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“Like Husband and Wife”: The Role of Susan B. Anthony and
Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Friendship in Advancing Their
Personal and Professional Successes

Maritza Mestre

DePauw University

Honor Scholar Thesis

7 April 2014

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“Like Husband and Wife”: The Role of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's
Friendship in Advancing Their Personal and Professional Successes

During the second half of the nineteenth century, women began to pursue rights in the public sphere more prominently than in years past. The suffrage movement in the United States brought women's rights advocacy to the forefront of the public mind in a way it had not done before, and gave women participating in the movement the opportunity to seek professional interests through their advocacy. The effectiveness of this movement hinged significantly on female alliances in promoting women's rights, and through these networks women could seek greater professional goals. Aligning with the rise of first wave feminism, the political nature of marriage saw an evolution during the later nineteenth century (Coontz 2005). More than ever before, women and men alike began to expect love and intimacy in their marriages and, as such, seeking these characteristics when selecting a marriage partner became more socially normative.

This transformation in marriage came as a slow process and, to compensate, women often sought relationships with close female friends to nurture their emotional needs when their expectations in marriage fell short. Analyzing the role of female friendship in supporting women's emotional needs outside of marriage in conjunction with their professional aspirations in advocacy groups can help illuminate the power of female friendship to enrich and promote greater satisfaction and comfort in women's lives. The friendship of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony – the focus of this thesis – provides an example of a case in which two women sought significant professional freedoms for themselves and for other women, and also provides an interesting comparison on the personal level. While Stanton spent almost fifty years of her life in marriage and had seven children, Anthony never married and at times dissuaded her friends

from entering into unions or mothering additional children. Through the study of Anthony and Stanton's letters, I discuss how the two women supported each other in seeking professional success while living distinctly different personal lives at home, and how the emotional and personal elements of their friendship combined with the professional motivations of their partnership to affect the function of their overall relationship.

FRIENDSHIP AND MARRIAGE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Separate Spheres

The concept of "separate spheres" colored much of the interactions between men and women at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This concept held that men and women occupied different roles in society and, as such, exerted their influence in their respective sphere – the public sphere for men and the domestic sphere for women (Coontz 2005). The concept of public-private spheres dictated gender roles and the social organization of marriage and the family for the middle class during the nineteenth century (Lystra 1989). Access to only one of these spheres presumably left women and men dependent on each other in marital partnerships in order to maintain the family's involvement in the world inside the home and that of the outside world. As Stephanie Coontz (2005) writes in *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, "Women would not aspire to public roles beyond the home because they could exercise their moral sway over their husbands and through them over society at large" (176). In this way, while women did not have access to the public or political world at the start of the nineteenth century, society expected them to exercise their voice through their husbands and, in turn, keep their husbands in line and productive in their work. As Janet Dunbar asserts in her book *The Early Victorian Woman: Some Aspects of Her Life*, early Victorian girls in the middle

and upper classes did not regularly question whether to pursue marriage or a career, for a marriage in which they occupied the private sphere while their husbands pursued economic fulfillment in the public sphere so clearly awaited them given their sex. In this marital system, the average woman simply accepted the limitations such a union brought to the prospect of her own personal pursuits in the public sphere (Dunbar 1953).

Therefore, the bond of marriage at this time served as a form of social control on men, in keeping them productive members of society, as well as on women, in confining their social access to the internal workings of the home. Coontz asserts that during this period, those in power explained the limitations of female access to the economic, professional, and political sphere in terms of “protecting” women rather than “dominating them” (Coontz 2005: 176). The lauded symbiotic relationships between husband and wife satisfied some women in the post-feminist period of the early 1800s, and “Women whose mothers had eagerly embraced the feminist demands of the 1790s turned their backs on earlier calls for equality and wholeheartedly embraced the doctrine of separate spheres for men and women” (Coontz 2005: 161). Framing the place of separate spheres as beneficial to each party in marriage and as giving women access to the public sphere through their husbands, and a responsibility to control their husbands’ professional aspirations as well, seemingly gave women a stable position that delayed the progression of a feminist agenda for several decades – instead marketing a “domestic feminism” to women of their generation (Coontz 2005: 165).

In fact, early Victorian women often sought to steer their portrayal away from cleverness, for fear that such a quality would deter a potential suitor. Dunbar adds that this need to avoid appearing too eagerly involved in intellectual pursuits corresponded with “a good deal of reaction against...that group of cultivated women whom at the end of the eighteenth century, had

enjoyed the friendship of men of intellect on equal terms” (Dunbar 1953: 21). Correspondingly, men did not often seek out intellectual wives but, rather, desired a partner who embodied charm and cared for her position in the domestic sphere and the obligations it brought in hosting guests and entertaining friends, and he sought a wife who would unquestionably abide by his rule (Dunbar 1953).

The Sentimentalization of Marriage

The way the public conceptualized marriage had significantly changed by 1830. While romantic love is traceable throughout much of history in different cultures, as Karen Lystra states in *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (1989), according to Duncan Crow in his work *The Victorian Woman*, it was not considered a requirement in order to enter into a respectable union (Crow 1971). However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century marital matches appear to have been determined by the potential suitors in the middle class more than by parental selection, and love saw a growing role in these decisions (Lystra 1989). By 1830 it became normative to think of heterosexual marriage as “the union of soulmates” (Marcus 2007: 6). While arranged marriages persisted and reportedly sustained positive levels of happiness, it was not unusual to see couples marrying for the purpose of love (Dunbar 1953). In fact, “By 1830, romantic love was fast becoming the necessary condition for marriage in the American middle class” (Lystra 1989: 28). Coontz (2005) calls this transformation the “sentimentalization of marriage” – a phenomenon that represented the first time in history when marriage became framed as the “pivotal experience in peoples’ lives” and the love they experienced within marriage as the main source of their emotional satisfaction (177).

Prior to this transformation during the Victorian era, men and women found practical marriage partners who would help them fulfill their role in society. Now, it became common for men and women alike to expect love in marital unions and, consequently, they assigned a greater value to finding romantic love in such a match. Despite these expectations, the societal construction of separate spheres made it difficult for women and men to understand each other on the intimate level that was now expected in sentimental marriage, since they had been socialized to understand their natures as fundamentally different (Coontz 2005). While those in the Victorian middle class understood marriage as a union based on love and choice, the distinctly different roles a husband and wife played were considered “compulsory social obligations (Lystra 1989: 192). As a result, Coontz says that many people in the Victorian era felt closer to their own sex who had shared the same gendered upbringing within their known sphere (Coontz 2005). Historians, still, are even skeptical of the amount the sentimentalization of marriage actually changed male and female relationships given the control men still legally, economically, and physically maintained over their wives (Lystra 1989: 55).

Seeking Female Friendship

As Victorian couples often found that their expectations for happiness within marriage did not align with the reality of their relationships, many women began to seek emotional comfort with female friends. Sharon Marcus explores how literature during the nineteenth century represented one of the first times in history where writers portrayed female friendship as something more complex than “an education in chaste passivity or as a rebellion against marriage and men” in her book *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Marcus 2007: 18). Rather, Victorians understood female friendship as crucial in

promoting heterosexual marriage and, therefore, able to function in conjunction with female relationships with men. It follows that this transformation in thought resulted from the sentimentalization of marriage where men and women began to share roles and spheres more – the previous doctrine of separate spheres made it difficult to conceptualize men and women as anything but opposites, which also implied that female friendships with other women must also oppose heterosexual marriages (Marcus 2007).

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (1975), in *The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America*, found evidence of women seeking emotional comfort in other women during times of distress and death in her examination of thirty-five families' letters and diaries. Beyond this, Smith-Rosenberg argues that these female support networks became institutionalized in offering women emotional support during each important life event from a new birth to a mourned death. Nineteenth century writers understood the significance of these female networks so much that they even represented them as “both a cause and effect of marriage between women and men,” (Marcus 2007: 12). In this way, the emotional element of female friendships served a key role in fulfilling women's needs for support, regardless of the emotional quality of their marriages.

Changing Divorce Rates and Childbearing Numbers

Following the sentimentalization of marriage came an increased acceptance of divorce and female singlehood in the nineteenth century (Coontz 2005). At the end of the eighteenth century, conservatives had already begun to fear the consequence love-focused marriages would have on national divorce rates, as they hypothesized that disenchanted couples would not see an incentive to remain in the marriage if not receiving the love society now told individuals they

could expect. Up to this point, a married woman was classified as the property of her husband and, as such, had “no existence in common law apart from her husband” (Dunbar 1953: 25). Correspondingly, fewer than half of the states in the United States allowed for divorce based on cruelty prior to 1840, but the sentimentalization of marriage allowed women more room to end marriage based on cruelty, for domestic violence was deemed unacceptable by a society that had come to understand marriage as a union based on love (Coontz 2005). In 1848, New York passed a Married Woman’s Property Act, which protected the assets a woman brought into a marriage, though any material gains once married were still considered the assets of her husband (Crow 1971). Then, in 1857, New York enacted a law that would make it easier for women to obtain a divorce, an effort headed by both men and women (Dunbar 1953). Just twenty years later, in 1860, “habitual drunkenness” became an accepted reason for divorce in most states (Coontz 2005: 180). Between 1880 and 1890, divorce rates in the United States rose by 70 percent, making the U.S. the world leader in divorce rates in conjunction with its priority of forming marriages based on love (181). Still, the increase in divorce rates in 1900 in the U.S. didn’t reach above 0.7 per 1,000 people – though still considerably higher than the rates of 0.2 per 1,000 people in Europe (183).

Not only did divorce rates increase in the nineteenth century, but the number of children born to each woman also decreased in the period between 1800 and 1900. By 1900, married white couples had an average of fewer than four children, compared to over seven children in 1800 (Coontz 2005: 171). Beyond this, Coontz says, the expectation of love in marriage created a culture in the United States and Britain where many women preferred lifelong singlehood to a loveless marriage – some women adapting the catchphrase “Better single than miserably married” in justifying their refusal to marry (179). Many women, including Susan B. Anthony,

suffered from a “marriage trauma” in which they feared marrying an unsuitable partner – and some, like Anthony, even experienced recurrent nightmares that manifested their anxiety (179). Despite this trend, few women sought the same power as the male counterparts they dreaded marrying, and even most feminists ultimately married. These marriages, Coontz (2005) asserts, were less conflicted than contemporary unions because “women kept their aspirations in check and swallowed their disappointments” (187).

Professional Friendships

A new culture began to emerge in England in the mid-1800s that supported female friendships that sought to encourage one another’s professional interests. These “professional friendships,” as Pauline Nester (2008) calls them, provided women with “encouragement, challenge, and mentorship” in which women worked towards a common purpose of achieving success and independence in the public sphere (376). Originally, these friendships began through philanthropic charities that women managed together – activities that helped challenge the previous impression that women could not work in unison to achieve a worthwhile, noble purpose (Nester 2008). During this time, a social controversy developed in which these sisterhoods were questioned for the influence they would allow women to have on one another and, beyond this, for the “female capacity for communal activity” (Nester 1985). As Banks (1986) asserts, “It is impossible, indeed, to overlook the extent to which feminism in the 1820s and 1830s, in particular, was one aspect of a wider movement for social and political reform, in which women’s rights took their place besides the rights of other groups which were equally the victims of injustice and tyranny” (129). The public context these female-led philanthropic organizations created for female friendships helped create a space for the emergence of female

friendship through feminist organizations. “In all,” Nester (2008) says of these women-centered networks, “what we see operating here are newly available options – new sentiments, new possibilities, a new function of friendship for women” that sought female advancement in the professional sphere (39). Often times, women were drawn to the women’s movement when they recognized the unhappiness they felt in their marriages (Banks 1986).

While female networks existed prior to this point, as scholars such as Smith-Rosenberg (1975) assert, earlier friendships surrounded domestic and religious matters, in contrast to the professional aspirations present in these later-nineteenth century friendships (Nester 2008). By the 1880s, Coontz (2005) reports, a radical wing of women voiced concerns that “thousands of women were trapped in repressive marriages,” while, at the same time, many middle class women sought secondary and even higher education before marrying, aiming to achieve goals in their lives outside the domestic sphere of their mothers (193). The perspective that women should have access to the public world grew to the point where even women who once rejoiced in having their own sphere supported the position that women should receive political and professional freedoms (Coontz 2005). It is in this framework that I examine the friendship of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and question whether these two women who played key roles in the advancement of women’s political and professional lives relied on their friendship in facilitating those accomplishments.

METHODOLOGY

Primary Sources

In studying the friendship of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, I used their letters as the primary source in analyzing the nature and effect of their friendship in their

professional successes as well as their personal lives. During the nineteenth century, “letters were the only vehicle for expression between people in love who were separated by any distance” (Lystra 1989). As such, scholars have used letters between male and female lovers as a way to study romantic relationships, particularly because letters provided a complex emotional fulfillment beyond other primary sources (Lystra 1989). The closeness with which Susan and Elizabeth worked as co-leaders of the women’s movement positioned them in a place where they sought each other out in emotional ways, and the abundance of their letters to one another certainly speaks to the importance letter writing served in their relationship.

Considering the proximity of the sources to the reported event and the intended audience of their writings is necessary when discerning the reliability of the primary documents. Events recorded closer to the time of their occurrence will prove more valuable in determining their accuracy and attention to detail, as will accounting for the writer’s level of connection with the event. The audience of the letters becomes essential to consider, since the author may have tailored their recollections and opinions according to the perceived reader. Many women in the nineteenth century kept communal diaries, in which multiple women would read and write their experiences and comments (Bunkers 1982). Additionally, it is essential to consider the particular “historical, socio-economic, ethnic, and geographical contexts” of the sources and recognize that an individual artifact cannot serve as a representation for the overall population of nineteenth-century women (Bunkers 1982: 15).

In conducting my analysis of Anthony and Stanton in particular, it became essential to identify their place as white women who knowingly lived much of their lives in the public eye. Given the political and public nature of their lives and relationship, one must recognize that their friendship is perhaps an exceptional case that cannot transfer to other women at this time. In

reading their primary documents, I recorded patterns in the topics they discussed or shared with one another. As Susan and Elizabeth had both shared and individual political agendas, I considered how these professional interests either aligned or clashed and how the two women ultimately reconciled these differences in order to progress their friendship and its professional aspirations. Taking each woman's personal life into account helped to explain how Susan and Elizabeth practiced their activism in accordance with their own lifestyles and behaviors, and how their friendship may have influenced their decisions and attitudes towards their personal affairs.

Content Analysis

Through my content analysis of Susan and Elizabeth's correspondence, I explored how the two women sought out each other's support while encountering emotionally trying stages in their activist work and the type of encouragement the women gave in response to this vulnerability, if any. Why and how did the friendship persist, what difficulties did the women encounter, and how did the friendship sustain these agitations? In considering the role of Susan and Elizabeth's personal and professional lives in conjunction with their friendship, I ultimately delved into whether their friendship proved instrumental in progressing their professional and personal lives, and whether the circumstances of their professional and personal lives fueled the friendship.

