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The Subversive Echo: A Comparison of Language Reclamation as a Feminist Rhetorical Strategy

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Abstract

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By Kathryn Battaglia

Feminist figures throughout women's rights movements use the same methods of subversion to validate and elevate their own voices. In this thesis, I analyze a key rhetorical appeal from the inception of the women's rights movement and from current conversations, using these selected moments as case studies that exemplify the Subversive Echo. Of the rhetorical appeals made on behalf of the suffragette cause, one piece particularly illustrates an impeccable application of the Subversive Echo: "The Declaration of Sentiments." While previous scholarship has acknowledged the relationship between the "Declaration of Sentiments" and the Declaration of Independence, few works have thoroughly compared the texts or conducted a rhetorical analysis on the connection. Section 1 explores this relationship, while Section 2 explores how "Pussy Grabs Back" informs contemporary feminism and reflects a quintessential example of the Subversive Echo. The Subversive Echoes of the "Declaration of Sentiments" and "Pussy Grabs Back" ultimately illustrate successful examples of feminist rhetoric reclaiming the past, breaking its hold, and reaching towards gender equality, thus suggesting these waves are still in conversation and that contemporary feminist movements explicitly rely on their foremothers. Through the act of close reading, while also using digital tools for methodical data visualization, one can better understand the precise moves of language reclamation as a feminist rhetorical strategy. Comparing strategies of the Subversive Echo, found throughout feminist waves, provides rich material to analyze and better understand power dynamics around the female voice.

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Introduction

"When we have grasped what little power we've had, often we have ... used the voices we were given to subvert the message we were told to tell" (McDermott 207).

Feminist rhetoric, like the language of other social movements, draws upon a number of strategies in an effort to establish authority. The disenfranchised voice often compensates for the disparity in power by adopting and exploiting the voice of privilege. From the beginning of what is now considered contemporary feminism, individuals have embraced this approach. By conducting a comprehensive rhetorical analysis with an emphasis on close reading and utilizing digital tools for data visualization, I illustrate how contemporary feminist movements reflect strategies employed by first-wave feminists.

The recent reemergence and popularization of feminism in the public sphere contributes to the exigence of this work. Both the championing of feminist ideals and the increase of common misconceptions prompt an intervention into the current conversation. Critically and closely evaluating its language can help illuminate how feminism functions in the contemporary "now." Ultimately, feminism's proliferation into public discourse compels the expansion of scholarship, to explore a more accurate understanding of feminism and how it operates within social frameworks.

Because language builds upon other language in a continuous conversation, whether conscious or not, understanding the contemporary "now" first requires an understanding of its precursors. Though conversations have no concrete origin point, scholars and historians operationally determine the beginning of American feminist discourse, the first wave, as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of the rhetorical appeals from the era, one of the first and most defining was the "Declaration of Sentiments," principally authored and delivered by

Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the Seneca Falls Convention. Originally known as the Woman's Rights Convention, the "Seneca Falls Convention was the first women's rights convention in the United States. Held in July 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, the meeting launched the women's suffrage movement, which more than seven decades later ensured women the right to vote" (*Seneca Falls Convention*). This meeting and its resulting manifesto helped define the movement's priorities and informed subsequent feminist discourses. Recently, some of the most prevalent American feminist discourses regard the response to a presidential candidate bragging about sexual assault: "Pussy Grabs Back" and the Women's March.[1] First coordinated to coincide with the Presidential Inauguration on January 21, 2017, the march has since become an intersectional, annual, and worldwide protest. To understand this current discourse, one must turn to the earlier conversation; thus, to understand how feminism operates around "Pussy Grabs Back" and within the Women's March, I turn to the Seneca Falls Convention.

The theory of the Subversive Echo serves as the theoretical framework, connecting and clarifying these selected feminist moments. The Subversive Echo draws from classical mythology, reimagining the traditional narrative. The mythical figure of Echo, cursed by Juno, can only repeat the words spoken by another as best she can. Echo's voice is restricted, like the female voice. However, Lydia McDermott proposes the theory of the Subversive Echo. In doing so, McDermott offers Echo a recourse to regain her agency: choosing how to echo the privileged voice, adopting that privilege, and exploiting it to suit her own intentions.

The Subversive Echo represents power born from punishment. It exemplifies contradiction, a theme found throughout feminist movements and explored in this thesis.

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[1] The Women's March represents plurality, both temporally and geographically. Although the term is singular and this work is primarily concerned with the Inaugural Women's March, it signifies the movement as a whole.

Feminism is contradictory. While the signifier may be stable, the signified, as defined by Saussure, transforms over time. Consequently, feminism also occupies temporal contradiction. True to the spirit of the Subversive Echo, first-wave and contemporary feminists embrace these forms of contradiction. In fact, it becomes the source of their power and the basis for their persuasive appeals.

The art of communication, the study and strategies of persuasion, lies at the heart of interaction. Rhetoric, from the Greek "art of an orator" and connected to "speech," illustrates the active analysis of communication. Though rhetoric has a rich and admirable history tracing back to Socrates and Aristotle, it is frequently – albeit ironically – misunderstood. Rather than being merely manipulative or empty, rhetoric encompasses every facet of every interaction, including tone, physical presentation, facial reactions, and context. Most quintessential to rhetoric is, of course, the study of language, of diction and syntax.

Rhetorical analyses illuminate truths otherwise overlooked and reveal why some attempts at persuasion succeed more than others. Some voices are inherently more privileged than others, requiring disenfranchised voices to compensate for the disparity through other means. An impeccable rhetorical strategy is one such way. Nearly every interaction includes some imbalance of power; the systematic disenfranchisement of women, of half the world's population, is just one example justifying closer examination.

By comparing an established rhetorical appeal from the first wave of feminism to the current tropes found in contemporary feminism, I explore shared strategies. Feminist scholar Karlyn Kohrs Campbell notes, "Because early feminists faced obstacles whose residues still haunt contemporary women, their rhetorical efforts are a rich source of illumination" (15). One such rhetorical effort is the Subversive Echo. The strategy's name stems from the mythical

figure, Echo, whose history is beneficial in fully understanding the deriving theory. Though cursed and thus limited in her speech, Echo counteracts the systematic restrictions by subverting the statements of the original voice. Feminist figures throughout women's rights movements use the same methods of subversion to validate and elevate their own voices. I analyze a key rhetorical appeal from the inception of the women's rights movement and current conversations, using these selected moments as case studies that exemplify the Subversive Echo.

Tracing the origins of Echo contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the process and application of the Subversive Echo. The figure of Echo, found in both Greek and Roman mythologies, is one of many female subjects primarily considered through voice. She is described with particular emphasis on her voice, and it is voice that defines her. In Book III of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid depicts the history of Echo and the origin of her penalty in the story "Narcissus and Echo." Pairing her with Narcissus thus couples "the eye and the voice, which so tormented Plato" and generates an immediate tension that begs reconciliation (Cavero 165). Rather than resolution, Ovid offers repetition, resonance, and reverberation. Echo is introduced by the following: "A strange-voiced nymph observed him, who must speak / If any other speak and cannot speak / Unless another speak, resounding Echo" (128). First, the nature of her voice is qualified as "strange" and her very identity is constructed through this hyphenated qualification. Echo depends entirely upon others to speak, if she is able to speak at all. However, the final phrase "resounding Echo" complicates her identity construction. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the adjective *resounding* can be defined as that which "resounds or re-echoes; sonorous, resonant" or "emphatic, total; unequivocal, unmistakable." ("Resounding, Adj."). There is power in both definitions. This contradiction, of power born from punishment, indicates how Echo can become the hero in feminist frameworks. While some argue her

narrative is tragic because of her penalty, a unique strength is available within her imposed limitations. Through this strength, the figure of Echo is adopted by feminist rhetoric and reframed as subversive, recognizing power where before there was merely punishment.

Because Echo is primarily considered through voice, there is particular tension between her voice and her body. Ovid continues to note, “Echo was still a body, not a voice, / But talkative as now, and with the same / Power of speaking, only to repeat, / As best she could, the last of many words” (128). Though still describing how Echo operates within the myth, Ovid also explores notions of her ability and power. The need to clarify she was “still a body” reveals complex temporalities of embodiment and the construction of identity, privileging either the body or the voice. The clarification that she was “still a body” can be interpreted multiple ways. The first relates to Ovid’s history. After being rejected by Narcissus, a heartbroken Echo wastes away until she is just her voice, just her curse. Yet it can also be read as an assertion that she is more than her voice. She is “not a voice.” Rather, Echo is an individual who *has* a voice to wield. Additionally, she has “the same / Power of speaking.” Although modified with “only,” the *same power* indicates that Echo’s voice may be modified, but her power is not lessened. Her power is not described in the negative. Rather, her power is described as a presence and a maintaining of ability.

However, Echo’s curse is pronounced specifically in terms of eliminating her power and is enacted as retribution for how she used this power. Ovid outlines this history, explaining that Juno, jealous of her husband’s various affairs, sought to catch Jove. Still, “Echo discreetly kept her talking till / The nymphs had fled away” (Ovid 129). Upon realizing this delaying tactic,

Juno cursed Echo[2] through the means of her deceit: her voice. Juno proclaims "Your tongue / …With which you tricked me, now its power shall lose, / Your voice avail but for the briefest use" (Ovid 129). Echo, then, could only repeat the last words spoken by another, thus also revealing the etymology for the modern understanding of echo. Juno's objective – to render Echo's voice powerless, restrained, and incompetent – fails if you reframe how power can be wielded. Juno's curse fails when applying the theory of the Subversive Echo.

In her essay "Echo as Ventriloquist: Disembodied Vocal Performance and Feminist Rhetorical Agency," McDermott constructs the myth of Echo as a representation of all female voice. She asserts, "women's voices have been reduced to echoes doomed to performing the male voice" (193). Drawing upon Judith Butler's theory of performativity explored in her work *Gender Trouble*, McDermott presents how performativity can be applied for a different mode of productivity. In a turn similar to the one made by Albert Camus in "The Myth of Sisyphus," McDermott flips the punitive aspect fundamental to the subject's identity into a subversive reclamation of that identity. For Sisyphus[3] in Camus's piece, his pause at the top of the mountain, his epiphany of purpose, his descending the mountain in joy entirely reframes the endless boulder pushing. Camus notes, "The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory." McDermott characterizes Juno's curse as a confinement, but claims that the "echo can be subversive and resistant in its performance" (193). Thus, Sisyphus, like Echo, uses his supposed confinement or punishment as the source of his power. For Echo in

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[2] Juno's cursing Echo also exemplifies women silencing women. Both men and woman contribute to the systematic silencing of women, thereby supporting the patriarchal agenda. Juno's curse, however, is particularly cruel because she was acutely aware of how powerful Echo's voice could be. In cursing Echo, Juno recognizes and affirms the power of female voice.

[3] The choice to use a male myth to inform a female figure could be considered contentious, especially through the frame of feminist theory and amplifying female voices. However, the move in utilizing his story to illuminate that of Echo also maintains the spirit of McDermott's Subversive Echo.

McDermott's essay, she selects *how* to repeat the previous phrase in a move that reaffirms possession of Echo's own voice.

Questions of possession, specifically ownership of and for the self, prevail throughout feminist dialogues. For Echo, reclaiming possession of her own voice is a crucial step in maintaining her personhood, in asserting her presence and her right to speak. Although still dependent upon an "original voice," Echo has space in which to operate. Even as her body fades away, she has power. When first introducing Echo, Ovid clarifies, "Echo was still a body, not a voice," implying a deterioration and thus privileging the former, embodied state (128). McDermott challenges the notion that the disembodied is disempowered. She argues, "Voice need not be tied to essentialism or naive conceptions of authenticity if we can disembody it; release it to echo and disturb, and to generate its own vocalic bodies" (207). The echo disrupts and develops, exemplifying the contradiction from which the power originates. In the myth, Echo literally disrupts because she interrupts.

This interruption can also be constructed as recourse in retrieving power, reclaiming the space to speak. Ever embodying contradiction, Echo confounds linearity in language. Though she relies on another's words, there is "a certain temporal overlap" because Echo's repetition begins "while the other is still speaking" (Cavero 165). This temporal overlap implies that both voices allege equal right to occupy the space, yet also indicates that the interrupting presence is asserting dominance over the voice being challenged, drowning out this first speaker. Through interruption, therefore, Echo reclaims her own voice while declaring possession of the place and time in which to speak. The rhetorical notion of kairos can help inform this interruption. If one

accepts the definition of kairos[4] as “the right and proper time” or “the propitious moment for the performance of an action,” then Echo’s kairotic moment overlaps with that of another speaker (“Kairos, N.”). It is both hers and not hers; the moment is only hers *because* it is not hers. She can reclaim her voice only through the voice of another. And yet she can, and yet she does. Nevertheless, she persisted.

Feminism derives from contradiction. Feminism is a response. As intersectional feminist scholar Sara Ahmed illustrates in her work *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, “feminism is shaped by what it is against… what feminism is against cannot be seen as ‘exterior’ to feminism. Indeed, what feminism is against is ‘what’ *gives feminist politics its edge* [*sic*]” (Ahmed 174). It exists only in relation to the existence of the other, the patriarchy. This other strengthens feminist politics, giving it both ethos[5] and exigence.[6] Echo, similarly, speaks because of the speaking of another. She has power by seizing and subverting the power of the other. McDermott recognizes this phenomenon, claiming, “Echo is powerful, even as she is disembodied. She cannot be silenced without the men she echoes silencing themselves” (207). To delegitimize Echo, one would have to delegitimize the original voice. To keep Echo silent, one would also have to

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[4] James L. Kinneavy more thoroughly describes the definition of kairos, discussing ancient rhetorical understandings as well as contemporary constructions. “He stresses the need,” Sheri L. Helsley explains, “to explore the ethical, epistemological, aesthetic, and rhetorical aspects of a complete definition of *kairos* [*sic*], a concept far richer and more complex than ‘saying the right thing at the right time” (371). For classical, Gorgianic rhetoric, kairos involves “the impetus for discourse, the tension in the situation,” and the “temporality of the situation” (Helsley 371). Modern rhetoric, on the other hand, is primarily associated with situational contexts. Though officially working with the definition provided by the Online *Oxford English Dictionary*, this thesis is also informed by Kinneavy’s more comprehensive understanding.

