
Elizabeth Cady Stanton,
Feminist as Thinker

A Reader in Documents and Essays

EDITED BY

*Ellen Carol DuBois and
Richard Cándida Smith*



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Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
Introduction <i>Ellen Carol DuBois and Richard Cándida Smith</i>	1
PART I The Essays	
1 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the Long View <i>Vivian Gornick</i>	17
2 Missed Connections: Abolitionist Feminism in the Nineteenth Century <i>Christine Stansell</i>	32
3 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Stuart Mill, and the Nature of Feminist Thought <i>Barbara Caine</i>	50
4 Stanton on Self and Community <i>Richard Cándida Smith</i>	66
5 "The Pivot of the Marriage Relation": Stanton's Analysis of Women's Subordination in Marriage <i>Ellen Carol DuBois</i>	82
6 "Free Woman Is a Divine Being, the Savior of Mankind": Stanton's Exploration of Religion and Gender <i>Kathi Kern</i>	93
7 Stanton and the Right to Vote: On Account of Race or Sex <i>Ann D. Gordon</i>	111
8 "Lower Orders," Racial Hierarchies, and Rights Rhetoric: Evolutionary Echoes in Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Thought during the Late 1860s <i>Michele Mitchell</i>	128

PART II A Selection of Speeches, Articles, and Essays by
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1854–1901

1	“Address to the Legislature of New York, Albany, February 14, 1854”	155
2	“Address to the Legislature on Women’s Right of Suffrage, Albany, February 18, 1860”	170
3	“Address to the Tenth National Women’s Rights Convention on Marriage and Divorce, New York City, May 11, 1860”	179
4	“Address to Anniversary of American Equal Rights Association, May 12, 1869, New York City”	187
5	“Subjection of Women” (1875)	206
6	“National Protection for National Citizens, Address to the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, January 11, 1878, Washington, D.C.”	219
7	“The Other Side of the Woman Question” (1879)	235
8	“Has Christianity Benefited Woman?” (1885)	243
9	“Divorce versus Domestic Warfare” (1890)	254
10	“The Matriarchate, or Mother-Age” (1891)	264
11	“Worship of God in Man” (1893)	276
12	Selections from <i>The Woman’s Bible</i> (1895, 1898)	282
13	“Our Proper Attitude toward Immigration” (1895)	296
14	“Significance and History of the Ballot” (1898)	301
15	“Progress of the American Woman” (1900)	307
16	“The Degradation of Disfranchisement” (1901)	312
	<i>About the Contributors</i>	321
	<i>Index</i>	323

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Introduction

Ellen Carol DuBois and Richard Cándida Smith

Although Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) was a prolific writer who produced far-ranging explorations of the political, social, historical, and religious dimensions of women's subordinate status, little of her writing has been easily available. She is an important figure in the development of intellectual life in the United States but known today for only a handful of pieces, most prominently "The Declaration of Sentiments" drafted for the 1848 Seneca Falls women's rights convention and her 1892 address, "Solitude of Self."¹ Historians of women's rights have concentrated on Stanton's role as activist and agitator in the earliest woman's suffrage organizations,² but her lifelong contributions as a movement leader are at times overshadowed by those of Susan B. Anthony, her more politically disciplined partner. Even though much of Stanton's writing pointed toward subsequent feminist theories of social and personal development, her place in either U.S. or feminist intellectual history remains largely unexplored.³ This volume is intended to remedy this problem by drawing attention to Stanton's contribution as an original thinker with insights—and contradictions—relevant for contemporary feminism. It combines a selection of Stanton's diverse writings with analytical essays by contemporary scholars taking a variety of perspectives on her important and understudied oeuvre.

The editorial collaboration underlying this book brings together two sets of historical expertise. From the perspective of U.S. intellectual history, this volume seeks to place Stanton more prominently in the framework of nineteenth-century liberal political theory, with particular attention to the role that her concerns with women's condition played in the emergence of modern conceptions of social organization. Stanton's half-century struggle to understand the factors holding back the development

of female self-sovereignty challenges us to rethink the relationship of nineteenth-century feminism and liberalism. Instead of seeing liberalism as an overarching, autonomous ideology that imprinted itself on the nineteenth-century women's rights movement, we find it more useful to treat it as a dynamic set of ideas developing over time, as all sorts of people played an active, creative role, prominent among them Elizabeth Cady Stanton struggling with the problem of women's place in modern society.

