SHATTERED SILENCE:

THE RHETORIC OF AN AMERICAN FEMALE LABOR REFORM ASSOCIATION

DISSertation

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by

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DEDICATION

To Loretta Bergen Riley
I wish to express sincere appreciation to Josina Makau, Joe Foley and Leila Rupp for their support and guidance. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Susan (who listened to me) and Ellen (who lived with me). They worked hard for their money.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

While numerous methodological and theoretical challenges have been made to traditional Aristotelian forms of rhetorical analysis and criticism, one underlying assumption has remained constant in its practice: that purposive discourse is meant to influence its hearers. That assumption guides the primary function of most rhetorical critics, which is the assessment of the effect of the discourse upon the audience.

Standard rhetorical analysis instructs the critic to ask several basic questions when judging discourse. These may be summed up as, "What is the speaker's intention?", "Who is the audience?" and, "To what degree did the speaker achieve his or her goal?" Cathcart (among others), recognizing the variety of forms which modern criticism has assumed, takes the position that there are standard tools of rhetorical analysis which can be applied successfully to public discourse. He cites these as analysis of (1) the rhetorical problem, which has created the need for rhetorical response; (2) the purpose of the discourse; (3) the lines of argument; (4) the modes of proof; and of (5) message organization. Such will yield the critic a basis on which to argue the effectiveness (or conversely, the ineffectiveness) of the discourse.
Andrews, however, warns that a critic must be careful to avoid cause-and-effect thinking when analyzing discourse. He points out that while "certainly the purpose of any rhetorical message is to persuade", identifying the actions of the auditors after the speech is so simplistic as to be almost useless to understanding. Determination of effect is made by "careful examination of the interrelationships between text and context, in order to offer the most reasonable explanation for the probable result of any given message."  

Traditional rhetorical criticism then, assumes that for a speaker to be most effective, s/he must be aware of situational constraints (i.e., audiences' expectations, values, and attitudes) and must design his/her discourse to overcome any obstacles engendered by those constraints. Successful rhetors invent arguments based on logical reasoning and buttressed by effective use of the three modes of proof first identified by Aristotle, ethos, logos, and pathos. Next, the effective speaker is charged with the responsibility of organizing public discourse into a coherent and meaningful pattern. Simply put, if the rhetor is successful in addressing him/herself to these concerns, persuasion should occur.  

The fundamental question of the present study deals with the value of such traditional forms of rhetorical inquiry to the study of women's discourse. While many analyses of women's rhetoric have been done utilizing such standards a significant challenge to this practice exists. Rhetorical critic Karlyn
Campbell rejects reliance on traditional modes in her studies of feminist rhetoric. She argues that "the sex roles of women contradict the dominant values of American culture—self-reliance, achievement, and independence." Further, insofar as the role of the rhetor entails these same qualities, "its very assumption is a violation of the female role."\(^6\) (original emphasis)

In her article "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron"\(^7\) Campbell argues that feminist rhetoric is

...substantively unique by definition, because no matter how traditional its argumentation, how justificatory its form, how discursive its method, or how scholarly its style, it attacks the entire psychosocial reality, the most fundamental values, of the cultural context in which it occurs.\(^8\)

Campbell illustrates this point by examining traditional discourses by contemporary liberationists, particularly those advocating legal, economic, and sexual equality. She determines that "reformists' demands are rightly seen as revolutionary and radical in the extreme", because "they threaten the institutions of marriage and the family and norms governing child-rearing and male-female roles."\(^9\) The form, style, structure, and supporting materials in the arguments she examines would "meet the demands of the strictest Aristotelian critic", yet "they are substantively unique and inevitably radical, because they attack the fundamental values underlying this culture."\(^10\)

She finds that feminist advocates do not have the option to be moderate or reformist. Related to this is feminism's "anti-rhetorical" style, as its advocates reject certain traditional
concepts of rhetorical process, namely persuasion of the many
by a leader or expert, adaptations to audience expectations,
and inducement to a specific program or group action. Use
of such traditional forms "encourages submissiveness and passivity
in the audience - qualities at odds with a fundamental goal
of feminist advocacy - self-determinism." She asserts that
"consciousness-raising" as a form of interaction or a type
of rhetorical transaction represents that stylistic feature
"uniquely adapted to the rhetorical problem of feminist advocacy." She defines that problem in the following manner