My process of content analysis involved a careful read through of the 82 letters between Susan and Elizabeth available through Ann D. Gordon's volumes *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*. As I read these letters, I marked consistent themes and topics that emerged and the tone with which the women used to address one another. I noted the ways their partnership may have embodied a "friendship" as I define it and how their

conversations relate to the motivations for group action and dramaturgy presented in Herbert Blumer and Erving Goffman's theory of symbolic interactionism. In presenting the results of my content analysis, I maintained the original formatting as presented in Gordon's volumes. All spellings, underlined words, punctuation, and uncertainty regarding the dates of the letters reflect Gordon's reproduction of them, not my own emphasis.

Defining Friendship

The role of friendship in offering emotional satisfaction in women's lives is an issue I've contemplated over the past eight years in some depth, and a theme that persisted in my life even as a young child. As a high school student I formed close friendships with several of my female peers who have remained prominent figures in my life even after I entered collegiate studies. It was through these friendships that I developed the confidence to aspire to and achieve success in countless realms – from athletics and academics to personal explorations and self-fulfillment. These friendships taught me how to value myself as a capable and loved individual, and gave me the space to develop the identity I desired. During emotionally trying times I have continuously sought refuge in these female friendships and they have given me the strength to endure any number of difficulties in my life.

Through my college education I have similarly sought out close friendships with a group of women whose resolve, dreams, and loyalty have helped me pursue my own interests. As a member of a women's sorority whose open motto is "Together let us seek the heights," I have spent the past three years surrounded by women whose dedication to their academic and professional accomplishments is rivaled only by their dedication to each other. Through these experiences I have come to understand the power of women's friendships in nurturing and

inspiring one another to aim for heights beyond what an individual woman previously thought possible. These experiences define what friendship means to me – a close bond between two or more individuals that offers them safety, reassurance, and guidance in whatever pursuits they take on in both the personal and professional realm.

Considering the ways in which my experiences with friendship are subjective, I asked audience members at my public thesis poster presentation in November to offer their definitions of friendship. The respondents to these questions seemed to share my understanding of friendship as a loyal and resolute force in one's life. Respondents left definitions such as "unconditional and honest love, support, and trust," or "a two-way street where people care about and take care of one another." Some even characterized friendship as a relationship in which one puts another individual's interests before his or her own. Other themes included the ability to express oneself truly and vulnerably – with one respondent characterizing friendship as "a reflection of yourself." Others left definitions such as "someone you can believe in, and someone who can believe in you." Some definitions included words such as "indescribable," and one definition clarified the bond as "platonic."

While most definitions lauded the unwavering support individuals feel in a friendship, another individual wrote that the "love and connection" one feels in a friendship is "interrupted periodically by irritation and division – but never divorce." The overall tone of these definitions was overwhelmingly positive and suggested that the respondents hold friendship in high esteem and to high standards. In my analysis of Stanton and Anthony's relationship, I employ a definition of friendship that maintains this positive frame backed in loyalty, trust, and inspiration. In order to account for the possibility of disaccord in their relationship, my definition allows for a degree of wavering in steadfast loyalty that most of my respondents did not, as long as the

ultimate relationship sustained and repaired whatever damage occurred. I use this definition to characterize the content, quality, and function of Susan and Elizabeth's friendship in relation to their personal and professional lives.

Symbolic Interactionism

In analyzing the letters of Elizabeth and Susan, I apply symbolic interactionism as a means of organizing their correspondence and commenting on the effects of their friendship. When Herbert Blumer first wrote the term "symbolic interactionism" in 1937, he used it to explain, "how active involvement in the life of a group affects the social development of an individual" (Farganis 2011: 297). He focused on how interactive processes help individuals form their own actions. Through this process, individuals must establish an understanding of shared language and gestures in order to determine their meaning for other individuals and the consequent actions that result from those behaviors. Therefore, Blumer asserts, "Individuals thus attempt to fit their actions and mesh their behaviors with those of others with whom they interact" (Farganis 2011: 297). Applying these principles to the study of Elizabeth and Susan's correspondence proves useful in determining how the two women perhaps framed their own language, ideologies, and actions based on the behaviors and thoughts of the other.

Additionally, Blumer defines a concept of "joint action" in his theory, in which he explains social life as a process in which group members are "constantly reflecting, negotiating, and fitting their actions to others in order to achieve common objectives" (Farganis 2011: 297). Through this process, participants must come together in their actions in order to move towards the common goals and, often, groups begin to act alike in their behaviors in order to accomplish these goals (Farganis 2011). As Susan and Elizabeth served as prominent group leaders of the

suffrage movement, considering the way their interactions and negotiations with one another conditioned their actions in the group setting helps explain the part that their friendship played in leading the movement together.

Erving Goffman's contributions to symbolic interactionism came in the form of dramaturgy – the idea that individuals interact in social settings similar to how actors put on a play (Farganis 2011). In this scene, there is a “front stage,” which the public sees, and a “back stage,” which is concealed from the metaphorical audience and where the performers collect themselves and prepare for entrance onto the front stage (298). Goffman's theory asserts that “To interact with others successfully, to achieve individual or collective objectives, entails the ability to play a variety of roles and to manipulate the self in order to get from others the desired reactions, responses, or rewards” (Farganis 2011: 299). This principle proves interesting in studying the way suffragettes often viewed Susan and Elizabeth as a unit, and how the two women occupied different roles according to their audience and the objective desired from that group.

In addition to this, the performer must maintain those roles by employing “show saving” methods in order to preserve the integrity of the image they wish to project (Farganis 2011: 207). Individuals use these methods by “avoiding likely disruptions or by correcting unavowed ones, or by making it possible for others to do so” (Farganis 2011: 207). In this way, Susan and Elizabeth's public friendship likely needed to maintain a certain air of agreement and unity despite whatever differences they encountered in their ideologies or personal lives. Likewise, their letters can potentially serve as a glimpse into their “back stage” world in which they prepared for their public presentations of ideas and issues, and in which they worked through any discord that could potentially have limited their professional success if brought into the public

sphere. This cohesion becomes particularly necessary when considering the implications of dramaturgy set forth by Goffman. He asserts, “Audiences tend to accept the self projected by the individual performer during any current performance as a responsible representative of his colleague-grouping, of his team, and of his social establishment” (Farganis 2011: 309).

Considering the ways Elizabeth and Susan appeared as a joint unit in progressing the women’s rights movement, it therefore follows that each woman had a great deal invested in the other’s behaviors and, therefore, may have intentionally guided the other in her actions so as to reflect the best interests of the pair.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON AND SUSAN B. ANTHONY: BEGINNINGS

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Born the eighth of eleven children (five of whom died at a young age), Elizabeth Cady Stanton grew up surrounded by wealth and high society in Johnstown, New York (Colman 2011). Her father, Daniel Cady, worked as a successful lawyer in the New York area, as well as a judge for a length of time, and even served one term in Congress. Her mother, Margaret Livingston Cady, came from a family of wealth and brought that wealth to her marriage, as her family “had once ruled a large part of the Hudson Valley like feudal lords” (Ward & Burns 1999: 11). This power instilled the attitude in many of Elizabeth’s family members that their ideas were inherently above those of others, and Elizabeth too seemed to follow this train of thinking at times – calling herself a “Daughter of the Revolution” (Ward & Burns 1999: 11). Openly, Elizabeth recalled her mother as a courageous and self-reliant woman, but still sought approval from her father more than her mother (Colman 2011, Ward & Burns 1999). Elizabeth especially put in an effort to impress her father after the death of her only surviving brother, Eleazar, who

died at the age of 20 (Colman). When her older brother died, Elizabeth remembered, “We all...felt that this son filled a larger place in our father’s affection...than his five daughters together” (Ward & Burns: 14).

Recognizing from a young age that her family and neighbors valued sons more than daughters – in 1827 her mother also suffered a nervous breakdown when a newborn son died (Ward and Burns 1999) – Elizabeth lamented that she could not serve as a son for her family, and therefore strived to act in a manner akin to boys – behavior she deemed as “learned and courageous.” Elizabeth could recall years later an incident when her sister Margaret was born and family friends remarked, “What a pity is it she’s a girl!” (Colman 2001: 9). Elizabeth also recalled an instance when she returned from school as a child and had beaten all the boys in her year in Greek, to which her father replied, “Ah, you should have been a boy!” (Colman 2001: 9). Daniel apparently echoed this sentiment after Eleazar’s death, to which Elizabeth replied: “I will try to be all my brother was” (Ward and Burns 1999:14). Despite her attempts to act manly through her intellect, her father never acknowledged that her successes made her as good as a boy (Ward and Burns 1999).

Still, Elizabeth closely observed her father’s work in his law practice, and particularly noticed the legal injustices done to women, especially married women (Colman 2001). Her father reportedly encouraged Elizabeth to go to Albany one day to relay the sufferings she had witnessed from women in her dad’s office to legislators. However, Ward and Burns doubt the truth in this report, as Daniel Cady “appears to have opposed his daughter’s every attempt to build an independent life for herself outside the home” (14). He did, however, allow her to attend school outside the home – though only all-girl schooling, as that was all that was available to women at that time. While attending Troy Female Seminary, Elizabeth sought the company of

the other female students, but found it childish how much her classmates fussed over boys. Her peers' fixation, she felt, stemmed from the separation of males and females in schooling (Ward & Burns).

When Elizabeth graduated from Troy Female Seminary in 1833 she returned to her family home in Johnstown. Elizabeth recalled this time in her life as one filled with many enjoyable days and activities. One influence Elizabeth received at home came from her cousin Gerrit Smith, who played a major role in her development as an activist (Colman 2011). Gerrit and his wife Nancy were involved in many reform actions and frequently filled their mansion in Peterboro, New York with those meeting on issues such as temperance, abolition, and women's rights and suffrage. Spending time in this environment delighted Elizabeth, who eagerly listened to the Smiths and their company debate current issues.

Elizabeth's association with her cousin led her to meet Henry Stanton at the Smith residence in 1839 (Colman 2011). Henry was an agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society and a skilled orator, as well as ten years Elizabeth's senior. Gerrit warned Elizabeth that her father would not approve of Henry and his abolition activities and because he did not have other means of financial support. Indeed, Elizabeth's father "adamantly opposed" Elizabeth's suitor. Discouragement from her brother-in-law Edward Bayard, who referenced the laws that limited the legal rights of married women, as well as her friends, left Elizabeth conflicted and doubtful. Ultimately, Elizabeth ended her engagement with Henry – though they continued to correspond as friends (Colman 2011). Henry sent Elizabeth many letters in attempts to win back her affection (Ward and Burns). When Henry told Elizabeth he planned to attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in England, Elizabeth said she would marry him in order to prevent separation – though another story says that she married Henry in order to ward off her brother-in-

law Edward's attempts to run away with her (Colman 2011). In so doing, Elizabeth married against her family's wishes and by her own choice (Ward and Burns).

When Elizabeth and Henry married, they removed the word "obey" from their vows so as to set up an egalitarian marriage, and Elizabeth insisted on being called "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," not "Mrs. Henry Stanton" (Ward and Burns 1999). Shortly after their wedding, the couple left for London to attend the Anti-Slavery Convention. While in London, Elizabeth met Lucretia Mott and other abolition wives, the first women she had encountered "who believed in the equality of the sexes" (Colman 2011: 33). Lucretia was twenty years older than Elizabeth and had six children. Elizabeth also noted that Lucretia's marriage to her husband James was based on equality. Eager to learn from Lucretia, Elizabeth made every effort to remain by her throughout the convention, for "Lucretia encouraged [Elizabeth] to think for herself, to trust her own opinions, beliefs, and ideas. A new world opened up to Elizabeth. She 'felt a new born sense of dignity and freedom.'" (Colman 2011: 34). While Elizabeth grew up with sisters and close female cousins, she discovered a kind of role model in Lucretia unique from any former relation. Lucretia offered an example of a woman who concerned herself with political and social causes alongside the men in activist societies at the time, while still serving as a mother.

Marrying Henry helped bring Elizabeth into contact with many women involved in the antislavery movement who also championed women's rights (DuBois 1981). In this way, her marriage actually served a facilitating role in establishing female friendships. Lucretia in particular played a supporting role in developing Elizabeth's feminist ideology and also "cultivated Stanton's intellect" (DuBois 1981: 11). This relationship mirrors others that developed in the 1830s and 1840s particularly, when women came together to act on social causes since their gender seemingly predisposed them for moral activities, forming local

networks in these efforts (DuBois 1981: 6). Then, “In the context of these all-women’s organizations, women were sometimes able to express their profound resentment of the social and economic power that men had over their lives” (DuBois 1981: 6). This joint work for moral purposes caused these women to come very close to the edge of the “woman’s sphere” (DuBois 1981: 7). While temperance and abolition both caused women to organize, abolition caused women to fight against established power in the country, and thus “helped to lead them beyond the ‘woman’s sphere’ way of conceiving their social role” (DuBois 1981: 7).

Susan B. Anthony

Born a state over from Elizabeth, Susan B. Anthony spent the first portion of her childhood in Adams, Massachusetts where her family lived in a farmhouse (Colman 2011). Her father, Daniel, grew up Quaker and still observed the tradition, while Susan’s mother, Lucy, grew up in the Baptist church. While Lucy did not join the Quakers, she did practice a simple lifestyle. Perhaps especially influential in Susan’s upbringing, the Quaker church recognized skilled female orators as elders and ministers in the church – women like Lucretia Mott (Colman 2011). Unlike Elizabeth, who was forced to attend an all-girls seminary school, Susan’s upbringing in the Quaker community encouraged boys and girls to receive the same education. In this setting, Susan’s education taught her and her brothers alike the value of self-reliance and social justice – such as issues surrounding temperance and abolition (Colman 2011). Like Elizabeth, Susan’s family environment facilitated her exposure to social causes at the time.

In Adams, Susan’s father owned a small textile mill where the family produced cotton cloth (Colman 2011). Susan’s mother, like Elizabeth’s, lost a couple of children at young ages but, in total, had eight children – with Susan as the second oldest. Susan described her mother as

a woman with “wise counsel, tender watching, and self-sacrificing devotion” (Colman 2011: 15). In 1826, the Anthonys moved to Battenville, New York to manage a larger mill. While in Battenville, Daniel decided to open a private school for his children and others after a local schoolteacher refused to teach Susan long division because of her gender (Colman 2011). In this way, Daniel supported Susan’s intellectual pursuits regardless of her gender – a support and justification Elizabeth, on the other hand, continually sought but never received from her father.

For a while, the Anthonys thrived in their situation in Battenville. As Susan’s father became wealthy, he encouraged her to become self-sufficient working as a teacher, instead of relying on a husband for financial security. In support of her education, Daniel paid for Susan to attend Deborah Moulson’s Female Seminary in Philadelphia, a Quaker boarding school. However, the Panic of 1837 caused Daniel to lose his business and home, and most of their possessions were sold at auction (Colman 2011). In an attempt to recover from this hardship, the Anthonys moved to Hardscrabble, New York, where Daniel purchased two mills and some land, which his two sons helped him manage while his daughters helped Lucy in the home. In an effort to help beyond this, Susan took her first job as a teacher in 1839 – though to support her family rather than herself, as her father had originally encouraged her to do. In time, men began courting her and she soon had nightmares of marrying men she had never met before (Colman 2011). As it turned out, Susan would be the only woman’s rights leader of the first generation who did not marry (DuBois 1981).

