

A Rhetorical Criticism of Susan B. Anthony's Speech on Women's Right to Vote

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Shabnam Kohan

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Bernard K. Duffy
Senior Project Adviser

Signature

Date

Dr. T.C. Winebrenner
Department Chair

Signature

Date

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Introduction

Although one might think of a woman's right to vote as the norm in today's society, it was quite the opposite in the late 1800s. Not only were women not permitted to vote in the United States, but they could even be fined and arrested for their offense. The first wave of the feminist movement was a quest for the right to vote. Women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony devoted their lives to achieving this goal for women. They wrote and delivered speech after speech on suffrage, but neither would see the day when the vote was given to women. Their efforts, however, did have a significant impact and paid off several years after their deaths. It would not be until 1920 that women were actually given the right by the Nineteenth Amendment of the Constitution.

In 1872, the feminist Susan B. Anthony illegally voted in that year's presidential election. She was caught two weeks later and tried by a jury in 1873 for her crime ("Susan B. Anthony House"). She was unable to take the stand and defend herself in court due to restrictions placed by the judge, so she instead gave a speech on the subject to several towns before the trial. The speech contained objections to her arrest on the grounds that the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed all US citizens the right to vote and she was, in fact, a citizen of the U.S. The judge did not listen to her stance on the matter, did not let the jury vote, and automatically made a decision based solely on the evidence that he had considered before the trial even began. The court found Anthony guilty, and she was fined for merely attempting to have a say in the leader of the country (Anthony 36).

Susan B. Anthony's speech was heard by the court and ignored, but her words lived on. Anthony's speech allowed her to reach out to more people than ever before and express her point of view. She was able to portray the necessity for women's right to vote in such a way that

others finally began to see her side of the issue. She began to tour all over the world and convey her opinion on the topic. The idea began to spread and become more seriously considered by the majority. Within several decades, the Nineteenth Amendment became a reality and women were given the right to vote due in part to Anthony's efforts along with other women like Marilla M. Ricker, who was the first woman to ever cast her vote (Stanton 586). Anthony's never-ending resilience helped her achieve this right for American women and she became one of the leading influences in feminist thought.

Her speech was significant for audiences at the time and has not lost its value for literary critics studying the speech today. Anthony uses a logical style in her speech and uses her persuasive abilities to argue her point through the artistic proofs. Critics can examine the way she uses the wording from the Constitution to show that women deserve the right to vote just as much as men do. The Constitution clearly stated "We the people" deserved civil rights and not just the men of the country. Anthony set out to prove that prohibiting women from voting was unlawful and went against the Constitution of the United States. Critics can observe this and discover how Anthony used the laws set forth by the Forefathers to show that keeping the vote from women was an unlawful act. Discriminating against one half of the population based on their sex went against everything that America claimed to have stood for. Anthony did not believe that her sex should hold her or any other women back. Liberty was essential and with women being deprived of certain freedoms, Anthony felt that America had become an "oligarchy of sex" ("Great Speeches"). Communication scholars are interested in reading Anthony's speech because of its impact on society. She was able to phrase her speech in a way that showed the restraints placed on women were simply because they were female.

After the speech was delivered, Anthony reached out to more people and her voice was better heard. She was able to assist the country in moving away from a place that offered certain liberties to one sex and not to another. Scholars should be interested to learn how Anthony achieved such a great deal through the use of words and the power of speech. Her eloquent and powerful writing was able to make a significant impact on the belief system of an entire country. It is interesting to note that the phrasing and delivery of a speech has such an effect on people and the way they view the world.

The speech on women's right to vote served as a stepping-stone toward women gaining even more opportunities. As Anthony spoke on the subject of her arrest to more people, the idea that women should gain the right to vote became a more prevalent issue. Anthony's arguments on the matter led people to believe that perhaps women should be given the right and treated as equals to men. Her firm stance on women's suffrage and her determination to make this possible eventually paid off. Because of Anthony's use of the artistic proofs as a means of persuasion, her logical approach to the issue, and her view of the Constitution applying to both men and women she was able to get her point across to a larger audience. Anthony reconstructed gender by showing that all human beings are equal under the Constitution and asked for a democracy instead of a patriarchy in which women are the subjects of men. This assisted in efforts toward creating the Nineteenth Amendment and getting women the right to vote in the United States. I will use rhetorical criticism to evaluate her speech and show that had it not been for Anthony's persistence and constant quest for change, women's suffrage may have been delayed.