...women are divided from one another
by almost all the usual sources of identification-age, education, income, ethnic origin, even
geography. In addition, counter-persuasive
forces are pervasive and potent - nearly
all spend their lives in close proximity
to and under the control of males. ...Women
also have very negative self-concepts, so
negative, in fact, that is difficult to view
them as an audience, i.e., persons who see
themselves as agents of change. ...If a persuasive
campaign directed to this audience is to
be effective, it must transcend alienation
to create "sisterhood", modify self-concepts
to create a sense of autonomy, and speak
to women in terms of private, concrete, individual
experience, because women have little, if
any publicly shared experience. The substantive
problem of the absence of shared values remains:
when women become part of an audience for
liberation rhetoric, they violate the norms
governing sex appropriate behavior. 

Stylistically, consciousness-raising consists of affective
proofs, personal testimony, participation and dialogue, self-
revelation and self-criticism, the goal of which is autonomous
decision making through self-persuasion. Strategic use of
techniques for violating the reality structures of participants,
by the use of attack metaphors and symbolic reversals, are attempts at the radical affirmation of new identities for women. These violations, while initially shocking to participants, are necessary for the recognition and articulation of the contradictions inherent in the "female role" - femininity as conflicting with the basic values of our culture.

Campbell concludes that feminist advocacy is a "unified, separate genre of rhetoric with distinctive substantive and stylistic features" and that "only the oxymoron, the figure of paradox and contradiction can be its metaphor." She states that this is no more obvious then when compared to traditional rhetorical definitions,

The view that persuasion is an enthymemematic adaptation of audience norms and values is confounded by rhetoric which seeks to persuade by "violating the reality structure" of those toward whom it is directed.

She further rejects analysis of rhetorical situations as being useful to the study of this genre, as the traditional view of situations as consisting of two or more sets of conflicting moral demands, does not adequately account for the situations feminists face.

The reason is simply that the rhetoric of women's liberation appeals to what are said to be shared moral values, but forces recognition that those values are not shared, thereby creating the most intense moral conflicts.

Similarly, Bitzer's identification of the elements of a rhetorical situation is seen as unsatisfactory for analysis of feminist rhetoric. His notion of a controlling exigence
which functions as an organizing principle for rhetorical response
is not complete enough to account for the personal changes
which must be effected in order for women to be persuaded. His
definition of audience as being composed of those persons who
are capable of being influenced and of being agents of change,
has already been dismissed as being not germane. The final
element of a rhetorical situation, according to Bitzer, is
that of constraints, which can "limit decision and action needed
to modify the exigence."17 Campbell argues,

...the notion of constraints seems inadequate
to a genre in which to act as a mediator
of change, either as a rhetor or audience
member, is itself the most significant constraint
inhibiting decision or action - a constraint
that requires the violation of cultural norms
and risks alienation no matter how traditional
or reformist the rhetorical appeal may be.18

Justification is then given for the rejection of standard
methodologies of rhetorical movement studies as feminism is
a movement which "eschews leadership, organizational cohesion,
and the transactions typical of mass persuasion."19

Campbell's argument for the separate critical treatment
of feminist rhetoric is, I believe, a powerful and convincing
one. However, her conclusions are drawn from analysis of an
admittedly "radical" group of women who utilize "anti-rhetorical"
strategies. This study seeks to test her assumptions by analyzing
a group of women who chose more traditional methods of persuasion,
the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association (hereinafter the "LFLRA").

This association was formed by 19th century women textile
workers in Lowell, Massachusetts. The distinctions between
this group and the feminists Campbell has analyzed are many. Firstly, their rhetorical strategies were traditional as will be illustrated in future chapters. Secondly, unlike feminism with its multitude of goals, the LFLRA had one stated purpose: the reduction of their hours of labor. While they occasionally voiced their support for other reform causes, their primary goal was the ten-hour day. Thirdly, contrary to the rhetorical problem of the audience as determined by Campbell, they were not divided along the lines of race, class, age, etc., but rather, shared a common heritage. Also, their activism lends credence to the claim that they viewed themselves as agents of change. Additionally, these women did possess the publicly-shared experience of working together in one of America's first industries, the textile mills. Finally, the efforts of the LFLRA fit neatly into the standard definition of a movement; there were leaders, they were organized, and many of their transactions were typical of mass persuasion. Will Campbell's argument hold true for this particular group?