[5] Ethos is understood as “persuasion through the character of the speaker” and “relies on the speaker creating credible character for particular rhetorical occasions” (Johnson 243). When following the Aristotelian tradition of rhetoric, ethos is joined by pathos and logos to constitute the three modes of proof.

[6] Professor of Communication Arts Lloyd F. Bitzer defines exigence as “an imperfection marked by urgency” and helps to “inspire and determine the appropriateness of discourse” (Dupont 76).

remain silent. Any voice gives Echo's power; thus, all voices give her power. Such is the strategy employed throughout feminist movements and explored in this thesis.

By adopting the language of a privileged voice (*i.e.*, a male voice) and subverting the original message to serve her own ambitions, Echo claims a formidable space in the dialogue, all while keeping the ethos of the original speaker. "The restrictions on women's speech made their speech potentially more powerful," McDermott further notes, "because it is therefore more transgressive" (202). To be transgressive implicitly designates norms that are being transgressed, established social systems being confronted. The very framework of norms, rules, and values restricting women's speech offers alternative means of power when women speak or act subversively. The confinement initially faced – like the restriction Juno imposed – is ineffective, as any subversion becomes exponentially more influential.

Note: Limitations & Objectives

The multiplicities of female experience and the post-modern assertion that there is no concrete definition of 'woman' render an absolute analysis of feminist movements challenging, to say the least. The terminology becomes further complicated when considering how the contemporary political moment influences the causes and goals of both the self-identified and otherwise labeled feminists. The understanding of both feminism and feminist is fluid for self-identification and imposed constructions alike. As Butler illustrates, "Indeed, the premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism, understood as a seamless category of women, inevitably generates multiple refusals to accept the category" (6).

Furthermore, retroactively applying modern terminology to historical concepts presents complications of its own. Because the efforts of this thesis are to trace what has since been

understood as feminist strategies, I use *feminism* somewhat anachronistically. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, contemporary *feminism* is defined as the "[a]dvocacy of equality of the sexes and the establishment of the political, social, and economic rights of the female sex; the movement associated with this" ("Feminism, N."). However, this is the third entry. The first two definitions, now disused, temporally align with the beginning of the women's movement. These entries relate to having the qualities of femininity and were employed "primarily, by anti-suffragists, to refer negatively to women's rights activists, that is, those committed to the legal, economic, and social equality of women" (Campbell 3). With the definition of *feminism* shifting so drastically, its meaning and use reversing entirely since the first wave, it quickly becomes problematic.

I employ an inclusive and retroactive construction of feminism. Although first-wave feminists would not have considered themselves such, nor would they have the retrospect to place themselves within the first wave, they embody the same mentalities and basic ideologies as contemporary feminists. Consequently, I do not feel unjust in considering them as such, but must also emphasize the anachronism in applying the term *feminist* so comprehensively. Similarly unstable is the categorization of the female rhetor. As I am analyzing rhetoric of feminists, specifically from female voices, one could also cast them as female rhetoricians, even though they may not classify themselves as such. Patricia Bizzell helps alleviate any anachronistic tension. Because "[s]cholarship to articulate the traits of women's rhetorics [*sic*] may look at almost any writings or recorded speeches by women," as Bizzell illustrates, then "…a woman whose writings are judged to be rhetorical, or to be employing persuasive devices, may be nominated ex post facto as a woman rhetorician" (772). Thus, I actively nominate Elizabeth Cady Stanton as a woman rhetorician, along with the other voices I highlight. Though this

primarily emphasizes the rhetoric of feminist movements, I want to take Bizzell's assertion one-step further by dropping the modifier of woman. Yes, they are women. Yes, their rhetorical appeals are grounded in feminism. But if one recognizes the definition of feminism as the advocacy for the equality of the sexes, then retaining this qualifier seems counterproductive. Instead, I nominate the following female voices as rhetorical voices, no modification required.

While reductionism is problematic, so too is the attempt at complete inclusion of all internal variation. That is not to say this thesis will avoid any nod towards the multiplicities and diversity within these topics, nor will it dismiss the critiques that these movements exclude certain voices. Rather, in an effort to make productive analyses, some nuance must be sacrificed. Furthermore, the scope of this work is limited to specific moments in American feminist movements within the past two centuries. It is by no means a comprehensive analysis of these waves of feminism and of course relies on a larger, global history of work allowing these movements to take place. Instead, I use these moments as a case study to track strategies that have endured the decades and political instability, suggesting these waves are still in conversation and that contemporary feminist movements explicitly rely on their foremothers.

Finally, I hope an explicit analysis of contemporary rhetoric and its comparison to previous strategies, specifically identifying moments of language reclamation, contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of how language operates within these spheres. As Ahmed notes, "placing hope in feminism is not simply about the future; it is also about recognizing the persistence of the past in the present" (187). Most effectively continuing feminist dialogues necessitates operating within this temporal ambiguity. Continuation implies a history, a current action, and a future direction. One must be acutely aware of context, of the moment in which one speaks, while also appreciating and responding to the prior dialogues, for the "persistence of the

past" endures. As bell hooks elucidates, "our task would be 'not to forget the past but to break its hold'" (33). Ahmed offers recourse to break its hold, instructing, "One must persist because of this persistence, by keeping feminism alive in the present" (188). However, "What we 'speak for' when 'we speak against' is not always available to us, as an object that can be delineated in the present. Indeed, speaking for something, rather than someone, often involves living with the uncertainty of what is possible in the world that we inhabit" (Ahmed 189). The feminist hope Ahmed discusses is future-oriented. Yet in another embodiment of contradiction, it does not operate primarily within this register. By analyzing the "persistence of the past in the present [feminist dialogue]," I hope to retrieve "what we 'speak for'" and to facilitate future conversations regarding feminist rhetoric (Ahmed 187, 189).

Section 1: Beginnings

First-wave Feminist & Suffragette Rhetoric

The Woman's Movement in the United States drew upon a variety of source materials to construct and present its case. In fact, the movement itself emerged from a multiplicity of campaigns. It both embodied and embraced contradiction. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, author of the multivolume analysis on key feminist texts *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, explores the origins of early woman's activists within this frame of contradiction. "Woman's alleged moral superiority," Campbell explains, "generated a conflict out of which the woman's rights movement emerged" (10). Because women are characterized as virtuous and pure, uncorrupted and protected within their domestic domain, they are thus considered more sensitive to moral sympathies. By the end of the eighteenth century, a number of texts "began to appear in which women argued for increased public roles, primarily as moral agents" (Bizzell 772). Since its establishment at the end of the eighteenth century, the strategy of manipulating one's restrictions to instead increase one's autonomy and influence has been taken up repeatedly. For those we now mark as early suffragettes, their embrace of the private sphere – and by extension of moral authority – is the restriction that allows them to extend that authority outside the home.

Although well within their assigned roles, women's response to identified moral corruptions was still considered a violation of social norms. Women who entered the public sphere relinquished the virtues of respectability that define the domestic space. Campbell identifies how this catch-22 became productive for those caught within such structures:

> What became the woman's rights/woman suffrage movement arose out of this contradiction… The hostility women experienced in reform efforts led them to found

> female reform organizations and to initiate a movement for woman's rights [and] base a movement claiming woman's right to engage in public moral action. (10-11)

Turns such as these, exploiting the very restrictions imposed by those in power to then serve as the rationale in asserting one's autonomy, are found throughout feminist rhetoric. Not surprisingly, the rhetorical strategies employed also generate from such intersectionality, creating a palimpsest of activist language.

The efforts to secure women's right to vote were supported by a number of critical parties, yet two voices tend to garner the most recognition: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. In theorizing why these two figures remain so illustrious, Ellen DuBois stresses:

> The ability of Stanton and Anthony to see so far beyond the conventions of their day regarding women's sphere came – perhaps ironically – from their application of liberal definitions of freedom that had always been intended only for men, principles such as economic independence, natural rights, and personal liberty. (Stanton xiv, Revised Edition)

Their reclamation of an understanding of freedom "intended only for men" reflects the diachronic process of phenomenology as explored by Jacques Derrida. The application of these "liberal definitions of freedom" by women, entirely contradicting the intended audience, illustrates the terms' instability. The Derridean notion of "trace" is also present, for although Stanton and Anthony reframe the adopted definitions, remnants of the origins remain. DuBois's emphasis on the irony of this application of male-intended definitions, as delineated with dashes, indicates a larger rhetorical strategy: the use of ironic, paradoxical, and subversive language, thus allowing the disenfranchised female voice a degree of influence.

The legitimization of female voice is not inherently assumed. Rather, the female voice must make space for its speech and defend its right to do so, while also defending the content expressed. Sociological theory describes what is needed for these processes, stating "*Legitimate authority*[7] [*sic*] is granted to actors when their social position grants them the ability to manage others and their social context approves of them taking said action" (Hegtvedt 257). This theory highlights the need for both ability and approval to wield legitimate authority within social structures. The social position of woman, submissive and docile and pure, did not grant women the ability to manage others outside the domestic sphere. The social context in nineteenth-century America did not facilitate others' approval of taking action. Women during this era, and to an extent still, were not allowed the authority[8] or the legitimacy[9] to speak.

Circumventing these structures, asserting the woman's right to speak, was the first step. Recently, scholars have been rereading nineteenth-century texts authored by women as "accounts of how women defined, claimed, and justified active public voices for themselves" (Bizzell 771). Scholars rooted in rhetoric are also "recovering these women's reflections on their persuasive practices" (Bizzell 771). I seek to read the selected suffragette text in line with this recent academic bent, engaged in discussions of asserting the right to speak and the right to be heard.

Both Anthony and Stanton repeatedly affirmed these ideals. "They insisted on their right – and capacity – to change society and affect history," DuBois describes. "To their lasting honor, they claimed their rights as historical actors not despite the fact that they were women, but

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[7] The term and its definition are drawn from sociological theory. Interdisciplinary terminology may prompt some slippage as it moves between subjects, but it is invaluable when considering such complex social systems.

[8] "*Authority* [*sic*]," according to Hegtvedt, "is granted by an actor's social position and allows them the ability to "direct, regulate, and evaluate the behavior of others" (253).

[9] "*Legitimacy* [*sic*] is granted to an actor by the broader social group when said social group supports the actor's pattern of behavior" (Hegtvedt 253).

because of it" (Stanton xviii, First Edition). In embracing the very identity responsible for their disenfranchisement, Anthony and Stanton distort what should suppress, appropriating it instead to support their own platform. It should be noted, however, that although both figures contributed complementary strengths, their influences unfortunately tend to become conflated. The two are frequently considered and discussed as a singular entity. While both deserve recognition for their efforts, their specializations are significant. "Cady Stanton was the pre-eminent thinker and publicist," Campbell describes, "while Anthony was the greater administrator and organizer" (143). Stanton served as the primary source for establishing ideology and delivering rhetorical appeals. Campbell notes, "From 1848 until her death in 1902, Cady Stanton's voice and pen were dedicated to woman's rights" (143). Thus, because Stanton is the principle author of nineteenth-century feminism, her work constitutes the majority of this section. Although both figures embody DuBois's description, claiming the right to speak *because* of their position as women, Stanton's claim can be read within the context of additional rhetorical strategies by considering the history of her other work.

This turn from suppression to strength parallels the strategy exemplified by Echo, as characterized by Dermott. Of the rhetorical appeals made on behalf of the suffragette cause, one piece particularly illustrates an impeccable application of the Subversive Echo: "The Declaration of Sentiments." The Seneca Falls Convention, originally known as the Women's Rights Convention, is widely considered the official beginning of the women's suffrage movement. The Seneca Falls Convention lasted from the nineteenth to the twentieth of July 1848; though it "was not the first convention to gather women… it was the first convention to focus its attention on woman's rights" (Campbell 51). The description and proceedings of the Seneca Falls Convention are documented in "The Report of the Woman's Rights Convention." Before an official

recording of the convention's minutes, the report briefly reviews the purpose for convening. The first words of the meeting's report, serving as a self-definition and thus illustrating its priorities, are "A Convention to Discuss the Social, Civil, and Religious Conditions of Woman" (*Proceedings* 3). Such explicit focus on women, specifically, was as noteworthy then as it is now, though perhaps for slightly different reasons. In retrospect, we mark this moment as the formal beginning of feminism in America. Like the first chapter of a book, the tonality and message conveyed at the beginning of this chapter of history significantly influences the cultural construction of the larger work, both internally and externally. In analyzing the rhetoric of feminist movements, therefore, particular emphasis on this moment is crucial.

Establishing ideologies is essential in shaping, unifying, and propelling the overall movement. This work by Elizabeth Cady Stanton significantly contributed to shaping the suffragette cause, while also informing our understanding of modern feminism. The keynote address delivered on the first day of the convention strongly asserted the breaking of past assumptions and enacted the beginning of a new historical chapter. This opening speech was the first to be considered feminist in the contemporary understanding. Her very speaking reflects contemporary feminist ideals, though radical in her time. Campbell notes, "Her present willingness to violate the taboo was justified by moral principles, by a sense of timeliness, and by a belief that only women could effect the changes required" (60). The "sense of timeliness" Campbell describes directly appeals to kairos, albeit in a reductive form. Stanton's speech, as well as the Seneca Falls Convention as a whole – the first woman's rights convention – mark the kairotic moment fully defined by Kinneavy.

