

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, "THE SOLITUDE OF SELF" (JANUARY 18, 1892)

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Abstract: In 1892 Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivered her rhetorical masterpiece, "The Solitude of Self." This canonical speech, analyzed more than any other in Stanton's career, reflected Stanton's evolving feminist agenda. This essay argues that "The Solitude of Self" marked an important moment in the history of the women's movement, as Stanton initiated a profoundly radical phase in the feminist quest for equality. This visionary speech signaled the birth of modern feminism with its emphasis on women's intellectual and spiritual independence.

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In 1892, at the age of seventy-six, Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivered a speech that many consider her rhetorical "masterpiece."¹ The speech, entitled "The Solitude of Self," was delivered to both the House Judiciary Committee and later that evening to the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) convention in Washington, D.C. Before the NAWSA, the speech served as Stanton's presidential retirement speech.² As an activist for woman suffrage for nearly six decades, Stanton had been the movement's leading voice and its "greatest speaker."³ Yet this speech was unlike any that she had delivered before, and there was something about it that struck a chord. Stanton herself seemed pleased with its reception. Writing in her autobiography, *Eighty Years and More*, Stanton recalled that it was "well received" and that "many hundreds of copies" of the speech were reprinted and "extensively circulated."⁴

"The Solitude of Self" is now a "canonical" speech of the woman suffrage movement,⁵ and it has been evaluated by many scholars. Indeed, it is the most studied speech of Stanton's career.⁶ Yet, to many the speech poses a conundrum. Lacking the practical, political orientation typical of Stanton's suffrage advocacy, "The Solitude of Self" is different from most of her speeches. Some have wondered specifically about the mood of the speech, speculating that Stanton's advancing age might account for the speech's seemingly "bleak" and "depressing" tone and its theme of "utter isolation."⁷ Few, however, have considered the "The Solitude of Self" in the context of Stanton's evolving feminist agenda. Frustrated by the mainstream movement's growing

conservatism and its narrow focus on the vote, “The Solitude of Self” imagined a broader feminist agenda—a vision of what Stanton once called a “nobler type of womanhood.”⁸ Designed, in part, to warn a new generation of suffrage leaders against limiting their ambitions, “The Solitude of Self” marked an important moment in the history of the women’s movement. Marking not just the culmination of Stanton’s career but also the beginning of a new, more profoundly radical phase in the feminist quest for equality, “The Solitude of Self” was a visionary speech that signaled the birth of modern feminism, with its emphasis on women’s intellectual and spiritual independence and self-sovereignty.

Stanton’s Feminism at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

By the end of the 1860s, the suffrage movement’s most prominent leader had tired of speaking at suffrage conventions. Hoping to break new ground, Stanton joined James Redpath’s Lyceum Bureau and embarked on a whole new phase of her career. She explained her decision to her partner in the movement, Susan B. Anthony, in 1869: “I do hate conventions, for I dislike to be in a position where any set of people have the right to say, ‘For the sake of the cause don’t do this or that.’”⁹ For twelve years the lyceum circuit afforded Stanton the opportunity to address new audiences—people from rural communities in the West and Midwest, most of whom had never attended a women’s rights convention or heard Stanton’s feminist message.¹⁰ Stanton spoke on a wide variety of topics on the circuit, including fashion, birth control, maternity, beauty standards, and the education of girls, and she considered these lectures to be some of her most important “educational work.”¹¹ Although her topics varied, the goal of her lectures remained the same: to teach the next generation of girls how to reach their full human potential. Stanton pursued this ambitious goal by adopting a feminine, almost motherly persona, and by offering her audience of young girls and women practical advice.¹² Her lectures were not as overtly political as her suffrage speeches. But as Stanton boasted, they nevertheless had “stirred up some lethargic *femmes covertes* to a state of rebellion against the existing order of things.”¹³

In 1880 Stanton retired from the lyceum circuit. She was sixty-five years old and, by her own account, the demands of the lyceum had become too taxing for a woman her age. Writing in her autobiography, Stanton recalled that the “hardships of these lyceum trips can never be appreciated except by those who have endured them. With accidents to car and bridges, with floods and snow blockades, the pitfalls in one of these campaigns were without number.”¹⁴ Stanton’s retirement from the lyceum, however, did not mean she was done fighting for women’s rights. Over the next decade, she would document the success of the movement she had led in the multi-volume *History of Woman Suffrage*.¹⁵ Providing an “arsenal of facts” to inspire the next generation of suffrage leaders,¹⁶ the *History of Woman Suffrage* not only documented the greatest achievements of the movement, but also emphasized Stanton’s role as the movement’s founding mother.¹⁷ As historian Nancy Isenberg has argued, the *History* popularized a “master narrative” that cast Stanton herself as “the heir and founder of the suffrage campaign.”¹⁸

The *History of Woman Suffrage* served many rhetorical purposes, including glossing over the disputes that had divided the suffragists themselves. Yet it later would be treated as the definitive historical account of the struggle for women's rights,¹⁹ and it made cultural icons out of the movement's leaders, particularly Anthony and Stanton. When it was written, the *History* was designed, in Stanton's own words, to "rouse new thoughts in minds prepared to hear them."²⁰ By the end of the nineteenth century, the movement was preaching "largely to the converted," as historian Olivia Coolidge has written,²¹ and Stanton had grown disenchanted with the movement's slow progress. In a diary entry in 1880, Stanton lamented that the movement had "sat quite long enough on a limb of the Republican tree singing 'suffrage if you please,' like so many insignificant hummingbirds." In the same entry, she proclaimed herself "ready for any change of method that will undermine a solid male dynasty."²² By the end of the decade, she even began to doubt Anthony's commitment to change: "I tell her that I get more radical as I grow older," she lamented, "while she seems to grow more conservative."²³

