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**The Effects of the American Revolution on Feminism in America**

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It's all by the grace of God,

I would like to dedicate this work to my lovely parents who always believed in me and showered me with unconditional love and support. I, also, would like to thank my beautiful siblings, Fadwa and Skander, who always make my days bright and fun. To my grandpa and my supportive aunties.

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### **Abstract**

This dissertation attempts to dig deep into the history of American women. It aims to shed light on feminist scholarship and to unravel the truth about the emergence of feminism. American feminism is usually traced back to the first wave of female activists who claimed suffrage. However, this research goes back in time to fetch the birth of this ideology and movement. It incorporates a collection of data concerning prominent females who spoke about equal rights and opportunities, plus the events that influenced women, leading to change. This study emphasized on the influence of the American Revolution that served as the foundation of American feminism. Arguably, external circumstances such as wars have affected the direction of American society, specifically women who have benefitted from those circumstances to redefine their roles and status in life.

Key Words: women, history, revolution, feminism, status, natural rights.

## Résumé

Cette thèse tente d'approfondir l'histoire des femmes américaines. Elle vise à faire la lumière sur les études féministes et à dévoiler la vérité sur l'émergence du féminisme. On fait généralement remonter le féminisme américain à la première vague de militantes qui ont réclamé le suffrage. Cependant, cette recherche remonte dans le temps pour aller chercher la naissance de cette idéologie et de ce mouvement. Elle incorpore une collection de données concernant les femmes éminentes qui ont parlé de l'égalité des droits et des chances, ainsi que les événements qui ont influencé les femmes et conduit au changement. Cette étude met l'accent sur l'influence de la Révolution Américaine qui a servi comme un fondateur de féminisme américain. On peut soutenir que des circonstances extérieures ont influencé l'orientation de la société américaine, en particulier les femmes qui ont profité de ces circonstances pour redéfinir leur rôle et leur statut dans la vie.

Mots clés : femmes, histoire, révolution, féminisme, statut, droits naturels.

## المخلص

تحاول هذه الأطروحة التعمق في تاريخ النساء الأمريكيات. وتهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على الدراسات النسوية وكشف الحقيقة حول ظهور الحركة النسائية. عادة ما يتم إرجاع الحركة النسائية الأمريكية إلى الموجة الأولى من الناشطات اللواتي ادعوا حق الاقتراع. ومع ذلك ، يعود هذا البحث في الزمن المناسب ليكتشف تاريخ ولادة هذه الأيديولوجية والحركة. يتضمن هذا البحث على مجموعة من البيانات المتعلقة بالإناث البارزات اللاتي تحدثن عن المساواة في الحقوق والفرص ، بالإضافة إلى الأحداث التي أثرت على النساء ، مما أدى إلى التغيير. تؤكد هذه الدراسة على تأثير الثورة الأمريكية التي كانت أساس تكوين النسوية الأمريكية. يمكن القول إن الظروف الخارجية كالحروب أثرت على اتجاه المجتمع الأمريكي، وتحديدًا النساء اللاتي استفدن من هذه الظروف لإعادة تعريف أدوارهن ووضعهن في الحياة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: المرأة ، التاريخ ، الثورة ، النسوية ، المركز ، الحقوق الطبيعية.



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## **Introduction**

The scholarship about women's history has largely expanded during the twentieth century, aiming to unravel the neglected half of history. American women, in particular, have a different lifestyle from their early ancestors. Those ancestors have strived rigorously to grant posterity such freedom and equality. As a colony, the new settlers in the thirteen colonies have adopted the norms of their predecessors, the Brits and Europeans, and also the religious teachings that subjugated women to certain roles. However, feminist thought started to circulate among the minds of women to eventually impose change on the whole society. This study focuses on tracing the roots of the emergence of feminist thought from its very beginning in the United States.

There has been so much research on the scholarship concerning women and feminism; plentiful books tackle the deeds of prominent feminists and also the situation of women during particular times. However, this research aims to incorporate together the deeds of female prominent figures and the series of events that affected them, with emphasis on the effects of the American Revolution, in order to achieve and reach their goal of equality and more opportunities. Plus, it sheds light on women in history because historical studies rarely mention the other half of the story which is about women, especially and specifically in Algerian English departments of Anglo-American studies. The study entails the storyline of American feminism that goes through three centuries, the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; it investigates the story behind the emergence of feminism that initiated through the influence of the American Revolution. Therefore, it incorporates both the events and the female prodigies that instilled change despite the social and religious constraints. In short, it fetches the influences that created, merged, and established the notion of feminism.

The most common truth about feminists is that they emerged to redress the inequities and the subjection they lived. Most researchers and feminists have the overview that their female predecessors were the slaves of men because of the many legal and social restrictions that women faced. However, other researchers view the issue in another light. Mary Beard, for instance, in her *Woman as Force in History* has spoken about such misconception, claiming that both men and women were tied through a relationship of conformity and agreement, plus women could resort to many means to protect their rights and properties legally. Beard's antifeminist thought aims to clarify the misinterpretation of feminists who believe in the notion of inequity between men and women (Degler 68-69). This serves as proof that feminism is attacked for its misconception. Antifeminists like Beard promote the idea that men and women lived peacefully with equal rights, and despite that they lived differently from nowadays women; it was their predecessors' choice out of free will to live such a lifestyle that coped with their circumstances and values at that time. Ancient American women defined their roles as wives, mothers, and keepers of the house, and those were the teachings that they imparted to their daughters. Nonetheless, some women got more ambitious, wanting more opportunities; however, they did not rebel against their domestic roles.

On the other hand, feminist activists spoke to the crowd about gender inequality, claiming that women have been always suppressed and oppressed by men. For example, feminist leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony fought for women's rights against what they received as inequity and unfairness. Moreover, the label "Women's Rights Movement" clearly states that the purpose is to riot against inequality and seek their natural rights through the triumph over men. Feminists sought to break free from the custody and gain independence over themselves and their choices. Many of them categorized women's situation as

enslaved since they were dependent on a male. Such feminist thoughts were strengthened by William Blackstone's works about women's legal status. Blackstone clarified to the crowd the relation of dependence of women on men where women could not be independent legally or even be considered citizens with rights. Therefore, feminist activists waged war against what they perceived as oppression. Moreover, many scholarly researches aim to describe women's situations in ancient times as oppressed; therefore, feminism gave rise to a sense of hostility against patriarchy.

The dissertation is considered a historical feminist study. It explores the relationship between prominent feminists and main events to answer the questions: how did feminism emerge? How did social change occur in the U.S.? And was the bloom of the Women's Rights Movement coincidental? Moreover, it focuses more on the influence of the American Revolution on feminism which resulted in the later alterations of the society. Data has been collected through a qualitative method of research, wherein it aimed to tell the story of feminism by pinpointing the relation of influence and effect which the American Revolution instilled.

The first chapter tackles the lives of female early settlers in the Thirteen Colonies, and then it marks the shift that occurred in their lifestyle due to the influence of the American Revolution and the emergence of women who spoke of rights and opportunities.

The second chapter talks about how the confidence that women gained from their contributions in the American Revolution helped instill change. Due to circumstantial situations, women invaded the realm of print. Moreover, during the nineteenth century they strived for more educational opportunities.

The third chapter focuses on the political realm where women started to act in order to gain political freedom and representation as citizens equal to men. They focused on the right of

suffrage which was their resort to achieve their entry into politics. Therefore, suffrage was the means for widening the opportunities of women by constitutional right.

## **Chapter One**

### **Exploring the Effects of American Revolution on Women: Status and Role Change**

The history of human beings has been always, or perhaps mostly, outlined by the heroism of men and everything related to them, whereas women were bound to traditional stereotypes such as the case in the New World, the thirteen colonies. However, the lives of American women thrive to become a field of interest for many scholars, who attempt to unravel the hindered other part of history, the history of women.

The scholarship concerning the status of colonial women differs, respectively. Mary Maples Dunn noted that the religious groups in America such as the Puritans and Quakers had granted women a certain degree of freedom and authority; however, other scholars such as Anne Hutchinson claimed that by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, patriarchy dominated (Vickers 197). The colony's order was based on religion: mainly Puritanism, which had strict rules and norms. People outlined the duties and status of women based on their interpretations of Biblical texts. Later on, that outlining became a lifestyle and, therefore, American society's culture. Nonetheless, during the first period of settlement, women were granted a certain amount of freedom; however, they were soon suppressed when the community enlarged, and social norms were treasured. Thus, colonial women went from a state of flexibility to restriction. Nonetheless, the American Revolution came to eradicate the old and mark the debut of a new era for women.

This chapter attempts to address the lives of early settlers, specifically women, concerning their statuses in the different fields of life. Besides, it aims to pinpoint the shift that occurred due to the revolution, wherein women had to adapt to the change that incurred a break free from the traditional social norms of Americans.

## **1.1 . Status of Colonial Women**

Early settlers of the Thirteen Colonies, who came from Europe and mainly Britain, moved to the New World with already established ideologies and goals, which are mainly religiously-based: on Puritanism. Those ideologies shaped the daily life of the newly formed society, wherein gender has separated roles between men and women. According to Wolbrecht, Beckwith, and Baldez, sex is distinguished from gender, wherein sex represents the biological differentiation between men and women, whereas gender is more about roles, expectations, and statuses allocated to each party-women and men; they also stated that conducting scholarship based on sex is more convenient to researchers to reach a better understanding of gender distinctions (5-6). Subsequently, women in early America, specifically in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, were confined to a certain gendered lifestyle and hierarchy, concerning marriage, education, and legal status, simply because those were the norms of the society adapted from their previous origins, Europe.