Anthony's speech is historically significant and reached many people in America who eventually saw that women's suffrage should be achieved. Throughout this essay, I will discuss how she was able to persuade her audiences, who the audiences consisted of, what types of

arguments she used, and how powerful the speech proved to be in assisting in women's suffrage. As I begin to delve into these topics, I will examine how they led to an increased amount of attention on women's rights and eventually led to the Nineteenth Amendment being created in 1920.

Biography of Susan B. Anthony

Susan B. Anthony was born on February 15, 1820 to Daniel and Lucy Anthony, both devout Quakers. Her family enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle that provided them with an abundance of material possessions, which was quite different than the lives led by many of their neighbors. In addition to gaining wealth through his cotton manufacturing business, Daniel Anthony knew the importance of education for his children and provided Susan with the education often not offered to girls in that time period. Susan proved to be a smart and determined child, even at the age of three when she learned to read and write (Harper 13). Daniel Anthony made sure that her growth would continue by creating a private home school environment in which he only hired teachers that would educate his daughter to the degree that they would educate boys (Harper 22). There, Susan began to gain a feminist perspective when her father hired a teacher named Mary Perkins. This mentor started to help form her beliefs about women's equality ("Susan B. Anthony").

Susan was intelligent and motivated to learn all that she could and at the age of seventeen went on to become a teacher herself for several years while working away from home (Harper 24). As Anthony grew older, she began to notice just how different and unfair her rights were when compared to those of men. When she was a schoolteacher she realized the difference in wages between male and female educators and petitioned for a change. She also pushed for the equal education of boys and girls in the school system and assisted in women attending the

University of Rochester for the first time (“Susan B. Anthony”). She then published her own paper *The Revolution* which advocated change in current laws and put her in touch with other feminists. From that point, Anthony gradually went on to join organizations and recite speeches in favor of women’s rights. She joined an assortment of organizations like Daughters of Temperance and the anti-slavery movement. She also began creating national women’s rights conventions to give other women the ability to speak in public and have their voices heard. She had a utopian vision for how women should live their lives and in her speech “The True Woman” she claims, “The true woman will not be exponent of another, or allow another to be such for her. She will be her own individual self, —do her own individual work, —stand or fall by her own individual wisdom and strength” (Campbell 17). Anthony did not want women relying on anyone but themselves and wanted them to be the change that they wanted to see in the world.

It soon became clear that she wished to devote her time mainly to women’s suffrage. She “saw that all of the legal disabilities faced by American women owed their existence to the simple fact that women lacked the vote” (“JURIST”). She wanted women to gain the right to vote because she saw it as the only way to ensure women that they could successfully be in charge of their own destinies (Campbell 20). Because of this, Anthony devoted her energies to legalizing the vote for women. She felt that if women were able to achieve this goal, then all other rights would come easily. She set out to put an end to white men taking away power from women.

Background of the Speech

Voting and Trial

In the election of 1872, Anthony decided that she was going to vote and threatened a lawsuit against the registrar if they did not allow her to do so (“Gale”). She felt that the Fourteenth Amendment only giving black men the right to vote and not women was discriminatory and illegal. The Amendment clearly stated:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States. (“Gale”)

By looking solely at the words written in the document, it was clear that “all persons” not just the black and white men born in the nation had the right to vote. Anthony attempted to use this argument in court, but it appeared that the Constitution was up for interpretation in this case. The presiding judge had already made up his mind about Anthony’s case and ignored her words and her pleas for a fair trial.