Interestingly, while Susan represented the only leader of the first wave of feminism to remain single, a stereotype developed during the later nineteenth century in which feminists were portrayed as spinsters. Parts of the public “frequently depicted them as women who had failed to find a husband and had turned to the women’s movement in a spirit of bitterness and despair”

(Banks 1986: 34). This stereotype is misleading in its own right but, additionally, many of the single women decided to remain unmarried as a matter of choice – as proven true with Susan (Banks 1986). It follows that single women had more time to devote to work in the women's movement than their peers who found time constraints attached to their obligations towards husbands and children. In order to ease these obligations for Elizabeth, Susan often found herself temporarily taking over care of the house and children in order for Elizabeth to engage in speech writing and to produce other scholarly works that she found herself unable to accomplish while running her home (Gordon 1997).

THE FORMATION OF A FRIENDSHIP

Amelia Bloomer, a prominent figure in the first generation of women's rights, introduced Elizabeth and Susan to one another in 1851 (DuBois 1981). Reportedly, "Anthony was immediately drawn to Stanton by the power of her ideas" (DuBois 1981: 16). In her autobiography, *Eighty Years and More*, Elizabeth writes of her first meeting with Susan on a street corner in Seneca Falls, New York after an anti-slavery meeting, where Amelia and Susan waited to greet Elizabeth. Recalling the meeting, Elizabeth writes, "How well I remember that day!....There she stood, with her good, earnest face and genial smile, dressed in gray delaine, hat and all the same color, relieved with pale blue ribbons, the perfection of neatness and sobriety. I liked her thoroughly, and why I did not at once invite her home with me to dinner, I do not know" (Stanton 1898: 162-63).

Their friendship inspired both women who had, before meeting, played an active role in the temperance and anti-slavery movements. But, just as Lucretia had encouraged Elizabeth to think more along feminist lines, so too did Elizabeth to Susan. Their first work together,

however, came in support of temperance. Around the time of their first introduction, Susan planned to start the New York State Women's Temperance Society and, upon meeting Elizabeth, convinced her to help. When they founded the organization in 1852, Elizabeth was made president of the society and Susan the traveling organizer (DuBois 1981). In her work with the temperance society, Stanton saw that "women's enthusiasm for temperance often embodied a protest against their vulnerability to and dependence on irresponsible men, and believed that this spirit could be turned in a feminist direction" (DuBois 1981: 17). However, it was these radical ideas that upset other men and women in the temperance movement and led them to depose Elizabeth from her presidency. In a show of solidarity, Susan withdrew from her position in the organization she had started in order to stand by Elizabeth – a move that brought them closer together (DuBois 1981).

Through her work in the temperance movement, Elizabeth recognized an opportunity to convert the enthusiasm of involved women in feminist endeavors, but her involvement also represented the first instance in which Susan engaged Elizabeth in "active reform work among women" – a realm in which Elizabeth would continue (DuBois 1981: 18). While Elizabeth may have first engaged in feminist thoughts and plans, Susan especially understood the strength of female networks that formed out of temperance and anti-slavery societies and grew to "appreciate the loyalty to sex that women were beginning to cultivate there. She believed that this sisterhood could extend into a feminist movement" (DuBois 1981: 18)

Once directed in the realm of women's rights reform, Susan wholeheartedly dove in and made the movement her primary goal and focus in life. While Elizabeth had first "liberated the feminism in Anthony," it was Susan who encouraged Elizabeth to extend herself beyond her responsibilities in the home (DuBois 1981: 16). As Elizabeth explained, "I do believe that I have

developed into much more of a woman under her jurisdiction, fed on statute laws and constitutional amendments, than if left to myself reading novels in an easy chair” (Harper 1898: 667). Once Elizabeth guided Susan in the direction of feminism – and particularly suffrage – she felt the dedication, and enthusiasm of her “convert” continually encouraging Elizabeth to continue in their work for suffrage as well (Stanton 1898: 187). Elizabeth writes in her autobiography that, “Soon fastened, heart to heart, with hooks of steel in a friendship that years of confidence and affection have steadily strengthened, we have labored faithfully together” (187). For Elizabeth and Susan, their work in women’s rights created a loyal bond between them that formed a solid foundation for a friendship that would reinforce their activism and goals over the next half-century.

Together in over 50 years of friendship, one known as “dramatic and sometimes poignant,” Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony led the movement that spurred over eight million American women to vote in 1920 when the Nineteenth Amendment passed (Ward & Burns viii). Through their friendship, Elizabeth and Susan prioritized different causes as the movement progressed. It was Elizabeth who had first suggested the necessity of suffrage in furthering women’s rights (Stanton 1898: 187). Once introduced to women’s rights, however, Susan felt suffrage should remain the primary goal and ambition of women, as the vote, she thought, would serve as a necessary tool in furthering progress (Ward & Burns 1999). Elizabeth, on the other hand, came to a point where she felt she had exhausted the topic of suffrage and therefore expanded her goals towards other directions, including the more controversial area of women’s place in Christianity. While Susan feared that an attack on Christianity would alienate some women involved in the women’s movement, publically she maintained a show of cohesion with Elizabeth (Ward and Burns 1999). The two women maintained a public image that

displayed their “unity, teamwork, and a collaboration so close they seemed to merge their identities into one” so much that they became the joint face of the women’s movement (DuBois 1981: ix). However, this show masked the conflicts that emerged between the two personalities and agendas. Elizabeth herself wrote of her friendship with Susan:

I am the better writer, [and] she the better critic. She supplied the facts and statistics, I the philosophy and rhetoric, and together we have made arguments that have stood unshaken by the storms of...long years; arguments that no man has answered. Our speeches may be considered the united product of our two brains. So entirely one are we that, in all our associations, ever side by side on the same platform, not one feeling of envy or jealousy has ever shadowed our lives. We have indulged freely in criticism of each other when alone, and hotly contended whenever we have differed, but in our friendship of years there has never been the break of one hour. To the world we must always seem to agree and uniformly reflect each other. Like husband and wife, each has the feeling that we must have no differences in public. (Stanton & Blatch 1922: 155).

Through their correspondence with each other, Susan and Elizabeth lived out their support and teamwork in their pursuit of women’s liberation, as well as their frustration with the cause and with one another throughout their efforts. In the following analysis, I examine the way Elizabeth and Susan played out the criticism in which they “indulged freely” while alone while also never experiencing “the break of one hour.”

RESULTS

In reading a collection of letters of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, almost all of which came from Ann D. Gordon's six volumes of *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, a number of prominent themes emerged concerning the content the two women most discussed. The five overarching themes include discussions about: the women's rights movement, longing for each other, disharmony, accomplishing more work together, and support offered to each other.

Women's Rights Movement

Within their discussions about the women's rights movement, which I have extended to also include comments the women made about work in abolition, Susan and Elizabeth write to one another about a few varied topics. Among these, the most prominent include 1) plans, events, and news of the movement, 2) sharing successes associated with their activist work, 3) discussing other women involved in the political sphere, and 4) their role as leaders in the movement and their public friendship. Often times, their comments to one another about the movement came in conjunction with letters aimed at discussing other topics. Very frequently, commenting on one's plans in connection to a speaking engagement for their suffrage work or relaying the latest news from a convention came as an aside in Susan and Elizabeth's letters.

Plans, events, and news

Letters from the earliest stages of Susan and Elizabeth's friendship until the final years of Elizabeth's life – ranging from 1852 to 1900 – share plans for the movement with one another. In their early partnership, Elizabeth writes to Susan about her ideological beliefs and the topics she

wishes to see pursued in women's rights work – such as the idea of marrying for love, declaring, “I say it is a sin, an outrage on our holiest feelings to pretend that anything but deep, fervent love & sympathy constitutes marriage,” as well as her desire for women to take up voices in sexual relations (Gordon 1997: 194). In the 1860s, Susan writes to Elizabeth about her own political thoughts and also mentions her work in abolition, particularly the work she engages in for the Anti-Slavery Society (Gordon 1997: 526, 534, 543). As the women's rights movement became more central in the two women's work, Susan writes to Elizabeth about how they plan to proceed in the suffrage effort, and who of their leaders should take which responsibilities, urging Susan that they “must keep the pot boiling by any possible means” (Gordon 2000: 516).

Likewise, in letters to Susan in 1874 and 1878, Elizabeth tells Susan about the tireless work she has undertaken for their cause, and mentions one of her upcoming speaking engagements which she hopes Susan might be able to attend. The tone of these letters suggests that Elizabeth expects Susan to eagerly await news of the latest developments of the movement – such as one letter Elizabeth sent in January 1878 in which she relays the happenings at a recent women's rights convention. She adds that the convention brought, “The usual successes and failures, joy and sorrows” (Gordon 2003: 373). Both women continue to write about the state of their cause based on each woman's encounters, and offer each other opinions and seek advice on how to best structure their messages or actions – such as in July 1883 when Elizabeth writes Susan to ask her opinion on how to best frame the suffrage movement in London, explaining that she has “written to the promoters exactly what I think about the narrow de[m]and for spinsters and widows, and advised them to base themselves on a [p]rinciple and not on the fraction of one” (Gordon 2006: 281).

Given Elizabeth's family obligations as a mother at home, Susan found herself on the frontlines of the women's rights movement quite often independent of Elizabeth. During these times, Susan's letters to Elizabeth often relay details of upcoming meetings and lectures, should Elizabeth be able to attend (Gordon 2009: 371). While Elizabeth commonly found herself too weighed down or exhausted to attend the meetings, in December 1884 she excitedly writes to Susan expressing her eagerness to attend an upcoming convention and take part in the commotion, declaring, "A year shut up [i]n a community of snails has developed in me an amount of enthusiasm that [i]s a surprise to myself" – a rare feeling for Elizabeth at that time (Gordon 2006: 382).

At times, the women wrote to one another about difficulties they encountered in progressing their activist work. In an effort to publish their plans and an announcement of a Council meeting in September 1895, Susan encountered resistance from the *Tribune*, and writes to Elizabeth about her confusion associated with this trouble, telling her, "I do not understand why the 'Tribune' does not publish it, except that that old Bible business blisters over all its pages" (Gordon 2009: 709). A year later, in 1896, Susan writes to Elizabeth about difficulties she has encountered in raising money for their cause, elaborating, "I am now writing around to our rich women at the east—begging them to help California—they cannot raise the money to pay expenses—I have never seen harder times anywhere" (Gordon 2013: 96).

Sharing successes

In conjunction with sharing their plans and relaying the events of a meeting or convention, Susan and Elizabeth also noted to each other times when they felt particularly triumphant in their work. Often this included a welcomed reception to a speech – such as when

Elizabeth writes to Susan in June 1874 about giving the “Bible argument” and receiving much enthusiasm around the topic from her audience (Gordon 2003: 86). Most notably, perhaps, on November 5, 1872, Susan writes to Elizabeth about her success casting a vote: “Well I have been & gone & done it!!—positively voted the Republican ticket—strait—this A.M. at 7 Oclock” (Gordon 2000: 524). In sharing this success, Susan tells Elizabeth of other women who also attempted to vote and the names of those women who were successful, concluding her letter by encouraging Elizabeth, “I hope you voted too” (Gordon 2000: 524).

Other women

Throughout the course of Susan and Elizabeth’s correspondence, the women frequently wrote about the successes of other women in their cause, frustrations with peers who did not organize events efficiently, or the politics of other women who fought against women’s suffrage. For instance, on May 26, 1856, Susan writes to Elizabeth about women like Catharine E. Beecher who spoke against women’s equality:

isn’t it strange that such women as these, Miss Beecher, Mrs. Kirkland Mrs. Stevens, S.J. Hale &c, &c, are so stupid, Yes so false as to work for any thing secondary—any thing other than their highest conviction—but those women are all bound by the fashionable Church & dare not take sides with the unpopular. (Gordon 1997: 319)

Again, in March 1884, Elizabeth writes to Susan about her frustrations with women who don’t understand their suffrage and equal rights efforts, complaining, “My English friends have all utterly failed to grasp our idea” (Gordon 2006: 349).

In discussions about fellow women’s rights activists Elizabeth, and especially Susan, wrote to one another about the less-than-desirable efforts some of their peers undertook. In May

1871, Elizabeth writes to Susan critically about other women's work, and explains her wishes for guiding them to achieve better scholarship and activism, telling Susan how she wishes their colleague Woodhull would "be careful that nothing very outrageous goes in" her paper (Gordon 2000: 430). In July 1895, Susan pointedly criticized a fellow women's rights leader, Mrs. Colby, on her actions. When Elizabeth received this letter she apparently forwarded it to Mrs. Colby with the attached note, "I get my share of criticism too. You need not return. Read & burn" (Gordon 2013: 700). Whether Elizabeth sent the letter to Mrs. Colby as an act of allegiance to her or as a means for her to improve is unclear.

While sometimes Susan and Elizabeth expressed dissatisfaction with other women as a means to work towards improving their work, at times they also used the work of other women as a comparison point to the high quality of their partner's work. In January 1897, for instance, Susan writes to Elizabeth about the unsatisfactory work of other women, and expresses her wish that Mrs. Colby could lead the forces more effectively. Susan follows this comment with the consideration, "Well—I wish you hadn't thrown up the office you filled so well—the one that no other woman can fill so well" (Gordon 2013: 118). In Susan and Elizabeth's correspondence it becomes clear that the two women understand their elevated roles as leaders in the first wave of the women's rights movement, and seemingly maintain that their work and successes are the standard to which other women are measured.

Role as leaders and public friendship

As Susan and Elizabeth were keenly aware of their role as leaders in the suffrage movement, so too did they acknowledge to one another the beneficial effect they had on the minds and peace of other women through their advocacy and leadership. Within a letter that

relays developments and successes in their cause, Susan adds, “many women came to me & thanked me for the word I uttered in opposition to Davis said they—had you not spoken we should have gone home burdened in soul” (Gordon 1997: 352). Similarly, in December 1878 Elizabeth writes, “Well, Susan, I think we have done a good deal to make women feel some new self-respect and dignity. Perhaps the world is better that we have lived and so we will not mind the hotel and early hours....So we have not struggled in vain, and borne our heavy burdens to no purpose” (Gordon 2003: 422).

As Susan and Elizabeth discussed the positive effects of their leadership, the two women wrote to one another about the importance of their continued guidance as heads of the women’s rights forces. In commenting on the death of British feminist leader Lydia Becker, Elizabeth relays the despair her absence as a leader has caused the women’s rights efforts in England:

She was evidently the power here that held the forces together. Since she let go the helm of the suffrage movement has been hopelessly demoralized the younger generation are all jealous of each other just as ours would be, if you should retire. Now all the dissatisfaction rests on you & me, if we were decapitated, it would rest by turn on all of them. (Gordon 2009: 308).