In order to determine the answer to that question, three issues need to be addressed. First, how traditional was the discourse? Was it effective? Next, did it attack the psychosocial reality of those it sought to persuade? Finally, what do the answers to these questions tell us about the value of standard effects-based methods of criticism with regard to the analysis of women's rhetoric? Explication of the method follows in Chapter III.
The female speakers of the LFLRA, and their counterparts in associations scattered throughout New England, were chief advocates of the Ten-Hour Movement. This movement was a decade-long struggle by industrial workers in the 1840s to limit their hours of labor. The organized effort spawned labor actions, petition drives, and occasional walk-outs from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania, primarily during the years 1845-49; however, its roots can be traced to the beginning of union organizing in the 1830s. Members of the LFLRA were among the most active workers and speakers for this cause.²⁰

This organization has been chosen as the focus of study for several reasons. First, no previous analysis of their rhetoric exists in the literature. What little work that has been done in the field on antebellum women speakers does not include the LFLRA. Further, this exclusion has led several critics of 19th century female reform rhetoric to misrepresent the antebellum period in their analyses.²¹

Upon completing their review on the status of research on women and communication Foss and Fos summarized, "one fruitful avenue for research is to begin to fill in some of the gaps...to understand women speakers, room exists for studies of the discourse and impact of those women heretofore neglected in our journals."²²

These women were different from the majority of their counterparts in other movements in that they were members of the paid-labor force. While numerous rhetorical scholars have pointed out the middle-class biases of these other organizations,²³ very
few have chosen to give working women a voice in the "golden age of oratory." By focusing upon this particular group of rhetors, this study hopes to provide an important dimension to the study of 19th century rhetoric, one which is glaring in its omission. Hopefully, it will add to our knowledge of this important phase of women's rhetoric.
NOTES - CHAPTER I


2 Ibid, pp. 38-75, passim.


4 Ibid., p. 9.


7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., p. 77.

10 Ibid., p. 78.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 84.

15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., p. 85.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 86.
21 See Chapter II of this study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As indicated, the rhetoric associated with the LFLRA has not been the subject of study within the literature of communication. The same is true of other organized labor reform advocacy efforts by females. Foss and Foss delineate five major trends within the literature dealing with women and communication.¹ Of these, the most closely aligned to the subject at hand is that of "Historical Treatment of Women." Sub-categories under this heading include teachers in the speech professions, individual female speakers, female writers and performers, and the women's movement. The predominant focus of the "single speaker" studies is upon suffragists.²

Altman echoes this finding in her analysis of bibliographic resources dealing with women's rhetoric. She asserts that "the majority of studies on (female) speakers throughout the 19th and into the early 20th century focus on women who spoke for various social and political reforms, especially women's rights and suffrage."³ Further, she determined that macroscopic "movement" studies during this same time period focus, again, on these same two subjects.

A review of literature relevant to the study includes an historical overview of the treatment of antebellum female speakers,
followed by related articles dealing with 19th century reform rhetoric. This will be divided into two sections, one dealing with women reformers, and the other with labor reformers. Only one article could be found dealing specifically with a single female labor reformer. All other works located dealing with this time period and topic are male-centered. This is followed by a review of some more current analyses of women's rhetoric which helps us judge the extent to which Campbell's claim dealing with the oxymoronic nature of women's rhetoric has had an effect on the literature. Next, examination will turn to literature relevant to possible methodological approaches.

Historical Overview

That women spoke publicly at all in the antebellum period is surprising, considering the strength of societal prohibitions against such an act. However, inspired by numerous motives, not the least of which was compassion, many female orators faced hostile crowds during this period, their very presence challenging the notion of a "woman's sphere." A review of the literature dealing with this era illuminates this point.