The address solidified not only the shift in feminist rhetoric, but also Stanton's ethos. She established herself as a force to be reckoned with, skilled in persuasive strategy and unwavering

in strength of voice. The “Declaration of Sentiments,” following the keynote address and adopted the next day, confirmed her command over language. The keynote address may have confirmed her individual presence in the conversation, but it speaks to Stanton more than the first wave. The “Declaration of Sentiments” serves as the movement’s manifesto and speaks comprehensively, surpassing the individual Although amended, approved, and signed by the entire convention, the “Declaration of Sentiments” was principally authored by Stanton, just as the Declaration of Independence was principally authored by Thomas Jefferson. For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, I consider each the speakers of their respective declarations. Though they may each be the voice, their declarations speak for a group greater than themselves. They speak for a movement.

While previous scholarship has acknowledged the relationship between these two documents, few works have thoroughly compared the texts or conducted a rhetorical analysis on the connection. Furthermore, few – if any – have explored the strategies and effectiveness of Stanton’s echoing of Jefferson and the feminist implications with the framework of the Subversive Echo. It is this gap in the academy that I strive to fill.

Asserting the Validity Female Voice: How Echoing Offers Ethos

The Relationship Between the Declaration of Independence & the “Declaration of Sentiments”

The “Declaration of Sentiments” may be an echo of the Declaration of Independence, but it does not perfectly mimic the latter. Nor does it necessarily strive to do so. The divide between these two key documents is easily evident when one merely looks at the practices for citing each of them. According to Modern Language Association citation policies, one does not modify “the title of laws, acts, and similar documents in either the text or the list of works cited,” such as the

Constitution or the Declaration of Independence, especially because these documents are considered so well known (*The Purdue OWL*). The "Declaration of Sentiments," on the other hand, is afforded no such privileges. Thus, MLA policy mandates that "Sentiments"[10] be consistently framed within quotation marks. This speaks to the relative publication dates of the two documents and the degree of significance in establishing a national identity, but it also can be read as an example of the lesser position of the female voice. Though this is just one reading of MLA in-text citation practices, the framing of these documents contributes to our understanding of them.

In any rhetorical appeal, it is crucial to first establish one's credibility in order to prevent the audience's immediate dismissal of any following claims. Stanton establishes the credibility to make her appeals at the Seneca Falls Convention by drawing upon the previously established ethos of the Declaration of Independence. Explicitly or implicitly connecting her call for women's rights to a document so crucial in constructing American identity allows Stanton to speak from this privilege. Rather than speaking from the comparatively disenfranchised voice of a woman in the twentieth-century United States, Stanton chooses to speak from the ethos of one of the most renowned founding fathers. She wears this ethos as armor, but also wields it as a weapon.

Evoking the authority of Jefferson and the foundational ideology of the nation ensures that if one wishes to delegitimize Stanton's appeals, one must first delegitimize these pillars. To attack the ethos of the nation would injure the speaker's own identity as a citizen of that nation. Additionally, it would open the speaker up to retaliation from any who choose to defend the

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[10] The Declaration of Independence and the "Declaration of Sentiments" may be abbreviated throughout this work, though the latter will always be distinguished through the use of quotation marks.

nation or their own identities as citizen. The respected editor and founder of the *New Yorker* and the *New York Tribune*, Horace Greeley, responded to this move precisely as Stanton's framework intended. Although hesitant to embrace the seemingly radical proposals of the convention, Greeley recognized the incontrovertible ethos of Jefferson's Declaration. He outlines this thought process in a *New York Tribune* editorial, writing:

> But when a sincere republican is asked to say in sober earnest what adequate reason he can give for refusing the demand of women to an equal participation with men in political rights, he must answer, None at all… the answer must be, 'I accede to it. However unwise and mistaken the demand, it is but the assertion of a natural right, and as such must be conceded.' (Ingersoll 443)

In the above editor's note, Greeley speaks in absolutes, repeating "must" in every option outlined. Within the parameters Stanton provides, there is but one appropriate response, for any answer other than confirmation ultimately disparages one's own character, decency, and authority. Greeley speaks from the authority of a renowned journalist, yet because of the endorsement from and trust of the people, he also represents their voices. His response, then, reflects the response of the generalized other.[11]

In July of 1848, the declarations made by the Women's Rights Convention were considered radical indeed. Greeley's describing these directives as "unwise and mistaken" is not out of place in this historical context. Consequently, the common man who is likely to share this reaction would also be obliged to share Greeley's conclusion: however radical these claims for equal rights or the women making them may seem, the only appropriate response is acquiescence, resigned agreement. While the specific inclusion of "natural rights" is the decisive

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[11] For more on the generalized other, consult George Herbert Mead and his work *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*.

element in this agreement, it also opens Stanton to censure. "Natural rights arguments," Campbell illustrates, "were perceived as less feminine… Women who claimed their rights were seen as selfish, as wanting to abandon their traditional womanly roles to enter the sphere of men" (15). Stanton claiming her rights would have been dismissed if not for her speaking through the Declaration of Independence. It did not matter if the claims she made were less feminine or seen as selfish for a woman to assert, for it was not her voicing them, but Jefferson. Failing to endorse this echoing of the Declaration shames the dissident, not the Echo. Therefore, framing her argument through the Declaration of Independence allows Stanton to parry critique directed at her and direct it instead towards an essentially unquestionable authority: America itself. She can sidestep attempts to delegitimize her voice, wearing that stronger ethos as armor.

The right to speak, the very nature of the female voice, must frequently be asserted and reasserted. "They were a group virtually unique in rhetorical history," Campbell explains, "because a central element in woman's oppression was the denial of her right to speak" (9). Rhetorical history is innately constituted by rhetorical appeals. Participating in such a vocal tradition while having one's voice continuously denied and dismissed and excluded is challenging, to say the least. Asserting the right to speak is crucial for women in the rhetorical tradition. For Stanton, leaning on Jefferson's ethos does that work continuously. As Ahmed notes, "The attack on the speech [of a woman] translates quickly into an attack on her as an embodied subject" (169-170). While Jefferson is problematic in his own right,[12] he is much more difficult to dismiss than an unknown female voice, especially by those of his ilk and those who subscribe to the core American values he represents.

[12] Jefferson's owning over 600 slaves during his lifetime and his controversial relationship with Sally Hemings are just two examples of his problematic past with human rights. For more, see sources such as *Smithsonian Magazine*'s "The Dark Side of Thomas Jefferson."

The Declaration of Independence serves as one of the three core documents for the founding of the United States, along with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. But the Declaration also serves as a crucial text for the development of the country's radical ideologies. According to The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "These three documents, known collectively as the Charters of Freedom, have secured the rights of the American people for more than two and a quarter centuries and are considered instrumental to the founding and philosophy of the United States" ("America's Founding Documents"). The Constitution, and by extension the Bill of Rights, relies upon the ideological pillars established by the Declaration, as do a countless number of social and political movements at home and abroad. From the French Revolution to the end of apartheid in South Africa, the Declaration of Independence "continues to inspire people around the world to fight for freedom and equality" ("America's Founding Documents"). The Declaration of Independence influences social constructions regarding the universal, but it also informs the specific.

Its influence on identity construction is equally immeasurable. "The Declaration of Independence states the principles on which our government, and our identity as Americans, are based" ("America's Founding Documents"). Distinguishing "our identity as Americans" through parenthetical expression implies a secondary importance to the sentence. Secondary, however, is not necessarily lesser. Rather, the parenthetical expression occupies a space of implicit recognition. It is as self-evident as the truths specified in the preamble. The unequivocal assertion allows no room for dissent, as a mere parenthetical is sufficient emphasis to effectively convey the enormity of such a statement. Furthermore, though the speaker is a national agency,

the possessive yet inclusive pronoun "our" still indicates group solidarity,[13] a singular entity, and an equality of responsibility. Those within the group consequently subscribe to the parameters outlined by this founding document.

"These truths," delineated by the Declaration of Independence, are crucial to any American audience. Thus, Stanton draws upon the document. The parallel ensures Stanton is not dismissed as merely an emotional woman. Ahmed asserts, "Feminists who speak out against established 'truths' are often constructed as emotional, as failing the very standards of reason and impartiality that are assumed to form the basis of 'good judgement [*sic*]'" (Ahmed 170). Stanton's claims clearly contest established 'truths,' such as female inferiority. One only needs to look to Greeley's dithering over her "unwise and mistaken" demands to identify claims against her rationality. Feminism, as Ahmed notes, is frequently considered hostile, thus making feminists persist in explaining why their anger is reasonable (170). Even when discussing emotions, therefore, women must prove the validity to voice them. She must provide warrant to be emotional before addressing the cause of emotions.

The female voice is yet again caught in contradiction. A female speaker is likely to be quickly dismissed as emotional, but if she forsakes any conventional femininity, she is equally dismissible. "A woman had to meet all the usual requirements of speakers, demonstrating expertise, authority, and rationality in order to show her competence and make herself credible to audiences," Campbell states. "However, if that was all she did, she was likely to be judged masculine, unwomanly, aggressive, and cold. As a result, women speakers sometimes searched for ways to legitimate such 'unwomanly' behavior" (12). Thus, feminist rhetorical appeals face the additional burden of maintaining an appropriate embodiment of womanliness. Again, female

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[13] For more on group solidarity, consult Émile Durkheim's descriptions of mechanical and organic solidarity, found in his text *The Division of Labor in Society*.

voices face a catch-22. And again, they find an alternative solution. To maintain their credibility and resolve these obstacles, female rhetoricians often turned to strategies involving the symbolic.

For example, Stanton spoke with a formidable force, irreverent of the traditionally masculine understanding of the rhetor. Rather than condescend to make her voice lesser and easier to digest, she turned to the symbolic.[14] Stanton legitimates her "unwomanly" behavior by adopting the legitimacy Jefferson offers represents. Additionally, because women's speech is consistently delegitimized as being merely emotional, any appeal to pathos[15] a woman makes must be thoroughly disguised. Indeed, throughout the "Declaration of Sentiments," Stanton allows very little pathetic slippage. Rather, her appeal is grounded in logos.[16] Identifying the hierarchy between logic and emotion, Ahmed explains "this hierarchy clearly translates into a hierarchy between subjects: whilst thought and reason are identified with the masculine and Western subject, emotions and bodies are associated with femininity and racial others" (170). Stanton adopts the ethos Jefferson presents in the Declaration: the masculine and Western subject. She adopts the voice of reason. She embraces logos, mirroring Jefferson's deductive reasoning, which further contributes to her authority. That is not to say she abandons any emotional appeals. Rather, the negative diction she employs carries an emotional appeal that is securely couched within a logical framework.

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[14] The symbolic is linked to the rhetorical understanding of commonplaces, but it is also influenced by sociological theory. In "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," sociologist Ann Swidler defines culture as being comprised of "symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal ritual practices such as language gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life." For more on the symbolic, see Swidler's entire piece and Erving Goffman's work on Interaction Ritual.

[15] Pathos is defined as "an argumentative/persuasive appeal to the emotions of the audience" and "is based upon the rhetor's ability to arouse certain types of emotions in the audience" (Colavito 492, 493).

[16] Logos is the appeal to logic and "persuades by means of demonstrating the existence of real or imagined truths" (Colavito 493).

Stanton strategically responded to her historical context, aware of her position in the first wave of feminism, though she may not have named it such. Stanton also deliberately navigated the cultural and political landscape, exploiting the contradictory position of women as moral authorities to ground her right to speak. Finally, Stanton cemented her ethos and asserted her right to speak by wearing the authority of commonplaces, of Jefferson, and of America itself. Securing these steps allowed her to make her radical claims. Through the act of close reading, while also using digital tools for methodical data visualization, one can better understand the precise moves of her language reclamation as a feminist rhetorical strategy.

Close Reading the Echo: A Rhetorical Analysis of the "Declaration of Sentiments"

From the title of Stanton's manifesto, the relationship to the original text is easily evident. The "Declaration of Sentiments" clearly parallels both the language and the style of the Declaration of Independence. Stanton's structure emulates Jefferson's: Introduction, Preamble, List of Grievances, Conclusion. Until the List of Grievances, Stanton essentially mirrors Jefferson's iconic language but for a few deviations which are particularly significant for this analysis. For those attending the convention at Seneca Falls, the resemblance between these founding documents would be confirmed after just a few lines. Echoing the first two sections sufficiently establishes the relationship to the Declaration, allowing Stanton to then speak to her own occasion. Stanton's precise echo of the first two sections, her reclamation of Jefferson's language, represents the first example of the Subversive Echo as a feminist rhetorical strategy.

When considering the relationship between these two texts, it is most productive to compare the language while honoring the organizational structures both employ. The Introduction of "Sentiments" demonstrates a close echoing of the Declaration of Independence.

Both texts begin with “When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one…” While Jefferson finishes the phrase with “people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another,” Stanton intervenes with “portion of the family of man.” Stanton does not only intervene; she supersedes Jefferson’s scope. While Jefferson focuses on the nation and political bands, Stanton expands her appeal to include all mankind, illustrated by “the family of man.” Her exact repetition of the Declaration’s famous first clause establishes the relationship of “Sentiments” to the Declaration of Independence. The familiar first phrase informs the audience of the foundation upon which they stand. Intervening during the second clause quickly destabilizes that ground. Though each text was written primarily by one voice, that voice assumes responsibility for a unified larger body, which is indicated by this second clause. Jefferson indicates the subject making the declaration is “one people.” Theoretically all-inclusive, “one people” describes the American people as a single and complete entity. In actuality, it is a single voice, the privileged white male voice, speaking on behalf of other propertied white males.

Stanton capitalizes on this referential slippage. She acknowledges the category of woman as a portion of the population, but by using “family of man,” she invokes larger institutions. Specifically, she invokes the unity and sanctity of the family unit, as well as alluding to biblical ideologies. As explored earlier, the place of women was in the private sphere, in the domestic, confined to the family.[17] The choice to use “of man” rather than “human” can be problematized as supporting sexist structures, but it can also be read as a slightly subversive nod towards the patriarchal social structures.