At the same time, from the perspective of the history of feminist thought, this volume explores the importance of Stanton for intellectual genealogies of Anglo-American feminism. Systematic analysis of Stanton's numerous and complex writings on women's condition have not yet risen to the level paid to figures such as Catharine Beecher, Margaret Fuller, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Jane Addams.⁴ On the broader historical stage, we seek to demonstrate that Stanton's body of writing deserves a place alongside Mary Wollstonecraft's passionate *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and John Stuart Mill's Olympian *The Subjection of Women* (1867) as documents essential for the intellectual history of feminism. The fact that Stanton did not produce an equivalent single sustained work on the status of women appears to pose an obstacle to such a project, but it also provides an opportunity. One of her strengths as a thinker was her refusal to write another set of formalized but vague abstractions of the type so prevalent during the nineteenth century. Stanton's restraint was especially admirable given that so little was known in her time of the social and psychological conditions of women's lives.

Instead, Stanton's insights grew out of a lifelong project to define and correct the problems women faced. Her numerous articles, speeches, and pamphlets most typically emerged as responses to immediate situations or as contributions to campaigns for an immediate goal. Stanton's engagement with the real-life issues of her day offers the opportunity to see a mind continuously rethinking the problem of women's subordination across a wide variety of situations. The specific issues that inspired her to take up her pen are today often obscure, but they kept pushing Stanton forward to understand why women fared so poorly from liberal, democratic revolutions. In her acceptance of progress as an inherent feature of modern life, Stanton might have accepted liberal ideas as she inherited them but for her persistent question: Why was it that the social condition of women had grown relatively worse even as the material gains of modern society became more evident. In her search for answers to this question, certain themes remain consistent. Three institutions lay at the center

of her analysis of the sources of women's continuing inferior status: citizenship, marriage, and religion. Over the long period of her career, her emphasis shifted back and forth across the structures of gender inequality these institutions created and enforced, as did her understanding of the methods needed to undo women's inferiority.

She understood from the start of her career as a women's rights advocate that the status of women was a product of laws serving the privileged to the detriment of the weak. Because the law was human made, she knew it could be changed through dedication and the exercise of free will. After the Civil War, she increasingly embraced the notion of progress as an impersonal process that emerged from social dynamics rather than from the exercise of individual free will. She accepted the idea that societies were governed not only by formal legal codes but by natural laws that reformers had to understand before they could secure full democratic rights. Change beneath and beyond legal reform drew her attention.

The overlay of positivist conceptions of natural law on top of her still strong belief in individual rights led Stanton increasingly to foreground "woman" as a distinct subject who had to become an autonomous voice within modern society. She moved from an emphasis on the likeness of the sexes to a focus on their differences. We wish to emphasize, however, that Stanton never embraced a thoroughly essentialist view of women's potential, though she accepted on a commonsense basis that women's reproductive functions gave them a distinctive vantage point from which they viewed every political and social question. To the degree that she remained a natural-rights liberal, however, she understood gender difference as historically situated and flowing out of the legal and customary limits put on women's freedom of action rather than as the unalterable condition of female life. Remove social restrictions, she believed, and women would explore as many paths to personhood as did men. Through all of this, she continued to insist that the emancipation of woman had to be first and foremost a political movement that demanded the full integration of women into the governance of the nation. From that difficult but simple change, other, more profound transformations would occur in every aspect of personal and collective life.

After the Civil War, as Stanton focused on the gendered foundation of social difference, her sensitivity to other forms of social inequality, particularly racial, waned. Embittered by the failure of constitutional change to include women's rights, she employed with increasing frequency crude stereotypes of African Americans and immigrants to express her outrage

that she, a cultured, educated woman, would still be denied the vote while men she considered her social and intellectual inferiors were enshrined in the Constitution as her legitimate political masters. With what she called "an aristocracy of sex" incorporated into the highest law of the land by the postwar constitutional amendments, the government of the United States, she insisted, had moved away from the republican ideal for which so many had died.