Doris Yoakum's seminal work "Pioneer Women Orators of America" first published as an article in 1937 and again in expanded form in the 1943 volume of A History and Criticism of Public Address deals specifically with the time period of the Lowell movement, yet makes no mention of the activities of the female labor reformers. Rather, her focus is primarily upon abolitionists and woman's rights advocates.
The author begins her work with immediate recognition of the prohibition of women speakers. Both men and women adhered to St. Paul's biblical injunction that "women should keep silent in the church", extending it to include all public meetings. Yoakum then acknowledges societal expectations that "woman's 'sphere' was in the home, where, as a humble and retired individual in the shade of domestic duties, she could yield to society the greatest returns." 6

Both her original article and the more comprehensive chapter follow the same structural pattern; each of the three decades of the 1830s, 40s and 50s is used as the division between groups of speakers. While the article says little about the women's actual rhetoric, the subsequent chapter provides more analysis. Important to this study are her cautionary remarks to the reader in the 1937 article, detailing the reactions of the general public toward women orators,

To appreciate the fact that over a hundred women became effective public speakers between 1830 and 1860, the reader must continually bear in mind the reaction of public opinion toward women's speaking. Criticism, justification, argument and opposition abounded throughout the period. ...From the beginning, women public speakers received the anathemas of the press and pulpit. ...The Pioneer Women Orators' meetings were frequently broken up, they experienced riots and mobbings, and they dodged the flying missiles, the favorites among which seem to have been rotten and fresh eggs, dried apples, beans. ...They tried to speak above the din of hissing, stamping, groaning, shouting, whistling and other demonstrations of disapproval. They endeavored to keep the audiences quiet and attentive in the face of threats of fires,
the extinguishing of lights, the locking
of outside doors, the breaking of windows,
and disturbances outside the halls.7

Six years later, in the expanded version entitled "Women's
Introduction to the American Platform", Yoakum credits these
early speakers with establishing the base from which the "Woman
Movement" was established. A similar claim is made in almost
all remaining articles dealing with this period.8 The author
also adds a section to this piece not found in the original
dealing with the overall historical significance of the antebellum
speakers. She again notes their relationship to women's rights
and continues by pointing out that both historians and sociologists
"have overlooked voluminous evidence that women's speaking
in public is a factor worthy of consideration in the study
of progress of American women..."9 As for the field of rhetoric,
she wrote, "Only recently have those concerned with the history
of oral persuasion in this country begun to ponder over the
possibility that women may have made some contribution to the
field of speech."10

Yoakum's two articles represent the first contribution
to the field regarding women speakers. Her work is significant
in that it dealt specifically with the antebellum period and
provides us with insight into the situations faced by women orators.

Crediting Yoakum with inspiring her interest in women speakers
of the 19th century, Lillian O'Connor wrote Pioneer Women Orators,11
first published in 1953. While not including labor reformers
in her work, O'Connor's book is particularly informative, in that it is the most comprehensive rhetorical treatment of women's oratory during the time period that the women of Lowell were agitating publicly for the ten-hour day.

O'Connor takes as her subject of study 27 female orators, who spoke publicly for the causes of temperance, women's rights, abolition, free inquiry, opportunity for free people of color and equal instruction for all Americans, between the years 1828-1869. She provides a detailed description of the historical setting in which the women spoke, biographic sketches of her subjects, excerpts from their speeches and rhetorical analyses of extant texts.

Her basic question of study was the extent to which the women of the antebellum period practiced sound rhetorical principles in their speeches. Her criteria for this analysis are comparison to the Aristotelian Ideal and the effective use of ethos, pathos, and logos as modes of proof. Next, she introduces as criteria the mid-nineteenth century ideal as found in Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres, Whatley's Elements of Rhetoric, Campbell's The Philosophy of Rhetoric, and John Quincy Adam's Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, as such is necessary to give fuller understanding to the situation in which the women spoke. In detailing the lives of her subjects, she goes so far as to speculate (and sometimes prove) which of them may have had access to these works, or the theories drawn from them.
O'Connor finds evidence to support her claim that the women exemplified the standards of mid-nineteenth century rhetoric. (O'Connor's analysis will be outlined in greater detail in the methodological section of this literature review.)

However, several other aspects of her work bear mentioning at this point. In discussing her struggle to find and authenticate the texts of her subjects she notes that the "files of leading metropolitan newspapers contain no complete texts of addresses by women. Moreover, there was apparently deliberate omission of any news concerning the public-speaking activities of women." (original emphasis) Her data come primarily from reform tracts of the day and printed proceedings of the events at which the women spoke. O'Connor asserts that while the authenticity of most of her data is above question, the same cannot be said of some exceptional orations credited to male speakers, amongst them Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death" (delivered in 1775, yet not published until 1817) and several others. She concludes this chapter,

> The texts of the early women speakers, as gathered from the contemporary records of the mid-nineteenth century, must therefore take their proper place in the history and tradition of rhetoric and American public address.