### **1.1.1. Education**

The issue of education for colonial women is debatable, for a wide range of historians claim the scarcity of opportunities for the female part. Nonetheless, other historians like Huey B. Long reveal the facts about the latter issue. Long demonstrates the various opportunities that colonial America presented for the sake of women's education, wherein they were granted the right to join Common Schools: which provide elementary education such as reading and writing, Apprenticeship: that provides a limited length contract to learn a certain craft, and Public Venture Schools: that are evening schools, providing more advanced schooling, concerning the type and variety of instructions. Even so, Long reveals that the rates of illiteracy prevailed among women more than men



(90-105). Although there was a biased distinction between men's and women's access to opportunities, the colonial structure, however, paid considerable attention to females' education. Still, American society did not consider females' education as a necessity, leading to the disparity in literacy rates especially among the poor whose priority was to seek a living. Families believed that education was unnecessary for their daughters as long as their only destination would be marriage and, therefore, domesticity. However, several families provided private tutors to their daughters, while others would send them to private schools or Dame schools. Dame schools were made only for girls, who would reside in the school and receive the teachings of the governess who would impart to them the skills of reading, writing, dancing, and also how to be competent housewives. Moreover, women were not allowed to enroll in education programs that are specialized for academic occupations, for they were only for men. Hence, it is a matter of fact that the men were more privileged than women concerning opportunities, plus the scarcity of scopes for females enlarged the disparity, leading to minimizing the options for the women and their inability to hold public offices or even share their intellect and views. Furthermore, the society shared the belief in women's intellectual inferiority, thus they had no access to higher education. The men perceived the tender race as incompetent in making objective-unbiased decisions because they tend to be emotionally driven.

### **1.1.2. Marriage**

A Maryland planter described the newly founded colony as a "paradise for women" (Berkin 27). The former referred, particularly, to the fact that the colony was outnumbered by men that competition over getting a wife prevailed, and single women were bound to find a husband for certain; in addition, during that time, the American

society was typical traditional, for having children without being married, adultery, was considered as a taboo that is punished for, and even divorce was out of reach: politically hardly-obtained, only in rare cases when the husband disappears for a long time, and socially unacceptable. People were so careful with their reputation because anything unusual would expose them to a load of criticism by society. Marriage, however, subjugated women to certain gendered roles such as childbearing and running the household; domesticity was their supposed realm. They even had to change their names to that of their husband. Despite that women were restricted under the concept of “feme covert” (to be explained in 1.3. Legal Status), they found themselves prone to other duties such as running their husbands’ business affairs when the men were far from home (Westerkamp 14-15). In addition, Westerkamp, also, highlights the duties of housewives concerning religion, wherein they were tasked with retaining the spirituality of the household (16). Religion, nonetheless, was an important part of society; in fact, it served as the guide for the community who believed a lot in spirituality and the role of religion in maintaining peace and order. Thus, early American housewives occupied the same traditional duties as their European counterparts, and to some degree, they were considered to be more independent in comparison to the British women because they were not completely alienated from their husbands’ business affairs. Moreover, they represented a crucial part of the Puritan society as promoters of spirituality. The American society classified and related the woman’s most crucial role to domesticity and the sense of dependence because toughness and the power of decision making were within the hands of the men, specifically the head of the household.

### 1.1.3. Legal Status

There was quite the distinction concerning legal status among women, for a single woman's status was different from that of a married one. Single women enjoyed a certain amount of freedom such as having the right to manage their properties and heritage. On the other hand, marriage confined the woman under the concept of "feme covert" or "coverture" (meaning "covered woman"). Blackstone defines the concept as having no legal personhood, wherein they become under their husbands' custody with no right to vote, own property, or any other political rights, going further to the extent that men are the ones who gain control over their wives' wages (Moore, Brooks, and Wigginton 133). However, even single women had no political representation. In other words, women were not considered citizens but entities that relied on male supervision. Although married women had no right to sue or be sued, Hartman states that coverture fades in the case of crimes, wherein the woman is left alone to be trialed in case she was accused of a blunder, mainly murder or sorcery (8). What is more is that in the case of widowhood, the woman gains back her political rights the same as a single woman. However, women were not granted the right to citizenship no matter what was her societal status, and even wealthy single or widowed women were still guided by the men in their family such as their brothers or sons because socially speaking, women's independence was not accepted or perceived positively, and this emphasized the notion of dependence to avoid criticism and judgment from the outside world because gossip was taken seriously at that time. Surprisingly, many women were framed only based on rumors. For example, the Salem Witch Trials mercilessly took many lives based on false accusations and insufficient proof. Thus, it was safer to be under the wings of a man because wealthy

single women were the most targeted. Society did not accept to see a strong independent woman, thus they start spreading rumors, especially women. And at that time, rumors were seriously taken into consideration.

## **1.2. Role Change**

White women's roles during the pre-revolutionary era were, mainly, related to domestic affairs. Still, they also engaged in small businesses such as selling and buying garden goods and managing their husbands' matters when they were traveling, such as the case of Deborah Reed Franklin who was known for her good management of her husband's business. As a colony, the settlers were deeply attached to their origins, the British Empire, but they also managed to establish their distinguished lifestyle. And as the discontent from the pressure- taxation and non-representation- that their motherland imposed, they gave rise to a sense of independence and patriotism for their founded nation. As a result, Americans waged a war for the sake of freedom. Some scholars argue that the American Revolution engendered no particular change concerning women's roles because after the war women reverted back to their traditional places and roles. However, others claim that it was the root of American feminism due to the effects that the revolution engendered in the spirits of women.

The war urged its men to join the troops against the British army, thus families were left without their guardians, men. Subsequently, the notion of "Deputy Husband" emerged, wherein women took on the men's duties such as managing the business, the farm, and the financial matters of the house (Gundersen 199). This latter notion contributed to creating a sense of independence among women, for they became the economic providers for the family, and this gave them the confidence that they can achieve and do more. Even so, the men still attributed this act of "deputy husband" to being still within the sphere of domestic affairs and that they only

acted as substitutes for them during the crisis as a part of their duty as good housewives and mothers.

Moreover, the revolution witnessed a wide shift of interest for women, wherein they began to voice their political views and demands: such acts were unprecedented, for women did not usually engage in such conversations that are considered male realms. Although they contributed to the cause, they were, appropriately, not considered citizens, and this led some educated women to raise their voices and ask for political consideration. Abigail Adams, the wife of the continental leader John Adams, was one of such prodigies; she is known for the letter she sent to her husband "Remember the Ladies", on March 31, 1776; she asked for political representation for women –citizenship- and a redefinition of roles and status that is well deserved due to their hard work during the revolution. Abigail described men as tyrants and threatened that women would rebel against the injustices practiced upon their race. However, on April 14, 1776, the letter has been replied to with disdain from her husband, claiming that the men know better what to do and what not to. He claimed that the revolution stirred chaos, for many groups started to go against the norms and such acts influenced women, plus he found such demands laughable. (qtd. Moore, Brooks, and Wigginton 165-166). The men have long grown used to a certain mindset that sets women as dependent on their leadership, and such a norm characterized their American culture. John's reaction depicted the overall views in regards to women's status which were rejection and mockery. Men perceived such demands as acts that incur imbalance in the social hierarchy. Abigail, however, is considered one of the first patches of women who spoke up for their rights. Anyhow, as women's participation in the polity was impossible, they, partly, engaged in the realm through their influence. Historians Bernard Bailyn and Gordon S. Wood allocated the success of republican ideology that emphasizes patriotism, to women who served as

promoters of virtue and influencers for their men and children (Lewis 24). The American society, in the revolutionary period, gave rise to the ideology of republicanism which emphasized patriotism, and many believed that women had a vital role in the process because they were considered educators for the generation and the responsible ones for creating, guiding, and influencing the American society's thought as wives and mothers. Additionally, Norton claims that the Edenton Ladies, Who worked on imposing nonimportation policies, mark a shift in roles wherein it was an unprecedented event for women to interfere in public affairs; however, this event was responded to by satirical judgments from men (161). Practicing any activity unrelated to domesticity was considered a challenge, and such attempts erupted negative responses from the society. Moreover, the disdain and mockery of men made the rest of the women deny and even hide their interest in political affairs; they did not want to be excluded as divergent in a society that does not welcome such acts. Furthermore, it is claimed that the famous patriot writer Mercy Warren Otis chose to publish her political works anonymously, at the beginning of her career (Gunderson 177). This, however, serves as proof of how judgmental the American society was toward women that even their thoughts were suppressed and perceived as a threatening divergence. Warren was also concerned about the inequalities practiced upon her sex; she was a friend of Abigail Adams, and they discussed and exchanged letters tackling women's status and the necessity to make alterations. On April 27, 1776, Abigail wrote to her friend Warren, complaining about the futile attempts to convince her husband of political change (qtd. Moore, Brooks, and Wigginton 3-4, 166-167). Educated women like Abigail and Mercy Otis attempted to use their influence to benefit their sex, but society limited them, especially because women themselves did not dare to join in such movements. In short, the minority could

not win over the majority. Nonetheless, such women gave rise to the feminist thought that demanded an egalitarian system.

The engagement of women politically was, nonetheless, represented through their genial efforts in boycotting English goods such as the Tea and Sugar Acts as an attempt to hit the British economy. Additionally, they attributed to themselves the name Daughters of Liberty and went on cutting all ties with the loyalists; the revolution divided even the Americans themselves wherein patriots became enemies with those who chose the British side- the loyalists. Plus, the Daughters of Liberty worked on convincing the whole population in pursuing their path. They, also, sought solidarity where they attempted to impose a redefinition of their political status through signing petitions. A rich widow, Mary Willing Byrd, protested for being forced to pay taxes though having no legal representation: such an issue was raised by many but with no consideration (Gundersen 178). Nonetheless, there was little change in regards to women's citizenship status during the revolution since the majority of men refused to consider the matter even though they did not deny the plentiful efforts of women.

### **1.2.1. Contributions**

As far as contributions are concerned, women made sure to mark their presence during the American crisis. They went on conquering the non-traditional fields for the fair sex, for example, economy, politics, and even the military. As they marched for boycotting campaigns to harm the British markets, they also made plans to aid the American economy and also their men on the borders. The homespun movement served as women's weapon for fighting for the sake of the country; it was considered a social activity that represents women's patriotism, thus participating in spinning bees- when a group of women gathers to make clothes- became the norm, especially in the northern parts of the thirteen colonies; they

started to produce clothes on their own, disregarding the British imports as a form of elevating the economy through establishing local markets; in addition, it was also regarded as a protest aimed to harm the British economy. The homespun movement was no mere arbitrary set of events. A woman by the name of Esther De Berdt Reed took the movement to a whole different level, for she organized a well-thought-of plan to engage as much as possible of contributions to the American army: dozens of women knocking on the doors to collect dough for the cause (Moore, Brooks, and Wigginton 173). The publication of Reed's two works influenced women's thoughts greatly: due to *The Sentiments of an American Woman*, The Ladies' Association of Philadelphia was established. She emphasized that her sex is capable of achieving great heights and engaging in all activities including politics, wherein in her book *Ideas, relative to the manner of forwarding to the American soldiers, the presents of the American women*, Reed outlined the plan of collecting money to send it to the soldiers to raise their spirits; her campaign proved successful, but the leaders refused to forward the money to the troops claiming that it would make chaos, and asked the ladies to put the money in the state treasury, but women refused and they ended up making linen shirts to the army instead. After her death, her friend Sarah Franklin Bache, the daughter of Benjamin Franklin, continued the mission of leading the women. Collecting money was not Reed's sole great achievement, she even led the greatest spinning bees to make the linen shirts at home so that they lessen the expenses and make as much as possible (Moore, Brooks, and Wigginton 173-177). This was, however, a kind of a social change, wherein women competed against the norms and proved to the men that they are eligible to do more than the domestic business through elaborate planning and work.



