

*'Til Woman Cometh Unto Her Own': A Comparative Analysis of American Woman
Suffragist Ideology to Marxism, 1848-1920*

By
Rachel Caroline Moses

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the

History

Program

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

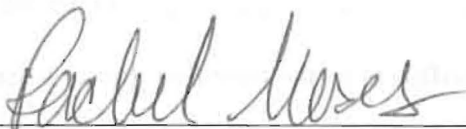
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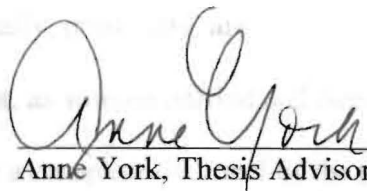


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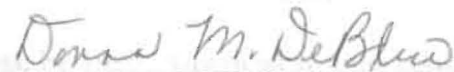
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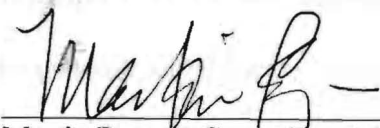
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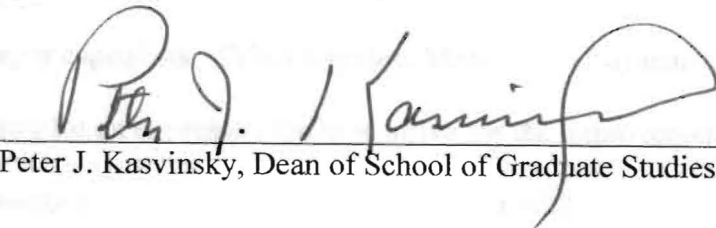
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Abstract

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels penned the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, a period of immense political, economic, and social upheaval. Industrialization spurred urbanization and created a new social structure of capitalists and workers. The inequalities fostered by this new social order spurred the development of socialism, which argued for egalitarianism and a classless society. These socialist arguments of inequality struck a chord with feminists and suffragists in later decades, and highlighted the political and social oppression women faced within a patriarchal society. The women's movement emerged in response to the societal repression of women intellectually, politically, and socially. The suffrage movement further illustrated this discontent, as women unified and demanded the right to vote. While some suffragists called for a complete overhaul of the social system, others concentrated solely on the right to join the ballot. This split inevitably led to fissures within the movement, but nevertheless, by 1920, American women could vote. Without the influence of socialist ideals and principles, the women's movement and woman suffrage would have lacked an appeal to the general public for the equality of a repressed segment of society akin to Marx's and Engels' call for the liberation of the proletariat, or working class, from the bourgeoisie, or capitalists. Taken together, Marxism and woman suffrage demonstrates the propensity for an oppressed group to strive for the improvement of their conditions, whether through a utopian vision or the adaptation of these visions to social realities in order to obtain these goals. Marxism proved a powerful influence in shaping American movements that demanded equality, but never infiltrated the government due to the diverse ethnic groups and social conditions within American society.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to the faculty and staff in the History Department who have seen me through this entire process. Special thanks to my committee, Anne York, Donna DeBlasio, and Martin Berger, who each put countless hours into the revision and guidance process. Also, thanks to Martha Pallante, for her help in the formulating this idea originally and whose guidance has proved invaluable during my time in graduate school. Special thanks to Donna DeBlasio, who convinced me to write this thesis and has been the best advisor I could ask for, and to Martin Berger, for going over the intricacies of syntax and semantics. Thanks also to my thesis director, Anne York, who gave me the encouragement I needed to press on, and who met with me as much as I needed during this whole process. My gratitude also goes out to William Jenkins, who loaned me material, which proved invaluable in the writing process. Thanks also to Tom Leary, for helping with the revision process of my proposal, ensuring I had a firm foundation upon which to start.

I would also like to thank all the graduate students and graduate assistants I had the pleasure of working with over the past two years. Without you, my experience in graduate school would have been woefully maddening.

Of course, thanks to my parents and sister for their ongoing and everlasting love, support, and their belief that I can achieve anything I put my mind to, no matter what juncture I choose (even if it is history).

Thanks to Larry Wallace, who I've known since the ripe age of twenty, and who has taught me more than any text could. He has truly shaped who I am today, and without his encouragement and willingness to see me through the rough patches, I could not have made it this far. I am truly humbled that he continues to be a presence in my life.

Above all, thanks my close friend and colleague, Shannon Skiles, who not only knows my ins and outs, but has been an invaluable source of comfort and support during my time in graduate school. She's not only seen me through every lesson and burned the midnight oil on several occasions by my side, but her wit and good heart are often my source of sanity. I can't thank her enough for her encouragement and ability to see me through my philosophical rants and long-winded debates on Marx in an effort to understand his genius. That eight page paper in Dr. Kenley's class seems ages ago, but then, like now, we persevered and made it through.

Introduction

Karl Marx lived in an era when industrialization dramatically altered the economic livelihood of individuals throughout the world. He, along with his life-long collaborator, Friedrich Engels, viewed this rapid change through a philosophical and political lens, acknowledged the existence of revolutionary reform movements before Marxism, and proclaimed their version of socialism as the panacea to the new economic woes of the world.¹ Born from this egalitarian impulse, many social movements which pleaded for equal political and economic standing adopted socialist principles in order to exact change. The women's movement represented an outcry by women discontent with their position as repressed members of society, unable to obtain the same political and economic rights as men. The demand for political rights naturally gave rise to the woman suffrage movement of the mid nineteenth to early twentieth century. Both movements adopted and transformed these principles of liberty and equality to fit within the mold of their unique American context.

Industrialization served as the catalyst for all types of socialism, including Marxism, beginning in England in the late eighteenth century, eventually spreading throughout Europe and across the globe. By the 1830s and 1840s, the aristocracy in Europe faced usurpation by the middle class bourgeoisie, who sought not only equal status but also political domination as well.² Technological innovations replaced labor once undertaken manually, and created a new social order of capital owners and workers. Urbanization occurred as individuals moved to the city in order to obtain employment as

¹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings*, ed. Martin Puchner (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005), 29-39.

² Charles Breunig, *Age of Revolution and Reaction: 1789-1850* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), 196.

the economic climate shifted away from rural areas. The implementation of steam-powered machinery, textile factories, the utilization of coal, and rapid transport through canals and waterways further solidified the urban industrial sector as the staple for economic security. Society restructured as guildmasters became capitalist entrepreneurs, replacing the landed aristocracy, and dominating the political and economic segment of society. Serfs, no longer tied to the land due to the disintegration of the feudal system, migrated to urban centers in order to obtain work. They toiled under harsh working conditions, while the entrepreneurs amassed the wealth generated by the newly built factories, mills, and mines. Workers toiled in mills, factories and mines devoid of safety codes or health regulations often for very long hours, and received pitifully inadequate pay. Skilled tradesmen, especially weavers, suddenly found their jobs replaced by machinery. A group of protesters who sabotaged machinery became known as the Luddites, and demonstrate the tenuous relationship between the capitalists and workers, often resulting in physical violence.

The bourgeoisie lived comfortably during industrialization in this arranged exploitation, while workers faced a multitude of hardships. They worked long, grueling hours in hazardous work environments and faced injury and death on a daily basis. In addition, families often lived in cramped conditions where disease ran rampant through the squalid, cramped and unsanitary living conditions. Women and children became an integral part of the workforce, given the lower wages companies paid them. Overseers singled out children for exploitation, providing a haven from the dangers of the urban streets, while also utilizing their small stature. The given their smaller stature and lower wages. This inequality of the standard of living between the classes, as all incidents of

blatant social ills and inequality, inevitably fostered ideologies based on the restructuring of society to ensure equality.

Equality served as an important theme of the women's movement, which coincided with the emergence of industrialization. The movement reacted against societal norms dictating that women remain in the household and engage in activities including motherhood, child-rearing, and proprietor of the household. Nineteenth-century women's-rights activists challenged this notion and argued that women deserved the right to engage in activities outside the home, including the right to independent economic acquisition. They also argued that women were competent intellectual beings capable of engaging in such activities. Opponents voiced their objections to the women's movement on the basis that altering of women's conventional role would upset the balance of society as whole. Campaigns founded on political, social and religious principles became rampant as men and women alike took part in this vehement opposition to women's rights. Politically, opponents argued that men represented women's interest at the polls, and religious principles labeled women with sexual temptresses who lured men into sacrilegious activities. In addition, social norms dictated the necessity of women in the home in order to ensure to proper upbringing of the youth and as such build a strong and secure future while advocating and upholding moral continence.

These conflicting views of woman as temptress and protector of moral continence inevitably created a duality in female identity. Nineteenth-century feminist writings demonstrated this duality by emphasizing intellectual repression and economic dependence on men, as demonstrated in the works by Margaret Fuller and Charlotte

Perkins Gilman. Their writings also correlated with socialist ideology in its denunciation of repression and an appeal for political and social equality. August Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism* and Frederick Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* provided a socialist interpretation of the plight of women and their attempts to obtain political equality within a capitalistic society. Speeches delivered by women's-rights activists, including the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, presented at the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, served as the harbinger for the suffrage movement.

The ratification of the nineteenth amendment in 1920 marked the victory of the American woman suffrage movement, which sprang from the women's rights movement of the previous century. The collaboration of women through this movement helped foster the emergence of female dominated organizations promoting the philanthropic welfare of the nation in the post-Civil War era. This tentative dabble in politics, as well as the emancipation of slaves following the Civil War which stressed racial equality, fueled female suffrage activities given the climate of social and political venues open for change. These factors encouraged women to take part in the suffrage movement, which emphasized gender consciousness, political dependence and inequality, the inevitability of change, and gender discrimination. *The Communist Manifesto* also addressed these themes and demonstrated the similarity between Marxist and suffragist ideology. In addition, suffragists emphasized female sexual identity and status as an argument in favor of suffrage, issues which Marx and Engels left unvoiced.

Speeches and writings from female activists during the mid-nineteenth century time including Emma Goldman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Emma Goldman, and Julia Ward Howe document this struggle. Conservative even in their

revolutionary struggle for equal suffrage, these women contributed to the political and social change in women's place within American society. Suffragists also invoked parts of the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the United States Constitution to argue the inevitability of political change in favor of women within American society. Differing in tone and context, these women were instrumental in effecting a radical change. These speeches and writings by suffragists demonstrates a similarity with Marxist thought in regard to class and economic equality, while deviating in regard to female sexual identity and status.

Scholarly examination of American socialism blamed the inflexibility of the ideology to conform to America's ethnic, religious, and economic diversity. In addition, historians emphasized different epochs within American and the rise of socialist ideals, while also detailing the various aspects of the movement, including utopianism and anarchism. Daniel Bell's *Marxian Socialism in the United States* examines the emergence of socialism with American from the 1870s to the 1950s. He explored the various segments within the socialist party, including the ideas of the International Workingman's Association led by Karl Marx, the ideals of Ferdinand Lassalle, and the anarchism of Mikhail Bakunin. Ferdinand Lasalle believed in implementing socialism through popular elections, thereby forcing the government to acknowledge the working class. Mikhail Bakunin proposed an anarchist achievement of socialism through revolution sparked by terror to unseat the ruling class.³ Bell claims that socialism ultimately failed within the United States due to 'ideological dogmatism' which included

³ Daniel Bell, *Marxian Socialism in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 21.

the movement's failure to reconcile issues of ethics and politics.⁴ Bell argued that socialism thought of the world rather than acting in the world, meaning the ideology worked best in theory rather than in practice, and as such, could not conform to adapt to the different set of ideological principles in the United States.

Oakley C. Johnson in *Marxism in the United States Before the Russian Revolution: 1876-1917*, explored the role of Marxism in America before any socialist state existed, when socialism was a theory and not implemented.⁵ Oakley details the socialist influence on American institutions such as politics, unions, art, literature and social movements for liberty including woman suffrage and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He argues that Marxism proved a significant influence on American culture, the impact of which proved worthy of study and evaluation. Like Bell, Oakley claims that the unique climate of the United States prevented socialism from flourishing in the country. Unlike Bell, however, Oakley examines Marxism in lieu of socialism as a whole, thus providing a differentiation between Marxist and socialist thought. Oakley also studies the effects of Marxism on social, as well as political, institutions, rather than adhering to a strict political examination akin to Bell's.

H. Wayne Morgan's *American Socialism 1900-1960* covers a shorter era than Bell's piece, and examines a larger period of time than Johnson's text while providing an examination of Utopian socialism on American society. Morgan argues that American socialism drew on the tradition of utopian communism that flourished before the Civil

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ Oakley C. Johnson, *Marxism in United States History Before the Russian Revolution: 1876-1917* (New York: Humanities Press, 1974), ix.

War and exhibited humanism, radicalism, and nonconformity.⁶ The rise of industrialization following the Civil War further allowed the emergence of a utopian view of humanity within American society due to the exploitation of one class by another. Similar to Bell, Morgan emphasizes the importance of different types of socialism, while focusing on the effects of social institutions similar to Johnson.

Historians have largely ignored the examination of the writings of influential female leaders and activists with relation to Marxist ideology pertaining to class and freedom. June Sochen in *Movers and Shakers: American Women Thinkers and Activists 1900-1970* establishes a foundation for further historical study of significant feminist leaders, thinkers, and activists. Published in 1973, Sochen's book acknowledges and redresses the exclusion of women in the historical discipline, while simultaneously setting precedence for the study of women's history.⁷ Sochen argues that long standing conservative societal values, ingrained in the feminists themselves, hindered their valiant struggle for equality.

Hilda Scott, in *Does Socialism Liberate Women?*, focuses on cultural values in her study of female discrimination under Socialist regimes in Eastern Europe. Scott emphasizes the impact of conservative and deeply ingrained societal views preventing true female equality, and focuses exclusively on socialist ideals pertaining to female liberation and neglects an examination of female ideals through their own words.⁸

Sheila M. Rothman in *Woman's Proper Place* focuses more concisely on the impact of

⁶ H. Wayne Morgan, ed. *American Socialism: 1900-1960* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), 2

⁷ June Sochen, *Movers and Shakers: American Women Thinkers and Activists, 1900-1970* (New York: Quadrangle The New York Times Book Co, 1973), ix.

⁸ Hilda Scott, *Does Socialism Liberate Women?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974), 212.

class on the suffragist movement. She claims the emergence of an educated female middle class following the industrial revolution galvanized women politically and secured an “alignment powerful enough to gain the vote.”⁹ Aileen S. Kraditor in *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement: 1890-1920* argues that the inherent conservatism of female suffragists due to the reformist rather than revolutionary character of their movement.¹⁰ These authors provide a solid background on the suffrage movement by implementing the themes of class, politics, and conservatism.

Nancy F. Cott in *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* emphasizes a collective female identity based on “the woman movement” in the early 1900’s with a strong emphasis on feminist philosophy and provides a varied analysis of class and cultural forces defining early twentieth century femininity.¹¹ These scholars have, however, failed to emphasize the writings of female activists in conjunction with specific political ideologies, particularly Marxism. The examination of female suffragist literature and speeches, with an emphasis on arguments, ideological trends and the distinct similarity or difference to Marxism, explicates the political motives of important females during this time.