Evidence that O'Connor's words were heeded is scant throughout the next several decades in rhetorical literature, as it was not until 1983 that the two other anchologies of women speakers were published. Several articles dealing with antebellum speakers pre-date those works however, therefore, they are presented first.
Both Kendall and Fisher's "Frances Wright on Women's Rights: Eloquence Versus Ethos" and "The Grimke Sisters and the Emergence of the Woman's Rights Movement" by Ellen Reid Gold provide further recognition of animosity toward females speaking in public. The latter also argues for the relationship between the Grimkes early abolitionist experiences and their later involvement and impact upon the "Woman Movement."

Frances Wright, an advocate of reforms in such areas as divorce laws, birth control and sexual equality, spoke to audiences primarily throughout the years 1828-1830. She carries the distinction of being the first female public speaker in this country. Travelling through America from her native Scotland, Wright shocked the public regularly during her initial two years of lecturing. Kendall and Fisher argue that "in spite of her eloquence, the historical evidence suggests that her failure to meet societal expectation lowered her ethos and thus mitigated her effectiveness."

Wright, in spite of her ability to inspire audience with her radical propositions, was viewed as an aberration. The authors point out that "The New York American (a newspaper of the time) said it felt no obligation to be courteous to her because she had 'waived all claims' to the privileges of her sex by giving speeches, and is a 'female monster'." She was attacked by the public and the press regularly for her violation of accepted female norms.
Nearly a decade later, Wright's legacy could be felt by Angelina and Sarah Grimke, sisters from South Carolina, and strong advocates for the abolitionist cause. Compelled to speak out, they were reluctant to do so after being told by a male colleague that he feared such an act might be deemed a "Fanny Wright meeting" and summarily advised them to make addresses in "private parlors."18

The Grimkes, according to Gold, were very conscious of the prohibition against female orators. Quoting an 1836 letter, she provides evidence for this claim: "We knew that some persons here were exceedingly afraid that if we addressed our sisters it would be called quaker preaching & that the prejudice here against womans (sic) speaking in public was...great," wrote Angelina.19

Public sentiment was so strongly against the notion of women public speakers that in 1837 the Congregationalist clergy issued a pastoral letter condemning the female reformers of the abolitionist movement. The letter, according to Gold, "strongly insisted that the proper role of woman was to maintain 'that modesty and delicacy which is the charm of domestic life'."20 Hostility and the potential for violence were felt wherever the sisters appeared.

While the Grimkes met with the same public animosity that Wright experienced,21 despite that opposition, they continued to lecture for the abolitionist cause and woman's rights throughout the remainder of the decade. Gold, echoing Yoakum, asserts that their perserverance and fervor appeared to pave the way
for other women, as Lucretia Mott, Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock Jones and Lucy Stone (among others) began publicly agitating for the cause of women's rights soon after the Grimkes retired from public life. Indeed, Eleanor Flexnor, in her book *Century of Struggle* asserts that Angelina and Sarah "fought for - and won - women's right to speak in public before any and every kind of audience."22

Both of these articles are important to this study as they allow additional insight into the intensity of public sentiment against women stepping out of their "sphere" of domesticity and into the public arena. They are also important as they further legitimize the existence of women's public advocacy during the time period of the beginning of labor reform in Lowell.

There remains one other article dealing with Angelina Grimke in the literature, but as the author clearly identifies part of her findings to the conflict spelled out by Campbell, it will be discussed in that section of the review.

Of the two anthologies published in 1983, only one is relevant for consideration here as the other is limited to women's speaking in the decade of the 1970s.23 Similar to *Pioneer Women Orators*, women associated with the LFLRA labor reform find no voice in the recent *We Shall Be Heard*, an anthology of women speakers throughout American history.24 Despite this lack of inclusion, the book is important to the re-introduction of the study of women's rhetoric within our field. The authors, Patricia Scileppi Kennedy and Gloria Hartmann O'Shield argue that strictly defined
gender expectations regarding women's passivity and sphere kept historians, social critics and rhetoricians from accepting women as perpetrators of social change, despite evidence to the contrary. While feminist historians and social critics have sought to rectify this situation, rhetorical critics appear to have lagged significantly behind. Kennedy and O'Shield's book then, represents an important contribution to the field as a whole and feminist rhetoric in particular.