The *History of Woman Suffrage* was designed to shake things up. Stanton hoped that it might inspire a new generation of suffrage activists by celebrating the successes achieved through the pioneering and radical spirit of the movement's founders. By acknowledging the contributions and successes of the first generation of women's rights activists, the *History* held up radicals like Stanton as role models for the next generation. At the same time, it implicitly argued for a broader, more far-reaching feminist agenda by reminding its readers that many obstacles to gender equality remained. As I have argued elsewhere,²⁴ Stanton's *History* laid the groundwork for the next phase of the women's rights movement by broadening the historical and ideological scope of the movement and by sketching a more expansive vision of female emancipation—one that went well beyond suffrage. As Stanton explained in the first volume of the *History*, "we who have undertaken the task have been moved by the consideration that many of our co-workers have already fallen asleep."²⁵ It was time to shake things up, and for the remainder of the 1880s and early 1890s, Stanton would do just that. The most famous speech of her career, "The Solitude of Self," was an important part of that effort.

Foundations of the "The Solitude of Self"

The late 1880s and early 1890s was a time of dissension and division within the suffrage movement, and even Stanton and Anthony often disagreed over the movement's focus and strategy, exhibiting "divergent interests."²⁶ Although Stanton and Anthony maintained a united front in public, the partnership had become strained, as Stanton distanced herself from the movement and began addressing controversial issues like religious reform.²⁷ The suffrage movement faced a major setback in January of 1887, when the U.S. Senate rejected a constitutional amendment on woman suffrage.²⁸ Between 1880 and 1887, only Washington Territory joined Wyoming and Utah in granting full suffrage to women.²⁹ Ann Gordon, editor of the Stanton-Anthony Papers, has explained that the mainstream movement was gradually gaining support among women, but "[n]othing was brand new."³⁰

The situation in the 1880s was “drastically different” from 1848, when Stanton had organized the first women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls.³¹ The movement had entered a period that many scholars refer to as the “doldrums,” with suffrage becoming “respectable and dull.”³² During this period, Stanton grew increasingly more “isolated” from her colleagues, leading one scholar to claim that she had “outgrown the suffrage movement.”³³ As political scientist Sue Davis explained, Stanton sensed the need for a “fundamental transformation in culture and society,” and this called for ideas that “went far beyond the campaign for legal and political reform.”³⁴ In addition, as historian Lori Ginzberg has noted, Stanton was unwilling to be “constrained by the demands of an organization,” and she was determined to “expand her cachet as the public philosopher of women’s rights to new audiences.”³⁵ As Davis aptly summarized this period in her life, Stanton had come to believe that “women’s oppression lay at the core of American culture” and that more “fundamental change would be necessary for women to achieve equality.”³⁶

It was within this context of growing disenchantment with the mainstream suffrage movement that Stanton was invited to give a speech to mark her seventieth birthday in November of 1885. This speech, which she entitled “The Pleasures of Age,” foreshadowed many of her themes in “The Solitude of Self.” Asked by fellow suffragist Lillie Devereux Blake how she would like to celebrate her birthday, Stanton replied that she wanted some “quiet social time with women alone.”³⁷ But that did not mean she would ignore politics. Requesting an audience of no more than “two or three dozen” women, Stanton agreed to gather at the home of Dr. Clemence Lozier, one of the first female physicians in the United States, and give a twenty-minute personal reflection on aging and life.³⁸ In a letter written to her daughter, Maggie, three days later, Stanton later explained that she had been pleased with the event and reported that her remarks had been “pronounced very good.”³⁹

Stanton’s meditation on aging began to sketch out a number of ideas that she would refine and expand in her more famous speech, “The Solitude of Self.”⁴⁰ Adopting the motherly persona of her lyceum lectures, she spoke in optimistic and forward-looking tones, offering her “young disciples” a message of “hope,” “triumph,” and “victory.” With tips on how to avoid a “restless, vacant solitude,”⁴¹ Stanton instructed women on how to age with grace and find true happiness and purpose in life. But more than that, “The Pleasures of Age” urged women to look more deeply into themselves for the sources of self-sovereignty and personal fulfillment. Seemingly apolitical, “The Pleasures of Age” in fact suggested political solutions much more radical than the suffrage movement’s focus on the electoral franchise. Foreshadowing Stanton’s concern in “The Solitude of Self” with the rights and responsibilities of personal liberation, “The Pleasures of Age” began to sketch out Stanton’s vision for the moral and spiritual liberation of women at every stage of life.

“The Pleasures of Age” signaled a transition from Stanton’s earlier appeals to natural rights to a more transcendent feminism rooted in self-sovereignty. It went beyond her earlier concern with rectifying the political and economic injustices of nineteenth-century society to envision the complete political, social, and personal liberation of each and every woman. As Belinda Stillion Southard reminded us,

Stanton's early rhetoric "incorporated predominant beliefs regarding natural rights, which date back to eighteenth-century political thought."⁴² This natural rights philosophy appealed to principles of individualism, reason, and political democracy. Stanton frequently used this approach to challenge the social and political system of her day, advocating equality based on a notion of "universal humanity."⁴³ In "The Pleasures of Age," conversely, Stanton urged women to turn inward for inspiration and liberation. She began to imagine a new feminist philosophy revolving around personal responsibility and self-improvement. Once women freed themselves, she seemed to suggest, they would be better positioned to change the world. "In the fuller development of the feminine element in humanity," she wrote, "we shall have the impress of woman's thought and sentiment in government and religion, exalting justice and equality."⁴⁴ When "the feminine element" became more prominent in all realms of life, not only would individual women be set free, but society as a whole would be transformed. A world with the "feminine element" would become more equal and just.

