

The Roots of Feminist Radical Thought in the US Society

Houria Mihoubi

Department of English

Faculty of letters and Languages

University of Algiers, epartment of English

Bouzareah

الملخص:

الهدف الأساس من هذا المقال هو إبراز وسليط الضوء على أهم جذور الحركة النسوية التي تعتبر من أهم الحركات الراديكالية في المجتمع الأمريكي. هذا البحث يبين أن من أهم الدوافع التي أدت بالمرأة الأمريكية للانتفاض و المطالبة بوضع أفضل و أحيانا بالمساواة مع الرجل هو تشبعها بالفكر الراديكالي و المثل التي قامت عليها الدولة الأمريكية و التي أدت إلى الثورة الأمريكية . إن المجتمع الأمريكي و منذ نشأته تبنى مبادئ العدالة و الحرية و المساواة كقواعد لاستقراره و استثنائيته . فالحركة النسوية لم تكن سوى تفعيل لهذا الفكر و من ثم جاءت المطالبة بتطبيق المبادئ الأمريكية كاملة على جميع فئات المجتمع بما فيها المرأة.

The most straightforward definition of feminism says that is it a movement for social, cultural, political and economic equality of men and women. It is a campaign against gender inequalities and it strives for equal rights for women. Feminism can be also defined as the right to enough information available to every single woman so that she can make a choice to live a life which is non-discriminatory and which works within the principles of social, cultural, political and economic equality and independence.

Feminism can be also defined as a global phenomenon which addresses various issues related to women across the world in a specific manner as applicable to a particular culture or society. Though the issues related to feminism may differ for different societies and culture but they are broadly tied together with the underlying philosophy of achieving equality of gender in every sphere of life. So feminism cannot be tied to any narrow definitions based on a particular class, race or religion.

It is in fact a global struggle for gender equality and end of gender based discriminations against women. So White American Women, Black American Women, Asian Women, Latin American Women, European Women or Women from any other part of the world are united in their struggle against gender based discrimination and inequality. Though they may be working for issues specific to their cultural and social settings but they are united in the philosophy of achieving equality of women in every sphere of life.

In fact, feminism is another reform which merits individual attention and is the early movement for women's rights. The history of American women has, in a sense, only begun to be written, but it appears that the early nineteenth century was a period of declining status for women. Increasingly, society's image of women came to center around the home. At the same time, as work moved from the household to the workshop and factory, the productive function of women in the home became increasingly unimportant. Some women followed spinning and weaving out of the household and became the nation's first factory labor force. Others, especially in the middle class, found themselves with fewer and fewer responsibilities and opportunities at home.

The early feminist movement had roots dating back at least as far as the Age of Revolution, which had produced, in Mary Wollstonecraft, the first great ideologue of women's rights. In the 1820s and 1830s, the Owenites had demanded greater rights for women and Frances Wright, the Scottish-born follower of Robert Owen, had become notorious by delivering public lectures demanding not only legal equality for women, but the right to birth control and divorce as well.

The Owen-Wright brand of feminism was the child of Enlightenment rationalism and its heritage of natural rights. It was thus somewhat different from another expression of early feminism, which stemmed from the great revivals. At first, the revivals stimulated the formation of women's reform societies which did not challenge the conception of women as the guardian of household and family. Moreover, increasing numbers of women participated in the crusade against slavery. From their experiences in abolitionism, some came to challenge the status of women as well as blacks.

Perhaps the leading example of the way abolition fed into early feminism was that of the remarkable Grimké sisters, Sarah and Angelina. Daughters of a prominent South Carolina family, they became, in the 1830s, Quakers and advocates of emancipation. Denounced by the Massachusetts clergy for addressing mixed audiences of men and women, the Grimkés undertook to defend the right of women to a role in public affairs. The controversy aroused by their activities not only helped split the abolitionist movement but inspired those, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, who organized the Seneca Falls convention of 1840 where women's suffrage was first demanded.¹

After the Civil War, when the feminists optimistically expected to be given the vote at the same time as the freed slaves, they were dismayed to learn that according to Congress, it was the "negro's hour" and women would have to wait their turn independently. The fourteenth and the fifteenth amendments ratified in 1868 and 1870 gave the vote to all male citizens white and black for the first time explicitly denying women the right of citizenship in the constitution "if that word male be inserted now." Stanton wrote despairingly it will take us a century at least to get it out. In the end it took not a century but fifty years and the passage of another constitutional amendment.