Industrialization led to a dramatic shift in the economic and social life in European and American societies, highlighting the exploitation born from a newly mechanized society with wealthy capitalist owners in charge of an army of workers. These socialist realizations of inequality struck a chord with feminists and suffragists in

⁹ Sheila M. Rothman, *Woman’s Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices 1870 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1978), 127.

¹⁰ Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement: 1890-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 258-259.

¹¹ Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3.

later decades, as it brought into focus the political and social oppression women faced within a patriarchal society. Without the influence of socialist ideals and principles, the women's movement and woman suffrage would have lacked a multitude of appeals made to the general public for the equality of a repressed segment of society akin to Marx's and Engels' call for the liberation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie.

Utopian Socialism and Marxism

Socialism emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, when industrialization transformed European and American societies from agrarian to urban based. Industrialization began in Great Britain around 1750 and gained full momentum by 1850, when it became firmly entrenched in European and American society.¹² Technological advances in water and steam power, mechanized machines, rapid transportation and communication provided the necessary means for mass production in a scale hitherto unknown, and created "a mechanized method of production."¹³ The railway provided the necessary means to transport raw materials utilized in factories over a large distance. Better communication, such as the telegraph, aided in the rapid disbursement of information within this advanced society.¹⁴ In essence, national economies became more consolidated and nations more interdependent.¹⁵ The results of this included the development of the city as the commercial center and an increase in urbanization as individuals and families moved from rural areas to obtain employment.¹⁶ Additionally, tasks once undertaken in the home, such as textile manufacturing, moved to factory production, a process which encouraged urbanization.¹⁷ Competition, born from the nationalization of industries once monopolized in small towns, also reduced individual

¹² Breunig, 196.

¹³ Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism: 1885-1914*, 2nd ed (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 2.

¹⁴ Breunig, 198.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Hays, 2.

¹⁷ Breunig, 198.

economic security.¹⁸ These changes invariably wrought discord among the population, as their conventional way of life altered dramatically.

Production also shifted with industrialization, as the standard of living improved due to increased wages and a worldwide increase in output. Economic opportunities abounded in the newly industrialized societies, as individuals acquired better wages in the various industrial sectors and the availability of mechanized appliances. However, these economic opportunities for advancement and an improved standard of living did not avail themselves to everyone, and “inequalities in the enjoyment of such benefits abounded.”¹⁹ Industrialization also spurred the development of two classes, the wealthy capitalists and the laborers, who stood in stark opposition in regards to social and economic stability and security.

Karl Marx believed this economic inequality would inevitably result in a revolution of the workers against the capitalists. The proletariat, or working class, would rise and overthrow the bourgeoisie, or capitalists, in order to eradicate class divisions and reinstate equilibrium in society in which no individual obtained more material goods than another. Marx, along with his collaborator Friederich Engels sought to devise an effective ideology for socialism, which would aid in its eventual global adoption.²⁰ In essence, the crux of Marx’s ideology called for the eradication of capitalism in order to obtain a perfect classless society.²¹

¹⁸ Hays, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 4.

²⁰ Paul Sonnino and Anne York, “The Origin of Socialism: Loss of Faith in the Free Market.” (Lecture given at Youngstown State University).

²¹ See Friederich Engels and Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings*, ed. Martin Puchner (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005). Originally published in London in 1848.

Writings by European and American authors depict the plight of workers and demonstrate the appeal and influence of socialist principles. Émile Zola's 1885 novel *Germinal* detailed the deplorable living and working conditions faced by miners in the town of Montsou in northern France and Upton Sinclair's 1908 novel, *The Jungle*, vividly described the myriad of hardships workers faced in the Chicago stockyards. Both works illustrate the universality of worker exploitation and the appeal of Marxism to this group in Europe and the United States.

The Transcendentalist movement in the United States, which emphasized human intuition and action over divine intervention, showed a shift from the metaphysical to the concrete in American thought. It was led by Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose essay *Self Reliance* provided the basic principles of Transcendentalism and showed the shift in American national thought in favor of socialist precepts.²² In addition, his speech, "The Young American", delivered in 1844, reflects the early presence of a type of pre-Marxian sentiment in the United States before the publication of the *Manifesto* in 1848 through Emerson's discussion of the implications of a newly instated capitalist society, worker exploitation, and the transformation of human labor into a marketable product.²³ This shows the propensity for the American public to adopt certain Marxian views of worker equality in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The creation of the American Socialist Party further solidified this influence, even though its ideology did not last

²² Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self Reliance," [essay on-line]; available from <http://www.emersoncentral.com/selfreliance.htm>; Internet; accessed 30 July 2007.

²³ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Young American," In eds. Alfred R. Ferguson, William H. Gilman, Robert E. Spiller, and Carol F. Strauch in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Volume I: Nature, Addresses, and Letters* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1971), 224-241.

beyond the mid twentieth century. Writings by Robert Owen, a Welsh immigrant with strong socialist leanings who immigrated to the United States in 1825, also reflected and disseminated utopian socialism throughout the United States.²⁴ Utopian socialism, with its emphasis on equality and the restructuring of society for the betterment of society, influenced various political and social movements in America, including the women's movement, education, and female suffrage.

Transcendentalism emerged in New England in the early nineteenth century and showed the willingness of Americans to embrace aspects socialism, especially and social egalitarianism. Based on human action, Transcendentalism was an important movement in American philosophical thought along with utopian socialism as espoused by Robert Owen and his social experiment of New Harmony, Indiana. Taken together, utopian socialism and Transcendentalism showed the importance of human self-reliance within American social life.

Marxian ideology inevitably spread across the Atlantic, fostering its own unique form within the United States. The International Workingman's Association, also called the First International, the political ideas of Ferdinand Lassalle, and the anarchism of Mikhail Bakunin provided the basis for socialist political organization in America.²⁵ Marx led the First International, while Lassalle argued for unionization in cooperation with the political arena and Bakunin viewed collective revolt as the means to exact social change.²⁶ Needless to say, the followers of these different ideologies failed to agree on

²⁴ See Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (Letchworth, UK: Aldine Press, 1972), Originally published in London by Richard Taylor and Co., 1813.

²⁵ Bell, 21.

many fundamental issues and produced their own segments of followers. By the 1880s, internal divisions within the International and the struggle between Marxism and Anarchism led to the eventual disintegration of the organization.²⁷ After decades of factionalism within the various groups born from these ideologies, socialistic political goals finally peaked in 1897 with the formation of the American Socialist Party which called for an improvement of working conditions including reduction of hours constituting the work day, universal health care, and national insurance.²⁸

Emerson's *The Young American* shows the presence of a form of socialist thought present in the United States before the publication of the *Manifesto*, yet mirrors it as shown through Emerson's emphasis on worker exploitation and the negative impact of trade on human virtue. Emerson's speech, however, can hardly be labeled as socialist as he strongly supported the industrial expansion and manifest destiny that accompanied the election of James K. Polk.²⁹ Delivered four years before the publication of the *Manifesto*, Emerson's speech nonetheless highlights the presence of socialist ideology with regards to worker exploitation in America before the spread of Marxian ideals.

The Young American touches lightly upon the state of the worker, while strongly emphasizing the liberation afforded to the worker, and society as a whole, through trade. He claimed that trade fostered the production of goods and provided a platform for men

²⁶ For more on the First International see Julius Braunthal, *History of the International Volume 1: 1864-1914*, trans. Henry Collins and Kenneth Mitchell (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967). The precepts of Anarchism as purported by Bakunin George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 222-233.

²⁷ Braunthal, 173.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁹ Eds. Alfred R. Ferguson William H. Gilman, Robert E. Spiller, and Carol F. Strauch, introduction to *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Volume I: Nature, Addresses, and Letters* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1971). 217.

to expose their production, but also “produce[s] art, skill, and intellectual and moral values.”³⁰ Clearly, Emerson did not share the belief of Marx and Engels in their implication of the destruction of human decency wrought from capitalism. Where Marxism viewed capitalism as having “drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation,” Emerson viewed capitalism as providing the necessary outlet for human art, skill and intellect.³¹ Emerson, however, continued stating that “the good and the evil of trade [is] that it goes to put everything into market, talent, beauty, virtue and man himself.”³² This statement clearly parallels Marx’s and Engels’ contention that the bourgeoisie “has resolved personal worth into exchange value.”³³ Emerson, Marx and Engels believed the greatest ill of capitalist domination included the transition of human labor and production into a commodity bought and sold as the market dictated.

In addition, Emerson stated that the wages laborers earned for the grueling hours they worked each day was a “pittance” and that the laborer “he buys everything at disadvantage and has no advisor or protector.”³⁴ Emerson continued by claiming that the laborer’s situation “[was] not as grievous as it seems,” given the educational opportunities open to the worker’s children and that “they grow up in perfect

³⁰ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Young American,” In eds. Alfred R. Ferguson, William H. Gilman, Robert E. Spiller, and Carol F. Strauch. In *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Volume I: Nature, Addresses, and Letters* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1971), 233.

³¹ Marx and Engels, 9.

³² Emerson, 233.

³³ Marx and Engels, 9.

³⁴ Emerson, 224.

communication and equality with the native children, and owe to their parents a vigor of constitution which promises them at least an even chance in the competitions of the new generations.”³⁵ Clearly, Emerson believed in the ability of an educated population to improve economic and social conditions, rather than in the outright revolution that Marx and Engels supported. In fact, Emerson believed that trade served as the lynchpin of liberty and that “it makes peace and keeps peace, and it will abolish slavery.”³⁶ This directly contradicts Marx’s and Engels’ claim that the laborer was “daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overseer, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself,” thereby demonstrating their belief that capitalism endorsed and created slavery in lieu of abolishing it.³⁷ Emerson’s view is much more optimistic and opportunistic regarding trade and industry, as evidenced by his belief in the advancement of liberty and education within American society.

Emerson also denied the view of the aristocracy as a permanent force in American society constantly oppressing the laborer as “the aristocracy of trade has no permanence, is not entailed, was not the result of toil and talent, the result of merit of some kind, and is continually falling, like the waves of the sea, before new claims of the same sort.”³⁸ While Marx and Engels viewed the bourgeoisie as a constant force solidified by the inflexible ideas and beliefs that “the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class,” demonstrating their belief in the permanence of bourgeois oppression so

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

³⁷ Marx and Engels, 14.

³⁸ Emerson, 234

long as these ideals remained ingrained in a society dominated by an oppressing class.³⁹ In Emerson's view, in direct contrast to that of Marx and Engels, the bourgeoisie did not monopolize society in the interest of the few over the many, but instead changed and progressed as the changing tide of time dictated.

Emerson also argued that the natural consequence of trade would benefit society rather than destroy it.⁴⁰ He stated that benefit socialism would follow trade and would "spread the American vision for the future to the farthest continental boundaries and beyond."⁴¹ This statement depicts an American slant on trade and industry, as Emerson echoed the belief in the benefits of spreading the American ideals of liberty, prosperity, and industry the world over. In addition, Emerson believed that "In every society some men are born to rule, and some to advise," demonstrating his acceptance of a rigid societal structure in which one group wielded some form of control over another.⁴² This directly contradicts Marx's and Engels' contention that class antagonisms produced by the bourgeoisie's domination over the proletariat had to be eradicated in order for the "free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."⁴³ While Emerson believed that a form of class structures was necessary for liberty, Marx and Engels believed that the eradication of these structures would foster liberty.

³⁹ Marx and Engels, 26.

⁴⁰ Emerson was more of a student of economics as espoused by Adam Smith's emphasis on free market. For more information see Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times, and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 47-51.

⁴¹ Emerson, 220.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 238.

⁴³ Marx and Engels, 28.

Land also served as an important theme in Emerson's speech and Marxist ideology. Emerson stated that "we must regard the *land* as a commanding and increasing power on the American citizen, the sanative and Americanizing influence, which promises to disclose new virtues for ages to come," showing his belief in not only in the industrial importance of land, but in its metaphysical properties of healing and virtue as well.⁴⁴ Marx and Engels viewed landed property as "based on the antagonism of capital and wage labor," and only contended that the complete eradication of bourgeois private property would serve in the interest of the common good.⁴⁵ Emerson differed drastically from this stance, seeing as he equated the improvement of society through the spread of American notions of trade and land, while Marx and Engels believed that an overhaul of private property acquisition and control would benefit the majority of exploited workers.

Robert Owen immigrated to the United States and espoused the beliefs of Utopian socialism, which Claude St. Simon and Louis Blanc advocated. This type of socialism called for a centralized government under state control, with the inhabitants fulfilling their own needs.⁴⁶ Owen established New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825 as an experiment to prove that human nature would thrive in the absence of a competitive market. He believed "that in a reconstructed community, people could be taught the principles of cooperation instead of competition."⁴⁷ New Harmony demonstrated a socialist presence in the United States before the publication of the *Manifesto* in 1848.

⁴⁴ Emerson, 229.

⁴⁵ Marx and Engels, 21.

⁴⁶ Sommino and York.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Owen's writings also convey this notion of Utopian socialism as he addresses the grievances of the lower classes and the need for reform. In his first essay contained in a "New View of Society," Owen claims "the chief object of these Essays is to forward investigations of such vital importance to the well-being of this country, and of society in general."⁴⁸ He also contended that the duty of the upper class "is to increase the particular happiness of society."⁴⁹ Owen's emphasis on the well-being of the nation and the happiness of society illustrates his Utopian Socialist leanings, as Marx and Engels made no direct appeal to the happiness of society, only to its development.

The implementation of New Harmony under the guidance of Owen demonstrated a utopian vision of socialist culture, with a strong emphasis on the happiness and well-being of its inhabitants. Marxism espoused these principles in a strictly economic sense. Utopianism applied in the American sector represented a stark contrast to the Marxian call for economic and political revolution by the proletariat. Owen believed a society based on the cooperation of individuals sharing a community without the constraints of competition would inevitably lead to a much healthier, happier society. However, the failure of New Harmony demonstrated the unwillingness of American capitalism to allow such an endemic community, based on the principles of common labor and acquired goods, to survive. Marx viewed this utopian version of socialism "apart from the money question," keeps workers as workers and masters as masters, thereby maintaining the status quo of the workers.⁵⁰ While Marxism viewed utopian socialism as a continuation

⁴⁸ Robert Owen, "New View of Society," in *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (Letchworth, UK: Aldine Press, 1972), 15. Originally published in London by Richard Taylor and Co., 1813.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰ Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 171.

of social ills, it inevitably represented one aspect of socialism prevalent in Europe and the United States.