Stanton imagined women of all ages achieving this self-sovereignty. Yet, her emphasis in "The Pleasures of Age" was on the later stages of life—"after their children are grown up and established in life."⁴⁵ It was at this point that women had the most to offer society, but only if they embraced Stanton's vision of the "ideal woman" who took personal responsibility for her "happiness" and "purer, higher development."⁴⁶ Envisioning a "nobler type of womanhood," she encouraged women in their golden years to engage in the "pleasures of self-reflection" and to pursue "soul-satisfying pleasures in a higher sphere of action."⁴⁷ Challenging the conventional wisdom that a woman's useful life ended after her child-bearing years, Stanton urged older women to pursue self-actualization and a "purer, higher development" through intellectual pursuits.⁴⁸ Although women increasingly had access to higher education in the late nineteenth century, few women of Stanton's age had advanced degrees. Thus, she urged them to take it upon themselves "to improve every talent they possess" through the study of "useful sciences," the "fine arts," or even "practical work in the trades and professions." According to Stanton, the "brave souls" of "true women" were needed everywhere,⁴⁹ so women should not sit idle in their old age, but excel in some "earnest life purpose."⁵⁰

In contrast to the prevailing sentiments of the time, Stanton's feminist vision thus emphasized independence and self-sovereignty rather than sacrificing for others. Stressing both practical and philosophical concerns, she argued that women, especially in old age, needed to be independent and self-sufficient in order to survive. "Beauty, wealth, position gone, evanescent possessions at best," Stanton asked, "what has this matron left in poverty and solitude to gild the sunset of her life?"⁵¹ Stanton went further in arguing that older women had earned the *right* to "intellectual achievement," "spiritual friendships," and "beautiful thoughts."⁵² By discovering her "earnest life purpose,"⁵³ a woman past child-bearing age could still become "fitted to a higher plane of action" and achieve self-fulfillment.⁵⁴ In short, life was not over for women in the later stages of life. To the contrary, it was at that point in life that a woman could find intellectual and even spiritual fulfillment.⁵⁵ Rejecting the social customs and mores that left young girls "vacant" and "restless" and older women useless, Stanton urged women

to escape the “whirl of fashion” and the “idle life of dependence” and discover this “nobler state of womanhood.”⁵⁶ The opportunity to do this—especially later in life—was one of the greatest “Pleasures of Age.”

Stanton pursued similar themes three years later in her “Address of Welcome to the International Council of Women,” delivered on March 26, 1888. The International Council of Women (ICW) consisted of more than fifty women’s organizations from around the world, including England, Ireland, France, Norway, Denmark, Finland, India, and Canada.⁵⁷ The group’s eight-day convention included many suffragists, and Stanton spoke as president of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). The ICW’s 1888 convention also commemorated the fortieth anniversary of Seneca Falls, so it was especially appropriate that Stanton, as a veteran of the 1848 convention, was there to reflect on the lessons of that first convention and the progress of the movement since that historic event.

Stanton began the speech by reminding her audience of the historical significance of the Seneca Falls convention. “This,” she boasted, “started the greatest movement for human liberty recorded in the pages of history.”⁵⁸ Stanton went on to recount the progress that had been made since 1848, including the admission of women to colleges, more liberal divorce laws, and the professional advancement of women. “Here is a great record of work achieved in the past half century,” she declared.⁵⁹ But that progress had come at a cost, Stanton reminded her listeners, as she recalled the sacrifices that she and the other founders of the movement had made: “Those who inaugurated the movement for woman’s enfranchisement, who for long years endured the merciless storm of ridicule and persecution, mourned over by friends, ostracized in social life, scandalized by enemies, denounced by the pulpit, sacrificed and caricatured by the press, may well congratulate themselves.” The battles fought by those pioneers had been “eloquently described many times by Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Antoinette Brown,” Stanton concluded, but they needed to be “rehearsed once more” for the benefit of the new generation of suffrage leaders.⁶⁰

Stanton was clear and direct in her criticism of the growing caution and conservatism of that new generation of leaders. While “holding the vantage ground” secured by the founders of the cause, she charged that they had become “afraid of the principles” that had animated those pioneers.⁶¹ There were still “many obstacles to be encountered before the rough journey is ended,” Stanton warned, and she called upon the new generation to embrace the spirit of Seneca Falls. Referring them to her newspaper, *The Revolution*, and to the newly published *History of Woman Suffrage* for “ammunition,” she implored the “younger hands” to “take up our work.”⁶² Yet Stanton was talking about more than just the continuing struggle to secure the vote. Echoing “The Pleasures of Age,” she declared “supreme self-sovereignty” the birthright of all women, and she argued that the movement was ultimately about the “sacredness of individual rights.” Every woman had the right to realize her full potential, she concluded, and in language foreshadowing “The Solitude of Self” she concluded on a melancholy note:

The solitude of every human soul, alike in our moments of exaltation and humiliation, in our highest hopes and deepest sorrows, into which no other can ever fully enter, proves our birthright to supreme self-sovereignty. As in the great emergencies of life we must stand alone, and for the final judgment rely upon ourselves, we cannot overestimate the necessity for that liberty by which we attain our highest development and that knowledge that fits us for self-reliance and self-preservation.⁶³

Like the "Pleasures of Age," Stanton's speech to the IWC was thus another precursor to "The Solitude of Self." It also helped to forge a new, more radical vision of feminism grounded not merely in the vote but in each woman's "birthright" to "supreme self-sovereignty." It was a vision emphasizing self-reliance, self-development, and self-preservation, and it imagined a wholesale transformation in attitudes toward gender and sexuality. It was not a practical but a revolutionary vision, one that even Stanton did not expect to realize any time soon. "The true woman," she asserted, "is as yet a dream of the future." But with her characteristic optimism, she pronounced herself "filled with wonder as to what the future mother of the race will be when free to seek her complete development."⁶⁴