What is more, the same as the war needed the men to fight; women were also needed in the camps. Many wives chose to follow their husbands' to aid in tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and tending to the injured, for example, Molly Pitcher who pursued her husband to the camps was said to have done marvelous brave actions during the exchange of fire, for she brought water and nursed the wounded, also she, incredibly, took charge of the fire cannon when her husband got injured (Bowen 33). The story of Molly Pitcher spread widely; it was unusual for women to show such heroism; in truth, they were not even granted such opportunities, thus the story was considered an oddity. It is a fact that the revolution incurred divergence because many women chose to enroll in the front lines and because the women were not allowed to do so, they resorted to other means such as disguising as men, making a revolution in gender roles. Deborah Sampson was such a case, for she disguised as Robert Shurtleff and served in the military as a man until she was discovered and discharged; the fact that she is a woman made it difficult for her to take pensions (Moore, Brooks, and Wigginton 338-334). Some women chose to disguise themselves as men to fight for the cause, and this shows how the revolution incurred and gave rise to a sense of patriotism and belonging among all the Americans, except for those who chose to be loyalists. Such cases of women on the front lines broke the traditional norms and the way society viewed females; they proved that they can fight bravely and succeed in it too. The ways women chose to show their patriotism differed, accordingly, for some women chose to take big risks and act up as spies to scout the information from the British and send the information to the continental army; those brave women even invented special codes, one of which is "The Clothesline Code", invented by Anna Smith Strong who hanged her laundry in a special method to convey that some information about the enemy is ready (Revolutionary spies). Serving as a

spy certainly endangered the life of a person; nonetheless, few women braved the dangers and did not hesitate to barge into the enemy's den for the sake of their country. Loyalists, as well, participated in such spying activities and succeeded in transferring confidential information to their allies. Moreover, others benefited the cause by hosting the influential parties of the revolution so that they can discuss confidential matters comfortably and scout intelligence, even from the women who were also influential as wives of the leaders. Somehow, men trusted women's abilities in scouting information.

Women's contributions were invaluable, and the leaders did not hesitate to mention that on special occasions, plus those leaders celebrated the famous brave women of the era such that some of them were granted the honor to lecture in front of the crowd about the hurdles and adventures of their participation in the war. Lecturing benefitted women in two ways: first, women could speak in public for the first time; second, it became a source of income that fulfilled their needs. Furthermore, those unusual actions, females' contributions, paved the way for the need of redefining gender roles and admitting that there has been an apparent social change. White women were invading all that has been banned from them; they shouted their political opinions, learned how to be independent economically, and barged to fight like men. Thus the call for political representation was inevitable because the former laws proved to be unfair and unreasonable in many cases, for instance, giving pensions to women who fought along with the troops, disguised as men, was hardly achieved just because of gender classification. Nonetheless, as there were men who celebrated women's achievements and contributions, there was, also, plenty who denied and resented them for stepping out of their traditional place and aiming for more. However, the male leaders knew and accepted that

women had to be rewarded for their efforts, and they rewarded them with what they regarded as suitable to maintain the order of the society and norms.

### **1.3. The Aftermath of the Revolution**

1783 marked the new age of the Thirteen Colonies, which have become a new republic, united by a constitution based on, supposed, democracy. The leaders have outlined the basis of the new American society, and their statement "all men are created equal" which has been long mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, intrigued women to call for their rights based on equality since independence was finally achieved, so they sought to be considered as citizens in the new nation. However, American society was far from adapting to this change that threatened the usual hierarchy. This hierarchy put the men, the patriarchs, in the up, wherein their status was hereditary from ancient traditions and conventions. Furthermore, misogynists composed the strongest opposition against such changes; such people resented the idea of becoming equal to the race that they have always considered inferior.

Women were not restricted only politically, societal conventions and authorities have also forbidden them from enrolling in any scopes that put them outside the household, especially in the world of men. It was a taboo to enter men's domains or even engage in discussions about serious matters, mainly politics and public affairs. Their education was based on the rudiments of reading and other domestic roles because it was agreed upon that females ought to be limited only to femininity which includes dependence on men and taking care of the household. They were, simply, trained to be submissive. Kerber related the American thought of women to that of Rousseau, where he attributes women to emotions, softness, and as subjects for their men and their children; Rousseau also claims that engaging women politically means losing their femininity and converting to masculinity (194-195). Such claims were highly valued by the male

world, wherein they celebrated their superiority over the fair sex: to them, femininity meant inferiority and reliance. Thus, it was more a matter of tradition and mentality that bounded women to domestic stereotypes. Although the heroines of the revolution showed their multiple competencies, they were still challenged by the norms that are based on mere traditional ideologies of conservatism: women are condemned to be dependent on men. Nonetheless, the contributions that women achieved during the call of duty gave them the confidence to claim their rights against unfair treatment: they called for freedom of speech so that they can voice their political views with no fears or shame, they called for the right of representation since they had to pay taxes, and also for more opportunities in work domains and public offices. Women such as "The Female Advocate" raised their contempt for considering knowledge and citizenship as masculine traits (Kerber 200). This, however, demonstrates the fact that society allocates intellect only to men. Furthermore, the demands were too outright that it was impossible to ignore them; as a result, American leaders came up with what is referred to as the compromise, where they introduced the concept of "Republican Motherhood" and "Republican Wife" to please the crowd (Rinder 320). This latter concept related the duties of the mother and wife to political purposes, wherein women were tasked with inducing virtue and loyalty to the nation through their influence on their children and husbands. This, however, indicates men's rejection of changing the usual American culture and keeping women dependent; as John Adams claimed in his reply letter to his wife that change will only incur chaos. In addition, women were granted a bit more access to education; their curricula were extended; still, they were within the sphere of producing republican mothers and wives. Benjamin Rush exclaimed his thorough plan on how women should be educated and for what purposes, one of which is transmitting the notions of liberty and patriotism to the children, he also proclaimed that education for women serves also to

benefit women themselves as influencers on men and to end the irrational beliefs in superstitions (qtd. in Nash 177-178). Americans recognized the role of education in elevating the status of the nation, and, luckily, they did not exclude women as they started to offer them more educational opportunities. These opportunities, nonetheless, were inferior and less than those given to men; however, they opened the path for women to experience the outside world: an experience that their ancestors could not enjoy. According to Rinder, “teaching became the first occupation open for women” (320). Still, women’s access to all sorts of knowledge was not a possible option, for their education was outlined to recruit them to transmit certain ideologies that serve the household and equip them to be good housewives and mothers. Even most literate women could not write because their teaching was centered on how to read; they were expected to read the bible for themselves and for their children.

There were some changes concerning legal status. Gunderson claims that New Jersey allowed some of its women who owned property to vote; however, the decision was later on terminated due to the strong opposition of men (134). The decision was made to increase the chances of winning political elections against the opposite party. Additionally, the fact that the men denounced the decision of allowing women to enjoy their political rights describes the robust patriarchal mindset of Americans who refuse that their status became threatened by considering women as full citizens equal in rights to them and no longer dependent. The possibility of eliminating the dependence consensus would deprive the men of many privileges, one of which is their dominance over the wealth and properties of their wives. Additionally, some courts revised their laws regarding divorce which had become a bit more of an accessible option at that time; a divorce is given when a woman claims to have severe hardships such as bad treatment or the disappearance of the husband for a long time. However, women rarely resorted

to such an option; they could not stand the judgments and criticism which the society throws on a divorced woman; additionally, they lose the custody of their children because they had no political representation. Moreover, the state rewarded the women by eliminating primogeniture, rendering the inheritance equal between the two sexes. Despite that women did not get what they called for which was the right to citizenship. There was, however, quite an apparent change after the war. As they were obliged to hold their traditional duties after the return of men, they, nonetheless, grew to adapt to the freedom they previously got while the posterity grew up listening to the tales of the war, thus they were encouraged to think out of the box that they were condemned to. Educated women spread their thoughts about serious issues like education and legal status, and through hearsay the thought of chances, opportunities, and freedom grew within the hearts of women.

The revolution gave rise to the sense of feminism that started with a thought and a desire for more, wherein women started to acclaim more rights and prove their willingness to be active parts of the community outside the sphere of domesticity; it served as a stimulus for women to alter the American culture in their favor against the long-lasting patriarchy. They kept marching in parades and claiming their deserved political rights, whereas elite women participated in gatherings with men to tackle political issues; moreover, the pen was another weapon that women used to emphasize their presence (Skemp 2). Even the acclaimed Mercy Warren, who used to write anonymously, gained the confidence to use her name and share her political opinions frankly with the crowd. Nonetheless, the period after independence, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is divided into two, for the slight cultural change that liberated women gradually reverted to restriction after the men got back to hold their positions as patriarchs and bosses of public offices. Furthermore, even the expectations from women were returned to the traditional

thought where they were expected to follow certain norms of virtue that the religion and the society imposed as a lifestyle. The slots which they have taken during war got back to their masters, so they had to re-take their roles as well so that the society reverts to its normal atmosphere.