Given her clear commitment to revolutionary republicanism, how to understand Stanton's use of racial stereotypes, particularly during her campaign to challenge the exclusion of women's rights from the Reconstruction amendments, has provoked considerable debate among contemporary feminists. She readily shifted between expansive statements about equal rights for all citizens to brutal dramatizations of the plight of native-born white American women that belittled black and immigrant men. Why did she fail to see beyond her personal limitations or remain apparently so disinterested in the lives of black, poor, and immigrant women who faced much greater restrictions on what they could do than women of her class? Her contradictory positions might be related to her parents having been wealthy slave owners, a painful truth that she never fully confronted and, indeed, as Kathi Kern has argued, concealed in her memoirs. She was, in several senses of the word, a daughter of the American Revolution whose personal contradictions reflected the young republic's difficulty in deciding what groups of people were fully entitled to "liberty and justice for all."

The problem posed by Stanton's racism leads to a broader set of questions concerning the limitations built into the liberal, individualist feminism of which she is such a fine exemplar: Is the assertion of every woman's fundamental right to individual agency the sine qua non of the feminist project, or does such a privileging of individualism inevitably reinscribe privilege and social hierarchy among women? Can we historically contextualize the racism evident in Stanton's work in order to clarify the conditions that have limited the ability of all groups to secure recognition of their rights to equal protection under the law and equal participation in the life of the nation? How can recognition of the racism marking almost all early white feminists contribute to refounding a contemporary multiracial alliance for women's rights? These questions are not easily answered, but each of the essays in this volume explores how Stanton's career and thought illuminates issues of vital importance for contemporary feminists.

In the end, it is difficult to separate Stanton's understandings of racial and cultural difference and inequality from her conceptions of democracy precisely because the commitment to democracy is not a state of personal grace that descends on each person as she or he joins the struggle to make society truly just. Democratic faith is necessarily flawed, indeed imbued with the very inequalities against which it protests. It grows from a desire for change that addresses the conflicts inherent to each person's place in society. It is one's own deficiencies, one's own failings, one's own sometimes invidious discontents, rooted in a deep connection to a society that is profoundly unjust, that makes an individual see the imperative for change.

The degree to which Stanton held to ideas of racial difference and inequality shows how one radical thinker was held back by the very structures of thought and feeling that stimulated her to reject the conventional ideas of her time in the first place. In the gap between her rejection of and her insistent participation in American society is the space where her most provocative ideas formed, important precisely because they emerged out of the conflict of having to work with the ideas that were ready at hand but were not truly capable of supporting her quest for self-sovereignty. But to what other ideas did she have access for thinking about the contradictions of her life except those available to her living in a society where the patriarchal institutions she opposed secured the limited but real privileges she enjoyed?

The Essays

The first section of the book consists of eight interpretive essays grouped into four pairs. The essays aim to situate Stanton within her own historical context while assessing what she has bequeathed to the modern feminist imagination. We begin with the contributions of Vivian Gornick and Christine Stansell. They provide contrasting overviews of Stanton's legacy for contemporary feminism. Gornick finds Stanton a powerful inspiration for women who claim the right to think, speak, and argue an opinion. As such, Gornick contends, Stanton provides the foundation for a genuine, lasting individuality among women. Whether Stanton was right or wrong on specific issues is of less importance than her having been a woman engaged in the life of the mind.

By contrast, Stansell sees Stanton as a leader who permanently weakened the U.S. women's rights movement by breaking the ties that had

allowed black and white women to work together. Stansell proposes the lifelong antiracist Sarah Grimké as an alternative founding figure for American feminism. Both essays are provocative in the broadness of their claims. Together, they set out the terms of a basic debate over how to assess Stanton and the liberal roots of feminism in the United States.

The essays by Barbara Caine and Richard Cándida Smith place Stanton in the major Anglo-American intellectual currents of her day. Caine juxtaposes Stanton's writings against John Stuart Mill's world-famous tract on women's rights, *The Subjection of Women* (1867), the single most influential nineteenth-century book defining the contours of liberal feminist thought. Comparing Stanton with Mill, Caine finds Stanton the more satisfying successor to their eighteenth-century predecessor, Mary Wollstonecraft. Stanton acknowledged Mill's influence, but went beyond his arguments to explore the complexities of women's existence. She insisted on the multiple fronts along which the campaign for expanded freedom of action for women had to proceed.