By the time Stanton addressed the NAWSA in 1890, her criticism of the growing conservatism of the movement had become well-known and controversial. Many believed she simply had become too radical to lead the suffrage movement to victory. She had been elected president of the recently merged American and National branches of the Woman Suffrage Association, but without Anthony's impassioned defense of her before an executive session of the NAWSA, Stanton likely would have lost that election. Acknowledging that Stanton's platform was "broad as the universe," Anthony recognized that many within the movement favored a more "conservative organization."⁶⁵ Yet reminding her listeners of all that Stanton had done for the cause, Anthony pleaded: "don't vote for any human being but Mrs. Stanton."⁶⁶

As president of the NAWSA, as historian Ellen Dubois has noted, Stanton "had little real power and few allies."⁶⁷ In her inaugural presidential address on February 18, 1890, she did little to mend fences and she continued to criticize the conservatism of the movement and to emphasize the need for radical change. As in her other speeches during the 1880s and 1890s, Stanton said little about suffrage in the address. Instead, she called for a long-term strategy of attacking sexism wherever it existed, declaring that the "enfranchisement of woman" would not come about "by political clap-trap, by stratagem or art, but by the slow process of education, by constant agitation and in new direction attacking in turn every stronghold of the enemy." When any "principle or question" relating to women's rights came "up for discussion," she intoned, "let us seize it and show its connection whether nearly or remotely, with woman's disenfranchisement."⁶⁸

Stanton's strategy of "constant agitation" and her call to attack "every stronghold of the enemy" was a direct challenge to the more conservative elements within the suffrage movement. In her presidential address, she confronted those elements directly, speaking of the dangers of sacrificing principle to political expediency.

“The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us,” she began, “the divine floods of light and life flow no longer in our souls.”⁶⁹ The movement had been patient long enough; it was time now to make radical changes. “Patience and perseverance,” she argued, “are beautiful virtues in dealing with children and feeble-minded adults,” but “those who have the gift of reason and understand the principles of justice” had a “duty” to “act up to the highest light that is in them, as promptly as possible.”⁷⁰ For Stanton, that meant attacking sexism on every front, including some new fronts, like organized religion.⁷¹ It meant demanding full equality for women in all realms of life. Indeed, it meant freeing women to become whatever they wanted to become, giving them complete self-sovereignty and control over their own destinies. In short, it meant freeing women to pursue a nobler type of womanhood—the type of independent, self-sovereign womanhood she had been imagining for years.

“The Solitude of Self”: The Culmination of Stanton’s Evolving Feminist Vision

In anticipation of Stanton delivering “The Solitude of Self,” Susan B. Anthony wrote to Ohio suffragist Harriet Taylor Upton predicting that Stanton would “make a splendid thing of it.”⁷² Anthony proved correct, as the speech was warmly received and had a significant impact. The House Judiciary Committee had 10,000 copies of the speech printed and distributed throughout the country,⁷³ and those who heard it at the NAWSA convention seemed equally impressed. In recalling the speech in the *History of Woman Suffrage*, Anthony and Harper reported that the “mental and physical vigor of Mrs. Stanton was much commented upon,” and that she spoke in a “rich and resonant voice.”⁷⁴ Declaring the speech Stanton’s “masterpiece,” they praised it for going beyond “old arguments so many times repeated” to offer something fresh and creative.⁷⁵ In a letter to New York suffragist Elizabeth Smith Miller, Anthony went further, calling “The Solitude of Self” the “crowning speech” of Stanton’s career and recalling how even the male legislators had to “wipe the tears” as she “portrayed the soul’s utter aloneness in all the deepest experiences of life!”⁷⁶

Historians and rhetorical critics have largely echoed those contemporary assessments, proclaiming “The Solitude of Self” a “canonical” speech.⁷⁷ Celebrated as a work of philosophical genius, the speech has been praised for its enduring appeal and its relevance to ongoing debates over gender equality. “Today,” Karlyn Kohrs Campbell wrote in *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, “it has the power to speak to us, precisely because it transcends its time and place to talk of what it is to be human and our common humanity as a basis of all rights.”⁷⁸ According to Campbell, the speech “speaks for all women, of all ages, in all roles, and in all conditions of life”; indeed, it speaks to “all persons, rich and poor, male and female, educated and uneducated.”⁷⁹ Similarly, Dubois reflected on the timeless philosophical qualities of the speech, arguing that it served as precursor to the “existential philosophy associated with the rebirth of feminism.”⁸⁰ Stanton biographer Elisabeth Griffith agreed, praising “The Solitude of Self” as the “definitive statement” of Stanton’s “feminist ideology.”⁸¹

Yet many scholars have also described “The Solitude of Self” as something of an aberration—a significant departure from Stanton’s usual mode of speaking, and a speech completely out-of-touch with the suffrage movement’s pragmatic, political emphases. Campbell, for example, called the speech “fresh and unusual” and described it as a “startling departure from the typical speeches and arguments of the nineteenth-century feminists.” Lacking a “cogent argument,” the speech violated the “traditional canons” of rhetoric, Campbell argued, and it is best understood not as a conventional speech but as “a rhetorical act in the lyric mode,” characterized by “subjectivity and sensuality of expression” and a “tragic” perspective.⁸² Similarly, Dave Tell turned to nontraditional theories of rhetoric to make sense of “The Solitude of Self,” situating the speech in a “confessional tradition” that is a “decisively modern phenomenon, rooted in the rhetorical theory of the Enlightenment.”⁸³ Exhibiting a narrative and dramatic logic, Stanton waxed philosophically in “The Solitude of Self,” according to Tell, momentarily setting aside the demands for “workable proposals and practical solutions” to instead reflect on the “ontological individuality of the self.”⁸⁴