As Ellen DuBois has argued, the women's suffrage movement challenged the pervasive division of society into public and private spheres, with women confined to the private world. It demanded access for women to the political realm as well as to all branches of employment. On the other hand, William O'Neill has suggested that the early feminists gradually receded from a critique of the nuclear family and sexual discrimination within the home, issues which had been raised by Frances Wright but were considered too controversial by later feminists.

A related question is the class basis of the feminist constituency. Gerda Lerner argues that the early women's rights movement was resolutely middle-class, and had little to offer the growing class of female factory workers. These women also organized themselves in the 1830s and 1840s, but along lines of class, not gender. The female workers of Lowell, Massachusetts, conducted a series of strikes in these years against the deterioration of working conditions and wages, but they tended to look to the male labor movement for allies, rather than the early feminists, and did not view the ballot as a panacea for their problems. As an organized force, feminism dates from abolitionism in the early 1830s.

Abolitionism was the radical anti-slavery movement which demanded the immediate cessation of slavery on the grounds that every man was a self-owner; that is, every human being has moral jurisdiction over his or her own body. It was the first organized, radical movement in which women played prominent roles and from which a woman's movement sprang. Abbie Kelley (1810-1887), an abolitionist-feminist, observed: "We have good cause to be grateful to the slave, for the benefit we have received to ourselves, in working for him. In striving to strike his irons off, we found most surely that we were manacled ourselves."² The modern historian, Aileen S. Kraditor, wrote:

"A few women in the abolitionist movement in the 1830s...found their religiously inspired work for the slave impeded by prejudices against public activity by women. They and many others began to ponder the parallels between women's status and the Negro's status, and to notice that white men usually applied the principles of natural rights and the ideology of individualism only to themselves."³

In the early 19th century, married women could not enter into contracts without their husband's consent, women lost all title to property or future earnings upon marriage, children were legally controlled by the father, and women were often without recourse against kidnapping or imprisonment by husbands and other male relatives.

Within abolitionism, women's rights stirred hot debate. The strongest advocate of women's rights was the libertarian William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879), editor of the *Liberator*, who insisted that anti-slavery was a battle for human rights, not male rights.⁴ Many of the abolitionists who opposed Garrison on this agreed that women were self-owners but resisted mixing woman's rights with anti-slavery for fear it would hurt the latter cause; Theodore Weld (1803-1895) exemplified this position. Through his encouragement, Angelina Grimke (1805-1879), Sarah Grimke (1792-1873), and Abbie Kelley became the first women in America to do lecture tours before audiences that included men. Nevertheless, he admonished them to stop introducing woman's rights into their speeches.

"Is it not forgetting the great and dreadful wrongs of the slave," he asked Angelina, "in a selfish crusade against some paltry grievances of our own?"⁵ "The time to assert a right," she countered, "is the time when that right is denied. We must establish this right for if we do not, it will be impossible for us to go on with the work of Emancipation."⁶

In a speech before the Massachusetts Legislature on February 21, 1838, whereby Angelina Grimke became the first woman to speak before an American legislative body, she continued to mix the two issues:

"Mr. Chairman, it is my privilege to stand before you...on behalf of the 20,000 women of Massachusetts whose names are enrolled on petitions...these petitions relate to the great and solemn subject of slavery...and because it is a political subject, it has often tauntingly been said that women have nothing to do with it. Are we aliens because we are women? Are we bereft of citizenship because we are mothers, wives, and daughters of a mighty people?"⁷