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[17] One area that can help inform these notions is the work of sociology of the family. For this, I turn primarily to the scholarship of Gary Alan Fine.

The next dialectical interjection also concerns positioning the self between and among other figures. After omitting Jefferson's "to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another," Stanton adopts most of the following transition: "to assume among the powers of the earth." Rather than "power," Stanton chooses "people," reaffirming the personal and emotional appeal introduced with "family of man." As to the position, however, Stanton deviates more significantly. The Declaration is a call to assume "the separate and equal station." While that document is a declaration of division, Stanton seeks redefinition and inclusion. Understandably, she forsakes this position in favor of "a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied." This move is the largest change Stanton makes in the Preamble in terms of bulk, but it also indicates the type of subversion to be expected throughout the remainder of the "Declaration." Different, not separate. Inclusion, rather than departure. In shifting the station Jefferson outlines to a different position, Stanton illustrates her own theoretical positioning and reveals her rhetorical reframing.

After resituating this position, Stanton adopts the remainder of the Introduction, but for the allowance of a few grammatical changes and small substitutions. She exchanges "the separation" for a more applicable "such a course," yet this switch still maintains the spirit and tone of the original text. Even forgoing these minor alterations of context or grammar, the "Declaration of Sentiments" explicitly repeats fifty of the seventy-two words in the Declaration of Independence's Introduction (see figure 1). Overtly echoing approximately 70% of the original text demonstrates more than a resemblance or a source of inspiration. Such a high percentage of shared language sufficiently supports the idea that Stanton was not simply drawing upon the Declaration; she was echoing the Declaration.

Though some of the 30% difference between the word choices includes negligible grammatical choices, the bulk of this difference derives from Stanton's unique positioning, which can be understood as her distinct subversion of the original text. Especially because subversion is understood as a reversal, position is crucial, for both the original and reversed subjects. Position orders subversion, whether it is in regards to the speaker, audience, or individual words. Since the majority of textual variance is Stanton shifting her position, the text that is not an echo is thus the subversion. Before one even moves past the Introduction, the theory of the Subversive Echo is easily evident. The parallels between the "Declaration of Sentiments" and the Declaration of Independence are so substantial so quickly, Stanton's subversion so strong, that one could practically render judgment on the strategy's effectiveness from the Introduction alone. However, Stanton offers equally rich material throughout "Sentiments," deserving a similar analytical treatment.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident:" the iconic introduction to Preamble of the Declaration of Independence is a formidable rhetorical call. Perhaps the most famous line in any American document, this introduction establishes unity, emphasizes truth, and is central to our understanding of the United States. In the "Declaration of Sentiments," Stanton embraces the distinguished Preamble nearly in its entirety. The small shifts she makes, however, are thus significantly more striking. Of the 237 words Stanton wields in her Preamble, 199 directly mirror Jefferson's choices (see figure 2). When one performs a more generous comparison, allowing for spelling differences and other negligible deviations, that number increases to 206, yielding an echoing rate of 87%. The widespread acceptance, or more accurately affection, for the Preamble offers a resilient base on which to build her rhetorical argument, a base that can withstand whatever destabilization subversion may trigger and still be supportive.

Though the actual changes Stanton makes be but little, they are fierce. The famed first sentence of the Preamble outlines timeless American commonplaces, understood in the classic rhetorical sense. Commonplaces, defined as ideas or knowledge shared by a community, contribute to the ethos of the speaker by appealing to these shared values. Although identity constructions are notoriously fickle, the core commonplaces listed in the Preamble's first sentence have only become increasingly integral to maintaining a stable American identity over the centuries. People turn to our nation's origins when seeking identity confirmation. Rather than dissipate over time, the national identity and its commonplaces have only strengthened. The commonplaces listed in the Preamble provide that reassurance. American historian Jack P. Greene describes the lasting influence of the Preamble's first sentence. He states, "Perhaps no single phrase from the Revolutionary era has had such continuing importance in American public life as the dictum 'all men are created equal' in the Declaration of Independence" (Greene 238). He continues, "For each generation, it has served as an imposing reminder of what Americans might achieve and as a standard against which they can measure how far they had to go" (Greene 238). Stanton calls upon this standard, relying upon the commonplaces, using them to challenge the dictum.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," the Preamble states, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Stanton's first interjection in the Preamble is powerful. She adds just two words to the above sentence, instead writing, "that all men *and women* are created equal" (emphasis mine). Though a small change proportionally, the frank and outspoken tone with which she speaks reveals an unapologetic and assertive figure, fully embodying the claims she asserts. The integrity of the sentence isn't jeopardized with her

interjection. Rather, it extends the meaning to fully occupy the unequivocal and unambiguous nature of "equal." Furthermore, the invocation of unalienable rights confirms that Stanton's rhetorical argument regards natural rights. Because natural rights are universal, innately protected from infringement by laws or nations, her addition of "of women" punctuates her rhetorical appeal.

Stanton maintains her dedication to this line of persuasion with her next interruption. Equally modest in scope, concerning just two words, this move is also equal in force. Although it is easy to see authorial choice and intent in the rewriting, authority is also palpable in the preserving of the original text. Though Stanton maintains the majority of Jefferson's Preamble, her next intervention is one of omission. The Preamble continues, "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Stanton chooses to exclude "among Men." She again maintains the integrity of Jefferson's words, echoing not only the exact phrasing but also the text's meaning. Yet in eliminating "among Men," she executes an indisputable albeit subtle Subversive Echo. This move calls out the hypocrisy of this founding document while refusing to submit to its limitations.

Mirroring an established document presents its own limitations, particularly in regards to how context and intentionality inform structure. Stanton's next break with Jefferson's document addresses these concerns. Jefferson utilizes anaphora heavily throughout the first half of the preamble and again, most notably, throughout the List of Grievances. While the use in latter is nearly aggressive in its intensity, the application in the former provides a heartbeat. Steady. Strong. Clear. Comprehensible.

In her own Preamble, Stanton adopts every use of anaphora, save one. In fact, Stanton adopts the beginning of every sentence and the beginning of every clause, save one. It is in this intervention that she introduces her own argument, modifying the Declaration to suit the needs of first-wave feminists. The occasion for Jefferson's text is, of course, the American Revolution. Its purpose: to announce the American colonies' separation from Great Britain, to justify their actions to the global sphere, and to provide rationale to its colonizer. Though also justifying actions and providing rationale, Stanton does not argue for separation. Thus, her rhetorical strategy deviates accordingly.

Jefferson uses the anaphora of "that …" to indicate a rational line of thought and keep the reader following this pattern. Anaphora derives from the Greek ana, meaning "on" or "up," and pherein, meaning "to carry" (Saville-Troike 10). Literally, then, anaphora carries on. It carries on the speaker's line of thought and the attention of the reader. Anaphora is defined as the "repetition of the same word or phrase in several successive clauses"[18] (Saville-Troike 10). "*That* all men are created equal, *that* they are endowed by… *that* among these… *That* to secure these rights… *That* whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, is it the Right of…" (emphasis mine). That, pun intended, parallel structure emphasizes Jefferson's deductive reasoning, further illustrating his appeal to logos. But the parallel structure emphasizes the document and word choices themselves. As a rhetorical device, repetition is one manifestation of emphasis within discourse. Repetition of particular parts of a sentence, "such as prepositional phrases, adverbial phrases, along with introductory clauses, serves to highlight a speaker's or writer's important idea" (Connal 221-222). This parallel structure highlights

[18] Like other rhetorical terms, anaphora has multiple meanings depending on the theoretical approach and the literary tradition upon which one draws. This thesis employs the more traditionally rhetorical application of anaphora, which "restricts the term only to repetition which occurs sequentially in clause-initial [*sic*] positions" (Saville-Troike 10).

Jefferson's natural rights argument. It casts the rest of the appeal in a light of positivity and progress.

The natural rights argument also evokes the classical rhetorical authorities of Greek and Roman culture. Jefferson draws upon the ethos of these ancient academies to ground his own appeal, just as Stanton draws upon Jefferson. Because anaphora's effect is to indicate a rational line of thought, Jefferson's calling upon the great ancient thinkers when stressing natural rights further supports his authority. To emphasize his appeal to logos rather than pathos, Jefferson employs anaphora repeatedly in his Declaration. The anaphora at the beginning of the Preamble tries to balance the anaphora throughout the List of Grievances, serving as a positive first impression before listing the considerable and weighty accusations. Jefferson returns to *that* anaphora in his concluding paragraph, thus couching the Grievances between calls of action and inspirational sentiment.

Of the five examples of anaphora in Jefferson's Preamble, two occupy a second rhetorical meaning. The final two executions of anaphora are also examples of anapodoton,[19] or a "kind of ellipsis in which an entire clause, usually the second member of a correlative expression, is left unstated" (Quinn 11). Parallelism provides the reader with a sense of balance and rhythm; the anapodoton quickens the pace slightly, alerting the reader to an upcoming change. In "Sentiments," Stanton also alerts the reader[20] to her deviation from Jefferson's text by forgoing his final anapodoton. She omits a single 'that.' In doing so, she indicates how and where she shifts her appeal to achieve her own objectives. She indicates where the appeal for national

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[19] Anapodoton is also known as anatapodoton, but this thesis uses the former term.
[20] The "Declaration of Sentiments" was first delivered orally, but for the purposes of direct rhetorical comparisons, this thesis treats it and the Declaration of Independence primarily as written texts.

independence is replaced by the appeal for woman's rights. The sentence in which she chooses not to adopt Jefferson's anaphora is also one of the sentences she alters most drastically.

"That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends," Jefferson's original Declaration reads, "it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government…" Stanton omits the introductory 'that' in the first clause, and then shifts the latter two clauses to frame the subject and objective of "Sentiments." She substitutes "of the People" to instead read "of those who suffer from it." The choice of the verb "suffer" has a number of implications. One particular implication is due to its use as a modifier – of *those* who suffer – indicating a specific portion of the population, only some of the governed mentioned in the previous sentence. While theoretically, the dichotomy she draws is just between men and women, one must acknowledge the implicit exclusion of voices. Theoretically, "those who suffer" are women, as opposed to men who had the vote. However, when this rhetorical appeal was made in 1848, the population of eligible men was also restricted. The black man would not be granted the constitutional right to vote until Radical Reconstruction, twenty-two years after Stanton's appeal.[21] Although Stanton does not qualify the women she represents, those who suffer, there is a very particular woman for whom she speaks: the white, typically middle-class, woman. The suffering, then, is only the suffering of a few. In doing so, Stanton commits the same kind of elitism as Jefferson.

Limited representation notwithstanding, Stanton's choice to use "suffer" contributes twofold to her appeal. Though she primarily leans on logos rather than pathos, her vehement tone allows for some pathetic slippage. Using "suffer" to describe the designated subject of this speech is one such example of how pathos and biblical allusions are smuggled into her rational

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[21] Though granted in 1870, largely due to Radical Republican Reconstruction, the right for a black man to vote was – of course – not fully realized until after the Civil Rights era.

argument. The word choice also connects back to the diction used in the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson's next sentence includes "suffer" in two conjugational forms, and the Preamble's last sentence presents yet another form. Mirroring Jefferson's original language reminds the reader yet again that Stanton's argument is drawing directly from this core document. Just as she makes a shift in the language, she also includes the original voice, providing paradoxical interpretations. The voice is hers, and yet her subversive voice deviating from the original voice is still the voice of the original. She adopts, she subverts: such is the trademark of the Subversive Echo.

The sentence in which Stanton deviates from Jefferson's anaphora is one of significant alteration; the two clauses following Stanton's substitution with "those who suffer" are similarly shifted. Jefferson explains, "It is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government." Stanton replaces his subject with "those who suffer from it" and continues by reframing their rights as well. She asserts it is their right "to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government." Because the purpose of the "Declaration of Sentiments" was not to throw off the government entirely, as was the case for the Revolutionists, Stanton omits absolute diction such as abolish. Instead, she asserts the right of refusal.

The right of refusal reflects the central contradictions within feminism itself. While now the right of refusal may be more reminiscent of contemporary sexual assault conversations, it also evokes more semiotic concerns. As explored earlier, feminism is a response. It is defined by what it is against. Ahmed also notes, "Being against something is also being for something, but something that has yet to be articulated or is not yet" (175). Stanton's asserting the right of refusing allegiance to a government is dependent upon whether that government becomes destructive of natural rights. Thus, Stanton's assertion is a response. In being against something,

"Sentiments" is for something. But to respond, to react, is not a lesser form of action. In fact, Ahmed asserts, "a politics which acts without reaction is impossible: such a possibility depends on the erasure and concealment that come before the subject. There is no pure or originary [*sic*] action, which is outside such a history of 'reaction'" (174). Stanton's echoing of the Declaration of Independence recognizes the history of the nation and of the female experience throughout that history. Consequently, the right to refuse allegiance exemplifies a politics that acts through reaction.

Reaction is also not lesser in tone or force. Stanton modifies Jefferson's "and to institute new Government," instead writing "and to insist upon the institution of a new government." Adding the verb *insist* contributes to an unyielding and determined tone. Such a forceful approach was considered appropriate for a male voice, but unsuitable for a woman. Stanton's addition of "insist" is particularly striking, therefore, as it does not appear in Jefferson's text in any form. That formidable word choice is exclusively from Stanton. Possible only due to her previous loyalty to Jefferson's text and by extension her adoption of his ethos, inserting "to insist upon" allows another moment of pathetic slippage, following her use of "suffer." Insistence also is heavily connoted with a sense of agency and authority needed to make these demands.