Moving to the last decade of the nineteenth century, Richard Cándida Smith's essay interprets Stanton's single most famous piece of writing, "Solitude of Self" (1892), in the context of emergent ideas about the self. "Solitude of Self" is properly understood as a manifesto for the recognition and cultivation of female individuality. Nevertheless, Cándida Smith demonstrates that Stanton assumes that a community of robust dialogue and collective inquiry is required for the cultivation of strong individuals. Influenced by ideas ranging from transcendentalism to positivism, she pointedly challenged the authority of theological institutions to define or limit women's spiritual experience.

The essays by Ellen Carol DuBois and Kathi Kern focus on Stanton's analysis of the institutional anchors of women's subordination. DuBois concentrates on Stanton's examination of marriage in the decade before the Civil War. Stanton crafted her critique of women's conjugal subordination by combining elements of the temperance and socialist traditions. The contradiction built into liberal feminism, between regarding women as individuals entitled to full, equal rights and as members of a social class with distinct interests, was already evident in her earliest sustained efforts to delineate a feminist approach to marriage reform.

After the Civil War, Stanton shifted her attention to religion as the institutional mainstay of women's subordination, and this is the subject of Kathi Kern's paper. Kern examines Stanton's controversial critique of Christian misogyny in terms of a growing interest in free thought and

positivism. Stanton's positions remain interesting because, unlike many nineteenth-century utopians, she did not simply reject marriage and religion as inescapably oppressive institutions. After demonstrating how marriage and Christianity limited women, Stanton proposed strategies for reorganizing these institutions so they might foster and expand women's capacities.

Finally, Ann D. Gordon's and Michelle Mitchell's chapters consider how Stanton's adherence to then-current ideas of inherent racial difference interacted with her strong democratic and natural rights commitments. Gordon demonstrates that Stanton's positions on race were fluid and contradictory. Speeches and essays containing demeaning racial and ethnic stereotypes also include passages defending the vote as a right of genuinely universal citizenship. Gordon shows that Stanton never abandoned her commitment to universal citizenship rights.

Nonetheless, Michele Mitchell documents the clear influence that scientific racism exercised on Stanton after the Civil War. Stanton's racializing comments were not simply momentary lapses uttered in the heat of rough-and-tumble argument. The racial science to which she subscribed was part of her faith in modernity and scientific rationality even though it was at war with the egalitarian republican values that originally motivated her. These two essays suggest how deeply intertwined Stanton's racism was with the sturdy republicanism of her politics and the questioning modern tenor of her mind. This synthesis of egalitarian and hierarchical perspectives goes a long way to explaining why Stanton's racism, even if shared with most other educated white Americans of her time, is particularly disturbing to contemporary students of the history of feminism.⁵

The Documents

The second section in the book presents some of Stanton's most important writing on the subordination and emancipation of women. They are organized to show major developments over a half-century of writing in her analysis of the sources of woman's oppression and of possibilities for emancipation.

As a young woman, Stanton had read widely in her father's law library and discussed cases with him. Selections 1 through 3 make clear that her legal training allowed Stanton to bring to the early women's rights movement a keen sense of the role of law in creating inequality between the

sexes. In the initial selection, her first major speech, presented in 1854 to the New York state legislature, Stanton argued that laws depriving women of the right to control their own property or income tutored men that women lacked authority to define their own needs. In the second selection, Stanton's analysis of contract and property law extended her earlier argument that law shaped everyday life to explain why marriage within U.S. legal principles resulted inevitably in female subordination. The third selection, a speech from 1860 on divorce, is a particularly fine analysis of interaction of state and family, in which she justifies full female participation in governance on the grounds that even the most intimate of personal relationships are shaped by law.

The antislavery movement fundamentally shaped the understanding Stanton had as a young woman of American law as a system for producing inequality. Like slaves, the wives and daughters of free male citizens were dispossessed of property and without control over the product of their own labor. Like slaves, they were legally subordinate to a patriarchal master whose absolute power corrupted him. Yet, as evident in her 1860 speech delivered just as Southern secessionists prepared to plunge the nation into civil war, Stanton's dedication to women's emancipation was her primary allegiance. She argued, even at that moment, that the prejudice against sex is more deeply rooted than that against color because only a minority of men directly profited from their control of slave labor, while the great majority of them exercised control over their wives' bodies and earnings.