19th Century Reform Rhetoric

The significance of The Rhetoric of Protest and Reform, edited by Paul Boase, and published under the auspices of the Speech Communication Association, might appear at first glance to be minimal with regard to this study. The compilation of works dealing with the years 1878-1898, "The Age of Reform", would seem to have little relevance to analyses of rhetoric of the 1830s and 40s. However, the articles dealing with both women speakers and labor reformers (mutually exclusive in this work) give rise to concern with regard to the present study.

The two analyses of women's rhetoric found in the text focus entirely upon the middle- and upper-class concerns of the time. In "Women Speak Out in Protest", Frances McCurdy addresses herself specifically to the issue of suffragism, and its principal advocates, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone. The author gives passing reference to the rhetors of abolitionism and suffragism in the antebellum
period, but gives no mention to female labor reformers. Indeed, in commenting on Victoria Woodhull's appearance before the House Judiciary Committee, McCurdy credits her with initiating legal action as a persuasive technique. Further, when discussing the strategy of petitioning, the author describes this as a technique started by temperance and antislavery groups and co-opted by the suffragists. Both strategies had been utilized by the members of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association nearly four decades before the period of which McCurdy writes.

Betty Caroli addresses the antebellum period in more detail in "Women Speak Out For Reform"²⁷, but states that those women associated with reform in the latter half of the century had more in common with 20th century speakers than they did with the earlier women.²⁸ Again, discussion of the antebellum period is limited to suffragists and abolitionists. Caroli asserts that one of the major distinctions between reform rhetors of the 1870s-90s and pre-war speakers was organization; "While antebellum women appealed to individuals as individuals, late nineteenth century women attempted to influence institutions through organizations."²⁹ As the LFLRA, and its sister chapters throughout New England could attest, the previous statement is misrepresentative of their experience. Similarly, Caroli attributes the expansion of women's acceptance on the public platform to the reformers of the post-war period. More than one historian credits that accomplishment to the Grimkes (see above), and an argument could be made to include the female labor reformers in this claim.
The four chapters dealing with The Industrial Protest in Boase focuses almost entirely on male labor reform advocates. (Emma Goldman is mentioned in one). Two quotes relevant to the topic at hand bear mentioning.

In "Labor in the Age of Protest", Beaty identifies worker agitation for an eight-hour day as a major issue of the period. Further, he asserts,

The genesis of the struggle for shorter hours can be traced to the pre-Civil War period. The first significant step taken by labor to secure a shorter work schedule, however, occurred in the 1860s when a Boston machinist named Ira Stewart persuaded the Machinists and Blacksmiths Union to include an eight-hour plank in the convention's platform. (emphasis added)30

Following this article is "Labor's Political Allies" wherein author Donald Springsen analyzes how Benjamin Butler, Wendell Phillips, Peter Cooper, and John Atgeld fought for "political protection of labor through their writing and their speaking" in the latter half of the 19th century. In his biographical overview of Butler and Phillips, "The Men from Massachusetts" he writes,

Their personality differences and behavior on the platform were probably due to their vastly different home situations. Butler, although of "good stock", was not like Phillips, a patrician. Phillips felt a responsibility for exemplifying the respectability of his birth and breeding. His speeches were never tainted with vulgarity, envy, or bad manners, as were Butler's. Butler, we must realize, grew up in a boarding house operated by his mother for young girls who worked in textile factories in Lowell, Massachusetts.31
In sum, it would appear that contributors to this work were probably unaware of the existence of the LFLRA. However unintentional, the authors have provided their audience with serious misrepresentation of the antebellum period. Their work is included here to give the reader a more complete sense of one of the problems in the literature engendered by the neglect of these women's oratory.

A 19th Century Femal Labor Reformer

The following represents the sole study found dealing with the rhetoric of a female labor reformer. Ironically, the subject of this study accomplished most of her work during the precise period covered by Boase's book. Her name is not mentioned in its pages.