The American Revolution has initiated a new era for its people; it founded a newly established independent nation that granted freedom and equality to its men according to the constitution, but for women, it contributed to founding the American feminist thought that evolved through stages. The feminist thought started with the heroines of the revolution who frankly exclaimed their opinions and called for equality and more opportunities. However, the matter of equality exceeded the realm of politics because the restrictions were rooted in the society itself, mainly the lenses that they view women through. In other words, domesticity was the only domain rooted and outlined for females. The post-revolutionary era was a sensitive stage in re-shaping the American society, thus the women who contributed and marched for the sake of an independent nation hoped for the better regarding their situations, but the results were not quite satisfactory. The men celebrated the grand aids of the women; still, they have put their claims aside and concerned themselves with building the nation all over with the focus on the male world, in which they believed that they are the dominant through divine right: the divine right notion was extracted from their Christian beliefs and specifically Puritanism which promoted conservatism. Consequently, the discontent of women led to a series of protest actions to claim their natural rights and eliminate sexism. On the whole, they contradicted the culture of patriarchy, giving rise to the ideology of equality regarding opportunities. They had to convince the people of their rights. They held with them the confidence of their revolutionary mothers and

grandmothers, who showed heroism for the sake of the nation's cause, and acted up to revolutionize their status in the society.



## **Chapter Two**

### **The Emergence of Feminist Thought after the Revolution**

Not long after the independence, the new republic found itself entering a new century which was also the beginning of a new era of changes to the world as a whole, especially the Western society. Women, in particular, found themselves as restricted as ever after the revolution, with no major alterations in their situation and status as entities depending on their male counterparts, and as the responsible ones for domestic affairs as usual. However, the confidence that they gained during the time of crisis- the American Revolution- contributed to the cause of equality, wherein they continued to further their claims, thus establishing what is labeled as feminist thought. In addition, they commenced the Women's Rights movement as a notion, claiming their natural rights in all realms of life such as freedom of speech and the right to equal opportunities, mainly concerning education. Moreover, the American society was split into groups when it came to their reactions and impressions about change: those who called for change were contradicted by the people of conservative societal norms.

#### **2.2. Print Materials as a Means for Change**

The independence urged the new republic to build a whole new infrastructure, and this meant and concerned the print materials such as newspapers and magazines. Print materials represent the culture, in some prospects, because they deliver the news that keeps the people updated about the nation and also the world; they, somehow, connect the people and also serve as a historical source. Moreover, most of the writings that the American society had enjoyed were, mainly, brought from the Brits; however, now the country needed its products and, surprisingly, women showed an incredible interest in reading materials: newspapers, magazines, periodicals...etc. As mentioned earlier, revolutionary pioneers granted a bit more educational opportunities to

females, thus literacy rates increased and reading became a thriving activity for leisure time. Reading has become available to middle-class ladies and not only the elite women, as it was in the previous centuries. Zagari, in her book *Revolutionary Backlash*, points out that the magazines of that era glorified women's previous chivalry and achievements such as the *New York Weekly Museum*, and such types of stories grabbed a quite decent amount of spotlight (14). Women enjoyed the idea that their race occupies a distinct position and status in the records of history; a few women succeeded in overcoming the many obstacles and rivaled the world of men, such as the Good Queen Bess. This proves that the publishers aimed to attract female audiences, and it also asserts the fact that females were interested in and engaged in readership activities. Zagari, also, draws attention to the plentiful contributions that women have made in the print realm, for publishers relied on the comments, letters, and writings of women to carry on the work of their printworks due to the impoverished situation that led to the inability of paying the writers: women were paid much less than the men for their works. Consequently, the reliance on fair sex saved and alleviated the continuity of American publications. Additionally, she highlights the significant appearance of Female Politicians who did not hesitate to share their opinions with the public on every possible occasion: The Ladies' Literary Society was established by a group of women who gathered to discuss political issues and matters (11-81). Women, during the new century, gained more freedom of speech where they have become able to voice their intellect concerning polity with no restraints compared to the previous times when it was taboo for women to have and speak of such thoughts. Even so, participation in the polity was still out of their reach, and the only ways to participate were through their influence on the men as wives and mothers, or to voice their thoughts in groups of discussions. Anyway, the culture of politics has spread all over the country where people split into factions, each

supporting the party they believe in and inevitable hostility arose between opposing parties: though women were not allowed to take part in the elections, they engaged in the support through conversations and group-meetings. Furthermore, print has become another resort to share feminist thought in American society. In other words, print works have become a commodity that not only created more job opportunities but also contributed to the emergence of the feminist culture throughout the country where women got influenced by what they read. Although the periodicals were not affordable to everyone; they reached a large portion of the population due to the magnanimity of sharing among the women.

The topics that the American print had tackled, regarding women, ranged, accordingly, with the tastes of the audience, wherein there were fiction, fashion, and domestic purchases and topics such as recipes and home management tips. By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a movement of publishing affordable periodicals had spread all over and this increased the culture of print materials; besides, readership rates accelerated more than ever. For example, it has become the norm for Americans to hold a newspaper in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other, in the mornings. Nonetheless, Garvey in her *Adman in the Parlor* explains how the act of adding ads to magazines grew along with the introduction and growth of the culture of advertisement. As it is well known, the industrial revolution affected the whole world; mass production needed buyers, and magazines played a vital role in the process, for they acted as a commodity for leisure time and also as an advertising space for consumer products.

### **2.1.1. The Industrial Revolution**

The American society relied heavily on agriculture; however, by the turn of the century, it got influenced by the changes occurring in the world, specifically the European one. The changes are known as the Industrial Revolution by which the country

began to focus on businesses related to manufacturing whereas the people moved toward urbanization. This revolution grew due to economic purposes with the ideology of capitalism; nonetheless, such purposes affected society on all levels. The rise of capitalism led to the bloom of entrepreneurial businesses which, in return, needed more laborers. Factories were based in the cities, thus the situation urged people to move toward the lands that offer more opportunities. Men occupied most of the slots in the main enterprises of the era which were railroads, steam shipping, steel, and iron. As such, the family no more remained stuck together as the men had to work away from home now. Consequently, women found themselves obliged to stick to their traditional roles and keep the family together. However, circumstances could not hinder them from joining the workforce; they engaged as factory laborers, worked as teachers and nurses, and also swarmed in the domain of print materials where their contributions were considered innumerable and invaluable. The world was changing and the needs for a decent living rose; as a result, more women began to claim their spots in the workforce to fulfill their economic needs.

The female part, specifically, represented an indispensable component of the movement of print, for they composed the majority of the workforce in the domain. Females joined the workforce by bypassing and distributing products' ads (Garvey 5-6). Simply put, print materials opened the path for women to invade the realms outside of domesticity; they served as a means to prove women's potential as workers and intellectuals because even at that time women had little access to what is referred to as the real world, the workforce, limiting the public offices only to men. Writing and advertisement offered opportunities and chances for women to provide

financial aid to themselves and their families during a time that allowed only a scarce portion of space for them.

Furthermore, the periodicals relied, heavily, on the writings of women such as serial novels that got quite an attention from the crowd though most of them were written anonymously because the society welcomed more the works of men. Undoubtedly, the century can be considered a revolution for women who have been always regarded as inferiors to men, mainly, intellectually. Moreover, the opportunities that the domain of publication granted to women, allowed them to hold a distinct position as contributors to the economy of the country as well, wherein, through their work, they contributed to the overall economy because they massively, consumed the imported goods and that of the country too, compared to the previous century. This act of mass consumption was due to the influence of industrialization. Besides, even the advertisements targeted women, in specific, because they were the responsible ones for purchasing the house's necessities and the ones known for their love for shopping as well. Even print houses worked on lowering prices so that the publications would be available for the majority of the population who are middle and lower-class people. Furthermore, the fact that the women have become providers for themselves and also able to voice their needs, views, and intellect through writing, has enhanced their sense of confidence and independence among them. They challenged the norms of virtue that restrained them to the gendered stereotypes and categorized them as inferior who must be always depended on the superior race, men. However, the circulation of print culture, being centered on women, led to the emphasis and continuation of the American feminist thought that has already begun during the revolution and evolved to form the American feminist character. Through time, speaking up has ceased to become a taboo, and female writers were no longer obliged to publish anonymously or even be afraid of being

excluded due to their political views. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many female writers abandoned the norm of writing anonymously or adapting male pseudonyms; this, however, is proof of the wake of a movement of confidence and challenge, wherein the women believed in their intellect and in the fact that there is no shame in sharing those thoughts to the world.

Writing, however, can be considered a means of revolt because it influences thoughts and also serves the purpose of proving women's intellect which has been long denied and categorized as a masculine trait. Print materials served as a resort to transmit the notion of women's rights which are natural and deserved, but only denied due to ancient traditions and religious restrictions. The bloom of the plentiful voices of women, that were meant to subvert the traditional mindsets, led to the increase of their confidence about being equal to men and also being capable to conquer the real world and enjoy the privilege of freedom: the freedom of speech and choice, for the society imposed on them certain gendered lifestyle and roles, whereas the women could do little to change their reality despite their deep resentment, mostly because of the lack of opportunities for them. The writings, nonetheless, included the stories, the ideas, the intellect, and the voices that have been suppressed for centuries, and they evoked a revolution of thought for both the sexes; it was a challenge to make the men admit that intelligence is not male property or trait. The pen offered the opportunity to express freely, providing a space for argumentation and also a chance to change the world. Feminism spread everywhere; it started as a thought and then expanded its scope even to literature: the refined art.

## **2.2. Education as a Natural Right**

The new republic has highlighted the importance of education as a means of development and glory for the nation, and this was proved through the multiple efforts to emphasize and generalize the concept of republican motherhood to guarantee that the next generations of sons

would be knowledgeable enough to benefit their country. It is a matter of fact, however, that illiteracy rates among women amounted far higher than that of men, for the sole reason which is the neglect of women's education and perceiving it as unnecessary and misleading for the feminine nature. For sure, there existed exceptions, for some families chose to educate their daughters' even if it included only rudimentary skills of writing and reading. Additionally, due to the reason that advanced education was paid for, families preferred to favor the sons over the daughters because the female's duty was to get married and take care of the children only. The issue of education was controversial; many prodigies claimed their right to get more educational privileges such as opening seminaries, whereas others perceived it as a natural deserved right that must be attained and must be given equally with no sexism that denied their opportunities to enroll in universities. Higher education, nonetheless, was one of the rights that women struggled for the most because of the distinction of intellectual faculties between the sexes that positioned men as superior. Higher education institutions were only male realms, and women faced a hard time attempting to convince those male higher-ups of the notion of equality. The notion that there is no scientific truth that proves women's intellectual inferiority. Similarly, male researchers attempted to prove females' inferiority by claiming that education harms the way women are made and renders them incapable of achieving their duties in the household.