Stanton welcomed the Civil War as a chance to complete the unfinished republican revolution of 1776. She hoped that a Union victory would sweep away the most powerful and entrenched opposition to the emancipation and enfranchisement of all Americans, especially including African Americans and women. But the promise of national Reconstruction began to give way earlier for women's rights advocates than for other radical reformers. By 1870 the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution were ratified, and not only were women's demands for recognition of their citizenship rights ignored, but the exclusion of women from the national electorate was now made explicit in the new language added to the Constitution.

Nonetheless, into the 1870s the temporary reinvigoration of republican thought in the wake of emancipation continued to find expression in many of Stanton's speeches on behalf of political rights for women. She enthusiastically embraced the constitutional and philosophical argument

that the natural, inherent rights of all citizens embraced the right to vote. She took the position that the federal constitution required no further modification to sustain voting rights regardless of sex. As Susan B. Anthony and other suffragists put this theory, known as the "new departure," to the test by presenting themselves at polling places as fully enfranchised citizens, Stanton turned her pen to elaborating a radical natural rights argument for woman suffrage.⁶ At this point, however, Stanton embraced, indeed celebrated, the power of the national state. Reversing many of the precepts of classical liberalism, Stanton argued in "National Protection for National Citizens" (1877) that the federal government was the essential guarantor of equal rights for all, regardless of race or gender.

For Stanton the failure of post-Civil War politics to secure a full democracy meant that the revolutionary phase of American life had come to an end. Privilege, custom, and habit had prevailed over the logic of ideals. Universal personhood faded as a practical goal, though the ideal continued to motivate her. Political emancipation for women would be a longer, harder battle than she had expected, but it was clear to her that any battle for democracy had to center firmly on the status of women.

In the aftermath of Reconstruction, Stanton explored new theoretical frameworks that helped her grapple with the contradictions of woman's position in modern life. Surely the family was the foundation of collective life, and even more certainly woman was the anchor of the family. Why then did liberal society with its rhetoric of universal self-sovereignty make it so difficult for women to resist their status as dependents of the families built around them? Darwin's theories, positivism, free thought, socialism, anthropology, and higher biblical criticism all provided raw material for her ongoing effort to explain why women's status remained so stubbornly degraded.

She wrestled with these difficult questions in essays that are stunning for their wide variety of starting points. In "The Subjection of Women" (1875), Stanton located the opposition of her contemporaries to women's rights in a historical context extending back from English common law to the ancient Hebrews and Greeks. In claiming their rights, women would have to redeem humanity's religious and civil legacies by stripping away overlays that Stanton considered vile superstition. Feminists would develop an alternative historical interpretation that supported modern demands for justice and equality. Stanton expressed in clear terms a conclusion that grew in importance as she aged: transforming women's status required transforming religion, law and education all at the same time.

She understood that feminists had to be vigilant to prevent modern science as well from being made into a tool serving the enemies of women's rights. In "The Other Side of the Woman Question" (1879), Stanton intervened in the debates over evolutionary theory among well-known male scientists and physicians such as Edward H. Clarke of Harvard University that natural and sexual selection led to women being both intellectually and physically inferior to men.⁷ She inverted their use of Darwin so that she could suggest that continued inequality between the sexes would eventually weaken the republic and endanger the future of the human race. In an argument redolent with eugenic overtones, Stanton saw that legislated inequality threatened the species by biologically "selecting" for female weakness, a position pointing forward to the more fully Darwinian argument that Charlotte Perkins Gilman made in 1898 in her book *Women and Economics*.⁸

In these and other writings, Stanton had come to understand that emancipation was not a single moment but an extended process of reform occurring simultaneously in the personal, the civic, and the legal realms. She regarded legal reform as essential for women to be able to discover their capabilities, but as still only one step in a much bigger struggle. Her focus had shifted from recognizing the inherent, natural rights of all women and men to creating a society that actively fostered individuality for all, an argument that found its most eloquent expression in "Solitude of Self," the farewell address she delivered when she retired from the presidency of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1892. In "Solitude of Self," Stanton proposed to women that they must never surrender the truth they learned from sharing experience, and this has remained a fundamental postulate of feminism throughout the twentieth century.⁹