Industrialization thus served as the main catalyst to class strife through the restructuring of society based on the alteration of production and consumption. The bourgeoisie replaced the landed aristocracy and dominated the social and political scene through their economic gains, while laborers toiled away in the newly built factories, mills, and mines and provided the basis for their new found wealth. The homogenization of nations through improved technology and communication further divided the upper and lower classes, while further entrenching them across national borders. The rigidity of class structures proved intolerable to those workers who toiled in unsanitary, unsafe, and grueling factories and mines, acquiring enough money to subsist. The owners of capital, however, lived beyond comfort and necessity, reaping the economic gains from this cheap source labor. This inconsistency in the quality of life inevitably led to the advent of socialism, which called for an egalitarian society where no individual obtained more than another.

Marx and Engels typified this conflict in *The Communist Manifesto*, implicating the bourgeoisie as bringing about the destruction of national character and individual liberty. They called for the reorganization of society based on the collectivization and mass revolt of workers in industrialized nations, and a complete transformation of the economic realm through the abolition of private property. They claimed that the proletariat slaved under bourgeois overseers, losing all sense of identity, nationality, family, and individuality through their labor.

They espoused the goals of the Communist Party, including the nationalization of banks, free education, and a graduated income tax in order to restore societal equilibrium. Seemingly economic in tone, Marxism encompassed the social and political in its appeal to the reorganization of these institutions.

In this atmosphere of tumultuous social and economic change, and in response to abhorrent working conditions laborers faced, Marx and Engels penned *The Communist Manifesto*, a philosophical treatise laced with political activism. They appealed to the masses of exploited workers, constructing a politically based argument for societal change. In addition, Marx and Engels argued for the replacement of a dominate group of minorities by the majority, acting in their own interest. Economically and politically centered, the *Manifesto* emphasized social equality in conjunction with economic reformation enacted through political means.

The *Manifesto* opened with the contention that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed.”⁵¹ This reflects the historical progression of society detailing societal strife from the earliest epoch of history to the newly formed proletariat and bourgeoisie following industrialization. Marx and Engels viewed the relationship between these two groups as that of ‘oppressor and oppressed,’ clearly demonstrating the inequality inherent in the class structure of the time. They further claimed that “our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class

⁵¹Marx and Engels, 7.

antagonisms.”⁵² This simplification entailed the division of society into “two hostile camps: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”⁵³ Marx and Engels thus argued that class antagonisms evolved to the point where society divided into two opposing, irreconcilable camps, with one in a dominate position over the other. This aptly described the condition between workers and capitalists during industrialization.

Marx and Engels detailed the restructuring of society as “the place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires—the leaders of the whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.”⁵⁴ Modern Industry therefore controlled the mode of production, while the modern bourgeois controlled the means of production. They also claimed that the bourgeoisie obtained political sway as well as economic with the advent of the Modern Industry.⁵⁵ The contention that the bourgeoisie controlled the political arena alludes to the fact that they control all facets of society, as the political sphere inextricably filters into every aspect of daily life. Given that Marx and Engels viewed the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat as two classes in opposition, one oppressor and one oppressed, the bourgeoisie dominated political sector led to the suppression and exploitation of the working classes, dictating every aspect of the workers’ social lives. This point is further illustrated when Marx and Engels claim the bourgeoisie “has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water

⁵² *Ibid.* 8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 9.

of egotistical calculation.”⁵⁶ This claim illustrated the corruption of social life by the bourgeoisie, especially those aspects of life regarded as above material and inherent to promoting the common good of all individuals. Reducing religion, decency, and individuality to a commodity, Marx and Engels blamed the destruction of human decency on the bourgeoisie.⁵⁷

Marxism expanded on this implication when the *Manifesto* claimed free trade, as enacted by the bourgeoisie, reduced the family to “a mere money relation,”⁵⁸ and stripped the individual of “every trace of national character.”⁵⁹ This further illustrates the corruption of society at the hands of the bourgeoisie, and the affects of capitalism upon the individual. They further addressed the individual when they wrote “laborers are a commodity like every other article of commerce”⁶⁰ and “[the worker] becomes an appendage of the machine,”⁶¹ demonstrating meshing of the individual with labor, and, together with the loss of nationality and human decency, the individual becomes one part of the monolithic construct which comprised the capitalist society.

The homogenization of society for the benefit of the bourgeoisie further expands on Marxian ideology. Marx and Engels claimed that the bourgeoisie compacted the scattered rural population and means of production into the urban areas and that the

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ For a more in depth discussion regarding Marx and morality see Stanley Edgar Hyman, *The Tangled Bank: Darwin, Marx, Frazer and Freud as Imaginative Writers* (New York: Antheneum, 1962), 86-103.

⁵⁸ Marx and Engels, 10

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14

“necessary consequence of this was political centralization,” with all manner of individual provincial laws, governments, systems of taxation and class interest joined together.⁶² In essence, Marxian principles viewed this unification of governmental and political interests as detrimental to the oppressed class of society, the proletariat, while promoting the interests of the dominant class. This homogenization not only destroyed the unique character of nations, but also undermined any notion for the acceptance of the diversification of its inhabitants. This appeal served as an important foundation in many political movements in the United States which acted in the interest of an oppressed class.

Marx and Engels believed the solution to class oppression and exploitation included the abolition of private bourgeois property through the collective efforts of the proletariat.⁶³ Given that Marxism viewed the bourgeoisie as the cause for social and economic strife on society as a whole, the abolition of their property would only improve the conditions for the exploited masses. Most importantly, this abolition of property would reorganize society for the better, into one in which “accumulated labor is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the laborer.”⁶⁴ This emphasis on collectivization as an important factor in exacting change is a crucial aspect of Marxism, one which reflects the appeals made by political and social activists in the following decades.

Another important aspect of Marxism included the emphasis on the ideas and eternal truths of the ruling class. A proponent of historical materialism, Marx viewed the

⁶² *Ibid.*, 12

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

course of history as a product of man and not of divine intervention.⁶⁵ This is evident in the *Manifesto* when he and Engels claimed the dissolution of old ideas that dictated society would inevitably lead to the dissolution of that society's existence.⁶⁶ In essence, the notions of exploitation, gain, and oppression depended on the societal conditions depended on the reality of those same notions during a specific time. Communism, Marx and Engels argued "abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."⁶⁷ Marx and Engels, therefore, argued that the most dangerous aspect of society lay not only in the ability of one class to exploit the other, but also in the rejection of the very notions that propagated and endorsed this behavior, notions the ruling class monopolized. They argued not only for the physical eradication of bourgeois property and political domination, but the very ideas that held sway over the members of society that made this control and power seem legitimate and right. Marxism thus proved not only a political struggle, but an intellectual struggle against long ingrained and persistent ideals. Other social movements in the United States, particularly the women's movement incorporated these same ideological elements of intellectual change in their arguments for female equality.

Two novels from this time period typify the plight of workers and demonstrate the appeal of socialist principles in Europe and the United States. Émile Zola's *Germinal*, printed in 1885, detailed Étienne Lantier's experiences as a miner in Montsou, located in

⁶⁵ This contention is debatable among Marxist historians. Helmut Fleischer argued that economic development fueled Marx's view of history. For more on this subject see Helmut Fleischer, *Marxism and History*, trans. Eric Mosbacher (London: The Penguin Press, 1973), 107.

⁶⁶ Marx and Engels, 26.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

northern France. Zola's piece offered a vivid exploration of the everyday working conditions typical of European miners, and the broad detail of social life mingled with the economic provides a broader examination of nineteenth century workers. Likewise, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, published in 1906, examined the struggle of American native and immigrant workers to obtain a livelihood. Focusing on the conditions of the working within the Chicago stockyards, Sinclair's novel provides an examination of the American perception of working class struggles and triumphs. Together, these novels depict the shared experience of laborers in Europe and America, as well as the appeal of socialism across cultural boundaries.

Germinal details the working and living conditions within the Montsou Mining Community told from the point of view of Étienne Lantier. *Germinal* began with Entienne's journey through the French countryside in search of work, whereupon he met Bonnemort, a mine worker. Bonnemort's physical deterioration from his many years working in the mines typified the plight of many workers in nineteenth century France. A worker in the mine since the age of seven, Bonnemart detailed his multitude of positions in the mine as a trammer, hewer, stoneman, tunnel digger, seam filler, repairman, and, finally, a driver.⁶⁸ In addition, Bonnemort pointed out that "[it's] five years ago and they made me a driver ... Hey, that's quite something, isn't it, fifty years at the pit, and forty-five of those underground!"⁶⁹ This statement demonstrates the exploitation of the mining industry on children and the elderly alike, in the context of Bonnemort's position as an above-ground driver only came following his physician's

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

statement that he'd "never come out [of the mine] alive."⁷⁰ This illustrates the domination of the worker under a capitalist system and the toil they endured throughout their lives.

Étienne obtained employment in the Le Voreux mine, where Bonnemort worked, the workers descending into the great chasm in cages which "slid up the surface and then fell smoothly back down again like some nocturnal beast, swallowing more and more men, drinking them down the dark abyss of its throat."⁷¹ This personification of the mine, which served as the economic livelihood of the workers within it, demonstrated the negative connotation Zola applied to the working conditions of nineteenth-century French miners. The fact that the cage "swallowed" men and ingested them into its proverbial stomach alluded to the consumption of the laborer within this economic position, and the all-consuming facet of capitalism. In addition, Zola described the workers within the mine as filled with seven hundred "workmen now sweating away in this giant ant-hill, burrowing into the earth on all sides, riddling it with holes like worms into wood."⁷² Zola's analogy of the workers to insects further illustrated the view of the mechanization of labor and the melding of the individual worker into a mass of production, with the worker losing all sense of identity and skill to the trade. This reflects Marx's and Engels' claim that "masses of laborers are organized like soldiers," working within a highly structured industrial setting.⁷³ The worker thus no longer toiled on land producing a unique commodity, laborers worked in masse for the good of the bourgeoisie hierarchy.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Emile Zola, *Germinal*, trans. Peter Collier (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 32.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷³ Marx and Engels, 16.

Zola also described the stark contrast between laborers and capitalists through his description of the morning routine in a dwelling at mining village number Two Hundred and Forty and the Grégoire's property. Zola described housing in the mining village as "four massive blocks of small back-to-back houses, running geometrically in parallel lines like a barracks or a hospital, and divided by three wide avenues, laid out with regular gardens."⁷⁴

The inhabitants of number sixteen in the mining village awoke every morning at four a.m. and the chimes of a clock through the floorboards regularly woke Catherine Maheus, Bonnemort's granddaughter.⁷⁵ In addition, the children slept in one bedroom, with three beds crammed into the room, while the parents shared a fourth bed in the adjacent room.⁷⁶ In contrast, Zola described the Grégoire's property as "a large square house.... [with an] orchard and vegetable garden, which produced the finest fruits and vegetables in the neighbourhood."⁷⁷ He also wrote that the Grégoire did not usually rise until nine a.m., "but that night's storm had upset them," and awoken them an hour early.⁷⁸ Additionally, Madame Grégoire requested the servant bake brioche for breakfast, owing to the fact that dough had already been made.⁷⁹ These descriptions convey more than the simple fact that the workers lived in inferior conditions to the capitalists. It also demonstrated the stark difference between the social and economic lives of the proletariat

⁷⁴ Zola, 15.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

and the bourgeoisie. The workers arose early in the day, fighting off fatigue and cold to make a living, while the bourgeoisie slept in at their leisure, and never worried whether there would be enough food in the morning. These stark differences encompassed every aspect of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, as the labor of the latter produced the fruits enjoyed by the former. Without the Maheus, the Grégoire's would not have the luxury of sleeping in or living in a large house with a servant and enjoy in the high standard of living.

Touching on these same themes, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* provided more of a socialist slant. The book traced the journey of Jurgis Rudkus and his wife and family in an area of Chicago called Packingtown. Jurgis and his wife Ona immigrated to America from Lithuania in an effort to attain the American Dream, only to find poverty, despair, and disillusionment once they arrived. Jurgis obtained a job in a meatpacking plant, living in the squalor of a boardinghouse. Sinclair claimed the neighborhood where Jurgis and his family lived consisted of "a population, low-class and mostly foreign, hanging always on the verge of starvation, and dependent for its opportunities of life upon the whim of men every bit as brutal and unscrupulous as the old-time slave drivers."⁸⁰ Sinclair's reference to "slave drivers" directly mirrors Marx's and Engels' claim that the worker is "hourly and daily enslaved by the machine, by the overseer."⁸¹ This emphasis on the oppression of workers to slave status is evident in Zola and Sinclair's work, clearly demonstrating the universality of the appeal of Marxism in the United States and Europe.

⁸⁰ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 129.

⁸¹ Marx and Engels, 14.

Another important aspect of Sinclair's work included the emphasis on the meat packing industry, which proved unsanitary and unsafe. He wrote that "the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit [which was] sent out to the public's breakfast."⁸² Sinclair's inclusion of the public in this disturbing passage points not only to the unsanitary conditions of the factory, but the deliberate actions to disseminate unhealthy meat to an unsuspecting public. Given that the factories represented a capitalistic enterprise which produced for the public and knowingly served them a bad product, Sinclair implied that capitalism afflicted the society as a whole. The rotten meat contained within the tins and wrappings demonstrated the hidden corruption and repugnancy of capitalist systems.

After a series of personal catastrophes, including the death of his wife and two children, Jurgis wandered the countryside as a tramp before returning to the city and scraping a living as best he could through any means necessary. Only when he attended a socialist political meeting by accident did he find the hope and will to live which he had lost long ago. Following a rousing speech on the ills of capitalism and the need of socialism in American, Jurgis stood "a falling in of all the pillars of his soul, the sky seemed to split above him roaring in the voice of a wild beast By God! By God! By God!"⁸³ This demonstrated Sinclair's appeal to the reader to adopt the good of

⁸² Sinclair, 163-164.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 367.

socialism over the evils of capitalism, a system which exploited its workers, corrupted every facet of society, and hindered the population as a whole physically and socially.

Clearly, socialist influence infiltrated American writings and speeches, demonstrating its pertinence in nineteenth century thought. Marx formulated his own views regarding socialism throughout the world, including the United States following the Civil War. Marx labeled the type of socialism espoused in the United States as conservative or bourgeois socialism given its propensity to undermine revolution and emphasis on the improvement of the worker's social condition within a bourgeois society.⁸⁴ Utopian socialism infiltrated American culture in the pre-Marxist era and is shown through the writings and speeches of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Upton Sinclair. Although pre-dating the emergence of the *Manifesto*, these works nonetheless show the rigidity of a free market economy within the United States, which stunted the growth of Marxism within the United States. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the socialist past of the country in order to understand the future.

These ideals appealed to European and American workers alike, as evidenced in the writings of Émile Zola and Upton Sinclair. Focusing on the social and economic exploitation of laborers, Zola's and Sinclair's works exposed the hardships of nineteenth and twentieth century laborers on both continents. While Zola's work centered on a mining community in France and Sinclair's on the Chicago stockyards, both authors emphasized the exploitation and loss of faith in a capitalistic society following their experiences in the newly industrialized workforce and the appeal of a socialist solution to these conditions. While Sinclair's work clearly demonstrated a call for socialism within the United States, Zola's text provided a balanced view of the laborer and owner motives

⁸⁴ Marx and Engels, 38.

and actions, purporting no absolute commitment to socialism as a cure for societal ills. The appeal of socialism to Zola's main character demonstrated its appeal to an exploited working class.

