

WOMEN OF THE SPHERES:
EARLY AMERICAN WOMEN RHETORICIANS

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ABSTRACT

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Early American women rhetoricians wrote, published, and edited essential texts that contribute to American rhetoric; however, many of these texts have been overlooked and lost. This dissertation reclaims, remaps, and analyzes a selection of early American women's editorials, treatises, essays, and conduct books and connects their unique rhetorical approaches to those of the first Sophists.

The feminist sophistic approach redefines the theory and practice of rhetoric to include women's works and a field of rhetoric more equitable toward women. A series of four feminist-sophistic criteria may be used to analyze early American women rhetoricians' works. First, a specific rhetorical method did not restrict early American women rhetoricians, and social circumstances shaped their rhetorical approaches; they expressed themselves in varied approaches and used available resources to argue for

change. Second, early American women rhetoricians, similar to the Sophists, created knowledge through discourse, which they identified as an intellectual and collaborative method of generating and gaining knowledge. Third, early American women rhetoricians realized the power of language; as the Sophists needed language as a tool to reform a growing government, women needed language to create their sphere in a male-dominated world. Finally, early American women rhetoricians focused on creating better citizens, similar to the way in which the Sophists educated students in civic duty.

This dissertation focuses on women in terms of their gendered rhetorical space. Women of the public sphere includes works by Margaret Fuller and the authors of the Lowell Offering and focuses on independence and equality, civic duty, reliance on scientific evidence, and polite learning and provided women with the opportunity to argue for female education, reform, and equality. Women caught between the spheres demonstrate how women's roles shifted from same and equal to different and equal. In this section the overlapping of rhetorical spaces is discussed through an analysis of works by Judith Sargent Murray and Sarah Josepha Hale. The third section, women of the private sphere, identifies women as a class apart from but equal to men and includes the analysis of conduct books by Catharine Beecher, Lydia Sigourney, and Lydia Maria Child.

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CHAPTER ONE:
EARLY AMERICAN WOMEN AND RHETORICAL BEGINNINGS

When we consider the beginnings of American knowledge, the founding of our country, and our ways of knowing, thinking, and being American, we tend to recall our first forefathers—an elite, collective group of educated, white men of British descent who, through their writing and speaking, shaped the United States as we know it today. However, such a limited view excludes the contributions of “other” voices, including those of Native Americans, Africans, Continental Europeans, and particular to this study, those of early American women. Only recently have literary critics, editors, and rhetoricians begun to define early American women’s roles beyond those as mothers of future legislators and wives of great men. Early American women, who deserve recognition as rhetoricians, wrote, spoke, and contributed to public life, and they helped shape what Americans today know, say, write, and do.

Rhetoric and men have a lengthy history; rhetoricians have studied men’s rhetorical acts, speaking and writing, from classical to present times. For centuries, men’s orations and texts have defined rhetoric. Furthermore, male-defined eloquence has been the aim of humanistic education. In Reclaiming Rhetorica, Andrea Lunsford claims

that “the realm of rhetoric has been almost exclusively male not because women were not practicing rhetoric—the arts of language are after all at the source of human communication—but because the tradition has never recognized the forms, strategies, and goals used by many women as ‘rhetorical’” (6). Women’s rhetorical history does not parallel that of men’s mainly because women have been discouraged from public speaking and publishing. In addition, feminist rhetorical history remains obscure, as women’s works have been unacknowledged, neglected, and lost.

The study of feminist rhetorical history is problematic because of the lack of acknowledged feminist oralities and feminist texts. However, recent anthologies have included a slight selection of early American women’s writings, particularly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and scholars have recovered “obscure” texts, such as Lowell Offering articles and Margaret Fuller’s New-York Tribune columns. Many early American women’s writings remain obscure, such as the body of work by Sarah Hale and the once popular proliferation of etiquette books. This dissertation will attempt to recover or “remap” some of those missing and often overlooked texts. Cheryl Glenn in Rhetoric Retold defines remapping as more than simply locating new rhetorical places. She says:

Given what we know about the writing of any intellectual history, given what we know about the limits of any one methodology, particularly an inchoate one, we cannot simply measure out the distance between women,

chart their places on the rhetorical map and travel. Instead, any remapping must locate female rhetorical accomplishments within and without the male-dominated and male-documented rhetorical tradition that it interrogates. (10)

Following Glenn's definition of remapping, this dissertation will also challenge traditional rhetorical history,¹ which excluded women's contributions, and reclaim and analyze from a feminist-historical and feminist-sophistic perspective the rhetorical works of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century American women rhetoricians.²

This dissertation will focus on women rhetoricians defined according to their use of rhetorical space. In the nineteenth century as well as in the twentieth, the separation of women's and men's rhetorical space has been referred to through the metaphor of sphere. In "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History" (1988), Linda Kerber traces the use of this metaphor in describing the gendering of women's space. She states, "When they used the metaphor of separate spheres, historians referred, often interchangeably, to an ideology imposed on women, a culture created by women, a set of boundaries expected to be observed by women" ("Separate" 17). In Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910 (2002), Nan Johnson uses the term "rhetorical space" "to chart which rhetorical situations carry political power and which do not" (175). Johnson identifies the American woman's home as women's rhetorical space and separates the home from public forums (175). Although she does

not refer to the nineteenth-century concept of separate spheres, which is clearly defined by Hale and other nineteenth-century writers, Johnson does separate the private from the public and links most women to the private and men to the public. Johnson claims that “a few publicly acclaimed nineteenth-century women may have gained temporary access to the powerful public rhetorical space of the podium and pulpit, the majority of middle-class, white women were being encouraged to see their rhetorical identities as a reflection of their roles as wives and mothers” (14). Nicole Tonkovich in Domesticity with a Difference (1997) more obviously uses the concept of separate spheres; however, she acknowledges that she uses it for a different purpose than many twentieth-century scholars. Tonkovich states:

The figure of separate spheres has recently come under close literary and historical scrutiny best exemplified by the work of Linda Kerber, who has argued that although nineteenth-century writers invoked the notion of separate public and private spheres, the force of this construction was primarily as a trope, an ideological construct taken too literally by twentieth-century scholars. Such uncritical acceptance has obscured the overlapping ideas and interdependence of these “spheres” in theory, practice, and text. Thus, I intend to show the extent of the contradictory behaviors made possible under this trope. (xiv)

In this dissertation, combinations of Kerber's, Johnson's and Tonkovich's definitions of rhetorical space are used to identify early American women rhetorician's rhetorical goals.

Women in the public sphere will be discussed as those who focused on independence and equality, civic duty, reliance on scientific evidence, and polite learning and argued for female education, reform, and equality. These women used rhetoric to encourage women's emergence into the public arena and to assert women's need for autonomy. By joining with other women, women in the public sphere, with their collective strength, built mutual respect for one another and declared their individuality and independence. In this section of the dissertation, eighteenth-century rhetorical approaches will be used to analyze works from Margaret Fuller as well as the Lowell Offering, which will provide the basis for understanding women's rhetorical goals and approaches in the public sphere.

Two women rhetoricians, Judith Sargent Murray and Sarah Josepha Hale, refuse to remain trapped in a specific sphere. Through their rhetorical approaches they demonstrate how women's roles shifted from same and equal to different and equal, and they show how the public and private spheres overlap and are interdependent based on current epistemologies. In this second section of this dissertation, Murray and Hale are discussed to represent women caught between the spheres. Although grouping Murray and Hale is uncommon, since they do not write during the same time period, their rhetorical positioning between the two spheres provides a connection. In this section of

the dissertation, Republican Motherhood; the rise of the separate sphere concept, as a result of male-dominated industry; and women's ambivalence in rhetorical goals,³ resulting from the gendering of space, will be introduced.

The third section, rhetoric in the private sphere, identifies women as a class apart from but equal to men. These women rhetoricians declared that women needed an education similar to that received by men; however, the purpose of female education was to improve conditions within the home, not within the male public sphere of politics. In this final section, rhetorical approaches of women's conduct books by Catharine Beecher, Lydia Sigourney, and Lydia Maria Child will be identified and critiqued, mainly in connection to belletristic rhetoric, to show their rhetorical goals.

Although the terms public rhetoric and private rhetoric are not one widely used in discussion of American rhetoric, they do provide a means of reclaiming women's rhetorical approaches, goals, and acts. Since few studies have focused on this group of women, no definite terminology in relation to women's rhetoric exists. However, the terminology largely assigned by James Berlin in Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century Colleges (1984) will be used to identify traditional rhetorical approaches, goals, and acts. Berlin writes:

When speaking of the features they [George Campbell and Hugh Blair] share in common, I shall use the term "eighteenth-century rhetoric."

George Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric (1776) and its offshoots will

be called “psychological rhetoric.” Hugh Blair’s influence, stemming from his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (1783), will be indicated by the term “belletristic rhetoric.” (7)

Terms, including “Scottish Common Sense Realism” and “romantic rhetoric,” will also be defined according to Berlin.

Defining Legality, Education, and Tradition: Early American Women’s Limitations

The history of early American women indicates the necessity of remapping American rhetorical history. Although American society evolved on the Lockean principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it denied these “certain inalienable rights” to American women. Antebellum American women had few legal rights; they were denied higher education and had limited public involvement. In post-Revolutionary America, some women began to fight for individuality; however, the majority of women sought marriage. Marriage was the romanticized goal of the early American woman’s life and often the only success she could achieve. For the early American woman, failure to marry was synonymous with failure in life. Women considered fortunate married early and disappeared into their husbands’ homes.

Under English common law, a married woman and her belongings were the property of her husband.⁴ Once married, she no longer owned the property that had been hers before her wedding day. Not only did her prenuptial holdings become the property

of her husband, but also whatever she earned after marriage and any property purchased with her earnings belonged to her husband. If an unhappy bride left her husband and returned to her childhood home with her trousseau, her husband could sue for the loss of his wife's service and the value of her pre-wedding clothes, which were legally his. Mothers who left their husbands had no control over the destinies of those children, and fathers could apprentice an unborn child without the mother's consent. If the father died while the children were small, the widowed mother was considered an unfit caretaker for them, and someone else, usually a male relative, was appointed as guardian by the courts. Since men were legally responsible for the conduct of their wives, unless their wives committed treason or murder, men disciplined and monitored them and legally chastised them when their wives did not "please" them. If a wife were abused, she had little recourse; women did not have the right to take legal action independently of their husbands (Blackstone 354-366). Since no woman could vote or take legal action, patterns of abuse and the limitations of married women were perpetuated. A woman's second option, which was rarely taken, was to remain single. A single woman could own and control her property, earnings, and legal actions, but because most women had no training or experience, the management of property was hazardous without the help of educated professionals—men. Thus, remaining single usually guaranteed failure for the uneducated woman.

In antebellum America, upper- to middle-class white girls in the East could easily attain a moderate amount of learning. Most girls were taught to read Bible scripture and to write their names, but they received little formal education beyond basic reading and writing skills. Upper-class girls' formative education, taught at dame schools,⁵ focused on cleaning, sewing, cooking, and rearing children. Slaves and western and southern females did not have the same advantages. Most girls, especially those of under-privileged social and economic classes, were not encouraged to go to school; they were encouraged to stay at home, where they were responsible for housekeeping and running the household—the private sphere.

A few fortunate girls, such as Margaret Fuller and Catharine Beecher, were taught at home by well-educated family members. The family member, usually a father or a brother, taught these girls classical languages and literatures, the true marks of higher education. Since most of these girls had access to home libraries, they were able to read proficiently and continued their education through self-learning. Some girls from upper-class families, after completing dame school, went to boarding schools, such as the Philadelphia Young Ladies Academy (established in 1787), which provided formal education to girls for the first time. At this boarding school, girls learned grammar, arithmetic, geography, and oratory. Later, in 1814, Emma Willard opened an influential female seminary in her home in Middlebury, Vermont, and in 1821, she opened another seminary in Troy, New York. In her seminaries, women received an education equal to

that received by men; however, most instruction focused on training women to become teachers, an unappreciated occupation. Several schools followed Willard's curriculum, including those founded by Catharine Beecher, who opened a seminary in Hartford, Connecticut (1823) and Mary Lyon, who opened Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in Massachusetts (1837). Ohio's Oberlin College, which was founded in 1833, more than two hundred years after Harvard, was the first college to enroll women and to grant women a bachelor's degree. However, at Oberlin, women remained segregated from men's training and studied in the "female" department. Antioch College, also in Ohio, followed Oberlin's lead in 1852. By the Civil War, only three private colleges and two state universities, Utah and Iowa, admitted women (Chamberlain 3).

The rise of formal education for women was met with opposition. Although these educational opportunities appeared, many men and women rejected the concept of an educated woman. They felt that women would distract men from intellectual pursuits, that intellectual activity was contrary to feminine nature, that education was harmful to women's health and reproductive ability, and that women would lower the intellectual standards set by men (Chamberlain 5). Many viewed women's education with apprehension and suspicion, since it would distract them from their household duties, allow them to compete intellectually with men, and make them immoral freethinkers.

Many men published propaganda against the cause of female education, and especially against providing higher education for women. Furthermore, Colonial

Americans read Richard Allestree's The Ladies Calling (1673), the Reverend James Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women (1789), and Dr. John Gregory's A Father's Legacy to His Daughters (1788). These writers insisted that women accept the inequalities between the sexes and praised the natural softness, delicacy, and helplessness of females. Additionally, the widely read Jean Jacques Rousseau argued that women did not need formal education and should be minimally educated for the benefit of men. In Emile (1763), he states, "To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young" (328). Similarly, in America, Dr. Edward Clarke wrote an extremely influential book, Sex in Education (1873), in which he uses biological explanations to prohibit women from entering universities. He explains that "subjecting" women to the stresses and strains of higher education would deflect physical energy away from their bodies, causing their reproductive organs to shrink, thus making them unable to bear children. Clarke, a Harvard professor, argued that because women needed blood to sustain development of the ovaries and womb, they should not divert their blood to the brain. Clarke claimed that women's natural abilities included not the ability to write or speak but to give birth, rear children, and perform household tasks.

In addition to the misogynist propaganda, universities continued to deny women higher education by refusing to admit them. Furthermore, authorities at colleges and

universities did not allow women in their libraries or at their lectures. It was not until after the Civil War that state universities accepted women, and Harvard University did not offer examinations to women until 1874 (Solomon 52-54). Denied access to higher education, many women received an education through alternate routes; Margaret Fuller learned from her father, and Sarah Josepha Hale was taught by her brother.

Even if a woman did receive an education equal to that of a man, she was denied a public forum. Women were not allowed to publicly practice rhetoric; they were not allowed to speak in public. The rhetorical tradition has long propagated the notion that public speaking is a masculine endeavor.⁶ In Man Cannot Speak for Her, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell says, “Women who formed moral reform and abolitionist societies and who made speeches, held conventions, and published newspapers, entered the public sphere and thereby lost their claims to purity and piety” (10). Campbell continues to explain that the traits of purity and piety were considered female and that once they were lost, a woman lost her respectability. If a woman were given the rare opportunity to speak in public, she did so at her own risk. Usually a man presented her speech, she published it privately, or she presented it in a non-threatening way. However, public speaking opportunities were limited; few women spoke in public during pre-Civil War times, and most women were prohibited from performing in, or even attending, the popular lyceums.

Beyond legal limitations and the lack of educational opportunities, public opinion also hindered the growth of a woman’s individuality and public activity. Custom

restricted a woman to household duties, and most women embraced these duties. They may have done so because a woman's only control was over her household. She organized the household, scheduled her daily chores, and reared her children. Later, with the help of women activists such as Emma Willard and Catharine Beecher, women entered the teaching profession and with the rise of American industry, women found jobs as seamstresses at the textile mills. Society accepted women in these positions for two primary reasons: female labor cost less than male labor, and men found these lines of work undesirable.

Claiming Space: Early American Women's First Rhetorical Approaches

In order to make change and fight for independence, women needed a public voice; however, women could not vote, so they sought alternative means of voicing their positions. The most available and least expensive means of arousing public interest was oral discourse delivered from the public platform. In early America, the public podium served as the reform platform; in churches and public lecture halls, speakers sought to arouse popular sentiment against the inequalities of the day. However, public orations by women were unacceptable. Male-dominated agencies silenced women who entered the public sphere, making the Scottish elocutionary movement exclusive to men. For example, in a pastoral letter of 1837, the General Association of the Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts rebuked Sarah Grimké and Angelina Grimké for presenting a

speech on slavery in the South. The ministers called attention to the “dangers which at present seem to threaten the female character with wide-spread and permanent injury” (General Association 305-6). A few years later, in 1852, Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) rose at a mass meeting in New York, held by the Sons of Temperance, to speak to a motion. The association authorities quickly silenced her by stating that “the sisters were not invited there not to speak but to listen and learn” (qtd. in O’Connor 35).

Consequently, many women found alternative means of publicly sharing information. Some wrote anonymously or pseudonymously. For example, Judith Sargent Murray often signed her treatises as “Constantia,” and Margaret Fuller marked her articles in the New-York Tribune with an asterisk sign. Women also found alternative ways to publicize their opinions through oral communication. In some cases, a woman would ask a man to deliver her speech. Catharine Beecher asked her younger brother to deliver a speech for her in solicitation of funds for her schools (Beecher, True Remedy 100). Additionally, Rev. Mr. Peck read one of Emma Willard’s addresses on female education (O’Connor 26), and Mr. Elihu Burritt read Willard’s speeches on common schools⁷ (Lutz 211). Willard, an education pioneer, was encouraged by Governor De Witt Clinton in 1819 to present her essay “A Plan for Improving Female Education” to New York Legislature. Willard presented her speech, but she presented it seated. Alma Lutz, Willard’s biographer, writes, “Although this [speech] was very unconventional for a woman, she did not hesitate, so great was her enthusiasm for her

Plan. . . . She impressed them not as the much-scorned female politician, but as a noble woman inspired by a great ideal” (28). By remaining seated, she remained feminine and non-threatening, and simultaneously, Willard took advantage of her public forum.

Although they are frequently unrecognized as rhetoricians, many early American women, such as Sarah Joespha Hale, Lydia Sigourney, and many others, used rhetorical strategies to combat these limitations and identify rhetorics specific to early American women. These rhetorical styles, based on collective approaches rather than on chronology, may be identified as public, public/private, and private. The use of gendered space, whether their components emerged from male-centered spheres or derived from communities of women, allowed women to publicly share their opinions and attempt to persuade their limited audiences to agree with them.

In American during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, homiletics and Ramism prevailed, rhetorical study focused on style and delivery, and the traditional rhetorics of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian were criticized. In 1636, the works of Peter Ramus and Omar Talon comprised the first Harvard University curricula. Most early American rhetoricians incorporated Talon’s works into their own: William Dugard (1606-1662) summarized Talon in his popular Rhetorices Elementa (1650). Later, in higher education, textbooks by Ebenezer Porter (1772-1834), who taught homiletics at the Andover Theological seminar, continued to focus on the skills of public speaking. His most popular textbook, Analysis of the Principles of Rhetorical Delivery (1827), was

written for preachers and was well read by scholars at Harvard, Yale, King's College (later Columbia), and College of New Jersey (later Princeton). At these colleges, rhetoric professors focused on sermon writing and oratory since the goal of these schools was to produce ministers of Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches.

Many American women received the equivalent of an education in rhetoric through the church. The graduates of the American colleges brought their rhetorical skills into the pulpit, and through mimesis, the women in their congregations transformed the ministers' strategies into strategies of their own. Primarily, prophetic and conversion rhetoric allowed women a means of presenting their public opinions. Using religiosity as the most available means for presenting their ideas publicly, they focused on reform, specifically on moral and Christian duty. Religiosity, redefined as morality, continued to influence women's rhetoric throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Women rhetoricians who used prophetic rhetoric presented themselves as vessels for the Lord's message. Women were encouraged by the church to hold informal sessions of prayer and meditation and to perform "general charity work connected with the church" (Holliday 39). In the sixteenth century, Anne Hutchinson, often referred to as the first American feminist and first American woman minister, conducted such assemblies, and, at first, members of the church praised her. In her meetings, women gathered to discuss the sermons of the previous Sunday, and Hutchinson, in the manner of a Puritan preacher, led the group in interpreting God's message. As she realized her

strength as a prophetess, Hutchinson rewrote the Puritan “Covenant of Works,” which relied on obedience to the statutes of church and state and taught the need for outward signs of God's grace. Hutchinson, as a vessel for the voice of God, implemented her “Covenant of Grace,” which permitted her followers to communicate directly with God, without the intervention of male Puritan clergy, and to claim that moral conduct and piety should not be the primary qualifications for “visible sanctification.”

However, once Hutchinson began to use prophetic rhetoric to assert female self-reliance and individuality, the community condemned her Boston weekly meetings. The Puritan clergy, threatened by meetings, charged Hutchinson with blasphemy and labeled her as an Antinomian. They based their charges not only on her illegal covenant, but also on her deviation from the Puritan woman's role. As a Puritan woman, Hutchinson's place in the great hierarchy came after that of man; therefore her Covenant of Grace threatened the religious and patriarchal chain of being, since it could lead to the collapse of distinctions of birth, education, and wealth.

Because of Hutchinson's prophetic rhetoric, the assembly passed a resolution in 1636, which stated, according to Winthrop:

That though women might meet (some few together) to pray and edify one another; yet such a set assembly, (as was then in practice at Boston,) where sixty or more did meet every week, and one woman (in a prophetic way, by resolving

questions of doctrine, and expounding scripture) took upon her the whole exercise, was agreed to be disorderly, and without rule. (234)

However, Hutchinson resisted this submissive state and placed herself in direct contact with God, and in 1636, Hutchinson was charged with heresy and banished from Massachusetts Colony.

Later, prophetesses, who usually worked as female evangelists in the political arena, continued to use prophetic rhetoric. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) in “Appeal to the Women of the Free States” (1854) asserts that women, as mouthpieces of God, must prevent the injustices of slavery. In this work, Stowe persuades her readers that God designed women as moral superiors and gave them the duty of preserving Christian morality. She claims that since women are moral superiors, God depends upon women as vessels for relaying His messages. Stowe writes, “However ambition and the love of political power may blind the stronger sex, God has given women a deeper and more immovable knowledge, in those holier feelings, which are peculiar to womanhood, and which guard the sacredness of the family state” (427). Stowe argues that because of the God-given gift of morality, women must care for the family and use their abilities to serve as Prophetesses of holiness.

Furthermore, in this same text, Stowe urges women, as moral mouthpieces of the Lord, to engage in traditionally male roles. Stowe encourages Christian women to “understand the subject [of slavery], and to feel that . . . she is bound to give her influence

on the right side,” “to get up petitions . . . to our national legislature,” to “employ lecturers to spread the subject before the people of their town or village,” and to earnestly pray for nonviolent resolution (428-29). Since Stowe appeals to women’s duty with the support of God, she properly encourages women to enter the public sphere as educated, politically bound, Christian citizens.

In addition to Stowe, Lucy Stone, who was also a nineteenth-century supporter of antislavery and women’s rights, used prophetic rhetoric in addressing the National Woman’s Rights Convention of 1855. As she argued for a revision of traditional women’s roles, she evoked the Lord’s paternal authority to justify her claims. In the preserved copy of the speech, she asserts, “I have the confidence in the Father to believe that when He gives us the capacity to do anything He does not make a blunder” (223). In this sentence, Stone reminds her audience that God designed women’s abilities. She uses prophetic rhetoric to claim that by questioning women’s abilities, which God provided, one also questions God’s creative powers. Using prophetic rhetoric to link women and God, she allows her largely Christian audience no choice but to accept women’s God-designed abilities.

After appealing to audience’s faith in God’s authority, Stone claims, “I believe He gave yearnings and longings to be filled, and that He did not mean all our time should be devoted to feeding and clothing the body” (223). Stone continues to leave little room for the audience to rebuke her position as she situates her argument as the word of God. In

this sentence, Stone uses prophetic rhetoric to argue that God gave women yearnings for tasks larger than taking care of husbands and children. If God designed women to perform only household tasks, women would not desire a larger public responsibility, similar to the one that Stone bravely pursued. As a prophetess speaking before a large assembly, Stone, relaying God's message, exemplifies the God-given abilities of women, which reach beyond the tasks of housekeeping.

Although conversion rhetoric is based on the same foundation as prophetic rhetoric, religiosity, it does not depend upon women as mouthpieces for the Lord. Instead, women related their individual conversion experiences. Candidates for church membership customarily related their conversion narratives, and spirituality and repentance governed these speeches and expressive works.⁸ Conversion narratives, which often included a good Puritan's entire life story, are often found in spiritual autobiographies, such as John Winthrop's Christian Experience (written in 1637), and private letters, such as Anne Bradstreet's (1612-1672) "To My Dear Children," published in 1867. They provide readers with testimonies, confessions, and other stories of converting from a sinful or evil existence to a Godly lifestyle.

Mary Rowlandson (1637-1711) uses conversion rhetoric in her autobiography titled A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (1682). In this captivity narrative, she describes God's testing of her faith. Captured by the Algonkian Indians, Rowlandson faces hardships of living as a female prisoner; during her

captivity, Rowlandson endures the harshness of the Native Americans, the death of her young daughter, and the separation from her husband and community. However, once her husband ransoms her, she confesses her sins, reasserts her faith in God, and writes her captivity narrative. Rowlandson's use of conversion rhetoric is found in the conclusion of her narrative:

I can remember the time, when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together; but now it is otherwise with me. When all are fast about me, and no eye open but His who ever waketh, my thoughts are upon things past, upon the awful dispensations of the Lord towards us; upon his wonderful power and might in carrying us through so many difficulties, in returning us in safety, and suffering none to hurt us. (46-47)

In this selection, she not only reaffirms her Puritan faith in God, but also expresses a woman's determination to survive physical hardships. In the narrative Rowlandson describes her strength, "I have been in the midst of those roaring Lions and Savage Bears, that feared neither God nor Man, nor the Devil, by night and day, alone and in company, sleeping all sorts together; and yet not one of them ever offered least abuse or unchastity to me in word or action" (43). Rowlandson believes that she was saved from physical harm by confessing her sins and recognizing God's powers.

Not only does confession provide Rowlandson, a housewife, with the ability to survive captivity, but also it aids her to publish her work. Puritan culture repressed

women's speaking and writing, and the publishers' decision to publish her account was exceptional. Because Rowlandson attested her experiences as God testing her faith, the Congregationalist clergymen, including Increase Mather (1639-1723), who probably aided in the writing of this confession, supported the publication of her narrative.

Conversion rhetoric permitted Rowlandson to become known as a popular spiritual woman, housewife, survivor, and author. Her text was one of the most popular works of the seventeenth century and went into its fifteenth edition by 1800.

Throughout the eighteenth century, women authors continued to use conversion rhetoric as a means of asserting their opinions publicly; however, they took conversion rhetoric out of the religious context and applied it to social expectations. Hannah W. Foster (1759-1840), for example, in her sentimental novel The Coquette; or the History of Eliza Wharton (1797) uses conversion rhetoric to exemplify woman's attempt for freedom in a morally corrupt world. In this epistolary work, Eliza Wharton tries to fulfill her desire for freedom "unbiased by opinion" (13). However, as she lives her life as a coquette, Wharton soon finds that her desired happiness is unattainable, and she is shunned by society for her flirtations. She writes, "Having incurred so much censure by the indulgence of a gay disposition, I am now trying what a recluse and solitary mode of life will produce" (135). Throughout the novel, Wharton learns that freedom and happiness are unattainable in a male dominated world. She discovers that womanly

morality and traditional expectations are women's only happiness, so, on her deathbed, Wharton writes a confession to her friend Julia:

And now, my dear Julia, recommending myself again to your benevolence, to your charity and (may I add?) to your affection; and entreating that the fatal consequences of my folly, now fallen upon my devoted head may suffice for my punishment; let me conjure you to bury my crimes in the grave with me, and to preserve the remembrance of my former virtues, which engaged your love and confidence; more especially of that ardent esteem for you, which will glow till the last expiring breath of your despairing ELIZA WHARTON. (156)

As she dies from consumption, Wharton realizes her downfall, which is an attempt to be an independent woman; asks for forgiveness; converts from her immoral ways; and accepts death as her just punishment. On the surface, the moral of this story prescribes how a young woman should lead her life: she should resign herself to marriage and make virtuous choices.

Using conversion rhetoric, however, Foster demonstrates more than didacticism. By adding Wharton's confession, Foster exemplifies women's lack of the power to obtain happiness and social, political, and legal status except through their husbands. She reveals women's limited lifestyles through Wharton's struggle in a corrupt, secular, market-driven world. In Wharton's final confession, Foster uses conversion rhetoric to

allow her main character freedom from social expectations as Wharton asks her friend for forgiveness and accepts her punishment in death.