Others likewise have treated “The Solitude of Self” as a striking departure from Stanton’s earlier work, particularly in tone and philosophical orientation. Ginzberg has described the speech as “depressing” and “bleak,” with an “air of regret and resignation.”⁸⁵ In a similar vein, Davis has argued that the speech marked a “shift” from the liberal egalitarianism found in most of Stanton’s work to “pessimistic individualism.”⁸⁶ According to Davis, that pessimistic individualism not only represented a significant departure for Stanton but also signaled her embrace of an “uncompromising” and “extreme” brand of “individualism.”⁸⁷

Yet read in the context of the speeches discussed earlier in this essay, “The Solitude of Self” does not seem all that different. Nor does it seem so pessimistic philosophically. Rather, it represents the natural culmination of Stanton’s evolving feminist philosophy—a philosophy that had changed gradually from an emphasis on pragmatic political concerns to a more reflective and spiritual orientation. In “The Solitude of Self,” Stanton did not abandon her concern with political and social reform. However, she did take the opportunity to imagine a future when a woman’s fate would depend not so much on the laws or policies of society but on each woman’s own talents and intellectual resources. In the historical context in which the speech was delivered, it was not pessimistic but forward-looking. It imagined the ultimate victory of Stanton’s vision of gender equality and the emergence of a nobler womanhood—a womanhood defined by self-reliance and self-sovereignty.

Stanton began the speech by explaining her shift away from pragmatic political concerns to a more philosophical orientation.⁸⁸ Directly addressing the “gentlemen of the committee” in the version delivered to Congress, she explained: “We have been speaking before Committees of the Judiciary for the last twenty years, and we have gone over all the arguments in favor of a sixteenth amendment which are familiar to you gentlemen; therefore, it will not be necessary that I should repeat them again” (1). Announcing that on this occasion she would instead talk about the “individuality of each human soul” (2), she did not abandon political concerns altogether, declaring her views consistent with “our republican idea, individual citizenship” (2). Yet in discussing the

“rights of woman,” she chose “to consider, first, what belongs to her as an individual, in a world of her own, the arbiter of her own destiny, an imaginary Robinson Crusoe with her woman Friday on a solitary island” (2). That familiar literary image set the tone for a speech that did not ignore politics but focused more on what the individual woman needed to cope with the challenges of everyday life.

For too long, Stanton argued, men writing about the “woman’s sphere” had focused on the “special duties and training” required of women for the “incidental relations of life” (5), such as mother, sister, or daughter. Philosophers like Herbert Spencer had subordinated women’s “rights and duties” as individuals to the “necessities of these incidental relations, some of which a large class of women may never assume” (5). Thus, Stanton set out to consider instead the rights of each woman “as an individual, as a citizen, [and] as a woman” (5). That meant treating the subject exactly as one would treat the rights of man: “In discussing the sphere of man we do not decide his rights as an individual, as a citizen, as a man by his duties as a father, a husband, a brother, or a son” (5). A man had opportunities for the “complete development” of *all* of his “faculties as an individual,” (5) Stanton observed, and so should women. Like men, Stanton argued that women should have the opportunity to be educated both for whatever “special work” they chose *and* for their larger “duties” in the “sphere of human usefulness” (6).

“The Solitude of Self” was grounded in the same ideals that Stanton and the other founders of the movement had articulated in 1848, but her reflective tone and her emphasis on timeless principles contrasted sharply with the rhetoric of a suffrage movement that now focused on the vote. While not denying the need for political and social reform, “The Solitude of Self” went beyond arguing merely for political rights to imagine a world where women were completely emancipated from all forms of “bondage, . . . custom, dependence, [and] superstition,” and even from “the crippling influences of fear” (8). It reflected the evolution of Stanton’s thought toward more modern feminist concerns with education, intellectual stimulation, and personal autonomy. Stanton was still very much the radical and visionary. But with female enfranchisement no longer a radical idea, she used her NAWSA presidential retirement speech to envision the next phase in the women’s rights movement. As a political speech, it foreshadowed the birth of modern feminism, with a focus not just on the vote but on complete gender equality.

Like the “Pleasures of Age,” “The Solitude of Self” addressed a much broader range of issues than the typical suffrage speech. Its demands included giving every woman “a voice in the government under which she lives,” as well as “in the religion she is asked to believe,” along with “equality in social life” and “a place in the trades and professions, where she may earn her bread” (8). As she had in many of her earlier speeches, Stanton questioned the moral legitimacy of a system that denied woman’s “political equality” (13). She certainly did not ignore the suffrage issue in “The Solitude of Self,” calling it the “height of presumption” for men to represent women “at the ballot box” (21). Yet she declared it equally presumptuous for men to do women’s “praying in the church, and to assume the position of high priest at the family altar”

(21). In “The Solitude of Self,” the vote became just one of many examples of how women had been stripped of their “birthright to self-sovereignty” (8).

More than Stanton’s other speeches, “The Solitude of Self” emphasized a woman’s need for education, personal fulfillment, and intellectual pursuits. Stanton argued that the “strongest reason” for giving every woman “all the opportunities for higher education” and for “the full development” of all of her “faculties,” both of mind and of body, was “the solitude of personal responsibility” for her “own individual life” (8). That theme—the *responsibilities* of self-sovereignty—was infused throughout the speech, as Stanton argued that women, in order to fulfill their varied responsibilities, needed the “cardinal virtues” and the “strong points of character” of the “most successful statesman” (16). The “uneducated woman, trained to dependence, with no resources in herself,” Stanton observed, was doomed to “make a failure of any position in life” (17). Stanton thus deemed it ludicrous that society would say that women had no need for “knowledge of the world,” the “liberal training that experience in public life must give,” or the “advantages of collegiate education” (17). Women who lacked these resources were not only unhappy but alone in their “humiliation” and a burden to society. The “solitude of the weak and ignorant is indeed pitiable,” Stanton concluded, and she metaphorically painted a dark picture of ill-prepared women: “In the wild chase for the prizes of life they are ground to powder” (17).