The Transcendentalist movement, led by Ralph Waldo Emerson, began in New England in the mid-nineteenth century and emphasized human action as the causal force in human change and progress also demonstrated socialist influence. The argument that human actions serve as the main determinate of evolution directly reflects the theory of historical materialism, which described history as the product of human actions.⁸⁵ Socialism proved a constructive response to the ills of capitalism, and Marx's theory of historical materialism, in which man controls the progress of society and not a divine being, further demonstrates this emphasis on logical over inspiration.⁸⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson's *The Young American* touched briefly on worker exploitation within the United States, but overall demonstrated a sympathetic and positive view of the implications of trade. Emerson also placed great importance on land with regard to patriotism and social prosperity, clearly rejecting the claim to abolish private property for the good of society, which also refuted the principles of Marxism in the following years.

In addition, Robert Owen's experiment in New Harmony demonstrated the Utopian aspect of socialism and its emphasis on societal happiness and well being over revolution and political strife. Following the influence of Claude St. Simon and Louis Blanc, Owen attempted to create a community based on cooperation without the interference of market competition. New Harmony's ultimate failure demonstrated the

⁸⁵ Rius, *Marx for Beginners* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 124.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

deeply engrained belief in capitalism within the United States, but not without the propensity for the population to consider a socialist solution to societal ills.

Socialism, therefore, proved as much an ideological development as economic one. This is further proven by Marx and Engels' claim that ingrained ideas of the ruling class maintained the status quo, and only the complete disruption of these ideas through proletarian revolution would change society. Marx and Engels refined socialism through their articulation of those inconsistencies within capitalism, which wrought poverty, exploitation and unhappiness. The emphasis on class inequality and the call for change to improve the condition of a large segment of the population proved a powerful and undeniable influence on the course of American political and social movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Women's Movement

The women's movement emerged in the nineteenth century as a reaction against societal norms relegating women to a life of domesticity, which included motherhood, child-rearing, and proprietor of the household. The Seneca Falls Convention convened to petition for women's rights under matrimonial law. Nineteenth-century feminists challenged this notion and argued women were competent intellectual beings in their own right. Opponents publicly voiced their objections to the women's movement, and took part in campaigns to uphold the status quo founded on political, social, and religious principles. Politically, women could not vote and many found themselves economically dependent on men. Socially, women followed a very narrow prescribed set of norms, rarely attaining higher degrees, professional careers, or a life outside of the home. Religious teachings portrayed women as stigmatized, due to the reprehensible sexual temptation they wielded over men.

Despite these perceived shortcomings in the female sex, society revered women as protectors of the youth, builders of the future, and advocates of moral countenance.⁸⁷ This inevitably created a duality in female identity, given their label as social stigmas and sustainers of the future. This duality is demonstrated in the writings of feminists including Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Margaret Fuller, who wrote in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and whose works correlate to Socialist ideology in its denunciation of subjugation and a call for higher equality. August Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism* and Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* provide a comparative analysis of Socialist perceptions of women and their efforts to achieve

⁸⁷ For an excellent discussion on American feminism and the influence of European ideas, see Margaret H. McFadden, *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999).

sexual equality. Speeches by leading women's rights activists, including the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, presented at the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, provide the contextual background for the suffragist movement. Although differences in these two movements were pronounced and multi-faceted, an emphasis on liberation through social and psychological means is evident in both.

Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1845, also challenged the prescribed norms for female behavior in the nineteenth century. It influenced the philosophy of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and the women's movement with its denunciation of the fetters which constricted women.⁸⁸ Fuller claimed that women in the nineteenth century realized their needs and as a result constructed solutions for the obstacles which prevented the fulfillment of them.⁸⁹ Demonstrative of these needs were the political injustices married women experienced through economic limitations, including property and inheritance rights, as well as her society instilled inferiority to men. Fuller claims "there exists in the mind of men a tone of feeling toward women as toward slaves," which inevitably led to the subjugation of women as inferior beings within society.⁹⁰ The emancipation of slaves following the Civil War provided a philanthropic outlet for women and many joined together to argue for the political rights of women.

Fuller described the inherent strengths and weakness of both sexes, blaming societal constructs surrounding the sexes as perpetrators of these obstacles. Fuller

⁸⁸ Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* in ed. Mason Wade, *The Writings of Margaret Fuller* (New York: Viking Press, 1941), 107.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

claimed “[m]an’s energies are repressed and distorted by the interposition of artificial obstacles he himself has put them there; they have grown out of his own imperfections,” maintaining that man’s folly created his own vices, while women have not had the opportunity to build false constructs due to their dependence on men.”⁹¹ This dependence, Fuller claimed, asserted the frivolity of sexual exchanges and relations between men and women, as women sought to live vicariously through men, who exemplified the very lifestyle they could not engage in. Fuller cautioned women against vice and urged them to “clear your souls from the taint of vanity. Do not rejoice in conquests, either that your power to allure may be seen by other women, or for the pleasure of rousing passionate feelings that gratify your love of excitement.”⁹² Fuller further illustrated the consensus of the time that women upheld virtue and prevented vice from entering a sexual relationship.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, published in 1892, exemplified the plight many women faced in the nineteenth century. Written in narrative prose, *The Yellow Wallpaper* explored one woman’s descent into madness. Gilman provided no name for her narrator, further allowing her to speak as a collective voice for women who faced psychological hardships within a strong patriarchal society. Indicative of the effects of living within this society was the psychological trauma and eventual deterioration of the narrator, whose physician husband dominated her physical and mental well-being.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 193.

A dominant theme in Gilman's text included the social dependence of women on men, particularly when Gilman described the dynamic between husband and wife. "If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression what can one do?" succinctly illustrates the dynamic between men and women in this time period.⁹³ The narrator was powerless to diagnose her own condition, and could not turn to friends or family for support given the absolute acceptance of the husband's diagnosis, solidified by the mere fact he was the husband and dictated her actions.

Gilman also showed this martial tension through the narrator's disdain towards her husband's diagnosis, believing the fact that her husband was a physician was exactly why she did not "get well faster."⁹⁴ Ordered to refrain from intellectual endeavors such as writing, the narrator found herself completely helpless, feeling the prescribed regime of tonics and social isolation detrimental to her health. The narrator claimed "I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good" demonstrating the social and intellectual limitations women faced, and their subsequent frustration this plight wrought.⁹⁵ Gilman's narrator hinted at this tension when she referred to her husband as "very careful and loving," but admitted to feelings "unreasonabl[y] angry [with] John sometimes." This shows the indoctrinated gratitude wives felt towards their

⁹³ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* in ed., Candace Ward, *Great Stories by American Women* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1996), 74.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

husbands congruent with the frustrations women felt regarding their inability to wield personal control over their own lives.⁹⁶

Gilman also used metaphors to describe the psychological imprisonment of the narrator through the yellow wallpaper in the room she shared with her husband. Gilman described the room as big and airy with barred windows on every wall, which metaphorically described the narrator's imprisonment within her marriage.⁹⁷ The wallpaper was dull, repellent, infuriating, and these hideous characteristics were indicative of her daily life as mother and housewife.⁹⁸ Perhaps ironically, she grew accustomed to the wallpaper and admitted to finding reprieve in the odd patterns and abhorrent color, seeing a woman shaking it violently and struggling to break free from her prison. This clearly demonstrated the narrator's projection of her own plight onto the wallpaper she found so repulsive. In essence, the narrator saw herself as trapped within the confines of her patriarchal marriage, a condition she found stifling and demoralizing.

In conjunction with her fascination with the wallpaper, Gilman's narrator slowly grew angry and resentful of her husband. Told to get better for his sake, their child's sake, and then for her sake, she took the order of the pleas as metaphor for social order of the women in nineteenth century American society.⁹⁹ The wife ensured the well-being of the husband and children, in that order, with little or no regard for her own interests or well-being. In essence, when married, most women ceased to hold onto any personal identity, submitting themselves entirely and wholly to their husbands and families. This

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

tension permeated the text as the narrator grew irritated with her husband, fearful he was attempting to break the woman free from behind the wallpaper without the narrator's consent. In addition, she found his behavior odd and wished he would take another room, so she could explore the wallpaper at her leisure. Thus, this shows the feeling of helplessness, changing rapidly to irritation and disdain, demonstrative of the physiological implications of domination within a marital relationship.

The story concluded with the narrator's mental breakdown. She finally locked herself in the bedroom and tore the wallpaper free from the wall, thus freeing the woman behind it. It was clear that the narrator projected herself behind the wallpaper when she exclaimed to her husband, "I've got out at last in spite of you so you can't put me back!"¹⁰⁰ This indicated her liberation from the confines of her martial imprisonment, exemplified through the abhorrent pattern of the yellow wallpaper. Gilman's narrative strongly emphasized entrapment, dependence, and helplessness, all key factors of the female experience during the nineteenth century. These frustrations and limitations inevitably brought forth the desire for change, articulated by the women's movement, which, as fervidly as socialism, offered an alternative to the existing condition experienced by American women in the nineteenth century

Fuller did not ignore the social plight of women within American society, sentiments which concretely echo Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. For example, Fuller contended that the "lot of Woman is sad. She is constituted to expect and need a happiness that cannot exist on earth. She must stifle such aspirations within her secret

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

heart, and fit herself as well as she can for a life of resignations and consolations.”¹⁰¹

This clearly correlated with the plight of Gilman’s narrator, who struggled to retain some semblance of control over her emotional and physical condition, but could not due to the constraints of society, reflected in the actions of her husband. Fuller continued by stating man “is not born for the woman, only the woman for the man The life of a woman must be outwardly a well-intentioned, cheerful dissimulation of her real life.”¹⁰² This statement further illustrated the plight of women in the nineteenth century, and their inability to convey their true desires and aspirations, whether confined to marriage or not.

Fuller also addressed and undermined the arguments against female participation in politics, the main emphasis of suffragists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She claimed that those who argued women’s physical attributes deem them unsuitable for political participation are not “those who think it impossible for Negresses to endure field work even during pregnancy, or for seamstresses to go through their killing labors,”¹⁰³ Fuller clearly implicated the majority of nineteenth century society, which viewed slaves as sub-human. Fuller’s comparison of women to slaves further illustrated the inequality of women within American society, though women did not share in the bondage and ownership experience of slaves.

Fuller argued against the notion that political participation would rob woman of those unique characteristics which defined her sex, given that “Woman can express publicly the fullness of thought and creation without losing any of the peculiar beauty of

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 123.

her sex," a sentiment adopted by suffragists.¹⁰⁴ In addition, she wrote that, if given the liberty to choose various endeavors, woman would not "wish to be men or manlike," given the conditioning of her sex.¹⁰⁵ She also argued that women would abandon their homes in favor of political positions would not occur more frequently than women left their homes to attend balls, theaters, revivals, and other socially acceptable activities.¹⁰⁶ Responding to the most prevalent and widespread argument, that men adequality represented women at the polls through the influence of wives, sisters, daughters, and female friends, Fuller said that the majority of men believed "Woman was made *for man*" and with men carrying such sentiments, women would never attain equal representation under the law.¹⁰⁷ Fuller's emphasis on women's political dependence on men indicated one of the many strains between the sexes in the nineteenth century, which in turn influenced suffragists.

Fuller's arguments included an emphasis on the complete intellectual and spiritual development of women as exemplified throughout her text. The crux of her argument rested on the contention that "[w]hat Woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded," which demonstrated the importance of intellectual and spiritual freedom within the patriarchal society.¹⁰⁸ She expanded on this by stating that it is the inherent right of every individual to attain intellectual freedom, as it served as the vehicle for spiritual

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

development, the lynchpin of a healthy society. Fuller stated it best when she wrote that women deserved spiritual and intellectual freedom because her subjugation “has lead to an excessive devotion which has cooled love, degraded marriage, and prevented either sex from being what it should be itself or the other.”¹⁰⁹ This shows the negative implications within important societal institutions such as marriage and sexual relations due to the constraints women faced in the nineteenth century.

In addition to advocating the full intellectual and spiritual development of women, Fuller also outlined her utopian view of American society after women attained full equality. Intellectual freedom would foster full spiritual growth for woman as “her especial genius I believe to be electrical in movement, intuitive in function, spiritual in tendency.”¹¹⁰ Given ample opportunity to develop and harness this spiritual intelligence, man and woman would no longer stand as separate entities within the same social sphere, but as equals. This in turn would engender a more companionable domestic sphere, based on the cooperative exchange of the sexes resulting in an ideal environment. She further claimed that when men and women embraced this ideal, consciousness would awaken to the fruits of a better future and would no longer act as slave to the mistakes of the past.¹¹¹ Most importantly, Fuller encouraged women to live first for God, so they would not sink into idolatry and tarnish the moral fabric of the society they helped build.¹¹² Fuller’s text, therefore, addressed the social conditions

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 216.

evident in women's lives in the nineteenth century and influenced a generation of women's rights activists and suffragists throughout the twentieth century.

Fuller's text directly reflected Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, thus providing a clear depiction of female life in nineteenth century America. Fuller's argument that "women need especially at this juncture a much greater range of occupation than they have, to rouse their latent powers," was clearly reflected in Gilman's piece when the narrator claims that congenial work, excitement and change, would greatly improve her condition, a condition worsened by the advice of her husband to refrain from all intellectual and physical exertions.¹¹³ Intellectual suppression provided the most important link between the two texts, as Gilman's narrator's husband warned her against giving in to her imaginative power and her weakness for stories, as it only worsened her nervous condition.¹¹⁴ This imaginative power alludes to a creative mind, the suppression of which found an outlet through her fascination with the woman behind the yellow wallpaper.

The archetypal marital tension between the husband and wife in Gilman's piece correlated with Fuller's argument for a companionable marriage based on spiritual and intellectual liberty. Gilman's narrator stated that she hesitated in confiding to her husband due to her fear of ridicule and her dread that he would deprive her of the wallpaper in which she found comfort, which clearly denoted an inequality of power in the marriage.¹¹⁵ Gilman's narrator, therefore, fostered Gilman's own outlet for her

¹¹³ Fuller, 215.

¹¹⁴ Gilman, 78.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

immense frustrations through the woman imprisoned behind the yellow wallpaper. Fuller's contention that the plight of women included her need to acquiesce in a life of resignation and consolations, while creating a false cheerful dissimulation of her life mirrored Gilman's text. The narrator stated she had to "take pains to control myself—before him at least and that makes me very tired," and "there comes John, and I must put this away—he hates to have me write a word."¹¹⁶ Unable to portray her true feelings to her husband, and unable to engage in desirable and enjoyable activities, the narrator demonstrated the plight of women as evidenced by Fuller.