Just as Elizabeth recognizes the effects she and Susan have over the women in the movement, Susan also writes to Elizabeth about the obligation she feels to remain a steady leader for the cause. Upon debating whether or not to resign from a position of leadership in the organization, she ultimately tells Elizabeth, “No, my dear, instead of my resigning and leaving those half-fledged chickens without any mother, I think it is my duty and the duty of yourself and all the liberals to be at the next convention and try to reverse this miserable, narrow action” (Gordon 2013: 48). At the time that Susan wrote this letter to Elizabeth, the organization had apparently

voted against Elizabeth in some way and, rather than resign as well, Susan conveys to Elizabeth that she feels it is both of their responsibility to remain as leaders for the sake of those whom they guide and nurture.

Another time, when conveying to Elizabeth the importance of her remaining a central and accessible figure for the women's rights efforts, she informs Elizabeth that she has discussed Elizabeth's role with another woman and they have both agreed that it is "your duty" to live in New York and be available for friends to call on her and help them along in their efforts (Gordon 2006: 371). She adds that this move is necessary for Elizabeth's position as a leader, for "You are there lost to the work of pulling down the strong holds of prejudice against Woman" (Gordon 2006: 371).

Just as Susan and Elizabeth wrote to one another about their obligations as leaders of the women's rights movement, so too did they consider the public image of their friendship. In a letter to Elizabeth in September 1896, Susan writes, "It is too funny the way peoples memories do carry you & me for the other & both as one" (Gordon 2013: 95). At the same time that Susan and Elizabeth perceive that the public groups them together as one, they also understand the way others look to their interactions with one another. In May 1892, Elizabeth writes to Susan, about news published that the "long partnership between Mrs. Stanton and Susan B. Anthony is about to be dissolved" (Gordon 2009: 473). Perhaps sarcastically, Elizabeth writes, "Have you been getting a divorce out in Chicago without notifying me? I should like to know my present status. I shall not allow any such proceedings. I consider our relation for life, so make the best of it" (473).

Longing for Each Other

Throughout their half-century friendship, Susan and Elizabeth often found themselves separated for long periods of time, and unable to attend the same events or meetings related to the suffrage movement. In these absences, their letters indicate common themes of 1) missing each other, 2) feeling alone emotionally or in their efforts for the cause, and 3) of lamenting Elizabeth's constant obligations in the home.

Missing each other

In the letters available in Gordon's volumes, the majority of comments made by the two women about missing the other come from Susan. Of the letters Susan writes to Elizabeth that lament their distance from each other, many surround the idea that the distance prohibits the two women from working jointly on their activist work. In May of 1856, Susan writes to Elizabeth that she is saddened the two do not live close enough so that "I can run in & tell you all I know in five minutes & be back to my work again" (Gordon 1997: 319). In this same letter, Susan also regrets the distance between her and two other friends and suffrage leaders – Lucy Stone and Antionette (Nette) Brown. Still, years later in November 1892, Susan writes to Elizabeth that "I wish you were to be with us also—It is too cruel that you must be settled—fastened—so far away—so that I cant get to you without spending so much time & money—We ought to have our heads together for lots of the work before us now" (Gordon 2009: 500). Again, three years later, she follows a similar sentiment in commenting, "Oh how I do wish you were where I could run in to chat over—but we are always so far apart" (Gordon 2009: 700). Susan often reminds Elizabeth in her letters how dearly she loves to receive letters from Elizabeth, urging, "Don't fail

to write me—it always does me so much good to get a letter from you,” a sentiment common in Susan’s expression of longing for Elizabeth’s presence (Gordon 1997: 352).

In another instance, Susan writes to Elizabeth distraught over their distance and wishing that Elizabeth could assist her in their work, then asking Elizabeth to contribute a piece of writing in support of the issue she currently toils over, writing, “I do wish your ‘Jimmy Grind’ order would come to you & be obeyed and that you would send me some short articles on whatever point you feel will help make the rank & file of the Democracy see & believe it their duty to vote for—‘Amendment No. 6’” (Gordon 2013: 101-02). Susan also expresses her desire that Elizabeth have the freedom in her schedule that she “were here & free with me to travel & see & be seen” (Gordon 1997: 535). She attempts in other instances to convince Elizabeth to come with her to important conventions and meetings – such as in Philadelphia in 1872 when she writes Elizabeth of a friend’s invitation for the pair to stay with her in Philadelphia during the convention, saying, “she can give us separate rooms—for she remembers how Susan sometimes snores—So you see you have nothing to do but to put on your bonnet & go...there we will talk and plan” (Gordon 2000: 497).

Beyond wanting Elizabeth’s participation in suffrage events, Susan also writes to Elizabeth to convey her disappointment in being separated from the support Elizabeth can offer her. In one such letter, Susan urges Elizabeth to write to her, adding “how I do wish I could step in to see you & make you feel all my infirmities, – mental I mean” (Gordon 1997: 321). Even deeper than sharing her worries with Elizabeth which, in the former case, involve struggles associated with the women’s rights movement, Susan also expresses her desire to be near Elizabeth for the emotional connection it would provide her. As she writes to Elizabeth in September 1857, she pens, “How I do long to be with you this very minute—to have one look

into your very soul & one sound of your soul stirring voice” (Gordon 1997: 1957). Again, in 1865, Susan tells Elizabeth of how much she wishes to be in her company, saying, “Dear me—how over-full I am, and how I should like to be nestled into some corner away from every chick & child, with you once more” (Gordon 1997: 544). In November 1900, two years before Elizabeth’s death, in a letter wishing Elizabeth a happy birthday and relaying her unfulfilled wish to see Elizabeth on the celebratory day, Susan also writes of excitement in coming together again in the near future for an upcoming event, noting “we’ll sit up in our big chairs & behave just the prettiest!” (Gordon 2009: 363).

The emotional content of Elizabeth’s letters to Susan is equally varied. However, the number of letters published regarding Elizabeth’s longing for Susan is much smaller than those written by Susan. Though her letters are fewer in number, Elizabeth writes to Susan in requesting her visit, and in expressing that Susan’s presence would also help Elizabeth in producing better work (Gordon 2009: 308). Elizabeth also expresses frustration in not hearing from Susan over what she deems an extended period of time. In January of 1856, Elizabeth writes to Susan asking, “Where are you Susan & what are you doing? Your silence is truly appalling. Are you dead or married?” (Gordon 1997: 316). While Susan and Elizabeth appear absent from one another throughout their friendship, failing to communicate with one another regarding what seems pressing in the other’s life and schedule is indeed unusual, as Elizabeth indicates in her message to Susan.

While the record of Elizabeth’s letters that express a sentiment of missing Susan are limited, Elizabeth does express in her biography that she also suffers from feeling distanced from Susan, and that the two women are not at their best when separated from the other. She writes, “So closely interwoven have been our lives, our purposes, and experiences that, separated, we

have a feeling of incompleteness—united, such strength of self-assertion that no ordinary obstacles, difficulties, or dangers ever appear to us insurmountable” (Stanton & Blatch 1922: 157).

Feeling alone

While Susan and Elizabeth both write to each other about longing for the other’s presence for professional purposes as well as emotional support, in the available letters between Susan and Elizabeth, Susan is the only one of the two to mention feeling alone in their cause. As she writes to Elizabeth in September 1857, Susan conveys how stressful and burdensome the work of a recent convention has been on her, and,

nothing looks promising—nobody seemed to feel any personal responsibility and, alone, feeling utterly incompetent to go forward.... There is so much, mid all that is so hopeful, to discourage & dishearten—and I feel alone. Still I know I am not alone but that all the true & the good souls, both in & out of the body, keep me company, and that the Good Father more than all is ever a host in every good effort (Gordon 1997: 352).

At another point, Susan urges Elizabeth to complete her work, perhaps in the home or for the cause, so that she is able to attend the entirety of an upcoming meeting (Gordon 1997: 543). The implication in the letters between Susan and Elizabeth is most often that Susan, as the only unmarried of the leading suffragists at the time, is pressed with greater responsibility to take charge of the organizing efforts. In a letter in June 1956, Susan despairs, “those of you who have the talent to do honor to poor oh how poor womanhood, have all given yourselves over to baby making & left poor brainless me to battle alone...” (Gordon 1997: 321). Susan laments further that Elizabeth, Lucy, and Nette should find themselves confined to the home to “rock cradles”

before Susan, who says, “such a body such as I might be spared to rock cradles, but it is a crime for you...”(321).

Tied to the home

In many of their letters, Susan and Elizabeth mention the weight of the home that holds Elizabeth back from greater involvement in their work. Susan often begs Elizabeth to forgo her household chores in order to attend important movement events. In one such attempt she begs Elizabeth, “waive household and baby cares & come to Rochester at the time of the Convention & open your mouth for the Good of the race” (Gordon 1997: 231). At another point, Susan writes to Elizabeth about the struggles she encounters in writing an address, claiming that her attempts cannot produce a worthy document. While earlier she asks Elizabeth to waive her ties to the home that she might fully participate in a convention, in this instance Susan begs Elizabeth to aid her while, at the same time, maintaining her responsibilities at home. In her distress, Susan beseeches Elizabeth, “so for the love of me, & for the saving of the reputation of womanhood, I beg of you with one baby on your knee & another at your feet & four boys whistling bussing hallooing Ma Ma set your self about work” (Gordon 1997: 321).

Five days later, Elizabeth writes to Susan about the intense limitation she feels in her ties to the home. In her response, Elizabeth indicates that she will aid Susan with the address should Susan come and provide assistance to Elizabeth in caring for the home and children. In explaining the agony she feels that prohibits her from fully engaging in the work on her own, Elizabeth adds,

Your servant is not dead but liveth. Imagine me, day in and day out, watching, bathing, dressing, nursing and promenading the precious contents of a little crib in the corner of

the room. I pace up and down these two chambers of mine like a caged lioness, longing to bring nursing and housekeeping cares to a close. (Gordon 1997: 325)

At other points in their correspondence, Elizabeth notes the intense burdens she feels in her household chores and cares, and how the workload she endures prohibits her from setting to work on an address and appeal asked of her. She warns Susan that, because of her nonstop obligations to care for her children and home, Susan should “prepare yourself to be disappointed in its merits, for I seldom have one hour to sit down and write undisturbed” (Gordon 1997: 237). In 1861, after a decade of friendship, Susan bemoans Elizabeth’s constant need to remain home, adding that, in any marriage Susan should ever enter, “I shall make a contract with the Father of my children to watch & care for them one half the time” (Gordon 1997: 456). It appears that Elizabeth is well aware of Susan’s frustrations in how Elizabeth’s ties to the home inhibit the progress of their work. In August 1857, she reassures Susan that her most recent child will be her last, and that soon she will be freed from the extent of her motherly responsibilities (Gordon 1997). Unknown to Elizabeth at the time, this would not prove true.

Upon hearing of Elizabeth’s unplanned seventh pregnancy in 1859, Susan distraughtly writes to an unknown party of the carelessness with which Susan and her husband produced the child, and the implications the pregnancy will have on Elizabeth’s access to the public sphere:

Ah me!!! Alas! Alas!!!! Mrs. Stanton is embarked on the rolling sea...her husband, you know, does not *help* to make it *easy* for her...Mr. Stanton will be gone most of the Autumn, full of *Political Air Castles*...He was gone *7 months* last winter. The whole burden of home and children therefore, falls to her, if she leaves the post *all* is afloat. I only scold *now* that for a *moment’s pleasure* to herself or her husband she should thus

increase the load of cares under which she already groans. But there is now remedy now.
(Ward & Burns 1999: 89)

Disharmony

Over the course of their partnership, Susan and Elizabeth endured disagreements surrounding 1) the other's dedication to the cause – or feeling overworked by the other – and 2) in defining the critical issues for their support and focus. The tone of their letters when one woman agitates the other is very direct and the women do not withhold their criticisms when they broach the topic.

Workload

Susan and Elizabeth openly discussed their role as leaders with one another, and this issue sometimes caused distress when one woman felt the other was not wholly devoted to their position leading their followers. In a letter to Elizabeth in January 1871, Susan accuses her of failing to remain committed to guiding the younger women in the women's rights movement. Susan writes that Elizabeth has discredited her own superior knowledge in mentoring the other women as “the pioneer, the originator, the leader,” which Susan characterizes as a resignation to which “there was never such a suicidal letting go the helm of a ship in a stormy sea as has been that of you these last two years” (Gordon 2000: 401). In a continuation of her frustration, Susan expresses the personal offense Elizabeth caused her:

But I am now tee-totally discouraged, & shall make no more attempt to hold you up to what I know is not only the best for the success of our cause, but equally so for the success of yourself, from the moral standpoint, if not the financial, altogether.—O! how I

have agonized over my utter failure to make you feel & see the importance & power of standing fast, & holding on to the helm of our good old ship, to the end of this storm. O! how gallantly wd. she have triumphed, & carried our woman suffrage flag into port, over a united army!....How you can excuse yourself, is more than I can understand. (Gordon 2000: 401)

In a move not uncharacteristic of Elizabeth's actions at other times in their correspondence, Elizabeth forwarded Susan's letter full of criticism to Martha Wright, to whom she commented,

You see I am between two fires, all the time. Some, determined to throw me overboard, & Susan equally determined that I shall stand at mast head, no matter how pitiless the storm. There are places enough where I am wanted, without crowding myself where I am not. Susan evidently believes with Solomon 'spare the rod & spoil the child.' She usually dresses me down thoro'ly. (Gordon 2000: 401)

Almost twenty years later, in June 1890, Elizabeth again complains of Susan's intense criticisms, or lack of defense on her behalf. Writing of an article published in *The Woman's Journal* that Elizabeth characterizes as full of falsehoods, Elizabeth says that the author of the piece intentionally did not mention Susan in the article in his efforts to play the two women off of each other. Perhaps in a sign that the author's intentions have taken hold, Elizabeth writes Susan that he "is determined if possible to kill me, & you all say sit still & let him do his worst. So long as I am the target no matter" (Gordon 2013: 308). Susan does not withhold her accusations of Elizabeth's failure to stand by her side either. In a particular instance, she irritably writes Elizabeth, "What a cruel thing you are to make me beg money of your sisters – but I've done it—and they'll doubtless curse me for it" (Gordon 1997: 460).

Another point of contention stirred when Elizabeth or Susan wanted to refrain from increased responsibility or work associated with leadership positions in their suffrage organizations. Elizabeth, in one such instance, informs Susan that she refuses to occupy a position of power in the organization, and thus urges her “Do not let my name [co]me up for consideration, as I positively decline” (Gordon 2003: 537). Explaining her assertion, Elizabeth tells Susan that she does not wish to engage in conventions anymore, and instead hopes other women who have such interests will take up those “labors.” In another letter, Elizabeth writes Susan that her personal life – full of obligations from weddings to family expenses – will prohibit her from taking part in any events in Washington that season (Gordon 2003: 419). In the letter, Elizabeth’s insistence begins with the imperative that Susan “must not ask” her to forgo her previous engagements to participate in the suffrage organization’s events.