In addition to constituting a mature restatement of the political philosophy that had led her to press for women's civil and political rights, Stanton's defense of individual rights has a powerful personal dimension: her sober confrontation with her own mortality. She was seventy-six years old, still vibrant intellectually, but facing the increasing physical limitations of old age. By the last decade of her life, Stanton had lost the cheery optimism of her early writings. She recognized that every aspect of human society assumed the subordination of women. The process of unraveling millennia of gender inequality involved every aspect of women's lives. Every time a woman decides to do something new, she changes the institutions within which she lives, as she encounters and challenges the resis-

tance built into their very warp and woof to the idea that all humans are equal.

As Stanton surveyed the forces holding back the development of women's potential, she insisted with new conviction that Christianity was the most insidious and powerful foe of women's emancipation and as such of the republic. Her frank opinions on American religion made Stanton a scandalous figure during the last decade of her life. Even the woman suffrage organization she had founded officially condemned her because she sought to alert women to the damage that the nation's religious traditions/beliefs did to them. As examples of her writing on the role of religion in repressing women's self-sovereignty, we include "Has Christianity Benefited Woman?" (1885), "Worship of God in Man" (1893), and selections from *The Woman's Bible* that present her radical rereading of Genesis (1895) as well as an interpretation of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in the Gospel according to Matthew. Her critique of religion became bolder in part because of what she was learning from new anthropological research on ancient societies. Her short article "The Matriarchate, or Mother-Age" (1891) reveals Stanton's effort to understand the contemporary implications of theories that patriarchy was a relatively recent historical phenomenon that had violently overthrown an earlier era of woman-rule.¹⁰

In the 1890s, Stanton confronted the development of a women's movement that was growing large and powerful but yet diverged in many essentials from her vision of human freedom. What she had proclaimed in 1848 at Seneca Falls was not a movement for votes for women but for self-sovereignty. The final selections from Stanton's writing reflect this difficult evaluation of a movement that was at once fifty years old yet only just beginning. "Divorce versus Domestic Warfare" (1890), "Significance and History of the Ballot" (1898), "Progress of the American Woman" (1900), and "Degradation of Disenfranchisement" (1901) recapitulate long-standing themes in variations that incorporate Stanton's newfound appreciation for the long battle that remains before all women can take for granted their rights to make the basic choices affecting their life, liberty, and happiness.

We hope that the issues raised by the analytical essays and primary documents in this collection help to make clear that the dilemmas Stanton confronted are inherent to any struggle to define democracy in the United States. To grasp the complexity and variety of her thought, Stanton's insights and contradictions need to be understood in their specific historical context precisely because her effort to develop a critical understanding of

women's subordination reveal the conflicts within the American thrust toward expanded democracy and social reform. Stanton articulated with clarity the desperate longing to be included fully in a world where equality has been an inspiring notion but not yet the firm basis for how people of different backgrounds, talents, and perspectives live together.

NOTES

1. We have not included either "The Declaration of Sentiments" or "Solitude of Self" in the selection of documents included in this volume because of space limitations. These important works can be easily located on the Web at the site for *Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (PBS-WETA), <http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html?body=resources.html>, http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html?body=solitude_self.html. See also Web site for Gifts of Speech, <http://gos.sbc.edu/s/stantoncady4.html> and <http://gos.sbc.edu/s/stantoncady1.html>; the Women's History Web site, <http://womenshistory.about.com/library/misc/blsolitudeself.htm>; or the site for Votes for Women, Selections from the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848-1921 (Library of Congress: American Memory, Historical Collections for the National Digital Library), http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?nawbib:2:./temp/~ammem_5zgO::. The most complete source of Stanton's writings remains *The Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979), for which a guide has been prepared by Patricia G. Holland and Ann D. Gordon, eds. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992); for the most comprehensive selection of Stanton's most important writings on all subjects, see Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997-2006), four volumes published, and more planned. See also Ellen Carol DuBois, ed., *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony Reader: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992); Stanton's *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences, 1815-1897*, republished with an introduction by Ellen Carol DuBois by Northeastern University Press in 1993, and *The Woman's Bible*, reprinted in 1988 by Ayer Press and in 1999 by Prometheus Books.