The concept of republican motherhood that evolved as a compromise has benefitted women, to a certain degree, on the level of education because the notion of educating them for the sake of their influence on men and children prevailed. The state legislatures worked on granting basic schooling for girls that centered on reading, writing, and other skills that are considered feminine such as dancing. Whatever, even the religious men promoted the idea of women's education so that they could easily read the scripture and pass its knowledge to their offspring: the society still

held a deep attachment to religion, and women acted as the responsible ones for keeping such a tradition of attachment. Thus, the number of girls attending Dame Schools increased, and it has become a common sight to see girls sitting in classes that were filled only with boys. Moreover, only a minority enjoyed the privilege of advanced education, and those women were categorized as the elite; one of such women was Judith Sargent Murray who, in her *On the Equality of Sexes* urged for more educational opportunities for the ladies, for she resented the fact that being a woman was the reason that she could not continue her education like her brothers, for she was advantaged by sharing the advanced tutoring along with her brothers but was denied the right to join in higher education for being a woman (Arezki and Mahmoudi). Wealthy families provided highly educated tutors for their sons; some families did not mind that their daughters benefit from such classes along with their brothers. Sargent Murray was one of those privileged daughters, and knowledge rendered her ambitious for more, but, unfortunately, society's conventions stripped her of her future academic dreams. After the revolution, the educational opportunities increased and the curricula of women's education widened to include more subjects- except for the subjects outlined for occupations; the purpose was still to equip good housewives and mothers. What is more, Smith argues that American society was highly influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* which was written as a reflection on *Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine. Wollstonecraft's background played a vital role in the production of her renowned work; she showed a distinct interest in education since her youth, and when she grew up she chose to practice the profession of teaching and even established her school in London. In her work, she protested that education is a natural right for all people, and it is an unfair consensus that women are deprived of such a right (20-24). Women like Murray and Wollstonecraft aimed to change society's views and traditions towards females'



education because it was perceived as unnecessary and only complementary for the sake of republican motherhood notion and social interactions; they wanted to emphasize education as a natural right that has been restricted not because of divine instructions but because of ancient societal traditions that deny women's intellect. It was quite the challenge to convince the parents to send their daughters to public or dame schools since they did not believe in the importance of female education: the families were more concerned with seeking a living and emphasized the future of their sons as the future financial providers; on the other side, when it came to daughters, they were only concerned about their marriage to a good family. The American people were still hesitant toward altering the usual norms; women were the incarnation of piety and virtue, and rendering them equal to men was considered a threat to the equilibrium of the matriarchal world. Equality would not only diminish patriarchal authority but also would create a challenge in the workforce, wherein the opportunities of getting a job would diminish for men as long as another race would appear: women were viewed as intruders. Besides, the notion of natural rights gave rise to the movement for Women's Rights.

Women's Rights began as a notion before becoming an established movement. Starting from the revolution where women proved to themselves and the others, the men, that domesticity is not the only realm they are good at, to the post-revolutionary era where the discontent increased because of the unreasonable limitations. Plenty of elites asked for more privileges; however, what changed after the revolution is that the women believed that the rights they were deprived of were naturally deserved and the only reason for such a situation was that the people kept believing in ancient conventions that divided genders and privileged only a certain race. On top of that, limitations on education were, mainly, because of the stern belief that the women are simply incapable of rivaling the men and they are more of an emotionally driven race. Women

like Abigail Adams, Mercy Warren Otis, and Wollstonecraft challenged the ancient traditional thoughts and opened the path for the intellectual rivalry between the sexes. It was a matter of convention and conviction that the people could not accept women as doctors or politicians even if they showed their potential: showing potential was also quite limited, for the privilege of education remained mostly on the level of reading books, learning geography, rhetoric, and composition, as in the Philadelphia Young Ladies Academy, with the exclusion of scientific majors; additionally, it was quite difficult for girls to enroll in Higher education (Clinton and Lunardini 39). However, several elites came out to challenge the norms and revolutionize female educational opportunities, and the higher education institutions reconciled and chose to harmonize with the change.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century is considered the revolutionary period for the rise of women's academies, also labeled seminaries. Clinton and Lunardini claim that one of the first and important founders of the latter revolution- the rise of academies- was Emma Willard who profoundly believed in the importance of women's education, thus she went on to request funding which she got later on from the New York legislation and established her seminary in Troy, New York. She, also, traveled across the country for the sake of speaking up and promoting female education (41-42). Opening a females' seminary was in itself a difficult task, but that was not the end of it, for there was also the challenge of gathering students: the founders of such seminaries had to convince society of the necessity of their daughters' education. It was due to Willard that a wave of founding female academies and schools had spread all over the country by plenty of her students. It is claimed that Willard's students were more likely motivated to pursue academic careers though the main teachings they received were to recruit them for social settings and marriage. Moreover, the first college for women in the country was established by Mary Lyon, who

received funding from South Hadley, Massachusetts. Lyon's college was characterized by its extended curricula that included Greek, Latin, and human anatomy, wherein such majors were quite not allowed for women (Clinton and Lunardini 43-44). This, however, serves as the initiation of rivalry between the sexes to prove that women also have intellectual faculties in all fields. Still, authorities rejected the idea that fair sex can intrude the realms that have been always crowded by only men. For example, Elizabeth Brown Blackwell was allowed to take a theology course but denied to take the degree (Clinton and Lunardini 44). American society was still unable to put their confidence in women as professionals. Nonetheless, the teaching profession was mostly practiced by female graduates during the century, plus society seemed to be approving it because women were always educators through raising their children.

Authorities and headmasters sternly opposed women's engagement in scientific fields. There was a spread of female nurses; still, it was considered an unbecoming profession for a pious woman. However, medicine was limited to men until Elizabeth Blackwell rebelled and fought firmly for her desire. Blackwell was born, in 1821, in England; she came from a privileged family who later on emigrated to America due to financial circumstances. After the death of her father, she worked as a teacher to help with the household's income. She was not fond of teaching, so, through the encouragement of a friend, she decided to become a doctor. She asked for admission to medical school from many institutions; however, such institutions only replied by rejection. Nonetheless, in 1847, she became the first female to enroll in a scientific institution; she got admitted to Geneva College in New York where she showed brilliant competence and willingness to pursue medicine as a profession. She carried on her education in France, and then she got back to America and spread her influence. Hospitals rejected to employ her because of her gender, so she proceeded to open her own. Blackwell is credited to have spread the

knowledge about physical education to her sex and sanitation (Edwards 41-50). Blackwell's story serves as an inspiration to all the women. It was not an easy feat to be admitted to a medical school; however, her persistence won over the obstacles. In addition to the pressure of higher institutions that refused to admit her intellect, she faced a myriad of judgments and doubts from the society as well. In the beginning, most people refused to be checked by a female doctor, and they even sent her threats to close her small clinic. Despite all the criticisms and threats that she received from the society, she continued to strive for her rights and all females' rights to equal opportunities in education. She aimed to introduce the culture of healthcare, especially to the women who suffer the loss of their children or even their lives because of the neglect and the common disbelief in their sanitary and medical treatment. Moreover, Elizabeth proved to the American society that they should re-evaluate their beliefs concerning women's intellectual faculty; she graduated with honor and added so much to the field through her publications and influence. Hence, she proved wrong the theory of her gender's inferiority. Plus, she gave confidence to the movement of feminism wherein women celebrated such achievements to tell the world that they are equal to men and deserve more opportunities. Although such female intellectuals awed the society, they still received a lot of criticism.

The act of expanding education led, inevitably, to alter the American culture; the people who were received as inferior and emotionally driven have become writers, teachers, and founders. The wave of feminist thought, now, included and reached all women who knew that they were still in the challenge of convincing the rulers of society, the men, that it is only natural for them to be equal in all regards. Education, in particular, contributed to establishing the movement of Women's rights as a notion because the majority of the female populace became aware of their rights and believed in obtaining them, especially of the fact that they have become financial

providers that gave rise to their confidence and the ideology of independence. The graduates of seminaries and colleges showcased a distinct difference in the way they lived their life; many of them chose to have small families compared to the large family system of society, while others persisted in continuing and pursuing academic careers despite all the difficulties and mockery that they received from their male peers and professors. Such a lifestyle became the argument that society used against feminists, accusing them of harming the sacred institution of marriage and family. In this regard, the limited opportunities for graduate women led to the foundation of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) by Alice Freeman Palmer and other 16 members, the association only welcomed female graduates from colleges and universities, and it worked on providing the right environment for them so that they conduct their researches which were mainly on women and children (Clinton and Lunardini 146). The association worked on providing actual and scientific evidence to the crowd in order to counter the arguments of antifeminists with facts. Nonetheless, education is, certainly, the main characteristic of the development of any country, and, here, it served as the factor that would change and benefit female status in society. It is considered a social reform.

Furthermore, as women prevailed in the teaching profession, they were mostly chosen and asked for in the schools and academies because they were paid less than men. Catharine Beecher argued that women would serve the widespread education throughout the country, thus the government should emphasize training them because they cost less. Beecher did not consider the matter of unfair payment because she believed that unmarried women support only themselves and she neglected the cases of those who support their entire family (Kleinberg 64). The issue of salary would continue for centuries later, wherein the work of men is more appreciated and paid just based on societal conventions. The century was characterized by the industrial revolution

which rendered the Americans a consumer society, so the needs increased and this necessitated financial stability. The workforce was mostly crowded with men; still, women were also heavily relied on in factories because they cost less. The fair sex had few options to resort to and public offices were only male realms. Besides, working conditions in factories can be described as harsh and bad for all men, and women, in particular, were no exception. Consequently, education and degrees were a kind of resort where women believed they can at some point join public offices by proving their academic achievements. The higher education institutions' decisions regarding the registration of women varied; by the late 1800s, three-fifths of the universities accepted female admissions (Kleinberg 1560). Although their opportunities increased, they were centered on the teaching profession, and having access to other occupations remained a struggle. Furthermore, the south lagged far behind the north, concerning education, especially for women. However, female teachers acted as the saviors and leveled up the rates of literacy. As the society became convinced of the necessity of educating their daughters, schools were full, thus teaching became the most common profession that benefitted women by providing them income, and also benefitted the society by increasing the rates of literacy. Society is uplifted through knowledge; therefore, spreading knowledge contributed to the progress of the entire country.