Intellectual repression, dominance of one spouse over another, and the subjection of women to a prescribed set of norms detail the environment from which the women's movement of the nineteenth century emerged. Fuller acknowledged the shortcomings of American society regarding female status, and offered her solutions to build an ideal companionable environment. Gilman utilized literature to portray these same limitations on American women, showing the implications of social and intellectual repression through extreme psychological ramifications experienced by the narrator. Exemplified in these two works printed in the nineteenth century, albeit decades apart, Gilman and Fuller demonstrated the initial complaints of early feminists, and the later plight of women under a stifling, male-dominated society in which women found few opportunities for intellectual and political pursuits.

Friedrich Engels and August Bebel also addressed these issues in their writings, which provide a socialist interpretation of the subjugation of women in a capitalist

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

society.¹¹⁷ Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* traced the oppression of women from pre-historic times to the late nineteenth century, arguing that male ownership of private property inevitably led to his domination of the female sex. Bebel's *Woman and Socialism* traced the position of women throughout history and argued that socialism would place her in equal standing with her male counterparts. Both of these texts emphasized the exploitation of women within a capitalistic economy, and its possible eradication through the institution of socialism throughout the world. These texts also addressed the concerns pointed out by Fuller and Gilman, and provided a political solution to these concerns, which invariably influenced women's rights activists and suffragists of the same period.

Engels' text traced the origin of female oppression to man's acquisition of private property and his utilization of slaves to take over the means of production. As a result, the wife became a slave to the household, which also transformed into a private institution.¹¹⁸ In primitive societies, women shared agricultural duties with men, thus engaging in economic production and occupying a position of power and prestige, as evidenced through the ancient Roman and Greek goddesses. Even within the communistic households, society viewed the woman's task of managing the home just as vital as the man's procuring of food.¹¹⁹ As Engels explained, reiterating earlier theories,

¹¹⁷ For more on the subject of Bebel and Engels and their influence on male and female political interaction see Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Avon, 1971).

¹¹⁸ Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 120-121. It should be noted that Engels derived his ideas for this text from Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society: Or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilization* (New York: Holt, 1887).

¹¹⁹ Engels, 92.

this relative freedom and respectability regarding women crumbled with male acquisition of private property.

Another important byproduct of property acquisition included the idea of monogamy. Through this, the man wielded control over the wife sexually in order to control the parentage of his offspring, while he himself engaged in extra-marital affairs.¹²⁰ This notion of monogamy undermined and attempted to eradicate acknowledgement of the existence of sexual intercourse outside of marriage, which commonly occurred in primitive societies.¹²¹ The institution of monogamy resulted in the subjugation of one sex over another, given the expectation of the woman to follow its precepts, but not the man.¹²² Engels defined the three stages of marriage within the context of three stages of human development: “for the period of savagery, group marriage; for barbarism, pairing marriage; for civilization, monogamy supplemented by adultery and prostitution.”¹²³ Thus, according Engels, shifting norms regarding marriage and monogamy resulted in the socioeconomic oppression of women, with women much more rigidly set within these confines than men.

Engels took this one step further by incorporating the Marxian concepts of class oppression within sexual relationships. Engels found that the “first class opposition that appeared in history coincided with the development of antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincided with that of the

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 100.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 138.

female sex by the male.”¹²⁴ The works of Fuller and Gilman showed that men wielded a substantial amount of control over women, whether through prescribed treatments for nervous depression or intellectual and spiritual suppression. Engels also found that marriage based on capitalist interests inevitably became a marriage of convenience, and thus “the crassest prostitution” especially for the woman as she entered a life-long sentence of sexual slave to the man.¹²⁵ The woman acted not only as a sexual slave, but as an economic dependent on the male, and as such became a pseudo-proletariat within her domesticated prison. Engels offered the solution of socialism to this marriage of convenience and sexual oppression of women. Through this, not only would the struggle between proletarian and bourgeois disappear, but the supremacy of man and the indissolubility of monogamy and prostitution would vanish as well.¹²⁶ By equating martial relationships to larger economic trends rooted in exploitation and oppression, Engels thus provided a political solution to the plight of women, a solution that suffragists and women’s rights activists could not ignore.

August Bebel, one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, wrote *Woman Under Socialism* and followed Engels’ trend of portraying the plight of women throughout history. In particular, Bebel addressed the “woman question” setting it within the broader question of how society should abolish oppression, exploitation, misery and need.¹²⁷ Bebel contended that the removal of social extremes and evils which

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹²⁷ August Bebel, *Woman Under Socialism* trans., Daniel De Leon (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 206.

were the result of oppression and exploitation would rectify this situation.¹²⁸ As evidenced in his text, Bebel did not believe that women were inherently domestic or wished to live a life behind the walls of their homes. He refuted the view that woman was any less capable of enjoying “the achievements of civilization, to lighten her burdens, to improve her condition, and to develop all her physical and mental qualities.”¹²⁹ The essence of Bebel’s arguments demonstrated the push for female enfranchisement and civic equality as purported by suffragists and women’s-rights advocates.

Bebel, however, offered a different view on the inner constructs of women’s rights movement advocates by emphasizing the internal class conflict. He claimed that even if bourgeois suffragists attained their goal, they would do nothing to eradicate prostitution, the economic dependence of women on men or the “sex slavery which marriage, in its present form, is to countless numbers of women.”¹³⁰ Bebel also viewed the class divisions within the suffragist movement as bourgeoisie interests over proletariat, given the dominance of middle-class women active within the movement. This text offered an extension to Engels’ thesis on the exploitation of women through private property by extending it within the ranks of the suffragist movement itself.¹³¹

Advocates for women’s rights officially proclaimed their creed for equality through the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, presented at the Seneca Falls

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹³¹ For more on Marx’s and Engel’s view of political democracy, see Richard N. Hunt, *The Political Ideas of Marx and Engels* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984).

Convention held at the Wesleyan Chapel at Seneca Falls, New York on July 19, 1848.¹³²

Modeled closely after the Declaration of Independence, and containing a list of grievances against men, the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions provided a collective voice against the limitations and conditions of women as demonstrated by Margaret Fuller. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and other women's rights activists who drafted this important document the day before the Seneca Falls Convention began, placed the Declaration within larger world events, and reflected the global activism for liberty as demonstrated through the French Revolution and Marx's and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*, published the same year.¹³³

The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments began with a revision of the Declaration of Independence, claiming that "all men and women are created equal," and that women had suffered a long train of injustices by the hands of the government and it was their right and their duty to change such government.¹³⁴ This showed that women activists acknowledged and addressed the exclusion of women politically and socially from many segments of society, and demonstrated their desire to change the institution, through force if necessary. The utilization of the Declaration of Independence provided a solid base of appeal for women rights activists, as the strong sentiments of patriotism and America's disdain of despotism appealed to a large segment of the American population in the mid-nineteenth century.

¹³² Miriam Schneir, ed. *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 76.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹³⁴ "Declaration of Rights and Sentiments" In ed. Miriam Schneir, *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 77-78.

The Declaration continued with a list of grievances including the political, economic, and social discrimination women experienced. Politically, men excluded women from the ballot, forced them to abide by laws propagated within legislative walls where women had no representation, made women “civilly dead” in marriage, and controlled the laws surrounding divorce and guardianship of the child.¹³⁵ Economically, men occupied the vestiges of wealth, leaving women to the lowest ranks of employment. Socially, men occupied the highest echelon above women, and despite their economic or social condition, they were excluded from institutions of higher learning, and from the clergy. In essence, “he has endeavored, in every way he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.”¹³⁶ Seemingly radical, these sentiments nonetheless clearly represented the culmination of decades of repression and subjugation of a large percentage of the American population. Fuller and Gilman’s works also utilized these themes of dependence, intellectual repression and marital dependence.

The Declaration offered a number of resolutions to rectify this situation, which called for an overhaul of the legal and social institutions ingrained in American society. These included the proclamation that holding women inferior to men contradicted the very nature of human existence, and undermined the work of the Creator. The Declaration additionally claimed that women should be given the right to partake in all social and political institutions open to men, including the pulpit, and various professions. In essence, the Declaration argued that women should be at liberty to speak openly and

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

voice their opinion without fear of retribution. Most important to suffragists, the Declaration stated "it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise."¹³⁷ These sentiments and resolutions demonstrated the main precepts of the women's rights movement, which would eventually splinter into two divergent camps following the Civil War.

The abolitionist movement provided an important base for women's movement activities. Advocating the emancipation of slaves on the basis of their natural rights as human beings, women advanced these views for the equality of their sex. Elizabeth Cady Stanton typified these appeals in her address to the New York State Legislature in 1860, where she clearly voiced the sentiments of abolitionists in her appeal for female equality. She fused the discrimination against race with that of sex, claiming that slaves had no name and wielded no economic power, just as women, when married, lost their names and were economically dependent upon their husbands.¹³⁸ She took her argument one step farther when she claimed that "prejudice against sex is more deeply rooted and more unreasonably maintained than that against color" based on the government's willingness to grant suffrage to African Americans.¹³⁹ These sentiments demonstrated the ideological ties of the abolitionist movement to the women's movement, while emphasizing the prominence women placed on their own movement over abolitionism.

This emphasis on the women's movement continued after the Civil War, when activists and woman suffragists ignored the plight of African American women following

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹³⁸ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Address to the New York Legislature, 1860" In ed. Miriam Schneir, *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 118.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Frustrated and disillusioned with inability to vote and the dominant view of women's inferiority to men, women activists returned exclusively to promoting their own cause, often excluding African American women. Abolitionism and women's rights may have found compatibility before governmental legislation entered the historical picture, but clearly this compatibility faded when women realized they were no nearer to obtaining equal standing before the law than in previous decades.

Also during this time, a new generation of suffragists, much more conservative in ideological aspirations, constituted the conservative progressives within the movement. They focused exclusively on the advancement of woman's suffrage. In 1869, they formed the American Woman Suffrage Association to further these goals. Liberal progressives, comprised of advocates of women's rights within the political, economic, and social sphere, remained entrenched in the absolute equality of women within American society, and the same year formed the National Woman Suffrage Association, headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. In their call for immediate woman suffrage, liberal radicals also demanded a number of political changes, including divorce law reforms, and social equality for women.¹⁴⁰ This split within the women's movement resulted from the burgeoning middle class—a result of urbanization—and the desire for the women to be involved in formulating a new ideology in order to attain basic political rights.

The women's rights movement served as an important ideological foundation for the suffragist movement. Social conditions women endured in the nineteenth century

¹⁴⁰ Barbara Deckard, *The Women's Movement: Political, Socioeconomic, and Psychological Issues* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 263.

included complete submission to their husbands, oftentimes with disastrous psychological implications as evidenced in Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Intellectually and creatively stifled and physically restricted, Gilman's narrator found comfort and sanity through the angular, abhorrent yellow wallpaper which metaphorically represented her own psychological imprisonment. This reflected the tendency for women to find comfort and solitude within their confined position, as society offered them no alternative. Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* highlighted the importance of cooperative marriage based on the intellectual and spiritual growth of the female. She argued that the propensity for men to view women as inferior beings sprang from the very obstacles and limitations men set upon themselves and then blamed women. Fuller viewed the greatest strength of women as their inherent spiritual intellect, which, if left unimpeded, would benefit all of society.

Engels and Bebel viewed the oppression of women through the lens of political and economic factors, each splintering the companionable and natural order of sexual relations. Engels emphasized the moral and societal decay as a result of man's acquisition of private property, and the woman's unfortunate place as sexual servant within a monogamous marriage. Engels viewed monogamy in and of itself as exploitation akin to class struggles, as the male wielded his superiority over the female in order to control his offspring and secure his future prosperity. The eradication of this unnatural exploitation could only be found through socialism, which would also eradicate adultery, prostitution, and class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Bebel highlighted these same points, but argued that the class divisions within the suffrage movement itself undermined and limited its goals. Women were inherently equal to men,

yet the bourgeoisie leadership of the suffrage movement ignored the needs of working women in favor of its own. Bebel argued that only through unification of the proletarian women would succeed in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the success of the suffragist movement.

These unvoiced frustrations finally found a voice in the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention through the Declaration of Sentiments and Rights drafted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and other women's rights activists. Molded on of the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of Sentiments and Rights declared women political, social, and economic equals of men, and resolved to promote these interests through legislative and public appeals. The abolition movement preceding the Civil War fueled the women's movement, as both called for the recognition of the value of human beings regardless of race or gender. The ratification of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments fractured the tenuous allegiance forged between African Americans and the white suffragists, and the hindrance of race within a highly prejudiced society could not be ignored.

Woman Suffrage and Marxism

The ratification of the nineteenth amendment in 1920 granted universal suffrage to women across the United States. During the Progressive era, the United States faced immense changes resulting from industrialization and urbanization.¹⁴¹ The emergence of “women’s club movements” in the post-Civil War era allowed women to exact political change through collective efforts regarding such philanthropic objectives as child labor and factory wages.¹⁴² This push towards politics, as well as the post-Civil War emancipation of slaves, fueled female suffrage activities. This culminated into the suffrage movement, which emphasized gender consciousness, the inevitability of social change, political dependence and inequality, and discrimination based solely on gender.¹⁴³ Marx’s and Engels’ *Communist Manifesto* also addressed these themes, albeit in essentially economic sense, and demonstrates the similarity between Marxist and suffragist ideology. Conversely, female suffragists also emphasized female sexual identity and status, themes absent from Marxism.

A multitude of speeches and writings from female activists during this time such as Emma Goldman and Elizabeth Cady Stanton document this struggle. Oftentimes conservative even in their revolutionary struggle for equal suffrage, these women contributed immensely to the political and social shift of women’s place within American society. Women such as Susan B. Anthony, Emma Goldman, and Julia Ward Howe vehemently voiced their radical ideologies for the full emancipation of women. Other

¹⁴¹ Susan Ware, *Modern American Women: A Documentary History* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1997), 4.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 4.

¹⁴³ These themes are addressed in Barbara Deckard, *The Women’s Movement: Political, Socioeconomic, and Psychological Issues* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

women, such as Sarah Winthrop Smith, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Hannah Bailey Johnson, utilized such documents as the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the United States Constitution to argue the inevitability of female suffrage in American society. Differing in tone and context, these women were instrumental in effecting a radical change. The examination of speeches and writings by female suffragists from different parts of the United States demonstrates a correlation with Marxism with regards to class and economic equality, while deviating with regard to sexual identity and status.

The female suffrage movement demonstrated a collective female demand for political equality with regards to voting, the basic right of most American men. *The Communist Manifesto* similarly emphasized the themes of freedom and equality, albeit in economic terms. The realization of these goals, Marx and Engels argued, would inevitably breach the social and political sector, thus installing a utopian society in which humans coexisted free of exploitation and degradation. Suffragists and their supporters argued that it was the basic right of every American citizen to cast a ballot, the implications of which would improve the moral climate of the country and reinforce the very principles on which the founding fathers drafted the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution of 1788. Marxism and suffragists both advocated a cause which would invariably improve the conditions of all citizens, and the realization of human harmony through equality underpinned their ideological arguments. In this way, the two movements share an ideological similarity that is impossible to ignore.