Sarah Grimke's tactics were similar to those of her younger sister. Her pamphlet, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* (1837), used the individualist feminist approach of comparing women to slaves. "If the wife be injured in her person or property," Sarah quoted Blackstone, "she can bring no action for redress without her husband's concurrence, and in his name as well as her own." Sarah observed, "This law is similar to the law respecting slaves, 'A slave cannot bring suit against his master or any other person, for an injury — his master must bring it.'" She compared the Louisiana law that said that all a slave possesses belongs to his master with a law that said, "A woman's personal property by marriage becomes absolutely her husband's which, at his death, he may leave entirely from her."⁸

Through the efforts of the Grimke sisters, women's rights became a subject of controversy throughout America. Angelina wrote:

"We have given great offense on account of our womanhood, which seems to be as objectionable as our abolitionism. The whole land seems aroused to discussion on the province of women, and I am glad of it. We are willing to bear the brunt of the storm, if we can only be the means of making a break in that wall of public opinion which lies right in the way of women's rights, true dignity, honor and usefulness."⁹

To the Grimke sisters, who smoothed the path for future feminists by breaking social taboos, and to Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), who encouraged civil disobedience through her involvement in the Underground Railroad, equality meant equal protection under just law and the equal opportunity to protest injustice.

The full emancipation of the females would according to Elizabeth Oakes not only enable women to achieve their individuality which was their due it would also make the world better for them. The enslavement of women claimed Mrs. Smith had made them a retarding force in civilization; their emancipation would convert them into a dynamic agent for its progress.

1-The Ideological Basis of Feminism

"To me," wrote Voltairine de Cleyre (1866-1912), "any dependence, any thing which destroys the complete selfhood of the individual, is in the line of slavery."¹⁰

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) wrote: "To define individual duty is difficult; but the collective duty of a class or sex is clear. It is the duty of women...to bring children into the world who are superior to their parents; and to forward the progress of the race." ¹¹

These quotes illustrate two opposing traditions within feminism — individualism and socialism. Both believe that women should have the same rights as men, that women should be equal, ¹²but the meaning of equality differs within the feminist movement. Throughout most of its history, American mainstream feminism considered equality to mean equal treatment under existing laws and equal representation within existing institutions. The focus was not to change the status quo in a basic sense, but rather to be included within it. The more radical feminists protested that the existing laws and institutions were the source of injustice and, thus, could not be reformed. These feminists saw something fundamentally wrong with society beyond discrimination against women, and their concepts of equality reflected this. To the individualist, equality was a political term referring to the protection of individual rights; that is, protection of the moral jurisdiction every human being has over his or her own body. To socialist-feminists, it was a socioeconomic term. Women could be equal only after private property and the family relationships it encouraged were eliminated.

Most Americans holding that women are by nature inferior to men only three religious groups allowed women any sort of active role among them the Quakers . Quakerism allowed women to ask questions and express their opinions as well as to preach .Quakers also believed in the equality of men and women and providing girls and boys equal education ¹³ long before the American independence there were many voices calling for the emancipation of women Thomas Paine the then editor of *Pennsylvania magazine* inserted an issue of August 1775 an essay which was perhaps the first general plea in America for the marginalized sex .

It was necessary for the champions of women's rights to use the arguments that both religion and the natural right philosophy provided in spite of Garrison 's firm statement "we know that man and women are equal in the sight of god "they later put greater relative emphasis on natural rights women were human beings all human beings possessed the same unalienable rights to life ,liberty ,property ,and the pursuit of happiness.