Prophetic and conversion rhetoric played on male rhetorical approaches and allowed women to develop opinions backed by the authority of religion, but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many women gradually drifted away from using religiosity as a rhetorical construct. However, they continued a significant tenet of prophetic and conversion rhetorics: morality. Morality became directly connected to women as an innate characteristic and a social duty, and women active in the public arena became known as members of “the moral reform group.” Women reformers continued to increase their visibility throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Traditional eighteenth-century British rhetoric, which was taught in American institutions of higher education in the nineteenth century, was concerned with polite society, and eighteenth-century British rhetoricians focused on four areas: classical rhetoric, elocutionary rhetoric, belletristic rhetoric, and psychological rhetoric (Golden and Corbett 12). These four areas shaped the writings of the two important eighteenth-century rhetoricians: George Campbell and Hugh Blair. These two rhetoricians, who are later accompanied by Richard Whately, largely shaped rhetorical instruction in institutions of American higher education (Berlin 7).

Both Campbell and Blair embraced Scottish Common Sense Realism. “Scottish Common Sense Realism locates reality in two discrete realms, the spiritual and the

material, and posits a set of separate and likewise discrete mental faculties constituted so as to apprehend each” (Berlin 6). In Common Sense Realism, individuality is emphasized, since the individual’s senses and faculties, not other’s past observations, determine reality.

Campbell and Blair focus on different areas of Common Sense Realism.

Campbell attempted to ground rhetoric in human nature and was significantly influenced by the psychological-philosophical theory of human communication. Campbell accepted the following tenets of Hartley, Locke, and Hume: “(1) the mind is divided into faculties; (2) the experimental method is superior to syllogistic reasoning; (3) ideas are held together by the laws of association; and (4) belief and persuasion are dependent upon the liveliness of an idea and the force of emotional appeals” (Golden and Corbett 15).

Campbell, a professor of divinity, focused on the connection of elocution and religion and used his theory of human nature to defend faith. Blair also adopted Common Sense Realism, but he focused on belletristic rhetoric. Blair focuses on rhetorical style and argues that students who learn to critique written texts well will write well. According to Berlin, Blair “underscores rhetoric as being concerned with written rather than oral discourse” (9).

According to Berlin, Campbell and Blair’s rhetorical theories were “wholeheartedly embraced by Americans in the nineteenth century” (9). Early American women rhetoricians, who learned of these British rhetoricians from their fathers and

brothers, often used eighteenth-century rhetoric in their approaches; however, their rhetorical strategies often deviate from traditional rhetoric. An analysis of early American women rhetoricians may be done with traditional rhetorical terms; however, a new construct is needed to adequately encompass the range of early American women's rhetorical approaches, goals, and acts. Susan Jarratt's feminist-sophistic approach provides this new construct.

Making a Connection: Early American Women Rhetoricians and Sophistry

In some respects, early American feminist rhetoricians and the first Sophists are parallel in their rhetorical approaches. As pointed out by Susan Jarratt in her postmodern definition of feminist sophistic, the first Sophists and many feminist rhetoricians connect through similarities in rhetorical approach. In *Rereading the Sophists*, Jarratt traces "a part of that process of intellectual marginalization through which the sophists take on a striking similarity to a discursive construct of woman" (64). A major similarity between the first Sophists and women rhetoricians is their ability to provide flexible alternatives to traditional rhetorics. This similarity allows for a feminist-sophistic reading of early American feminist rhetorical texts and acts.

First, both the Sophists and early American women functioned as teachers, and their teachings directly influenced civic virtue and argued for equality. During the age of Pericles, the Sophists practiced and taught *dissoi logoi*, and they provided their students

with training in moral reasoning and discursive ability and urged them to become responsible citizens. As democratic government emerged, the Sophists' teachings flourished in Athenian democracy because citizens gained the ability to vote, hold office, and bring suit against any other before a jury, and the Athenians depended upon the Sophists to teach them the ability to argue their cases eloquently and to function as respectable citizens.

After the Revolutionary War, American feminist rhetoricians practiced and taught civic virtue in the home and emerged as creators of female educational institutions. The women's movement began to flourish in post-Revolutionary America during the rise of American independence; women argued that freedom and equality were rights to be given to women, slaves, and other oppressed groups as well as to men. Oppressed groups needed early American rhetoricians to provide them with a means to seek equality and respect as American citizens.

Beyond flourishing as teachers during times of government reorganization, the Sophists and early American feminist rhetoricians show parallels within their roles as rhetoricians and within their rhetorical approaches. First, neither group was considered mainstream. They were both denied the right to participate in government. The first Sophists were alienated from civic roles based on Athenian birth right laws. Anyone not born within Athens could not function as a citizen, and most of the Sophists, such as Gorgias, who was from Sicily, and Protagoras, who was from Northern Thessaly, were

not born in Athens. Similarly, based on gender, women were denied the right to participate in governmental duties. Constitutional law allowed only men to participate in holding governmental office and to vote.

Additionally, both groups were criticized for their liberal beliefs. Plato, Aristotle, and others who wanted to preserve an elitist point of view, which allows only those of the highest social order the ability to speak publicly and participate in civic activities, criticized sophists. Additionally, Sophists were rejected because their rhetorical approaches were considered manipulative and faulty, since they relied on doxa and not on truth. Early American women rhetoricians, who wanted to enter the public sphere, experienced similar criticism. Many American men and women felt that women belonged in the home and had a moral obligation to rear children and take care of domestic duties; thus, women were often barred from public involvement. The early American women who felt that women deserved the same equalities as men and left the home for a public life were criticized by those men and women who attempted to relegate women's roles to home and to exile them from any public activities.

Similarities between the first Sophists and early American feminist rhetoricians largely exist in their rhetorical goals. Both the first Sophists and early American women focused on teaching civic virtue. The Sophists taught their students the importance of civic responsibilities, and early American women taught their children, primarily male children, the importance of upholding high moral and civic honor. Additionally, both the

Sophists and women argued for equality. Sophists wanted a democratic society where all (excluding women, slaves, and foreigners) were considered equal citizens, regardless of economic and social status, and many women argued for gender equality in the revolutionized America. Lastly, both the Sophists and women used human perception as the basis for determining correctness. They claimed that since humans measure all things, truth and other human-determined matters are relative. This last issue caused controversy for both groups. Plato and his followers rejected the use of human perception and argued that the philosopher through dialectic discovers higher truth. Early American men, specifically those who followed the Ramist tradition, argued against human perception and claimed that truth is learned through higher education, religion, and natural male instinct. Although women did participate silently in religious activities, they were denied a higher education as well as a natural instinct known only to men.

The strongest parallel between the Sophists and early American feminist rhetoricians exists in their continuous questioning of dominant definitions. Both groups destabilized traditional social and political institutions by questioning existing hierarchies and epistemologies, such as the before mentioned issue of human perception as a valid means of measurement. They brought new approaches to education, civic roles, and equalities. The Sophists questioned elitist thought that restricted education as well as governmental duties to those born to wealthy families. Early American women rhetoricians questioned their restricted roles; they attempted to enter institutions of higher

education, sought public speaking roles, and demanded reform in the lack of equality between men and women.

Similarities between the Sophists and early American rhetoricians are found in contemporary definitions of feminist historical rhetoric. Contemporary feminist historical rhetoric redefines the theory and practice of rhetoric to include works by women and a field of rhetoric more inclusive of women, minorities, and other marginalized groups. The Sophists similarly redefined current rhetorical goals in order to create a more inclusive body of rhetorical works. Susan Jarratt points out this relationship in Rereading the Sophists. She claims:

Showing how feminist theory and literary critical work enacts practices adumbrated by the democratic rhetoric of the sophists provides a way to recover a range of marginal voices in the history of rhetoric. Reciprocally, outlining the connections with sophistic rhetoric in current feminist reading and writing may offer increased leverage for dislodging the patriarchal institutions whose foundations were laid during the sophists' time. (79)

Jarratt challenges the loss of sophistic rhetoric that commonly informs constructions of Western epistemology and proposes a similar relationship between the Sophists and current feminism. The combination of these similarities between the Sophists and the contemporary definition of feminist historical rhetoric forms a methodology, which may

be used to analyze early American women rhetoricians' written works and public acts.

The following four criteria may be used to analyze early American feminist rhetoricians' work and to interpret it as a significant contribution to the rhetorical cannon.

First, early American women rhetoricians were not restricted by a specific rhetorical method, and their rhetorical approaches were shaped by their social circumstances. Like the Sophists, these women were flexible in their rhetorical approaches. Since early American women were not formally educated, many were not directly exposed to prominent, traditional rhetoricians, such as Ramus, Bain, Blair, and Goethe. They received most of their education through second-hand sources—from brothers and fathers, from reading a limited number of books, or from observing other orators. Additionally, early American women rhetoricians expressed themselves in many ways and were not bound by an absolute standard. For example, for ethos some women relied on anonymity and others relied on their roles as mothers and wives as means for constructing arguments. Some women presented their arguments orally and others relied upon written texts. Some women presented arguments through fiction, and some did so through non-fiction.

Additionally, early American women rhetoricians' social circumstances shaped their rhetorical approaches. Women rhetoricians used their available resources to argue for change. Following the Sophists' claim that truth is limited by human perception, early American women rhetoricians considered their issues to be moral, valid concerns;

however, their means of persuading an audience was based on their limitations, not necessarily upon an understanding of Platonic Truth. Many women's rhetorical approaches largely did not and could not depend upon empirical evidence or truth because of their limited education, limited audiences, and limited amount of public presence. Therefore, they used their social contexts as housewives, mothers, editors, moral leaders, teachers, and factory workers to argue for women's reform in areas such as education. For example, Catherine Beecher argued for improved female education by appealing to men's desires. Addressing an audience of men, who would also financially support her female academies, she developed an argument on how educated women would better men's lives, rather than on the improvement of women's lives. Although her main concern may have been improving women, she uses rhetoric to appeal for men's financial support for the establishment of women's seminaries.

Second, early American women rhetoricians created knowledge through the act of discourse. Similar to the Sophists, these women accessed knowledge through discourse. They viewed rhetorical discourse as an intellectual method, a way of generating and gaining knowledge. Although women did not engage in public debate frequently as the Sophists did, they did engage in conversation through women's clubs, such as Anne Hutchinson's discussion groups in Boston in 1635, improvement circles at the mills in Lowell in the 1830s, and Margaret Fuller's Conversations in Boston in the 1840s. These meetings consisted primarily of white, middle-class, middle-aged, Protestant women who

studied art, music, history, geography, and literature. Their primary activities refined women's abilities to speak and write.

Since the publication and distribution of American women's texts was limited, most women relied on conversation as a means of creating ideas and sharing them within their communities. Women met to discuss the latest lectures, to share the education provided by their fathers, brothers, and husbands, and to relay information from current and classical publications. These meetings provided many women with their only opportunity for an education and a chance to share ideas, and early American women's collaboration was founded in the act of discourse. Women orally engaged in creating knowledge within groups, pointing to women's knowledge as collaborative. For example, Sarah Hale, as editor, published women authors in Godey's Lady's Book, and this periodical was circulated to a female readership. Women readers shared their copies of Godey's, read these female authors, and gathered to discuss the writings.

Third, early American women rhetoricians used persuasive language to construct their "sphere" and understood the power of language. Although all rhetoric focuses on the use of powerful language, the Sophists and early American women use powerful language to construct rhetorical space. Just as the Sophists needed language as a tool to reform a growing government, women needed language to create their sphere in a male-dominated world. Women published rhetorical treatises, gave lectures, met in women's clubs, edited magazines, read magazines, and wrote fiction. Early American women

rhetoricians used persuasive forms of language, such as the sentimental style, to argue for change within the domestic and civic arenas. For nineteenth-century American women rhetoricians, style was probably connected to Blair's belletristic rhetoric. For example, women used the style of persuasive language in treatises that argued for improving female education. Furthermore, women argued for a voice in the household as they made domestic duties a science and argued for a public voice through publications and rising numbers of public orations.

Finally, early American women rhetoricians focused on creating better citizens. Just as the Sophists strove to educate their students in civic duty, many women took it upon themselves to use their moral strengths to reform society. Because they were mothers, women such as Judith Sargent Murray argued that they were the primary educators of children, especially of those who would grow into the men who would become future legislators. Similar to the Sophists' pedagogy, a mother's teachings strove to develop civic leaders, who could build a better society. Like the Sophists, women rhetoricians were concerned with human knowledge and conduct. For example, the Republican Motherhood rhetoricians argued that women needed education in order to improve the education of their sons.

Using the combination of feminist rhetorical historicism and rhetoric of the first Sophists, this dissertation will add to the growing field of women's rhetoric by focusing on early American women and their rhetorical works and acts. Although this study

focuses on feminist historical rhetoric, it does not separate women from their cultural context. Agreeing with Barbara Biesecker, this dissertation will “remain firmly committed not only to recovering women’s rhetorics, but also to struggling for their integration into the canon” (236-37). Since rhetoric is not static but is constantly in flux as it interacts with male-dominated factors, such as economical, political, and religious forces, the works of women will be analyzed as well as mapped to expand the significance of women’s rhetorical approaches, goals, and acts.

The chapters of this dissertation, as previously mentioned, will reclaim early American women’s rhetoric through the examination of women’s unique rhetorical discourse and their connection to first Sophists’ rhetoric. This dissertation will contribute to the study of American rhetoric in general and American feminist rhetoric in particular by examining and reclaiming early American women’s rhetoric. It will add to the rhetorical tradition by reclaiming, synthesizing, and analyzing early American women’s rhetoric.

Although the strong tradition of American male rhetoric ignores female authors, educators, orators, and students, and early American women’s rhetorical works have long been unrecognized, a tradition of feminist rhetoric does exist. A major movement of the late twentieth century has been to define past women’s voices and to recognize their rhetorical acts. One means of reclaiming these female rhetoricians is through the growing field of women’s rhetorical historicism. By looking backward at unquestioned

rhetorical scholarship and questioning, testing, and opening it to advance the rewriting of rhetorical history, historical inquiry into early American feminist rhetoric exemplifies that women's rhetorical acts empowered action.

NOTES

¹ Many contemporary women scholars use the term “historiography” to define the addition of women’s texts to the rhetorical traditional. For example, Glenn writes, “Historiography, reading it crookedly and telling it slant, could help me shape—remember—a female rhetorical presence” (8). Susan Jarratt in Rereading the Sophists (1991) uses the term “gendered historiography” to define “a woman’s search for a different kind of history” (xii). Although the study of this dissertation supports these definitions, the term “historiography” is intentionally avoided to prevent confusion between a rhetorical study, which this dissertation attempts, and a history.

² The term “rhetorician” is rarely used in connection to women. For example, Shirley Logan in “We Are Coming” uses the term “female intellectual” (xi). A few writers, including Nan Johnson in Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910, use the term “rhetorician” in reference to women. Johnson uses “rhetorician” to refer to orators (16). In this dissertation, “rhetorician” defines eloquent writers who use rhetorical approaches or strategies for particular rhetorical goals. “Rhetorician” is used to empower women who have been overlooked in traditional rhetorical canons. The term “rhetorician” is considered a synonym to “rhetor.”

³ Johnson says, “The complicated cultural field that nineteenth-century rhetorical performance represents comes into sharper focus when we realize that the gender agenda of the parlor-rhetoric movement testifies to a deep ambivalence in postbellum America toward women’s rights and their claims to rhetorical space that remained unresolved in American life even at the turn of the century” (Gender 17). In this dissertation, ambivalence will be discussed as a rhetorical strategy, synonymous with dissoi logoi, of antebellum women writers.

⁴ Married women did not own property until 1839 when Mississippi passed an act to allow women to own and control property. Several other states followed Mississippi’s lead.

⁵ Parents left daughters with a neighborhood “Dame,” who taught children letters, numbers, and prayers.

⁶ For example, educated Renaissance women, such as Laura Cereta and Christine de Pisan, were banned from public speaking on the “grounds that it was immodest for women to speak in public, before the gaze of an audience of men” (Bizzell and Herzberg 483-84).

⁷ Lutz reports that according to Mrs. Willard it was “too great a strain on the proprieties for a woman to read her own address before such an assemblage” (100).

⁸ For a similar argument on the use of conversion as a means of public presence, see Barbara Epstein's The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America (1981).

CHAPTER TWO

RHETORIC IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE:

MARGARET FULLER AND AUTHORS OF THE LOWELL OFFERING

“Society is now so complex, that it is no longer possible to educate woman merely as woman; the tasks which come to her hand are so various, and so large a proportion of women are thrown entirely upon their own resources.”

(Margaret Fuller, Memoirs, 1852, 142).

“Yes, woman can climb the Hill of Science, and let her go; let her bind the laurel and the myrtle with the roses which already bloom around her brow, and the wreath will be more beautiful; but she should guard well the flowers, lest the evergreens crush, or overshadow them, and they wither away, and die.”

(Ella, The Lowell Offering, 1841, 135)

Women’s public lives derived from American Enlightenment philosophies, which were dominated by male political thinkers such as Benjamin Franklin (1706-90), Thomas Paine (1737-1809), and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), and which focused on liberty, reason, equality, and social duty. Enlightenment thinkers trusted human reason to solve crucial problems and establish the essential norms in life, and the application of reason

dissipated superstition, prejudice, and barbarity and freed humanity from its reliance on authority and unexamined tradition. In America, eighteenth-century rhetoric, which was implemented in American institutions of higher education during the nineteenth century (Berlin 9), stemmed from the scientific, political, psychological, and philosophical reasoning and writings of Europeans, particularly Francis Bacon (1561-1626), John Locke (1632-1704), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In American universities, eighteenth-century rhetoric evolved from Ramism and focused on a combination of Scottish and classical rhetorics. Eighteenth-century, Scottish rhetoricians, such as Hugh Blair (1718-1800), George Campbell (1719-96), and later Richard Whately (1787-1863), influenced American rhetoric in the areas of classical rhetoric, elocution, belle lettres, common sense, evangelical concerns, psychology, and philosophy. John Witherspoon (1723-94), who brought Scottish eloquence to America, focused on a blend of classical and Scottish rhetoric in his Lectures on Moral Philosophy and Eloquence (1810). Ebenezer Porter (1772-1834) continued the Scottish and classical traditions of eloquence in his Analysis of the Principles of Rhetorical Delivery (1827) and The Rhetorical Reader (1831). Good taste, common sense, and duty to social and cultural ideas dominated the curriculum as universities strove to produce men of “polite learning.”

Some early American women seized the foundations of eighteenth-century rhetoric, particularly the concepts of equality and civic duty. Women, to defend equality, used eighteenth-century rhetoric to claim that women’s intellectual abilities matched

those of men and that mind had no sex. Nina Baym claims, “The implicit, enabling claim that women are capable of an intellectual training ‘equally’ demanding with men’s features a precept that Enlightenment (more precisely, Cartesian) thought made possible: that mind has no sex” (Feminism 105). Although the body continued to be recognized as gendered, the mind was not, and the split of the mind and the body justified women’s entrance into a previously all-male, public world of discourse. Early American women, such as Margaret Fuller and the authors of The Lowell Offering, adopted the Lockean theory of “Universal Reason” as equally a property of men and women, and since the establishment of the American republic demanded new types of work, early American women used universal reason as rationale for entering the public sphere. Consequently, women published original texts, gave speeches, worked in factories, and challenged the private sphere of woman.

During the rise of women’s public rhetoric, arguments supporting the notion that women’s duties as mother, wife, and educator should solely benefit men’s morality began to falter. Instead, the ideas of collaboration and individuality began to dominate women’s writings. Although the combination of collaboration and individuality differ from eighteenth-century rhetoricians’ “established religious, political, and social arrangements,” Berlin points out that “the American belief in individualism, equality, and self-government” are not “altogether incompatible” with the rhetoric of Campbell, Blair, and Whately (32-33). Berlin states that the “emphasis on common sense seemed to

support the democratic glorification of the common person, endowed by God with faculties that gave him freedom and dignity. In other words, Common Sense Realism was safe, politically and religiously” (22). Although early American women may not have found the public sphere “safe,” they did grasp onto the ideas of collaboration and individuality.

In early America, those two ideas, complementary in effect despite seeming distinct and contrary, formed the basis for what many modern critics have identified as feminist rhetoric. In the early 1800s, American women collectively argued for rights such as controlling property and earnings, receiving an education, and attaining legal status. They achieved these goals by gathering their strengths within a community of women and individually applying them.

These two opposing ideas of individuality and collaboration are found throughout the early nineteenth century as Transcendentalists, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), use them to emphasize the importance of self-reliance and the collaborative contribution of individuals’ skills and knowledge to the community. In early American feminist rhetoric, the combination of individuality and collaboration applies not only to the development of the individual woman but also to communities of women. Women gathered and built a collective strength

Women united as social reformers, which lead many critics to claim the women's movement developed as an offshoot of the abolitionist movement; however, the beginning of the American feminist probably began, not with the collective struggle for the end of slavery, but with the organization of women's groups, clubs, and associations, which rallied to remedy issues such as the oppression of women and slavery.¹ Early American women banded together in rejection of the isolation to which urbanization relegated them. As men increasingly worked outside of the home, women spent more time in the domestic sphere, isolated from adult companionship and fully engaged by the duties of wife and mother. Their only escape from this oppressive life was through benevolent associations and women's clubs, which allowed them access to the knowledge and responsibilities that had been denied them. These groups, particularly literary groups, encouraged women to explore their independence and individuality, separate from men, and engage in civic duty.

Collaborative discourse is only one of the means by which these women rhetoricians resembled the Sophists. They also used varied rhetorical approaches to prove themselves equal to men. They understood the persuasiveness and power of language and used language to distribute their writings in the public sphere. Additionally, they continued to identify themselves as the altruistic sex and worked to improve society.

Margaret Fuller (1810-1850)

A leader in Transcendentalism and the women's movement, Margaret Fuller largely contributed to and is often given credit for developing women's public rhetoric.² By offering her Conversations and by writing Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845)³ as well as numerous articles, she supported women's rights in the public sphere and urged women to collaborate to reject male dominance and strive for self-improvement. Controversial in her own time because of her independence and public life, Fuller insisted that women should develop intellectually to improve the female self, as opposed to using their intellect solely for the benefit of husbands and children.

Studies on Fuller are numerous. Recent biographical studies include Charles Capper's Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life—The Private Years (1992), which covers her early life, and Joan Von Mehren's Minerva and the Muse (1994), which focuses on her later life. Important nineteenth-century biographical materials include James F. Clarke, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and William Henry Channing's edition of Memoirs of Margaret Fuller (1852); Julia Ward Howe's Margaret Fuller (Marchesa Ossoli) (1883); and Thomas Wentworth Higginson's Margaret Fuller Ossoli (1884).

All of these biographical works note the instrumental role Fuller's father played in educating his eldest daughter Margaret. Unlike that of most girls, Fuller's education did not focus on domesticity. Under her father's guidance, Fuller read Ancient Greek and European authors and studied Greek, French, and Italian. Beyond her father's home

schooling, Fuller attended Miss Susan Prescott's Young Ladies Seminary, where she studied history, geography, philosophy, mathematics, and science. In her later years, she continued to teach herself by reading major Enlightenment texts, including contemporary philosophers such as Goethe, and women authors, such as Germaine de Staël and Maria Edgeworth.

After her father's death, to support herself and her family, Fuller began a teaching career. She first taught at Bronson Alcott's Temple School and later at Greene Street School, where she taught from Whately's rhetoric. Bravely, she resigned her teaching career to focus on writing. During her early writing career, she completed a translation of Goethe and accepted a position as editor of The Dial (1840-1842). Later she taught a series of classes, or Conversations, to provide educated women with the opportunity to practice, share, and implement their learning. During the five-year course of her Conversations, Fuller gave women a public place to think and discuss topics such as Greek mythology, art, and roles of women.

Of Fuller's works, the two most famous and often cited are Summer on the Lakes (1844) and Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845). Summer on the Lakes, a piece of travel literature, recounts her journey through Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan, during the summer of 1843. This work includes a mix of literary genres from journals to short sketches. In Woman in the Nineteenth Century, Fuller's most well-known work, Fuller uses eighteenth-century rhetoric in her arguments for women's independence. In this

work, her goals are twofold: she proves that women need and have the same right to freedom as men, and she defines womanhood in terms fundamentally different from those imposed by tradition. For example, she argues for freedom and a new definition of womanhood by urging women to choose careers of their choice: women, if they have the proper skills, can be “sea-captains” and “carpenters” (Woman 102). Fuller also uses feminist rhetoric in writing Woman in the Nineteenth Century as a type of conduct book, one which differs from those that Beecher⁴ and other women rhetoricians of the private sphere published. Unlike most conduct books, Fuller’s goal is not to train women to become good mothers and housekeepers for the betterment of their husbands and sons; it is to teach them to use their minds and talents outside of the home. In Woman in the Nineteenth Century, Fuller says:

So much is said of women being better educated, that they may become better companions and mothers for men. . . . But a being of infinite scope must not be treated with an exclusive view to any one relation. Give the soul free course, let the organization, both of body and mind, be freely developed (56)

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Fuller does not use Republican Motherhood as a tool for argument; she refutes the tenets of Republican Motherhood and blames men for positioning women in the domestic sphere. She argues, “Ye cannot believe it, men; but

the only reason why women ever assume what is more appropriate to you, is because you prevent them from finding out what is fit for themselves” (Woman 36).

Fuller argued for female independence through rejecting the traditional female roles. She found the bourgeois household, which Catharine Beecher strove to develop, to be bleak, dreary, and boring, and she deemed talk of “Woman’s Sphere” and “Woman’s Mission” to be repulsive. She felt that women should “hold property not by permission but by right” and should “take an active part in all great movements” (Memoirs 139).

Unlike Beecher and Emma Willard, Fuller argues against educating women for domestic duties. She claims, “Society is now so complex, that it is no longer possible to educate woman merely as woman; the tasks which come to her hand are so various, and so large a proportion of women are thrown entirely upon their own resources” (Memoirs 142).

Instead, she argues for the “learned woman,” a woman educated for the purpose of self-fulfillment.

Bravely, Fuller asserted her individuality in the male world. As early as 1837, she addressed a dominantly male group called “The Coliseum” (Hoffman 37, 45). One of the two essays she presented to the group boldly questioned the progress of women. Fuller claimed that improvement of women is found in the question of “What are the best ways and means for educating women?” (49). Then she berated American society for forgoing the examples of past history, hinted that progress has overlooked women’s contributions particularly because of the abandonment of arts and literature, and suggested the need for

Americans to root arts and literature in America (50). Her audience questioned her arguments, and a male group member responded to her article by presenting those questions in an essay; however, Fuller maintained her position and her membership in “The Coliseum.”

Fuller’s progressive philosophies on women’s roles and her advancements in literary criticism continued and developed through her contributions to the New-York Tribune. Horace Greeley, editor of New-York Tribune, was impressed with Fuller’s Summer on the Lakes and Dial articles and asked her to work as the Tribune’s literary critic and social commentator, and she did so from 1844-1845. She continued her contributions to the Tribune as foreign correspondent from 1846-1850.

The New-York Tribune, which attracted more than ten thousand readers, assured Fuller of a significant readership for her articles, which appeared two or three times per week. Fuller’s significant influence in the Tribune helped her define American literature, provided her a role as woman in the political sphere, and added to her reform movement. In her articles, she wrote about New York City’s prisons, almshouses, hospitals, and insane asylums. After twenty months at New-York Tribune, she left for Europe, supported by Greeley who paid her to send dispatches. Her travels ended in Rome during the Italian Revolution. There she met and married Giovanni Ossoli and had a son, Angelo. The family, one year after the fall of the Roman Republic in 1850, left Italy for

America. Tragically, they all died during this travel in a shipwreck off Fire Island, New York.

Although many studies have analyzed Fuller's more popular works, few have carefully examined her Tribune articles. The quantity as well as the quality of these articles makes them a good representation of Fuller's best work, particularly because they come relatively late in her writing career. Furthermore, they exemplify Fuller's rhetorical approach in defining the self-reliant woman.

Fuller clearly used the New-York Tribune to assert her political agenda. Judith Bean, co-editor of Margaret Fuller, Critic: Writings from the New-York Tribune, 1844-1846, states in her "Introduction," "They [the articles] show that she gained an increased understanding of the opportunities for political action open to women and to intellectuals as she directly considered national political programs and her own role in shaping them through one of the most popular newspapers of the day" (xv). Fuller's position is revealed through her rhetorical approaches, and a sophistic-feminist rhetorical analysis demonstrates how Fuller promoted her agenda. In her appeals, Fuller used a variety of rhetorical approaches, appealed to knowledge through collaborative discourse, encouraged and participated in civic duty, and recognized of the power of language.