After such an assertive intervention, Stanton leans back upon a close echo of Jefferson's original text. Until her Preamble's penultimate sentence, the only changes Stanton makes are regarding capitalization and comma usage, as well as one adoption of a word's contemporary spelling. The next substantial change is to the following Jeffersonian sentence: "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government." Stanton makes one substantive change to Jefferson's text. She omits "it is their right," moving

straight into “it is their duty.” This move is especially noticeable because it seems so discordant with her preceding rhetorical efforts. In her omissions, Stanton makes stark and significant shifts, adapting the text to her desired occasion. But she also leans on the natural rights argument throughout “Sentiments,” using a form of the word “right” four times before this moment and nine times after. If Stanton’s intention was anything other than merely simplifying and shortening the sentence to increase its impact, then removing “it is their right,” seems incongruous to her linguistic strategy. Removing “it is their right” emphasizes the other half; it emphasizes “it is their duty.” The notion of duty reflects the contradictory roles of women, who are cast as morally superior but then dismissed when responding to perceived moral injustices. Duty implies a higher authority to which one answers. It eclipses the individual, emphasizing the universal.

If her intention were to increase emphasis, then it would also help explain her next deviations. While Jefferson ends the single paragraph of the Preamble with three additional sentences, Stanton ends the paragraph after the first sentence and gives the remaining two sentences their own paragraph (see figures 3 and 4). Structurally, this is Stanton’s only modification thus far. Though noticeable in itself, the move also serves to highlight the ideas she sets apart in the first sentence. When discussing different methods of emphasis, Louise Rodriguez Connal lists one strategy as the “placement of the ideas in separate or short paragraphs that contrast with longer elements within the discourse” (222). The structure of “Sentiments” is visually similar to the Declaration, making this new paragraph all the more jarring.

It is not the sentences within this new paragraph that offer the biggest impact, but rather the break in text itself. Ending the paragraph, stopping the text. The white space on the page can

be just as striking as ink. To the reader, a new section indicates a pause, a momentary silence before continuing on to the next thought. Whether it be for a clause or sentence or paragraph or chapter or volume, the pause between sections is pregnant with meaning. Stanton's break forces the reader to reflect upon the concluding thought, the final sentence. The break emphasizes the substantial shifts in the final sentences and gives the reader space to consider the rich changes.

The final sentence in Stanton's Preamble departs significantly from the corresponding sentence in the original text. Jefferson writes, "Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government." To make these words applicable to her own purpose, Stanton replaces "these Colonies" to a more apt "the women under this government." However, this understanding of women is restricted to white, middle-class women. But in invoking "this government," Stanton holds her audience accountable. "This government" echoes the language and the occasion of the Declaration, again reminding the audience of the situational irony women in America faced: independent yet dependent.

The next shift Stanton makes is in regards to verb choice. Jefferson uses "to alter," which also reflects his earlier use of "to alter or to abolish it, and to institute" Because Stanton modified this section to read, "to refuse allegiance to it and insist upon the institution," she also modifies her later sentence to reflect the earlier verb choice. She renews the forceful tone evoked by the use of "to insist upon" by using "to demand." Thus, in repeating the strong-willed connotation of the earlier verb choice, Stanton maintains Jefferson's rhetorical strategy of repeating particular diction in the same places structurally. She echoes Jefferson's syntactical pattern, but is unambiguous in her subversion, unyielding in asserting her agency.

Stanton continues unapologetically asserting her agency with the paragraph's final clause. The demand articulates Stanton's overall purpose: to realize "the equal station to which [women] are entitled." Ending the paragraph with "equal" bookends her Preamble, linking the radical notion of gender equality to the Declaration's most distinguished assertion. Stanton takes her revolutionary declaration one step further, affirming that women are entitled to equality. To be entitled is to have a "legal right or just claim" ("Entitled, Adj."). Demanding "the equal station to which they are entitled" supports the appeal to natural rights, again reflecting the opening of Jefferson's Preamble.

In addition to these allusions, Stanton employs alliteration, assonance, and consonance. The combination of literary devices effectually emphasizes the final clause, thereby stressing Stanton's purpose. Consonance, or the repetition of consonant sounds, occurs through the repetition of *d* and *t*, found in the following pronunciations:[22] *t*o, *d*eman*d*, s*t*ation, *t*o, and en*tit*le*d*. Assonance, or the repetition of vowel sounds, compliments the previous literary device through the repetition of both the hard and soft pronunciation of *e*. The former occurs in d*e*mand and *e*qual with the latter in th*e*y and *e*ntitl*e*d. Equal and entitled also exemplify alliteration, the repetition of the first letter or sound. Linking equal and entitled represents the crux of Stanton's claim and links the two in the reader's mind. Entitled represents all three literary devices, and as it is the final word in the paragraph, the linguistic artistry lingers for a moment longer than usual. Because of these rhetorical devices, the claim Stanton makes regarding the natural rights of women resonates with the reader. Stanton then gives the reader the break in the text, dividing Jefferson's Preamble, and challenging the classification of the following two sentences.

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[22] Because there are multiple pronunciations of letters within these words, the instances of consonance are italicized.

Although Stanton gives these two sentences their own paragraph, they mirror Jefferson's text so closely that they can be considered part of the Preamble's echo (see figure 4). Jefferson's text reads, "The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world." Stanton merely shifts these lines in accordance with her own subject. Rather than "the present King of Great Britain," Stanton uses "mankind." Stanton also intervenes after "repeated injuries and usurpations" to add "on the part of man toward woman," clarifying her differing subject and object. With these changes, she further clarifies and concretizes the conflation of King George III's tyranny over the colonies to men's tyranny over women.

While these sentences demonstrate a clear echo of Jefferson's text, their structural separation from the Preamble and the isolation between sections confound such simple classification. These two sentences occupy a liminal space of categorization, neither securely within the Preamble nor part of the List of Grievances. These two sentences mirror the position of women Stanton describes: a part of yet apart from society. They traffic between both registers, acting as a transition from the Preamble to the List of Grievances.

Jefferson informally divides the body of the List of Grievances into two sections: the first is an indictment of King George III while the second is an indictment of the British People. Stanton's organization is more nuanced, as her appeal is more convoluted than Jefferson's appeal for separation. The accusations in her List of Grievances fall into four categories: violation of natural rights, disabilities of married women, religious discrimination, and denials of opportunity for individual development (Campbell 53). Though Stanton continues echoing Jefferson's structure, her diction shifts in line with her purpose, rendering a close reading unproductive for

this thesis. Thus, while Stanton's List of Grievances mirrors Jefferson's in terms of form and with the same application of anaphora, the language and strategy deviated from the Declaration. In the "Declaration of Sentiments," Stanton leans into this deviation and stresses the contradictions women faced. "The list," Campbell notes, "was a dramatic, forceful reminder of the discrepancy between the principles of natural rights as articulated in the founding documents and their application to women" (53). This reminder exemplifies instances of structural strain, but it also contributed to consciousness-raising for first-wave feminists.

Consciousness-raising, a process that helps define and strengthen a group by developing awareness of particular issues, targeted both sexes. Stanton's immediate audience was those at the Woman's Rights Convention. However, the publication and distribution of "Sentiments," not to mention the very widespread nature of a declaration, designates a broader audience. Stanton's audience reached beyond the geographic and temporal moment of the Seneca Falls Convention. The "Declaration of Sentiments" helped determine the direction of feminist dialogues to follow. It continues to influence our understanding of feminism and reflects strategies still seen today. Because the Seneca Falls Convention is considered the beginning of modern feminism with its tropes carried throughout feminist movements, the continuation of the Subversive Echo strategy is remarkable.

Section 2: The Present

The consciousness-raising and activist work by first- and second-wave feminists fundamentally informs current feminist objectives. Because of this earlier work, some structural limitations no longer restrain contemporary feminists. One crucial advancement facilitated by first-wave feminists is, of course, women's right to vote. Though even with suffrage, barriers to feminist objectives persist, for as Ahmed explains, "the persistence of the past" endures (187). Moreover, bell hooks asserts, "our task would be 'not to forget the past but to break its hold'" (33). Contemporary feminism reflects both claims. Although elements of the past inform the present, feminism constantly responds to these traces and works to nullify them. Feminism is both understood as a response and defined by what it is against; feminism, then, responds to patriarchal constructions and defines itself as resisting the patriarchy. Breaking the hold of the past, expressed by hooks, suggests continually resisting the grip over future progress. Nevertheless, she persisted, superseding the persistence of the past.

The Women's Marches offer one such response. This international and perennial response exemplifies contemporary feminist tropes. Enabled by the accomplishments of earlier feminists and modern technologies, primarily social media, contemporary feminists embrace "the role of emotions in active citizenship" at a rapid and global scale (Bore 530). First-wave feminists were forced to avoid emotional appeals lest their already tenuous ethos be dismissed entirely. Instead, first-wave feminists employed rational arguments drawing upon higher authorities, illustrated by Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments," which mirrors the tone of first-wave rhetoric. Contemporary feminists, on the other hand, often facilitate consciousness-raising and legitimize their right to speak *through* emotion and through anger in particular. The first

Women's March invoked emotional appeals, particularly because it developed in response to a recording of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump. The recording reveals Trump bragging about how his privilege granted him the ability – the right – to sexually assault women, to "grab them by the pussy" (Fahrenthold). If feminism is defined by what it is against, then the Women's March is defined as against the themes represented in this recording. The Women's March grabs back, refuting the exercise of power male privilege wields over bodies. Contemporary feminists countered Trump's "grab them by the pussy" with the Subversive Echo "Pussy Grabs Back."

The Women's March responded with notions of community, of possession, of natural rights, and with subversions of the privileged voice. While the previous section explored how the "Declaration of Sentiments" contributed to concretizing the politics of first-wave feminism, this section explores a similar relationship: how "Pussy Grabs Back" informed contemporary feminism. Just as the "Declaration of Sentiments" helped identify and define the group's commonplaces, so too did the "Pussy Grabs Back" call help locate priorities for contemporary feminists. These priorities concretely manifested in the 2017 Inaugural Women's March. Though the Women's March reflected multiple narratives and took on a variety of social issues, one unifying rallying cry remained: "Pussy Grabs Back." The first Women's March may be a prime example representing contemporary feminism, but that is not to say it marks the beginning of this wave. Rather, my focus on the inception of "Pussy Grabs Back" and its relationship to the Women's March illustrate larger trends in feminist rhetoric. The mantra "Pussy Grabs Back" reflects a quintessential example of the Subversive Echo in contemporary feminism. Comparing strategies of the Subversive Echo, found throughout feminist waves, provides rich material to analyze and better understand power dynamics of the female voice.

Though the manifestation of the "Pussy Grabs Back" Subversive Echo differs from its feminist precursors, it ultimately reflects the same overall strategy. This Subversive Echo gained widespread recognition within mere hours of the original recording's release. The echo's success relied upon common knowledge of the recording and expected reactions of widespread disapproval, disgust, or anger. Based on this common knowledge, it presumed the resulting emotional response. On the other hand, Stanton's Echo in the "Declaration of Sentiments" relied upon common knowledge of the Declaration of Independence, a text published nearly a century before her appeal, and its widespread approval. Condensed temporalities, therefore, is one trait embodied by modern rhetorical movements, simply due to the world in which they operate. Rhetorical strategies in contemporary feminism also employ affective appeals more directly than its predecessors, thanks in part to their predecessors' work as well as new mediums of communication. Twitter allows a more informal and more emotional appeal than, say, an official convention presenting a signed declaration.

The impact of technology, consequently, cannot be overstated. Not only has technology impacted the mediums through which feminist rhetorical appeals are made, but it also influences the speed and tonality of these appeals. Furthermore, it allows more individuals to be included in resistance efforts. While a select few (white, privileged, heteronormative) women authored and distributed the "Declaration of Sentiments," the mantra "Pussy Grabs Back" gained traction through widespread participation via online mediums. It became identifiable and effective because of its accessibility.[23] The phrase arose on Twitter after user Amanda Duarte posted one

[23] The "Pussy Grabs Back" call and the Women's March as a whole, however, are still guilty of excluding certain voices and troubling fundamental feminist theory. Though effective in some instances, emphasizing "pussy" as the unifying attribute can also reduce the individual and limits those who can identify. Specifically, emphasizing "pussy" defines woman and feminism through biological determinants, which is not in line with the predominant feminist discourse. Thus, the

tweet, followed by user Jessica Bennett developing the content in another post. The first, a rushed but emotionally evocative message proposing the Subversive Echo; the second, a collaborative effort presenting a striking image and more polished albeit very similar phrasing. The message gained traction online in various forms, frequently maintaining the tag #PussyGrabsBack. It later manifested as a rallying cry for the Inaugural Women's March. Participants brought signs and clothing marked with variations of grabbing back, such as the knitted pink "pussy hat," demonstrating additional levels of subversion. Knitting, typically considered women's labor and thus lesser, surfaced as an act of resistance. In contemporary feminism, therefore, feminists still employ strategies of language reclamation with a few key adjustments.

Contemporary Feminist Rhetoric

October 7, 2016 marked one renewal of feminist conscious-raising. Responding to a 2005 audio and video recording in which then-presidential candidate Donald Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women, the public sphere explicitly reembraced feminist sentiments. While first manifesting in digital environments, feminist responses gained momentum and culminated in the International Women's March. Consciousness-raising and additional interactions in digital spaces mobilize contemporary feminists. "Feminist therapy and consciousness-raising groups," Ahmed explains, "allowed women to make connections between their experiences and feelings in order to examine how such feelings were implicated in structural relations of power" (172). Online communities built through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter not only facilitated critical examinations of structural disenfranchisement, they magnified them

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continued use of "Pussy Grabs Back" is rightfully criticized for catering only to cisgender women and reflecting trans-exclusionary ideas.

exponentially. They offered platforms for logistics, organizing where and when and how acts of resistance would occur. Moreover, the President of the United States epitomizes formal authority and power, as defined by Hegtvedt. Consciousness-raising, beginning on these online spaces, crucially enables women to examine and critically respond when privileged voices violate their natural rights. If feminism is a response, then consciousness-raising is a foundation of that response.