Although they did not yet have access to evolutionist notions of change, woman's rights activists in the antebellum period distinguished between

woman's inherent nature and current manifestations of women's present natures, agreeing that the former was God-given and unalterable but asserting that it had not yet been attained by most women. As Lucretia Mott, the Quaker abolitionist and woman's rights reformer, declared in 1850, men had wrongly equated the "present position" of woman with the "original state" designed for woman:

"We would admit all the difference, that our great and beneficent Creator has made, in the relation of man and woman, nor would we seek to disturb this relation; but we deny that the present position of woman is her true sphere of usefulness. . . . True, nature has made a difference in [woman's] configuration, her physical strength, her voice, etc.—and we ask no change, we are satisfied with nature. But how has neglect and mismanagement increased this difference! It is our duty to develop these natural powers by suitable exercise, so that they may be strengthened "by reason of use." ¹⁴

There are two basic ideas emerging which express the bulk of the feminists' concerns. Which can be called the Egalitarian Ethic and the Liberation Ethic, but they are not independent of each other and together they mesh into what can only be described as a feminist humanism.

The Egalitarian Ethic means exactly what it says. The sexes are equal; Feminism is also related to men in the sense that all gender based equality is in fact a balance between the male and female with the intention of liberating the individual. In that sense the definition of feminism also

includes all movements and campaigns that target men and boys for gender sensitization with a goal to end gender based discriminations and achieve gender based equality.

Therefore sex roles must go. American history has proven that institutionalized difference inevitably means inequity and sex role stereotypes have long since become anachronistic. Strongly differentiated sex roles were rooted in the ancient division of labor; their basis has been torn apart by modern technology. Their justification was rooted in the subjection of women to the reproductive cycle. That has already been destroyed by modern pharmacology.

The cramped little categories of personality and social function to which we assign people from birth must be broken open so that all people can develop independently, as individuals. This means that there will be an integration of social functions and life styles of men and women as groups until, ideally, one cannot tell anything of relevance about a person's social role by knowing their sex. But this increased similarity of the two groups also means increased options for individuals and increased diversity in the human race. No longer will there be men's work and women's work. No longer will humanity suffer a schizophrenic personality desperately trying to reconcile its "masculine" and "feminine" parts. No longer will marriage be the institution where two half-people come together in hopes of making a whole.

The Liberation Ethic says this is not enough. Not only must the limits of the roles be changed, but their content as well. The Liberation Ethic looks at the kinds of lives currently being led by men as well as women and concludes that both are deplorable and neither is necessary. The social institutions which oppress women as women, also oppress people as people and can be altered to make a more humane existence for all. So much of our society is hung upon the framework of sex role stereotypes and their reciprocal functions that the dismantling of this structure will provide the opportunity for making a more viable life for everyone.

It is important to stress that these two Ethics must work together in tandem. If the first is emphasized over the second, then we have a women's rights movement, not one of women's liberation. To seek only equality, given the current male bias of the social values, is to assume that women want to be like men or that men are worth emulating. It is to demand that women be allowed to participate in society as we know it, to get their piece of the pie, without questioning the extent to which that society is worth participating in. This view is held by some, but most feminists today find it inadequate.

Those women who are more personally compatible in what is considered the male role must realize that that role is made possible only by the existence of the female sex role; in other words, only by the subjection of women. Therefore women cannot become equal to men without the destruction of those two interdependent mutually parasitic roles.

The failure to realize that the integration of the sex roles and the equality of the sexes will inevitably lead to basic structural change is to fail to seize the opportunity to decide the direction of those changes. It is just as dangerous to fall into the trap of seeking liberation without due concern for equality. This is the mistake made by many of the left radicals. They find the general human condition to be wretched that they feel everyone should devote their energies to the Millennial Revolution in belief that the liberation of women will follow naturally the liberation of people.

However women have yet to be defined as people, even among the radicals, and it is erroneous to assume their interests are identical to those of men. For women to subsume their concerns once again is to insure that the promise of liberation will be a spurious one. There has yet to be created or conceived by any political or social theorist a revolutionary society in which women were equal to men and their needs duly considered. The sex role structure has never been comprehensively challenged by any male philosopher and the systems they have proposed have all presumed the existence of a sex-role structure to some degree.