Fuller launches her diverse rhetorical approaches, similar to the first Sophists, by writing in response to others' works. Through her reviews of literature, music, and art, Fuller spans various topics such as race as she reviews Henry R. Schoolcraft's Oneota, or

The Red Race of America and the duty of Americans to point out the “hatred of the injurer for the injured” (80). She states:

With the primitive features of the landscape this primitive aspect of human nature was indissolubly united; before the advance of the white settler both vanish, almost with the rapidity of thought, and soon will be but a memory, yet we should wish that memory to be faithful for there was a grandeur in that landscape, and in the figures that animated it, in itself too poetic, to be misused as theme or suggestion for mere fancy pictures. (80)

Fuller continues her defense for the preservation of Native Americans, or at least the memory of Native Americans, by commending Schoolcraft on his recording of Native American legends and mythological tales. Clearly, through this review, Fuller uses Schoolcraft’s work not only to provide a literary critique but also to promote works that portray the injustices suffered by Native Americans and to refute “the vulgar notion that the Indian obstinately refused to be civilized” (82). Fuller also uses her reviews to enlighten her readers on wrongs of slavery in her review of the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. She identifies this autobiography as “a specimen of the powers of the Black Race, which Prejudice persists in disputing” (131).

Fuller’s criticisms on the wrongs of humanity go beyond race discrimination; she writes commentary demanding better treatment of the insane and of women prisoners, defending the rights of the impoverished, and even suggesting revision of children’s

literary education. Additionally, she crosses international lines by reviewing works from countries such as Italy, Germany, and France. Significant to this study, Fuller uses her professional role as critic to argue for gender equality in her articles, such as “The Wrongs of American Women. The Duty of American Women.”

Fuller joins “men’s work” as she establishes political identity in New-York Tribune. She takes a public tone, shapes attitudes toward America’s political conduct, and deviates from women’s well-known private writing. Fuller writes for a large public audience as opposed to a limited audience. She writes to both women and men; she writes to the New Yorker. As Bean states, Fuller’s reader was America (xvii), and through her reviews and her editor’s urging, she focused on reforming resistant mainstream America.

Fuller may have chosen to write anonymously because her critiques presented liberal views or, most likely, because she was a woman presenting public, political, and traditionally male arguments. In any case, following the tradition of many early American women authors, Fuller’s articles were published without revealing the identity of the author; she signed all of her Tribune articles with an asterisk. By using an asterisk instead of her name or simply leaving the articles unsigned, Fuller claims a collection of writings that otherwise might have been attributed to multiple authors. Eventually, Fuller’s asterisk was associated with her name, and readers knew her identity. However, Fuller continued to use the asterisk, which allowed the Tribune to finesse the issue of its

correspondent's gender. Newspapers often published unsigned columns, and since it was unusual for major newspapers to publish general essayists and Fuller's style was not conventionally feminine, her continuation of the asterisk probably provided her with the freedom of a public voice.

Another rhetorical approach Fuller used involves her change in writing style. "In the Tribune she writes for multilayered New York and national audiences rather than a highly educated literati" (Bean xxxii). She shapes her writing for a particular audience. Instead of writing lengthy articles filled with pauses, diversions, and sometimes flowery language, such as those she wrote for The Dial, Fuller writes articles for the Tribune that are short and to the point. Her style is direct, much more direct than she is in other works, such as Woman in the Nineteenth-Century. Additionally, she provides her readers, many of them unable to afford books or the time to read books, with extractions of popular works of the day. By changing her style, she met her audience's needs and increased her readership.

Since the majority of newspaper readers were probably male, Fuller's push for female independence and recognition in the public sphere was a brave venture. However, she did so without a hint of double-speak or so-called female "manipulation," except for the exclusion of her signature. She presented herself with confidence to hostile audiences—audiences who were accustomed to traditional, domestic roles for women. She used plain language to carry her message and delivered it without hesitation.

Unlike many authors of literary criticism during her time, who often focused on male British Romantic writers and male American lecturers, Fuller provides critiques of women authors. Usually, Fuller points out the successes of these women authors and their works, which, as she states in a review of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems, "indicate an intelligence of beauties, rather than regret for defects!" (20). By providing reviews of successful female authors, such as Lydia Maria Child, Lydia Sigourney, Anna Cora Mowatt, Caroline Kirkland, and Elizabeth Barrett, Fuller builds a community of women authors and publicizes their works, which otherwise may not have received such public, wide-spread recognition.

In one of her more forceful Tribune articles on women, "The Wrongs of American Women. The Duty of American Women [sic]" (1845), Fuller sympathizes with two earlier publications: Charles Burdett's Wrongs of American Women. First Series. The Elliott Family; or the Trials of New York Seamstresses (1845) and Catharine Beecher's The Duty of American Women to Their Country (1845). Beginning her article as a review of these two texts, she briefly summarizes them. She points out that both of these works use statistics to indicate the growing number of women working. Then, in the last line of the first paragraph, Fuller uses these texts, which she leaves unnamed, to demand a larger culture for women beyond domestic sphere. In this last powerful sentence of paragraph one, Fuller states, "Full acquaintance with the wrong must call forth all manner of inventions for its redress" (233).

Behind the guise of a book review, Fuller demands that her audience consider alternatives for women beyond the care of her husband's house and children. She claims that women need intellectual culture because of conditions that could send them into the public workforce. She states:

But the most fastidious critic on the departure of Woman from her sphere, can scarcely fail to see at present that a vast proportion of the sex, if not the better half, do not, cannot, have this domestic sphere. Thousands and scores of thousands in this country no less than in Europe are obliged to maintain themselves alone. Far greater numbers divide with their husbands the care of earning a support for the family. In England, now, the progress of society has reached so admirable a pitch that the position of the sexes is frequently reversed, and the husband is obliged to stay at home and "mind the house and bairns" while the wife goes forth to the employment she alone can secure. (234)

After pointing out the reality that women often support themselves and contribute to the family income, she does not contradict the opinion of many women of her time who claim that "the natural order" is best. Instead, Fuller says that she does not rejoice in "an opposite distribution of functions between the sexes," but she realizes that women "must do as they do for bread" (234). "Hundreds and thousands must step out of that hallowed

domestic sphere,” claims Fuller, “with no choice but to work or steal, or belong to men, not as wives, but as the wretched slaves of sensuality” (234-235).

In this article, Fuller goes against the traditional, private roles of early American women. She does so through two approaches. Her first approach directly follows her claim that the reverse of gendered space is inevitable. Fuller remains rooted in the current American epistemology by pointing to Europe as an example instead of America, although many American women were working in the public sphere during this time. By using European examples, Fuller is able to provide credible evidence, but at the same time she keeps the issue of working women distant by not acknowledging American women’s work. In her second approach, Fuller again agrees with the American status quo. She admits that the reversal of women’s roles is painful and against the natural order. In this support, she agrees with most of her readers who base women’s roles on physicality, but also she asks her readers to sympathize with women who have no choice but to enter the public sphere. Fuller claims that women must step out of private life, since such a life is no longer a privilege for most women.

In the middle of this article, Fuller provides her audience with a solution to the problem and shifts the literary review further from a critique and an argument to a solution-based persuasive essay. Fuller’s answer to the problem of a growing number of destitute women is to urge women and men to look to the future and relinquish their hold

on the past. According to Fuller, the future demands “more avenues of employment to women” and work-related educational programs for women (235).

In the remaining half of “The Wrongs of American Women. The Duty of American Women [sic],” Fuller details her solution. She attempts to create a public place for women. First, she provides a list of current job opportunities for women, including domestics, factory workers, seamstresses, and salespersons of fruit, vegetables, and flowers. She then pushes new possibilities, including physicians, priests, writers, musicians, actors, and painters. Finally, she narrows her scope to two professions: nurse and teacher. Women, according to Fuller, are “naturally better fitted than men” for these careers (236). Again, pointing to physicality as well as to dominant epistemologies, Fuller depends on stereotypes of women to defend her claim. She defines women as naturally “superior in tact, quickness of sympathy, gentleness, patience, and a clear and animated manner in narration or description” (236). These innate qualities, according to Fuller, make women excellent teachers and nurses.

Although Fuller briefly mentions the possible role of women nurses, her focus centers mainly on women teachers. Like her contemporaries, including Willard and Beecher, Fuller argues for higher education for females, which would provide women with an education similar to that received by men. This educational process, claims Fuller, would prepare young women for careers as teachers. Also similar to Beecher, Fuller softens her argument by claiming that teaching is good for the development of

young women in the years before they become mothers and wives, since teaching helps them mature. Fuller claims, “These are just the years of leisure in the lives even of those women who are to enter the domestic sphere, and this calling most of all compatible with a constant progress as to qualifications for that” (237). In this statement, Fuller supports her argument not by rejecting domesticity entirely, but by noting that even women who live private lives will benefit from education as well as “practical teaching” (237).

Fuller concludes her argument for educating women and employing them as teachers by playing on her readers’ philanthropic desires. She says:

The plan is offered as the most extensive and pliant means of doing a good, and preventing ill to this nation, by means of a national education, whose normal school shall have an invariable object in the search after truth and the diffusion of the means of knowledge, while its form shall be plastic according to the wants of time. (237)

Knowing that her readership expected her writings to focus on reform, Fuller entices readers to join her cause. She urges them to reform women’s roles. She pushes readers to send women into the public sphere, an arena where women have been shunned.

Fuller frames the conclusion of “The Wrongs of American Women. The Duty of American Women [sic]” by returning to the works she intended to review. In the last three short paragraphs of the article, she refers readers to Burdett’s book for an example of “the hopeless, comfortless, useless, pernicious lives” of working women who “are

capable of this better profession [teaching]” (238). She also recommends The Duty of American Women to the Country as a source for a plan of training women to teach.

Fuller never provides a literary critique on the works although her argument for women entering the public sphere resounds clearly.

Fuller continues her argument that women are men’s intellectual equals. She appeals to her audience by adhering to their ingrained belief system and their desire to reform as well as by pointing out the necessity for women in the public sphere. She urges her readers to accept women in the public sphere, and by writing and publishing her articles semi-anonymously, Fuller bravely takes a public role. Fuller’s various rhetorical approaches and her continuous awareness of her audience’s belief systems allows her to make forceful claims and secure a place for women.

In addition to using various rhetorical approaches, Fuller also parallels the first Sophists’ rhetoric by encouraging discourse through collaborative means. Most obviously, Fuller’s Conversations allowed women an alternative to the oration, lyceum, and higher education, all of which women were largely denied. They not only grew out of Fuller’s desire to earn money⁵ using her self-developed skills, but also out of her desire to educate women and to teach them to respect other women’s minds as well as their own.

In an 1839 letter⁶ to Sophia Ripley, Fuller explains her plans for the Conversations. She describes her purpose as

to pass in review the departments of thought and knowledge, and endeavor to place them in due relation to one another in our minds. To systematize thought, and give precision and clearness in which our sex are so deficient, chiefly, I think, because they have so few inducements to test and classify what they receive. To ascertain what pursuits are best suited to us, in our time and state of society, and how we may make best use of our means for building up the life of thought upon the life of action. (Memoirs 325)

Between 1839 and 1844, Fuller fulfilled these goals as she taught art and mythology to forty Boston women who met at the Transcendentalist Book Shop, owned by Elizabeth Peabody (1804-1894),⁷ each Saturday morning for two ten-week sessions per year.

Fuller's series of liberal arts courses, which were conducted in the Socratic manner, taught daughters and wives of ministers, professors, merchants, high school teachers, and doctors as well as well-known literary figures such as Lydia Maria Child.⁸ Using feminist rhetoric, Fuller provided a means for these women to band together for self-improvement in a setting which not only provides women with a traditionally male curriculum but also with a learning style which suits women's collaborative learning style.⁹

In addition to her Conversations, Fuller suggests the idea of sisterhood in Woman in the Nineteenth Century. She claims that women must take responsibility for one another; women must help the prostitutes, over-worked seamstresses and laundry women,

and abused wives. She emphasizes women's works throughout history and catalogues their achievements to build a community of these women, showing "that no age was left entirely without a witness of the equality of the sexes in function, duty, and hope" (101). Her catalog, which stretches across the world from the ancient past to her present, provides a collection of female literary characters such as Panthea¹⁰ and Leonora; historical personages, such as Aspasia and Queen Elizabeth I; women from the Bible, such as Eve and Mary; women from Egyptian, Greek, and Roman mythology, such as Isis, Proserpine, and Diana; women authors, such as Sappho, Mary Wollstonecraft, Lydia Maria Child and George Sand; and women orators, such as Angelina Grimke and Abby Kelly. Fuller includes this catalog because she felt that women could learn from one another and use what is learned to develop self-trust and self-reliance.

This same catalog is found in her numerous Tribune reviews. By focusing on women authors and praising their works, Fuller builds a community of women writers. By actively discoursing with the texts of women authors, such as Elizabeth Barrett, Caroline Kirkland, and Anna Jameson, Fuller encourages her readership to continue the discourse by reading the works for themselves.

Fuller, similar to the first Sophists, clearly understood the power of language. She used language to reach wide, varied audiences and unite reformers in collaborative actions. Her publications on numerous issues of reform exemplify her trust in the power of language. Furthermore, as editor and critic, she shapes the direction of other author's

language styles, and as Fuller must have considered, the published texts empowered readers to take action.

One striking example of Fuller's understanding of language's power is found in her Tribune review of Anna Jameson's Memoirs and Essays (1846). In this article's subtext, Fuller encourages women to embrace the power of language and to refrain from using text as a means of denigrating both themselves and other women. Fuller, who disapproves of Jameson's self-effacing remarks, claims that women, especially women with positive reputations, such as Jameson, have no reason to make a "great fuss about publishing or not publishing" (476). Women, according to Fuller, should seize the opportunity to write and publish and should not question their motives or abilities. Women, states Fuller, do not "need to be fitted for no other chance than that of growing like a cherished flower in the garden of domestic love" (479). The power of language, which nineteenth-century women rarely attained to the degree of publication standards, should not be questioned, but should be honored, praised, and used for reform—civic benevolence.

Fuller's reform rhetoric is based in what Bean calls "criticism that is more ethically than aesthetically oriented and that moves toward human change and genuine social improvement" (xxii). Similar to the first Sophists, Fuller's priority for understanding and using rhetoric was to promote reform. Her improvement issues span from women's rights to social welfare to prison reform. In her Tribune article titled

“Our City’s Charities” (1845), Fuller debates current social welfare policies. In this text, she calls for a rehabilitation program for “the destitute.” Current prison institutions, notes Fuller, do not prepare inmates for supporting themselves once they are released. She identifies the need for occupational training these inmates so that they may serve their communities as good citizens. In “Asylum for Discharged Female Convicts” (1845), Fuller makes a similar reform appeal. She urges the rich and poor, men and women, to donate furniture, books, and clothes to those women who are incarcerated for making mistakes. Such donations, claims Fuller, will aid in the rehabilitation process of female inmate. She says, “There is a chance of that partial restoration which society at present permits” (135). In this article, Fuller specifically asks those who have leisure time to pity the inmates, who she describes as “little girls huddled in a corner [with] their neglected dress and hair” (136). Through the power of language, in this case through pathos, Fuller encourages readers to save the less fortunate.

Slavery, the abuse of women, the war with Mexico, insane asylums, class distinction, the way we treat others with less money than ourselves—all these are reform issues for Fuller. Through her Tribune contributions, Fuller identifies, breaks down, and explains the need for reform and considers it her duty to do so. By publicly announcing the need for reform, she reminds readers of their civic duties and brings awareness to areas readers would not otherwise consider.

By using sophistic-feminist rhetoric, Fuller promotes her feminist stance, which encourages women to expand their minds, not for the benefit of men, children, or a household, but for the benefit of the female self. As a New York journalist, in a time with journalism was considered an unfitting employment for women, she publicly supported women's rights and urged women to deviate from the accepted standard of womanhood. Her Tribune articles sympathize with the poor and insane, call for the growth of American literature and culture, and promote the advancement of women at a time when women were expected to remain silent, especially on these subjects. Most importantly, through varied rhetorical approaches, collaborative discourse, the power of language, and benevolent acts, Fuller persuaded women to accept and participate in public life.

The Lowell Offering (1840-1845)

The Lowell Offering was established in 1840 by the Reverend Abel C. Thomas in anticipation of the publication of The Garland of the Mills, a collection of sketches, poems, stories, and essays to be published by a self-improvement circle of Lowell's working women.¹¹ In its beginnings, The Lowell Offering featured "A Repository of Original Articles, Written Exclusively by Females Actively Employed in the Mills," as the magazine's front cover boasted. Unlike many women's periodicals of the time, such as Godey's Lady's Book, The Lowell Offering did not focus on domestic tips, children's

fashion, and gardening advice. Instead, it focused on fiction and non-fiction about women working in the mills while maintaining a non-reformist stance.

The magazine gained strength in 1842, when it merged with Operatives' Magazine (1841-1842), another factory women's magazine that was edited by two women, Abba A. Goddard and Lydia S. Hall. The tradition of female editors carried over into the merged magazine, which retained the title of the more popular magazine, The Lowell Offering; it was edited and later owned by Harriet Farley (c.1813-1907) and Harriott Curtis (1813-1889).¹² For five years, The Lowell Offering enjoyed a modest success, but the magazine began to decline when the Ten Hour Movement gained momentum and Irish immigrant labor began to replace the women workers, and the magazine eventually failed.

History on The Lowell Offering is found in Benita Eisler's The Lowell Offering (1977), Philip Foner's The Factory Girls (1977), Harriet H. Robinson's memoir Loom and Spindle (1898), and Lucy Larcom's autobiography A New England Girlhood (1889). In these books, Francis Cabot Lowell (1775–1817), the founder of the first total production factory in the United States and owner of the Boston Manufacturing Company cotton mill, is acknowledged as the pioneer of the United States textile industry; however, he created much more. From his entrepreneurial enterprise, grew a community of women, women who prided themselves on independence, hard work, and intellect. Enticed by the highest wages offered to women anywhere, young women left their

teaching jobs and the farms of Massachusetts and surrounding areas. They came to Lowell to earn money for their families and their dowries and to engage in one of the time's largest female education systems.

Lowell women in the early 1840s earned only half as much as male workers; they brought home \$1.85-\$3.00 a week, depending on how fast they worked (Eisler 15), but this pay rate significantly surpassed that received by teachers and domestics. Additionally, Lowell women received a major benefit in self-improvement circles and education systems. Lowell operatives attended evening schools, which featured a high-school curriculum, and they pooled pennies to employ teachers of German, music, and botany. In addition, they were avid readers. They frequented the Lowell's Mechanics and Laborers Reading Room, which opened to women in 1825 when university libraries did not, the Lowell City School Library, and the Merrimack Corporation Reading Room for Female Operatives, but Lowell's circulating libraries were the most popular. Harriet Robinson, who grew up among with factory workers, recalls one of her mother's boarders "who had come to Lowell to work, for the express purpose of getting books, usually novels to read" from the circulating library (43). Lowell women also attended Lyceum lectures, which usually catered only to men, where they listened to lecturers such as John Quincy Adams, Horace Mann, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. According to Robinson, Professor A.P. Peabody of Harvard recalled that "the Lowell Hall was always crowded and four-fifths of the audience were factory girls" (74).

The so-called “Lowell Girls” used The Lowell Offering as a medium for publicly sharing their rhetorical approaches. Through this magazine, Lowell female operatives, who worked in the mills by day and wrote at night, exhibited their literary talents in prose and poetry and in fiction and non-fiction. In her memoir, Robinson describes The Lowell Offering as “a publication which was the natural outgrowth of the mental habit of the early mill-girls, for many of the pieces that were printed there were thought out amid the hum of the wheels, while the skillful fingers and well-trained eyes of the writers tended the loom or the frame” (60). Collaboratively, the Lowell women thought, composed, edited, and publicly shared their “self-improvement circle.” They provided women with essays that suggested classroom assignments, such as D.’s mock-Socratic dialogue titled “Chapters on the Sciences” (1842); tales poking fun at rural family life, such as Tabitha’s “The First Dish of Tea” (1842); bildungsroman-style stories, such as S.G.B.’s “Tales of Factory Life, No. 1” (1841) which mark the farm girl’s evolution into a factory operative; and factual reports on history, archeology, geology, and mineralogy.

Although the primary audience of The Lowell Offering was the factory workers themselves, the magazine captured a larger secondary audience. Other middle-class women, resigned to a life of domesticity, read the magazine to escape from housework and motherhood duties. Additionally, several significant United States readers, including William Ellery Channing, Emma Willard, Elizabeth Peabody, and John Greenleaf Whittier, read and commented upon The Lowell Offering authors’ abilities (Eisler 35).

Eventually, the magazine attracted an international audience. Harriet Martineau (1802-1876), English author of Society in America (1837), encouraged Charles Knight (1791-1873) to edit a collection of The Lowell Offering articles. Knight's collection, Mind Among the Spindles (1844), enhanced by a Martineau preface, expanded The Lowell Offering reputation throughout Europe and captured the attention of authors such as George Sand (Eisler 35).

Authors of The Lowell Offering, however, focused on a limited audience, women mill workers and potential women mill workers. They touted the benefits of factory life. The operative's work was easy, the pay was exceptional, and self-improvement opportunities were abundant. The women writers expounded on their self-sufficiency, independence, and ability to support family members and give to charities. Although an occasional article mentioned the tedious nature of textile work, the majority of texts elaborated on the benevolence of corporate owners and overseers and the independence, liberty, freedom, and individuality found in a factory woman's public life.

However, with the rise of the Ten Hour Movement and factory-reform publications, such as Voice of Industry (1845-1848), apparently the Lowell factory owners began to see that The Lowell Offering was the perfect means of propaganda, and according to many critics, both now and then, the magazine was advertisement for mill work. Eisler, a contemporary critic, claims, "The Offering, uncensored and independent, provided a fortuitous medium for those two expressions of distinctly American genius:

public relations and packaging” (36). Additionally, critics of the 1840s, such as Sarah Bagley (c.1806-c.1848), once a contributor to The Lowell Offering and later the editor of Voice of Industry, claimed that the Lowell factory owners used The Lowell Offering as bait to lure in the workers. In a July 17, 1845 Voice of Industry, Bagley wrote that The Lowell Offering

is, and always has been under the fostering care of the Lowell Corporations, as a literary repository for the mental gems of those operatives who have ability, time and inclination to write—and the tendency of it ever has been to varnish over the evils, wrongs, and privations of a factory life. This is undeniable, and we wish to have the Offering [sic] stand upon its own bottom, instead of going out as the united voice of the Lowell Operatives, while it wears the Corporation lock and their apologizers hold the keys. (3)

However, reform was never the intended purpose of The Lowell Offering; instead, the magazine focused, possibly naively, on the positive aspects of factory life. In support of this viewpoint, Farley, who composed most of The Lowell Offering editorials,¹³ wrote:

We do not think the employers perfect; neither do we think the operatives so. Both parties have their faults, and to stand between them as an umpire is no easy task. The operatives would have us continually ring the changes upon the selfishness, avarice, pride, and tyranny, of their

employers. We do not believe they possess these faults in the degree they would have us represent them; we believe they are as just, generous, and kind as other business men in their business transactions. Their own interest occupies their first thought, and so we find it elsewhere. . . . What can we think of those who wish to make the Offering a medium for the avarice and ill will? We could do nothing to regulate the price of wages if we would; we would not if we could—at least we would not make that a prominent subject in our pages, for we believe there are things of even more importance. (284)

Even though the Lowell women operatives lived in deteriorating and overcrowded conditions and worked seventy-five hours per week with only four holidays per year (Eisler 36), The Lowell Offering continued to showcase the Lowell women's intellect, benevolence, and skill in the textile industry.

Another reason why The Lowell Offering authors did not criticize factory conditions was because the focus of the magazine was elsewhere. Unlike Voice of Industry, The Lowell Offering did not fight for factory reform and, as Bagley charged, was known for not printing criticisms of the factory system.

Nevertheless, the rhetorical approach of The Lowell Offering may be considered as more than textile corporation propaganda. As Elizabeth Freeman points out in “‘What Factory Girls Had Power to Do’: The Techno-logic of Working-Class Feminine Publicity

in The Lowell Offering,” The Lowell Offering not only functioned as public relations for the Lowell Corporations, but also “it also functioned as PR for feminine self-making. . .” (113-114). Although the Lowell owners may have directed the content of The Lowell Offering, even to the extent of dismissing those who supported reform movements, the focus on the female operatives’ intellectual and manual abilities serves as a rhetorical approach. The authors and editors of the magazine co-persuade with the forced corporate perspective to elevate women in all aspects of public life.

Because many New Englanders felt that “mill girls” were inferior, immoral, and socially unacceptable, the women of Lowell felt compelled to defend themselves. So, while promoting corporate industry, many of The Lowell Offering authors accentuate Lowell women’s abilities. These arguments centered on proving that women factory workers are cultured, intelligent, religious, moral, and above all feminine. Therefore, a rhetorical approach used by the authors and editors of The Lowell Offering is to accentuate and defend women’s abilities while simultaneously pleasing male, corporate industry. The Lowell authors assert their individuality through eighteenth-century rhetoric.

For example, the 1840 editorial titled “Defence [sic] of Factory Girls” meets the factory owners’ expectations and displays the factory workers’ abilities. The author, identified as “A Factory Girl”¹⁴ but who may have been the editor, Harriet Farley, responds to Orestes A. Brownson (1803-1876), who claimed that women working in

factories are doomed to infamy. Boldly, “A Factory Girl” attacks Brownson’s negative review of factory operatives.

A Factory Girl begins her editorial by calling Brownson a slanderer and claiming that “a factory girl is not afraid to oppose herself to the Editor of the Boston Quarterly Review” (32). The author then presents a positive definition of female operatives:

A class of girls who in this city alone are numbered by thousands, and who collect in many of our smaller towns by hundreds; girls who generally come from quiet country homes, where their minds and manners have been formed under the eyes of the worthy sons of the Pilgrims, and their virtuous partners, and who return again to become the wives of the free intelligent yeomanry of New England, and the mothers of quite a proportion of our future republicans. (31)

Throughout this article, the author continues to point out that the operatives are “worthy, virtuous, intelligent, and well-educated girls” (32). These female operatives, according to A Factory Girl, uphold religious principles, are moral and well-mannered daughters, and are marriage and mother material. The only difference from Lowell women and those who remain in their fathers’ homes, says A Factory Girl, is that women factory workers boldly embrace hard work. A Factory Girl claims that Lowell women do not reject factory work just because it is “toilsome” or “some people are prejudiced against it” (33). She says, “Yankee girls have too much independence for that” (33).

Next, A Factory Girl notes that, as in all areas of life, not all of the women operatives are perfect, and she claims that not all factory operatives are infamous. A Factory Girl says, “There are among us all sorts of girls” (33). “The Improvement Circles, the Lyceum and Institute, the social religious meetings, the Circulating and other libraries,” continues A Factory Girl, “can bear testimony that the little time they have is spent in a better manner. Our well filled churches and lectures halls, and the high character of our clergymen and lecturers, will testify that the state of morals and intelligence is not low” (33). Factory members who do not participate in these activities, claims the author, are not disreputable; they are saving their money: “There are widows earning money for the maintenance and education of their children; there are daughters providing for their aged and destitute parents; and there are widows, single women, and girls, endeavoring to obtain the wherewithal to furnish some other home than a factory boarding-house” (34). She looks to factual information to account for monies saved. She reports that deposits in the Lowell Savings Bank do not account for the totality of money saved, since they send income home and to other banks. Furthermore, A Factory Girl claims, women operatives give their money to “public benevolent purposes,” such as the “fifteen hundred dollars which were collected in one day for Missionary purposes” (34).

A Factory Girl continues to accentuate factory workers abilities and simultaneously please the industry when she writes, “And the Lowell Offering [sic] may prove to all who will read it, that there are girls here whose education and intellect place

them above the necessity of pursuing an avocation which will inevitably connect them with the ignorant and vicious” (34). In this quote, the author obviously states that Lowell factory workers surpass other women workers, whose conditions lack educational opportunities and leave employees defunct and unskilled. She also points to The Lowell Offering as the perfect means of exemplifying Lowell women’s intellectual abilities and shows how women collaboratively displayed their intellect though a public medium. The co-existing argument claims that the Lowell factory is the perfect working environment, a place void of “the ignorant and vicious.” This second argument, given the previously mentioned information, probably came from corporate influences. This quote not only serves as a defense of the working women but also as propaganda of the factory.

A Factory Girl concludes the article by questioning Brownson’s manhood: “And now, if Mr. Brownson is a man, he will endeavor to retrieve the injury he has done; he will resolve that ‘the dark shall be light, and the wrong made right,’ and the assertion he has publicly made will be as publicly retracted” (35). Again, the assertion suggests duality. In one instance, the women want a public apology—an apology that will restore their reputation as well-educated and socially acceptable women. Alternatively, the corporate owners demand an apology—one that will restore their reputation as managers of a respectable operation.