In her speech, Anthony tried to prove to her audience that she had not committed an offense by voting in the presidential election, but had just used her right to vote. She claimed that the Constitution had guaranteed her this right. Her understanding of “We, the people of the United States,” did not simply apply to the male population, but to the women as well. She found it difficult to believe that the Constitution would say women could enjoy the liberties provided to them in the U.S. when women could not vote and could not secure these rights for themselves. As a citizen of the country, Anthony felt that women should be able to vote in order to elect officials who would better support their freedoms. Anthony said that women would never be able to prosper if the right to vote was kept from them. She claimed that all men are made oligarchs over the women in their lives and this causes a great deal of rebellion in every

household. Men should not have control over women, but both should instead act as equals who make political decisions and offer their vote to help elect officials. She says that a citizen is defined as a person who is in America and the Constitution states that such people are allowed the right to vote. She ends with a question of “Are women persons?” and shows that they in fact are, so they should be allowed to vote (“Great Speeches”).

The occasion in which this speech was delivered occurred at a time when the Fourteenth Amendment had just been passed, giving black men the right to vote, but withholding it from women. This amendment was set forth after the Civil War to make sure black men were given the same rights as white men. This did not sit well with Anthony and on November 5, 1872, she decided to vote in Rochester, New York (Peck). She did this along with fifteen other women, but was the only one tried in court because she was their leader and refused to pay the fine. Anthony’s argument was that the Fourteenth Amendment (passed in 1868) and the Constitution clearly gave her the right to vote in the US. District Attorney, Richard Crowley, disagreed with her assessment and charged her with disobeying the Fourteenth Amendment (Peck). Anthony went to court in 1873 to try and plead her case to the judge. She wanted to not only prove her innocence to the court, but also show that women’s suffrage was an important issue that needed to be addressed. She felt that the same laws that now applied to black men should surely be applied to women as they were both US citizens.

Anthony had prepared a speech to discuss the topic of women’s suffrage, but the judge who was against the idea of a woman’s right to vote did not let her plead in her own defense. Ward Hunt, the judge that presided over the case, was well known for his ill feelings toward women receiving the right to vote (Peck). He would not let her testify, saying that she was an incompetent witness, and believed that she had disobeyed the Fourteenth Amendment by casting

her vote in the election. Anthony was indicted on charges of “having voted in defiance of a statute of the United States, made and provided, while, as a matter of fact there was no such statute” (Dorr 256). Even though it seemed clear that the document had not specifically forbidden women from voting, many states created their own interpretations of the law. In New York, this judge had already decided on his understanding of the Constitutional Amendment.

Hunt did not bother polling the jury to get a conviction, but instead instructed them to vote guilty. This was upsetting to all who were in the courtroom and the audience burst out in objection over Anthony’s unfair trial (Peck). Some of the men on the jury later said that they would have voted in favor of Anthony, but were not presented with the opportunity. Hunt had taken away Anthony’s Constitutional rights by not allowing her a trial by jury, which was guaranteed by the document to all people except for slaves at the time (Dorr 257). When Hunt ordered Anthony to pay one hundred dollars, she responded, “I shall never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty. And I shall earnestly and persistently continue to urge all women... that resistance to tyranny is obedience to God” (Peck). Anthony believed that by rejecting Hunt’s orders to pay the fine, she was working against the tyranny of the male dominated country. By refusing to pay, she showed that her trial was unlawful and her belief in women’s suffrage was as strong as ever even though a male dominated court tried to tell her otherwise.

Anthony’s rejection of the ruling worked in her favor and she never paid her fine. Hunt was forced to back down and the people in the courtroom were able to see the strength that she possessed. Anthony gained widespread attention for her trial and more people began to become interested in the topic of women’s suffrage. People no longer saw Anthony as a woman who was trying to stir up conventional U.S. ways, but began to respect her as a symbol for change. Many considered her actions brave and began to listen and understand her view on equality for women.

Anthony continued to hold speeches and discuss women's equal rights until audience members started to adopt her perspective. Eventually, the Nineteenth Amendment was developed due to Anthony's and other feminist's never-ending efforts to get the vote for women.

The Amendment giving women the right to vote was not passed until fourteen years after Anthony had passed away, but audiences continue to read her speech and take into account her perspective. The speech began a movement that elevated women in society and helped them become more equal in the eyes of the law. By assisting women in receiving the right to vote, Anthony made it possible for them to become equal to men in other respects as well.