### **2.3. The Reactions of the Society toward Change**

Contradiction is, inevitably, one of the characteristics of the human world. Concerning women's status, several female prodigies sought and claimed the right for a change, yet the change was later on claimed by all the classes of the society due to circumstantial situations. Some of them wanted glory for their race; some wanted to keep up with the changes of the world, while others had enough of being dependent entities. In actuality, not all men rejected or mocked women's rights, records and letters show that many of them spoke, discussed, and

seriously considered the matter of equality. Still, quite many the society, including men and women, could not welcome positively this social revolution.

It was during the American Revolution when elite women began to voice their political views and plans for a better nation through publishing pieces of writing, group discussions, letters, or even their influence on their men, specifically the wives of revolutionary leaders. Despite the contributions that they have made, the men still criticized them heavily and mocked their attempts to join the polity or to be independent, in any way. Even among women, the minority of them who had the mindset for discussing intellectual or political matters were excluded from their race and considered at odds, thus elite women had few options to discuss freely or find themselves in a comfortable environment for such discussions, and the plenty anonymous publications proved the extent that they were restrained and denied as intellectuals. What is more, many female writers kept using male pseudonyms so that their works can receive a neutral attention and criticism: works of females were, heavily, judged, especially when the work discusses a controversial or an unusual topic. The American culture expected specific roles from the women which are being role models of virtue and serving as good wives and mothers, whereas the attempts to join in the men's world would lead to their exclusion as threats to the norms. Barbara Welter explains what is meant by virtue for the Americans as follows: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (152). The latter characteristics mold what Welter labeled as True Womanhood. The culture was sternly based on the religious beliefs that outlined such traits of femininity, long ago, and damned those who go against the rules. The established seminaries, nonetheless, emphasized to the public their efforts to induce religious thoughts, and they also proclaimed that they outlined their curricula to suit the purpose of training their students on how to manage the household, yet society seemed to view things otherwise, for the

graduates of such schools gave birth less than their predecessors while others preferred to pursue other paths and promoted for the notion of independence rather than submissiveness to men. In the same vein, Catharine Beecher, who comes from a renowned religious family, spent most of her life demonstrating and emphasizing the importance of maintaining order which includes domesticity for women, her work *Domestic Economy* (1841) received considerable attention from women (Clinton and Lunardini 42). This reveals that some women were loyal and apprehensive of their roles as managers of household affairs, especially during this century when the industrial revolution urged the men to work and spend much time away from their homes, so the households needed the women to be strong more than ever.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American society was no longer agrarian; as a result, there was quite the race to find jobs and seek a living. Women along with men, also, entered the workforce but their conditions in factories were far worse than the males. So, the majority sought to become teachers. Society celebrated, merrily, the idea of women as teachers because it was always perceived that it is in their nature to serve as the educators of the generations which they did, since ever, as mothers. Nonetheless, welcoming women in all realms of occupations was rather difficult to accept; it would have created a huge discontent due to the competition in the job market. The men were favored in holding public offices and scientific professions that they were paid more than women, who accomplish the same work as them because the men were believed to have bigger responsibilities as financial providers for an entire household. Moreover, the enrollment of women in colleges and universities gave rise to the opposition. For example, Dr. Edward Clarke was famous for his claims that higher education endangers women's health (Clinton and Lunardini 146). Such theories were focused on and studied thoroughly by female graduates who worked on proving facts rather than theories. What strengthened the position of



such theories were the society's judgments who perceived the new wave of educated women as less caring for their domestic duties compared to their mothers. Such oppositions, however, made it a long journey for the fair sex to achieve gaining equal opportunities in education. In the same vein, higher education institutions for scientific majors constructed such a high barrier when a wave of women aimed to enroll; the patriarchal academies were reluctant to agree on equality between the sexes, specifically on the level of intellect. Hence, seeing women in medical or law schools was a rare sight; moreover, even for the rare cases, who joined such classes, they were not treated fairly in comparison to their male colleagues. Some women excelled in their classes; however, they were still viewed as thieves for the slots that are supposed to be for men. Moreover, the majority did not see the purpose of their admission to colleges since their duty was to take care of the house.

The fair sex has achieved considerable success in widening the scope of their opportunities, but it was not an easy task to attain a place in the public offices; such a domain was always male dominant and highlighted men's authority as decision and policymakers. In 1822, Elizabeth Bartlett was nominated to hold a public office, the news of her nomination was spread all over the state of Massachusetts through newspapers and it made a huge ruckus that a writer labeled "Susan Thoughtful" raised the issue in a magazine where she did not hesitate to showcase her resent toward this rare case, plus she posed many questions about Bartlett's duties as a woman if she was to get married. Soon after, Bartlett announced that she denounces her nomination (Zagarri 78-79). The story makes it wide clear how society opposed such changes and even women were no exception. Susan's reaction explains the fact that not all women welcomed the notion of equality, and they utterly believed in the existence of a distinction between the sexes and gender roles. Moreover, the concept of coverture prevented the women from entering the

sphere of politics and public offices, for they were unable to sign a contract or practice any political activities because they were simply not considered citizens yet. Society, including both men and women, was concerned about the new waves of thought that calls for independence and re-shaping gender roles such that they clashed with the promoters of feminist thought by writing satirically about the matter. Granting equality simply meant the fall of the patriarchal world; as such, opposition was unavoidable. Nonetheless, the society had to adapt to the change somehow because it was inevitable to deny women's roles that had increased during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the country faced another set of wars. As it is well known, the wars needed men to fight; consequently, women found themselves obliged to enter the men's world and hold more responsibilities: factories needed workers, and the women had to provide for themselves when the men left for war, they had to accept the harsh conditions for the sake of few pennies. In addition, the economic revolution, industrialization, which necessitated more providers to the household for better living conditions, worked in favor of women, for it became culturally accepted to see them working, of course in a limited number of domains such as teaching, nursing, or as factory workers.

On the whole, American society has, indeed, welcomed change but only to a limited degree. They approved what was regarded as unharmed to the patriarchal hierarchy and the religious norms of virtue. Domesticity, however, was still one of the main priorities and responsibilities allocated to women. Despite the obvious changes and achievements of women, a large part of society viewed their work as an obstacle to their real duties as a wife and a mother, wherein they described the new generation of educated women as oddities to the culture. Anti-feminists declared their concerns about the concept of family; they argued that modern educated women harmed the usual hierarchy and norms. Moreover, the community was adamant to grant and

allow political freedom to the race that they believed should continue to be submissive as it has always been for ages. However, the adapters of feminist ideology kept growing in number and change was occurring gradually.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Women's Revolution: Overcoming Political Restraints**

The changes that occurred to the American society and rendered it more welcoming to women in the real world, compared to the previous times, have contributed to the bloom of independence notion, wherein females sought more openness and rights to cope with the alterations occurring to the world. With their quest for equality, they knew it would only be achieved through overcoming political restrictions that denied them as citizens. Political activism, however, was concerned with the abolition of inequality where suffragists took the lead, wherein the Seneca Falls Convention marked their start, while the suffrage organizations imposed the change that led to the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment.

#### **3.1. The Roots of Women's Political Revolution**

American society, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was a rather separated community based on sex and race. While White women were under the restriction of the male world, African-Americans faced racial segregation and slavery. Many White Americans, mainly in the northern parts of the country, engaged in activities that supported Abolitionism, and women, as well, enrolled as active participants in such communities. Participation in Abolitionism, however, is deeply related to the wake of the official Women's Rights Movement, for two of the main founders of the movement, Lucretia Coffin Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton met at The World Anti-Slavery Conference. Although they met for the cause of slavery, it was meant for them to reunite again to fight for their own sake; the sake of the female race.

Born in a Quaker family, Lucretia Coffin was inspired by her mother, who solely handled the affairs of the household, as her husband worked away from home for long periods, and also by the Quaker community as well which encouraged coeducation, unlike the other conservative

religious groups. She developed a deep resentment for slavery since her childhood and a strong belief in women's rights, regarding equal opportunities. When she grew up, she worked as a teacher and married James Mott who supported her all the way. She, also, became a prominent Quaker Minister, a pursuit that was uncommon for the ladies at that time (McMillen 35-36). Lucretia's background motivated her to speak up, with no fears, for the unprivileged people – her career of activism started with Abolitionism-and to become a prodigy of one of the most important reforms in American history, the Women's Rights Movement. On the other hand, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who comes from a wealthy family, spent most of her life attempting to rival men because her father wished she was a boy that would become the heir of the family and continue their lineage (McMillen 9). The stimulus that her father gave her contributed to rendering Elizabeth an educated woman with ambition, the ambition to excel in male domains and break free from the chains of subordination. They both shared a strong belief in females' capabilities to achieve more than what is expected from them as a race. Furthermore, they, adamantly, made their way into antislavery communities which, in the beginning, denied women's participation such as the American Antislavery Society until women reformers imposed their existence as efficient contributors: the denial projects the firm disapproval of society, especially men, for allowing the tender race into the polity and public events.

According to Clinton and Lunardini, The World Anti-Slavery Conference that was held in London, in 1840, created a huge controversy. In addition to its main purpose which was to address the grievances of the enslaved race, women's participation erupted contradiction. Most of the men opposed women as delegates and speakers because they believed that their inclusion would stir criticism and deviate the conference from its designated purpose (112-114). The majority of participants regarded women's participation as a separate matter, simply another

cause that would overshadow the cause of Abolition. Nonetheless, influential men like William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips spoke on behalf of the women, claiming that they earned their right to be seated due to their plentiful achievements in the movement; however, it was all futile (McMillen 72-73). After the tense arguments of the higher up of the international conference, Stanton and Mott could only attend it as guests where they eventually met and shared the load of their mutual ideas and intellect. Anyhow, by the end of the conference, they both went on separate ways till their next meeting which was years later. Anyway, the world conference emphasized the disparity between male-female statuses not only in the U.S., in particular, but all around the world. However, for the Americans, it marked the root of the emergence of the women's reform movement because it is, undoubtedly, unfair to deny their rights to participation, neglecting their myriad of efforts simply based on sex. The fight for abolitionism led to the official commencement of the fight for another cause, wherein women activists recognized the urgent need for equality so that their endeavors would not be put aside again. Thus, a group of reformers gathered to inaugurate the official debut of the Women's Right Movement.