A Factory Girl received a large privilege after publishing this article. The Lowell corporate officers found a propagandistic treasure in A Factory Girl. Amos Lawrence,

Lowell's textile magnate, read this defense and, apparently assuming A Factory Girl to be Harriet Farley, chose to assist Farley financially so that she could resign her mill duties and devote herself to the editorship full time (28).

Other defenses are found throughout The Lowell Offering. In "Letters from Susan," Farley describes the sisterhood and warmth found in the boardinghouses, the attendance of church, the easy millwork, and the fashionable dress and cheerfulness of the pretty, well-behaved mill women. Additionally, S.G.B., Sarah Bagley, who later opposed factory-working conditions, defends the women workers and the Lowell corporation in a December 1840 essay titled "Pleasures of Factory Life."

In "Pleasures of Factory Life," Bagley notes that although the "constant clatter of machinery" and "little leisure" is not pleasant, pleasure is found in factory life (36). She defends the pleasures of factory life in four classifications. First, she says that the factory provides a "pleasant place for contemplation" (36). "There all the powers of the mind are made active by our animating exercise," continues Bagley, "and having but one kind of labor to perform, we need not give all our thoughts to that, but leave them measurably free for reflection on other matters" (36). Second, she points out that the operatives may find pleasure in the mill decor. The textile work areas, according to Bagley, are more like a "flower garden than a workshop" (36). Bagley claims that this beauty of nature allows the operatives to give thanks to God, which in turn makes the workers "wiser and better, and consequently more happy" (36). Third, working in the factory, says Bagley,

provides pleasure because the money earned allows factory workers “to assist aged parents who have become too infirm to provide for themselves” and “to educate some orphan brother or sister, and fit them for future usefulness” (37). Being benevolent and earning money, according to Bagley, bring a sense of satisfaction. Meeting people “that reside in almost every part of the country” is the final pleasure. Thus, Bagley finds intellectual, religious, charitable, and social pleasures in her interpretation of factory life. These qualities with the addition of honest, good paying work rounds out a well-educated, socially acceptable, independent woman—the type of woman The Lowell Offering chose to portray.

Lastly, just in case readers suspect that Lowell women are too independent, Bagley informs readers that factory workers are “placed in the care of overseers who feel under moral obligations to look after [their] interests” (37), and she reiterates Lowell operatives’ privileges of “abundant means of information,” through lectures and of “religious knowledge” through institutions of religion” (37). Again, as in the articles written by A Factory Girl and Farley, Bagley defends Lowell women and simultaneously promotes Lowell life and the Lowell Corporation.

Another rhetorical approach of the Lowell authors is that of eighteenth-century rhetoric. Both in action and in writing, Lowell operatives established their roles as a part of the industrial revolution and the rise of science, and as Fuller did, the Lowell operatives asserted their independence as women. Lowell women prove that not only can

they successfully operate machinery, but also they can work as hard as men and work in the public sphere—out of the house. Although men and male-driven economy dictated Lowell factory production, the Lowell mill women educated themselves and others in a sphere that fundamentally operates independently from men's, but at the same time shares men's social and educational ranks.

The act of working and educating themselves places Lowell women in the public sphere and, as noted in the previously discussed Bagley article, creates independent women. Using eighteenth-century rhetoric, the authors of The Lowell Offering defend the public woman as one equal to the public man. One example is found in “A New Society” by “Tabitha,”¹⁵ who argues that women should have the same advantages as men. The article begins with the author, Tabitha, reading a book and “feasting upon the treasures of knowledge which it contained” (209). Then a little boy enters the room and hands Tabitha a paper that contains an account, with the future date of April 1, 1860, of the “Annual Meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Industry, Virtue, and Knowledge.”

In this futuristic dream, Tabitha reads the adopted resolutions. The first resolution sets the tone. It boldly argues for equal educational opportunities for girls and boys: “1. Resolved, That every father of a family who neglects to give his daughters the same advantages for an education which he gives his sons, shall be expelled from this society, and be considered a heathen” (209). The third resolution of the nine argues “that the

wages of females shall be equal to the wages of makes, that they may be enabled to maintain proper independence of character, and virtuous deportment” (211). The other seven resolutions do not solely pertain to equality between men and women; they focus on human rights for both sexes. For example, eight-hour workdays should be enforced (209), and everyone should spend three per day cultivating “mental faculties” (210).

The essay concludes with amiable results; the majority of the nation, including men, agrees with the resolutions. While Tabitha reads the resolution, a salesman interrupts her. She informs him of the resolutions, and he responds, “Oh happy America! Thrice happy land of Freedom! Thy example shall yet free all nations from the galling chains of mental bondage; and teach to earth’s remotest ends, in what true happiness consists!” (210). Additionally, after reading the remainder of the account, Tabitha finds that two thirds of the population agreed with the resolutions. By encouraging a bandwagon response, Tabitha encourages her readers to work toward an equality of Enlightenment.

Other Lowell Offering articles, such as “Woman,” which as published in January 1841 by “Ella,” continue public women’s rhetoric. In “Woman,” Ella promotes equality between men and women, albeit modestly in comparison to other Lowell Offering writers, by declaring, “It cannot be thought strange, that in this country, where the rights of man are so vehemently asserted, those of woman should also receive some attention; and that the questions should arise whether her mission is duly performed—her sphere

the only one for which she is fitted—her rights appreciated—and whether she is indeed ‘as she should be’” (39). Throughout the article, Ella examines women’s roles in government and claims “that woman should here share in the toils, duties, and honors of government” (41). Woman, says Ella, should be the “mediator” of war. Additionally, Ella points out that women are equal to men in “literary talent” (43).

Ella concludes this article, not by asserting that women should replace men, but suggesting that women deserve equality. She states that women “cannot become men—let them therefore not cease to be women” (44). She continues to point out woman’s abilities and independence in the article’s conclusion: “Yes, woman can climb the Hill of Science, and let her go; let her bind the laurel and the myrtle with the roses which already bloom around her brow, and the wreath will be more beautiful; but she should guard well the flowers, lest the evergreens crush, or overshadow them, and they wither away, and die” (44).

All of The Lowell Offering’s rhetorical approaches depend upon the authors’ discursive and collaborative abilities. Since these women lived in boardinghouses, the first planned industrial community in the United States (Eisler 22), most of their actions were in collaboration. The female operatives lived together and created accepted values, solidarity, and political activism. Within the boardinghouses, Lowell women formed self-improvement clubs. Eisler reports that by “the early 1840s there were no less than seven Mutual Self-Improvement Clubs in Lowell, whose members met to read their

writings to one another” (33). Additionally, by writing for, editing, and publishing The Lowell Offering, these women work toward the same collaborative goal—women’s improvement.

“Leisure Hours of the Mill Girls” by D.¹⁶ exemplifies the Lowell operatives’ use of collaborative discourse as they learn through interaction with one another. In this narrative, one of a group of boarders claims, “I think it is our duty to improve our minds as much as possible, now the Mill girls are beginning to be thought so much of” (99). Instead of declaring that she will improve her mind, the boarder claims that all of the boarders should improve their minds, and the improvement is to take place collaboratively—“our duty to improve our minds” (99, emphasis added). Thus, “self-improvement,” which The Lowell Offering identifies as the publication’s basis, could be titled more accurately as “group-improvement.”

Additionally, in this narrative, the boarders look to one of their co-workers as an example. Isabel, who embodies the perfect image of a Lowell woman, helps them “do some good in the world” (109). In the cozy setting of a bedroom, the boarders discuss Isabel’s ill fate and her ability to overcome it and point out that Isabel is benevolent, educated, and a dedicated worker. Isabel had “more trouble than any other girl in the home; but instead of claiming the sympathies of every one on that account, [she is] always cheering others in their little, half-imaginary trials” (107-108). While conversing about Isabel, the boarders realize their faults and identify ways that they could become

more like her. Through this discourse, the Lowell operatives collaboratively learn how they can improve.

In the conclusion of this narrative, the author assures her readers that this type of exchange between “sisters” often takes place in the boardinghouses. She states, “They are intimate as sisters. Together they are resolutely struggling against the tide of habit” (111). She then urges the readers, her “dear sisters,” to join the boarders in self-examination. She asks, “And, dear sisters, how is it with each one of us? How do we spend our leisure hours? Now, ‘in the stilly hour of night,’ let us pause, and give our consciences time to render faithful answers” (112). Therefore, the collaborative boarders, “sisters,” extend to the readership, which as previously stated included an international audience. The author calls all readers to join in the discourse and to join the women in improvement.

The authors of The Lowell Offering, like the Sophists, recognized the power of language. For the women of Lowell, the act of writing created the self as it exemplified to the readers that Lowell women were educated and knowledgeable. Lowell women gathered in self-improvement circles to explore an active learning through composition, and they shared their independence and cultural advantages with middle-class readers, who did not have the opportunities of the Lowell women. The Lowell Offering represents the written efforts of young women discovering their public power.

Writing style, as detailed by eighteenth-century rhetorician Hugh Blair, also allowed women authors of The Lowell Offering to achieve their rhetorical goals. For the most part, The Lowell Offering contributors used a plain writing style; few examples of sentimentality exist in the magazine, mostly in the journal's few poems and in a few of the short stories. It would not, however, be unlikely for sentimentality to exist in The Lowell Offering since most of the women in Lowell spent their leisure time reading the popular novels of the day, which were, overwhelmingly, sentimental novels. What is uncommon is that these women authors did not emulate the sentimental style; instead, they used an unadorned style. This style, which may parallel the authors' eighteenth-century rhetorical approaches and which was considered an unwomanly style, corresponds with the subject matter of the articles. For example "Lisette"¹⁷ in her article "The Western Antiquities" writes, "In the valley of the Mississippi, and the more southern parts of North American, are found antique curiosities and works of art, bearing the impress of cultivated intelligence. But of the race, or people, who executed them, time has left no vestige of their existence, save these monuments of their skill and knowledge" (122). In this quote, lofty thoughts, heavenly music, and communing with nature are absent. Instead, Lisette focuses on art and people in a factual, scientific manner. Throughout this article, Lisette points to scientific evidence, including geography, habitat, and artifacts, to define the creators of ancient pictographs and to speculate on the ancestors of the American Indians. Since she writes about scientific

findings and contributes her speculations, Lisette probably felt that a plain style best fit. However, if the purpose of this article were to describe and celebrate the beauty of nature, which was a common theme for many authors during this time, Lisette could have and probably would have used sentimentality. The Lowell women's subject matter, covering everything from the mechanics of millwork to boardinghouse life, usually did not lend itself to the sentimental style. These women were too deeply engrained in sharing scientific knowledge for their readers' self-improvement to write in the sentimental style.

Additionally, Lowell Offering authors used a blend of fiction and non-fiction. Their use of fiction varied from that found in the sentimental novels and short stories of the day; most of the fiction reads like non-fiction and contains non-fiction elements. For example, in "Chapters on the Sciences: Geology and Mineralogy," fictional characters are used to engage in a mock-Socratic dialogue, a commonly used teaching style during this time, on topics such as "the crystallization of alum in forming baskets" and "quartz, mica, and feldspar" (128, 129). By using fictional characters who are women just as Plato used historical men, the author of this dialogue, Eliza J. Cate, engages her female audience in reading about other scholarly women, powerful women attuned to Enlightenment-style scientific findings and not unlike the Lowell women themselves. Throughout their publications, the Lowell authors continued to use stories and descriptions, which were always moral and revealing about Lowell.

The Lowell Offering itself exemplifies these authors' ultimate use of the power of language. Instead of remaining silent in their factory lives, they chose otherwise. Each article reveals a sense of the Lowell life, preserving these women's living and working conditions, religious beliefs, education, autobiographies, humor, and benevolent acts. These women chose to share their knowledge publicly, to establish their modest place in history, and to proclaim their power in an accessible form of reading—the periodical.

Similar to the Sophists, The Lowell Offering authors also encouraged civic duty. The first example of benevolent duty is found in the previously mentioned example on discourse, “Leisure Hours of the Mill Girls.” In this article, the Lowell women felt a duty to “do good,” and through group moral policing, they worked toward that goal as the “sisters” learn to use leisure time for civic duty. The author of “Leisure Hours of the Mill Girls” points out some of the boarders' faults: they waste valuable time with “silly novels” and with fashion. The good Lowell woman, Isabel, however, does not waste her time with such frivolities; instead, she reads the Bible, attends lectures and improvement circles, and works to put her brother through college. The narrative's author subtly implies through example that all Lowell women should be as benevolent as Isabel.

Ella¹⁸ provides an additional instance of civic duty in her informative essay titled “Joan of Arc.” In this semi-historical account, the author defines Joan of Arc as the enlightened woman, one equal to man, and as the moral woman, one who gives her life to serve others. The author points out that as “an agent of heaven” Joan serves her God, her

country, and her king (121). The author claims that through “religious enthusiasm” (117) Joan realizes her civic duty—to save her country—and implies that all women should follow Joan’s example, although not to such extremes. Ella implies in the essay’s introduction that she does not encourage women to transform into “the sterner sex”(115).

This author uses the example of Joan of Arc to define the civic woman:

From the gloom of that dark age, when woman was but a play-thing and a slave, she stands in bold relief, its most conspicuous personage. Not, indeed, as a queen, but as more than a queen, even the preserver of her nation’s king; not as a conqueror, but as the saviour [sic] of her country; not as a man, urged in his proud career by mad ambition’s stirring energies, but as a woman, guided in her brilliant course by woman’s noblest impulses,—so does she appear in that lofty station which for herself she won (116).

Thus, by implication, woman should stand bold, serve her master or leader, save her country, be brilliantly noble, and above all be “woman.” Alternatively, implies Ella, woman should not overpower or conquer, be proud or lofty, or be “man.” Through example, a benevolent woman would understand that she should acquire these traits.

This essay not only serves as an example of the civic woman, but also it teaches Lowell operatives a moral lesson. Ella warns women of Joan’s downfall, which she identifies as man’s ambition. She states, “It probably was not the first time, and it certainly was not the last, when woman’s holiest feelings have been made the instruments

of man's ambition, or agents for the completion of his designs" (121). Thus, the author cautions the enlightened woman against ambitious, persuasive men and encourages woman to remain loyal to her holy feelings, the feelings possessed by Joan when she saved her country.

The Lowell Offering as a whole may also be regarded as an act of civic duty. The magazine derived from self-improvement circles and was published so that not only Lowell readers but also readers outside of Lowell could participate in similar self-improvement. Additionally, the act of writing and editing the magazine provided Lowell women with the opportunity to engage in civic duty as they enlightened their readers.

The women authors of The Lowell Offering not only provided women operatives with intellectually stimulating articles but also served as an outlet for expressing their points of view. Through The Lowell Offering and sophistic-feminist rhetoric, these women progressed as working women who embraced and shared educational opportunities and promoted the then unusual concept of successful, educated, working women. Additionally, the sophistic-feminist approach allowed Lowell women to build a female community centered on sharing educational opportunities and committing to civic duty.

Through the sophistic-feminist approach, Fuller and the authors of The Lowell Offering used varied rhetorical approaches, which often equaled those of their male

counterparts in assertiveness; collaborative discourse; powerful language; and benevolent acts based on reform issues to argue the acceptance of women's work in a male world. Fuller focuses on collaborative discourse, along with other sophistic-feminist approaches, to promote her feminist stance and to encourage women to match their male counterparts in intellectual abilities. Through various rhetorical approaches, the authors of The Lowell Offering focused on developing the working woman's mind as well as persuading the general public to accept working women as moral, respectable individuals. These early American women rhetoricians, along with many others, opened the public sphere for women and began to make the public sphere an acceptable place for women's work.

NOTES

¹ For a similar yet largely detailed study on women's groups, see Barbara Berg's The Remembered Gate (1978).

² Margaret Fuller is commonly connected to Romantic rhetoric; however Romantic rhetoric is not discussed in this dissertation because it existed in a realm separate from most nineteenth-century women's gendered space. Romantic rhetoric, during the early nineteenth century, was a limited approach embraced by the Transcendentalists in a limited rhetorical space, which excluded most women rhetoricians. Berlin notes, "Romantic rhetoric did not find its way into composition courses until late in the [nineteenth] century, despite the fact that it grew out of the work of such important figures as Emerson, Thoreau, and others involved in the transcendental movement" (9). Additionally, since Romantic rhetoric "considers oratory as superior to written communication" (Berlin 10), it does not allow for women's public rhetoric, which for the most part was written.

³ Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845) began as an article, "The Great Lawsuit: Man versus Men. Woman versus Women" which Fuller published in the Dial (July 1843).

⁴ Beecher wrote A Treatise on Domestic Economy, for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School. (1856) and with her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, she wrote The American Woman's Home (1869) and The New Housekeeper's Manual (1873).

⁵ Fuller's Conversations cost as much as lyceum lectures. They cost \$16 for twenty-four hour and a quarter lessons within a group of 25. In smaller sessions, the fee was \$25 (Memoirs, I 325-327).

⁶ Robert N. Hudspeth provides the date for this letter in his edition of The Letters of Margaret Fuller (II:86).

⁷ Peabody, a social and educational reformer, opened the first kindergarten (1860) in the US and based her pedagogy on Bronson Alcott's philosophies.

⁸ The only records of Fuller's Conversations exist in Sophia Peabody's written impressions, which are found in Fuller's Memoirs (1852) and in Caroline Healey Dall's Margaret and Her Friends (1895), which records one season's meetings.

⁹ For more information on women's learning styles, see Carol Gilligan's In a Different Voice (1982) and Nancy Chodorow's The Reproduction of Mothering (1978).

¹⁰ Some of Fuller's less well-known allusions are identified as follows: Panthea is the heroine of Xenophon's Cyropaedia. Xenophon (c. 430-c. 355 BC) was a Greek historian. Leonora, from Goethe's drama titled Torquato Tasso (1790), is the pure, thoughtful beloved of Tasso. Aspasia (c. 470-410 BC), mistress of Pericles, was a rhetorician and teacher. She is thought to have written several of Pericles' speeches and

to have taught Socrates. She is known for her salon, which consisted of politicians and philosophers, as well as for her house of prostitution. George Sand is the pseudonym of Amandine Lucile Aurore Dudevant (1804-1876). She was a radical French Romantic novelist known for wearing male attire, smoking cigars, and engaging in a series of love affairs. Angelina Grimké (1805-1879) was an abolitionist. Her An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South (1836) is often cited for its connection of slavery to the roles of women. She is most famous for her public speaking to “mixed” audiences. Abbey Kelly (1811-1887), a Quaker, was known for her speeches on women’s rights and abolition.

¹¹ Because of the overshadowing success of The Lowell Offering, The Garland of the Mills was never published (Eisler 33).

¹² Farley eventually became the sole editor, and Curtis managed the subscription department (Foner 27).

¹³ Harriet Farley’s articles and tales from the Lowell Offering were published as Shells from the Strand of the Sea of Genius (1847).

¹⁴ Foner identifies “A Factory Girl” as Harriet Farley (28); however Eisler refers to “A Factory Girl” as “author unknown” (192).

¹⁵ Eisler identifies “Tabitha” as Betsey Chamberlain (210).

¹⁶ Eisler identifies “D.” as Eliza J. Cate (112).

¹⁷ Eisler identifies “Lisette” as Louisa Currier (124).

¹⁸ Eisler identifies “Ella” as Harriet Farley (122).

CHAPTER THREE
RHETORIC BETWEEN THE SPHERES:
JUDITH SARGENT MURRAY AND SARAH JOSEPHA HALE

“It is expected that with the other sex we should commence immediate war, and that we should triumph over the machinations of the most artful. We must be constantly upon our guard; prudence and discretion must be our characteristic; and we must rise superiour to, and obtain a complete victory over those who have been long adding to the native strength of their minds. . . .”

(Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes,” 1790, 223)

“Give women some pursuit which men esteem important, and see if their work is not well done, provided they are suitably trained. Now, we do not desire to change the station of the sexes, or give to women the work of men. We only want our sex to become fitted for their own sphere.”

(Sarah Josepha Hale, Godey’s, vol. 44, 1852, 228)

Many early American women’s writings remained trapped between the public and private spheres. These women authors entered the public sphere, yet they remained rooted in the private. They published works, entering the public sphere, yet on the surface their writings encouraged other women to embrace private life. However, through feminist-sophistic rhetoric, these women use varied rhetorical approaches,

collaboration, powerful and persuasive language, and benevolent acts to subversively argue for change—for a woman’s public sphere and new gendered rhetorical space.

Two of these early American women, Judith Sargent Murray and Sarah Josepha Hale, exemplify women caught between the spheres. Although pairing Murray and Hale is uncommon, since Hale writes approximately fifty years after Murray, their rhetorical positioning between the two spheres provides a connection. These two women both published in periodicals, though at different times, and they use different approaches to achieve their ends, which is to provide higher education and other public opportunities for women. In her approach, Murray often uses Republican Motherhood to pursue her arguments, and Hale’s approach often uses what Johnson calls “ambivalence” (17) and the Greeks termed dissoi logoi—“the art of constructing opposing arguments for a single question” (Lanham 57) or, more succinctly, “contradictory propositions” (Jarratt 70).

Immediately following the Revolutionary War, the attitudes of Republican Motherhood, which chronologically occurred during the eighteenth-century, supported improved education for women, since women were assigned the responsibility of rearing sons as the nation’s next leaders. Linda Kerber, in Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America (1980), defines Republican Motherhood as

Searching for a political context in which private female virtues might comfortably co-exist with the civic virtue that was widely regarded as the cement of the Republic, [women] found what they were seeking in the notion of what

might be called “Republican Motherhood.” The Republican Mother integrated political values into her domestic life. Dedicated as she was to the nurture of public-spirited male citizens, she guaranteed the steady infusion of virtue into the Republic. Political “virtue” . . . could be safely domesticated in eighteenth-century America; the mother, and not the masses, came to be seen as the custodian of civic morality. (11)

Republican Motherhood gave the private, domestic role of women a public responsibility; women were responsible for the moral instruction of the country’s leaders and future housewives. Women rhetoricians, such as Judith Sargent Murray, who use Republican Motherhood as an approach, argue that women, within the boundaries of the private sphere, influence the public sphere indirectly.

However, contrary to the claims of many literary critics, Murray does not limit her rhetorical approaches to Republican Motherhood. She expands her repertoire to include early Enlightenment thought, although she wrote in the 1770s, and is one of the first American women to argue that men and women are equal in terms of gender. Similar to Margaret Fuller, who writes almost eighty years later, Murray claims that women and men, although they differ physically, possess equal mental capabilities.

Some nineteenth-century women rhetoricians adopted ideas similar to those of Republican Motherhood. They rejected the equality of women and men and returned to prophetic and conversion rhetoric typifying the women’s roles found in the Bible.

Because of their roles as mothers, these women were teachers and guardians of religion in the home—not in the public sphere, and women’s duty was to support the public lives of their husbands and sons. Therefore, women such as Sarah Hale argue that the “Magna Charta of women’s rights” is the Bible (Godey’s, vol. 44, 1852, 88) and that women, the moral sex, are equal to men but should perform separately—in the private sphere.¹ The vocabulary to discuss these women’s rhetorical acts has largely relied on Aileen S. Kraditor’s theory of the “cult of domesticity” discussed in Up from the Pedestal (1968) and Barbara Welter’s definition of “true womanhood” in Dimity Convictions (1976). Both of these terms, “cult of domesticity” and “true womanhood,” are used to describe the limitations of women within the home and identify women as pure, pious, domestic, and submissive. Nan Johnson in Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910 (2002) uses a rhetorical term to describe this private rhetorical construct. She uses the term “parlor rhetorics,” since the majority of women’s rhetoric remained in the private sphere—the home. Johnson says that

recent studies that have focused on the involvement of nineteenth-century women in other rhetorical arts and in rhetorical education typically confirm the historical assumption that the cultural stress on nineteenth-century women to confine their words to the parlor was persistent and represented an obstacle that had to be circumvented or overcome. (6)

Although Johnson's rhetorical history focuses on women after the Civil War, the women who wrote throughout most of the nineteenth century used parlor rhetoric.

However, Hale does not limit her rhetorical approach to that of the private sphere. Hale, who wrote for more than fifty years, covers a range of persuasive techniques. She begins writing in the 1830s for an audience engrained in Enlightenment thought, but as her audience's point of view changed, especially near the Civil War, Hale also reconsidered her approaches. Furthermore, in an attempt to circumvent and overcome the limitations of the private sphere, Hale uses dissoi logoi to achieve her rhetorical goals.

Murray and Hale represent two women caught between the ideologies of private and public spheres. Their ability to travel from one sphere to another, while exposing them to charges of ambiguity and contradiction, provides them with the flexibility to use varied rhetorical approaches. They, similar to the first Sophists, modify their rhetorical approaches to please their audiences and protect their careers while simultaneously presenting their true, often radical, positions.

Both Murray and Hale serve as transitional figures. Murray works as a transitional figure from prophetic and conversion rhetoric to eighteenth-century public rhetoric, and Hale figures as a transitional figure from Enlightenment to what Johnson calls parlor rhetoric. Although they are from different times, both Murray and Hale confront the same challenges. As they both write during transitional times, they must please wide audiences, and they remain caught between the spheres, accepting dominant

thought from both and at the same time condemning both. Additionally, since both authors depended on their publishing success for income, they both lived in the public sphere, and this lifestyle influenced their rhetorical positions on issues regarding women's roles. However, both authors are careful to mention that they live in the public sphere out of necessity—not out of desire. Because of their lifestyles as well as their audiences' demands, Murray and Hale manage a careful balance between the spheres and between rhetorical approaches.

Judith Sargent Murray (1751-1820)

The leading proponent of Republican Motherhood, Judith Sargent Murray (1751-1820), argued that women could escape emotionalism and sentimentalism if they were given an equal opportunity to develop their rational capacities. Murray regarded domesticity as a vocation and motherhood as a profession, and she claimed that, if the republic were to grow, women needed education to succeed in their professions as wiser wives and better mothers. A woman, she thought, should be able to write and converse elegantly and correctly, pronounce French, read history, and comprehend some simple geography and astronomy. Women needed these skills to benefit themselves as well as their children, not to amuse the male sex (Gleaner 68-71).

Although the classic biography on Murray, Vena Bernadette Field's Constantia: A Study of the Life and Works of Judith Sargent Murray (1931), is now quite dated, two

introductions, Nina Baym's "Introduction" to The Gleaner (1992) and Sharon M. Harris' "Introduction" to the Selected Writings of Judith Sargent Murray (1995), and Harris' "Legacy Profile" (1994) do a good job of updating. Born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, Judith Sargent, received an exceptional education for a woman of her era; she was tutored along with her younger brother in his preparation for Harvard (Harris, "Legacy Profile" 152; Harris, "Introduction" xv-xvii). Approximately fifteen years after she married John Stevens in 1769, she began publishing occasional poems and essays in Gentleman and Ladies Town and Country Magazine; her works were usually published under the pseudonym "Constantia." In the late 1770s and early 1780s, the Stevens suffered financially, and John Stevens left for the West Indies to avoid debtor's prison. Shortly after he left in 1786, she received word that he had died. Two years later, she married John Murray, a well-known Universalist preacher and a supporter of her literary career (Harris, "Legacy Profile" 153-54). They had two children: a son, who died a few hours after birth, and a daughter (Harris, "Introduction" xxiv).

In 1789, Murray began contributing poetry to the Massachusetts Magazine, and in 1790, the Massachusetts Magazine published one of her most important works, an essay titled "On the Equality of the Sexes." Murray, one of the first women in America to have her own magazine column, began authoring two columns for Massachusetts Magazine. The first one, titled "The Gleaner," contained a series of essays on social issues, and her second column, titled "The Repository," focused on religious topics (Harris, "Legacy

Profile” 154-55). Murray also published a novel titled The Story of Margareta, which was serialized in “The Gleaner,” and two plays. In 1798, Murray compiled her contributions to “The Gleaner” in a three-volume edition titled The Gleaner. Later in life, she turned to editing John Murray’s religious writings and autobiography in hopes of remedying their financial crisis. After her husband’s death, Murray depended upon her son-in-law’s wealth to support her; in 1820, she died in Natchez, Mississippi at her son-in-law’s plantation where she had been living (Harris, “Legacy Profile” 157).

As Janet Carey Eldred and Peter Mortensen note in “‘Persuasion Dwelt on Her Tongue’: Female Civic Rhetoric in Early America,” Murray despised Sophistic rhetoric. “Miserable sophist! from whence do you derive this right of rendering from innocence the sceptre [sic] of reason, and of placing it again in the hands of vice,” wrote Murray (Gleaner 255). Eldred and Mortensen argue that since Murray wanted national standards, including a national language, she demonstrates the necessity of government’s dependency on “the integrity” of the language of written laws (181). However, Murray does not necessarily practice what she advocates. She uses the “devious manipulation” of sophistry, plays with language, and concerns herself with sophistic eloquence, despite what she says.