Analysis of Women's Right to Vote Speech

Audience of the Speech and Anthony's Delivery of the Speech

Prior to Anthony's trial, she felt it necessary to travel around Monroe County, New York and discuss why she voted and why she felt that this was legal under the Fourteenth Amendment. In her eyes, as well as in many others, Anthony had merely practiced her Constitutional rights and she wanted to show the public how she had come to this conclusion. Anthony had reached an idea for the outline of her discussions from fellow suffragist, Victoria Woodhall (DuBois 152). She decided that she would discuss the idea of citizens having the right to vote, the fact that women are citizens, and how they should therefore be able to vote in elections. She wanted to prove that her participation in the election of 1872 in Rochester, New York had been legal under the Fourteenth amendment ("Susan B. Anthony House").

Anthony began delivering her speech on women's right to vote several months prior to her trial date, so that she could adequately inform her audience of the choice she had made when voting in the election of 1872. Her efforts began in Monroe county where she had been told her trial would be taking place. She worked tirelessly, delivering her speech to twenty-nine districts

in the county. She stood in front of her audience, who often consisted of a just a few dozen men and women to over one hundred people (Linder). Regardless of how many showed up to support her, Anthony would talk to them about the struggles she was facing just for casting her vote and wanting to be a contributing citizen of the United States. She would present the audience with her major premise “women are persons,” her minor premise “persons in a democracy have the right to vote,” and allow them to draw the conclusion that “women therefore have the right to vote” (Duffy 30). It was hard for the audience to ignore the facts and brush off Anthony’s logical arguments.

Anthony had a reputation for not being a strong orator and only delivering a speech well if it was extemporaneous, but she conveyed her speech on women’s right to vote successfully. It was a memorized hour-long speech, but she was passionate about the issue and it showed through when she spoke about her Constitutional right to vote. It was well thought out and without the emotional elements sometimes conveyed in extemporaneous speeches and this allowed for her audience to connect with the facts present. The men in the audience were able to see that logically and legally, women were supposed to have their rights under the country’s own laws. Women were able to see that they did have the same rights as men as far as voting in elections. Many of the audience members were said to have found her to be very “sophisticated” and “sincere” (Linder).

In addition to trying to show the country that women were entitled to vote, Anthony attempted to persuade those who would possibly be on a jury in her trial to dismiss her of the charges she was faced with. Prosecuting attorney, Richard Crowley did not like this and was concerned that she had been able to convince the men of Monroe County that she was indeed innocent, so he asked the judge, Ward Hunt to move her trial location. Hunt agreed and moved

the trial to Ontario County, where people were less familiar with the trial and had not heard Anthony's speech (Linder). Anthony and her lawyers were dismayed with this decision, but carried on in Ontario where Anthony continued her speech circuit for nearly a month prior to her trial. She presented her speech over forty times in 1873 before standing trial for illegally voting (Duffy 30).

The crowds were receptive to Anthony and both men and women understood her point of view. It appeared that Anthony's dedication to spreading the word about women's rights had paid off. It was not until the trial itself that Anthony discovered all her hard work had not factored into her trial, as the judge directed the jury to vote she was guilty before they had the chance to cast their own votes. Her stance had been heard by many audiences, however, and had left a lasting impression.

Style, Organization, and Artistic Proofs

Anthony's speech was arranged in a logical fashion based on laws created by the United States Constitution. She discussed an array of problems facing women and how they were being kept from reaching their goals in society. She talked of the changes she saw and the effects that these changes would have on the women in the Nation. The style, organization, and artistic proofs present in this speech resonated with the audiences and helped to make the lecture one which would be present in the memory of its audience for years to come.