Furthermore, Clinton and Lunardini explain how fate brought Stanton and Mott Together again at an invitation to Seneca Falls, New York, 1848. The two women had the chance to discuss the matters of equality even further along with other women who were invited as well: Mary McClintock, Jane Hunt, and Martha Wright. At the end of the meeting, they ended up on the decision of inviting the people interested in demanding women's right to equality on July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> at Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. The five women outlined The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, based on the Declaration of Independence, which included eighteen grievances; their demands were as follows: equal education, equal access to trades and

professions, marriage equality, the right to make contracts, to own property, to sue and be sued, to testify, to retain children's guardianship, and to vote. Although about three hundred people gathered, including women and men, only a hundred signed this declaration (114-155).

Surprisingly, few men also attended the meeting to support equality, and they signed the declaration. After The Seneca Falls Convention news spread all over the country through the press; it received considerable attention from the crowd followed by a load of criticisms that eventually many withdrew their participation. Of all the demands, the franchise became the most discussed on the list: men conceived it as an attempt to revolt against the norms and the patriarchal culture, while many women, as well, sternly opposed and ridiculed such a demand.

The founding mothers knew that they are faced with the mission of convincing society of the benefits of equality. Thus, women reformers began to squatter in all directions of the republic to win the approval of the majority; one of the most influential women was Susan B. Anthony; she was an activist in Abolitionism, temperance, and the women's rights movement; she was highly influenced by Elizabeth Stanton that she joined the mission and held the responsibility of preaching for equality, traveling to the many states of the U.S. (Clinton and Lunardini 144).

Traveling was a challenging matter, for one thing, it was costly, plus they still had to hold their domestic roles. However, challenges did not hinder them and they campaigned for their cause, aiming to convince as much as possible of both women and men that their demands are simply natural rights. In the long run, their efforts proved successful, for the reform reached and recruited a lot of supporters; nonetheless, another portion of the population kept on their satire and opposition, claiming that gender roles are outlined by biblical texts; they considered such acts as taboos that harms the culture and generally the hierarchy of the society. Although historical studies claim that some influential political men supported equality, their efforts to

make the change were shut down by the strong opposition of the other parties in power who refused to be seated with a race they consider incompetent and inferior. The culture of patriarchy was based on the notion of "men's rule" as the superior race; whereas, any attempts to reverse or threaten it is considered a red flag. The men took pride in their positions as leaders of the household and the nation as well, so such attempts incurred much wrath, especially among the religious groups. Religious Americans, in particular, attacked any odds that would create an imbalance in the hegemony of the society. They kept criticizing suffragists and attempted to convince people of the dangers of the change.

Although the franchise was not the sole right they claimed, the controversy over it proved its importance in imposing cultural change. They trusted that cultural change would only occur through targeting the traditional mindsets that firmly believed in male dominance and female inferiority: even women, anti-suffragists, conceived the vote as a power that should not be given to them because it holds a huge responsibility that female brains cannot handle. Female reformers challenged the norm of domesticity and called for more opportunities; franchise, however, attained the most focus because they believed it was the core of change. Suffragists aimed to achieve full democracy which was the basis of the nation according to the Declaration of Independence. It is a democratic republic only when it includes all people, regardless of race, sex, or color. Thus, the founding mothers of the Suffrage movement contributed to shaping the nowadays nation, as well as American feminism. They insisted on attaining the doctrine of natural rights to better their lives conditions and render their race celebrated rather than being destined to subordination and taken advantage of: because women had no political representation, they had little right to make their own decisions even on their properties and heritage. Despite that the grievances were many; the mothers of feminism concentrated much



effort on franchise because it received most of the refusal and counterattack; hence, it became wide clear that suffrage would make the change concerning their status. It was the means for achieving their rights to citizenship and, therefore, equality.

### **3.2. The Rise of Women's Organizations**

After the Seneca Falls event, women's activities spread widely; however, the Civil War, 1861-1865, prompted such practices. The main reason for the war was that the Northern part of the country was in dispute with the Southern part over the issue of Abolition. The South formed a chain of opposition, claiming that slaves represent a vital part of their economy: they used to assign hard labor in the field to the slaves; as such, granting freedom to the enslaved meant that they will have to pay them. Additionally, several states aimed to secede and break the Union apart. On the whole, chaos characterized the republic. For women, the situation obliged them to act up again and perform their expected duties that are related to domesticity, and which they willingly performed: they operated in the duties that their ancestors did back in the American Revolution. Plus, women's inclusion in nursing accelerated, as they were needed to tend to the sick and injured soldiers. Furthermore, the nation needed women to occupy males' jobs in the factories because of the lack of a workforce. Their experiences in the war contributed to emphasizing the independence notion, more than ever, among the females who sought to be included in more domains, yet they were still suppressed because when the war ended, they were again pushed toward their traditional spheres. Hence, the Women's Rights movement gained more acceptance and crowd. Quite a lot of them chose to join social reforms such as Temperance: during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, alcohol consumption gravely increased, and women campaigned and protested against it to retain and protect family values (Kleinberg 178). Society treasured conservatism and moral codes. Although social reformers achieved some

goals such as imposing certain states' bans on alcohol, they could not temper the choices of the people; as such, alcohol consumption continued and expanded. Political reformers, however, sought to join environments that promoted equality, and organizations provided such opportunities wherein they paved the way for women into the realms of the polity and granted them the opportunity to gain expertise.

After the Civil War ended, reformers resumed their work. In 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony established the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA); they banned male participation, and their goal was to impose a federal amendment for women's suffrage rights. Their publication, *The Woman's Journal*, became the most famous representative work of the women's movement. Moreover, as a protest, Anthony, along with other members of the association, attempted to take part in the presidential elections of 1872; however, she was arrested and fined. Anyhow, the methods of the NWSA did not appeal right to all activists; as such, in the same year, Lucy Stone emerged as an eminent leader of the suffrage movement and established the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA); she welcomed male participation and sought state-by-state support. In 1883, the state of Washington authorized franchises for women, but it was soon reversed because the case was challenged in court (Clinton and Lunardini 123-125). Their refusal of adding any male participation stemmed from their stern feminist views, wherein they aimed to prove their capabilities as women to win in politics. Furthermore, a federal amendment meant the obligation of the whole republic to approve the franchise since it is a constitutional decision: an amendment. However, pursuing state-by-state support meant spending a huge deal of effort and plans in attempts to convince each state, independently, of their quest. Although the process of work of both the NWSA and the AWSA was slow and did not attain their goal; they, nonetheless, succeeded in influencing a large portion

of the population which, in return, embraced the reform; consequently, many branches of the associations were opened, granting the opportunity for everyone to be a part of history.

Furthermore, Female participation in social affairs prevailed, for they acted as campaigners, influencers, and lecturers. Lecturing, however, has become a widespread occupation for women which provided for them economically in addition to giving rise to a wave of female lecturers. Such cases were unprecedented; as a result, they received a mix of reactions. Moreover, as women joined the workforce, especially during the Civil War when they were needed the most because the men were absent, the discontent rose because of the bad and unfair working conditions: low payment, long work hours, and exposure to danger. They protested by forming labor unions but to no avail; anyhow, equality activists called for their right to hold positions in public offices; however, the demand could not be achieved because they had no political representation: they were banned from signing contracts or voting on a decision, and such activities were vital parts of the job of an officeholder, plus it was culturally inappropriate for women to stand in male gathering and speak. As such, suffrage held the key to resolving such issues, for it would grant them the privilege of citizenship.

After twenty years of rivalry, the NWSA and AWSA merged in 1890 to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Stanton was the first to take leadership, preceded by Anthony. As they both were aging, they allowed the younger generation to take the lead, wherein they made considerable achievements, for nine states extended suffrage for their women by the end of the century (Clinton and Lunardini 125-126). As both the associations had the same goal, there was no need for rivalry, for collaborating intelligence would serve the cause better. Additionally, the older generation had to pass the chair to the younger ones, for they bring with them new innovative methods and plans that conform to the updates of the world. In the

same vein, American society grew used to female involvement in more realms than usual, thus more males supported women's rights compared to the ancient times. Furthermore, the new generation of activists, that benefitted from social reforms and opportunities that were banned such as higher education, provided exponential intellectual support; they served as elites and masterminds, outlining the suitable plans that would make them appear as professionals and capable in the polity.

As the American society was an agrarian one, the industrial revolution heavily harmed the populace in the rural territories. Railroads industry led to stripping many farmers of their lands, plus factories stripped women of their low income: people in urban areas have become more dependent on factory products rather than women's farmhouses products. Therefore, farmers reacted by establishing the Grange, also called The Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, in 1867. It was first founded to connect rural America to the rest of the country, providing intelligence and so; however, with the spread of industrialization, the Grange incorporated more interest in economics and politics to defend the farmers' rights. What is special about the Grange is that it was one of the rare organizations to allow entry for women as participants, officeholders, and voters (Clinton and Lunardini 118-119). The south was more conservative compared to the north; even so, it revolutionized the status of females. The Grange paved the way for women into politics, wherein it allowed them to prove their efficiency in the realm through their diligent work. Moreover, the women of the Grange took advantage of their experiences in the organization and implemented them to the cause of equality: many of them joined suffrage associations. Whatever, women's involvement in such political activities granted them a source of income, especially lecturing which expanded more than ever as a profession, after the Civil War. In addition, the growth of the capitalist system affected the mindset of the society wherein

the pursuit of money intensified. Thus, by the end of the century, men started gradually getting used to and accepting the female part more, compared to the previous time. Still, plenty of the domains that demanded political representation, and public offices, banned women's entry. Also, such banned realms were regarded as occupations that are beyond their abilities while power is more suited to men. Such consensus was agreed upon even by women who showed their contempt for divergent females; they chose to defend the norms of the Americans and to maintain virtue in the spirits of their sex.

On the other hand, while suffragists fought for equality, another group emerged to contradict them, the anti-suffragists. Kodumthara narrates that in 1895, a group of women established the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage; Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, a member of the association, was known for her firm and strong opposition to women's suffrage; she used her privilege as a writer to reflect her ideas to the people, wherein she claimed that suffragists would engender disorder to the realm of politics and the American family as well. Although she opposed suffrage, she voted when her state allowed voting rights to her sex; however, she used her experience as a reason for convincing women not to vote, claiming it was a bad one. The organizations that opposed women's suffrage spread widely until the ratification of the nineteenth amendment which meant that their mission was a failure. The members were mainly conservative women who feared that suffrage would damage the concept of family, specifically the republican concept of family. Their rejection of equality stemmed from their concerns about gender roles which they perceived as sacred criteria for the American society: they agreed upon the norm that men were born to be superior and hold the positions of power both in the household and workplace.