Murray’s varied rhetorical approach derives largely from her anonymity, which was a product of her social circumstances. She always published under a pseudonym--a common practice for most eighteenth-century women authors. Most often, she used the

pen name “Constantia,” which later in her career was readily identified with her name. However, her anonymity as the author of “The Gleaner” provided her with opportunities denied to most women authors of her time. Many of Murray’s essays, especially those on female education, appeared in “The Gleaner,” and Murray is most successful in writing this column when she uses a male persona referred to as “the Gleaner” or “Mr. Vigillius.” Murray constructs this persona as a traditional husband and father who says that “the proper characteristic of womanhood” (Gleaner 19) was to be submissive. Using this persona, Murray builds her ideas on female equality and proper education for girls around the story of Margaretta, an orphan adopted by the Mr. Vigillius and his wife. Mr. Vigillius states, “I think the propriety of circumscribing the education of a female, within such narrow bounds as are frequently assigned, is at least problematical” (Gleaner 58). During Murray’s time, such a statement, especially by a woman, was outlandish and either invoked a refutation or was ignored. Most men and women agreed that female education should consist of housekeeping and child rearing, and any woman who disagreed with the standard, limited education of females was shunned and considered immoral and disloyal to her sex. Murray could draw upon a male ethos by using a persona, especially one who is published in the well-read Massachusetts Magazine. The credibility she gains this way, of course, is questionable, since she is in effect lying about her own identity, but, given the prejudices of the time, Murray had little option but to establish her authority using available means—a male voice.

Additionally, anonymity allows Murray to present embedded critiques of the Margareta story and of her novel writing. She does this by inserting comments from “the voice of the genuine critic” (Gleaner 104). The genuine critic’s voice comes from conversations that the Gleaner happens to overhear upon travel or at a tea party. For example, in one situation, the Gleaner includes comments from a group who questions his reliability as an anonymous author. By adding these overheard comments, Murray builds her credibility. She acknowledges that people are reading her column and are conversing about it in public places.

These comments prompt her to respond, providing her with another rhetorical approach. In this next approach, Murray, as the Gleaner, includes comments on anonymity, reacts to them, and provides his own criticism. Murray states, “The business of the reader is to scan the intrinsic value and general tendency of the composition; if that is considerable, if that is laudable, he ought to leave the author to announce himself under what auspices he shall judge proper” (Gleaner 105). The comments not only provide her with an opportunity to respond to her readers, but also they allow her to tell her readers how to critique compositions properly—to find value in the work itself.

These comments, which are probably fictional, continue to help Murray establish her credibility. For example, Murray uses these comments to praise her own writing: One reader claims that she is “an admirer of the Gleaner” and that the Gleaner is a “moral writer” (Gleaner 106). This reader’s comments build the Gleaner’s credibility, which is

why Murray included them, but at the same time, knowing that the Gleaner is Murray, one must question the reliability of Murray's self-praise. However, since Murray's identity was unknown during this first publication, she could not be criticized for inflating her own credibility, and she needed to increase her readership. Her success as an essay writer depended upon increased readership, and since she risked her popularity by embracing the topic of female education, she cleverly assured that success by the most available means.

Murray also faced the challenge of writing for a male audience. Murray uses Republican Motherhood as a rhetorical approach to appease her male audience and simultaneously present her feminist argument. In "On the Equality of the Sexes" (1790), which was published in the Massachusetts Magazine under the pseudonym "Constantia," Murray challenges the prevailing idea that intellectual differences in men and women are natural, and she argues that women's lack of education and social duties create such misconceptions. In the introduction of "On the Equality of the Sexes," Murray seeks the support of her male audience by using common, male-developed stereotypes to show women's intellectual abilities. She demonstrates women's imaginative capabilities, for example, by citing women's success in gossiping, creating slander and scandal, and having good fashion sense.

Then, Murray adopts late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century rhetoric and argues that male and female minds are equal. After demonstrating that women have the

ability to think rationally, she refutes a series of male-derived claims against educating women to argue that women need formal education to achieve equality with men. She first refutes the claim that men are inherently more intelligent than women, arguing that tradition, not nature, creates the appearance that men are more intelligent. She further states that “the sister must be wholly domesticated, while the brother is led by the hand through all the flowery paths of science. Grant that their minds are by nature equal, yet who shall wonder at the apparent superiority, if indeed custom becomes second nature; nay if it taketh place of nature, and that it doth the experience of each day will evince” (133). Secondly, she refutes the claim that education will cause women to deviate from God and religion. Murray opposes this claim by exemplifying how education can lead women closer to God; for example, she argues that studying astronomy would allow women to “catch a glimpse of the Deity, and thence she would form amazing conceptions of the august and supreme Intelligence” (134). She further refutes claims that education will hinder women’s domestic duties. Murray says that education will only allow women to reflect and imagine ideas “worthy of rational beings” while “pursuing the needle, or the superintendency of the family” (134). Lastly, she refutes the assertion that women are incapable of higher thinking because of their physical weaknesses. Although she acknowledges that women are usually physically weaker than most men, she states that physicality does not determine the strength of a thinker’s soul. As an example, Murray refers to Alexander Pope (1688-1744), who “clogged with an enervated body, and

distinguished by a diminutive stature, could nevertheless lay claim to greatness of soul” (135). Murray concludes this section by reassuring men that she seeks “equality only” and not superiority (135).

To retain the attention of her possibly hostile audience, Murray takes a common rhetorical approach: She embeds the harshest argument in the middle of her essay. As Nina Baym claims, Murray also depended upon “the presence of women in the audience” (“Introduction” xii), so at this point she no longer appeals to a male audience but calls a female audience to action in support of their own gender, and she embeds this argument in the middle of the essay. In this section, she not only uses male Biblical characters as examples of failure, but also she declares war on the male gender:

It is expected that with the other sex we should commence immediate war, and that we should triumph over the machinations of the most artful. We must be constantly upon our guard; prudence and discretion must be our characteristics [sic]; and we must rise superiour [sic] to, and obtain a complete victory over those who have been long adding to the native strength of their minds. . . . (223)

After softly attempting to convince men that educating women would only benefit their lives, she advocates that women revolt against male assumptions of superiority and “let serious studies equally employ [women’s] minds” (223). According to Murray, the only men who deserve a woman’s “hand of amity” (223) are those who accept women as equals. In the conclusion of this short section, Murray softens her call to war and again

appeals to her male audience. She reassures her male readers that they are indeed superior: “We confess that the superiority is indubitably yours; you are by nature formed for our protectors; we pretend not to vie with you in bodily strength; upon this point we will never contend for victory” (224). She then returns to her argument of separate spheres. She claims that men belong in the public world while women should remain at home: “Shield us then, we beseech you, from external evils, and in return we will transact your domestick [sic] affairs” (224). Murray probably realized she needed to appease her male readers, and she does so effectively by acknowledging the differences between men’s and women’s work.

Using Republican Motherhood as a rhetorical approach, Murray approves the concept of women pursuing careers as mothers and wives. She argues for educating women so that they may improve the domestic sphere and ultimately improve the republic. This strategy allows Murray to gain the credibility and respect from her largely male audience. However, she presents an underlying warrant within her discussion: lodged within her argument for educated women in the private sphere, Murray argues that women are superior to men. She boldly uses the Bible to prove her point and loudly calls women to action. Republican Motherhood disguises her bold claim by cloaking it in widely accepted women’s roles.

In the last section of this essay, Murray appends a letter to “On Equality of the Sexes” to refute Scriptural interpretations used as evidence of women’s inferiority.

Using classical syllogistic rhetoric, which was often taught in nineteenth-century American colleges, she questions the authority of the Bible and devises a new interpretation of the Adam and Eve story. Instead of considering Eve to be the downfall of Adam and mankind, she shows that Eve's status is equal to, if not superior, to Adam's. Eve, who first partook of the tree of knowledge, was motivated "by a desire of adorning her mind . . . a thirst for knowledge" (225). Adam "was influenced by no other motive than a bare pusillanimous attachment to a woman!" (225). Although she shows that women are intellectually stronger than men and motivated by a higher desire—a desire for knowledge—she concludes this section with a third and final reference to the equality of men and women. Murray claims, "He is manifested as the figure of strength, but that we may not regard him as any thing more than a figure, his soul is formed in no sort superiour [sic], but every way equal to the mind of her, who is the emblem of weakness, and whom he hails the gentle companion of his better days" (225-26).

Murray involves her readers in her argument by asking them to participate as judge and jury. Her goal in "Observations on Female Abilities," a four part essay published in Massachusetts Magazine (1791), is "to prove, by examples, that the minds of women are naturally as susceptible of every improvement, as those of men" (Gleaner 710). By presenting a flawless argument, Murray anticipates that her audience will find her witnesses' examples worthy and accept her position. Murray, as the Gleaner, states, "But the highly respectable and truly honorable court, is, we presume, convened; the jury

are empaneled [sic], and we proceed to the examination of the witnesses, leaving the pleadings to those silent suggestions and inferences, which, we are assured, will voluntarily enlist themselves as advocates in every ingenuous bosom” (Gleaner 710). Using a set of ten criteria, the Gleaner argues that “women, as far as relates to their understanding, [are] in every respect, equal to men” (Gleaner 711). To support this argument, the Gleaner presents an array of female witnesses. These witnesses, primarily from Greece, Rome, and Britain, include historical women such as Aspasia, Hortensia, Portia, Margaret of Anjou, and Lady Jane Grey. After producing the witnesses, the Gleaner then states that “the cause is before the public; we await their verdict; and, as we entertain all possible veneration for the respectable jury, we shall not dare to appeal from their decision” (Gleaner 726). By using this approach, Murray invites her readers to respond to her well-exemplified position and anticipates that they will be enlightened by her argument, engage with her text as readers, and will learn by judging her arguments.

Murray clearly understood the persuasiveness and power of language. Yet again “On the Equality of the Sexes” is one of the best examples. This essay, which Murray published in the wake of the Revolutionary War, is loaded with war imagery and language, suggesting Blair’s belletristic rhetoric. In a time when the nation was recovering from war, Murray played on the feelings of Americans, evoking eighteenth-century psychological rhetoric; she does this by using persuasive language, which conjures images of war. Murray’s war was also revolutionary in that she sought freedom

and equality. In her attempt to seek equality for women, she calls women to “commence immediate war” with the other sex, and she begins a fiery argument on triumphing “over the machinations of the most artful” (223). She continues her argument urging women to be on “guard,” to join her in “combat,” to “obtain a complete victory,” and gain the “wreath of victory” (223). She concludes, “We will meet upon even ground, the despot man; we will rush with alacrity to the combat, and, crowned by success, we shall then answer the exalted expectations which are formed” (223). Murray’s repetition of forceful words of war exhibits her understanding of the power of language.

Although almost all of Murray’s essays concluded with a didactic or moral theme, probably in connection to Enlightenment rhetoric’s emphasis on moral reasoning, she usually linked her call to civic duty with support for female education. She felt that men had a civic duty to promote the education of girls in a manner similar to that of boys. She also argues that women have a civic duty to fight for and embrace education. Women need education, claims Murray, so that they can educate their children and function as better wives: “Females would become discreet, their judgments would be invigorated, and their partners for life being circumspectly chosen, and unhappy Hymen would then be as rare, as is now the reverse” (134). Not only would women better please their husbands by being a more judicious marital match, but also education would enable women to better “transact . . . domestick [sic] affairs” (224).

Often regarded as an early feminist and sometimes as the first American feminist, Murray emerges as a leader in early American women's rhetoric. Her varied rhetorical approaches, collaborative discourse, powerful language, and civic duty shaped those of American women who followed her. Authors such as Margaret Fuller continued Murray's use of dialogue in the argument for women's education, and many other women rhetoricians, especially those in the nineteenth century, continue Murray's use of Republican Motherhood as rhetorical approach.

Sarah Josepha Hale (1788-1879)

Sarah Josepha Hale, one of the first women editors in America, dedicated fifty years, from January 1828 until December 1877, to editing two widely-circulated, conduct-style magazines, the Ladies' Book (1828-1836) and Godey's Lady's Book (1837-1879, the most widely circulated magazine of her time. Hale published the majority of her rhetoric in these magazines, in articles titled "Editor's Table."² Additionally, Hale wrote two dozen books, hundreds of poems, two plays, short stories, and histories. However, her accomplishments as a successful editor and author define her as one of the foremost women rhetoricians of her day. In her editorials, she focused on fields of significant influence, including charitable enterprise, female education, and the recognition of women within well-defined limits, and through her editorship, her

influence extended into the lives of almost every middle-class household in the United States.

Most of Hale's biographical details, compiled from Hale's family members and letters, are contained in Ruth E. Finley's The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale (1931) and in Isabelle Webb Entrikin's Sarah Josepha Hale and "Godey's Lady's Book" (1946). Both biographies emphasize the importance her family placed on education. Her brothers and sisters were educated at home, and Hale gave credit to her mother for her early training. Under her mother's guidance she read the Bible as well as works by Bunyan, Milton, Addison, Pope, Johnson, Cowper, Burns, and Shakespeare. Hale also read Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho, a book that Entrikin claims to have inspired Hale to become an author (2-3). Once her brother went to college at Dartmouth, Hale found that his education could be used for her benefit. Through her brother, she learned English grammar, rhetoric, composition, geography, and criticism (Entrikin 4). Later, she continued her studies with her self-educated husband, David Hale, and with his help, she studied composition, rhetoric, poetry, and prose.

Hale began her writing career, as did many early American women, after the death of her husband. He died after they had been married for nine years and left her with five children to rear. In order to support herself and her children, Hale went into the millinery business with her sister-in-law, and she used her limited free time to compose poems. Under the pseudonym "Cornelia," she published sentimental poems along with a

volume of her poetry. She eventually won prizes for her poetry and prose, which appeared in magazines such as the Boston Spectator and The American Monthly Magazine.

The publication of her first novel Northwood (1826), which contrasts American life in the north and south, gained Hale the public recognition she needed. In 1827, the popularity of the book encouraged Rev. John L. Blake to offer Hale an editorial position. He invited her to come to Boston and take charge of the Ladies' Magazine, which he established for her. At the age of forty with five dependent children and no promise of an assured income, she embarked upon her editorial career.

For eight years, Hale successfully edited and wrote for the Ladies' Magazine, which changed its name to the American Ladies' Magazine in 1834 because a British periodical used the identical title (American Ladies' Magazine, vol. 7, 1834, 48). In her periodical, Hale added "sketches of American scenery and manners; critical notices of the literature of the day; articles of original poetry; biographical notices; anecdotes of eminent women; and whatever else is calculated to illustrate and improve the female character" (Ladies' Magazine, vol. 1, 1828, advertisement at end of issue). Hale's selections and editorials focused on educating women, women's work, and on forming women's groups. She also encouraged and published women authors.

In 1836, the American Ladies' Magazine suffered financially. Subscribers were delinquent, and the disturbances of the banking system during Jackson's administration

brought on a panic (Entrikin 57). In several 1836 editions of the magazine, Hale called attention to American Ladies' Magazine's financial problems, and in November 1836, she stated, "the first of January will commence a new volume of the 'Lady's Book,' with which our Magazine will be united. We shall take charge of the editorial department" (American Ladies Magazine, vol. 9, 1836, 664). During the time of hardship for Hale's periodical, Louis Antoine Godey's Lady's Book increased in sales. Beginning in 1830, he published the Lady's Book in Philadelphia; however, unlike Hale, Godey had no editorial department, and for the most part he borrowed stories and articles from domestic and foreign periodicals and books (Entrikin 33). Godey needed Hale to fill in his weaknesses, and he convinced her to consolidate the two journals.

Hale's first issue of Godey's Lady's Book began with a "Conversazione" in which she set forth her intentions "to carry onward and upward the spirit of moral and intellectual excellence in our sex" (Godey's, vol. 14, 1837, 1-5). She continued to develop such themes as female education, training women as teachers, and social work, which she began in the Ladies' Magazine. Although Godey demanded more fiction, fashion, and hints for housewives, in her "Editors' Table" Hale continued to express her opinions on issues such as women's education and professions, the establishment of Thanksgiving as a national holiday, and the completion of Bunker Hill Monument. As editor, she secured the submissions by some of the best-known authors of her time; she published works by Poe, Holmes, Longfellow, and Lowell as well as Child, Stowe,

Sigourney, and Sedgwick. Additionally, she reviewed domestic and foreign publications. One of Hale's most significant accomplishments as an American editor was to publish original works instead of those previously published in Europe.

Throughout her time as editor, Hale saw a steady increase in subscribers. By 1844, Godey's circulation reached fifty thousand (Godey's, vol. 28, 1844, 200). Additionally, Hale watched her arguments make changes; she witnessed the establishment of institutions of higher education for women, the reinstatement of Thanksgiving, and the first woman medical missionary sent to the Eastern lands (Finley 306). In 1877, Godey's was sold, just a few months before Godey's death, and after editing for fifty years, at the age of ninety, Hale took her leave from Godey's. Two years later, in 1879, she died and was buried in West Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia. After 1877, Godey's passed through several publishers and faded into obscurity, ultimately ending in 1898.

Since the publication of Finley's and Entrikin's biographies, several biographies of Hale³ have been written for juveniles and adolescents. Secondary sources on Hale's writing career include Helen Woodward's The Lady Persuaders (1960), Patricia Okker's Our Sister Editors: Sarah J. Hale and the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Women Editors (1995), and Nicole Tonkovich's Domesticity with a Difference: The Nonfiction of Catharine Beecher, Sarah J. Hale, Fanny Fern, and Margaret Fuller (1997). These last two books make a significant contribution by adding Hale to the evolving

literary cannon and feminist literary criticism. Okker's study focuses on Hale's "influence on nineteenth-century literary culture" based on Hale's "understanding of sexual difference and her version of the so-called ideology of separate spheres" (4), and Tonkovich focuses on Hale's use of domesticity, including sex roles, marriage, families, and home, through an interpretation of Hale's lifestyle. However, neither of these works fully focuses on Hale's contributions to early American women's rhetoric.

Hale's rhetorical approaches define her as a transitional figure between Enlightenment and parlor rhetoric. Since Hale published for more than fifty years, she had the opportunity to experience a shift in rhetorical approaches. She began her writing career by urging equality between men and women within the same sphere. However, as her career advanced and her audience's expectations changed, Hale focused on parlor rhetoric, for which she is best known, and argued for equality between men and women in separate spheres and employed Republican Motherhood rhetoric. Additionally, Hale provides an ideal example of the use of ambiguity or dissoi logoi. Although she participated in the male-dominated public sphere of writing, editing, and publishing, she urged women to remain in a separate sphere within the home.

The rhetorical approach found in Hale's exploration of the Enlightenment-parlor rhetoric shift and dissoi logoi is the feminist-sophistic approach. Similar to the Sophists, Hale's feminist sophistic employs a variety of rhetorical methods shaped by social circumstance. She focused on civic virtue, created knowledge through discourse and

collaboration, and used powerful and persuasive language as she constructs an essentialist “sphere.”

Not restricted to a specific rhetorical approach, Hale used a variety of rhetorical methods, and her social circumstances as well as the demands of her audience shaped her writing. Since Hale’s success as an author depended upon readership, her audience dictated her rhetorical approaches. This audience, which consisted mainly of white, middle- to upper-class women who had the education and leisure to read lengthy periodicals, consistently expanded. Although she defines her audience as “one half the human race” (*Godey’s*, vol. 18, 1839, 94), Hale’s editorship additionally attracted some male readers. In the 1848 edition of *Godey’s*, Hale publishes extracts from four male readers, all eager to know the identity of a woman contributor, and one of whom proposes marriage to this anonymous woman. Hale acknowledges her male readership: “We are sure that some of our gentlemen readers—for we do have gentlemen readers, if we are a lady’s book—would be upon the qui vive to know the name of our contributor; but we had no idea of the sensation that innocent portrait would create among all sexes, ages, and conditions” (*Godey’s*, vol. 37, 1848, 118). Additionally, Hale wrote for an audience that expanded as Americans moved west and south. Throughout her editorial career, she recorded the expanding geographic circulation of her periodical. She refers to readers in the “rather remote settlement of Minesota [sic] Territory” and Matamoras, Mexico (*Godey’s*, vol. 39, 1849, 155, 227). She also recorded the existence of overseas

subscribers. In 1848, she notes that American women in Russia subscribe (Godey's, vol. 37, 1848, 318). Beyond the large audience of white, middle-class women from various geographic regions and a few men, many of Hale's readers are difficult to identify since copies were borrowed. Numerous women wrote Hale requesting new copies of the issues they had lent to neighbors, boardinghouses, schools, and clubs.

Although her audience was diverse, and although she acknowledged this diversity in her writings, Hale continued to focus on writing and editing for women, and by limiting her market to the growing number of female periodical readers, she succeeded. Hale adhered to her audience by including works of fiction about women's experiences as well as domestic tips in areas such as cooking and gardening for women. Additionally, she published women authors and addressed women's issues in her "Editors' Table."

Sentimental works were one of the most popular genres in America during the early nineteenth century, and most of the fiction found in Godey's may be considered sentimental. Both the fiction Hale included and even more the poetry, emphasize traditional sentimental topics of death, love, and abstract beauty, all of which appealed to Hale's audience. Often, Hale included her own poetry, drama, and short stories, which center on the theme of love and loss. For example, Hale's moralistic short story, "The Last Offer," tells the tale of a young girl's desire to marry for love instead of convenience (Godey's, vol. 18, 1839, 123-25). Examples of her focus on domesticity are found in

Hale's selections on cooking, such as her 1851 "Editors' Table" article on "Various Useful Receipts, &c., of our own Gathering" (Godey's, vol. 42, 1851, 69-70), and on gardening, such as an article titled "Fresh Hints on Flower Gardening" (Godey's, vol. 60, 1860, 478-79). Her focus on domesticity and child-rearing is demonstrated by the inclusion of an article, "A Dear Little Baby" by Lucy Hardy Odercurk, which discusses the strength of a mother's love (Godey's, vol. 59, 1859, 177).

To establish her ethos, Hale not only relied on womanly topics but also on her experience as a mother. For example, instead of relying on past education or her expertise as an author, Hale describes her decision to enter public life, which was still highly irregular, as a motherhood duty. In 1877, she wrote:

I had little to depend upon except the promises of God for the fatherless and widow, and my own pen to support my young family of five children, and educate them as their father would have done. I had lived secluded in the dear home where he left me. . . . I must give up this precious home . . . and go out into the world which I so much dreaded. (Godey's, vol. 95, 1877, 522)

Although her early writing suggests that Hale probably would have entered public life whether or not her husband died, she probably did so sooner because she had to support her children. By emphasizing that need rather than her desire to write prompted her entry

into the public sphere, and by expressing her dread of the public world, Hale makes her shift from the private home to the public world acceptable to her readership.

When women read Godey's tips, fashion notes, recipes, and fiction, they were reading works by women. One of Hale's goals as editor was to promote the publication of women authors, those who shared her public sphere. By doing so, Hale built her credibility as she published these authors—the experts on women's issues. Hale continuously featured Lydia Sigourney, who, similar to Hale, advanced women's gendered rhetorical sphere and became associated “with Mrs. Hale in the editorial management of the Lady's Book” (Godey's, “Editor's Table,” vol. 19, 1839, 238). Since Hale accepted only work that had not been previously published, Sigourney wrote new pieces expressly for Godey's; for example, she submitted “Mothers, as Christian Teachers,” which Hale featured in the first pages of the January 1839 edition (Godey's, vol. 18, 1839, 1-4). Like Hale, most of these women authors promoted the private life of women as mothers and wives; however they did not follow their own advice. Although the readers probably took the authors' advice at face value, the example of these women writers, which Hale obviously promoted, may have influenced the readers to seek recognition beyond the private sphere. Additionally, Hale provides reviews of women authors who write on women's topics. For instance, in an “Editors' Table,” she provides a lengthy and critical review of one of the most popular, sentimental women's novels in

the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Wetherell's The Wide, Wide World (Godey's, vol. 43, 1851, 185-86).

By focusing on a female audience, Hale promotes the nineteenth-century belief that men and women belong in separate spheres, but her use of dissoi logoi proves otherwise. Hale identifies women's roles in the preface of Woman's Record (1850), her lengthy encyclopedia of famous woman: "Those who hold the doctrine of equality will be no doubt shocked to hear that I am convinced the difference between the constructive genius of man and woman is the result of an organic difference in the operations of their minds" (2). Hale, as editor of Godey's Lady's Book, advanced this doctrine of separate spheres for men and women and in her "Conversazione" claimed "the strength of man's character is in his physical propensities [and] the strength of woman lies in her moral sentiments" (Godey's, vol. 14, 1837, 1). Additionally, in an 1852 "Editors' Table," Hale clearly defines women's roles:

Men and women have different tendencies of nature, and different tasks to occupy and develop those tendencies; to bring them into the same field of employments would be as absurd as to make the value of porcelain consist in its power to do the work of iron. . . . The true wife has a ministry at home which may be more potent than that of the pulpit. . . . (Godey's, vol. 44, 1852, 88)

However, while claiming that women should not approach the "iron pulpit," Hale does exactly that. She takes a stance and shares it publicly, politically, and rhetorically, and

she continues the use of dissoi logoi throughout her editorials. Although the magazine rarely featured articles about current problems, politics, social concerns, or economic topics, Hale used it to advocate education for women and women's vocations.

Additionally, as editor, she continued to promote women's rhetoric by publishing women authors, such as Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Lydia Sigourney, and providing them a public forum.

Using dissoi logoi, Hale embedded her rather liberal ideas within Godey's, while simultaneously appealing to the dominant nineteenth-century female culture. Along with the pages of recipes and fashion plates are articles on women's education reform and women in the workplace. For instance, while applauding Godey's on the moral improvement of women, Hale advances her goal of improving female education. In an "Editor's Table," she begins her argument by playing on nineteenth-century women's duty to create and maintain a Christian household. Hale informs her readers that they are obligated to God: "If God intends that mankind shall attain to the happiness and perfection of knowing and serving him, then will he bless and prosper those who are conscientiously endeavoring to advance this great work of human improvement" (Godey's, vol. 18, 1839, 96). Since her readers probably believed in God and felt a duty to maintain God's will, Hale leaves little room for them to deviate from her position on human improvement.

After explaining to her readers what she determines to be God's will, she continues to use dissoi logoi to present her argument on women's education. Most women during Hale's time defined themselves as the moral sex, and Hale uses this belief of the innately moral female to promote her position on education. Because women are naturally moral, argues Hale, they are the best teachers for children. Hale claims, "Every increase of moral power over physical might, elevates the condition of woman—because her nature being in consonance with this moral progress, and her influence over the young so sacred and irresistible, her aid will be sought and prized by the good and wise among men" (Godey's, vol. 18, 1839, 94). She then argues that since moral women are the best teachers, they need a means of acquiring knowledge to teach, and that knowledge, says Hale, is found in institutions, which educate women.

Advocating a population of educated women was risky for Hale. By doing so, she went against the dominant belief that knowledgeable women created discord in the home. So, to allay her readers' fears, she clearly states her position on the separation of the public and private spheres. She concludes this "Editor's Table" with "We have often remarked, and we now repeat, that we do not seek to invite our sex to emulate the pursuits of men" (Godey's, vol. 18, 1839, 94). Although education could provide a level of equality between the sexes since men would no longer dominate knowledge, Hale downplays the freedom education could offer women. Instead, she maintains the

dominant thought of her time by encouraging women to apply their knowledge differently and in a separate sphere than that of men.

At the same time, Hale encourages her readership to complete texts that were taught to, advertised for, and read by men. In each edition of her “Editor’s Book Table,” Hale provides brief references to no fewer than ten books. Here, she encouraged women to read Henry J. Ripley’s Sacred Rhetoric; or, Composition and Delivery of Sermons, Henry David Thoreau’s A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Richard Whately’s Elements of Logic (Godey’s, vol. 19, 1839, 153, 223, 294), and Sir E. Bulwer Lytton’s Harold, the Last of the Saxon Kings (Godey’s vol. 37, 1848, 178).

Although she subtly promoted public life for women through education and writing, she continuously reiterated women’s private roles. Beyond her previously mentioned “Conversazione,” Hale also identifies women’s roles as private: “But the woman who arranges her household, forms her domestic plans, watches over the economy of her house, and wisely dispenses her means, spreads harmony, love, and peace throughout the circle, and makes her husband, whom she loves, a happy prince over the happiest domain” (Godey’s, vol. 40, 1850, 210). Hale probably felt the need to promote separate spheres for men and women because her audience expected and demanded it. Nevertheless, Hale, using dissoi logoi, promotes an underlying warrant: women may succeed in the public sphere. Hale’s reprint of an article, titled “Woman the Teacher,” which she wrote for American Ladies’ Magazine in 1830, provides an

excellent example of culmination of her rhetorical approaches. In this article, she argues for separate spheres, but her underlying warrant urges women to enter public life, as she did, as intellectuals. She appeals to her audience by identifying women as mothers and moral superiors, but she uses dissoi logoi to present her warrant.