Anthony entered a barber shop that doubled as a voting booth in New York on November 5, 1872 and placed a vote for Ulysses S. Grant to win the presidency. She was arrested for her crime, but before being tried for it she delivered her speech on women's right to vote to twenty-nine towns (Anthony 36). Anthony began her lecture by telling crowds that she was arrested wrongfully for voting in the last presidential election when she was simply using the rights

granted to her by the Constitution. This began her first of many logos appeals to the audience and also built her ethos. Anthony saw it as perfectly logical to vote in the election because, according to the Fourteenth Amendment it was perfectly legal and if it was legal, why wouldn't she use her right to vote? Anthony stated: "Our democratic-republican government is based on the idea of the natural right of every individual member thereof to a voice and a vote in making and executing laws" (DuBois 153). She made the logical argument based on the rules of her country and the voice that the Constitution was supposed to ensure all citizens. She went on to say that, "the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the constitutions of several States and the organic laws of the Territories, all alike propose to *protect* the people in the exercise of their God-given rights" (Dubois 153). Anthony appealed to the rights bestowed by these documents and demonstrated the logical facts present in the Constitution. She also attempted a pathos appeal by bringing up the fact that these documents are supposed to protect citizens and in her case they are seemingly unable to do so. If her rights could be threatened in such a way, then so could the rights of her audience members.

She began to claim early on in her speech that women are equal to men and that the Constitution recognized this as well by saying that all United States Citizens are granted the right to vote. Anthony asked the question, "for how can 'the consent of the governed' be given, if the right to vote be denied?" (Dubois 153). If women are unable to vote, then how can they have any input in their own government? Withholding the right to vote did not make logical sense to Anthony. She said that no state can take this right away from her and reads an excerpt from the Constitution stating:

We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general

welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. (Anthony 36)

She pointed out that it begins by saying “We the people” have formed the Union and not just the white men of the nation. She argued that in the eyes of our Forefathers all people were to be considered equals. This was a clear logos appeal and she tried to show audience members that it was perfectly logical to vote as any citizen in the United States, be it a white, black, female, or male citizen.

Anthony then went on to say that the Constitution was not created to keep liberties away from anyone who was not a white man, but was created to ensure that liberty is secured for everyone. Anthony said, “It is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government-the ballot” (Anthony 36). She made this pathos appeal to her audience and evoked emotional responses when women stopped to realize that they were being denied their rights by their own government. Anthony pointed out that it was a mockery and contradicting to talk to women about how they have all the freedoms in America when they in fact do not. It was unfair to women to be held back in this fashion and kept from making decisions that impacted their lives. She wished to move away from the idea that women should sit idly by while the men make the important decisions. She argued that using the ballot was the only way to secure liberty and women could not ensure it if they were not given the right to vote and choose the leader of the country. It seemed to be a flawed system to her and one which only benefited men. How could women even have liberties when they have no way of securing them?

Anthony argued that certain rights are inalienable as written in the Constitution. She said, “all of the State constitutions are equally empathetic in their recognition of the ballot as the

means of securing the people in the enjoyment of these rights...” (DuBois 155). Anthony argued that the right to vote was indisputable and obviously guaranteed to everyone through the Constitution. She claimed that this right is necessary for members of society to feel involved and happy in their government. She made a pathos appeal to the men in the audience by describing women being happy and fulfilled through obtaining the vote. She hoped that men would join in the effort and assist women in achieving their goal. The female audience members also gained a clearer understanding of how the vote could impact their lives and enable them to secure their own destinies.

She held that “no barriers whatever stand today between women and the exercise of their right to vote save those of precedent and prejudice, which refuse to expunge the word ‘male’ from the constitution” (DuBois 156). Anthony made a pathos appeal to the audience by illustrating that it was only a preexisting prejudice that was holding women back from becoming more active members of society and actually having a say in the laws which their country passed. That prejudice was keeping women down and by having the word “male” in the Constitution; women’s rights were being suppressed and overlooked.