2. See Lois W. Banner, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Radical for Women's Rights* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980); Elisabeth Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

3. Recent books that have addressed aspects of Stanton's contribution to intellectual life include Mary Beth Waggenspack, *The Search for Self-Sovereignty: The Oratory of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989); Mary D.PELLauer, *Toward a Tradition of Feminist Theology: The Religious Social Thought of*

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Anna Howard Shaw (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1991); Kathi Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001); Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

4. See Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Dolores Hayden, *Catharine Beecher and the Politics of Housework* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977); Jeanne Boydston, *The Limits of Sisterhood: The Beecher Sisters on Women's Rights and Woman's Sphere* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Nicole Toncovich, *Domesticity with a Difference: The Nonfiction of Catharine Beecher, Sarah J. Hale, Fanny Fern, and Margaret Fuller* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1997); Barbara Anne White, *The Beecher Sisters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); David Watson, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Charles Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Fritz Fleischmann, ed., *Margaret Fuller's Cultural Critique: Her Age and Legacy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000); Belle Gale Chevigny, ed., *Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings: The Woman and the Myth* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994, revised edition); Jean Bethke Elsh-tain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy: A Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Louise Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Victoria Bissell Brown, *The Education of Jane Addams* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Ann J. Lane, *To Herland and Beyond: The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990); Louise Michele Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

5. "My Stanton, Myself," Kathi Kern, Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Storrs, Connecticut, June 2002.

6. For more on the new departure, see Ellen DuBois, "Taking the Law into Our Own Hands: Women's Direct Action Voting in the 1870s," in *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism*, ed. Nancy Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsack (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

7. Edward H. Clarke was a prominent professor of medicine at Harvard University who in 1873 published his book *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for the Girls*. Long known for his advocacy of equal rights, Clarke stunned the women's rights movement when he reversed course to argue that scientific evidence had demonstrated that intellectual stimulation was harmful to young women. As a trustee of Harvard College, he voted against opening the school to female students. For a discussion of Clarke's argument and the challenge it posed to nineteenth-century feminists, see Michele Mitchell's chapter in this volume; Rosalind

Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 1–27; Louise Michele Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 86–106.

8. See Charlotte Perkins Stetson (later Gilman), *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1899).

9. The argument in “Solitude of Self” seems to look forward to existentialism, but its language and argument clearly reflect the classically Lockean and Scottish Common Sense philosophies that Stanton learned in her youth. The only thing I know for certain, Locke had insisted, is my own existence and the immediate sensations I experience. Stanton added to these simple sense impressions her own experience of both discrimination and inequality. Stanton claimed for her own individual experience a higher standard of truth than the assertions of male experts that women were necessarily, inherently, inescapably, empirically men’s inferiors.

10. In 1861, Johann Jakob Bachofen’s *Das Mutterrecht* (The Matriarchy) argued that the vestiges of matrilineal descent found in aspects of Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern culture were evidence of a lost matriarchal stage, in which women had ruled society. His conclusions were supported by Henry Sumner Maine’s *Ancient Law* (also published in 1861), Fustel de Coulanges’ *The Ancient City* (1864), John Ferguson McLennan’s *Primitive Marriage* (1865), and the American Lewis Henry Morgan’s *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871) and *Ancient Society* (1877). All these scholars argued that matriarchy had been a phase of simple democracy and communal ownership of property. With the subjugation of women came the establishment of military-based monarchies, private property, and the enslavement of conquered peoples. More recent scholarship on nineteenth-century theories of an earlier matriarchal stage in social development can be found in Cynthia Eller, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Matriarchy Study Group, *Politics of Matriarchy* (London: The Group, 1979); Philippe Borgeaud, *La Mythologie du matriarcat: L’Atelier de Johann Jakob Bachofen* (Geneva: Droz, 1999); Deborah Gewertz, ed., *Myths of Matriarchy Reconsidered* (Sydney: University of Sydney Press, 1988).

Part I

The Essays