She first claims that women are natural teachers since they possess pure hearts and understanding and have “influence in nursery”; therefore, states Hale, women have “vast influence on society, which nothing can prevent” (Godey’s, vol. 37, 1848, 143). After making this widely accepted claim, she goes on to argue that women can do more than rear children. Hale proclaims, “Females might be extensively employed in school-keeping.” She supports this statement with two rationale: it is too expensive to employ men and “the young imbibe instruction more readily from female teachers than those of the other sex” (Godey’s, vol. 37, 1848, 143). She then goes a step further by boldly stating that women may develop intellectually. “Teaching disciplines and strengthens women’s minds,” asserts Hale (Godey’s, vol. 37, 1848, 143-44). Hale pushes her audience to accept women’s strengthened minds by daringly supporting her argument with women who led public lives as examples. She includes Mrs. Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld, Miss Edgeworth, and two French women, Madame de Genlis and Madame Campan. Then, Hale uses dissoi logoi when she states, “In short, though there should be no encroachment on the prerogative or privileges of the men, yet women should remember they too have privileges which they ought not, which they cannot, consistently

with duty and delicacy surrender” (Godey’s, vol. 37, 1848, 144). Calling on women’s duty as educators, Hale urges women to accept their privilege of an education; however, this “privilege” for women was not one approved by many early nineteenth-century men and women. So, Hale softens her claim by stating that as educated teachers, women will instill love of virtue and a horror of vice, since they have “purity of principles.” Once again, she returns to the belief that women are moral superiors. She concludes this article by reiterating that claim, albeit rather harshly. Hale writes, “A female advocating infidelity, or endeavoring to weaken the bonds of moral and social order, is a phenomenon. Can the same be said of the other sex?” (Godey’s, vol. 37, 1848, 144).

By using varied rhetorical approaches as the first Sophists did, Hale promotes higher education for women. The complexity of dissoi logoi with its manifold of approaches allows Hale to manipulate language and to subversively urge women to enter the public sphere, and she is able to satisfy multiple audiences and still encourage public life for women.

Her second similarity to the Sophists is found in her ability to create knowledge through the act of discourse, which encourages collaboration. Hale conversed with her readership, as did many editors, by encouraging readers to write to the editor and by responding to their concerns. Additionally, she advocated women’s discursive collaboration, although not actively, through the group readings of Godey’s Lady’s Book. Women shared their copies of Godey’s and gathered to discuss the writings. The

magazines were often loaned in boardinghouses and in women's schools. Throughout the publication of Godey's, Hale notes the growing numbers of women sharing their latest copies of Godey's Lady's Book. She publishes notices of readers who complain that their periodical was read before they received it in the mail (Godey's, vol. 37, 1848, 59), and numerous women complain in letters to the editor that their copies were lost when they lent them. Hale continued to promote collaborative discourse by creating a community of authors. In Godey's, she published and re-published authors, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe; furthermore, she established a literary club called "The Coterie" where women shared works anonymously and read their works publicly to a mixed audience (Tonkovich 30-31).

Thus, just as the Sophists used language as a tool to reform a growing government, Hale used language to construct her identity as an editor and to argue for women's education. Obviously, she did this by publishing and writing editorials on education for one of the largest circulated periodicals.

Additionally, Hale manipulates language to advance her politics. She presents her arguments through forceful language. For example, she writes:

Many women are . . . obliged to toil for their own support. Some mothers have to maintain their little children, other women must provide for parents and those who helplessly depend on them. For these reasons, it is necessary that every young woman in our land should be qualified by

some accomplishment which she may teach, or some art of profession she can follow, to support herself creditably, should the necessity occur.

(Godey's vol. 48, 1854, 271)

In this bold quote on the topic of women's work, Hale uses powerful, action words such as "obliged," "have to maintain," "provide," "necessary" at the risk of losing her readership. However, she usually softened her discourse by re-iterating early nineteenth-century epistemologies.

She also emphasized the power of language by defining what is and is not acceptable writing. According to Hale, "In our country, where the fusion of classes is . . . constantly carried on, where men rise from poverty and obscurity to the highest public positions, and finally where so much depends upon the faculty of speech, it is especially necessary that we should learn in the very cradle the grammar and the diction of our native English" (Godey's, vol. 84, 1872, 572). In her articles, Hale teaches her audience proper English. For example, she emphasizes the fine points of correctness in language by distinguishing "euphemism" (a necessity of upper-class interchange) from "vulgarity" (imprecision in speech): "There is hardly any reproach which a writer or speaker dreads more than that of vulgarity" (Godey's, vol. 83, 1871, 181-82). She also insists on proper terminology, which she defines. For example, she insisted on calling herself "an editress" as opposed to "a female editor," since "editress" carried more authority.

As editor of Godey's and in her articles, Hale assigns superiority to specific uses of language. She claims that periodical writing is superior to other genres, and she provides advice for writing magazine pieces. Hale also acknowledges that brief tales written for periodicals are superior to novels, since tales are more difficult to write: “. . . it is generally easier to write a good novel than to write a good tale” (Godey's, vol. 18, 1839, 47-48). Hale further promotes periodical writing by pointing out that journals are read by larger audiences than longer texts. She says, “In truth, the greatest productions of genius would rarely become popular were it not for the aid of periodicals.” To support her claim, she cites Addison and his publication of Paradise Lost, which she notes was read widely because of Addison's large circulation and his publication of short excerpts from the epic poem. She then compares herself with Addison and Milton by noting that her large circulation and periodical articles are widely read. She claims, “Everywhere in our land is heard the advocacy of a better provision for female education, and the better securing of women's rights of property. These are the improvements in woman's social condition that we have advocated and urged” (Godey's, vol. 37 (1848): 388).

Additionally, like Poe, Hale identifies brevity as an important quality of the periodical article or tale. She states, “We want short, racy, spirited essays; stories and sketches that embody pages of narrative or sentiment. . .” (Godey's vol. 37, 1848, 389).

Similar to the Sophists and many women rhetoricians, Hale took it upon herself to improve society. When describing Godey's, Hale, with strong values tied to Christian

duty and woman's innate morality, writes, "What adds ten fold to its usefulness and interest, is its elevated tone of morality.—It is of the purest moral character" (Godey's, vol. 19, 1839, 141). By publishing a magazine of "moral character" and re-affirming her intentions, Hale promotes moral deeds, similar to the Sophists' attempts to encourage civic duty. Hale calls Godey's a "great work of human improvement" (Godey's, "Editor's Table," vol. 18, 1839, 94) and concentrates on improving society, albeit through women's roles in the home.

Woman's largest civic duty, according to Hale, is to teach her children. Hale believed that, since women are mothers, they should be the primary educators of children. Using Republican Motherhood rhetoric, Hale argues that women are responsible for raising future legislators and teaching morality, especially to their sons. In this case, Hale makes some powerful assumptions. She takes for granted that women will assume the role of motherhood and will do so for the good of the country. Hale continues her advocacy of active benevolence when she encourages women to gain an education so that they may teach young children. She claims:

Now, these young ladies are actuated by that love of little children and desire to do good which are the true Christian characteristics. But were there no opportunities for the exercise of these noble and charming sentiments, their hearts would, insensibly to themselves, perhaps, lose the

bright, holy fervor of charity that now assimilates them with the angels
(Godey's, vol. 36, 1848, 247).

This last quote probably best sums up Hale's rhetorical ambition. She wanted the best for women and her country, but simultaneously, she maintains nineteenth-century epistemologies and identified women as the angels in the house. Throughout her editorship, Hale continues to promote active benevolence. She does this by perfecting a woman's magazine that "fosters and calls out the best energies of woman's mind" (Godey's, vol. 36, 1848, 247).

Hale's use of the feminist-sophistic throughout her editorial and writing careers aided her in bridging the transition from Enlightenment to parlor rhetoric. By using varied rhetorical approaches, collaborative discourse, powerful language, and civic duty, Hale encourages higher education and work opportunities for women while maintaining the appearance of a traditional nineteenth-century woman writer. She does this by using rhetorical devices such as dissoi logoi to encourage women to enter the public sphere while not alienating those who desire to remain in the private.

Judith Sargent Murray and Sarah Josepha Hale exemplify only two of the many women who remain trapped between public and private life. They show how women, who are often caught in private life because of societal demands, can enter the public life and subversively encourage other women to do the same.

Using feminist-sophistic rhetoric, Murray and Hale engage in varied rhetorical approaches, which stem from their attempts to please their diverse audiences. Murray uses Republican Motherhood in her approach while Hale uses dissoi logoi. Additionally, these women build collaborative communities by encouraging women to engage with their widely shared publications. The powerful language and benevolent acts embedded within these women's works argue for change, especially within the male-run higher education system.

NOTES

¹ Nina Baym uses the term “Victorian” to describe American nineteenth-century women writers and what Johnson refers to as “parlor rhetoric.” In a chapter titled “From Enlightenment to Victorian” Baym claims, “In the most general terms the Victorian ideology of women’s intellect rejects the sexless mind, elevates the value of spirituality over intellect, and associates women with spirituality” (Feminism 117).

² In 1840, Hale’s “Editor’s Table” became titled “Editors’ Table.” This change resulted from the association of Lydia Sigourney who assisted Hale with the magazine’s editorship (Godey’s, vol. 19, 1839, 238). Most critics assume that Hale was the sole author of the “Editors’ Table.”

³ Olive Burt’s First Woman Editor (1960), Norma R. Fryatt’s Sarah Josepha Hale: The Life and Times of a Nineteenth-Century Career Woman (1975), and Sherbrooke Roger’s Sarah Josepha Hale: A New England Pioneer, 1788-1879 (1985)

CHAPTER FOUR

RHETORIC IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE:

CATHARINE BEECHER, LYDIA SIGOURNEY, AND LYDIA MARIA CHILD

“And as a system of right moral and religious education gains its appropriate influence, as women are more and more educated to understand and value the importance of their influence in society, and their peculiar duties, more young females will pursue their education with the expectation that, unless paramount private duties forbid, they are to employ their time and talents in the duties of a teacher, until they assume the responsibilities of domestic life.”

(Catharine Beecher, “An Essay on the Education of Female Teachers,” 1835, 294)

“Of what unspeakable importance then, is her education, who gives lessons before any other instructor—who pre-occupies the unwritten page of being—who produces impressions which only death can obliterate—and mingles with the cradle-dream what shall be read in Eternity. Well may statesmen and philosophers debate how she may be best educated, who is to educate all mankind.”

(Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney, “Address to the Guardians of Female Education,” 1837, 282-283)

“If a girl feels interested in nothing but books, she will in all probability be useless, or nearly so, in all the relations dearest to a good woman’s heart; if, on the other hand, she gives all her attention to household matters, she will become a mere drudge, and will lose many valuable sources of enjoyment and usefulness.”

(Lydia Maria Child, The Mother’s Book 1831, 21)

Rhetoric of the private sphere emphasizes a commitment to civic duty and reform, incorporates Republican Motherhood through the identification of women's role in the home, and advocates women's rights through ambiguity. These women rhetoricians defined themselves as a class apart from men and argued for equality in a separate, gendered space, often labeled the private or domestic sphere. Many early nineteenth-century women, often referred to as "true women," asserted that the female mind is sexed, different, and separate from men's minds; however, as Nina Baym asserts, "women [during the early nineteenth century] are not less intellectual but differently intellectual, qualitatively different from men" (Feminism 117). Although society did not expect women to use their education within the male, public, political sphere, women needed formal education for the improvement of conditions within the home and for teaching their children. The home was women's only acceptable sphere of influence and place where they used their education, and society urged women to strive for perfection within the home and shunned women who deviated from the norm by moving into the public sphere.

These women had no wish to alter the fundamental role of women as wives and mothers. Later, the flourishing of industry during the 1830s and the approaching Civil War separated the public and private spheres and brought on the need for Republican Motherhood. Families divided; fathers left the home and cottage industry to work in factories and businesses, and mothers remained at home to care for children and to pursue

“good works.” Many women remained involved with the reform movement and most remained convinced that women, as the morally superior sex, had a duty to reform the corrupt public sphere. Consequently, the home, the private sphere, became associated with morality, and the workplace, the public sphere, was thought to harbor sin.

Before the Civil War, most of American women’s rhetoric is found in conduct books. Unlike courtesy books, which focus an individual’s goals for raising one’s status in society and are often associated with Renaissance rhetoric, conduct books promote social goals for the Republic’s progress. The conduct book prescribes a domestic life for women and encourages them to recognize gender-role distinctions and to cultivate ideal womanhood. Johnson claims, “Conduct literature participated in the rhetorical repatriation of the woman back to the parlor by overtly discouraging women from having strong voices, literally and culturally, and by reminding American readers that if happiness was to be secured, women should keep to their former place in the home and do it quietly” (49). Conduct books focus on a woman’s duty to serve God and the Republic by raising virtuous children and by providing her husband a welcome refuge from the industrial public sphere.

Although the conduct book appears to oppress and restrict women, many women rhetoricians of the private remained as assertive and public as women rhetoricians of the public sphere. This double argument, or *dissoi-logoi*, continue throughout many early nineteenth-century women’s lives and texts. For example, although these women argue

against issues such as the woman's right to vote, these women themselves participate in the public arena. These early nineteenth-century women authors and speakers may have associated women with the private sphere in their articles and speeches, but their actions prove otherwise. During this time, the numbers of women on public platforms increased. Women speakers, such as Catharine Beecher, debated topics such as education for women. Women authors, such as Lydia Sigourney and Lydia Maria Child, published prose articles, novels, conduct books, letters, and poetry. Through these public roles, women established a private rhetorical presence.

This rhetorical presence, women's private rhetoric, employs many of the characteristics of feminist sophistic. Mainly, civic virtue dominates most of the written works. Additionally, early American private rhetoricians freely employ various rhetorical methods shaped by social circumstances, create knowledge through discourse, and acknowledge the power and persuasiveness of language. The works, principally those of prose, of three early nineteenth-century women rhetoricians, Catharine Beecher, Lydia Sigourney, and Lydia Maria Child, exemplify this feminist-sophistic rubric in combination with their current epistemologies.

Catharine Beecher (1800-1878)

Most of Catharine Beecher's biographical information is found in her autobiography titled Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions (1874), Mae Elizabeth

Harveson's Catharine Esther Beecher: Pioneer Educator (1932), and Kathryn Kish Sklar's Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (1973). These three works emphasize Beecher's father's influence on her life's work. Her father, Rev. Lyman Beecher, was the eminent pastor of the Congregational Church, and since Catharine was his oldest child, he shared his religious morals and beliefs with her. Beyond her father's influence, Beecher's life and works were shaped by her personal experiences as care taker and homemaker; she assisted her mother and later her stepmother in caring for the younger children.

Beecher's formal education came from her mother and aunts and at Sarah Pierce's Academy in Litchfield, Connecticut. In an attempt to support herself, she educated and prepared herself for the teaching field and began her career at a girls' school in New London. She later studied mathematics, and once confident in the "higher branches," she opened a school for girls in Hartford (1823), later incorporated as the Hartford Female Seminary. Although the school had no financial backing and at one time met in a basement, over one hundred girls attended. Following this enrollment boom and the unexpected death of her fiancée, Beecher dedicated her life to educating women. She did so by seeking financial backing for her Hartford school and receiving it, establishing the Western Female Institute (1833) in Cincinnati, sending educated young women to teach in Western America, and writing and publishing educational texts, including conduct books.

During the five years she ran the Western Female Institute, Beecher began to write her conduct books on domestic economy. Her most popular work, A Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School (1841), shows women how to fulfill domestic responsibilities and standardizes American domestic practices. According to Sklar, Beecher prescribed “one system that integrated psychological, physiological, economic, religious, social, and political factors” and demonstrated “how the specifics of the system should work” (152). Her Treatise became widely popular on the East Coast as well as in the western settlements, where Beecher sent many of her trained teachers. After the publication of Treatise, Beecher was acknowledged throughout the United States as the heroine who simplified household maintenance, child rearing, gardening, cooking, cleaning, doctoring, and other responsibilities of middle-class, white women.

Beecher spent the last forty years of her life traveling, lecturing, writing, organizing societies for training teachers, and supplying trained teachers to new schools in the frontier states and territories. During this mission, she founded the American Woman’s Education Association in an attempt to raise funds to establish an institution of higher education for women in Milwaukee. Although she continued to encourage women’s education, Beecher did not support the movement to secure legal rights for women. She believed women should function in three areas: household management,

education, and health care, and she proclaimed that women belonged in the private sphere as wives and mothers.

Beecher lived until her death in Elmira, New York with her brother Tom, who lived near a water-cure center, another area of her interest. In Elmira, she enjoyed the benefits of the water cure, gave speeches, and influenced women and their studies at an Elmira college. She died in 1878.

Although Beecher wrote many philosophic and religious texts, she is best known for her works on household management. Her essays and book-length guides on domestic duties contain some of her best examples of rhetoric. In these works, Beecher employs the feminist-sophistic approach through varied rhetorical approaches, which primarily focus on higher education for women; collaborative discourse; use of powerful language; and civic duty.

Beecher's rhetorical approach consists of many modes. Although the genre she most commonly employs is the conduct book, she, similar to the first Sophists, uses a variety of approaches to persuade her audience to support her main position—women need a domestic education. Therefore, her conduct books are more than the common “how to” books frequently read by women of her time. Beecher's conduct books also function as treatises on educating women, which is why she titles her most famous conduct book Treatise on Domestic Education.

Beecher's rhetorical approaches center upon her intended audience, those who read her conduct books. In Treatise on Domestic Economy, she identifies her audience in the extended title of the work: Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School. Beecher's "Young Ladies" were America's future homemakers and teachers. Since Beecher used this work as a textbook in her schools, young women, who hoped to become schoolteachers and were expected to be homemakers, looked to Treatise on Domestic Economy as a guidebook. Beecher expands her readership in the book's dedication where she addresses experienced mothers

whose intelligence and virtues have inspired admiration and respect, whose experience has furnished many valuable suggestions, in this work, whose approbation will be highly valued, and whose influence, in promoting the object aimed at, is respectfully solicited, this work is dedicated, by their friend and countrywoman.

In short, Beecher's audience consisted of literate women in the private sphere and those women brave enough to enter the public world of teaching. During Beecher's time, the literate female audience largely consisted of white, upper- to middle-class mothers, housewives, and students, and these characteristics probably describe her readership. Geographically, Beecher's audience was located in the eastern states as well as in Ohio, Iowa, and Illinois—what was then considered the far west. In both of these areas,

Beecher established female seminaries and sent her seminary pupils to teach. Her conduct book was the textbook, and probably her pupils continued to use this text in their endeavors as teachers, continuing to increase Beecher's readership.

Beecher, as an educator, carried authority in the field of educating women. She was taught by her well-educated father, she attended the best available schools, and she also taught herself; she applied her learning in her teaching and was respected for doing so. However, she lacked personal experience as a homemaker, wife, and mother. In her conduct books, however, she establishes her limited authority by providing knowledge through observation instead of knowledge by participation. She acknowledges this limited experience in the preface of Treatise on Domestic Economy. Beecher states:

Although the writer was trained to the care of children, and to perform all branches of domestic duty, by some of the best housekeepers, much in these pages is offered, not as the result of her own experience, but as what has obtained the approbation of some of the most judicious mothers and housekeepers in the nation. (9)

By observing the work of mothers and housekeepers, Beecher recorded and published a guide on housekeeping. However, her limited personal experience diminished neither her ethos nor the sale of her conduct book.

In this work, Beecher never draws on her experience as a teacher. Although her audience may have respected her expertise as a teacher, she never mentions or refers to

her teaching experiences. Perhaps Beecher felt that her public experiences would diminish her success. After all, public women, especially educated women, were not revered by most. More likely, she thought that her audience could better relate to other mothers—those who shared similar experiences.

Beecher's arguments persuaded her audience because of the authority Beecher carries in her rhetorical approaches. She uses three basic approaches: arguing in a straight-forward, classical manner, which may be the result of training in eighteenth-century rhetoric;¹ appealing to the power of the mother; and incorporating *dissoi logoi*.

Beecher often uses a traditional argumentative format and modes to present her arguments. In this approach, which is similar to Cicero's argumentative format, she moves from introduction, to rationale, counter-arguments, and a conclusion. Within this structure, she uses traditional modes of argumentation, including example, comparison and contrast, questioning, and problem/solution. One good example of her clear use of this format and these modes can be found in "Chapter Four: On Domestic Economy as a Branch of Study" of her *Treatise on Domestic Economy*.

Beecher takes an approach that has become traditional: she defines her topic and states her thesis in the introduction of the chapter. In her introduction, she points out a specific problem: "neither parents nor teachers realize the importance, or the practicability of constitution [domestic education] as a branch of female education, to be studied at school" (63). Beecher then states that the aim of her argument is "to point our

some of the reasons for introducing Domestic Economy as a branch of female education, to be studied at school” (63).

Continuing to follow traditional format, Beecher then presents three reasons supporting her argument. The first reason is the simplest and the one with the least support. She points out that a woman always uses and needs domestic knowledge to benefit herself and to help others. Her second reason is that “every young lady, at the close of her school days, and even before they are closed, is liable to be placed in a situation, in which she will need to do, herself, or to teach others to do, all the various processes and duties detailed in this work” (63). Beecher argues this point through example. She presents three situations where “under her own observation” she saw that women needed a domestic education for practical purposes. Her third reason is that without a formal branch of education dedicated to domestic knowledge “young ladies will not be taught these things in any other way” (65). In this section, Beecher uses a series of questions to investigate mothers’ domestic knowledge and teaching abilities. Beecher also asks how many mothers, whether or not they have the “qualifications,” provide daughters with the necessary instruction: “Is it not the case, that, owing to ill health, deficiency of domestics, and multiplied cares and perplexities, a large portion of the most intelligent mothers, and those, too, who most realize the importance of this instruction, actually cannot find the time, and have not the energy, necessary to properly perform the duty?” (65).

Then, Beecher presents a series of counter-arguments. She first rejects the idea that domesticity cannot be taught from textbooks. Through the use of example, she claims that women learn processes of mechanics and the identification of machinery through texts and that housekeeping can be learned in a similar manner. Next, Beecher rejects the idea that those who study domesticity will forget it. Using comparison, she states that “much of everything studied at school” will be forgotten and then questions “why should that knowledge, most needed for daily comfort, most liable to be in demand, be the only study omitted, because it may be forgotten?” (66). Her last refutation focuses on the claim that women may obtain textbooks on domesticity outside of the school and do not need in-class instruction. She refutes this claim by comparing studies on chemistry and philosophy to domestics. She asks, “And so they can get books on Chemistry and Philosophy, and study them out of school; but will they do it?” (66). In this section, Beecher claims that without instruction in schools, women will not read the necessary textbooks.

Finally, Beecher presents her last reason “for introducing such a branch of study into female schools” (66). In this section, Beecher argues that domestic education needs “importance and dignity” and that introducing the study of household management in schools would gain it respectability in the ranks of other disciplines. Beecher argues, “And let the young women of this Nation find, that Domestic Economy is placed, in schools, on equal or superior ground to Chemistry, Philosophy, and Mathematics, and

they will blush to be found ignorant of its first principles, as much as they will hesitate respecting the laws of gravity, or the composition of the atmosphere” (67). She claims that women should be able to perform necessary skills, such as sewing a dress or sweeping a room, as well as they can discuss philosophy or political economy or construct geometric diagrams. The domestic skills, claims Beecher, are more necessary and will be better performed when they are taught in schools.

Beecher concludes this chapter by stating that she cannot implement her plan until “endowed institutions” are established universally. In her conclusion, she compares the current, imperfect state of women’s domestic education to her plan for the future. She states, “In the present imperfect, desultory, varying, mode of female education, where studies are begun, changed, partially learned, and forgotten, it requires nearly all the years of a woman’s youth, to acquire the intellectual education now demanded” (68). Then, she provides her solution to the problem of current female education: “While this state of things continues, the only remedy is, to introduce Domestic Economy as a study at school” (68).

This straightforward approach mimics that used by educated men in the early 1800s, and Beecher probably learned it from her father. It works well with her audience, since they probably were familiar with classical format through sermons. However, not all authors followed her style. The sentimental style of writing was popular and used by well-read authors, such as Lydia Sigourney; however, Beecher never attempts to

incorporate flowery language. Instead, she uses a plain style, which seems to fit the content of her practical, conduct books. Perhaps Beecher felt that the plain style carried more authority than the sentimental style.

Similarly, Beecher uses a classical approach in “An Essay on the Education of Female Teachers” (1835). In this essay, Beecher focuses on equality in education through logical arguments, empirical evidence, and plain language, which emphasizes her use of the power of language. Since it was the American Lyceum that invited Beecher to deliver this address, she shifts her approach slightly; she uses scientific language and refers to an emerging industrial nation to capture her male audience. As she argues for continuous funding of permanent, female educational institutions, Beecher appeals to her audience using the epistemology of the “public sphere.”

First, Beecher plays on the rise of experimental science and industry:

In regard to education, the world is now making experiments, such as were never made before. Man is demanding disenthralment, alike from physical force, and intellectual slavery; and by a slow and secret process, one nation after another is advancing in a sure though silent progress. Man is bursting the chains of slavery, and the bonds of intellectual subserviency; and is learning to think, and reason, and act for himself. (177)

In this passage, Beecher appeals to the people of an ambitious nation, people who strive for improvement through education and who dare to experiment in the name of industry.

By using such words as “process,” “advancing,” “progress,” and “reason,” to present her ideas, Beecher plays on the emerging identity of an industrial nation and demands its population’s loyalty to freedom, independence, and progress.

Beyond using scientific language to appeal to her audience, Beecher further encourages them to accept her underlying warrant: the nation should support education for women. Although she never mentions women or women’s education in this passage, she subtly identifies the lack of women’s education with intellectual slavery and a lack of progress and attempts to convince her audience that they do not want to be responsible for the downfall of their new nation.

She continues her emphasis on scientific reasoning when she claims, “. . . moral and religious education, and the best methods of governing and regulating the human mind, must become a science . . .” (181). In a time when scientific fact was privileged above all forms of creative thought, Beecher needed to associate female education with science. By agreeing with her audience that science must regulate the human mind, she aligns herself with the audience’s point of view.

Throughout this essay, Beecher supports her arguments using empirical evidence—a method recommended by Aristotle. Instead of pointing to religion, Beecher, who was an intensely religious woman, relies on statistics to buttress her ideas on education. She incorporated shocking statistics, such as the following: “At this rate, ninety thousand teachers are this moment wanted to supply the destitute; and to these

must be added every year twelve thousand, simply to meet the increase of population” (182). Although she does not provide the source of her data, she does appear to have researched the subject and compiled mathematical statistics based on her findings.

Beecher’s use of empirical knowledge links her to the classics as well as to Enlightenment rhetoric, but her strong emphasis on the role of the mother better categorizes her as a parlor rhetorician. Beecher’s second means of appealing to her audience shows her focus on the power of the mother; since mothers regulate children’s food, air, and clothing, Beecher argued, they are the “sovereign of an empire” (Domestic Economy 157). In Suggestions Respecting Improvements in Education (1823), Beecher defines the power of the mother: “It is to mothers, and to teachers, that the world is to look for the character which is to be enstamped on each succeeding generation, for it is to them that the great business of education is almost exclusively committed” (147). Using this ideology as a rhetorical approach, Beecher focuses on mothers who nurture and who could make “the ill-natured amiable, the selfish regardful of the feelings and rights of others, the obstinate yielding and docile” (Educational Reminiscences 48).

By appealing to the early nineteenth-century thought that mothers are morally superior and all-powerful in the home, Beecher, through her popular orations, attempted to collect funds from “benevolent men [united] in endowing institutions” and established numerous female seminaries (“Essay on Education” 295). In “Essay on Education,” which also shows Beecher’s classical approach, she proves that men are not dedicated

educators but that women are. She does so, not by stating that women accept low salaries and monotonous work, two common characteristics of the teaching profession, but by defining women as moral, nurturing:

It is woman, fitted by disposition, and habits, and circumstances, for such duties, who, to a very wide extent, must aid in educating the childhood and youth of this nation; and therefore it is, that females must be trained and educated for this employment. And, most happily, it is true, that the education necessary to fit a woman to be a teacher, is exactly the one that best fits her for that domestic relation she is primarily designed to fill. (“Essay on Education” 293)

Because women are naturally and circumstantially mothers and caretakers, Beecher claims they already possess teaching skills. Yet, she argues, women need formal training to increase their primary duties as wives and mothers. She argues for female seminary funding to train professionally women as teachers as well as nurses and housekeepers. She seeks to elevate “womanly” studies in these female seminaries and argues for the acknowledgement of “the science and practice of Domestic Economy . . . as a regular study in female seminaries” (Domestic Economy 50). However, Beecher notes, “it is to the mothers of our Country, that the community must look for this change” (Domestic Economy 51).