At other times, Elizabeth simply writes about the amount of work she has put into writing her speeches, adding that she “devoted my whole vacation to the speech” (Gordon 2003: 373). While it is unclear whether or not Elizabeth resents this commitment, Susan also writes to Elizabeth that she must not mention an address the women are working on, for “This week was to be leisure to me” (Gordon 1997: 321). Here, Susan explicitly forbids Elizabeth from impeding upon her time off with suffrage business, and does so in a somewhat accusatory manner. Other times, Susan writes of how exhausted and physically worn out her constant work has made her, telling Elizabeth, “I ache in every bone & muscle of me...have written & worked & run all day” (Goron 1997: 460). While both Susan and Elizabeth write to the other about easing up on their obligations at certain times, Elizabeth also writes to Susan that she has failed to live up to what Elizabeth expected of her work. In 1880, as Elizabeth and Susan worked to publish the first volume of their women’s history series, Elizabeth writes to Susan that she aimed for the two of

them to print the volume by Christmas. When Susan apparently devotes her time elsewhere despite Elizabeth's insistence, Elizabeth complains, "I thought [y]ou and I were to devote ourselves religiously to History for four months...And now you fly off at [s]omething else" (Gordon 2003: 565).

Disagreeing on the critical issues

Throughout their correspondence, Susan and Elizabeth sometimes expressed their fierce opposition to the other's standpoint on a particular issue the other deemed imperative. In July 1883 with Susan apparently about to embark on a trip to London, Elizabeth asks her to check up on the state of the movement there and then offers her own opinion of how to best progress their efforts. Following these suggestions, however, she adds, "You may take what position your conscience dictates; I shall follow my own" (Gordon 2006: 281). In another disagreement, Elizabeth writes to Susan about the differences the women see in the power of the legislature versus the power of the courts and constitutions. She says that she "repudiates [Susan's position] from the bottom of my soul" and that Garrison – presumably late abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison – would "turn in his grave" if he saw Susan's ideas published in the history edition Elizabeth and Susan sought to publish (Gordon 2006: 501-02). She continues that if such ideas make it into their history, "I shall always bow my head with shame and sorrow" (502). Gordon notes that Elizabeth's children edited this letter a great deal before publishing it.

Another pressing dispute between Susan and Elizabeth occurred in 1884 when abolitionist Frederick Douglass married a White woman, Helen Pitts. In this instance, Susan abhorrently resents Douglass' actions and writes that Elizabeth, as a leader of women's suffrage, must refrain from encouraging his actions. It appears that Susan's main concern surrounds a fear

that support of intermarriage will either isolate supporters of women's suffrage, or distract from what she deems is the current pressing activist point: obtaining the vote (Gordon 2006: 324). In her letter, Susan writes that the issue of intermarriage of the races "has no place on our platform, any more than the question of no marriage at all—or of polygamy!" (Gordon 2006: 323). She begs Elizabeth not to congratulate Douglass, for "He has by this act compromised every movement in which he shall be brought to the front!" (Gordon 2006: 323). She furthers this request by placing emphasis on Elizabeth's role as a leader of the organization:

Had you or I, as leading representatives of our movement—in our persons done any thing that made our presence on the platform, raise the question of race intermarriage—then the rank & file of our suffrage constituency might rightfully ask us to resign our posts—they surely would never elect us again to be their representatives. (Gordon 2006: 324).

Susan's insistence continues by accusing Douglass and Elizabeth of unjustly taking the right to endorse the issue publically. She adds that, "I would cut my right hand off before I would thus set back the growing feeling of friendliness towards our cause!" (Gordon 2006: 324-25). Susan then follows this pronouncement with the personalization: "But enough—only for my sake—if no other—don't proclaim yourself as endorsing this act!" (325). It is important to note, however, that this letter apparently underwent edits at the hand of Susan's biographer Ida Harper.

Another key issue of contention surrounds Elizabeth's focus on religion and the bible as a means of liberating women. Susan, as she disagreed with the promotion of intermarriage as a central issue, feared that highlighting religion would divert attention from the more pressing issue of suffrage. In July 1887, Susan writes to Elizabeth, "No—I don't want my name on that Bible Committee—You fight that battle—and leave me to fight the secular....The religious part—has never been mine—you know—and I won't take it up....So go ahead—in your own

way—and let me stick to my own” (Gordon 2009: 699-700). The next year, Susan writes to Elizabeth that her resistance to focusing on the religion issue “is not because I hate religious bigotry less than you do, or because I love prohibition less than Frances Willard does, but because I consider suffrage more important just now” (Gordon 2013: 62).

Accomplishing More

While Susan and Elizabeth found disagreement over establishing a fair and reciprocal workload, they also aided one another in progressing each other’s work. This aid took the form of 1) collaboration on work and 2) in spurring each other to endeavor for more and accomplish as much as possible and, also, in praising the other for her accomplishments.

Collaboration

In some conversations the two women have through their letters, they work to help the other in preparing speeches and articles. In May 1852, Elizabeth writes to Susan that she will “greatly (gladly?) do all in my power to aid you” in preparing her lecture, and offers for Susan to come stay with her. She continues to say that “I have no doubt a little practice will make you an admirable lecturer...I will go to work at once & write you the best lecture I can” (Gordon 1997: 197-8). Five years later, Elizabeth again writes Susan to assure her that “I will do anything to help you on. If I do nothing else this fall I am bound to help you get up an antislavery address” (Gordon 1997: 1857). Over twenty years later, Elizabeth writes to Susan that she has not been able to write for their history edition since the “moment you left me last summer...I cannot work on the big job alone” (Gordon 2003: 552). In strategizing how the two women will work to finish the history edition as soon as possible, Elizabeth concludes, “We must go at it religiously, and

[n]ot turn aside one hour for anything” (552). Susan too laments in 1896 that Elizabeth has not been able to assist her in producing articles she plans to write for the *Examiner*: “Oh how I have longed for you at my side to put into your matchless sentences the words that wait the saying” (Gordon 2013: 101-02). Again, when discussing their joint work on the volume on women’s history they are working to publish, Elizabeth assures Susan that “If you could spend April here and lay out work for me for the summer, so that I could take it leisurely, I could accomplish something” (Gordon 2006: 349).

In their efforts to produce more together, Susan often came to Elizabeth’s home to help her take care of the children in order to free up Elizabeth to engage in intellectual thought and production. When Susan wrote to Elizabeth in June 1856 asking her for help with an address she needed to write, Elizabeth responded that Susan should “Come here and I will do what I can to help you with your address, if you will hold the baby and make the puddings” (Gordon 1997: 325). Similarly, in 1859 Elizabeth tells Susan that once she comes to Elizabeth’s home, “I think you & I can still do more if you make the puddings & carry the baby” (Gordon 1997: 391). She also writes that “I expect to get my inspiration facts & thoughts from you....I am in no situation to think or write, but the occasion demands that I exert myself to do all I can so come on, we have issued bulls under all circumstances” (Gordon 1997: 391). In the midst of Elizabeth’s inability to fully commit to the suffrage cause without Susan’s assistance, Elizabeth assures Susan that “You and I have a prospect of a good long life we shall not be in our prime before fifty & after that we shall be good for twenty years at least” (Gordon 1997: 1857). Commenting on the value of the two friends collaborating, Elizabeth tells Susan, “You err on the side of detail, & I on the opposite extreme let us try & strike a happy medium & leave something to the peoples common sense” (Gordon 2009: 10).

Spurring each other forward and praising each other

As part of their support of one another, Susan wrote words of encouragement to promote Elizabeth's pursuit of intellectual production and advancement. In multiple letters, Susan writes Elizabeth expressing her hopes that she will attend conventions or asking her to write a speech on behalf of a particular issue (December 23, 1860, February 20, 1861, October 10, 1863). Susan also writes to Elizabeth expressing her hopes of Elizabeth's attention to an address she is charged with preparing:

I hope you are concentrating your every thought on the addresses which you wish to make to go down to history as your final and most complete utterances on the question of the enfranchisement of women. I wish it were possible for me to be in two places and to do two things at once. If it were, I should certainly be with you and keep you stirred up to do this one thing of getting your best thoughts arranged in your best sentences for this great celebration of the great principle you declared fifty years ago, and the great work that all women together have done during the last half-century to bring about its realization. (Gordon 2013: 179-80)

Susan also offers to pay the board necessary for Elizabeth to come meet with senators in December 1884, contributing her own financial resources to promoting Elizabeth's participation beyond her words of encouragement.

Additionally, Susan uses Elizabeth's position as president of the National Women's Suffrage Committee as reason to encourage her to actively set the standard for the other women in the organization. In this leadership, Susan says Elizabeth must meet the need of guiding the organization once more. Susan writes, "Somebody surely will be there—& you owe it to yourself & the cause to be there first—I was almost going to say—to me too—for our obligations to the

movement are one—that is to hold the helm & keep the ship from running on to shoals & quicksands” (Gordon 2000: 448). Again, in 1897, Susan emphasizes the role Elizabeth maintains as a pioneer of the women’s movement. As Elizabeth prepares an important address, Susan tells her that she is the only one who is capable of accomplishing the important task, and that Elizabeth must not “let anybody or anything divert you from getting your papers written” (Gordon 2013: 179). She continues that, “If possible, you should overtop and surpass anything and everything you have ever written or spoken before” (180). Perhaps most strikingly, Susan acknowledges the pressures she has put on Elizabeth over the years to pursue greater success. In the same letter, Susan writes Elizabeth, “Now my dear, this is positively the last time I am ever going to put you on the rack and torture you to make the speech or the speeches of your life” (180).

In an address responding to the topic of “The Friendships of Women,” Elizabeth reflected upon her friendship with Susan in the speech’s closing, adding that she appreciated the pressures Susan put on her as she promoted her successes:

If there is one part of my life which gives me more intense satisfaction than another, it is my friendship of more than forty years’ standing with Susan B. Anthony. Ours has been a friendship of hard work and self-denial....Emerson says, “It is better to be a thorn in the side of your friend than his echo.” If this add weight and stability to friendship, than ours will endure forever, for we have indeed been thorns in the side of the other. Sub rosa, dear friends, I have had no peace for forty years, since the day we started together on the suffrage expedition in search of woman’s place in the National Constitution Well, I prefer a tyrant of my own sex, so I shall not deny the patent fact of my subjection; for I do believe that I have developed into much more of a woman under her jurisdiction, fed

on statute laws and constitutional amendments, than if left to myself reading novels in an easy-chair, lost in sweet reveries of the golden age to come without any effort of my own.

(Harper 1898: 667)

Again, in *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary, and Reminiscences*, Elizabeth writes on the nature of her professional friendship with Susan, saying, “It is often said by those who know Miss Anthony best, that she has been my good angel, always pushing and goading me to work, and that but for her pertinacity I should never have accomplished the little I have” (Stanton & Blatch 1922: 154). But, considering her own home life and role as a mother and wife, Elizabeth adds, “With the cares of a large family I might, in time, like too many women, have become wholly absorbed in a narrow family selfishness, had not my friend been continually exploring new fields of missionary labors” (Stanton & Blatch 1922: 154).

As Elizabeth indicates in her reflections of Susan’s role in inspiring her throughout their careers, another form of encouragement the two suffrage leaders offered each other came by encouraging the other in her successes and praising her for her work. Telling Elizabeth about feedback she heard from someone in regards to Elizabeth’s talent, Susan writes in November 1860 that the individual who offered praise said to, “Tell Mrs Stanton I think she has the power to shake the world, and if she only is true to the light within, I am sure she’ll do it” (Gordon 1997: 449). Likewise, Elizabeth tells Susan that her husband, Henry, in discussing Susan’s success in relation to Elizabeth’s support, told Elizabeth “You stir up Susan & she stirs up the world” (Gordon 1997: 351). Echoing the support the two women offer each other, Susan writes in December 1898, “when Lucretia is dear & you are at our own quiet home & I in the far west—who is there left to stand for freedom for your most radical world” (Gordon 2013: 250).

As Elizabeth shares Susan's excitement for her upcoming trip to England in 1878 to attend Congress, she displays the support that she and Lucretia offer Susan in progressing her success. Writing to Susan, Elizabeth says that she and Lucretia will manage the Rochester convention so as to make sure that Susan can go to the international convention, adding "Anything to get you off" (Gordon 2003: 364). More specifically, Susan often details the extent to which she admires the quality of Elizabeth's work. Discussing a letter Elizabeth sent to her to incorporate into a convention, Susan says, "I haven't given it out to be printed—because I want to be with you & go over it carefully—first—I am clutching it—like a nugget of gold" (Gordon 2009: 500). Speaking of another club meeting to which Elizabeth and Susan were not able to attend, but to which Elizabeth submitted a letter for reading, Susan tells her "Had I been there I should have strained every point & myself read it in the time given me for a speech" (Gordon 2013: 250). Susan also compares the quality of Elizabeth's work to that of the coming generation of suffragists, telling her, "none of the young women are good-clear, crisp writers...but how unlike your answers" (Gordon 2013: 1896).

Perhaps no praise and alliance is more evident than in the last available letter between Susan and Elizabeth, very close to the time of Elizabeth's death. In the letter Susan writes,

I shall indeed be happy to spend with you the day on which you round out your four score and seven, over four years ahead of me, but, in age as in all else, I follow you closely. It is fifty-one years since first we met, and we have been busy through every one of them, stirring up the world to reorganize the rights of women....We little dreamed when we began this contest, optimistic with the hope and buoyancy of youth, that half a century later we would be compelled to leave the finish of the battle to another generation of women, But our hearts are filled with joy to know that they enter upon this task equipped

with a college education, with business experience, with the fully admitted right to speak in public—all of which were denied to women fifty years ago. They have practically but one point to gain—the suffrage; we had all. These strong, courageous, capable women will take our place and complete our work. (Gordon 2013: 451)

Susan transitions from acknowledging the work the two women have accomplished together into discussing their future after death, presumably at a time when Susan knew Elizabeth would soon pass on. She writes, “And we, dear old friend, shall move on the next sphere of existence—higher and larger, we cannot fail to believe, and one where women will not be placed in an inferior position, but will be welcomed on a place of perfect intellectual and spiritual equality,” (451).

In the conclusion of this last letter between Susan and Elizabeth, Susan signs off “Ever lovingly yours,” a superlative of her more usual ending, “as ever yours” (Gordon 2013: 451 & Gordon 2013: 433). Throughout the entirety of their friendship, Susan addresses Elizabeth as “Mrs. Stanton” at the start of her letters, while Elizabeth addresses Susan by her first name, and often begins with “Dearly Beloved” or “[D]early beloved sister in the Lord” (Gordon 2003: 384 & Gordon 2006: 339).

Support

In measuring the effect Susan and Elizabeth had on one another’s personal and professional life, it is perhaps most telling to study the forms of support the two women offered one another. In their available correspondence, this support took the form of 1) a united front, 2) advice, 3) trusting and confiding in one another, and 4) emotional support.