Such undue emphasis on the Liberation Ethic has also often led to a sort of Radical Paradox. This is a situation the politicians frequently found themselves in during the early days of the movement. They found repugnant the possibility of pursuing "reformist" issues which might be achieved without altering the basic nature of the system, and thus, they felt, only strengthen the system. However, their search for a sufficiently radical action and/or issue came to naught and they found themselves unable to do anything out of fear that it might be counterrevolutionary. Inactive revolutionaries are a good deal more innocuous than active "reformists."

But even among those who are not rendered impotent, the unilateral pursuit of Liberation can take its toll. Some radical women have been so appalled at the condition of most men, and the possibility of becoming even partially what they are, that they have clung to the security of the role that they know, to wait complacently for the Revolution to liberate everyone. Some men, fearing that role reversal was a goal of the women's liberation movement, have taken a similar position. Both have failed to realize that the abolition of sex roles must be continually incorporated into any radical restructuring of society and thus have failed to explore the possible consequences of such role integration. The goal they advocate may be one of liberation, but it does not involve women's liberation.

Separated from each other, the Egalitarian Ethic and the Liberation Ethic can be crippling, but together they can be a very powerful force. Separately they speak to limited interests; together they speak to all humanity. Separately, they are but superficial solutions; together they recognize that while sexism oppresses women, it also limits the potentiality of men. Separately, neither will be achieved because their scope does not range far enough; together they provide a vision worthy of our devotion. Separately, these two Ethics do not lead to the liberation of women; together, they also lead to the liberation of men.

2- Seneca Falls Convention: Jeffersonian Legacy

Although the first announcement appeared only eight days before the meeting, approximately three hundred people attended the Seneca Falls Convention, held at the Wesleyan Chapel of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, an abolitionist denomination, on 20 and 21 July 1848. The object of the meeting, as stated in their public call, was to discuss "the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women." Women and men gave speeches, read aloud and discussed the content of the Declaration of Sentiments, made some revisions, and approved the document. The Declaration of Sentiments was a rewriting of the Preamble of the U.S. Declaration of Independence to declare men and women equal and to criticize the specific "injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman."¹⁵

Upon the first observation of the speech we will notice that Stanton carefully drafted it to closely resemble the 1776 the declaration of independence thus connecting the women's campaign directly with the American symbol of liberty using this former document as a model, Stanton used as much of the original words as possible she also created a list of eighteenth of women's grievances the same number that was in the declaration of independence

In the first paragraph, both documents although a slight word variation it was set out that the intentions were to declare the causes that impel them to such a cause "Thomas Jefferson and Stanton were both writing on behalf of their own people demanding freedom whether from the tyrannical rule of King George III or from the tyrannical rule of men

In the first line of the first paragraph the original copy states we hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal while Stanton states that

The final notable change was in the concluding sentences before the grievances were listed Stanton changed the original form labeling the colonies as the ones who suffered in the hands of the king to "the patient sufferance of the women under government"¹⁶ by making this change it is easy to see the irony that this government which people created to escape the tyrannical rule of Great Britain was the same that was imposing its tyrannical rule over women; Stanton then introduced the list of grievances by doing that it seems that she wanted to point out that women were fighting for the same rights that the forefathers were fighting for when they wrote "the Declaration of Independence"

Emerson says, "A healthy discontent is the first step to progress." The general discontent I felt with woman's portion as wife, mother, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide, the chaotic conditions into which everything fell without her constant supervision, and the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women impressed me with a strong feeling that some active measures should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular. My experience at the World's Anti-slavery Convention, all I had read of the legal status of women, and the oppression I saw everywhere, together swept across my soul, intensified now by many personal experiences. It seemed as if all the elements had conspired to impel me to some onward step. I could not see what to do or where to begin my only thought was a public meeting for protest and discussion. In this tempest-tossed condition of mind I received an invitation to spend the day with Lucretia Mott, at Richard Hunt's, in Waterloo [New York]. There I met several members of different families of [Quaker] Friends, earnest, thoughtful women. I poured out, that day, the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent, with such vehemence and indignation that I stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare anything. My discontent, according to Emerson, must have been healthy, for it moved us all to prompt action, and we decided, then and there, to call a "Woman's Rights Convention." ¹⁷

Signing continued on both days of the convention, but the reasons that only one-third of the persons present signed the document remain unknown. For instance, Quakers held egalitarian principles about men and women, but they might not have supported participation by either sex in the corrupt world of politics. Others may have sympathized but been reticent to sign publicly in support of women's political rights.