Interestingly, Stanton used seemingly masculine metaphors to make her point that women needed intellectual, physical, and spiritual resources. Early in the speech she deployed a navigational metaphor, observing that no matter how much a woman might prefer to “lean, to be protected and supported,” she ultimately had to “make the voyage of life alone.” Therefore, she needed to learn “something of the laws of navigation,” and “for safety in an emergency,” she also had to learn how to “watch the wind and waves and know when to take in the sail, and to read the signs in the firmament over all.” On the open seas, it did not matter whether the “solitary voyager” was a man or a woman. “Nature having endowed them equally,” they were left “to their own skill and judgment in the hour of danger, and, if not equal to the occasion, alike they perish” (8). A bit later in the speech Stanton invoked another masculine metaphor, comparing her call for “the complete development of every individual” to “fitting out an army,” where we provide for each soldier’s “individual necessities” but “each man bears his own burden” (9). Stanton returned to the military imagery later in the speech. She declared that “life must ever be a march and a battle” and that “each soldier must be equipped for his own protection,” before concluding that “it is the height of cruelty to rob the individual of a single natural right” (12).

Stanton still spoke of political issues in “The Solitude of Self,” but she obviously was concerned with more than the vote. “To deny political equality,” she declared, was to “rob the ostracized of all self-respect; of credit in the market place; of recompense in the world of work; of a voice in those who make and administer the law; a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment” (13). In still more violent metaphors, she compared depriving women of education to “putting out the eyes,” and the denial of women’s property rights to “cutting off the hands” (13). Invoking Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, she lamented the injustice of

robbing a woman of her “natural rights,” then forcing her to “fight her own battles” and “in the emergencies of life to fall back on herself for protection” (13).

Midway through the speech Stanton reflected on how the “solitude of self” was manifested at various stages in a woman’s life. The girl of sixteen experienced it when she was “thrown on the world to support herself,” yet was expected to resist all “temptations” and maintain a “spotless integrity.” If she wearied of the struggle and allowed herself to “drift with the current,” she had “plenty of company,” but nobody to “share her misery in the hour of her deepest humiliation.” “Young and friendless,” she came to know “the bitter solitude of self” (14). Similarly, the “young wife and mother,” while perhaps blessed with a “kind husband to shield her from the adverse winds of life,” still experienced the “solitude of self” as she struggled to manage a household, have a “desirable influence in society,” keep “her friends and the affections of her husband,” and “train her servants well” (16). Then, in old age, women experienced the “solitude of self” because they no longer had children to raise and they had wearied of “active service.” Stanton explained: “If they cannot find companionship in books, if they have no interest in the vital questions of the hour, no interest in watching the consummation of reforms, in which they might have been identified, they soon pass into their dotage” (18). Urging older women to educate themselves and stay active in worthy causes, Stanton observed that the “more fully the faculties of the mind are developed and kept in use, the longer the period of vigor and active interest in all around us continues.” If women stayed involved, she concluded, their “solitude” would “at least be respectable,” and they wouldn’t be “driven to gossip or scandal for entertainment” (18).

Throughout “The Solitude of Self” Stanton put on display the sort of “liberal thought and broad culture” that she imagined all women pursuing. Not only did she invoke Shakespeare, but she also recounted a personal conversation with Prince Krapotkin, a Russian revolutionary and anarchist philosopher whom she met during her travels to London in 1888. Confined to Russian and French prisons for many years, Krapotkin taught Stanton about the “resources” one needed to “mitigate the solitude that at times must come to everyone.” Deprived of “books, pen, ink, and paper,” Krapotkin told Stanton that he survived many years of solitary confinement by becoming “acquainted with myself and my own resources” (19). Stanton drew a similar lesson from her biblical studies, reflecting on how even Jesus, “in those last sad days on earth, felt the awful solitude of self” (24). Judged by Pilate, betrayed by his own disciples, and nailed to the cross, Jesus could only cry in agony, “My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me” (24)? For Stanton, philosophy and religion thus taught the same life lesson, as relevant to women as it was to men: “As in our extremity we must depend on ourselves, the dictates of wisdom point to complete individual development” (25).

Thus Stanton arrived at the ultimate point of her speech: the need for women to develop all of their faculties, mental and physical. That was her vision of a nobler womanhood, a vision that she had been developing for more than a decade and that eventually would come to define feminism in the modern era. It was a vision of women “thoroughly educated for all positions in life they may be called to fill,” and with “all the resources in themselves that liberal thought and broad culture can give” (25). Stanton

reminded her listeners of the various ways women already had proven themselves capable of being “recognized as individuals . . . guided by their own conscience and judgment” and therefore “fitted for those hours of solitude that come alike to all, whether prepared or otherwise” (25). Invoking news stories of women heroically rescuing victims of a tidal wave, Stanton claimed that women had proven their “calmness and courage in the most trying hours of human experience” (27). In addition, women were “already the equals of men in the whole realm of thought, in art, science, literature, and government” (28). Women had become explorers, great artists and musicians, and social reformers. They filled “the editor’s and professor’s chair,” she noted, and they “plead at the bar of justice, walk the wards of the hospital, and speak from the pulpit and the platform” (29). This was “the type of womanhood” that an “enlightened public sentiment” welcomed today, Stanton concluded, and it reflected a simple “triumph of the facts of life over the false theories of the past” (29).

“The Solitude of Self” might have been more philosophical and less focused on the short-term political goals of the suffrage movement than many of Stanton’s earlier speeches. But it was hardly apolitical, nor was it pessimistic. To the contrary, it made a compelling case for liberating women from the “narrow political limits” of the past and allowing “the exercise of every faculty of mind and body . . . in woman as well as man” (30-31). It was a forward-looking argument for independence, equal opportunity, and complete self-sovereignty. In that sense, it optimistically, even triumphantly, anticipated many of the themes of second-wave feminism, particularly the emphasis on equal rights under the law and equal opportunity in education and in the workplace.