United front

Given the public nature of Susan and Elizabeth's professional lives, the two women at times received criticism or had to navigate tricky social interactions in order to best promote their cause. While, on occasion, the two women felt neglected by their companion, at other points their letters evidence extreme care and loyalty to one another. For instance, in a letter from Susan to Elizabeth in November 1860, Susan writes that Parker Pillsbury wished a particular paper of Elizabeth's had been "more argumentative," though Susan explains that she stood up for Elizabeth and told Pillsbury that the paper "was not intended for an argument, but precisely what it is" (Gordon 1997: 449). Elizabeth also keeps track of public perceptions of Susan. In August 1890, Elizabeth tells Susan of a newspaper that a friend has sent Elizabeth about a disagreement in which Susan took part. She says of the friend, Matilda, "She wants to keep me posted as to what your enemies say of your short comings, as if anything new could be said of either of us" (Gordon 2013: 308). Expressing her loyalty even further, Elizabeth concludes: "If all the papers in the two Dakota's, should herald the news that you have been arrested & imprisoned for theft & slander, it would not make the slightest impression on me. I should not believe a word of it" (308). Beyond naturally standing up for one another, Susan at one point beseeches Elizabeth to come to her defense when a couple of women perceive that Susan thinks ill of them. Susan tells Elizabeth,

I surely have never had anything for either of them but the best love, so when you write her or any one, I think with your knowledge of me and of my feelings towards each and all of the workers in our movement, you might do me the justice to say that you know all such charges against me to be false. I think I should do that much for you assuredly, if any one came to me with grievances against you. (Gordon 2009: 709)

In another letter, Susan tells Elizabeth of the information she relayed to someone about the split in the women's rights movement and the possibility for a truce. In explaining what she told him, Susan implores, "In heavens name I hope you have not given any other answer if the Call for a truce meeting has met you on the way" (Gordon 2000: 311). Just as the two women seek to portray a similar message to their followers, they also rely on one another to be able to provide similar resources to their followers and stand in for the other when necessary. In one such example, Susan tells Elizabeth about speaking with Mrs. Janet Norton, the prime leader of the Taxpaying Women of New Orleans, saying "She wants me to meet her in New York—I cannot—have told her of you...I do wish you & I could see her & infuse into her the real philosophy" (Gordon 2003: 314).

Giving advice

In the midst of their activism to achieve women's suffrage and gain greater equality between the sexes, Susan and Elizabeth also provided advice to one another in personal matters as well as professional. These suggestions included tips on how to maintain the other's wellbeing and health, advising the other on what to read, and tips on where to have the other's work advertised and printed. Elizabeth offers Susan suggestions on how to preserve her home as well. In June 1891 she tells Susan, "My advice to you, Susan, is to keep some spot you can call your own; where you can live and die in peace and be cremated in your own oven if you desire" (Gordon 2009: 385).

In regards to the advice the women offer each other concerning their work, Elizabeth frequently suggests that Susan rest more in her suffrage efforts. In June 1956, six years after their first meeting, Elizabeth encourages Susan: "You, too, must rest, Susan; let the world alone

awhile. We can not bring about a moral revolution in a day or a year” (Gordon 1997: 325). Years later, in July 1880, Elizabeth advises Susan to drop her work with conventions and instead leave it to “[t]hose who have each in turn wished you and me out of their way” (Gordon 2003: 552). However, as Elizabeth at one point conveys her opinion to Susan about how to manage an upcoming meeting, she follows her suggestions with the addition, “These are simply suggestions!” (Gordon 2009: 9). The lengths of the other’s support for one another are evident in the way that Susan, in a letter in July 1895, offers advice to Elizabeth about how to go about managing and progressing the Bible Committee, telling Elizabeth, “do at least have the members of your Committee of those who have even read the Bible once through—consecutively—in their lives,” although she has no wish to promote the cause herself (Gordon 2009: 699).

Confiding in and trusting one another

Through reading Susan and Elizabeth’s letters, it becomes evident that the pair maintained a particular trust between one another that, at least on Susan’s side, appears quite unique. As Susan seeks help from Elizabeth on writing an address, in a letter she marks “Private” at the top, she tells Elizabeth of her plans and asks her advice on how to carry forward, adding “but no man can write from my stand point—nor any woman but you” (Gordon 1997: 321). This trust in Elizabeth’s ability to speak for her and inspire her unlike anyone else is again clear in Susan’s writing to Elizabeth in September 1857. In her letter she tells Elizabeth, “Oh Mrs Stanton how my soul longs to see you in the great Battle field—when will the time come—you say in two or three years—God & the Angels keep you safe from all hindrances—and free you from al mountain barrier—If you come not to the rescue, who shall?” (Gordon 1997: 356).

Susan and Elizabeth both invest their trust in the other regarding sensitive information as well. Susan, in letters to Elizabeth in 1854 and 1856, tells Elizabeth about sentiments and hopes that her friends have expressed to her in confidence, perhaps risking violation of their trust in sharing the information with Elizabeth (Gordon 1997: 260 & 319). In January of 1861 Susan was involved in the protection of a wife fleeing from an abusive husband and she writes Elizabeth requesting that she not expose the woman's whereabouts so as to maintain her protection (Gordon 1997: 456). Elizabeth, after a visit to France, writes to Susan about an experience where a French professor kissed her in his greeting goodbye. While Elizabeth remarks that the kiss was a cultural practice in France, she also implores Susan, "Pray, do not let this reach the ears of that [o]ld-fashioned friend of ours...So, Susan, let this indiscretion be known [to] you alone" (Gordon 2006: 170).

Emotional support

Within Elizabeth and Susan's comments that lend each other emotional support, the women disclose 1) anxieties and fears of inadequacy, 2) stresses related to family life, health, and loss, and 3) turmoil associated with their work in the suffrage movement.

1. Anxieties and fears of inadequacy

In the often pressure-filled pursuits that Susan and Elizabeth took on, anxieties of failure often followed them. The pair articulated these fears to one another in their letters, including an understanding that the other woman was likely equally invested in the other's success. Susan frequently writes to Elizabeth about her apprehension in public speaking, expressing how dearly

she has prayed to be a great orator (Gordon 1997: 321). Elizabeth also fears ill performance in her speeches. Expressing this fear to Susan in February 1875 she writes

I was in the depths all night and the day before lest the speech should not be up to the occasion, and when I saw the crowds in the street and, from behind the scenes, that immense concourse in the auditorium, I did feel like running!...But when I was fairly launched and every eye on me, I could feel the pluck and pathos slowly rising and I went through the ordeal with credit to myself and to you; for I believe you are always quite as anxious about me as I am myself....I always feel that what I have to say is inadequate. (Gordon 2003: 151).

Elizabeth also writes in 1884 informing Susan that her health will prevent her from attending an upcoming convention. In conveying this news, she adds how sorry she is that she will not be present to “share you anxieties” (Gordon 2006: 339). In line with this sharing of anxieties, Susan once expresses to Elizabeth, “I have very week moments—and long to lay my weary head somewhere and nestle my full soul close to another in full sympathy—I sometimes fear that, I too shall fall by the wayside—and drop out the ranks of the faithful few” (Gordon 1997: 352).

2. Family, health, and loss

While a great deal of Elizabeth’s and Susan’s conversations surround their work in the suffrage movement, supporting one another through those challenges, and lauding their successes, the two also turn to each other in times of hardship in their home and family life – and also to celebrate momentous occasions. In January 1856, for example, Elizabeth writes to Susan that, “I have got out the sixth edition of my admirable work, another female child is born into the world!” regarding the birth of Harriet Eaton Stanton, Elizabeth’s sixth child (Gordon 1997:

316). On the converse side, however, Elizabeth also writes to Susan in 1859 about the birth of her seventh child, Livingston Stanton, born when Elizabeth was 43 years old. She tells Susan,

You need expect nothing from me for some time. I have no vitality of body or soul. All I had & was has gone into the development of that boy. It is now four weeks since my confinement & I can scarcely walk across the room. You have no idea how weak I am & I have to keep my mind in the most quiet state in order to sleep. I have suffered so much from wakefulness. (Gordon 1997: 387).

Years later, in 1879, Elizabeth writes how she regrets that she will not be able to attend a convention in St. Louis because “I feel as if one more [ou]nce of responsibility would kill me. I am sick, tired, jaded beyond des[cr]iption and the younger, fresher women must supply the enthusiasm for the [oc]casion” (Gordon 2003: 443). As she writes to Susan that she cannot attend the convention, she simultaneously expresses that she feels guilty for this absence, however assuring Susan “if you knew how I feel, you would say stay [w]here you are” (444). Similarly, Susan reassures Elizabeth in a letter in September 1895 that “I am feeling splendidly and you need not worry a speck about me” (Gordon 2013: 709). Beyond their health, the two women also discuss Elizabeth’s troubles and struggles within the home. Regarding an experience when Elizabeth came home from time away to find her sons rambunctious throughout the house, Susan writes to Elizabeth in empathy (Gordon 1997: 456).

Speaking about their family colors a good number of Susan and Elizabeth’s letters – especially when a close family member falls sick or dies. As Elizabeth tells Susan about the death of her father and her close cousin Gerrit Smith’s entrance into an asylum, Elizabeth writes, “Indeed it would do me great good to see some reformers now” (Gordon 1997: 400). Susan also writes to Elizabeth about her mother’s injury and says, “You know this is the year I have always

felt that mother would pass on to the beyond” (Gordon 2003: 325). She continues to express her hesitation and “constant querying” over staying away from home in order to pursue her professional opportunities while remaining absent from her mother and family (325-26). Susan and Elizabeth remain in contact about their family members until the end of their lives. In 1900, Susan writes to Elizabeth to tell her of the death of her brother, and refers back to the death of an earlier brother 25 years prior that Elizabeth seemingly would recall. As she relays this death to Elizabeth, she explains that the death may prevent her from attending a conference (Gordon 2009: 352).

3. Struggles associated with work

As Susan and Elizabeth write to one another about the challenges in their lives and seek emotional support with one another, they also address the emotional toll their work in women’s rights work takes on them. At one point after Susan’s arrest for voting, Elizabeth writes to Susan in great angst. Telling Susan that she has found an article regarding Susan’s case and that she will provide it to her, Elizabeth says, “It is as you say terribly humiliating to be asking these supercilious boys to consider our rights....How these white livered scribblers do disgust me!” (Gordon 2000: 592). Elizabeth’s entire letter exudes her anger and, in closing the letter, she signs “Your rebellious friend” (592). Elizabeth also writes to Susan regarding her own frustration with the state recognition of women’s rights, using more extreme language than in her previous letters. In reference to Susan and Elizabeth’s peers, Elizabeth refers to the women as “coadjutors,” (Gordon 2003: 537) a term which can mean “one who works together with another,” but also “a bishop assisting a diocesan bishop and often having the right of succession,” perhaps adding a religious tone to their work (Merriam-Webster).

Susan also writes to Elizabeth about distress she experiences in her work, particularly in her role as president of the suffrage committee. She writes:

During three weeks of agony and soul, with scarcely a night of sleep, I have felt I must resign my presidency, but then the rights of the minority are to be respected and protected by me quite as much as the action of the majority is to be resented; and it is even more my duty to stand firmly with the minority because principle is with them. (Gordon 2013: 47).

While Susan also mentions that she has discussed the worry with her sister Mary, who advised her to resign “for [Susan’s] own sake,” she still writes to Elizabeth about her concern and rationale (47).

DISCUSSION

Susan and Elizabeth’s relationship emphasizes their need for each other in order to contribute to the women’s rights movement in a way that suggests the women shared a strong working partnership. At other times, the women’s interaction emphasized their emotional connection and support in reflection of a deep-rooted friendship. More often than not, their communications indicate a relationship that functioned simultaneously as one focused on pursuing their professional goals and one that nurtured the other in mutual friendship. In reading the pair’s letters, their written interactions raised points related to the tenets of symbolic interactionism related to 1) shared language, 2) joint action, and 2) the dynamic of the front stage and back stage.

Shared Language

The varied topics Susan and Elizabeth discuss often emphasize the women's desire to stand for a shared aspiration in their roles as the primary leaders of the U.S. suffrage movement. Even early in their friendship, Elizabeth writes to Susan to share her ideological beliefs in regards to their movement, perhaps as a way of establishing a common understanding of the topics about which they would come to lead their peers and followers (Gordon 1997). Additionally, the women write to one another about how to best structure their messages to their followers (Gordon 2003). Blumer's interpretation of symbolic interactionism suggests that Susan and Elizabeth's conferral over their own beliefs shows a desire to establish a shared language that sets the expectations for their followers (Farganis 2011). The importance of establishing a shared language and shared gestures became especially important at times when Susan presented herself without Elizabeth at conventions and meetings as the leader of the suffrage movement. This shared language also seems to persist as something only Susan and Elizabeth could fully articulate. In one letter, Susan asks Elizabeth to help her write an address, explaining, "but no man can write from my stand point—nor any woman but you" (Gordon 1997: 321). While they develop their language as something to guide the other women, the understanding between Susan and Elizabeth supersedes all others, and creates a strengthened relation between the two as it limits their ability to rely on other women.

Still, in their letters Susan and Elizabeth are careful to observe the ways other women in their movement, or perhaps outside it, might disrupt the shared language and gestures the two leaders established together. Catharine E. Beecher, for instance, openly opposed women's suffrage. When Susan writes Elizabeth in May 1856, she calls Beecher "stupid," "so false," and accuses her of being "bound by the fashionable Church & [she] dare not take sides with the

unpopular” (Gordon 1997: 319). Her frustrations surround Beecher publically speaking against those common goals of suffrage, which Susan and Elizabeth devoted their lives to achieving. Regarding women in their ranks, Susan also writes to Elizabeth about Mrs. Colby, another leader in the movement. Criticizing Mrs. Colby’s actions in heading the forces, Susan expresses her desire that Elizabeth had not given up her office as leader of the suffrage organization, for other women cannot fill it with the same success that she did. Susan’s frustrations surround the way other women, like Mrs. Colby, cannot represent and progress further the common objectives Susan and Elizabeth so meticulously developed.

When fears develop that Elizabeth and Susan have presented differing public opinions, and therefore failed to communicate their shared language, they confer with one another in attempts to “save the show.” Upon hearing of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, a Black man, marrying a White woman, Susan urgently writes to Elizabeth in hopes that she has not sent Douglass or anyone else words of encouragement on their union. Distraught over how the subject of intermarriage could distract from their targeted issue of suffrage, Susan seeks out Elizabeth in hopes that she can prevent any more damage on that front. This action falls in line with Goffman’s theory of “show saving,” in which groups maintain their public face by “avoiding likely disruptions or by correcting unavowed ones, or by making it possible for others to do so” (Farganis 2011: 207). In coordinating the pair’s response to Douglass’ perhaps disruptive action to their cause, Susan hopes to help undo some of the damage that has already occurred.

Back Stage, Front Stage

In their well-acknowledged role as the visible heads of women's rights activism, Susan and Elizabeth's correspondence indicates a medium in which the women planned and contemplated their modes of action in leading the movement. In their discussions of who should take responsibilities for particular meetings and speeches, the two leaders coordinate logistical details representative of the "back stage" dynamic Goffman outlines in his dramaturgy (Farganis 2011: 298). The vehicle of letters allowed Susan and Elizabeth the space to prepare before revealing their plans to the suffrage organization and, beyond that, the public. Susan and Elizabeth used this back stage as a place to discuss difficulties they encountered in their suffrage actions – such as in 1895 when Susan writes to Elizabeth regarding her difficulty in getting an Invitation to a Council meeting published, or in 1896, when she struggles to raise funds for the movement (Gordon 2013).