All resolutions in the Declaration of Sentiments passed. Disagreement concerned whether men as well as women should sign the declaration and whether the convention should demand the elective franchise for women, or the right to vote; both questions were answered affirmatively. The only known African American to sign the declaration was Frederick Douglass (1818–1895), author of the most famous autobiography by an escaped American slave (1845), who spoke out for both women's suffrage and abolition.

Many other conventions, regional and national, followed this first convention, and national women's rights organizations were also formed. It is valuable to remember that these early women's rights activists had to teach themselves how to be instigators of a rebellion because their lives of domesticity had not trained them for such civic participation. Female friendships were thus an essential resource of the movement. Among the more supportive and enduring activist friendships was the relationship begun in 1851 between Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), who is considered to have been the most effective recruiter and organizer of the women's rights advocates.

Perhaps the most profound treatise on women's rights was Margret Fuller's *Women in the Twentieth Century*. In this remarkable book, Fuller, the transcendentalist women argued that there is no wholly masculine man, no purely female woman. She also severely criticized the hard barrier society had drawn between the two naturally equal sexes once this truth was recognized, women would cease living for men and begin to live for themselves as well and in so doing they would help men become what they had promised, the sons of God. Fuller once claimed: "man should esteem himself the brother and friend, but nowise the lord and tutor of woman" ¹⁸

With the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920¹⁹, giving women the right to vote, some people heralded the completed success of the goals motivating the Seneca Falls Convention. and women's suffrage was so radical that women themselves feared it as a threat to the foundation of American society, the family ²⁰ But more leaders believed that the work of feminism's "second wave" was just beginning and that there was much more work to do for achieving women's equality. There is no consensus on whether full parity has been achieved by the early twenty-first century.

It was not until the 1960's that feminism experienced another upsurge. In 1953 Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* had appeared in English translation, an influential book that analyzed the

history and implications of female subjection in Western culture. Simone de Beauvoir considered that man and woman are born equal but society decides that this is a man and the other is a woman she states "one is not born a woman but becomes one"²¹ and she called women to rebel and revolutionise their unjust social status by achieving social equality between the two sexes : "society being codified by man ,decrees that woman is inferior ;she can do away with this inferiority only by destroying male's superiority"²² .to achieve this goal Simone de Beauvoir incited women to act immediately she wrote "change your life today ,do not gamble on the future ,act now ,without delay "²³

In 1963 Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, openly criticizing the prevailing stereotypical role of the American housewife and mother. :

"The problem that has no name which is simply the fact that American women are kept from growing to their full capacities is taking a far greater toll on the physical and mental health of our country than any known disease "²⁴

Also in 1963 a Presidential Commission issued a report American Women which recommended a number of moderate reforms to improve their status. In response to these and other developments, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded in 1966 and soon became the largest and best known of various new women's organizations.

NOW almost immediately took up the fight for an Equal Rights Amendment and demanded several other drastic reforms, such as the right to abortion. In the meantime, these demands found much wider support than previously, because many middle-class women had become radicalized through the renewed black civil rights struggle, voter registration drives in the South, and the peace movement against the American war in Southeast Asia.

Sexual and reproductive liberation could be discussed more openly, as the whole country had become more sensitive to issues of fairness and individual freedom. In the early 1970's the abortion issue was suddenly settled by the U.S. Supreme Court in the feminists' favor. Moreover, Congress finally passed an Equal Rights Amendment stating "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." No matter how difficult and lengthy the struggle for ratification may turn out to be, and no matter how often it may fail, feminists are hopeful that the amendment will ultimately be adopted.