Stanton’s Legacy

As Stanton began to separate herself from the mainstream suffrage movement—ultimately resigning the presidency of the NAWSA—her ideas become more radical and provocative. Articulating a new vision of feminism that emphasized the liberation of the mind and spirit, Stanton’s feminism underscored the importance of each woman’s individuality, personal responsibility, self-sovereignty, and self-sufficiency. “The Solitude of Self,” more than any of Stanton’s other speeches, articulated both the rationale for, and the contours of, that vision of a “nobler womanhood.” Stanton’s vision of emancipated womanhood rested on humanistic and moral principles that transcended gender distinctions. “The Solitude of Self” marked the culmination of this evolution in Stanton’s thought, from a pragmatic feminist fighting for the vote, to a visionary imagining the ultimate triumph of the woman’s rights movement.

After “The Solitude of Self,” Stanton rarely spoke in public, and instead dedicated her time to writing her memoirs, *Eighty Years and More*. During this period, she also published her two-volume critique of organized religion and the established church, the *Woman’s Bible*. Stanton may have stepped down from the presidency of the NAWSA, but that hardly meant that she retired from the woman’s rights movement. “I can still do good work with my pen,” she wrote in her diary in 1892, “and it shall be at the service of our reforms so long as its power lasts.”⁸⁹

The first volume of Stanton's *Woman's Bible* was published in 1895—an ambitious biblical exegesis that reinterpreted the role of women in the Old Testament. Differing substantially from the reform-minded biblical criticism of the day, Stanton rejected the Bible and organized religion outright. Reactions to Stanton's religious views were predictably hostile, and even the NAWSA publically censured the *Woman's Bible*. While angered by the censure, Stanton seemed to relish the attention and controversy the book produced and even printed the censure in the next edition of the *Woman's Bible*.⁹⁰

Stanton would continue to embrace controversy with the publication of her autobiography, *Eighty Years and More* in 1898. Although better received than the *Woman's Bible*, the rhetorical purpose of both works was essentially the same. In the process of describing her life and work, Stanton attacked patriarchal oppression and urged a broader view of the woman's rights movement. The autobiographical genre allowed Stanton to outline her vision of secular radicalism through examples of her own life, making the case for bold thought and action in the process.⁹¹

As she seemed to predict, feminists today celebrate Stanton as a great visionary. In her own day, as Ginzberg reminded us, she was considered a “dangerous radical” who “threatened the sanctity of religion” and “men's exclusive control over politics.”⁹² Yet today almost all of her “radical” ideas are widely accepted, and that, as Ginzberg concluded, gives us “all the more reason to try to understand why they seemed so outrageous at the time.”⁹³ In capturing her accomplishments and legacy, Suzanne M. Marrilley refers to Stanton as the movement's “most consistent and daring liberal thinker.”⁹⁴ “The Solitude of Self,” while considered something of an aberration by some, actually reflects both Stanton's consistency and her daring and visionary forethought.

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NOTES

1 Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 4 (Indianapolis, IN: Hollenbreck Press, 1902; reprint edition, New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969), 189.

2 Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, in *Their Place Inside the Body Politic, 1887-1895* (New Brunswick: NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 424.

3 Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, ed., *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, vol. 2, *Key Texts of the Early Feminists* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 41.

4 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More* (1898; reprint, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 440.

5 Dave Tell, "Stanton's 'Solitude of Self' as Public Confession," *Communication Studies* 61 (2010): 172.

6 See: Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Stanton's 'Solitude of Self': A Rationale for Feminism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 304-312; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Humanistic Underpinnings of Feminism: 'The Solitude of Self'" in *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, vol. 1, *A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 133-144; Kristan Poirot, "(Un)Making Sex, Making Race: Nineteenth-Century Liberalism, Difference, and the Rhetoric of Elizabeth Cady Stanton," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96 (2010): 185-208; Susanna Kelly Engbers, "With Great Sympathy: Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Innovative Appeals to Emotion," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37 (2007): 307-332; Nathan Stormer, "Embodied Humanism: Performative Argument for Natural Rights in 'The Solitude of Self,'" *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36 (1999): 51-64.

7 Lori D. Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An American Life* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009), 170.

8 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Pleasures of Age," 12 November 1885, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 4, *When Clowns Make Laws for Queens, 1880-1887* (New Brunswick: NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 460.

9 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony, 28 December 1869, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton, As Revealed in her Letters, Diaries, and Reminiscences*, vol. 2, ed. Theodore Stanton and Harriet Stanton Blatch (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), 125.

10 For a complete discussion of the rhetorical functions of the nineteenth-century lyceum, see: Angela G. Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005).

11 Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, 262.

12 Lisa S. Hogan and J. Michael Hogan, "Feminine Virtue and Practical Wisdom: Elizabeth Cady Stanton's 'Our Boys,'" *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 6 (2003): 419.

13 Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, 279.

14 Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, 261.

15 This project would ultimately produce six volumes, each nearly one-thousand pages. Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joselyn Gage edited the first three volumes. See: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1 (New York: Fowler and Wells Publishers, 1881; reprint edition, New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969); Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 2 (New York: Fowler and Wells Publishers, 1882; reprint edition, New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969); Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 3 (New York: Fowler and Wells Publishers, 1881; reprint edition, New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969); Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 4 (Indianapolis, IN: Hollenbeck Press, 1902; reprint edition, New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969); Ida Husted Harper, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 5 (New York: J.J. Little and Ives, 1922; reprint edition, New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969); and Ida Husted Harper, ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 6 (New York: J.J. Little and Ives, 1922; reprint edition (New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969).