Beecher uses the dissoi logoi in her rhetorical approaches. First, she was a public figure, who was well respected by both male and female fellow educators. Additionally,

she never fulfilled what she defines as the primary duty of women; Beecher neither married nor reared children. She continued to function in the public sphere throughout her life, and by advocating female education, she encouraged other women to join her in the public life as teachers. She felt that women should “pursue their education with the expectation that . . . they are to employ their time and talents in the duties of a teacher, until they assume the responsibilities of domestic life,” (“Essay on Education” 185) and as men emigrated westward in the early nineteenth century, Beecher sent her students with them to establish schools for educating women. Through dissoi logoi, Beecher provided a means of educating women and sending them into the workforce.

Beecher’s focus on feminist-sophistic discourse and collaboration is found in her actions, which play on her ideas of women’s civic duty, rather than her words. One of her most popular collaborative efforts came from organizing a committee of women in Cincinnati to help her educate and train women in the East who would act as “missionary teachers” in the West and South. These Cincinnati women collaboratively educated and sent missionary teachers into their fields, although most of the western and southern teachers reported unsuccessful experiences.

Additionally, since Beecher felt that financial endowment was the key to successful women’s education, she encouraged women and men to work collaboratively in an attempt to seek funding. Through several meetings in New York City, she organized the American Woman’s Education Association. This association consisted of

women of large experience and public spirit from various religious denominations along with several business and professional men. Together they raised funds and erected a building in Milwaukee and later in Dubuque to train women to be intelligent, healthful wives, mothers, and housekeepers.

Beecher supported her goal of civic duty through multi-faceted rhetorical approaches, powerful language, and collaboration. She argued that women had a moral duty as educators of America's future leaders: "But are not the most responsible of all duties committed to the charge of woman? Is it not her profession to take care of mind, body, and soul? and that, too, at the most critical of all periods of existence?" (Domestic Economy 52). Beecher attempted to convince women of their duties as teachers within the home, first, and in schools, if necessary. Similar to Hale, Beecher desired the best possible life for women; although, her brother Thomas delivered most of her speeches, and she rejected women factory workers and suffrage, Beecher dedicated her life to improving educational standards for women.

Beecher's rhetorical strategies aid her goal of increasing higher education opportunities for women. These strategies appear in her conduct books. In her conduct books she uses the feminist sophistic through her varied rhetorical approaches, the creation of knowledge through collaborative discourse, powerful language, and civic duty. Her writing borrows these rhetorical techniques from the first Sophists to persuade her audience that women need an education.

Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865)

Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney, “the sweet singer of Hartford” and nominal editor of Godey’s Lady’s Book, advocated educating girls for usefulness in “woman’s sphere” and presented dissoi logoi in her public, political stances, which urge women to remain in the private sphere. Although she flourished as a successful author, she publicly encourages women to stay at home. This paradox is seen in her book titled Lucy Howard’s Journal. “Herein is the patriotism of woman and her privilege,” Sigourney wrote, “not to wrestle at the ballot-box,” but “to be the priestess at the shrine of the household affections” (322). Sigourney’s career as a prolific author and her lifestyle, however, contradict her stance on the role of woman within the private sphere.

Most of the information about Sigourney’s life is found in Gordon Haight’s Mrs. Sigourney: The Sweet Singer of Hartford (1930), the only book-length biography on her, and in Mary G. DeJong’s “Legacy Profile” on Sigourney (1988). Lydia Howard Huntley, born in Norwich, Connecticut, was influenced by her father’s employer, Mrs. Jerusha Lathrop, who encouraged her to read sermons and other solemn works. As a girl, she began keeping a journal and writing poetry. Her formal education ended when she was thirteen, and she began to learn housekeeping skills, but she continued studies on her own and with local tutors.

In 1814, she opened a select school for girls in Hartford, and unlike the dame schools of her time, her school focused on history, arithmetic, grammar, composition, and

journal writing. Her first book, Moral Pieces in Prose and Verse (1815), was written for her classroom. With the publication of this work and the success of her school, she quickly found that she could support herself, her family, and charities (DeJong 36).

In 1819, she married Charles Sigourney, who encouraged her to publish her works anonymously and ended her teaching career. Although he disapproved of her public presence, her publications helped supplement his income, and support his three children from a previous marriage, especially after his business failed. Sigourney wrote and published many sentimental, occasional poems and sketches and numerous books, including the semi-autobiography titled Lucy Howard's Journal (1858) and conduct books titled Letters to Young Ladies (1833) and Letters to My Pupils (1852).

Sigourney's sentimental works, which reflect the literary culture of her time, focus on death, women's virtues, and compassion for oppressed minorities. She reinforced woman's private sphere and encouraged women to study diligently for the joy of learning, to carry on conversations, and to develop their inner resources. Most of Sigourney's rhetorical approaches are found in her advocacy of female education in combination with woman's domestic duties. Sigourney wrote, "Though to combine the excellences of a housekeeper, with much eminence in literature or science, requires an energy seldom possessed—still there is no need that domestick [sic] duties should preclude mental improvement, or extinguish intellectual enjoyment" (Letters to Young

Ladies 90). Through her works on female education as well as charitable duties and self-improvement, Sigourney's rhetorical approach parallels that of the feminist sophistic.

A specific rhetorical method does not restrict Sigourney's writing, and her social circumstances shaped her rhetorical approaches. Like the Sophists, her rhetorical approaches are varied. Sigourney presents her point of view through both prose and poetry. For example, she argues for formal girls' education in one of her most famous prose pieces, "Address to the Guardians of Female Education." Here she argues for "an increase of benefits" for female education (Letters to Young Ladies 10) and acknowledges that girls need formal education so they can teach their future children and properly run a household. Similarly, her poem titled "A Mother's Teaching" (1840), which was published in The Ladies' Companion, continues this argument. The poem begins with a young boy "listening to the words / That from his mother fell" and ends with a young man who realizes "the seed his Mother sow'd, / Brought forth rich fruit for Heaven" (145). Sigourney increased her readership by writing both poetry and prose. Not only did she use an argumentative, traditional style to appeal to her audience, usually men, but also she appealed to those, usually women, who preferred to read poetry.

Sigourney also uses epistolary writing as a rhetorical approach. During the early nineteenth century, letter writing was popular among women writers and was accepted as a woman's mode of writing. To increase her readership, Sigourney publishes almost all of her argumentative prose pieces as letters. The epistolary form, found in her Letters to

Young Ladies and Letters to My Pupils, enables Sigourney to publish publicly her arguments on female education, women's charitable duties, and conduct and to remain somewhat encircled within the woman's sphere.

As a woman author, Sigourney knew how to appeal to the growing audience of women readers. She wrote in the genres that most women read—novels, poetry, and letters. Additionally, she realized that sentimental writings sold best. Therefore, most of her writings contain a sentimental style, which DeJong calls “sentimental, didactic, and pious” (39).

That Sigourney bases her rhetorical approach on sentiment has led twentieth-century critics to label her writing as too sentimental and unworthy of inclusion in literary canons. However, her flowery language is nothing more than a reflection of her time. Unlike many authors who used sentimentality mainly to evoke vicarious emotion, Sigourney uses sentimentality as a rhetorical approach; but she presents underlying warrants. For example, in Letters to Young Ladies she writes, “Does not the influence of woman rest upon every member of her household, like the dew upon the tender herb, or the sunbeam silently educating the young flower? or as the shower, and the sleepless steam, cheer and invigorate the proudest tree of the forest?” (12). Through her sentimental vocabulary of “dew upon the tender herb” and “the sunbeam educating the young flower,” she argues that women are teachers, whether they work at a school or rear

children at home. She presents her warrant, which claims women and teaching are inseparable, and remains within the accepted tradition of sentimental writing.

Another rhetorical approach used by Sigourney is that of arguing from the authority of others. Throughout her works, she supplements her arguments with quotes and situations experienced by internationally known authors, philosophers, statesmen, and teachers. Her broad range of secondary sources exemplifies her extensive knowledge and adds to her credibility. Her letter on “Benevolence” found in Letters to Young Ladies refers to authorities, such as Pascal, Bacon, the father of Louis XVI, the Countess of Warwick, Isabella Graham, the Baron Degerando, Franklin, Henry Martyn, Samuel J. Mills, Bishop Wilson, Plutarch, and, of course, the Bible. All of these authorities, she points out, advocate benevolence, just as she does.

Beyond rhetorical appeals to women through genre and style, Sigourney uses another rhetorical approach based on her social circumstances; she argues from personal experience. Although she taught for only five years, most of her rhetorical approaches relied on her teaching experiences, which provided her with the authority to write conduct books and manuals for girls. For example, in the preface of The Girl’s Reading Book (1841), she writes, “I have myself been a teacher” (6). Following this statement, she instructs young girls on the importance of reading and conveying “the delicate shades of thought, of the most refined writer, clearly and agreeably to the mind of another” (6). Using her authority as a teacher, she argues that girls should be skilled in reading the best

authors' works and in thinking critically about them. She uses the same rhetorical approach in her Letters to Young Ladies. In the preface, she notes that, since she has dedicated "several years" to her students' "instruction," she knows "the influence they might exercise in society" (1). Then, she presents her canon of acceptable behavior and advice for women.

Unlike many parlor rhetoricians of her time, Sigourney rarely uses her authority as mother and wife, but she argues that women must maintain these roles with dignity. For example, in Letters to Young Ladies she states, "Household occupations, to men engrossed by the sublime sciences, seem a tissue of trifles. Yet, as 'trifles make the sum of human things,' so the comfort of a family is affected by the touching, or not touching, many minute springs, which like 'a wheel within a wheel,' are of secret operation, but essential importance" (216). Many critics, such as Ann Douglas Wood in "Mrs. Sigourney and the Sensibility of the Inner Space," suggest Sigourney was unhappy with her personal life. Wood writes, "Her dry and exact husband was distasteful to her, as were his daughters by a previous marriage, and she repeatedly but vainly asked him for a separation" (166). Her family life may have kept her from using her roles as mother and wife as a credible source of authority; however, she continues to argue for women to remain in the home.

Second, Sigourney encourages the creation of knowledge through discourse. For Sigourney, discourse is "conversation," which she defines as "a delightful and improving

intercourse between intellectual and immortal beings” and “the medium by which knowledge is communicated” (Letters to Young Ladies 187, 188). In her letter on conversation, Sigourney notes that women have many more opportunities than men do to engage in conversation at many levels, and she suggests that women use this advantage for personal growth. For Sigourney, conversation is an art gained through education and morality. She states:

To attain excellence in it, an assemblage of qualifications is requisite; disciplined intellect, to think clearly, and to clothe thought with propriety and elegance; knowledge of human nature, to suit subject to character; true politeness, to prevent giving pain; a deep sense of morality, to preserve the dignity of speech, and a spirit of benevolence to neutralize its asperities and sanctify its powers. (Letters to Young Ladies 187-188)

Educating her audience in conversation, Sigourney teaches young ladies to avoid negative gossiping and to speak properly to young men. Most importantly, she teaches young ladies how to learn from their conversations. She instructs young ladies to “recall the instances in which they have been trifling, profitless, or recreant to the law of kindness” (Letters to Young Ladies 188). By recalling these instances at the end of each day, Sigourney anticipates that young ladies will learn from their mistakes and will learn to use conversation to communicate effectively and to create morality and usefulness.

Sigourney additionally urges discourse within her writing style. She promotes collaboration, community, and discourse by calling for a group of unified, educated, domestic women. This group of women, according to Sigourney, is to rear moral children, keep an acceptable household, and help the less fortunate. She forms this collaborative group of women through pointed addresses. For example, she refers to her readers using variations of “my dear young friends” (Letters to Young Ladies 20, 63, 208). By using such an address, she engages with her readers as if she were conducting a literary club, a sewing circle, or more likely, a class. In the conclusion of Letters to Young Ladies, Sigourney most obviously acknowledges her attempt to form a discourse. She states, “Though we never meet in the flesh, yet at that day when the ‘dead, small and great, shall stand before God,’ may it be found that we have so communed in spirit, as to aid in the blessed pilgrimage to ‘glory—honor—immortality—eternal life’” (Letters to Young Ladies 259). Sigourney anticipates that the women who have read her book will join her and other readers in the active promotion of morality and education within women’s sphere.

Sigourney acknowledges the power of language. She teaches her readers that the language they use will be the means by which others judge them (Letters to Young Ladies 171-88), and she tells her pupils to “converse both agreeably and usefully” using “clear enunciation” and “the best language” (Letters to My Pupils 44, 45, 47). Sigourney claims that women should be educated in the use of “fitly-spoken words,” which she

divides into three classes: “those that give pleasure, those that impart instruction, and those that comfort sorrow” (Letters to My Pupils 49). By providing detailed instruction in each of these classes, Sigourney encourages women to define themselves through language as nurturers who give pleasure, who teach, and who comfort others. For Sigourney, these three functions are of utmost importance since women who attain these language skills will succeed in their private spheres, and since women’s dominion is within the home, women must use the most effective language to communicate with her husband and children.

Finally, Sigourney’s primary goal, which is largely exemplified through her conduct books, was to create better citizens through good example and through encouraging benevolence. In Letters to Young Ladies, she clearly states her position on civic virtue in the letter titled “Benevolence.” Sigourney commands, “Resolve, therefore, this day, that you will not live exclusively for your own gratification, but that the good of others, shall be an incentive to your studies, your exertions, your prayers” (Letters to Young Ladies 190-191). In this letter, she encourages women to follow her lead in helping “the deaf and the dumb,” the schools for the Cherokees, and “the children of poverty and ignorance” (195). Additionally, she provides a daily system to regulate civic virtue. This system focuses on improving and expressing gratitude to the “Almighty Benefactor,” parents and older friends, other members of the family, neighbors and companions, the poor and sick, enemies, and oneself (Letters to Young Ladies 202-204).

Additionally, since Sigourney defines women as the moral sex, she assigns women the duty of promoting morality and civic virtue within the home. Women are natural born teachers, according to Sigourney, and they give “lessons before any other instructor—who pre-occupies the unwritten page of being—who produces impressions which only death can obliterate—and mingles with the cradle-dream what shall be read in Eternity” (Letters to Young Ladies 18). These lessons are to include “sowing seeds of purity and peace” in their children (Letters to Young Ladies 15). Not only does she persuade women to seek an education for the good of their families, but also she teaches them to be good housekeepers since women’s “strongest affections are in the keeping of others” (Letters to Young Ladies 50). Educating children and keeping a moral household are women’s two primary duties, according to Sigourney, and women must study these “sciences” so that they may successfully rear the future parents, teachers, and legislators.

Sigourney’s rhetorical approach parallels that of the feminist sophistic. She uses a variety of rhetorical approaches based on social circumstances, encourages collaborative discourse, acknowledges the power of language, and advocates civic duty. Although her ideas appear contradictory, since she advocated educating girls for usefulness in “woman’s sphere” while she flourished as a public, successful author, she promoted two seemingly opposing ideas—women’s work in the private sphere and female education.

Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880)

Similar to Sigourney, Lydia Maria Child wrote conduct books for profit and used parlor rhetoric to promote her literary career. Utilizing the theme of the idealized “true woman,” Child developed her success as an author and supported her idealist husband, who was constantly in debt. Specific information on Child’s life may be found in numerous biographies including Helene Gilbert Baer’s The Heart is Like Heaven (1964), Milton Meltzer’s Tongue of Flame (1965), William S. Osborne’s Lydia Maria Child (1980), Patricia Holland’s “Legacy Profile” (1988), Deborah Clifford’s Crusader for Freedom (1992), and Carolyn L. Karcher’s The First Woman in the Republic (1994).

Although Lydia Francis, born in Medford, Massachusetts, attended local schools, her family gave her the most important elements of her education. At the age of twelve, she lived with a married older sister. This sister’s husband, a lawyer and politician, influenced Child’s education by inviting intellectuals to the house and discussing current topics around the table (Holland 47; Karcher, First Woman 9). Later, her brother, Covers Francis, minister of a Unitarian church, became her intellectual mentor, taking a personal interest in her education and introducing her to Emerson and Fuller (Holland 7).

In 1828, she married David Lee Child, a lawyer, a newspaper editor, and an idealist. He failed as a lawyer, was arrested for libel, and depended on his wife to support him. The childless couple lived a politically active life. They joined the antislavery movement in 1830 and later supported the free-produce movement by establishing an

experimental sugar-beet farm to counter the slave-based production of sugar cane (Holland 47-48).

Child supported these experiments through her writing and editing. In the beginning of her career, she published newspaper columns in the Standard and the Boston Courier and wrote children's stories and poems. Later, she edited The Juvenile Miscellany; wrote several popular novels including Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times (1824), household advice books including The Frugal Housewife (1829) and The Mother's Book (1831), and anti-slavery writings including An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans (1833); and helped Harriet Brent Jacobs publish her Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861). In 1841, she edited the National Anti-Slavery Standard, which she abandoned due to a conflict with William Lloyd Garrison, and in 1843, she published a series of her letters, Letters from New-York (1843).

Child gained popularity with the publication of her women's conduct manuals, but her popularity and income declined after the publication of her anti-slavery works. After the publication of An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans, she received no positive reviews and only one negative review, published by the American Monthly Review (1833). The American Monthly Review critic as well as her respectable friends admonished Child for addressing the radical topic of anti-slavery. She continued writing about the oppressed, especially about African-Americans and

Native Americans; however, throughout the remainder of her life, her sales remained disappointing. In 1874, Child died of a heart attack.

Although not all of Child's works, especially those on abolition, fit within the concept of separate spheres, her best-selling works do. The Frugal Housewife (1829), which sold six thousand copies the first year and went through thirty-three editions in the United States, twelve in England and Scotland, and nine in Germany, and The Mother's Book (1831), which sold out in six weeks and ran through five printings in two years, appealed to nineteenth-century housewives and mothers and their work within the domestic sphere (Karcher, Reader 98-99). These two major conduct books provided "middling" women with the advice they needed to manage their households efficiently. The Frugal Housewife contains a large selection of pointers on how to stretch a budget by manufacturing soap and candles, recycling worn-out goods, and cooking inexpensively. The Mother's Book includes a comprehensive guide to child rearing, covering stimulating sensory awareness in infants and furnishing teenaged daughters with sex education. In these domestic works, Child uses dissoi logoi. Similar to the Sophists, her rhetorical method, which social circumstance shaped, varies; she creates knowledge through discourse; her language is powerful and persuasive; and she focuses on civic virtue.

Child's rhetorical approach succeeds through her appeal to a specific audience. Manuals on housekeeping and childcare and didactic literature for children saturated the

book market, but Child found a new marketing technique. Instead of targeting upper- to middle-class women, Child points out in the preface to The Mother's Book that her intended audience is “the middling class in our own country” (v), and in The Frugal Housewife, she says, “I have written for the poor” (6). She directs her advice throughout these books toward those who depend upon a limited income and remains aware that “people of a moderate fortune cannot attend exclusively to an infant” and that domestics and sisters “must be intrusted” (Mother's 4). Her marketing was exact, and her domestic works succeeded.

Unlike most women authors, with the exception of Beecher, Child succeeded in publishing without establishing credibility based on personal experiences or need. Child, who never had children, faced a challenge in writing The Mother's Book. She did not have authority as a mother. In a later edition of the book (1844), Child wrote, “Childless myself, I can only plead my strong love for children, and my habitual observation of all that concerns them” (170). In the first edition of her book, she corrects her limited ethos by speaking as one who owes “a great deal to frequent conversations with an intelligent and judicious mother”² (Mother's vi). However, this lack of authority does not prevent Child from writing her book on motherhood and does not inhibit her sales. In The Frugal Housewife, Child's personal experiences lend to her credibility. Although Child and her husband lived without a substantial income, never mentions her personal experience in this book. Child knew how to live on a frugal budget from first hand experience.

Child's rhetorical approach in establishing her authority derives from her directness. In The Mother's Book, she is so confident in her authority that she feels qualified in deciding who should or should not be a mother. Child claims, "The care of children requires a great many sacrifices, and a great deal of self-denial; but the woman, who is not willing to sacrifice a good deal in such a cause, does not deserve to be a woman" (Mother's 15-16). Throughout The Mother's Book, Child does not concern herself with credibility; instead, she assumes that mothers will accept her honesty. "I am aware that my views on this subject will differ from many of my readers," states Child, "but through the whole of this book I have endeavored to speak what appeared to me to be the honest truth, without any reference to what might be thought of it" (84). Child does not question her ability and does not allow her audience to question her stance. If mothers agree with her, Child assumes that they are "judicious parents," and she infers that those who disagree with her are not (Mother's 131). Child's continues this direct rhetorical approach in The Frugal Housewife. She offers no support for her credibility to a lower-income housewife; instead, she simply states, "The writer has no apology to offer for this cheap little book of economical hints, except her deep conviction that such a book is needed. In this case, renown is out of the question, and ridicule is a matter of indifference" (6). Child bases her credibility on self-confidence and directness and relies on her audience to accept her book as a necessity.

Child succeeds with the direct approach as numerous sales of the two books indicate. Child is so convincing in her direct approach that readers apparently overlooked the fact that she was not a mother and she was not poor. In The Mother's Book, Child's occupation as an author should have alerted readers that she was not a traditional homemaker. Her experiences as a writer and activist in the public sphere separate her from woman's sphere twice within this work, but both times, she remedies her problematic ethos. In one instance, she claims an exception from a mother's duties because she is a literary woman. Child claims, "Literary women are not usually domestic; not because they cannot easily be so—but because they yearly acquired the habit of attending to literary things, and of neglecting others" (19). Assuming that Child categorizes herself as a literary woman, she provides herself with a suitable excuse: her attentions have been elsewhere. In the second instance, she uses her literary habits as an example of carelessness: "I speak feelingly on this subject; for years of self-education have hardly yet enabled me to cure the evil. I have made mistakes both in conversation and writing, concerning things which I knew perfectly well, merely from an early habit of heedlessness" (42). Since elsewhere Child represents herself as an educated conversationalist and writer, she may expect readers to excuse her carelessness, but she does not suggest they should follow her model. As mothers, her readers must give close attention to the heedlessness of their children. Child, with an assured rhetorical flair, turns these two instances to her advantage. She makes no pretensions as a successful

mother, only as a successful author, despite the evidence that she fails at domestic management and is heedless.

Another approach Child uses in supporting her authority is to minimize secondary references. She quotes and refers only to the Bible (Mother's 40), she provides examples only from well-known American women, such as Jane Adams and Dolley Madison (Mother's 59-60, 120-21), and she also refers to only two authorities on children's education: Miss Hamilton³ and Miss Edgeworth⁴ (Mother's 75-80, 90, 117). In The Frugal Housewife, Child makes almost no secondary references except for a passing reference to Benjamin Franklin and a lengthy quote from Mrs. Barbauld⁵ (5, 104). Probably in consideration of her audience, Child does not provide the numerous secondary sources as Sigourney does. Child's readership, women in the lower to lower-middle class, probably lacked the education that Sigourney supposes her audience possesses; thus, relying on secondary sources would alienate her readers.

Similar to many early nineteenth-century women authors, Child uses approaches of private rhetoric in appealing to her audience. In The Mother's Book, she encourages separate spheres by dividing household duties for boys and girls. Boys are simply "to assist others, when they possibly can, and should be encouraged in all sorts of ingenious experiments not absolutely mischievous," and girls are to sew, knit, weed the garden, and dust (62-63). Child also encourages separate reading styles for boys and girls. Boys may read alone, but girls "should not read anything without a mother's knowledge and

sanction” because girls’ “feelings are all feverent and enthusiastic, and the understanding is not strengthened by experience and observation” (92). She also glorifies the worth of women’s domestic duties: “A knowledge of domestic duties is beyond all price to a woman. Every one ought to know how to sew, and knit, and mend, and cook, and superintend a household” (Mother’s 146). Concerning the public sphere, Child claims that “learning is not necessary” for women. “The mother, who has had no other advantages than are furnished by a public school in a remote county village,” states Child, “knows a great many more things than a child of three or four can possibly know” (Mother’s 11). She continues her argument on the benefits of learning in the home by insisting “the influences at home will have the mightiest influences” (Mother’s 146).

In The Frugal Housewife, she continues to gender rhetorical space. She identifies wives as housekeepers and men as breadwinners. As she urges women to keep “an exact account of all you spend,” she claims that frugality will answer two purposes: “it makes you more careful in spending money, and it enables your husband to judge precisely whether his family live within his income” (4). In addition, the topics of The Frugal Housewife identify woman’s proper place—in the home. She writes about simple remedies, cheap dye-stuffs, common cakes, meat selections, odd scraps for the economical, and other areas that focus on the roles of housewife and mother. She also says that women have a duty to please men; since women contribute to society by

reducing household expenses, frugality proves to husbands and fathers that women are good wives and daughters:

Let women do their share towards reformation—Let their fathers and husbands see them happy without finery; and if their husbands and fathers have (as is often the case) a foolish pride in seeing them decorated, let them gently and gradually check this feeling, by showing that they have better and surer means of commanding respect—Let them prove, by the exertion of ingenuity and economy, that neatness, good taste, and gentility, are attainable without great expense. (6)

By exerting ingenuity and economy, according to Child, women can better please their husbands and fathers. Throughout her conduct books, Child employs parlor rhetoric as an available means for identifying with her audience; however, she also uses ambiguity as an available means of presenting underlying warrants. In this case, Child encourages women be frugal housewives, and at the same time she urges them not to “decorate” themselves for their fathers and husbands. She tells women that there are alternatives to “commanding respect” beyond foolish finery.

In her approach, Child engages in a subject, such as marriage, and presents it from the traditional attitudes of the time, but she simultaneously adds in her more liberal thoughts. For example, says that marriage is “the home of woman’s affections, and her pleasantest sphere of duty,” but she encourages women to learn independence (Mother’s 166). For example, Child claims, “I do not wish to see American women taking business

out of the hands of men; but I wish they were all capable of doing business, or settling an estate, when it is necessary” (Mother’s 136). Girls should learn penmanship, arithmetic, “book-keeping,” and “a general knowledge of the laws connected with the settlement of estates,” so that they will not be cheated and “as a means of support,” states Child (Mother’s 136). More radically, she uses her position on domestic female education for housewives as a way to validate women who choose to remain unmarried. She says, “I do not say that an unmarried woman can be happy as one who forms, with proper views and feelings, a union, which is unquestionably to most blessed of all human relations; but I am very certain that one properly educated need not be unhappy in single life” (Mother’s 165). She urges parents not to teach their daughters that marriage is “a necessary sacrifice of her freedom and her gayety” (Frugal 95).

She also uses dissoi logoi to undergird her support for women’s education. As previously stated, Child claims that mothers do not need an education to teach their children; however, she contradictorily claims, “A mother needs to be something of a philosopher.—In other, and better words, she needs a great deal of practical good sense, and habits of close observation” (Mother’s 143). Not only does she encourage women to become philosophers but she also urges that they read (Mother’s 20, 53, 86-109). Child claims, “I think a real love of reading is the greatest blessing education can bestow, particularly upon a woman” (Mother’s 86). Since Child wrote conduct books for women, she certainly encouraged reading and educating women in domesticity. Additionally, in

The Mother's Book, she provides a lengthy account of acceptable and unacceptable works for women's reading. For example, novels, such as Charlotte Temple, should be avoided, but historical novels are acceptable (91, 94). She also provides a list of books mothers are to teach to their children (Mother's 86-109). Child especially encourages girls to read, and by doing so, she encourages them to expand their knowledge beyond the private sphere. Child claims that reading "cheers so many hours of illness and seclusion; it gives the mind something to interest itself about, instead of the concerns of one's neighbors, and the changes of fashion; it enlarges the heart, by giving extensive views of the world . . ." (Mother's 86). So, while condemning female education, Child simultaneously encourages it and even provides it with her publications.

In The Frugal Housewife, Child continues her contradictory arguments on education, and she more clearly defines why she rejects female education. Since female education teaches "girls to exaggerate the importance of getting married; and of course to place an undue importance upon the polite attentions of gentlemen," Child finds that early nineteenth-century trends in female education are useless (91). In addition to the art of finding a suitable husband, Child also rejects female education for teaching girls piano, fine arts, and "the elements of a thousand sciences," which are "of very doubtful value to people of moderate fortune" (93). At this point, Child presents a more useful education for her women readers of the lower to low-middle classes. She does not encourage marriage and gentility as important educational topics; instead, she acknowledges that

daughters need proper domestic education. Domestic education, according to Child in The Frugal Housewife, does “not mean the sending daughters into the kitchen some half dozen times, to weary the patience of the cook, and to boast of it the next day in the parlor. I mean two or three years spent with a mother, assisting her in her duties, instructing brothers and sisters, and taking care of their own clothes” (92). Although Child does not approve of female education as it existed in the early nineteenth-century, she does indeed encourage education of girls in useful areas—in this case, in the home. Although Child encourages the traditional domestic education of women in women’s sphere, she does it for a distinct purpose. She wants women to be self-sufficient. A woman who was educated in household duties could find work as a domestic, and if needed, she could run her own household. A woman educated in fine arts or in securing a husband had little option but to marry well.