The feminist movements also concentrated on achieving reproductive and sexual freedom. Feminists demanded affordable child care, birth control and abortion on demand, more attention to women's health needs, rape crisis centers, and women's shelters. Their efforts resulted in the municipal Rape Treatment Center Act of 1974, which established rape treatment centers in city hospitals. Feminists were also prepared to defy the law, forming an underground organization to provide abortions when they were still illegal in Illinois.

Economic equality was also a goal of feminist movements from the 1960s onward. Unlike many women's movements earlier in the century, which had often favored protective labor legislation for women, the new feminist organizations emphasized gender equality in the workplace. The Coalition of Labor Union Women was formed in Chicago in 1974 to give union women access to leadership positions denied in the male-dominated union structure, to help union women overturn discriminatory insurance rates and pension benefit deductions, and to secure maternity leave.

Women Employed worked in Chicago to fight hiring and job discrimination for nonunion women. The Feminist Writers Guild, organized in the 1980s, sought similar equality of access for female writers. Moreover, Congress finally passed an Equal Rights Amendment stating "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." No matter how difficult and lengthy the struggle for ratification may turn out to be, and no matter how often it may fail, feminists are hopeful that the amendment will ultimately be adopted.

Today American women are making unprecedented inroads in highly paid jobs like engineering, medicine, and law. The number and size of business owned by women have risen rapidly since 1990's. Women ran for and elected to high public office the number of female state governors and state legislatures in the US Congress reached its heights. In 2008, Hillary Clinton the former first lady by nearly winning the Democratic Party nomination for the presidency became the first seriously competitive female candidate for that office²⁵ despite all that, I can say that the road to independence was not easy for American women because Jefferson had proclaimed equality the bedrock of American government but it had taken 144 years for women to achieve full citizenship in the USA.

Endnotes

- ¹ - Changes in the status of women are discussed in several of the essays in Berenice Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History*, and in Mary Ryan, *Womanhood in America*. On the Grimké sisters, see Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters*, and for a general survey of American feminism, Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle*.
- ² - Abbie Kelley.
- ³ - Aileen S. Kraditor., *Means and Ends (USA1965)*p.67
- ⁴ - *ibid.*
- ⁵ - Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters (USA 1969)*p.89.
- ⁶ - *ibid.*
- ⁷ - *ibid.*
- ⁸ - *ibid.*
- ⁹ - Gerda Lerner, *op.cit*
- ¹⁰ - Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist, The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978)*, p. 161.
- ¹¹ - Quoted in Aileen Kraditor, *Up From the Pedestal (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968)*, p.175.
- ¹² - This does not include the small minority who believe women are naturally superior to men and that society should reflect this
- ¹³ - Andrew Frank, *American Revolution :People and Perspectives* p 21
- ¹⁴ - Evan Sarah, *Born of Liberty : a History of Women in the USA (Free Press 1991)*p56
- ¹⁵ - This passage is from Elizabeth Cady Stanton's memoir *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences 1815–1897*. It shows the underpinnings of Stanton's thinking about women's rights and her interest in agitating public awareness of the cause. Stanton was also, like Ralph Waldo Emerson, a philosopher of her era.
- ¹⁶ - Elizabeth Stanton ,Anthony Susan ,*History of Women Suffrage (USA 1969)* p70
- ¹⁷ - Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp. 147–148.
- ¹⁸ - Margaret Fuller *Women in the Twentieth Century (Boston 1860)*p38
- ¹⁹ - Section 2 the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any stat on account of sex
Section 2 The congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation
- ²⁰ - Jane Camhi, *Women against Women* pp4-7
- ²¹ - Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex (London 1954)*
- ²² - *ibid*
- ²³ - *ibid*
- ²⁴ - Betty Freidan *The Feminine Mystique,(New yuork1963)* p.45
- ²⁵ - David Muuk Oakland john *American Civilization :an Introduction. P. 85*