16 Stanton, et al., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1, 7.

17 Kathi Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001): 19.

18 Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3.

19 See: Sue Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1995); Lori D. Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*; Elisabeth Griffith, *In her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); and Lisa Shawn Hogan, "Wisdom, Goodness, and Power: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the *History of Woman Suffrage*," *Gender Issues* 23 (2006): 3-19.

20 Stanton et al., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1, 24.

21 Olivia Coolidge, *Women's Rights: The Suffrage Movement in America, 1848-1920* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1966), 96.

22 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, diary entry of 18 November 1880 in *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, vol. 2, 254.

23 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, diary entry of 9 January 1889, in *Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as Revealed in her Letters, Diaries and Reminiscences*, vol. 2, 254.

24 Hogan, "Wisdom, Goodness, and Power," 3-19.

25 Stanton, et al., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1, 7.

26 Gordon, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, xxiii, xxii.

27 Stanton's focus on religious reform would culminate in the controversial, *Woman's Bible* published in 1895. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Woman's Bible* (1895; reprint, Salem, NH: Ayer Company, 1991).

28 Gordon, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5 xxiv.

29 Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 4, xxi.

30 Gordon, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, xxiv.

31 Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 178.

32 Coolidge, *Women's Rights*, 96.

33 Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 179.

34 Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 77.

35 Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 134.

36 Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 180.

37 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Lillie Devereux Blake, 30 October 1885, Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 4, 445.

38 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Lillie Devereux Blake, 445.

39 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Margaret Stanton Lawrence, 15 November 1885, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 4, 463.

40 All citations are from "The Pleasures of Age," 12 November 1885, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 4, 452-463.

41 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 453-454.

42 Belinda A. Stillion Southard, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 'Address on Woman's Rights,'" *Voices of Democracy* 2 (2007): 157.

43 Southard, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," 160.

44 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 458-459,

45 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 457.

46 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 460

47 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 460.

48 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 456

49 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 457.

50 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 460.

51 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 455

52 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 457.

53 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 460.

54 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 454

55 This emphasis on spiritual fulfillment also might be seen as a precursor to Stanton's later critique of organized religion in the *Woman's Bible*. In "The Pleasures of Age," she insisted that "I can say that the happiest period of my life has been since I emerged from the shadows and superstitions of the old theologies, relieved from all gloomy apprehension of the future, satisfied that as my labors and capacities were

limited to this sphere of action, I was responsible for nothing beyond my horizon, as I could neither understand nor change the conditions of the unknown world." See: 459.

56 Stanton, "Pleasures of Age," 455, 454, 458.

57 All citations are from "Address of Welcome by Elizabeth Cady Stanton to the International Council of Women" 26 March 1888, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, 93-107.

58 Stanton, "Address of Welcome," 94.

59 Stanton, "Address of Welcome," 98.

60 Stanton, "Address of Welcome," 96.

61 Stanton, "Address of Welcome," 97.

62 Stanton, "Address of Welcome," 100.

63 Stanton, "Address of Welcome," 103.

64 Stanton, "Address of Welcome," 98.

65 "Remarks by Susan B. Anthony to the Final Executive Session of the National Woman Suffrage Association," 17 February 1890, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, 247, 246.

66 Anthony, "Remarks to the Executive Session," 246.

67 Ellen Carol Dubois, ed., *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony Reader* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 186.

68 "Address by Elizabeth Cady Stanton to the National-American Woman Suffrage Association," 18 February 1890, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, 259.

69 Stanton, "Address to NAWSA," 260-261.

70 Stanton, "Address to NAWSA," 255-256.

71 At one point in the speech, Stanton declared: "We might get some agitation by trying a new field for our labors, demanding equality for woman in the church." See: Stanton, "Address to NAWSA," 256.

72 Susan B. Anthony to Harriet Taylor Upton, 1 January 1892, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, 410-411.

73 Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, ed. *Man Cannot Speak for Her: A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric*, vol. 1, 143.

74 Anthony and Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 4, 186.

75 Anthony and Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 4, 186 and 189.

76 Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Smith Miller, 15 February 1892, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, 446.

77 Tell, "Stanton's 'Solitude of Self,'" 172.

78 Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, vol. 1, 143.

79 Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Stanton's 'Solitude of Self': A Rationale for Feminism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980), 311. In another essay, Campbell interpreted the speech as an "enduring rationale for individual rights based on our republican tradition, the protestant concept of the priesthood of all believers and the

credo of individualism and self-reliance.” Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, ed., *Women Public Speakers in the U.S., 1800-1925* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1993), 187. Not everyone agrees with this interpretation, however. Nathan Stormer has critiqued the speech for its focus on a white, affluent, and able-bodied ideal. Nathan Stormer, “Embodied Humanism,” 51-64.

- 80 Dubois, *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony Reader*, 246.
- 81 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 203.
- 82 Campbell, 1980, 304, 312.
- 83 Tell, “Stanton’s ‘Solitude of Self,’” 173.
- 84 Tell, “Stanton’s ‘Solitude of Self,’” 173, 175.
- 85 Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 170.
- 86 Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 210.
- 87 Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 200.
- 88 All subsequent citations are from Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, 425-434.
- 89 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, diary entry of 1 November 1892, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in her Letters, Diary, and Reminiscences*, vol. 2, 290.
- 90 Lisa S. Strange, “Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *Woman’s Bible* and the Roots of Feminist Theology,” *Gender Issues* 17 (Fall 1999): 15-36.
- 91 Lisa Shawn Hogan, “The Politics of Feminist Autobiography: Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *Eighty Years and More* as Ideological Manifesto,” *Women’s Studies* 38 (2009): 1-22.
- 92 Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 3.
- 93 Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 4.
- 94 Suzanne M. Marrilley, *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 7.