Anthony then went on to talk about the day she voted and how she was soon ordered to appear in court. She talked about supreme laws in America and how disqualifying women from the right to vote based on their sex was a violation of these laws. This raised her ethos and gave audience members an understanding that she was aware and well informed about the laws provided by the Constitution. She said that not allowing an entire half of American people the right to vote and ensure their liberties was a crime. She described women’s views on America:

For them this government is not a democracy; it is not a republic. It is the most odious aristocracy ever established on the face of the globe. An oligarchy of

wealth, where the rich govern the poor; an oligarchy of learning, where the educated govern the ignorant; or even an oligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this oligarchy of sex which makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters, of every household; which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects — carries discord, and rebellion into every home of the nation. (DuBois 157)

Anthony described the American government as being an “oligarchy of sex” in which power rests with men and is taken away from women. Women were subjects of their fathers, sons, husbands and all other men in their lives and this caused conflicts in every family. This was a clear pathos appeal and impacted all of her audience members. It displayed men as the rulers over women in their lives and this created an uncomfortable realization for all present in the audience. Men were left with the feeling that they perhaps put women in subservient roles and women were left feeling like second class citizens, whose purpose was to serve men. Anthony did not want this division between men and women. She hoped to show that all people are equal and cannot be under the rule of one another, but instead in equal partnerships so that peace is maintained. America claimed to be a democracy in which all people had control over the decisions that have an impact on their lives, but Anthony said that this was not so. Women were not allowed to vote and were under the control of the men in their lives, so a democracy did not exist in her eyes. She stated that it was, in fact, an aristocracy in which men are considered the most qualified citizens and given the right to rule over women simply because of their sex.

To further her stance on women deserving the same rights as men, Anthony proclaimed that all people residing in America are defined as being citizens and therefore able to vote. She read the Fourteenth Amendment which stated:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States, and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of the citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, or deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. (DuBois 158)

This is another logical appeal made to the audience. It seemed clear to Anthony that the Fourteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote as citizens of the United States. The Amendment stated that all people born in America are citizens and no one shall take away their privileges. She then asked the question, “are women persons?” Since all people are considered citizens, then why were women not being given the right to vote? As women are clearly people, states should uphold their rights and put an end to the discrimination. She reconstructed gender in the 1800s by rallying for the equality of women to white men. She felt they should be afforded the same liberties as men at a time when this was not the popular consensus.

Anthony then reasoned that obtaining the right to vote would be the most important privilege that could be gained, as it ensures all other rights to follow. She said, “seek first the kingdom of the ballot and all things else shall be added” (DuBois 158). Once women could obtain their right to vote, then they would gain the power needed to vote for specific laws to be put in place. Having the right to vote and using this privilege would give women the ability to have an input in government policies that impact all citizens. This was another logical appeal

and showed that with the vote, women could go onto creating a better life for themselves.

Anthony went on to ask why the Constitution was even used if the Fourteenth Amendment was not going to ensure all people the right to vote. She pondered: “If the Fourteenth Amendment does not secure all citizens the right to vote, for what purpose was that grand old charter of the fathers lumbered with its unwieldy proportions?” (DuBois 159). Anthony felt that the Constitution was created with the purpose of establishing a clear set of laws and that if the Amendments were not followed, then the Constitution had no meaning.

Anthony insisted: “There is and can be but one safe principle of government— equal rights to all. Discrimination against any class on account of color, race, nativity, sex, property, culture, can embitter and disaffect that class, and thereby endanger the safety of the whole people” (DuBois 161). She maintained that equality was the only way to make all the citizens in the country happy and ensure that other citizens were safe. By withholding certain rights, the government was doing a disservice to its people and making them resentful. She again made a pathos appeal and stated that women would feel more in control of their futures once they had the right to vote. This right opens the doors to women’s freedom.

Anthony felt that women did not have the freedom they deserved and were treated like slaves engaging in servitude for their husbands. She asked, “what is servitude? ‘the condition of a slave.’ What is a slave? ‘A person who is robbed of the proceeds of his labor; a person who is subject to the will of another’” (DuBois 161). By making this pathos appeal and comparing women to slaves, Anthony was hoping to stir up feelings of frustration in women, so that they would no longer stand idly by while they were being treated like slaves. She was hoping to wake them up so that they could see they were being controlled by their husbands just as African Americans were being controlled by their masters. She did this to indicate that obtaining the

right to vote would become the first step in helping women become free and independent. They would no longer have to rely on their husbands to vote for what they wanted, but would be able to decide what they individually wanted in their government.