The response to the video released on October 7, 2016, surpassed the moment; it became a movement. The video, obtained by *The Washington Post*, records Trump bragging to *Access Hollywood*'s Billy Bush as they arrive on set to *Days of Our Lives* (Fahrenthold). Though the video primarily shows the outside of the *Access Hollywood* bus before the two emerge, the audio recording clearly captures the full conversation, thanks to a hot microphone on Trump's person. The microphone might have been actively recording, but the conversation's participants did not proceed like they were being recorded. The conversation that has since become public was originally concealed physically, as it occurred within the bus and thus out of sight. Yet it was also concealed from the public, as the recording only surfaced in October of 2016 when *The Washington Post* released the information and corresponding video.

The three-minute recording begins with Trump admitting a failed attempt to seduce a married woman. When describing the situation and the woman in question, Trump employed a cavalier and dismissive yet superior tone, accompanied by graphic and objectifying language. This conversation is interrupted, however, when Bush announces, "Sheesh, your girl's hot as shit, in the purple" (Fahrenthold). Bush is referring to actress Arianne Zucker, waiting outside the bus to escort them to the set. Trump responds with the following exclamation "Whoa! Whoa!" Another voice (likely Bush's) chimes in, "Yes! The Donald has scored." Amidst other

exclamations, Trump comments, “Look at you. You are a pussy.” A few seconds later, Trump continues with the following:

> I’ve got to use some Tic Tacs, just in case I start kissing her… You know I’m automatically attracted to beautiful – I just start kissing them. It’s like a magnet. Just kiss. I don’t even wait. And when you’re a star, they let you do it. You can do anything… Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything.

Though the video continues with problematic and objectifying language and physical interactions, the penultimate phrase “Grab them by the pussy” incited particular rage and disgust. Or, at the very least, people used this succinct phrase to represent the recording in its entirety and when identifying problematic traits. Not surprisingly, women capitalized on this elucidation, using the phrase to serve as the basis for the Subversive Echo.

At 7:51 PM EST on October 7, 2016, writer and activist Amanda Duarte posted the following text on Twitter: “November 8- PUSSY GRABS BACK .@realDonaldTrump” (see figure 5). At 8:53 PM EST that evening, author Jessica Bennett[24] tweeted, “Nov. 8: PUSSY GRABS BACK Thank you, @duarteamanda #feministfightclub #ImWithHer,”[25] with an image of a grayscale hissing cat and bold black and red bars with the text “NOV. 8 PUSSY GRABS BACK” (see figure 6). Shortly after, Duarte shared the same image with the text, “Image by @jess7bennett,[26] sentiment by yours truly, see you pussies November 8. #pussygrabsback” (see

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[24] Jessica Bennett is the author of *Feminist Fight Club: A Survival Manual for a Sexist Workplace* and she currently serves as the “gender editor of *The New York Times*, working to expand global coverage of women, gender [*sic*] and society across platforms” (“Jessica Bennett.”).

[25] Of the three tags Bennett includes, the first (@duarteamanda) is the Twitter handle for Duarte, the second (#feministfightclub) relates to Bennett’s work, and the third (#ImWithHer) demonstrates her support of Hillary Clinton’s presidential candidacy.

[26] Though Bennett’s Twitter handle is currently @jessicabennett, it was previously @jess7bennett.

figure 7). While the first tweet introduced the Subversive Echo, Bennett's more deliberate and polished image in responding tweet, which embodies key aspects of contemporary feminism, offers a rich text for analysis. Regardless of form, however, the mantra "Pussy Grabs Back" became internationally recognizable. Feminists embraced the subversive reply. Creators applied variations of "Pussy Grabs Back" throughout feminist responses, both in the digital sphere and the physical. Due to modernization, digital spaces reflect the same traits as the public sphere. While sociologist Jürgen Habermas describes the latter as "a space of deliberative knowledge exchange where public opinion can be formed," digital spaces also fit this definition (Bore 533). A quintessential example of traditional interactions in the public sphere, the Seneca Falls Convention represented a very specific, formalized space of dialogue. The Women's March, born out of preceding online dialogues, represents the same attributes as the online interactions: a deliberate space where "public opinion can be formed." In the case of the Women's March, online dialogues moved to also occupy physical spaces. Regardless of location, women took up the cry of "Pussy Grabs Back," reclaiming language and asserting agency.

Though contemporary feminism shares strategies with its precursors, its execution of the Subversive Echo differs. By rhetorically analyzing key aspects of contemporary feminism, such as the selected image (figure 8) and the Women's March in Washington DC, we can better understand how feminist strategies operate over time.

Impact of the Digital Sphere

The fundamental subversions may be similar, but the social sphere has shifted drastically; modernization impacts rhetorical analyses, just as history and context impact our understanding of earlier appeals. Thus, one must account for the effects of modernization, particularly the development of the digital world. Participation in the digital sphere manifests on multiple

mediums and offers remarkable opportunities for inclusion. Online participation can occur at varying degrees of intensity, from actively engaging with and contributing to frequently trafficked websites to interacting with smaller social circles. Online participation does, however, pose risks of "clicktivism" or "slacktivism," understood as "political participation that involves minimal personal effort, yet serves to increase the feel good [*sic*] factor of participants" (Bore 532). One example of slacktivism is contributing to a cause by merely reacting to a social media post. Though theoretically engaging with the issue, slacktivism requires only a single click and does not meaningfully contribute to the cause. Inger-Lise Kalviknes Bore describes one issue with this phenomenon: "Passive gestures of slacktivism, like 'click-labour,' can be a significant threat to conventional forms of political participation because they create the false illusion of meaningful engagement" (532). The participant may believe they have supported the cause in question, but they likely have not meaningfully contributed, thus prompting no actual change.

While digital participation poses risks, it also offers significant promise, particularly in regards to consciousness-raising and appeals to emotion. Though noting these potential pitfalls, Bore concludes by recognizing social media's benefits. When discussing how click labor contributes to political participation, Bore states:

> The practice [of circulating images] can invite other social media users to feel an enjoyable sense of belonging to wider protest movements, to feel energized [*sic*], angry and disruptive together, and to participate in shared, defiant laughter. Here, recorded "shares," "retweets," "likes," emojis and comments function not only as traces of a wider feeling community (with unknown, ever-changing contours) but they also contribute to a layering of affect that makes these online images "sticky" with various feelings and

> emotions which in turn might help to animate the movement beyond the actual march. (538)

Bore illustrates a number of key concepts, such as a sense of community, affective responses, and the movement's manifestation in multiple spaces and temporalities. While the more traditional physical space offers the first two traits, the modern digital space expands a group's capabilities by also offering the third quality listed. Bore describes how specific attributes contribute in animating moments to become movements, to manifest beyond a single march.

The Women's March and Bennett's image provide one such example. Bennett's image catalyzed individuals to come together in digital spaces, and in sharing empowerment through defiant laughter, they gained cohesion. The group expanded to become the Women's March, all the while continuing to converse online. But Bore also identifies affective influences beyond defiant laughter and a sense of belonging. As Bore explains, the stickiness of emotions may be the very reason for an appeal's success, which is a stark difference from the rational appeals by first-wave feminists. Thus just as the nature of analyzing social media interactions is modern, so too is the embrace of emotion a thoroughly modern rhetorical strategy for women.

Empowerment *because of* emotion rather than *in spite of* it is rare for the female voice. Because "[f]eminists who speak out against established 'truths' are often constructed as emotional" and dismissed as illegitimate authorities, the embrace of emotions by contemporary feminists demonstrates marked progress (Ahmed 170). Furthermore, Ahmed asserts, "the 'truths' of this world are dependent on emotions, on how they move subjects, and stick them together" (170). Rather than dismissing emotions or claiming that feminism is rational instead of emotional, Ahmed adamantly defends the valuable place of emotions in persuasive appeals. She advocates for feminists "to think about forms of politics that seek to contest social norms, in

terms of emotion, understood as 'embodied thought'" (170). Reading political action as embodied thought reveals insights about how the Women's March and contemporary feminism operate.

Anger is, perhaps, the emotion most closely associated with all waves of feminism. Whether a fair or unfair association, women must frequently justify their anger as a credible, a reasonable, or even a righteous response to injustice, violation, or oppression They must persist in asserting not only the right to speak, but also the right to speak with anger. Anger, accordingly, is a political act. Anger can be productive. "Anger is creative; it works to create a language with which to respond to that which one is against," Ahmed explains, "whereby 'the what' is renamed, and brought into a feminist world" (170). Discursively translating abstract concepts, anger is also a "speech act, which is addressed to somebody" (Ahmed 177). Duarte's first tweet exemplifies the different registers on which anger functions. The Subversive Echo "Pussy Grabs Back" indicates how anger created language (or in this case recreated language through personification and additional rhetorical devices) and clearly delineates that which Duarte is against. Directly tagging Trump indicates how anger is "a speech act, which is addressed to somebody." Tagging Trump indicates that somebody, the subject to whom the tweet is addressed. Though some dismiss female anger and the nasty women who choose to invoke it, "anger functions as 'an important source of energy for the movement from personal experience to being able to contextualize [*sic*] this everyday reality in the politics of institutional systems'" (Ahmed 180). For the Women's March, as well as the more recent #MeToo campaign, anger operates productively. Perhaps an indicator of steady social progress or a result of other modern attributes like social media, anger's effectiveness in various appeals is a recent development. The

acceptance of women's rage as a legitimate and productive entity within rhetorical strategies highlights just one development from first-wave feminism.

Emotions such as anger provide personal context, allowing the individual to locate themselves in relation to the issue at large. But they also facilitate consciousness-raising and group cohesion. "Emotive attachment to political ideas," for example, "can bring like-minded communities together and encourage forms of affective political action" (Bore 533). Ahmed discusses the relationship between feminism and anger. "Women's testimonies about pain… are crucial not only to the formation of feminist subjects," she writes, "but to feminist collectives, which have mobilised [*sic*] around the injustice of [structural] violence and the political and ethical demand for reparation and redress" (172). While the Women's March adopted a number of causes in response to patriarchal social structures, it particularly mobilized around the issue of sexual assault. The "Pussy Grabs Back" movement originated in reaction to the sexual assault video and emerged again for the larger march. In both instances, emotion functions as a key influence for both motivating the individual and catalyzing the larger movement.

Before the Echo

The evolution of the contemporary feminist sentiment "Pussy Grabs Back" and its wider application warrants a rhetorical analysis that reveals its multiplicities. Although speaker and author tend to be conflated when deconstructing a work, their distinction is profound, especially when considering the following selected tweets. Duarte's first tweet, with the text "November 8- PUSSY GRABS BACK .@realDonaldTrump" contains multiple appeals. While the full implications of the phrase will be excavated when discussing the primary image (figure 8) in the section "Close Reading the Echo," this first tweet provides insights into how the phrase is ultimately understood. The first part of the tweet, "November 8-," references election day 2017.

When coupled with the second section, "PUSSY GRABS BACK" in all capital letters, Duarte alludes to but ultimately subverts Trump's "Grab them by the pussy" comment. Flipping the original language also changes women's position in the scenario, from passive object being grabbed to the active subject executing the action. Duarte's echo gives women agency. Her use of full capitalization contributes to the bold and unyielding tone, as does her use of grammar. The hyphen immediately after November 8 signals an abrupt break in flow, yielding a staccato-like effect. The lack of space between 8 and the hyphen suggests Duarte composed the tweet quickly, or indicates the platform's more casual tonality. Even though hyphens designate connection between two entities, Duarte employs the symbol as one might a colon or dash, the latter of which she likely intended. Regardless, the break is abrupt. The full capitalization of the tweet's second section is aggressive in its emphasis; it is declarative. However, because the phrase follows a future date, the phrase is future-oriented, functioning more like a promise or a threat.

By mimicking Trump's diction, Duarte clearly indicates the subject to which she is reacting. Tagging Trump in the tweet,[27] the third and final section, holds him directly accountable and underscores her subject. It also offers her audience specific context, directing them to the source if they were unaware of Trump's comments. Consequently, her third section, ".@realDonaldTrump," also indicates the target of her threat. Rather than adopting a menacing

[27] @realDonaldTrump is the Twitter handle for Donald Trump. The period before the commercial at (@) is a misuse of one Twitter function intended to expand audience. It is used when the commercial at would otherwise be the first character, which would render the tweet visible only to the tagged individual, whereas the period ensures the tweet is fully public. While the commercial at tags the account, the period before the symbol is superfluous in this instance as it is not the first character. It ultimately has no effect, positive or negative, and is unsurprising due to the confusion surrounding this lesser known Twitter practice.

air, Duarte is defiant. The tone of Duarte's tweet is hurried, imbued with emotion, caustically declarative, and uncompromisingly short. It is empowered because of emotion, not in spite of it.

Duarte explains the motivation behind this first tweet, saying, "I thought about how we all have this power to absolutely shut him down on November 8, and felt very empowered, and thought, let's rally the pussy troops" (Maloney). Duarte traffics between the personal I and the collective we, expressing her agency as an individual while still stressing her participation in a larger group. "Rallying the pussy troops" paints Duarte as a kind of organizer and catalyst, but she is not an officer in the pussy army, so to speak. Her voice is amplified, but not authoritative. Duarte may have first coined the Subversive Echo at hand, but other voices have come to claim it. Conversely, when delivering the "Declaration of Sentiments," Stanton spoke on behalf of a larger group. Though Stanton is not the sole author of "Sentiments," for others contributed to the document's formation, the process of creation and distribution remained relatively straightforward. Contemporary rhetorical appeals, however, become increasingly convoluted. Modernization and the application of technologies impose filters upon text, operating as gatekeeper while also informing how the content is understood.