The back stage available through their letters also provided Susan and Elizabeth the opportunity to express their personal distresses involved with domestic life. In response to Susan's requests that Elizabeth forgo her obligations to the home in order to contribute more to the movement, Elizabeth candidly responds to Susan that "I pace up and down these two chambers of mine like a caged lioness, longing to bring nursing and housekeeping cares to a close" (Gordon 1997: 325). Even as Susan accuses Elizabeth of diminishing her work for the movement, Elizabeth does not defend her actions but, instead, confides in Susan that she, in fact, does not desire to continue in her daily home routine that restricts her ability to engage in the public sphere. Through their letters, Elizabeth can openly admit this "weakness" of motherhood to Susan without fear of public ridicule. Susan can also openly express her opinions on Elizabeth and Henry's distribution of childcare and housework through their letters without fear of their

followers seeing her criticism of Elizabeth's involvement. In their correspondence, both Susan and Elizabeth identify the problem restricting Elizabeth's increased involvements in suffrage action as her obligation to run her household with her young children – a blame they might not place publically as an attempt to prevent isolating potential members.

Susan's efforts to advance Elizabeth's contributions to their field also entail her urging Elizabeth to present herself on the front stage more. While Susan often engaged in conferences and conventions, Elizabeth's participation in these public events considerably fell behind Susan's. Perhaps recognizing the importance of Elizabeth presenting herself as an involved leader to the masses rather than coordinating work from the back stage, Susan urges Elizabeth to "see & be seen" in their suffrage work (Gordon 1997: 534). However, this participation did not occur as much as Susan apparently desired, suggesting that the two women held different roles in their partnership regarding which party most actively engaged on the front stage versus back stage. Extending her efforts even further, Susan once writes to Elizabeth regarding a letter Elizabeth wrote and submitted to a meeting, saying, "Had I been there I should have strained every point & myself read it in the time given me for a speech" (Gordon 2013: 250). As Susan demonstrates here, even when Elizabeth cannot make the effort to present herself in the public stage, Susan would readily give up her own speaking time in order to allow Elizabeth's work to fill a public space and reach their followers.

Given that Susan found herself more readily available to occupy the front stage than Elizabeth, Susan at times complained to Elizabeth of undesirable tasks Elizabeth put on Susan. In one such instance, Elizabeth asks Susan to raise money from their peers. Horribly upset with Elizabeth, Susan chastises, "What a cruel thing you are to make me beg money of your sisters – but I've done it—and they'll doubtless curse me for it" (Gordon 1997: 460). Elizabeth's request

of Susan places tension on their balance of front stage responsibilities. However, Susan's choice to carry through on Elizabeth's instructions illustrates the way she forgoes her public image among their fellow suffragists in order to aid Elizabeth, albeit whatever feelings of resentment she feels for doing so.

While Susan tries to increase Elizabeth's involvement on the front stage, she also seeks solace on the back stage with her working companion and friend. Her desire to "be nestled in some corner away from every chick & child, with you once more" speaks to the function their friendship provided the women, or at least Susan, in emotionally nourishing them in conjunction with increasing their work production. For, although Susan emphasizes the need for their joint presence in the public eye, she also expresses the ways that she and Elizabeth share a friendship that extends beyond just the front they put on while in public. In Susan's letter from November 1900, her comment that, while joining together again for an upcoming event, "we'll sit up in our big chairs & behave just the prettiest!" strengthens the perspective that Susan and Elizabeth genuinely enjoyed the other's company and sought the other out for friendship, emotional support, and enjoyment beyond the need to progress their activist goals (Gordon 2013: 323).

However, the back stage of their friendship did not always provide such a warm retreat for the women. In their seemingly private letters, Susan and Elizabeth also find a space in which to criticize their partner's approach to their activism and work. Elizabeth's frustration with Susan's perspective on the role of the legislature in granting women equality versus that of the courts and constitution causes her to declare, "I shall always bow my head with shame and sorrow" should Susan's principle reach publication under the pair's names (Gordon 2006: 502). While they argue about including their different opinions in their joint history book, which represents a collaborative collection of their experiences with suffrage and women's rights, in

Susan and Elizabeth's private discourse with one another, they are able to bicker, chastise, and vehemently disagree with one another in a way inappropriate in a publically published book. Perhaps the environment of the back stage also permits Elizabeth the freedom to feel justified in making her disagreement with Susan personal – stating that she will feel shame and sorrow as a result of Susan's ideology. By bringing in her personal self worth into their discussion, Elizabeth attempts to use Susan's emotional care for Elizabeth as a means to sway her into changing her political opinion. Elizabeth's assertion also implies that she feels Susan should concede to her argument, for she believes sparing Elizabeth from feeling "shame and sorrow" trumps Susan's desire to publish her own opinion.

Receiving Susan's criticism of other women in the movement who fail to appropriately endorse Susan and Elizabeth's shared language, Elizabeth challenges the safety and trust of her shared back stage space with Susan by sharing a letter of criticism with its subject. Elizabeth's action of forwarding Susan's letter to Mrs. Colby with the empathetic addition, "I get my share of criticism too," could perhaps indicate a breach of confidence on Elizabeth's part concerning the sensitive opinions Susan shares with her. However, if considered in the perspective that Susan and Elizabeth's primary goal, one they shared, was to communicate their common objective through the shared language they had developed, then Elizabeth's decision to forward the perhaps private message to Mrs. Colby could signify an allegiance to Susan and Elizabeth's common objective and to helping other women also abide by its expectations. Still, Elizabeth's act of sending Susan's criticisms to Mrs. Colby represents her transference of the issues Susan discussed with her in the "back stage" to the "front stage." Though Colby herself holds a position as a leader of the suffrage movement, and therefore is perhaps more of an insider than an audience member, she is an outsider to the original partnership Susan and Elizabeth share. Thus,

Colby represents an audience member within the scale of the suffrage movement itself, and Elizabeth sharing Susan's private opinions with her breaks the curtain behind which the two leaders establish their expectations and plan their moves.

At another point, however, Elizabeth encloses a letter to her friend Martha Wright in which Susan directly criticizes Elizabeth. Given that the content of this forwarded letter does not include suggestions on how to better help Martha act within the bounds of Susan and Elizabeth's shared language, it follows that Elizabeth writes to Martha in search of emotional comfort. Her words, "You see I am between two fires, all the time. Some, determined to throw me overboard, & Susan equally determined that I shall stand at mast head, no matter how pitiless the storm," signify another instance in which Elizabeth breaks the back stage trust she and Susan have established (Gordon 2000: 401). It seems, though, that Elizabeth only breaks the trust of her private sphere with Susan because she feels that Susan has failed to provide the safe and comforting place in their back stage that Elizabeth desires from her friend in the midst of this "storm." Susan's emphasis on Elizabeth's professional responsibilities over her emotional comfort indicates one instance in which the professional nature of their friendship inhibits their personal relations. Overall, the space of the back stage allows Susan and Elizabeth the opportunity to discuss their plans for the movement, seek emotional comfort and encouragement from one another and, typically, express their dissatisfaction with the other's ideologies or leadership styles.

Joint Action

While the two suffrage leaders shared exciting moments with one another in connection to their personally prioritized agendas, they also worked to actively engage the other in their

plans. For instance, when Susan writes to Elizabeth about her triumph in voting, she concludes her letter saying, “I hope you voted too” (Gordon 2000: 524). From a perspective of symbolic interactionism, Susan’s words represent an attempt for the women to “fit their actions and mesh their behaviors with those of others with whom they interact” (Farganis 2011: 297). In the same way, Elizabeth apparently asks Susan to participate on her Bible Committee in 1887, to which Susan pointedly responds “No—I don’t want my name on that Bible Committee—You fight that battle—and leave me to fight the secular....The religious part—has never been mine—you know—and I won’t take it up...So go ahead—in your own way—and let me stick to my own” (Gordon 2009: 699-700). Here, while Elizabeth reaches out to Susan regarding her desire that Susan join her in her objective for gaining women’s equality within Christianity, this push for Susan to take up the same objective causes controversy. For, although Susan and Elizabeth recognize the importance in their communicating a shared message to their followers and regularly behaving in a uniform way when seeking to advance women’s suffrage, they also understand the way their individual behaviors can face interpretation as one associated with their partner, and vice versa.

Thus, this awareness conforms to Goffman’s assertion that “Audiences tend to accept the self projected by the individual performer during any current performance as a responsible representative of his colleague-grouping...” (Farganis 2011: 309). Although the women’s partnership represented a cohesive public front whenever possible, the women were also careful not to allow this expected cohesion to promote a cause which the other deemed as disruptive to their previously determined common objective. At times, it seems that this understanding of owning one’s ideological standing caused the women to break their otherwise publically united front. In 1883, for instance, Elizabeth’s advice to Susan regarding Susan’s upcoming trip to

London and how to structure its movement concludes with “You may take what position your conscience dictates; I shall follow my own” (Gordon 2006: 281). In this letter, Elizabeth openly acknowledges that the two women may have differing perspectives on leadership, and ultimately decides that, regardless of Susan’s position on this particular issue, Elizabeth will not mesh her own beliefs with Susan’s.

Pointedly aware of the way the public associates her actions and Elizabeth’s actions as derivative of the other, Susan even holds herself responsible when Elizabeth does not behave in a fashion that Susan deems representative of their best interests. Bemoaning, “O! how I have agonized over my utter failure to make you feel & see the importance & power of standing fast, & holding on to the helm of our good old ship,” Susan sees it as her duty to guide Elizabeth towards the appropriate actions for leading their activist efforts. Susan thus takes it upon herself to actively connect the pair in their priorities, hoping their priorities will lead to aligned actions.

Just as Susan and Elizabeth reflect on other women’s role in their activism, they also reflect upon their own role as leaders. Elizabeth’s words to Susan in December 1878 encourage her that “I think we have done a good deal to make women feel some new self-respect and dignity....So we have not struggled in vain, and borne our heavy burdens to no purpose” (Gordon 2003: 422). These encouraging words affirm Susan and Elizabeth’s enduring work in a way that is motivational for their future endeavors. Blumer explains this process of group contemplation as one where members are “constantly reflecting, negotiating, and fitting their actions to others in order to achieve common objectives” (Farganis 2011: 297). While this process can aid members in perfecting their plans and better framing their objectives, Goffman does not address the ways it also extends beyond this purpose – as in Susan and Elizabeth’s case. For them, reflecting on the positive effects of their work serves as personal affirmation of their

extensive dedication to furthering their objective, and creates a reassurance from which they may gain additional momentum.

In continuing this momentum, the two friends remind each other of the importance of their leadership and in remaining steady mentors for the younger generation, and also remind each other of their obligation towards one another. As Susan considers resigning from their suffrage organization, her letter to Elizabeth explains that she has decided against resigning, as it is “my duty and the duty of yourself” to remain with the movement and try to set it right rather than abandon it (Gordon 2013: 48). Susan’s terminology of their “duty” is not uncommon in their correspondence, and it appears that their friendship, in some ways, serves as a vehicle to remind each other of their common objective and responsibility to uphold their obligation to joint action. As Susan reminds Elizabeth of this obligation of leadership at another time, she extends, “you owe it to yourself and the cause to be there first—I was almost going to say—to me too—for our obligations to the movement are one” (Gordon 2000: 448). Here, Susan emphasizes Elizabeth’s responsibility for continued leadership by connecting the pair’s loyalties to one another with their loyalties to their common objective, stressing the importance of Elizabeth maintaining her promise to both.

In Susan’s insistence that Elizabeth put her childcare duties on hold in order to observe a more active role in suffrage work and in her leadership, she also presses Elizabeth to remember her duty to the whole of women, and, even more personally, “for the love of me” (Gordon 1997: 321). Here again, Susan calls on the close bond the women share – or at least the obligation they feel towards each other – in order to inspire Elizabeth to increase her commitment to women’s rights and, in turn, to Susan. In regards to the issues which Elizabeth projects to their followers, Susan also uses their allegiance as a means to sway Elizabeth on what opinions she presents to

others, or as a means to suppress her views on controversial issues. In trying to sway Elizabeth against supporting intermarriage on a platform as a leader of the women's rights movement, she writes, “I would cut my right hand off before I would thus set back the growing feeling of friendliness to our cause!....But enough—only for my sake—if no other—don't proclaim yourself as endorsing this act!” (Gordon 2006: 324-25). Comparing her loyalties to the movement with Elizabeth's and then, ultimately, begging Elizabeth to form her actions according to Susan's desires based on Elizabeth's obligations to Susan personally, Susan once again takes the pair's personal relationship and imposes its corresponding loyalties on Elizabeth's activism.

Perhaps some of this obligation comes from Susan and Elizabeth's knowledge that they are each held in the public eye as intrinsically related to the other. Susan, for instance, writes to Elizabeth in September 1896, “peoples memories do carry you & me for the other & both as one” (Gordon 2013: 95). This close association, according to Goffman, is typical in the way audiences come to accept groups and colleagues as constant representations of each other. For, not only were Susan and Elizabeth seen as representations of the other, but they were also seen as a combined unit – a known pairing of powerful women. The friends themselves seem to present the other as their worthy counterpart. Susan, for instance, tells Mrs. Janet Norton, the leader of the Taxpaying Women of New Orleans, that, absent Susan's ability to meet with her in New York, Elizabeth may be able to meet with her instead (Gordon 2006). Knowing that she and Elizabeth have a shared language and routinely work for the same purposes, Susan has confidence in Elizabeth's ability to assist their followers in the same manner that she herself could.

When one of the women does face public attack, the other woman usually comes to her defense, or is at least expected to do so. Defending Elizabeth against the accusation that one of

her paper's failed to reach a proper argumentative stance, Susan tells Elizabeth that she informed the accuser, Parker Pillsbury, that it "was not intended for an argument, but precisely what it is" (Gordon 1997: 449). Seen as a "responsible representative of [her] colleague-grouping," Susan's response was likely accepted as in line with Elizabeth's own views (Farganis 2011: 309). In this instance, Susan speaks up for Elizabeth without prodding, and does so seemingly out of loyalty to Elizabeth and belief in her intellectual work. Elizabeth too holds fast to Susan's integrity when hearing supposed rumors about her. Declaring her loyalty to Susan in 1890, she writes her, "If all the papers in the two Dakota's, should herald the news that you have been arrested & imprisoned for theft & slander, it would not make the slightest impression on me. I should not believe a word of it" (Gordon 2009: 308). In both of these cases, the women automatically stand by the other's character and scholarly pursuits either because of intimate knowledge of the other's circumstance that can disprove the claims, or due to their steadfast trust in the other.

Susan more directly asks Elizabeth to come to her defense in a request that dictates the extent to which the two women were familiar with the other's thoughts and behaviors. Upset that two women believe Susan dislikes them, Susan beseeches Elizabeth, "you might do me the justice to say that you know all such charges against me to be false. I think I should do that much for you assuredly, if any one came to me with grievances against you" (Gordon 2009: 709).