In the mid-1840s, women such as Stanton and Anthony collaborated and called for, and ultimately attained, women's suffrage. The writings of Stanton, Anthony, Catt,

Howe, and Gilman serve as a milestone in American political and social history. Female suffragist ideology, similar to Marxism, appealed for equality for everyone regardless of class or gender.

A myriad of works by female suffragists, as well as *The Communist Manifesto*, demonstrate the similarities and differences of the two ideologies. Published speeches by Susan B. Anthony, Leonora O'Reilly, and Julia Ward Howe also demonstrate these similarities and differences. In addition, essays by Emma Goldman, Alice Stone Blackwell, Hannah Johnson Bailey, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Carrie Chapman Catt contained in published pamphlets provide a basic understanding of female suffragist ideals disseminated to a mass audience.

These sources are useful in explicating the ideology and arguments of the suffrage movement in the early twentieth century. Speeches by Anthony, O'Reilly, and Howe demonstrate the language utilized by female suffragists when addressing a general audience. Suffrage essays and published pamphlets provide ample opportunity to compare and contrast the language in comparison to that of Marx and Engels. The suffrage writings also demonstrate an emphasis on class equality and female sexual identity.

These published speeches, essays and pamphlets offer a broad overview of female suffragist ideology with regard tone and language implemented by suffragists to appeal to the public. Printed speeches and essays strongly emphasized political equality and called for the continuation of the status quo regarding the conventional female role in society as proprietor of the home and family when arguing for female suffrage. Female suffragists also employed the Preamble to the Constitution as well as sections of the Declaration of

Independence to demonstrate the political equality of American women. The emphasis on equality within in the political realm serves as an important link to Marxism, even though the latter places greater emphasis on economic equality.

Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* serves as the basis for examination of these ideological trends. Their emphasis on the economic equality of workers paralleled with political equality served as a similar goal for female suffragists. Radical and revolutionary, Marx called for an end to nationality, family, and cultural identity, and urged workers to unite through mass collectivization in order to form their own class. Female suffragists also emphasized female consciousness in their call for a united female front to battle political inequality.

The struggle for female suffrage began in 1848 and lasted until 1920.¹⁴⁴ The Seneca Falls Convention, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, made a controversial call for the right of women to vote in the Declaration of Sentiments.¹⁴⁵ In 1869, female suffragists split into two camps, conservative progressives and liberal radicals due to the political rights granted to African Americans. Conservative progressives emphasized political equality only in their arguments for female suffrage, while advocates of the Women's Movement swelled the ranks of the liberal radicals and argued for complete gender equality. In 1870, the Federal Government passed the fifteenth amendment, granting male citizens the right to vote despite race or past status as slaves.¹⁴⁶ This highlighted the continued exclusion of women from the ballot and by

¹⁴⁴ Kathryn Cullen-Dupont, ed., *American Women Activists' Writings: An Anthology, 1637-2002* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), xvi.

¹⁴⁵ Susan Ware, *Modern American Women: A Documentary History* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1997), 113.

¹⁴⁶ Deckard, 262.

1890, the National American Woman Suffrage Association emerged.¹⁴⁷ Liberal radical suffragists dominated the public scene during this transitional period, as the movement focused on a revitalization of female rights and awareness, as well as a radical call for overstepping the normative bounds of feminine duties and status. As the eighteenth century closed, however, public disapproval of women's rights arguments and the suffragists assumed a decidedly more conservative progressive tendency, which advocated suffrage over women's rights. This is demonstrated by the fact that suffragists focused exclusively on the right to vote and largely ignored proposing social and economic equality. This attitude shifted due to the conservatism of the American public and the belief that female suffrage would disrupt the normative role of women in society.

Female suffragist literature inextricably altered in tone and language as the movement progressed and transformed throughout the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period, female activism reached a new high, coinciding with a sharp decline in public perception of the radicalism of the movement.¹⁴⁸ The public no longer perceived female enfranchisement as stepping outside the prescribed bounds of femininity, but as an extension of this role.¹⁴⁹ Feminist literature during this period demonstrated these changes, as well as the underlying emphasis on gender consciousness and equality akin to Marx's call for class consciousness. The integration of Marxist ideology with that of female suffragists demonstrated the importance and influence of political schools of thought outside the United States in this struggle for enfranchisement.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

The ratification of the nineteenth amendment demonstrated the successes of these female activists, as well as the importance of political shifts in America during the latter part of the Progressive era.

Two prominent themes in the *Communist Manifesto* include class consciousness and economic equality attained through the collectivization of the working class. Marx's and Engels' work provided a radical alternative to capitalism which sprang from the advent of industrialization and urbanization throughout Europe in the late 1840s. Their assessment of capital as a "social power"¹⁵⁰ set in motion only by "the united action of all members of society"¹⁵¹ demonstrated their emphasis on the importance of power through collectivization. They viewed the dominance of the bourgeoisie, or the capitalists of production, over the proletariat as exemplary of the exploitation of one class by another. This trend reoccurred as "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."¹⁵² They called for the working class, or proletarians, to unify as "united action is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat."¹⁵³ Perhaps more directly, they spelled out the precepts of the Communist party as the "formation of the proletarians into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat"¹⁵⁴ Therefore, Marx and Engels suggested that the oppression of the proletariat class would end only through the collective unification of the proletariat, and the consequent overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

¹⁵⁰ Marx and Engels. 21.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

Leading female suffragists in the early twentieth century likewise emphasized the themes of political equality and gender-based consciousness. While the form-of-consciousness, which was the implementation of social and political sentiments suffragists used to convince women to join their cause, suffragists advocated differed from Marxism's emphasis on class, both appealed to a set group of individuals occupying a specific strata in society. Women such as Susan B. Anthony and Emma Goldman forthrightly called for female unification, or female consciousness based on gender, to attain suffrage. Other women, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sarah Winthrop Smith, and Hannah Johnson Bailey, were less radical than Marx and Engels, as evidenced by their emphasis on the natural right of women to vote. While none of these women advocated the formation of a new class within American society, they were revolutionary in advocating an active, collective female presence in American society present in the electorate process.

Similar to Marx's and Engels' forthright call for class consciousness, Emma Goldman, an anarchist who influenced the development of the movement in the United States, emphasized the power of female common action to gain freedom through suffrage. She stated, "history tells us that every oppressed class gained true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is necessary that woman learn that lesson, that she realize that her freedom will reach as far as her power to achieve her freedom reaches."¹⁵⁵ Goldman's emphasis on female freedom through her own actions of social and political action, as well as mental freedom, mirrored Marx's and Engels' claim, "the

¹⁵⁵ Emma Goldman, "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" In ed. Alix Kates Shulman, *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches by Emma Goldman* (New York: Random House, 1972), 142.

proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore, Goldman, Marx and Engels emphasized the power inherent in both groups to improve their social condition.

In addition, Susan B. Anthony argued for the unification of women in her plea for equality. “For, however destructive to their happiness this government might become, a disfranchised class could neither alter nor abolish it, nor institute a new one, except by the old brute force method of insurrection and rebellion.”¹⁵⁷ Not explicit in her call for rebellion, this statement reflects the implicit nature of her advocacy for female revolt as this group was the disfranchised class seeking to institute a female suffrage revolution. This correlated with Marx’s and Engels’ call for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, though Anthony does not view class in the strict economic terms as Marx and Engels.

Julia Ward Howe, an abolitionist, social activist and writer, also utilized the theme of gender-based consciousness, stating that “a reform which implies a revolution is first seen to be just. It is then seen to be possible. Last of all, it is seen to be providential.”¹⁵⁸ This demonstrated Howe’s belief in the validity and importance in woman suffrage through revolution, and implied the collective actions of females across the United States. Her stance correlated with Marx and Engels on the importance and urgency of class consciousness to implement a revolution. Howe, Marx and Engels advocated the improvement of one group, or class, of individuals through revolution.

¹⁵⁶ Engels and Marx. 18

¹⁵⁷ Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *History of Woman Suffrage. Vol. 2*, 1882. 630-646: Reprinted in ed. Kathryn Cullen-Dupont, *American Women Activists’ Writings: An Anthology, 1637-2002* (New York: Cooper Square Press. 2002), 167.

¹⁵⁸ Julia Ward Howe “On Suffrage” In *Woman Suffrage: Arguments and Results, 1910-1911* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 3.

The call for the female unification from other prominent women to exact change differs from Marx and Engels with regard to language and tone. Sara Winthrop Smith stated, “women were human beings long before the organization of any State and their rights as human beings were inherent in the Declaration of Independence, The Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution as were the same rights of men.”¹⁵⁹ Smith’s argument lacked a direct call for revolution or female collectivization. Instead, she appealed to the precedence of natural rights guaranteed to all citizens of the United States in these documents, with a sharp emphasis on the exclusion of women.

Likewise, Elizabeth Cady Stanton made a similar appeal when she stated, “the right of suffrage is simply the right to govern one’s self, to protect one’s person and property by law.”¹⁶⁰ Stanton’s appeal demonstrated the right of women to govern themselves, and voting as an extension of that right. Deviating from Anthony, Goldman, and Howe, Stanton’s argument lacked reference to the collectivization of women to attain suffrage. What is radical, when closely examined, was Stanton’s argument that women have the right to protect their bodies and property, both considered extensions, if not property, of the husband during the early twentieth century.

Hannah Johnson Bailey, a suffragist who wrote primarily in New York, succinctly stated, “Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. Women are governed. ‘Taxation without representation is tyranny.’ Women are taxed.”¹⁶¹ This reflects Smith’s and Stanton’s more muted appeals to the natural

¹⁵⁹ Sara Winthrop Smith, *Suffrage a Right of Citizenship* (Seymore, CN: Connecticut National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1892), 3.

¹⁶⁰ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Suffrage a Natural Right” In *Open Court* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1894), 2.

rights guaranteed to women through precedence. Unlike Marx and Engels, who utilized such phrases as “brutal exploitation” and “slaves of the bourgeois class,” Smith, Stanton and Bailey called upon the sentimentalities of patriotism through well-known and revered American documents to universally appeal to women.¹⁶² This approach lacked the radicalism of Marxism and female activists such as Emma Goldman, and therefore appealed to a broader base of conservative men and women. This wide base of support gave the suffrage movement the momentum it needed to ultimately succeed.

The inevitability of social change is another theme prevalent in Marxist and female suffragist literature. Marx and Engels contended that the fall of the bourgeoisie was natural and inevitable given the measures that this group undertook to dominate the workers, which included oppression, enslavement, and subordination.¹⁶³ They also called for the emancipation of the proletariat from economic dependence on the bourgeoisie, the class which burdened the proletariat with labor, poverty, and destitution. Females also bore a similar burden through their economic and political dependence on men in a society that did not grant women the right to vote.

The theme of state was evident in Alice Stone Blackwell, daughter of women’s rights activists Lucy Stone and Henry Brown Blackwell, argued “it is fair and right that the people who must obey the laws should have a choice in choosing the lawmakers,”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Hannah Johnson Bailey, “Annual Address of the President of the Maine Woman’s Suffrage Association” In *Woman Suffrage: Arguments and Results* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 14.

¹⁶² Marx and Engels, 14

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Alice Stone Blackwell, “Why Should Women Vote?” In *Woman Suffrage Arguments and Results: 1910-1911* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 1.

which emphasizes the natural, and consequently inevitable, right for women to actively participate in government. Female citizenry who had no voice in legislation demonstrated the struggle between the disenfranchised and the lawmakers. Lillie Devereux Blake, a liberal radical suffragist and writer, also argued the injustice of excluding women from the ballot because “they are treated in all other public matters like men and are forced to bear all the burdens of citizenship, without its privileges.”¹⁶⁵ Blake’s argument alludes to the inevitability of female suffrage as men and women equally bear the burden of citizenship. Carrie Chapman Catt, leader of the American Woman Suffrage Association for two terms, provided a direct argument when she stated, “the suffrage for women already in the United States makes woman suffrage for the nation inevitable.”¹⁶⁶ The precedent of female suffrage in such states as Wyoming provided the basis of her argument, as precedence is linked to progression.

Economic dependence and inequality was another theme prevalent in Marxist and female suffragist literature. Marx and Engels claimed the proletariat served as “slave” to the machinery of the bourgeoisie, and called for the abolition of private property from ownership of the few, to ownership of the many.¹⁶⁷ In addition, a graduated income tax and “equal liability to all labor” would ensure economic equality in the ideal communist state.¹⁶⁸ Marxism’s call for equal liability would ensure economic equality to everyone, regardless of class. With regard to women, Marx and Engels stated, “differences of age

¹⁶⁵ Lillie Devereux Blake, “Woman Suffrage: An Argument in Favor of It” In ed. Janet Beer *American Feminism: Key Source Documents 1848-1920* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 243.

¹⁶⁶ Carrie Chapman Catt, “An Address to the Legislatures of the United States” In ed. Janet Beer, *American Feminism: Key Source Documents 1848-1920* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 435.

¹⁶⁷ Engels and Marx, 23.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

exchange for subsistence.¹⁷¹ She further claimed that “the economic dependence of women has kept them back from their share in human progress.”¹⁷² This directly reflected Marx’s and Engels’ contention that the abolition of a bourgeois society would foster a society in which “the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all.”¹⁷³ Both stress the hindrance of progress due to the existing societal conditions that resulted in the dependence of one group on another, which not only stifled individuals, but society as a whole. Gilman argued the implications of this economic dependence included the propensity to make women pathetically ignorant and ineffective in carrying out their domestic duties.¹⁷⁴ Likewise, the *Manifesto* claimed that the dependence of the proletariat upon wage labor, the product of a bourgeois society, reduced the worker’s act of labor to a commodity exploited by the capitalists in order to increase their own wealth.¹⁷⁵ Both stress the loss of independence and the ineffectual byproducts of this economic dependence, which invariably spread to the social sector as well. The worker wielded no individual economic control, just as the woman wielded no social and psychological control.

The realization of the desired equilibrium argued by Gilman placed great stress on human psychological and social freedom. Gilman argued that “[w]hen women stand free as economic agents, they will lift and free their arrested functions, to the much better

¹⁷¹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 65.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 241.

¹⁷³ Marx and Engels, 28.

¹⁷⁴ Gilman, 247.

¹⁷⁵ Marx and Engels, 13.

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¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 241.

¹⁷³ Marx and Engels, 28.

¹⁷⁴ Gilman, 247.