Anthony said she wanted women to have their ‘citizen’s rights’ and not women’s rights. Women were citizens and entitled to every privilege the men in the country had. She also asked that the jury in her case vote ‘not guilty’ based on the arguments she had presented in her speech. She concluded her speech with a pathos appeal to the audience about her never-ending fight to one day obtain the right to vote for all. She said, “It is on this line that we propose to fight our battle for the ballot— peaceably but nevertheless persistently— until we achieve complete triumph and all United States citizens, men and women alike, are recognized as equals in the government” (DuBois 165).

Anthony’s speech resonated with audiences and it left a lasting impression because of its unique style. Many women tend to use stories when giving speeches because they can more adequately describe what they are trying to say through the use of examples. Anthony was an exception to this rule and stuck mainly to the use of logos appeals to gain support from her audience. She did not tell stories about others engaging in the same struggle as she had, but instead told her own story to a small extent while mainly focusing on logical appeals.

Women are usually expected to tell stories to illustrate the point that they were trying to get across, while men base their speeches on logic. Anthony diverged from this stereotype as did President Reagan when he was in office. Instead of speaking to audiences in a logical fashion, he mainly attempted pathos appeals. He told stories of a soldier at war, a child saving another child, and a woman who had spent her entire life helping children of drug addicted parents (Jamieson 118). He told stories to evoke emotions from his audience members that would ensure

they would remember his speech. Telling individual stories also made audience members connect with the people who he was talking about and this created an emotional response. It was said that, “Reagan brings a talent for creating both verbal and nonverbal synoptic vignettes that capture his central claims. Better than any modern president, Reagan translated words into memorable televisual pictures” (Jamieson 119). The element of storytelling helped Reagan connect with his audience and it left them with a lasting impression even though this tactic was commonly used by women. “He is a skilled storyteller...Reagan understands the power of dramatic narrative to create an identity for an audience, to involve the audience, and to bond the audience to him” (Jamieson 137). Reagan used clear details and the power of storytelling to convey messages to his audience.

Anthony’s style was not like Reagan’s as she used a more logical approach with only a couple of stories which involved only herself and those whom she interacted with. She included almost no stories about other people in her women’s right to vote speech. Her plan was to show that she had a logical reason for voting as she had and she did not feel it necessary to try to tell the audience stories in order for them to relate to her more. She connected with the women by talking about the vote and how it would help them take control of their lives. She connected to the men in the audience by telling them about the subjugation that their wives and daughters feel because of not having the vote. She did not talk of specific men or women who have a problem with not having the vote. She made logical appeals that showed she had the legal right to vote under the Constitution. This document and the Fourteenth Amendment were not up for interpretation, so Anthony talked about it making rational sense for her to vote. She was a feminist, but spoke in a very masculine style, which commanded the attention of both men and women.

Anthony delivered her speech repeatedly throughout the months before her trial and gained support from those in her audience. Her divergence from the usual storytelling style, which is used by many women, helped her connect to her audience in a broader way and reach out to the men as well as the women. The ethos, pathos, and especially logos appeals resonated with her audiences and left a lasting impression. She was unable to win her case, but with this speech she was able to send a message about the unequal rights in the country. Her work, as well as the work of her fellow suffragists was able to eventually lead to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Evaluation of the Speech

Susan B. Anthony resisted the idea of a patriarchy and a world dominated by men with women as their subjects. Anthony analyzed the control that men had over politics and ultimately the control they had over women's liberties. Anthony wished to end this patriarchal society and turn it into one which accepted all human beings as equal, whether women or men. She rejected the idea of women being subjects to men and being under their control because they were thought of as the superior sex.

As author Angie Marek put it, Anthony continuously fought for women's suffrage even when she was eighty-six years old and told by doctors to stay in bed. Anthony dedicated her life to getting Congress to see women as equals and pass the Nineteenth Amendment. Her last known public words were "failure is impossible!" With this statement she helped a new generation of feminists reject patriarchy and fight for the liberties that were granted to them in the Constitution (Marek). By attending rallies and making her voice heard, Anthony made a dramatic impact on the feminist movement and the decline of patriarchy.