### **3.3. The Ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment**

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the leading reformers of the movement grew old or died; however, the mission was still in progress by the new generation of reformers and heirs of leading organizations. Society got used to seeing women as active participants in many fields. As higher education no more banned enrollment based on sex, they got their opportunities to rival the ancient tradition that claims their intellectual inferiority and incapability to hold power due to their feminine traits –the norm of perceiving the female race as emotionally driven incapable of making rational decisions. Additionally, educated women used their teachings for the sake of the cause: female graduates were considered an example to the society, proving their intellectual competencies and their success in rivaling men academically. Furthermore, they also benefitted from the expertise of their feminist predecessors who imparted confidence to their race: the confidence of facing the norms and intruding into politics. Nonetheless, the government still refused to allow women as officeholders, and a part of the society did not trust that the change holds positivity, plus the notion of independence did not appeal well to their culture and mindsets. The American mindset was based on the old conventions that are based upon religion, and religion was used to explain gender roles and positions of women as submissive and dependent. And as the challenge of the traditional mindsets increased, it led to more expansion of opposition. Despite that the opposition increased, substantially, the NAWSA continued its mission with the new generation who pursued state-by-state support. The process was still slow; however, the entry of Alice Paul to the NAWSA marked the beginning of the last phase of the struggle for suffrage, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She was born in a Quaker family, obtained a master's and doctoral degrees in political science from the States, then she moved to Britain where she joined higher education institutions for further education and even joined

reform associations of the British such as the Pankhurst, the British version for the fight for equality and suffrage for women. She adapted the ideologies of Stanton and Anthony who pursued a federal amendment, thus she separated from the association and organized her group where she promoted nonviolence (Adams and Keene 1-21). Paul took advantage of her education and the expertise she gained from her previous involvement in association to implement them in her nation's cause of feminism. She was not satisfied with the situation in the NAWSA, for the rate of their success was still slow though the organization is considered an old one; as such, she decided to work on her own, establishing her association that led thousands of women in peaceful marches. As the violent current of the Pankhurst spread in Britain; their influence started to grow more with time, around the world. Paul aimed to avoid such tactics because it would only cause more disruption, for the twentieth century came with more challenges for the world. Because women were granted more access to social life, the society was in the phase of rebuilding its infrastructure: the century was characterized by this new movement which is Modernism where the people faced uncertainty about everything. Hence, Paul promoted peaceful measures such as campaigning and marching for the cause, taking as an example Mahatma Gandhi who won over the Brits through his political peaceful measures; in the end, her methods reached the designated purpose. Anyhow, her popularity as the main leader of the movement was suppressed because of her entanglement in serious matters that harms the reputation of the nation. Alice Paul was controversial during her era, but she faced suppression from the leaders in the upper echelons because she was considered a threat. As such, her name is not well known as other female heroes such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone. However, her achievements cannot be denied.

The Great War of 1914 also had an impact on the cause. The U.S., as an industrial country, needed women to fill in the gaps while the men were sent for military missions. It was inevitable to not recognize the role and contributions of women as well as the changes that occurred in society due to their intervention in all fields of social life. Political reformers continued their work all along, emphasizing their rights. Moreover, suffragists' influence spread widely, and this put pressure on the government. Although Democrats opposed suffrage; they, eventually, approved it, and during the term of Woodrow Wilson, the nineteenth amendment was passed, granting the franchise to all white women (Adams and Keen 243-245). The country was already in chaos because of the effects of the war in addition to the disillusionment of the society due to Modernism; therefore, the pressure on suffragists had to be suppressed. The suppression was, actually, in their favor, for they finally gained their natural right of suffrage. The right to vote was a natural human right, not a privilege; it served as a means to push women's status higher, rendering them equal not inferior. Suffrage was their passage to polity. However, after passing the nineteenth amendment some states took a while for approving such a decision. Moreover, the press discussed the matter enthusiastically, for there was a range of multiple opinions: people who joyfully welcomed the franchise, considering it as a necessary aspect of modern society while others kept criticizing it. The portion that criticized the franchise voiced their concerns about the future of the family, concerning the domestic duties of females. Feminists did not deny or refuse their domestic roles, however, as they were busy campaigning, antisuffragists used this fact to attack them, claiming that their divergence harmed society, specifically the future of children who are not getting enough care from their mothers anymore. However, the opposition only strengthened the suffragists' position and stand, making it obvious to the world that they are on the right path. Overall, suffrage is, generally, referred to as the first wave of American



feminism, for it granted equality in terms of voting right where women's voices have become recognized through participating in presidential elections as voters. Elections are regarded as an important pillar of democracy, and the right to vote marked equality of social groups; it also means that the enfranchised groups are constitutionally considered citizens with the right of choosing their sovereigns and participating in decision making in the democratic country.

Nonetheless, the franchise was only the official beginning of the feminism movement that would keep expanding to attain more goals and equality.

The nineteenth amendment was the first official step for women's liberty of the ancient social and religious chains. The quest for representation was long acclaimed in the American Revolution when they raised their contempt for paying taxes without being represented. Ironically, The American Revolution was initiated due to the discontent of the colony for paying heavy taxes without having representation from their motherland, Britain. Despite enfranchising them, they were still far from getting equal distribution of power in the realm of the polity. The process of their inclusion in governmental post offices is considered slow because it was socially accepted only decades later: women who showed an interest in claiming a post in political domain were highly criticized. Compared to men, women remained outnumbered by their male counterparts in the upper echelons of constitutional occupations until this day. Until now, The U.S. had no female president in its history of the presidency. Moreover, Burns, Schlozman, and Verba, in their book *The Private Roots of Public Action*, state that women's participation in polity after the passing of the nineteenth amendment remains less than the rates of men. Women's participation in the polls remained high, but it lagged in other activities such as electoral campaigns (357-358). Plenty of studies have been conducted to understand this disparity that occurred in spite of the long history of struggle for political rights, especially since

women have a long history of struggle to enter the realm of politics. However, it is clearly stated that their presence in the polls remains high.

## Conclusion

This research has traced back the very first roots of feminism, starting from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when a few women adamantly spoke their opinions in a judgmental environment that did not grant freedom of speech to the fair sex. As a matter of fact, thoughts play a vital role in the process of change, wherein women allowed themselves to think independently and realize their truths: the truth that they are capable of thinking and achieving more. Furthermore, audacity was another factor that women needed and attained, for it needed bravery to talk their minds in a society that resented such acts from women.

Speaking for themselves began by voicing their interjection about the notion of their inferiority and the unfair inequalities they face regarding opportunities. The American society refused to listen to the few divergent voices that have risen, thus women needed an event, an accident, or a movement to help make their words heard, and, eventually, The American Revolution became the opportunity that women craved for their salvation. The first chapter focused on how the revolution stimulated change concerning women's status. A wave of women prodigies emerged to speak for their race with confidence; this confidence was the fruit of women's participation in the warfare wherein they proved their multiple capacities and challenged the notion of their claimed inferiority. The war-time experience contributed to widening the ideology of feminism which intended to make the female race noticed and recognized as capable independent entities. Thus, the revolution served as the infrastructure of American feminism which kept evolving gradually afterward.

The second chapter serves as a continuation of the first in which it entails how women started to break free from the social constraints. The opportunities in the real world started to widen for them in the realm of print where they got the chance to express their thoughts and also

become independent financial providers for themselves and the household. In addition, education was an indispensable factor in women's liberation. To prove wrong the notion of their inferiority, women had to show men and society that their brains are capable of reasoning and studying just like men can do. It was not only a matter of rivaling but also a matter of natural right because women resented their inability to access higher and advanced education because of gender distinction. The fight to enter the education realm led to the birth of entrepreneurial women who established schools on their own and also led to making women invade the profession of teaching. Education allowed the tender race to prove their intellectual faculty and to have the right over their lives to some extent. They, however, were opposed by the portion of society that criticized such divergence which they viewed as a contradiction of the society's values.

The last chapter investigates women's struggle for political representation. As they were delegated by a male relative, they were banned from many rights and domains such as voting or working in public offices. Several elite women decided to officially initiate political action which began with The Seneca Falls Convention where they wrote down a list of their grievances and went on the mission of convincing the whole population of their rights. They carried on their mission by establishing suffrage organizations, for they believed that gaining suffrage would grant them political representation which renders them legally citizens equal to men in rights. Suffragists aimed for a federal amendment, and despite the hurdles they received from antisuffragists, they finally achieved their goal when the nineteenth amendment was passed in 1920.

Historically, 1920 is considered the first wave of feminism; however, this research intends to tell the whole story of feminism starting from the beginning. It tackles the background of American women and their deeds to impose change. American women sought to change their

situation through multiple actions; nonetheless, external factors worked in their favor such as the revolution, civil war, and industrialization. It aims to unravel the truth about the history of feminism in the U.S. and shed light on the scholarship on women in Algeria. Each chapter makes it wide clear that external factors influenced women and their lifestyle, thus it benefitted them in their cause of demanding more rights and change. Although many female heroes emerged to talk about inequity; the change was achieved only through action that was allowed mostly by those external factors.

In short, feminism dates back to the era of revolutionary women when they wrote letters discussing the issue of their status, and also occupied the position of the provider and protector of the household affairs in the absence of the men. Furthermore, the stories of bravery of revolutionary women kept circulating to reach the ears of the next generations who took their ancestors' confidence to carry on the legacy, the legacy of potent capable women who disprove the notion of female inferiority. The emergence of feminism is the result of female consciousness about their rights. In addition, the Americans were a religious society that classified women as objects of virtue and piety, and change threatened the hierarchy of the community. However, a series of events and external factors such as the American Revolution, Industrialization, and Civil War contributed in a one way or another to imposing social change that granted women more freedom and access to the outside world. Moreover, the discontent from unfair treatment despite spending equal efforts to men, the story behind Seneca Falls Convention, led to the bloom of Women's' Rights Movement. Nonetheless, the movement is a continuation of a long history of struggles that have been successfully won due to the efforts of those prominent female figures and also those women whose stories went untold. Appropriately, the American Revolution served as a stimulus to all the changes that occurred afterward.

The dissertation has covered the storyline of American women of their quest for political representation and liberation from social constraints. Although the quest was met with success, there exists a gap between the rates of women and that of men in the matter of political participation such as electoral campaigns and political offices. As such, researchers still attempt to study the causes of such a disparity.

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