The Subversive Echo case study for contemporary feminism has no single defined speaker. Duarte authored the sentiment "Pussy Grabs Back" via the tweet discussed above. However, while Bennett created the now iconic image (figures 5, 8) and shared it on her account, citing Duarte, Duarte also posted the work, citing Bennett. The notion of speaker becomes further convoluted when considering the nature of the social-network medium. Though Bennett is the original publisher of the image, Twitter users can also claim voice by retweeting the content, perhaps also adding their own commentary with the "quote tweet" function. An echo in its own right, the retweet function endorses the original commenter and validates the comment.

Yet it also claims the tweet for the echoing voices. Though retweeting preserves the original source, as it shows their name and Twitter handle, it reframes the content as spoken and published by the new source. The medium confounds straightforward conceptions of speaker. In keeping with second-wave feminism, therefore, social media promotes a collective voice, a collective speaker, for contemporary feminists.

Retweeting also shifts the boundaries of audience. Because most online organizations employ algorithms to selectively direct information based upon predicted preferences, online content faces additional barriers. While algorithms and the resulting filter bubbles impact a tweet's audience, that audience is already restricted to a user's followers. Retweeting expands the content's audience from the followers of the original voice to the followers of the echoing voice, the user who retweeted. The tweet may be public, but without following the user or actively searching the hashtag, discovering the content is more challenging, thus restricting those who consume the content. The notion of "going viral" supersedes these restrictions by reaching a tipping point of audience, when it can then be assumed that the generalized other has seen the content in question. "Pussy Grabs Back" is an effective rhetorical call because it reached this tipping point. One can operate rhetorically and proceed with one's argument without needing to spend time on contextualization. Rather, because of shared knowledge from viral online content, the speaker can proceed *in medias res*.

The original voice, however, did not expect her content to become viral. Duarte did not intend for her contribution to ultimately define the conversation. Duarte spoke as an individual woman perhaps drawing upon the anger of other women, but she did not intentionally speak for them with presumed or legitimate authority, as defined by Hegtvedt. Duarte did not speak intending for women to rally behind her, as Stanton did. However, as Duarte's phrase gained

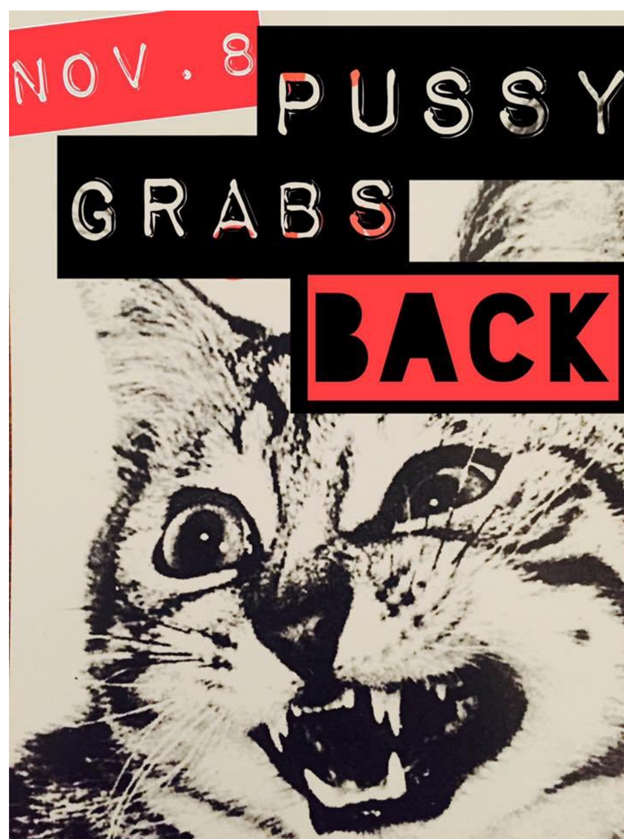
traction across the digital realm, and Bennett's contribution reached viral levels of success, they assumed the responsibility given to her by the masses via retweets. It is Duarte's voice. It is Bennett's voice. It is hers, yet it is not hers. It is only the voice of the masses because it was once hers, and yet the retweeted voice is not hers. Bennett may have authored the image, yet her voice is framed by other voices, asserting their own authority. Duarte's first tweet may demonstrate a spontaneous rhetorical call, but the intentionality behind Bennett's image renders it a purposeful rhetorical appeal, similar to the "Declaration of Sentiments." Though the first tweet must be recognized, it is the carefully considered and deliberate second post with the constructed image that occupies the bulk of my analysis. Without such distinctions, aspects of the rhetorical triangle become increasingly challenging to concretely define in digital spaces.

Though the speaker and audience shift and expand exponentially, the occasion, subject, tone, and relative purpose remain stable. The scale at which these operate, however, also increases exponentially. Bennett's purpose reaches across multiple realms. Because the authority of the female voice must constantly be asserted, her speaking at all is a claim to agency, an assertion of her right to speak and of the validity of her voice. Bennett's message of subversion also demonstrates an intention to destabilize the message from the privileged male voice. She asserts her authority while disrupting established authority. Additionally, the fact that she subverts the privileged voice through appeals to emotion – through anger – illustrates both the progress from first-wave feminism and the refusal to be dismissed by dominant discourses. The success of the "Pussy Grabs Back" Subversive Echo draws upon these notions of anger and agency, of agency *through* anger. Bennett described why she thought the phrase appealed to many people. "To me," she explained, "'Pussy Grabs Back' had the perfect combination of anger, humor, action, punk rock, and — you know what's coming — pussy. You could laugh at

it, you could be pissed, but you could also feel like you had power to fight back." Because this image thus embodies so many attributes of contemporary feminism, it warrants an in-depth rhetorical analysis to better understand how these themes operate.

Close Reading the Echo: A Rhetorical Analysis of "Pussy Grabs Back"

The image reflects the collaborative effort between Duarte and Bennett, but has been adopted as a rallying cry for women seeking to reclaim power. The image is but one manifestation of the Subversive Echo Duarte coined, but it offers exceptional insights, as it is the first deliberate application of "Pussy Grabs Back" in a formalized, intentional manner. Upon seeing Duarte's first tweet, Bennett capitalized on the execution of words she herself could not articulate. Bennett expressed her admiration of Duarte's phrase, stating "It put the power back in women's hands" (Maloney). She then adopted Duarte's sentiment, adding it to a cat picture originally by Stella Marrs, and shared the image intending for its widespread circulation. Like feminist efforts in general, her work is only possible and thus effective due to the earlier contributions of other women. Bennett built upon their work and created a call that others adopted for themselves. When first created, the image might have represented a particular meaning, yet this meaning shifts over time as it begins to



stand for something larger than itself. Messages like become imbued with value. Like Stanton and "Sentiments," the author crafted the appeal for a particular purpose for a specific moment. Like "Sentiments," however, women claim the appeal in a larger effort to reclaim power and to legitimize voice. The appeal can stand for a movement.

The "Pussy Grabs Back" movement capitalizes on the sign's multiple significations. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites five categories of multiple definitions for the primary entry alone. Of these five distinct categories, three are particularly pertinent. The first category provides two definitions of *pussy* as noun. The first is a rather outdated usage of *pussy* as a "girl or woman exhibiting characteristics associated with a cat, esp. sweetness or amiability" and the second is the slang term meaning "A sweet or effeminate male; (in later use chiefly) a weakling, a coward, a sissy. Also: a homosexual man" ("Pussy, n. and Adj.2."). Both entries describe the subject's passivity and the only positive denotations are those that are since disused. The latter entry's second definition expounds upon the negative perception. A term once used to compliment gentleness has since been turned to disparage and dismiss.

Another category of meaning, the uses of *pussy* as coarse slang, is equally disparaging. The first description reads, "The female genitals; the vulva or vagina" ("Pussy, n. and Adj.2."). The original context of the diction "grab them by the pussy" primarily draws upon this signification. It can, however, be further informed by the following two entries: "sexual intercourse with a woman" and "A woman, or women collectively, regarded as a source of sexual intercourse" ("Pussy, n. and Adj.2."). In these definitions, women are objectified; their identities and respective worth are determined by sexual promise.

Feminists refuted this identity by drawing upon yet another defition: "A cat. Frequently used as a proper or pet name" ("Pussy, n. and Adj.2."). Using this colloqial understanding of

pussy, feminists subverted the phrase's original meaning. They reclaimed the word and reclaimed their bodies. As McDermott explains, "When we have grasped what little power we've had, often we have … used the voices we were given to subvert the message we were told to tell" (207). In creating the image, Duarte used an available definition to subvert implications of objecthood and passivity. The image's central figure is that of a cat prepared to bite, thus actively contributing to the tone of defiant determination. But it also contributes to the anger imbued throughout the Subversive Echo. Duarte's inclusion of the hissing cat thus connotes agency and emotion, both of which directly contradict traditional casts of women. The cat is a literal representation of the echo "Pussy Grabs Back." Yet the phrase also invites ironic humor; what does it mean for a cat to grab? Can a cat grab? Additionally, the syntax renders the sentence declarative. Duarte does not deign to clarify her meaning, for the audience knows *pussy* also signifies woman.

Those applying the Subversive Echo must traffic between the multiple meanings, balancing the effects of each connotation when evoked. The incongruous and humorous notion of a cat grabbing uses anthropromorphism, a rhetorical device defined as the "attribution of human personality or characteristics to something non-human, as an animal, object, etc." ("Anthropomorphism, N."). Perhaps most notable in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, anthropromorphism provides a less-threatening foundation to exemplify troublesome topics. It helps a wider audience access political and social satires that may otherwise be ineffective. Giving the cat human characteristics, specifically the ability to grab, maintains a level of accessibility while still stressing agency.

Yet anthropromorphism only applies when utilizing the particular definition of *pussy* as a literal cat. If one uses a different register and category of meaning, "Pussy Grabs Back" reflects

different devices and offers varying rhetorical effects. In the image, Duarte anthropromorphiszes the cat. However, the audience also recognizes the cat's symbolic nature. Reading the cat with the coarse slang definitions, "Pussy Grabs Back" can also exemplify metonomy or synechdoche. These devices are frequently conflated, with scholars offering contradictory or redundant definitions, but each device provides particular syntactical moves. Shelia Davis defines metonomy as a "device of symbolic substitution that replaces the subject meant with an attribute or related image," whereas synecdoche "functions primarily to substitute the part for the whole" (444). Thus synecdoche "bears an *internal* [*sic*] relationship with the replaced subject" while metonomy "bears an external relationship" (444). When rhetorically analyzing "Pussy Grabs Back," the degree of metaphor matters. If one applies the definition "The female genitals; the vulva or vagina," then "Pussy Grabs Back" is an example of synecdoche. In this case, woman is grabbing back and the female genitals are the part representing the whole person. If one applies the pussy as cat definition, then the phrase exemplifies metonomy, for the cat has an external relationship to woman.

Creators of the image, Duarte and Bennett, also trafficked between varying rhetorical devices. When interviewed about the movement's development, Duarte responded through an anthropromorphic example. She explained her inspiration, saying, "to hear a presidential candidate bragging about sexually assaulting women, well, my pussy got really angry. She is tired of feeling violated and unsafe, and she isn't gonna take it lying down. I got this image in my mind of my pussy just snapping back at his disgusting tiny hand" (Maloney). The pussy is then given human attributes, exhibiting feeling emotions such as anger, impatience, and indignation. It is given the idiom "take it lying down," implying that it has a body to fulfill the figure of speech. Duarte's use of this phrase is particularly noteworthy. The idiom connotes passivity,

rendering the actor an object, likely located in bed and thus also instilling sexual implications. However, the pussy's refusal and subsequent snapping back reifies its agency and identity as more than a sexual object. Furthermore, *pussy* is not only given personhood, it is also given gender; she is female. Duarte embraces the female, using the gender as a strength, drawing power from this source of supposed passivity.

Bennett directly addresses this notion when asked if the meme she created was in fact a reclamation of the word. She responded:

> I hope so, and I have to say we were both pretty pleased to see the word appear – in the context of grabbing back – on the pages of international newspapers and other outlets. For so long, pussy has been co-opted to mean "weak." And you know what's the opposite of weak? Birthing a f*cking [*sic*] human. So here's to pussy posses [*sic*], pussy power, and pussies grabbing back, on Nov. 8 and beyond. (Maloney)

Bennett's personal expression of individual hope underlines the notion that these women are not intentionally and authoritatively speaking for all women. Rather, they are two individuals speaking, whose words have been endorsed and ideas promulgated by a larger population. Still, Bennett speaks in the first person. However, at the end of her response, she speaks as part of a collective larger than herself. Additionally, Bennett deconstructs her choice of diction, referencing "how pussy has been co-opted to mean 'weak.'" Bennett responds with one of the prime examples of woman's strength: giving birth. Applying this context to the same anatomical feature reframes its understanding, reclaiming the objectified body part as an indicator of power. Thus, Bennett reflects the themes of the Subversive Echo. In recognizing how the term can be reclaimed, Bennett enunciates how women can compensate for the systematic disenfranchisement of female voice.

Imperative to the term's understanding is Bennett's contextual clarification, transcribed here through the use of em dashes. The break in syntax capitalizes upon an important distinction: the word's appropriateness depends entirely on how it is used. Trump's use of the word arguably caused more outrage than his acts of sexual abuse and assault. The term's vulgarity and egregiousness of his overall comments violate typical constructs of womanhood, as outlined in the previous section. Though progress has undeniably been made, the "persistence of the past" endures. However, just as the Subversive Echo turns restrictions into advantages, so too can contemporary feminists apply former restraints as current strengths. The historical constructions of woman, as passive, whose sphere is the domestic and whose value is determined by her purity, can be coopted for righteous refutation. If women's piety and purity are sacred in traditional gender constructions, then Trump's assault on female bodies also assaults these notions of womanhood.

