion of democracy was an ever expanding and direct one. Little by little, all those excluded would embrace the liberal promise of the American Revolution and the Enlightenment, and would eventually broaden it, securing their access to the democratic process. Suffragists assumed that the ones involved in the democratic process should be directly participating in it. Moreover, the vote, exercised as a result of education and forming of opinion, would civilize and refine the voters. They, in turn, would better the political system (Camhi 211-2). Through claiming and exercising the right to vote, suffragists believed that this Enlightenment notion of direct democracy would be put into practice.

Anti-suffragists, on the other hand, were convinced that their own time had reached a peak in history. This highest form of civilization was nourished by their conservative social philosophy based on notions like the separate spheres, on public and home life, on republican motherhood, etc. The task of the present generation was to keep this advancement and protect it from decay and falling back into backwardness, or Romanism, to use their own terminology. In order to succeed, antis championed a representative form of democracy. Not all citizens were apt, i.e. reasonable, enough to make the right political decisions. The system needed citizens (in their case: rich, native born, Protestant, white males) of greater intelligence and experience who would serve as a sort of filter to the unreasonableness of the others (women, immigrants, poor males, African-Americans, etc.). The vote, they feared, would throw into government all those who were unfit to take part in it and thus outnumber the reasonable ones (Camhi 211). This would be the end, antis warned, of the hard fought political and social advancement in the U.S.

The debate on female suffrage, I avidly agree with Sara Graham, was indicative of a larger one. The Progressive Era put the very notion and practice of democracy to debate. On a larger scale, over the course of these decades the very ideas, limitations and implications of the Enlightenment in the U.S. were

debated. There was anything but a general agreement on issues like: Once women vote, who else should be given the ballot? Would universal suffrage prod anarchy and eventually the end of democracy? What should be the criteria for voting (Graham 11-12)? Would the vote secure further rights? And to whom? Who may claim rights at all? These issues would trigger a dynamic dialectic of the Enlightenment in America that would shape the political process for decades to come. This debate was an essential process of modernity in the U.S. Both parties involved, suffragists and anti-suffragists, were equally taking part in it.

Looking at both camps through the dialectical lens, the Enlightenment developed in America, however, has hopefully left us with a valuable insight and (not only) for the anti-suffragists' profile. After all, antis defended the position of a strict female role and sphere that was not new. What was new, however, is that they *rationalized* them by embedding their convictions in the Enlightenment context. The analysis of the representative documents adds the fact that antis were by no means obfuscating progress, as if belonging to a time long past to the scholarly situation. By arguing with the Enlightenment, they, just like suffragists, were anchored in, and a product of our modern time. The dialectic of the Enlightenment in America sees both, suffragists and anti-suffragists, inclusion and exclusion alike, as the two sides of the coin to modernity in the United States.

The dialectic of the Enlightenment in the U.S. is a constantly developing process and an intricate phenomenon of America. In the case of this study it has been demonstrated by means of the female suffrage debate at the beginning of the twentieth century. How other marginalized groups – be it in the case of the African American cause: abolitionists or the Civil Rights movement of the twentieth century, or of Native Americans and their Indian movement in the 1960s, Chicanos, or homosexuals – drew on the Enlightenment in their struggle for democratic participation. How they have been excluded using it as a basis are questions worth contemplating. For the sake of a better understanding of these and other social processes in America the dialectic needs to be developed further.

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List of Illustrations:

Figure 1: Werner Bartens. "Missbrauch einer Idee," *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* Nr. 268, p. 16, Friday 20 November, 2009.