Beyond her varied rhetorical approaches, Child also mirrors the feminist-sophistic technique of using discourse to create knowledge. In The Mother’s Book, Child’s suggested pedagogy relies on discourse as she encourages mothers to ask questions and to read with their children. Child claims, “With regard to lessons, reading, and work, the attention of children should be kept awake by talking with them, asking questions on the subject, and showing them the best and most convenient methods of doing whatever they are about. . .” (Mother’s 143). She advises mothers that children learn best when actively engaged in discourse. Child also encourages mothers to teach conversation as a learning

experience: “Occasional interviews with intelligent and cultivated individuals have a great influence on early character and manners, particularly if parents evidently place a high value upon acquaintances of that description” (Mother’s 114). Obviously, Child felt that discourse provided the best learning environment.

Unlike Sigourney, Child never addresses her readers or uses other discursive techniques in her conduct books. She teaches mothers to use discourse, but she never actually engages in discursive acts with her readers. She may avoid engaging in discourse because of her chosen style of language. Similar to the Sophists, Child realized the power of language and used language as a rhetorical tool. However, unlike Sigourney and other writers of her time, Child does not use sentimental language. As mentioned previously, Child uses a direct approach in addressing her audience, and she uses this direct style throughout her conduct books. For Child, the direct approach provided a means of emphasizing her subject matter: frugality. For Child, sentimentality is synonymous with extravagance, and extravagance is an infectious disease: “It really is melancholy to see how this fever of extravagance rages, and how it is sapping the strength of our happy country” (Frugal 110). In all cases, writers, housewives, and mothers must avoid extravagance and sentimentality, claims Child. She exemplifies this position best in The Frugal Housewife. Child states, “I have attempted to teach how money can be saved, not how it can be enjoyed” (6). Similarly, Child does not write for the entertainment of mothers and housewives, so she does not supplement her words with

flowery language. Instead, she saves her words and directly approaches her audience with solid advice—not extravagant entertainment.

In The Mother's Book, Child does not digress on sentimental nature or the visual beauties of the home; instead, she gives advice, develops it with examples from observations of anonymous families, and reinforces her advice with repetition. For example, on the topic of death Child encourages mothers to teach their children to accept both life and death equally. Child emphasizes this point by referring to a story about a mother and daughter who witness the death of their Aunt Betsy. The mother tells her daughter that Betsy now lives with the angels in heaven, which she equates to “a happy home” (81). Child then reveals that the daughter, who dies from a childhood illness, accepts death willingly. Child concludes this lesson by praising the mother for successfully teaching her daughter “cheerful associations with death” and uses this story to exemplify her point (81). Although the story may appear sentimental in its glorification of death and references to “angels,” “tenderness for the dead,” and “the little fragrant wreath,” the presentation of the story is straightforward, and it directly makes its point (81).

In this same work, Child not only continuously uses this direct style, but also she disdains sentimental writing. In reference to works of fiction, Child encourages reading histories and biographies, which contain “true pictures of life in all its forms, instead of the sentimental, lovesick effusions” (87). Women, according to Child, should not read

sentimental works; instead, they should read non-fiction, truthful accounts, such as her conduct books.

Child continues the direct approach in The Frugal Housewife. After the introduction, Child wastes no time introducing her subjects, explaining her intentions, or referring to music, poetry, or art; she directly begins chapter one with suggestions on “Odd Scraps for the Economical.” The first few sentences of chapter one begin:

If you would avoid waste in your family, attend to the following rules, and do not despise them because they appear so unimportant: ‘many a little makes a mickle.’

Look frequently to the pails, to see that nothing is thrown to the pigs which should have been in the grease-pot.

Look to the grease-pot, and see that nothing is there which might have served to nourish your own family, or a poorer one. (8)

Just as Child urges frugality among housewives, she employs frugality in her writing. Her approach is direct and powerful, it leaves little room for misinterpretation, and her readers clearly understand her advice. By avoiding sentimentality in her conduct books, Child presents honest, solid advice and provides women with a quick, economic means of mothering and housewifery.

Child continues her focus on frugality by equating benevolence, which women enhance through economy, with the feminist-sophistic concept of bettering citizens and

promoting civic virtue. Child defines benevolence as “a willingness to deny ourselves for the benefit of others—to give up something of our own, that we really like, for the sake of doing good” (Mother’s 134), and she states that the truly benevolent are the economical. For example, in The Frugal Housewife Child claims, “True economy is a careful treasurer in the service of benevolence; and where they are united respectability, prosperity and peace will follow” (7). Therefore, by being frugal and by giving to others, one may, according to Child, achieve benevolence. Conversely, she identifies women who do not practice frugality and live beyond their income as “morally wrong . . . and injurious beyond calculation to the interests of our country” (Frugal 5-6).

Child’s feminist-sophistic approach to creating better citizens stems from the view of women as innately moral, and Child claims that mothers, through their innate morality, must dutifully create benevolent citizens. In The Mother’s Book, Child encourages mothers to teach benevolence to their children, since “young people need to be cheered onward in the path of goodness” (134), and Child observes that mothers teach best through example. “The mother should keep her own spirit in tranquility and purity,” claims Child, “for it is beyond all doubt that the state of a mother affects her child” (Mother’s 3-4).

Since Child appealed to housewives and mothers and their work within the domestic sphere, her conduct books fit within the concept of separate spheres. In these works, she taught “middling” women how to manage their households efficiently.

However, Child lives a public life and encourages public education for women. Using this ambiguity along with feminist-sophistic rhetoric, Child advocates change through education for women.

The conduct books of these three early American rhetoricians quietly encourage domestic women's reform. Through public roles, Beecher, Sigourney, and Child established a private rhetorical presence, which used ambiguity as a rhetorical approach. Although reform, benevolent acts, and civic duty dominates the texts of their conduct books, other forms of the feminist sophistic are also found. These women rhetoricians employ various rhetorical methods shaped by social circumstances, create knowledge through discourse, and acknowledge the power and persuasiveness of language.

NOTES

¹ Golden and Corbett note that Campbell, Blair, and Whately “applying the yardstick of critical judgment to the classical rhetorical theories, endorsed some ideas but modified and rejected others” (12).

² In her biography on Child, Karcher presumes that the “intelligent and judicious mother” is Louisa Gilman Loring, a good friend of Child (140).

³ Miss Hamilton is probably Emma Hamilton, who wrote Education; or, A Journal of Errors (1809).

⁴ Miss Edgeworth is Maria Edgeworth, author of children’s fiction.

⁵ Mrs. Barbauld is probably Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743-1825), editor of several readers for juveniles and author of poems and instruction books for children.

CHAPTER FIVE: OPENING THE SPHERES

In Rhetoric Retold, Cheryl Glenn concludes her work by claiming, “A regendered, retold rhetorical tradition opens up—not closes down—investigation into rhetorical practices” (173). This study, hopefully, will also enlarge the study of rhetoric. Many rhetoricians recognize the variations in the definitions of rhetoric, and in response to the variations, many scholars attempt to accept a general definition, whether they realize it or not, based on the dynamic first Sophists, who define rhetoric as an applicable art based on theory and taught as a discipline. By using a general version of the first Sophists’ rubric as a basis for identifying early American women’s rhetorical approaches, rhetoric provides inclusiveness, and although women did not play a major role in ancient rhetoric, the first Sophists’ definition reveals rhetoric as a field where women of all times may participate. The first Sophists’ definition of rhetoric parallels the collaborative, non-linear concept of women’s ways of understanding, speaking, and writing, argued by theorists such as Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan. Using the first Sophists’ fluid definition, rhetoric stretches beyond argument and includes other models of speaking and writing. The first Sophists’ rubric opens up rhetoric to feminist acts, where “feminist”

refers to all who work for the advancement of women, through reclamation of works similar to those accepted by men, resistive reading, or discovering new areas of rhetoric for women.¹

Furthermore, the rejection of women from the academic arena began with Greek rhetorical education.² In Politics Aristotle claims that women, because of their inferiority, cannot participate in higher thought; he says that “between the sexes, the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject” (1254b). In this vein, early America where rhetoric was a field for men—not women, and it dominated higher education. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in America, rhetoric was seen as eloquence, and American higher education stressed men's need of eloquence in order to participate in public life. The American elocutionary movement came from Britain, and Sheridan’s notion that it would fulfill “the Want of proper Places to finish the Education of an Gentleman” (Conley 213-14) was adopted by American educators who followed Sheridan’s patterns, as well as the ideas of Whately, Blair, and Campbell. Americans especially followed Blair and Campbell because of their use of “common sense” and their evangelical concerns.³

However, most early American women rhetoricians do not fit within the elocutionary construct and have thereby been excluded as rhetoricians. Furthermore, contemporary theorists who define rhetoric as argumentation also exclude these early American women. Robert Connors defines rhetoric as the ability “to create persuasive

arguments, to develop and win cases, to put forward opinions in legislative forums, to stake out turf and verbally hold it against opponents in public contest” (67). He points out that men have traditionally denied women the right to perform rhetorical acts. Indeed, Connors argues that women were not considered a part of the rhetoric community until they were formally educated in institutions of higher education.

The use of feminist sophistic, however, includes these early American women and their rhetorical acts. As Jarratt notes, feminist-sophistic rhetoric exposes “contradictions inherent in dominant discourse” and allows for “minority voices” (xxiv). These minority voices, women rhetoricians, bound by geography, race, and gender, share similarities in their desire to improve, change, and re-invent America through public orality—all of which are strategies employed by the first Sophists. Early American women rhetoricians, similar to the first Sophists as well as to some eighteenth-century rhetoricians, understood that knowledge is accessible through discourse, so they practiced rhetoric as a means of generating knowledge. Through the manipulation of rhetorical approaches, language, and situation, they persuaded their audiences to accept probable knowledge shaped by social circumstances and argued that humanity expresses itself in many ways with no absolute standards.

Margaret Fuller and Lowell Offering authors embraced the public sphere. Using feminist rhetoric, they argued that women’s intellectual abilities matched those of men. During the rise of women’s public rhetoric, collaboration and individuality began to

dominate women's writings. However, collaborative discourse is only one way that these feminist rhetoricians mimicked the Sophists. They also used varied rhetorical approaches, understood the power of language and used it to distribute their writings in the public sphere, and continued to identify themselves as the moral sex and work to improve society.

Margaret Fuller largely contributed to and is often given credit for the development of women's public rhetoric. She supported women's rights in the public sphere and encouraged women to reject male dominance and strive for self-improvement. Fuller insisted that women develop intellectually to improve the female self—not to benefit husbands and children. Her progressive philosophies on women's roles and her advancements in literary criticism developed through her contributions to the New-York Tribune. Through the Tribune, Fuller defined American literature and participated in the public sphere.

In the Tribune, Fuller's position is revealed through her rhetorical approaches, and a sophistic-feminist rhetorical analysis demonstrates how Fuller promoted her agenda. She presents her diverse rhetorical approaches by writing in response to others' works. Through her reviews of literature, music, and art, Fuller not only provides a literary critique but also promotes works that portray injustices. Through these reviews, Fuller criticized race discrimination; the treatment of the insane, of women prisoners, and of the impoverished; children's literary education; and gender inequality.

Fuller engages in “men’s work” and the public sphere as she established political identity, albeit semi-anonymously, in the Tribune, and she advocated female independence without a hint of double-speak or so-called female “manipulation,” except for the exclusion of her signature. Fuller’s use of collaborative discourse, builds a community of women writers and students. She creates this community in her writing by focusing on women authors and praising their works. Through her Conversations and feminist rhetoric, she provided a comfortable place for women to band together for intellectual self-improvement.

Fuller, similar to the first Sophists, clearly understood the power of language. She used language in her publications to reach wide, varied audiences and unite reformers in collaborative actions. Her publications on reform issues demonstrate her trust in the power of language. Also, as an editor and critic, she shapes the direction of other author’s language styles.

Fuller’s priority for understanding and using rhetoric was to promote civic duty, specifically reform. Her reform issues had little boundary. Through her Tribune reviews, Fuller identifies, breaks down, and explains the need for reform, and by announcing the need for reform, she reminds readers of their civic duties and brings awareness to areas that readers would not otherwise consider.

Through sophistic-feminist rhetoric, Fuller encourages women to expand their minds, not for the benefit of men, children, or a household, but for the benefit of the

female self. Through the Tribune, she supported women's rights and urged women to deviate collaboratively from the accepted standard of womanhood. Her Tribune articles sympathize with the poor and insane, call for the growth of American literature and culture, and promote the advancement of women. Most importantly, through varied rhetorical approaches, collaborative discourse, the power of language, and benevolent acts, Fuller persuaded women to accept and participate in public life.

The authors of The Lowell Offering used feminist rhetoric to secure an acceptable public place for working women. Through The Lowell Offering, female operatives revealed their literary talents as they publicized the benefits of factory life. The Lowell Offering exhibited the Lowell women's intellect, benevolence, and skill in the textile industry and promoted feminine self-making.

Through varied rhetorical approaches, the women of Lowell defended their roles as educated, working women. Their arguments claimed that women factory workers are cultured, intelligent, religious, moral, and above all feminine. Both in action and in writing, Lowell operatives established their roles as a part of the industrial revolution and the rise of science, and as Fuller did, the Lowell operatives asserted their independence as women. Through work and self-education, the Lowell women entered the public sphere as independent women.

Collaboratively, the Lowell women thought, composed, edited, and publicly shared their "self-improvement circle." The Lowell Offering's rhetorical approaches

depend upon the authors' discursive and collaborative abilities. The periodical's authors female operatives lived and worked together, and by writing for, editing, and publishing The Lowell Offering, these women work toward the same collaborative goal. The Lowell Offering itself demonstrates these women authors use of the power of language. Loudly, these women reveal a sense of the Lowell life publicly and proclaim their power in one of the most accessible forms of reading—the periodical. For the women of Lowell, the act of writing created the self as it exemplified to the readers that Lowell women were educated and knowledgeable. Similar to the Sophists, The Lowell Offering authors also participated in and encouraged civic action, and The Lowell Offering as a whole may be regarded as an act of benevolence. The magazine encouraged self-improvement of its readers and focused on women's moral duties.

Using feminist-sophistic rhetoric, the Lowell authors entered the public sphere. These working women embraced and shared educational opportunities and used powerful language to promote their success. Additionally, the sophistic-feminist approach allowed Lowell women to build a female community centered on sharing educational opportunities and committing to civic duty.

Through the feminist-sophistic approach, Fuller and the authors of The Lowell Offering used varied rhetorical approaches, collaborative discourse, and benevolent acts to argue the acceptance of women's intellectual growth in the public sphere. These early

American women rhetoricians, along with many others, opened the public sphere for women and began to make the public sphere an acceptable place for women's work.

Many early American women's writing remained trapped between the public and private spheres. These women authors published works and entered the public sphere, but on the surface their writings encouraged other women to remain in the private sphere. However, through feminist-sophistic rhetoric, women rhetoricians use varied rhetorical approaches, collaboration, powerful language, and benevolent acts to subversively argue for woman's place within the public sphere. Two of these early American women, Judith Sargent Murray and Sarah Josepha Hale, exemplify women caught between the spheres. These two women both published in periodicals, though at different times, and they use different approaches to achieve their ends, which is to provide higher education and other public opportunities for women. In her approach, Murray often uses Republican Motherhood to pursue her arguments, and Hale's often uses dissoi logoi.

Judith Sargent Murray encouraged higher education for women. Using Republican Motherhood, Murray claimed that women needed education to succeed in their benevolent duties as wiser wives and better mothers. Beyond encouraging civic duty, Murray, similar to the First Sophists, also encouraged collaborative acts and used powerful language in her varied rhetorical approaches.

Using Republican Motherhood as a rhetorical approach, Murray advocates the concept of women pursuing careers as mothers and wives. She argues for educating

women so that they may improve the domestic sphere and ultimately improve the republic. Murray's varied rhetorical approach also derives from her anonymity. She always published under the freedom provided by a pseudonym. Using the persuasiveness and power of language, particularly through imagery, Murray challenges the prevailing idea that intellectual differences in men and women are natural, and she argues that women's lack of education and social duties create such misconceptions.

As a woman writer during the American Enlightenment, Murray remained trapped between the public and private spheres. As a transitional figure from the Colonial to the Enlightenment period, Murray must appease her readers who encourage the private roles of women; however, as an Enlightenment thinker herself, she argues that men and women are equal in terms of gender and enters the public sphere as a published author.

Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of Godey's Lady's Book and author of numerous "Editor's Table" articles, influenced the lives of almost every middle-class household in the United States. Hale, who remained in the public sphere for more than fifty years, experienced what Tonkovich identifies as the Enlightenment-Victorian shift in rhetorical approaches. She began her writing career by urging equality between men and women within the same sphere; although, as her audience's expectations changed, Hale shifted her focus to Victorian or parlor rhetoric and to equality between men and women in separate spheres.

Similar to the Sophists, Hale's feminist sophistic employs a variety of rhetorical methods shaped by social circumstance. She focused on civic virtue, created knowledge through discourse and collaboration, and used powerful and persuasive language as she constructs an essentialist "sphere."

Since Hale's writing career depended upon her female readership, her audience dictated her rhetorical approaches; therefore, she published women authors and addressed women's issues in her "Editors' Table." By meeting the demands of her female audience, Hale promotes the belief that men and women belong in separate spheres, but her underlying ambiguity proves otherwise. While claiming that women should function as wives, mothers, and homemakers, Hale enters the public world politically and rhetorically. Furthermore, through her editorials on education for women and women's vocations, she encourages other women to join her.

Hale used the power of language through her publishing and writing editorials on education for one of the largest circulated periodicals. Her arguments contain forceful language. Additionally, she emphasized the power of language by defining what is and is not acceptable writing. Hale also encouraged benevolent acts; specifically, she encourages Christian moral duties. Hale claimed that woman's greatest civic duty is to teach her children. Since women are mothers, argued Hale, they are the primary educators of children and are responsible for raising future legislators and teaching morality.

Hale's use of the feminist-sophistic throughout her editorial and writing careers aided her transitioning from the Enlightenment to what Nina Baym calls the Victorian era. By using varied rhetorical approaches, collaborative discourse, powerful language, and civic duty, Hale encourages higher education and work opportunities for women; although, Hale continues to meet the needs of her audience by never abandoning the concept of woman's private sphere.

Judith Sargent Murray and Sarah Josepha Hale show how women, who are often caught in private life because of societal demands, can enter the public life and subversively encourage others to follow. Using feminist-sophistic rhetoric, Murray and Hale engage in varied rhetorical approaches, build collaborative communities, use powerful language, and emphasize benevolent acts.

Parlor rhetoric limits women's roles to the private sphere. Many early nineteenth-century American women rhetoricians defined themselves as separate from men and their public world and argued for equality in private sphere. These women encouraged the roles of women as wives, mothers, and homemakers. Their conduct books prescribe a domestic life for women. Although the conduct book appears to oppress and restrict women, many parlor women rhetoricians remained as assertive and public as their Enlightenment predecessors did. This rhetorical presence, women's private rhetoric, employs many of the characteristics of feminist sophistic. Mainly, civic virtue dominates most of the written works. Additionally, early American private rhetoricians freely

employ various rhetorical methods shaped by social circumstances, create knowledge through discourse, and acknowledge the power and persuasiveness of language.

Catharine Beecher's essays and book-length guides on domestic duties contain some of her best examples of rhetoric. In these works, Beecher employs the feminist-sophistic approach through varied rhetorical approaches, which primarily focus on higher education for women; collaborative discourse; use of powerful language; and civic duty. She uses a variety of approaches to persuade her audience that women need a domestic education.

Beecher often uses a traditional argumentative format and modes to present her arguments. Beecher argues that domestic education needs "importance and dignity" and that introducing the study of household management in schools would gain it respectability in the ranks of other disciplines. Beecher focuses on equality in education through logical arguments, empirical evidence, and plain language, which emphasizes her use of the power of language. As she argues for continuous funding of permanent, female educational institutions, Beecher appeals to her audience using the epistemology of the "public sphere." Beecher supports her arguments using empirical evidence—a method recommended by Aristotle. Instead of pointing to religion, Beecher, who was an intensely religious woman, relies on statistics to buttress her ideas on education. Beecher also appeals to true womanhood and claims that mothers are morally superior and all-powerful in the home. Because women are naturally and circumstantially mothers and

caretakers, Beecher claims they already possess teaching skills. Yet, she argues, women need formal training to increase their primary duties as wives and mothers.

Beecher also uses dissoi logoi in her rhetorical approaches. She never fulfilled what she defines as the primary duty of women; Beecher neither married nor reared children. She continued to function in the public sphere throughout her life, and by advocating female education, she encouraged other women to join her in the public life as teachers. Beecher sent her students to establish schools for educating women. Through dissoi logoi, Beecher provided a means of educating women and sending them into the workforce.

Beecher's use of feminist-sophistic discourse and collaboration is found in her actions, which play on her ideas of women's civic duty, rather than her words. Her most popular collaborative efforts derive from her organization of women and men to educate and train women to work as teachers and to raise funding for schools. Beecher supported her goal of civic duty through multi-faceted rhetorical approaches, powerful language, and collaboration. She argues that women had a moral duty as educators of America's future leaders.

Beecher's rhetorical strategies aid her goal of increasing higher education opportunities for women. In her conduct books she uses the feminist sophistic through her varied rhetorical approaches, the creation of knowledge through collaborative discourse, powerful language, and civic duty. Her writing borrows these rhetorical

techniques from the first Sophists to persuade her audience that women need an education.

Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney advocated educating girls for usefulness in the private sphere and presented dissoi logoi in her public, political stances. Although she flourished as a successful author, she publicly encourages women to stay at home. Most of Sigourney's rhetorical approaches are found in her advocacy of female education in combination with the woman's domestic duties. Sigourney presents her point of view through several genres, including prose, poetry, and epistolary writing, which increased her readership.

Sigourney also emphasized the importance of collaborative discourse. Sigourney claims that women have many more opportunities than men do to engage in conversation at many levels, and she suggests that women use this advantage for personal growth. Sigourney additionally encourages discourse by promoting collaboration, community, and discourse by calling for a group of unified, educated, domestic women.

Sigourney acknowledges the power of language by teaching her readers that the language they use will be the means by which others judge them. For Sigourney, language is of utmost importance since women who attain language skills will succeed as wives, mothers, and homemakers. Women, according to Sigourney, must use the most effective language to communicate with her husband and children. Similar to the first Sophists, Sigourney focuses on creating better citizens through good example and

through encouraging benevolence. She encourages her readers to live for the good of others, particularly within the home.

Sigourney uses a variety of rhetorical approaches, encourages collaborative discourse, acknowledges the power of language, and advocates civic duty. Using not only the feminist sophistic but also dissoi logoi, Sigourney advocated educating girls for working within the private sphere.

Lydia Maria Child uses the feminist sophistic to provide “middling” women with the advice they needed to manage their households. Although she was not a mother and she was not poor, her audience still sought her advice. Child uses the feminist sophistic combined with parlor rhetoric throughout her conduct books.

Using dissoi logoi, Child encourages mothers and their daughters to promote household harmony, but also she urges them to succeed in endeavors beyond the home. Similar to the Sophists, her rhetorical method, which social circumstance shaped, varies; she creates knowledge through discourse; her language is powerful and persuasive; and she focuses on civic virtue.

Child’s rhetorical approach derives from her directness and her emphasis on the necessity of her conduct books; however, Child also uses parlor rhetoric in appealing to her audience. She encourages separate spheres by dividing household duties for boys and girls, and she glorifies the worth of women’s domestic duties. In her approach, Child addresses a subject and presents it from the traditional attitudes of the time, but she

simultaneously adds her liberal thoughts, which usually focus on supporting women's education. Child encourages the education of women so that women may become self-sufficient, if the need should arise.

Beyond her varied rhetorical approaches, Child also mirrors the feminist-sophistic technique of using discourse to create knowledge. Child's encouraged mothers to ask questions and to read with their children and claimed that children learn best when actively engaged in discourse.

For Child, the power of language lies in a direct style. Child uses direct style and disdains sentimental writing. According to Child women should not read sentimental works; they should read functional guides, such as her conduct books.

The truly benevolent, claims Child, are the economical. Child's feminist-sophistic approach to creating better citizens stems from the cult of domesticity or true womanhood where women are innately moral, and Child claims that mothers, through their innate morality, must dutifully create benevolent citizens.

Child encourages women to remain within the private sphere, as she taught them to manage their households efficiently. However, Child lived a public life and encouraged public education for women. Using dissoi logoi along with feminist-sophistic rhetoric, Child advocates change through education for women.

Early American parlor rhetoricians encourage women's private roles; however they lived within the public sphere. Dissoi logoi combined with the feminist sophistic

shows how these women rhetoricians balanced this careful contradiction. Although reform, benevolent acts, and civic duty dominate their writings, these women rhetoricians employ various rhetorical methods shaped by social circumstances, create knowledge through discourse, and acknowledge the power and persuasiveness of language.

Feminist-sophistic rhetoric is not the only valid approach to understanding the work of these women, but it does allow readers to uncover the rhetorical styles of these early American women writers. Feminist sophistic, unlike many rhetorical theories, lends itself to flexibility—a universal finding in women’s rhetorical approaches—and allows for adaptability. A focus on the use of satire, on reform in general, on political implications, or on suffrage could prove equally valuable. Additionally, various critical windows, such as reader response, biographical studies, and Burke’s use of identification, may have much to offer. Using a single rhetorical approach always brings about difficulties because it limits a study; furthermore, using a contemporary hybrid approach complicates this study since the concepts of feminism and sophistry were probably not recognized by early American women rhetoricians. Feminist sophistic does provide a basis for rhetorically interpreting these authors’ works; but additional studies from varied approaches are needed.

Enormous numbers of early American women’s manuscripts exist, often buried in obscure libraries and personal collections; few have been collected and re-published. The neglect of these women in the past has been so complete that there are numerous textual

and rhetorical situations yet to be explored. The women rhetoricians identified in this study do not represent every woman; they are limited to literate, middle-class, white, Protestant women from northeastern America because they were more literate and as a consequence more prolific in writing than other women. After the Revolution, “half or more white women qualified as reading at some level, compared to men’s illiteracy rate of only 25 percent.” A few years after the Civil War, white women “nearly equaled men in basic literacy.” Chicana, Native American, and southern women had less access to literacy than white northern women, and many African American women were prohibited by law from reading and writing (Hobbs 2).

The texts of early American women minorities, women of the South, and other white, middle-class women deserve attention. A few collections, such as Shirley Logan’s With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women, which reclaims the works seven African-American women rhetoricians, and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s collection of early American women speakers, draw attention to women rhetoricians. However, studies of Native Americans, lower classes, Chicanas, and others have yet to surface. These texts are difficult, if not impossible, to find; however, as the study of Aspasia demonstrates, women’s rhetorical acts can be reclaimed without the authors’ texts.

Because of the enormous amount of studies yet to be done, this study cannot conclude. However, it can point to women who were not silent and were not private.

Early American women rhetoricians existed in the public sphere where women have always existed but have not always been acknowledged. Women's rhetorical texts have always existed within what Glenn labels as "the innumerable, interminable, clear examples of public, political, agonistic, masculine discourse" (175). This work acknowledges a few of those women and their works, opens the sphere for more study, and brings awareness of the possibilities.

NOTES

¹ Patricia Bizzell in “Opportunities for Feminist Research in the History of Rhetoric” (1992) identifies three approaches to feminist research in rhetoric: reading male texts through a feminist lens or reading resistively; locating women who have done work similar to that by traditional, canonized male authors; identifying new areas that include women’s works and that redefine the notion of rhetoric (54).

² In early America, women had little opportunity for higher education and the women’s biological makeup was believed to prohibit them from the practice of rhetoric. Many women were denied the very voice and action defined by traditional notions of rhetoric. Such denials are not specific to early America; women have always lived in a separate sphere where life is private and domestic. Ancient Greek women were defined by their connections to men; they were subjected to the whims of their husbands or masters, or they were hetaerae, such as Aspasia, an Athenian woman now considered an early rhetorician. Although Aspasia held salons and hosted rhetoricians, including Socrates, she was not considered a respectable woman and was denied an honorable public life. All Greek women were confined to the home, and they were not citizens nor were they allowed a role in public life.

³ James Berlin in Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges (1984) and Nan Johnson in Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America (1991) provide lengthy studies on traditional nineteenth-century American rhetoric.

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