¹⁷⁵ Marx and Engels, 13.

fulfillment of their duties as wives and mothers and to the vast improvement in health and happiness to the human race.”¹⁷⁶ This clearly demonstrated the emphasis American society placed on motherhood at the time, and stresses woman’s role as the safeguard of the human race within her domestic sphere of influence. In addition, Gilman stressed importance of the highest development of personality within the home, which would inevitably create a harmonious society.¹⁷⁷ It is evident Gilman believed that the psychological of women served as an important link to the welfare to humanity as a whole. Marx and Engels wrote before the ideas of Sigmund Freud explicated psychological welfare, and thus they failed to address the psychological welfare of the workers. They alluded to it, however, in their argument that restructuring society through the overthrow of the bourgeoisie would provide progress for all, implying more than economic and political freedoms. Once the proletariat destroyed the veritable chains of the industrial sector, and wielded independent economic control, the improvement of its economic condition would inextricably improve socially, physically, and psychologically. In essence, both Gilman and the *Manifesto* argue for the liberation of a suppressed group for the betterment of humanity and society as a whole.

Lucretia Mott, a Quaker minister and abolitionist, reflected Gilman’s emphasis on psychological welfare as benefiting all of society in her address to the American Equal Rights Association in New York in 1867. Her argument that women were already independent within the household does not undermine her notion that marriage “crushed woman; the Church, supporting the law, had assumed that the Bible forbade woman from

¹⁷⁶ Gilman, 241.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 260.

using her rights.”¹⁷⁸ In this argument, Mott expressed the limitations placed on women by society, especially by the religious realm and its prescriptions on the sanctity of marriage. To rectify this dependence wrought by marriage, Mott argued that women should be “properly educated physically, intellectually and morally properly developed; and then, in the marriage relation, in spite of the laws and customs and religious errors, the independence of the husband and wife will be equal.”¹⁷⁹ This demonstrates Mott believed that society would improve with the psychological development of the woman within the home.

Elizabeth Sheldon Tillinghast, a suffragist from Connecticut, like Lucretia Mott, argued that the dependence of the state on the “physical, mental, [and] moral”¹⁸⁰ health of its inhabitants, especially women was essential. She called for the enfranchisement of women, not only to improve their economic status, but the economic status of the state as a whole. As with Marx, Engels and Gilman, Tillinghast emphasized the implications of the dependent, or disenfranchised, on the well-being of the nation.

Oppression was another theme in Marxist and feminist literature. Marx and Engels declared the past “of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle [between] oppressor and oppressed.”¹⁸¹ They argued furthermore that political power was a method of oppression, as it “is organized power of one class for oppressing the

¹⁷⁸Lucretia Mott, “The Argument That Women Do Not Want to Vote” In ed. Dana Green, *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons* (New York: The Edward Mellen Press, 1980), 287.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 289-290.

¹⁸⁰ Elizabeth Sheldon Tillinghast, “The Economic Basis of Woman Suffrage” In ed. Janet Beard, *American Feminism: Key Source Documents 1848-1920* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 137.

¹⁸¹ Engels and Marx, 7.

other.”¹⁸² Suffragists also addressed the notion of oppression in their speeches and writings. Markedly more conservative in tone and language than Marx and Engels, these women were forceful in their opposition to female oppression because of government and religious institutions.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton alluded to women’s oppression through her proclamation, “Here comes the great enemy of individual freedom: ‘the love of domination’ which prevents the harmonious development of the oppressor as well as the oppressed.”¹⁸³ Her use of the phrase “individual freedom” alludes to the subjugation of women through disenfranchisement, which upset the balance between men and women. She denied the complacency of women by stating that women do not enjoy domination through oppression. Her use of the term “domination” demonstrated the oppression faced by women, and her allusion to “love of domination” as the great enemy to individual freedom referred to female discontent with her oppression within society. Stanton’s argument was a stark contrast to Marx and Engels, who argued for the replacement of the oppressing class with the oppressed. This was shown by their statement, “Let the ruling classes tremble at the Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!”¹⁸⁴ Marx and Engels’ use of the term “chains” demonstrates the oppression of the proletariat as being weighed down physically within society. Their call for the working class to unite is a radical departure from Stanton’s arguments.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁸³ Stanton, 7.

¹⁸⁴ Engels and Marx, 41.

Hannah Johnson Bailey in her annual address as the president of the Maine Woman's Suffrage Association utilized much more forceful language regarding female oppression. She stated, "The gospel dispensation restores to woman all she lost in the fall. She was to be the help-mate, not the servant of man. Equal, not the subordinate. The mother not the slave."¹⁸⁵ Bailey appealed to the Christian sentiments of her listeners and declared woman the slave of man. Carrie Chapman Catt also identified this oppression, when she claimed, "It is no more right for men to govern women than it was for one man to govern other men."¹⁸⁶ Her emphasis on men oppressing other men appeals to the logic of freedom and liberty and adds validity to her argument against the oppression of women by men.

In contrast to Stanton, Bailey, and Catt, Emma Goldman declared women enslaved not by men but "by [their] own silly notions and to tradition."¹⁸⁷ Goldman refuted the claim of female virtue as the savior of society, and argued that true female autonomy came from the efforts of the individual.¹⁸⁸ Her argument correlated with Marxist ideology through her denunciation of societal traditions that oppressed women. Marx and Engels did not advocate the preservation of traditional mores or practices in their manifesto, nor did they advocate stagnation to effect change. The *Manifesto* advocated an extreme, if not violent, shift in society, a sentiment reflected in Goldman's

¹⁸⁵ Bailey, 9.

¹⁸⁶ Carrie Chapman Catt, *President's annual address before the 34th annual convention of the National-American woman-suffrage Association and the First international woman-suffrage conference* (Washington DC: Hayworth publishing house, 1902), 12.

¹⁸⁷ Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 3rd ed. (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1917), 214.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 217.

argument of internal enslavement. She claimed the only way to break free from oppression was through a radical shift in internal thought and belief, a parallel to the Marxist call for revolution. Marx's and Engels' contention that "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains,"¹⁸⁹ parallels Goldman's call for women to liberate themselves from their internal limitations, in effect their own personal chains, in order to attain their full potential in society.

Female sexual identity and status within American society serve as the major divergence from Marxist ideology. Rarely advocating a divergence from traditional female roles in the twentieth century, female suffragists emphasized femininity and woman as the savior of society. Marx and Engels portray women solely as members of the exploited working class. Suffragist literature did not utilize this theme of exploitation to appeal to women on the basis of the virtues of womanhood.

The majority of female suffragists did not challenge the role of women as protector of the home and family. During her speech before the New England Woman Suffrage Association, Julia Ward Howe proclaimed, "we who are gathered here are not a frantic, shrieking mob. We are not condemners of marriage, nor neglecters of home and offspring."¹⁹⁰ This statement by a notable female suffragist reassured men and women that suffragists did not advocate a radical alteration of feminine duty within American society. Howe further contended, "It has been shown that women can be both wise and womanly; can speak in public without sacrificing her dignity; can be graduated from a

¹⁸⁹ Engels and Marx, 41.

¹⁹⁰ Howe, 2.

co-educational institution without becoming masculine.”¹⁹¹ She was careful to reassure the public that women supporting female suffrage did not compromise their docile nature or rob society of their femininity, thus illustrating the conservatism evident in her arguments for suffrage. This conservatism ultimately reflected the attitude of American society, as well as the attitude of suffragists regarding their own cause.

In addition, Carrie Chapman Catt upheld woman’s traditional role by exalting her superior morality. She argued, “extending the suffrage to women increases the moral vote,” due to the fact that women comprise the majority of “all organizations working for the uplift of humanity.”¹⁹² Catt’s emphasis on female morality reassured the public that female piety and submissiveness would not be lost when enfranchised. Likewise, Frances Maule Bjorkman’s arguments relied heavily on the domestic sphere. She claimed that women wanted the vote in order to feed, clothe, house, and provide proper education and morals to their children, as well as abolish such practices as child labor and white slavery.¹⁹³ Like Catt and Howe, Bjorkman did not compromise the traditional female role in American society through her emphasis on a moral basis for female suffrage.

Hannah Johnson Bailey and Lillie Devereux Blake also supported the notion of female morality, and subsequently her traditional sexual status in society. Bailey claimed that suffrage would “increase the womanliness and womanly influence of women For

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹² Carrie Chapman Catt, “Did You Know?” In *Woman Suffrage Arguments and Results: 1910-1911* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 8-9.

¹⁹³ Frances Maule Bjorkman, “Why Women Want to Vote” In *Woman Suffrage Arguments and Results* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 1-12.

no influence is greater than a mother's if wisely guided."¹⁹⁴ She argued not only that the right of women to vote would improve society, but also claimed the superior influence of women in politics. Blake was equally reassuring when she argued, "women will forever be good wives, fond mothers, loving their homes, constant to their duties."¹⁹⁵ Her reassurance of the sanctity and status quo of woman's proper place revealed the conservatism of female suffragists.

Demonstrative of this conservatism was the emphasis on female sexual identity by many suffragists. Hannah Johnson Bailey asserted that political participation, "cannot rob a woman of any of the charms of womanhood but will add to them."¹⁹⁶ Comparable to her reassurance of female sexual status, this statement revealed the safety of traditional female sexuality accompanying enfranchisement. Alice Stone Blackwell offered an equally conservative argument for female sexual identity when she stated, "What gives a woman influence? Beauty, goodness, tact, talent, pleasant manners, money, social position, etc. A woman who has any of these means of influence now would still have them if she had a vote."¹⁹⁷ Her emphasis on these external attributes provided the basis for Blackwell's defense against the argument that suffrage degraded these distinctly female attributes. When she argued beauty, goodness, tact, and talent would not be lost if woman was given the right to vote, she upheld those traits demonstrative of female

¹⁹⁴ Bailey, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Blake, 1.

¹⁹⁶ Bailey, 6.

¹⁹⁷ Alice Stone Blackwell, "Why Should Women Vote?" In *Woman Suffrage Arguments and Results: 1910-1911* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 12.

sexual identity. These notions of femininity undermined the female fight for true equality, as she would still be relegated to a class below men based on her gender.

The Communist Manifesto addressed women strictly within the economic sector, which served as a marked difference between Marxism and female suffragist ideology. The bourgeoisie, they argued, treated their wives as “instruments of production,” as “the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.”¹⁹⁸ Therefore, Marx and Engels viewed the plight of women as akin to that of the proletariat. The issue of gender presented the propensity for women to endure sexual exploitation through prostitution and infidelity. Communism, Marx and Engels claimed, would eradicate the false construct of infidelity as defined by the Bourgeoisie and allow men and women to freely share relations.¹⁹⁹ In addition, it would not only eradicate public prostitution, but the private prostitution women endured as mistresses during infidelity.

In conclusion, there are more similarities than differences between Marxism and female suffrage ideology as evidenced through the emphasis on consciousness born out of class and gender and thus directed to a specific group, the inevitability of social change, political dependence and inequality, and oppression. Marx and Engels argued that the restructuring of society for the improvement of the oppressed could be attained through the conscious and revolutionary actions of that group. Their argument claimed that the oppressed did not know their plight, but the collective efforts of the few could arouse the awareness of the many.

The argument of consciousness appeared in the appeals of female suffragists, though defined as gender rather than class. Emma Goldman typified it through her

¹⁹⁸ Engels and Marx, 25.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

emphasis on female freedom through individual efforts, which could arouse the attention of other women. Susan B. Anthony made a revolutionary call for insurrection and rebellion in order to ensure democracy and an equal voice for all women. Likewise, Julia Ward Howe stated, "A reform which implies a revolution is first seen to be just. It is then seen to be possible. Last of all it is seen to be providential,"²⁰⁰ which demonstrates her support for reform through revolution which alludes to the collective realization of female oppression within American politics. Diverging from this force of tone, other women such as Sarah Winthrop Smith, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Hannah Bailey Johnson appealed to the sensibilities of women through their emphasis on such documents as the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution. Patrick Henry's famous words, "Taxation without representation is tyranny," proved an effective, and much more accessible appeal to the oppression of women through disenfranchisement.

The inevitability of social change also served as a valid argument for woman suffrage. Marx and Engels claimed social change was a natural course in the development of a society, just as female suffragists alluded to the inevitability of the female vote due to political precedence. Alice Stone Blackwell illustrated the inability of women to choose lawmakers, while Lillie Devereux Blake argued that women wanted to share the equal burden of citizenship with men. Carrie Chapman Catt pointed out the presence of female suffrage already instituted within the United States and made no allusions to the inevitability of universal female suffrage. The emphasis on precedents by these women demonstrates their reliance on the past to effect change in the future.

²⁰⁰ Howe, 3.

Marx, Engels and female suffragists both argued against political dependence and inequality within a highly segregated society. Marx and Engels argued for the rights of the working class, while women argued for the rights of their sex. Lorena O'Reilly, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Elizabeth Sheldon Tillinghast all emphasized the necessity of female suffrage in order to alleviate the economic plight of the working class. O'Reilly called upon her own experiences as a low-wage laborer in her address to the Joint Senate Committee in 1912 when she explained the low pay comparable to the long hours women labored.²⁰¹ Gilman illustrated women's economic dependence on men, and the need for their independence for the good of society. Mott also argued for female independence within marriage, which inevitably stemmed from the political sector of suffrage and Tillinghast called for female suffrage in order to cure the ills of society.

Oppression also served an important similarity between Marxism and female suffragist ideology. Marx and Engels' denouncement of the oppression forced on the proletariat by the bourgeoisie reflected the arguments of suffragists against governmental, or male, oppression. Elizabeth Cady Stanton refuted female complacency towards domination by exposing a social system that mutes women's interests in their government. Hannah Johnson Bailey utilized language comparable to Marx's and Engels' when she claimed that women were, "equal, not the subordinate [of men]. Mother not the slave."²⁰² Her utilization of the words slave and subordinate reflects Marx and Engels when they stated, "Not only are they [the proletariat] slaves of the bourgeois

²⁰¹ O'Reilly, 126.

²⁰² Bailey, 9

class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine.”²⁰³

Carrie Chapman Catt, stated, “It is not more right for men to govern women than it was for one man to govern other men,”²⁰⁴ and thus denounced male oppression of females through her denunciation of male oppression against male. Emma Goldman, the most radical in her call for female equality stated, “It is necessary that woman realize that her freedom will reach as far as her power to achieve her freedom reaches,”²⁰⁵ and thus condemned women as slaves of themselves and claimed their only means of liberation was to abolish societal norms and traditions regarding her place in society.

Marxist ideology and female suffrage arguments diverge acutely regarding female sexual status and identity within society. In fact, mention of woman’s status and sexual identity are largely absent from Marxism. This is in part due to Marx’s and Engels’ emphasis on the working class, and not on the equality of a specific gender. In addition, gender played no role in socialism, as Marx and Engels did not need the unnecessary radicalism of a female revolution as well as a workers’ revolution. The reassurance by the less radical female suffragists of the preservation of women’s role as protector of the home and family demonstrated the conservatism of not only American society, but of the female suffragists themselves.

Women such as Carrie Chapman Catt, Frances Maule Bjorkman, and Julia Ward Howe reassured their constituency that female suffrage did not mean the destruction or disruption of traditional female roles in society. Howe promised female suffragists had

²⁰³ Engels and Marx, 14.

²⁰⁴ Catt, 12.