While Susan and Elizabeth's correspondence suggests that the two women frequently vouched for each other naturally and without prodding, here Susan frankly asks Elizabeth to speak on her behalf, a task that Susan believes is natural for Elizabeth given her knowledge of Susan. Beyond this trust, Susan's request articulates the expectations she has for their friendship – that the two women should outwardly deny any falsehoods associated with their friend's name by virtue of their intimate knowledge of the other and their assumed investment in their friend's reputation.

Nature of Friendship

In considering the emotional components of Susan and Elizabeth's relationship alongside the pragmatic elements that helped spur their work forward, I analyzed the potential motivations behind the women sharing their successes with one another. On the one hand, sharing their successes with one another suggests a particular genuine character of the women's friendship. However, given that the successes Susan and Elizabeth most often write about to each other surround their professional accomplishments – such as the positive reception to Elizabeth's "Bible argument" in 1874, or Susan's triumph in casting a vote in the 1872 election – perhaps also suggests that the successes the women feel most comfortable sharing concern those that surround their common objective of women's liberation (Gordon 2000 & 2003). Yet these two particular successes that the women share align most strongly with their personal accomplishments that, albeit related to women's suffrage, might extend beyond the focus of their communal attempts for women's liberation. In fact, Susan vehemently opposed pressing the "Bible argument," as she felt it would distract from their most important and urgent goal – gaining women the vote. Correspondingly, the success Susan writes to Elizabeth about in this instance details how she carried through this most lofty goal of voting. Although Susan and Elizabeth disagreed at times over the most important messages to convey to their followers, they still shared their excitement over accomplishing their independent goals with each other. In this way, Susan and Elizabeth's friendship resembles the descriptor provided by an audience member from my poster presentation in the fall in defining friendship: "Someone you can believe in, and someone who can believe in you." While symbolic interactionism provides useful tools for understanding the way individuals interact for the purpose of accomplishing a communal goal, it does not lend itself to analyzing the way individuals might interact with one another to gain

emotional support and personal affirmation. Thus, it becomes important to view Susan and Elizabeth's relationship, which contained deeply compassionate elements, beyond the bounds of a working partnership, since the dynamics exclusive to colleagues prove limiting when analyzing the complexity of their both professional and emotional alliance.

While Susan and Elizabeth's letters certainly make a case for a deep friendship that extends beyond their activism, it does not appear that this friendship always embodied a "two-way street" as my contributors suggested a friendship necessitates during the poster session earlier this year. As Susan takes the lead in representing the two women in the public sphere while Elizabeth cares for her home and children, she writes to Elizabeth about feeling alone and "utterly incompetent to go forward....discourage[d] & dishearten[ed]" without the support of Elizabeth and the other suffrage matriarchs who invest more time at home caring for children, instead of on the frontlines of the suffrage movement (Gordon 1997: 352). Susan directly states that her fellow suffrage leaders "have all given yourselves over to baby making & left poor brainless me to battle alone..." (Gordon 1997: 321). At times like these, it appears that Susan feels abandoned and does not receive the emotional support or professional aid that she desires from her partnership with Elizabeth. For, not only has Elizabeth left Susan to handle the front stage of the suffrage movement without her, but she has also left her to emotional distress in this solitude – therefore abandoning the two principles their friendship otherwise strives to fulfill.

The conflict over prioritizing the professional production of their partnership over the empathy of friendship creates additional tension between Susan and Elizabeth. In November 1878, Elizabeth writes to Susan that she must not ask her to engage in convention work, similar to when she told Susan that she should not mention an address the pair is composing, for "This week was to be leisure to me" (Gordon 1997: 321). In these instances, it appears as though

Elizabeth sees Susan asking too much of her for the sake of progressing their professional work and at the cost of her personal and emotional welfare as an affront to their friendship. It seems, however, that Susan is at least somewhat aware of the pressure she places on Elizabeth.

Following her request that Susan write a speech that will “overtop and surpass anything and everything you have ever written or spoken before,” she adds, “Now, my dear, this is positively the last time I am ever going to put you on the rack and torture you to make the speech or speeches of your life” (Gordon 2013: 180). So, while Susan places pressure on Elizabeth to produce great work, she also understands the toll it takes on her friend and in some ways attempts to mitigate that pressure as much as possible. Seemingly, Elizabeth ultimately appreciates the way Susan pushes her forward in their professional work. As Elizabeth told her biographer, “I do believe that I have developed into much more of a woman under [Susan’s] jurisdiction, fed on statute laws and constitutional amendments, than if left to myself reading novels in an easy-chair, lost in sweet reveries of the golden age to come without any effort of my own” (Harper 1898: 667). Despite the pressures Susan places on the professional side of their friendship, Elizabeth appears to have felt gratitude towards Susan for her insistence that Elizabeth produce more and increase her presence in the women’s rights movement.

In another instance, however, Elizabeth writes to Susan that she has failed to live up to Elizabeth’s expectations for her work in diligently producing their history volume. Accusing Susan of her choice to “fly off at [s]omething else” instead of prioritizing Elizabeth’s plan of action indicates an instance in which one of the women took offense from failing to prioritize their professional work and transferred it into the personal realm of their friendship (Gordon 2003: 565). This example demonstrates the ways in which Susan and Elizabeth’s actions in the professional realm of their partnership transfer over into the sense of loyalty the women feel is

due from their friend. Again, while Blumer and Goffman articulate a useful frame for understanding the interplay between working peers, their analysis disregards the potential for emotional friendships separate from those working partnerships. As such, they do not acknowledge the way professional dynamics can bleed over into the personal relationships one holds with his or her peers as well.

When Susan and Elizabeth disagree over various issues in their letters, they do not hesitate to directly address their concerns. This directness could derive from the rapport of their friendship, in which the women openly praise their partner as well. Additionally, Susan and Elizabeth's roles as leaders necessitate that they discuss rather important topics with one another regularly, and make decisions that could affect many individuals in the movement. Operating in a partnership in which their primary common objective so strongly permeates their decisions, Susan and Elizabeth are versed in discussing sensitive and heavy information, and thus may carry that open discourse over into their conversations concerning personal disagreements as well. In another instance, Elizabeth feels that Susan does not defend her when she receives public criticisms in *The Woman's Journal*. Just as Susan feels abandoned by Elizabeth in her public work on the women's rights movement, so too does Elizabeth feel abandoned by Susan in standing by her in public opinion.

However, although Susan and Elizabeth are aware of the scrutiny they face to represent their friendship in an appropriate light, they also seem to maintain a certain air of confidence in holding their friendship together. When Elizabeth writes to Susan about news published that Susan and Elizabeth's partnership "is about to be dissolved" in 1892, Elizabeth responds in a seemingly sarcastic manner accusing Susan of getting a divorce without Elizabeth's knowledge, adding, "I consider our relation for life, so make the best of it" (Gordon 2009: 473). Elizabeth's

easy brushing off of this apparently erroneous article suggests the depth of her friendship with Susan – beyond just their activist work. Elizabeth’s assertion that their relation will continue “for life” – perhaps even after their work on a particular cause has concluded – emphasizes the loyalty and care they showed one another. Here, it becomes clear that symbolic interactionism does not address the way one’s personal loyalties to a peer can in fact trump his or her obligations to a common cause. While Susan and Elizabeth disagreed over particular issues and their work distribution, the pair prioritized maintaining their lifelong friendship over advancing their common goal at the detriment of their bond.

Still, Susan and Elizabeth’s partnership certainly contains a balance of both personal and professional motivations. In their letters that express the way they long for each other, much of their dialogue surrounds a desire to be near each other for the purpose of better producing their work. Susan, complaining of the effort required to visit Elizabeth, writes that she cannot reach Elizabeth “without spending so much time & money—We ought to have our heads together for lots of the work before us now” (Gordon 2009: 500). Susan’s comment suggests that the two women had established a working and professional identity that includes the other. Through their pursuit of fulfilling their common objective, Susan and Elizabeth’s joint action progressed towards a joint identity. Beyond longing to be near one another to progress their intellectual work, Susan and Elizabeth also demonstrated a need for the other’s emotional support. Susan’s letter to Elizabeth in June 1856 that laments, “how I do wish I could step in to see you & make you feel all my infirmities, – mental I mean,” provides an indication that the two women saw each other as companions who were attuned to the other’s emotional distress in a way that would help soothe the other in a unique way (Gordon 1997: 321).

In this companionship, the two friends worked together in order to nurture the other in their professional work, thus extending the compassion they felt for one another into their work for the movement as well. Writing to Susan about how she will aid her in her preparation of an address, Elizabeth says, “I will do anything to help you on. If I do nothing else this fall I am bound to help you get up an antislavery address” (Gordon 1997: 351). The language with which Elizabeth expresses her devotion to aiding Susan, saying that she will do “anything” if it helps her friend in writing the address, shows how the pair’s empathy, care, and support of one another in their friendship carry over into strengthening the ties of their professional relationship too – just as how their obligations to produce consistent work for the suffrage movement at times negatively affects their personal relationship.

In fact, the care Susan and Elizabeth show each other even when working on professional production together becomes a necessary support for the women, and without the friend’s collaboration the other at times reports feeling discouraged in her work. For instance, in 1880 when Elizabeth tries to work on the women’s history edition alone, she writes Susan expressing how from the “moment you left me last summer...I cannot work on the big job alone” (Gordon 2003: 552). Susan too indicates that Elizabeth’s presence would encourage her scholastic abilities, such as when she writes to Elizabeth regretting their distance as Susan tries to prepare an article for publication in the *Examiner*, “Oh how I have longed for you at my side to put into your matchless sentences the words that wait the saying” (Gordon 2013: 101-102). In establishing their joint identity in women’s rights work, Susan and Elizabeth developed a partnership that supported the other so much that working without the assistance and input of the other felt daunting and lonely. Elizabeth also explains, “I expect to get my inspiration facts & thoughts from you” when Susan comes to visit, thus admitting the ways Susan’s presence will

help release Elizabeth's intellectual hold ups (Gordon 1997: 391). At another point, Elizabeth writes to Susan recording the reasons why the two women work so well together, as "You err on the side of detail, & I on the opposite extreme let us try & strike a happy medium" (Gordon 2009:10). Elizabeth's explanation here suggests that the women do not see each other as merely supporters of the other's work, but as fundamental contributors of one functioning intellectual unit. Henry Stanton also commented on the tag-teaming dynamic of the two women's friendship, noting to Elizabeth: "You stir up Susan & she stirs up the world" (Gordon 1997: 351).

Perhaps no example more strongly demonstrates the way Susan and Elizabeth extended extreme care to the other for the sake of progressing their professional engagements as the times when Susan went to Elizabeth's home to care for the children in order to give Elizabeth the time to spend writing and preparing lectures and articles. As Susan would "hold the baby and make the puddings," Elizabeth found the time to consider intellectual issues in a manner that her typical household duties prevented (Gordon 1997: 325). Aware of the toll her household responsibilities take on their professional progress, Elizabeth tells Susan that this dynamic in which one woman must forgo her intellectual curiosities in order to care for Elizabeth's children will soon end. In this affirmation, Elizabeth reassures Susan that "You and I have a prospect of a good long life" after Elizabeth's children grow (Gordon 1997: 351).

In reflecting upon the "long life" the two women lived together, Susan writes to Elizabeth in the days leading up to Elizabeth's death. She remarks to her friend, "in age as in all else, I shall follow you closely" (Gordon 2013: 451). So closely, in fact, that Susan adds, "And we, dear old friend, shall move on to the next sphere of existence" (451). The letter Susan writes also details the achievements she and Elizabeth can count for advancing women's rights – proudly and triumphantly celebrating the successes they have seen in their lifetime and the world they

have handed on to the next generation of women. In these words to her friend, Susan sums up the deepest elements of their friendship – they worked tirelessly on behalf of womankind, work that took a toll on them mentally, emotionally, and physically. But the work they embarked upon represents a joint venture, and one rich with successes and joys. Most of all, through all of their difficulties within the movement, outside the movement, and in their own partnership, Susan and Elizabeth held each other's hand through the half-century of their work – through the half century of their friendship.

CONCLUSION

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton spent many years building a relationship that incorporated their need for professional motivation and alliance, but that also nurtured the emotional needs associated with their public work and, beyond that, their personal lives. By establishing a shared language, the pair formed a common message to lead their followers in the women's rights movement, and with which to establish expectations for their own personal relationship as well. At times, this shared language enabled Susan and Elizabeth to better achieve their leadership goals. However, when one of the women violated the expectations set forth for their joint action, the ramifications extended beyond Susan and Elizabeth's professional partnership into their personal friendship, causing the recipient to feel exploited or manipulated. On the other hand, this crossover between Susan and Elizabeth's working partnership and personal relationship proved strategic at times when one woman wanted to remind the other of their obligation to each other and, therefore, to the suffrage movement.

Ultimately, despite any potential manipulation of their friendship for professional purposes, Susan and Elizabeth's friendship greatly aided them in leading a successful women's

movement. The trust and loyalty they found in one another allowed them to create a functioning “back stage” in their movement, in which the pair could both create plans of action and seek solace in the other, exposing their insecurities and hardships in a way they could not reveal on the “front stage.” The back stage of their friendship also provided Susan and Elizabeth with the opportunity to disagree with and challenge each other on their perspectives on the movement in a way that beneficially aided them in establishing common action without publically showing a divide in their ranks. As suggested by a participant at my poster session, a true friendship contains a dynamic in which the “love and connection” one feels in a friendship is “interrupted periodically by irritation and division – but never divorce.” In this way, Susan and Elizabeth’s friendship truly thrived, for it granted each woman the opportunity to challenge the other within an overarching frame of love, trust, and forgiveness.

In studying social movements and, more generally, women’s professional advancements, it can prove useful to consider the role female friendships played in those developments. As in Susan and Elizabeth’s case, the two women inspired one another in their ideologies, activism, and leadership of the suffrage movement. At times when Susan or Elizabeth experienced discouragement or resistance, they turned to the other for advice, reassurance, and comfort – therefore enabling the women to carry on with their goals with greater momentum and force than either woman felt she could carry on her own.

While Susan and Elizabeth’s combined partnership and friendship created tension when one woman felt the other prioritized the professional use of their relationship over their emotional responsibility to care for their friend, the overall nature of their friendship conceded professional aspirations to personal loyalties. Because of this intimately compassionate dynamic, the two women created an emotionally supportive space in which they could better strive

towards professional successes. For the bonds of friendship, more than one's obligations to a colleague, have the power to inspire an individual who represents "a reflection of yourself," as one respondent suggested at my poster session. And, in cherishing someone whose needs, welfare, and dreams are so closely related to one's own, both parties can progress united with strength far greater than that any single individual could possess alone. As Elizabeth reflected on the relationships and events of her life, she concluded, "If there is one part of my life which gives me more intense satisfaction than another, it is my friendship of more than forty years' standing with Susan B. Anthony" (Harper 1898: 667).

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