The choice of diction, therefore, motivated those who felt compelled to refute this vulgarity. Campbell's history of first-wave feminism mirrors many facets of contemporary feminism, specifically when discussing moral violations. If physical assault is not transgression enough, then the assault via diction may be. The formal authority Trump represents intensifies the transgression's offense and requires significant work to counter that abuse of power. For example, "Carol Tavris argues that consciousness-raising groups were important because 'to question legitimate institutions and authorities, most people need to know that they are not alone, crazy, or misguided'" (Ahmed 172). Bennett's image offers this awareness, providing the foundation to question the legitimate authority wielded by the Republican Party's nominee for President of the United States. In "Pussy Grabs Back" and the Women's March, women actively recognized the larger group of which they belonged. Bennett's pleasure with Duarte at seeing the

phrase across international media outlets signifies the mass dissemination of the idea, contributing to consciousness-raising efforts, and ultimately furthers the group's strength and solidarity.

The movement, beginning with Duarte's tweet and propelled by Bennett's image, reached crescendo with the Inaugural Women's March. Deliberately scheduled at the same time of Trump's Presidential Inauguration, the Women's March intentionally refuted the comments regarding sexual assault. Because feminism is defined as a response, then this intentional timing demonstrates precisely that to which it responds. Marchers mobilized in response to the vulgarity of Trump's diction. If feminism is defined by what it is against, as Ahmed asserts, then the march's date and scheduling speak against the new presidential administration.

The #WomensMarch label constructs and identifies a community of feminist activists. The bright pink pussy hats take this in-group identification one step further. The pussy hats, and the march as a whole, served as an assertion of the right to speak, the right to occupy space. It embraced the vulgar and the obscene, an unmistakable reclamation and association with the overall movement. When reflecting upon the Inaugural Women's March, Laura Snow explains, "We were reclaiming and recasting the word. We are not JUST our pussies, but our pussies are nonetheless OURS. 'Pussy' is ours to shout from the pavement, not yours to grab" (Walton). Snow echoes Bennett's rhetorical sentiments, emphasizing possession and the boundaries of bodies. Her comment stresses the multiplicity of women's identities and their capacity beyond sexual beings. She stresses agency, the right to speak and occupy space. Directly alluding to the *Access Hollywood* tapes, Snow rectifies ownership of the word and the anatomical feature.

Though feminism is strengthened by what it is against, it is also strengthened by contradiction and complexity. Snow notes the inherent contradiction women faced when

criticized for repeating the very word used by an individual cloaked in formal authority and responsibility. She highlights the "hypocrisy of expecting a level of propriety from the demonstrators that is not expected from the President of the United States… Rich, white men," she continues, "do not get the monopoly on vulgarity: these pussies grab back" (Walton). Snow identifies the hypocrisy otherwise use to dismiss any voices that try and delegitimize the women's response of "Pussy Grabs Back." Identifying discrepancies in power, capitalizing on contradiction, and drawing strength from systematic disenfranchisement, women validate their voice and assert the right to speak.

These comments also allude to the rhetoric of space explored throughout feminist movements, particularly the spaces women inhabit and how they operate within them. The space women take up, both physically and metaphorically in conversation, reflects the larger assertion of women's right to do so, whether they are given space in which to speak or if they grab the space regardless of approval. The type of space women occupy may be polite or bold, embodying propriety or vulgarity with pussy hats; however, women's claiming the right to speak persists nevertheless, carrying forward the persistence of the past. Finally, as hooks claims "our task would be 'not to forget the past but to break its hold'" (33). The Subversive Echoes of the "Declaration of Sentiments" and "Pussy Grabs Back" illustrate successful examples of feminist rhetoric reclaiming the past, breaking its hold, and reaching towards the "social, political, and economic equality of the sexes" (Adichie 47).

Appendix

50 matching words were found:

Item 1 72 words, 69% matched		Item 2 73 words, 68% matched
When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one	« 13 words »	When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one
people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and		portion of the family of man
to assume among the	« 4 words »	to assume among the
powers		people
of the earth,	« 3 words »	of the earth
the separate and equal station		a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one
to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes	« 27 words »	to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes
which		that
impel them to	« 3 words »	impel them to
the separation.		such a course.

Figure 1. Results from https://www.copyscape.com/ using the "Compare Articles or Web Pages" function. Item 1 is the Introduction from the Declaration of Independence and Item 2 is the Introduction from the "Declaration of Sentiments."

199 matching words were found:

Item 1 229 words, 87% matched		Item 2 237 words, 84% matched
We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men	« 12 words »	We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men
are created equal,		and women are created equal;
that they are endowed by their Creator with certain	« 9 words »	that they are endowed by their Creator with certain
unalienable Rights,		inalienable rights;
that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of	« 10 words »	that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of
Happiness.--		happiness;
That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted	« 8 words »	that to secure these rights governments are instituted,
among Men,		
deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --	« 10 words »	deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.
That		
whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of	« 15 words »	Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of
the People to alter or to abolish		those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to
it, and to	« 3 words »	it, and to
institute		insist upon the institution of a
new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath	« 50 words »	new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath
shewn,		shown
that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism,	« 47 words »	that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism,
it is their right,		
it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of	« 25 words »	it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of
these Colonies;		the women under this government,
and such is now the necessity which constrains them to	« 10 words »	and such is now the necessity which constrains them to
alter their former Systems of Government.		demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

Figure 2. Results from https://www.copyscape.com/ using the “Compare Articles or Web Pages” function. Item 1 is the Preamble from the Declaration of Independence, with the last two sentences removed, to correspond with Stanton’s structural change in the Preamble from the “Declaration of Sentiments.” Item 2 is this Preamble, Stanton’s second paragraph.

232 matching words were found:

Item 1 271 words, 86% matched		Item 2 279 words, 83% matched
We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men	« 12 words »	We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men
are created equal,		and women are created equal;
that they are endowed by their Creator with certain	« 9 words »	that they are endowed by their Creator with certain
unalienable Rights,		inalienable rights;
that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of	« 10 words »	that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of
Happiness.--		happiness;
That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted	« 8 words »	that to secure these rights governments are instituted,
among Men,		
deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --	« 10 words »	deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.
That		
whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of	« 15 words »	Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of
the People to alter or to abolish		those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to
it, and to	« 3 words »	it, and to
institute		insist upon the institution of a
new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath	« 50 words »	new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath
shewn,		shown
that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism,	« 47 words »	that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism,
it is their right,		
it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of	« 25 words »	it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of
these Colonies;		the women under this government,
and such is now the necessity which constrains them to	« 10 words »	and such is now the necessity which constrains them to
alter their former Systems of Government.		demand the equal station to which they are entitled.
The history of	« 3 words »	The history of
the present King of Great Britain		mankind
is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations,	« 8 words »	is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations
all		on the part of man toward woman,
having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over	« 11 words »	having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over
these States.		her.
To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.	« 11 words »	To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Figure 3. Results from https://www.copyscape.com/ using the “Compare Articles or Web Pages” function. Item 1 is the entire Preamble from the Declaration of Independence and Item 2 is the corresponding text from the “Declaration of Sentiments.”

34 matching words were found:

Item 1 **43 words, 79% matched**		**Item 2** **43 words, 79% matched**
The history of	« 4 words »	The history of
the present King of Great Britain		mankind
is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations,	« 8 words »	is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations
all		on the part of man toward woman,
having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over	« 11 words »	having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over
these States.		her.
To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.	« 11 words »	To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Figure 4. Results from https://www.copyscape.com/ using the "Compare Articles or Web Pages" function. Item 1 is the final two sentences from Preamble from the Declaration of Independence and Item 2 is the corresponding sentences from the "Declaration of Sentiments," though they are structurally separated from the Preamble.

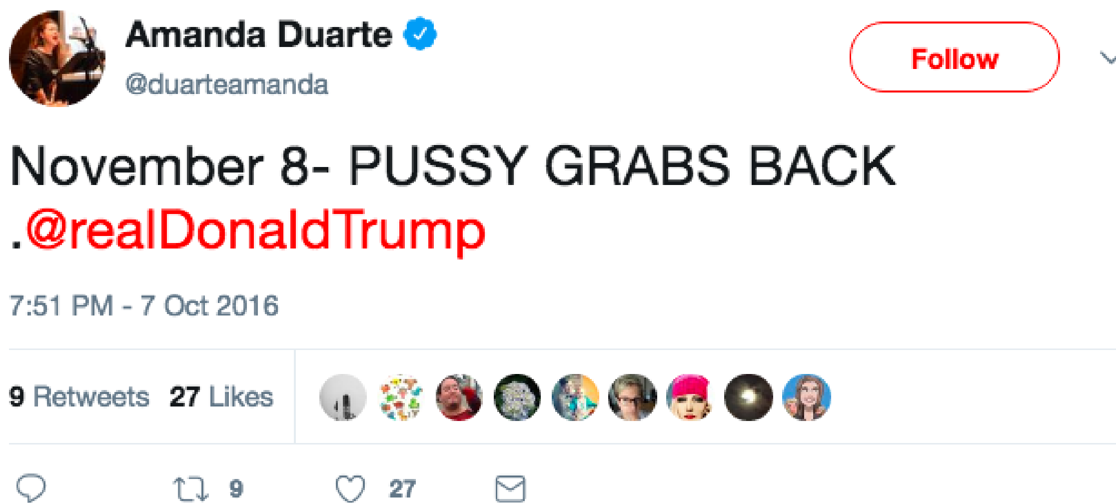


Figure 5. Amanda Duarte's tweet, which was the first instance of the phrase "Pussy Grabs Back" in response to the recording released by *The Washington Post*.
https://twitter.com/duarteamanda/status/784541579029704704

Figure 6. Jessica Bennett's post, combining Duarte's sentiment with the picture by Stella Marrs, with the first instance of the image in question.
https://twitter.com/jessicabennett/status/784557297657847808

Figure 7. Amanda Duarte's post sharing the image Bennett originally created, approximately one hour after Bennett's post.
https://twitter.com/duarteamanda/status/784576474561048577

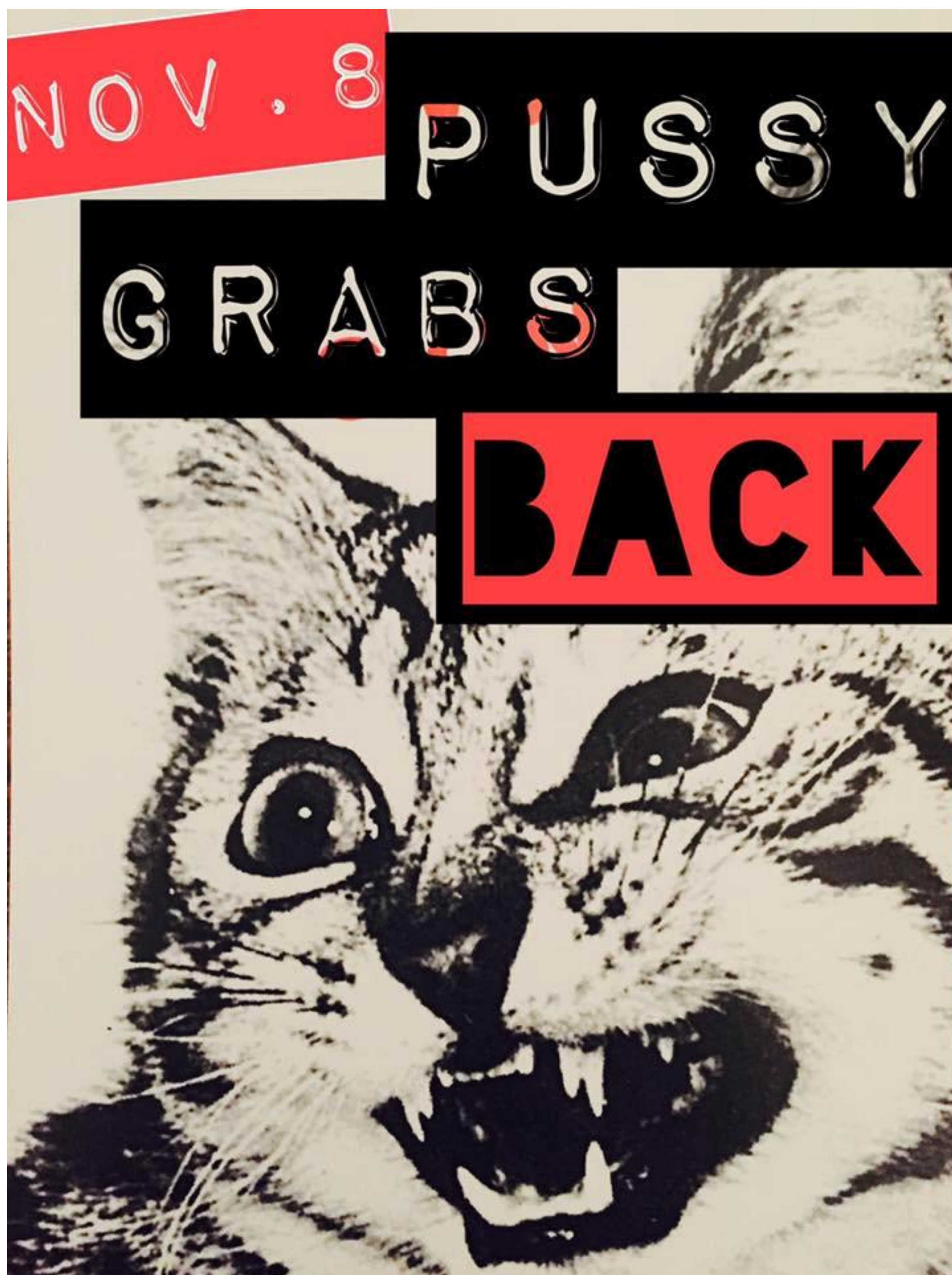


Figure 8. The image in its entirety.
https://twitter.com/jessicabennett/status/784557297657847808

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