²⁰⁵ Emma Goldman, “The Tragedy of Woman’s Emancipation” In ed. Alix Kates Shulman, *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches by Emma Goldman* (New York: Random House, 1972), 142.

no intention of abandoning marriage, child rearing, or the home. Catt reassured the public of the sanctity of woman's place, arguing her morality, not her mind, would be her greatest strength at the polls. Bjorkman's arguments for female suffrage centered on female duties within the home, arguing that with suffrage women would be better able to service the home and her children. Hannah Johnson Bailey and Lillie Devereux Blake also emphasized the morality of woman over her independence, as well as her continued duties to her family when she attained suffrage.

Coinciding with the preservation of female sexual status was the emphasis on female sexual identity. This theme is absent from Marxism, and further illustrates the conservatism of female suffrage arguments. Hannah J. Bailey and Alice Stone Blackwell offered reassurance to their constituents that female suffrage did not mean an end to femininity. Woman's docile place would not be comprised if she were given the right to vote. Their claims demonstrated that the conservative values of American society, as well as female suffragists themselves.

The similarities and differences between Marxism and female suffrage thought demonstrate not only the conservatism of American attitudes towards female suffrage, but the conservatism of American society towards Marxism. The relative absence of gender equality in Marxism reveals the revolutionary stance of female suffrage, a stance that even later suffragists did not adopt out of fear of failure to attain the ballot. Leading female suffragists demonstrate a strong correlation to Marxist thought, but their conservatism regarding language and thematic issues such as female sexual identity and status demonstrate America's, and indeed their own, unwillingness to embrace true

freedom and equality of the sexes politically, socially, and economically, the implications of which are still evident today.

Conclusion

Industrialization provided the necessary basis for the emergence of class inequality and oppression through the restructuring of society based on mechanized production. The bourgeoisie, or capitalists, rose to replace the landed aristocracy who dominated the political structure of European and American society in the mid nineteenth century, while workers to the industrial machine toiled away in the newly established factories, mills, and mines. The interdependence and homogenization of world nations through improved technology and communication further solidified the position of the bourgeoisie at the top echelon of society and kept the laborers relegated to society's lower rung. This rigidity regarding class structure kept the workers in jobs that paid little and promised little beyond physical exhaustion and injury, barely allowing the working class to earn a living outside of subsistence levels. In contrast, the bourgeoisie, however, lived off of this labor and acquired a standard of living that exceeded comfort and necessity. This inconsistency in the quality of life inevitably led men such as Marx and Engels to search for a solution to this unequal exploitation through an ideological foundation, one they based on socialism. These principles inevitably appealed and spread among the working class as they emphasized the right of equality and liberty for all individuals.

Marx and Engels typified this conflict in the *Communist Manifesto*, implicating the bourgeoisie in fostering exploitation that bordered on slavery and oppression. Additionally, they argued that capitalism robbed the family of its traditional communal construct in which the members act on behalf of the whole rather than the individual necessity. They called for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system

through the radicalization and revolution of the proletariat, thus reinstating equality and intellectual freedom to all members of society. Marx and Engels further called for the abolition of private property as a means of economic advantage by the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. The goals of these actions included the nationalization of banks, free education for all citizens, and a graduated income tax in order to restore economic equilibrium.

Seemingly economic in tone, Marxism espoused political revolution as well as economic, and as such, also called for an overhaul of the social aspects given the inextricable link between political and social institutions. Politics inevitably filters into the social realm because it is created and maintained in response to these institutions and fluctuate according to the demands of the most influential members of society. In Marx's day, he viewed the bourgeoisie as the group with the most influence, able to ensure that society functioned according to their interests. This same theme occurred in the women's movement and woman suffrage, as these movements fought against a patriarchal-dominated society where their need for intellectual and social freedom remained stifled.

These ideals appealed to Europeans and Americans alike, as evidenced in the novels of Émile Zola and Upton Sinclair, who focused on the economic and social exploitations of the working class. Zola's novel *Germinal* detailed the struggles of Étienne Lantier's labor in the mining industry of Montsou, France, while Sinclair's work, *The Jungle*, followed a Lithuanian immigrant family who settled in the area of Chicago known as Packingtown, metaphorically representing the evils of capitalism through political corruption and the distribution of rotten meat to an unsuspecting public. Both authors emphasized worker exploitation and the hardships within a capitalistic society.

Zola does not paint socialism as the panacea for these ills as does Sinclair. The appeal of socialism, however, in both texts demonstrates the appeal of this ideology to oppressed workers spanning the Atlantic Ocean. Unlike socialism, however, the appeal of woman suffrage across socio-economic lines in the United States demonstrates the universality of this cause different from that of socialism, given its propensity to appeal only to the working class.

In short, socialism proved a multi-faceted ideology, not confined to a strictly economic, political, or social construct. It was an outlet for the frustrations of the exploited working class, a platform to pronounce all utopian visions of egalitarianism and liberty within a highly class segregated society. Dividing into different camps as ideological systems often do, socialism at its core remained a utopian vision of the future, a vision which appealed and influenced various movements which called for equality, including woman suffrage. Marxism was one such branch of socialism, refined and tweaked by Marx and Engels in an effort to create a more scientific vision of socialism. Marxian socialism's emphasis on class consciousness and the inevitability of change provided a strong rallying point for reformers in order to gain membership and build comradeship. Collectivization brought together scores of individuals who collaborated and produced some of the most important documents in American history, such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Julia Ward Howe and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The inevitability of change provided hope, the foundation of any struggling group against a seemingly impenetrable system, and allowed the cause to survive through generations of defeat.

The women's rights movement not only demonstrated these socialist influences, but also provided a key ideological foundation for the suffragist movement. Women in the nineteenth century remained submissive to their husbands and other important male figureheads, such as the clergy, often with disastrous psychological implications as evidenced in Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Intellectually and creatively stifled and physically restricted, women found comfort and solitude in any way they could within this confinement, as society offered them no alternative. Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* highlighted the propensity for men to view women as inferior beings and argued that a woman's greatest strength was her inherent spiritual intellect, which, as evidenced in Gilman's writing, remained stifled and unbidden.

Engels and Bebel provided a political and economic analysis of the oppression of women, both of which inextricably altered sex relations and woman's place in society. Engels argued that man's acquisition of private property led to moral and societal decay, including the economic exploitation of women as laborers and prostitutes within marriage. He also believed monogamy represented exploitation akin to class struggles, as the male wielded unlimited and unquestioned supremacy and control over the female. The eradication of this unnatural exploitation could only be found through socialism, which would also eradicate adultery, prostitution, and class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Bebel also argued that these points, but claimed the bourgeois leadership of the suffrage movement ignored the appeals working women in favor of advancing their own needs first. Again, this mirrors the socialist call for collectivization in order to exact change, as Bebel viewed the combining of proletariat women with the bourgeoisie would win the suffrage battle.

These unvoiced and bidden frustrations found a voice in the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention through the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, which declared women politically, socially, and economically equal to men, and resolved to petition these appeals through the legislature and to the public. The abolition movement also served as an important catalyst to the women's movement, as it appealed for human equality regardless of race. Working together, African American and white women formed a union which promoted this demand for equality which culminated in the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. This legislation, rather than unifying the women, fractured their collective allegiance, thus causing a permanent strain between African American and white suffragists.

Industrialization thus affected the women's movement through its creation of a new working class, comprised of women as well as men, and the emergence of the bourgeoisie allowed women more leisure time and the ability to spend their newly acquired money on such social ventures as suffrage. As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, and a new generation of feminists replaced the old, conservatism replaced the call for complete social and civic equality with electoral rights of women. This split into Conservative Progressives and Liberal Radicals influenced by Marxian socialism, influenced the experience of the nineteenth century woman in search for emancipation from her socially relegated sphere.

Where socialism provided the foundation for the women's rights activists, their activities provided the necessary means for the emergence of the woman suffrage movement. The writings of suffragists demonstrate the influences of Marxism and the similarities between the two ideologies. This is evident through the emphasis on

consciousness directed to a specific group, economically centered in Marxist writing and gender based in suffragist: the inevitability of social change, political dependence and inequality, and oppression. Marx and Engels argued that the restructuring of society into an egalitarian one would come about through the conscious and revolutionary actions of the oppressed group. The revolution, they envisioned, came about through the collectivities of the proletarians into a class in and of their own.

This same argument of consciousness appeared in the appeals of female suffragists, though emphasized on gender rather than class. Emma Goldman typified it through her emphasis on female freedom efforts which would spread awareness to a large group of women, and Susan B. Anthony made a blatantly called for rebellion in order to ensure democracy for women. Julia Ward Howe also advocated reform through revolution which alluded to the awareness of female oppression born out of collective efforts. Other suffragists appealed to women through their invocation of the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution. This link to patriotism harkened to the national sympathies held by Americans of all genders, and illustrated the collective appeal made by suffragists in order to promote collectivization.

Marxist and suffragists argued in favor of the inevitability of social change, claiming historical precedence dictated this occurrence. Marx and Engels claimed the eradication of class antagonisms inevitably led to the restructuring of society, while suffragists argued that the principles present in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution granted women equal political rights as men, rendering suffrage inevitable. Suffragists pointed out that women could not choose their lawmakers or the laws under which they lived while sharing the equal status of American status as men. Other women

pointed to the sentiments of citizenship granted to all, and men holding the right to vote, as a demonstration of the inalienable rights of women.

In conjunction with this, political dependence and inequality in a rigidly divided society underscored Marxist and suffragist writings. Marx and Engels presented an economic and political solution for the exploitation of the working class, while suffragists made political and social appeals. As a whole, suffragists did not make arguments in favor of the complete emancipation of women from their societal constructs. They argued instead that the benefits reaped from woman suffrage regarding morality and propriety within American society would not be lost when women obtained the right to vote. Where Marx and Engels argued for a complete overhaul of the economic and political system, suffragists argued for the preservation of the economic status quo through the female vote.

Oppression served as another link between Marxism and suffragist literature. Marx and Engels argued tirelessly against the oppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, claiming that this oppression hindered not only the worker, but also society as a whole. Suffragists pointed out that the economic and political dependence of women in a male-oriented political scheme, thus loosely attacking the oppression of women under the hands of powerful men, who included husbands, politicians, and the clergy. Hannah Johnson Bailey's argument clearly echoed Marx and Engels when she claimed that women were enslaved by men, just as the proletariat slaved under the bourgeoisie. Emma Goldman's call for the liberation of women from their own constructs of feminism even more closely echoed Marxism's appeal to the overhaul of ingrained ideological beliefs.

Marxism and suffragist ideology split with regard to female status and identity within society. Marx and Engels only mention women in the *Manifesto* with regard to their economic oppression within society and the destruction of the familial relations through capitalism. They also argue that women's role as prostitutes served as a strictly economic activity, which would dissolve with the implementation of socialism. As shown, the appeal for woman suffrage did not rely on the economic independence of women, but on the preservation of the traditional female role in society within the domestic sphere. This demonstrated the conservatism of American society, and the necessity of suffragist arguments to follow this trend in order to achieve electoral success.

Conservative progressive suffragists such as Carrie Chapman Catt, Frances Maule Bjorkman, and Julia Ward Howe reassured the American public that woman suffrage did not mean the end of woman's traditional role in society, but would extend this role into the social and political sphere. Overall, suffragists downplayed female emancipation from the home and family, arguing instead for the betterment of society through women's attainment of suffrage. Howe claimed that suffragists did not intend to abandon the home, and Catt's writings reassured her audience of the sanctity of woman's place within society, arguing that her morality would prove her greatest strength at the polls. Additionally, suffragists claimed that the woman's femininity would not suffer with the attainment of suffrage. She would retain all those qualities which defined her sex, namely her docility, propriety and protector of the future through her matriarchal duties. The push for the full intellectual and social emancipation of the woman intellectually and socially did not concern the suffragist movement, and the push towards this would not occur for over half a century.

What to make of all this? It is clear from these trends that the similarities and differences between Marxism and suffragist ideology demonstrated the conservatism of American attitudes towards female suffrage, as well as the conservatism of American society towards socialism. Both movements centered on an ideological foundation which purported a vision of equality for a segment of society which faced oppression and exploitation at the hands of a dominating group of powerful individuals who held the majority of political and economic control. Taken together, Marxism and woman suffrage exposed the propensity for an oppressed group of individuals to strive for the improvement of their conditions, whether through a utopian vision or the adaptation of their goals to social realities to obtain their goals. Marxism proved a powerful influence in shaping American movements which demanded equality, but never infiltrated the government as the diversity of ethnicity and social conditions within American society, coupled with the inflexibility of socialism, rendered a truly American socialist society impossible. Furthermore, the shift of the suffrage movement to more conservative leanings demonstrated the necessity of appeasing the American population as a whole, which did not accept radical shifts in the social place of women, demonstrating society's overall acceptance of the status quo. This acceptance proved the most ardent obstacle to revolutionary reform within the United States, given the limitations on gender equality evident to this day.

Epilogue

The suffrage movement proved successful in acquiring the vote for women in 1920, but this did not lead to the multitude of women's rights as hoped by early suffragists and women's rights activities including Susan B. Anthony. Women remained firmly entrenched into the lower strata of society, conforming to societal norms propagated by a male-centered political and social structure. Limited economic liberation offered by the outbreak of the Second World War allowed women to experience independence in the work place on a scale hitherto unknown. Following the war, women returned to the home, and prescribed to a set of domestic norms many found stifling following their limited liberation from the previous decade.

By the 1960s, women actively lashed out in the context of an era of immense political and economic change. The Second Wave of the Feminist movement demanded those rights in a more vocal, forceful and revolutionary manner. In many ways, this movement mirrored the Marxian emphasis on revolt and revolution to usurp the dominate powers and restructure society in order to include a place for the oppressed and exploited groups within. While the arguments of feminists in the 1960s were certainly not new, their emergence did prove the first time women collectively voiced and demanded a radical shift in their position within American society. The Women's Liberation Movement, a term that implied radical action, achieved the social liberation of women sexually, economically, and socially at rate that far surpassed the efforts of the movement's feminist ancestors. Women entered the workforce in larger numbers, attended college for the purpose of obtaining a degree rather than a husband, wielded

control over their bodies through birth control and the right to an abortion and formed their own unique sexual strata within American society.

Sadly, these achievements were slow-paced and unevenly distributed, as women continued to face opposition in the educational, political, and social realm when they attempted to act autonomously. Underpaid in the workforce, relegated to employment positions deemed feminine and limited in the social sphere on the basis of gender, women found that the limitations of their achievements underscored the ingrained notions of femininity espoused in nineteenth century society. It remains clear from the successes and failures of the suffragist movement and the First and Second Wave of the feminist movement, that American women continue to strive for equality and respectability in a society which continues to judge them solely on the basis of their gender and the limitations ascribed to it. These limitations were ingrained long before the advent of socialism or feminism, but the continued battle for sexual equality demonstrates how far American society is from complete equality of all its inhabitants.

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