When Anthony was initially arrested and tried in court for her unlawful act of voting she was fined one hundred dollars that she refused to pay, saying it was unjust (Marek). Before she went to court she delivered her speech on allowing women the right to vote to many towns in hopes of having her voice heard. In it, she said that women were being “degraded from the status of citizen to that of subject” (Marek). As discussed previously, she found that women were second class citizens in a country that claimed to make all citizens equal under its Constitution. She argued against the idea of patriarchy and that of women being the subjects of the men in their lives. Having a country work as an oligarchy of sex rather than a democracy ensuring the same liberties to all its citizens was perplexing and unconstitutional to Anthony.

The idea of men having the ultimate authority over women was greatly resisted by feminists. They believed that they should have the same liberties as men and a right to ensure these liberties through the vote. Although many men did not agree with Anthony’s feelings about the subject, she did bring up valid points about the rights granted to citizens in the Constitution. She argued that all people in the United States were citizens and citizens were guaranteed the right to vote. Anthony used this point to illustrate that women were just as equal to men and deserved the same rights.

When Anthony asked the question “are women persons?” during her speech, she set out to prove the equality of women through the use of figures and tropes. She used a syllogism and said that all people in the U.S. were citizens, women are people, and therefore all women were citizens. Anthony claimed that no state could take away the rights that have already been given to women (“Great Speeches”). By saying this in her speech, she wanted the audience to realize that women are people and therefore equal to male citizens. One half of the American people should not be discriminated based upon their sex and they should not be controlled by the other

sex in a patriarchy. She maintained that such a system was oppressing women and causing disturbances in households where the women felt dominated by male relatives.

Anthony said that a patriarchic society should be ended by giving women the right to vote to ensure their liberties. Without this right, women would be unable to choose an official that they felt could best represent their needs and this would create a system in which women felt dominated and unheard (Marek 48).

Anthony's speech on women's right to vote helped lead to the Nineteenth Amendment being passed in 1920. Thanks to her undying efforts, she was able to make her voice heard. Though Anthony didn't live to see the conclusion of her efforts, she encouraged a new generation of women to continue in her path. These women did just that and fourteen years after Anthony's death, the amendment was created giving women the right to vote and therefore the ability to have a say in their government. This big step concluded the first wave of feminism and started two others.

Northwestern University Professor Edward Samuels said "the most momentous fact of the nineteenth century" was women's emancipation (Adams 229). Gaining the right to vote was a huge accomplishment and one that enabled women to be able to better be in charge of their destinies. Women still face many political battles, however, even to this day. Anthony helped get women the vote, but there is still more to be done in an effort to fully emancipate women. They are still often seen as weaker than men and are less visible in politics. One federal commission said that too few women "possess the practical experience obtained at middle and upper levels of administrative and executive responsibility...they therefore lack the public visibility" (Adams 237). He suggests that women must be more visible and involved more heavily in the higher levels of politics to successfully enhance their place in society. They must

continue their efforts to be seen as men's equals. The next two waves of Feminism have been used to further women's political equality in America.

Through the analysis of her essay, I found that Anthony used tropes and figures to make a point about women being equals to men under the Constitution. She said that all people were citizens and therefore all women were citizens. She used logic in her speech to prove that she did nothing wrong by casting a vote in the presidential election of 1872 as she was a citizen. Her reasoning was not listened to by the judge that presided over her case, but through her defeat she was able to reach even more people and raise more awareness about the injustices faced by women. "The hard-won vote has lifted them out of a deep feeling of uncertainty and lack of competence in a man's world to a point on level ground where they begin to take a hand in that world, with no apologies to be made and no quarter asked, where they are truly people" (Adams 238). The changes that Anthony was able to help make have created significant impacts on women in America.

Anthony was also able to change the way rhetoric has been historically used. Men had created and used rhetoric for years to persuade others, but Anthony as a female used it to her benefit. She attempted to persuade others that her actions were constitutional and was eventually successful in her efforts. She showed others that all human beings are equal and the idea of a patriarchy should be disbanded.

Anthony reconstructed gender through her efforts to make women equal to men and helped begin efforts to disband patriarchy and male control over women. She started this with her speech on women's right to vote.

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