"Elizabeth M. Morgan: Pioneer Female Labor Agitator" 32 written by Ellen M. Ritter offers insight into a 19th century woman's self-education as an orator. British by birth, Morgan immigrated with her husband to Chicago in 1869. After experiencing the poverty brought on by her husband's lack of employment during the Panic of 1873, she became a committed Socialist and zealous labor reformer. Ritter traces the evolution of Morgan's rhetoric from that of "vituperation" to "investigation." Morgan became nationally known for her fight against the "sweating system" prevalent in Chicago's industries and championed labor reform most specifically for women and children. "Sweating" was the term applied to the system of parcelling out unfinished
product of industry to agents who in turn hired "the cheapest non-union labor possible" to complete the job. As the agent's payment was dependent upon the amount of finished products returned to the manufacturer, "he literally 'sweated' the work out of his employees by working them twelve to fifteen hours a day."33

Morgan's initial rhetoric consisted of sarcastic and radical challenges to the Chicago Trades and Labor Assembly for failing to enforce child labor laws and health and safety regulations. Eventually she was appointed to a "Committee on Abuses" by that board and realized that emotional appeals would no longer serve her purposes. It was at this juncture, Ritter asserts, that Morgan turned to "investigative" rhetoric, toning down her sarcasm and backing up her reports to the committee and the public with facts.

Ritter states that

For many years Chicago manufacturers simply refused to acknowledge that the sweating system existed. To prove otherwise it was necessary for Mrs. Morgan's investigation to appear more credible than the denials issued by established businessmen. Emotional attacks were no longer suitable as a rhetorical strategy; only facts could prove her case.34

Once Morgan's case was established she argued by analogy for the abolition of sweating. She identified the system strongly with slavery to the extent of arguing that slaves were better off under such a system than women and children were in industry. While not directly influencing the creation of laws against sweating (which did not come for several more
decades), according to Ritter, Morgan's "investigative" rhetoric was largely responsible for bringing public attention to the specific problems of women and children in industry.

What Ritter describes for us is the process by which Morgan developed as a rhetor. Her work is significant to this study only insofar as it represents what would by all appearances seem to be the only recognition of female participation in 19th century labor reform within the literature.

It may be concluded from this review that women speakers were very active throughout the 19th century, despite public reaction against them. Additionally, those rhetoricians who have focused on the antebellum period have, without fail, recognized the impact that the notion of a "woman's sphere" had upon the rhetorical situation. Despite this, all utilized fairly traditional methods of criticism in their analyses. For a look at more current rhetorical criticism of women's discourse, discussion now turns to the impact of Campbell's seminal ideas in the literature, and continued acknowledgement of the impact of women's "sphere" on women's rhetoric.

**Recent Analyses of Women's Rhetoric**

An acceptable method of judging an idea's usefulness and legitimacy in academe is to determine whether or not it has withstood the test of time. While it is the case that Campbell's article was published only 13 years ago, given the transient nature of current trends within the literature, it would appear
reasonable to claim that her work was significant. Numerous references are made to "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation..." in a variety of contexts within the literature.\textsuperscript{35}

In "From Small Group to Public View: Mainstreaming the Women's Movement,"\textsuperscript{36} author Becky Swanson Kroll traces the evolution of a rhetorical vision from its genesis in feminist consciousness-raising groups in the Twin Cities during the 1970s through the method of fantasy theme analysis. She posits that what began as radical talk in small group settings "chained out" into a "mainstreaming vision."\textsuperscript{37}

Kroll characterizes the strategies of the groups of which Campbell wrote as breaking rhetorical ground, "with its blunt and rudimentary redefinitions."\textsuperscript{38} Additionally, she argues such rhetoric was necessary for the early phase of feminism, but that it could in no way sustain the movement.

The early small groups, determined Kroll, redefined individual women's faults and failures by placing the blame for these on social structure. The result of the interaction which occurred was a shared belief in a "woman as victim" fantasy type. In a reversal of typically negative status associated with this role, the early feminists further redefined women's sense of herself by lauding the victim as a martyr. Kroll asserts that this very direct, simplistic redefinition aided the development of the movement in that it was a role diverse numbers of women could identify with. The "pro-woman" line of the early rhetoric, however, was not complete enough to sustain further growth,
because it "fell short of the encyclopedic and integrated view of reality" that characterizes a mature rhetorical vision. It was also, according to Kroll, an "all or nothing, long-deferred salvation." As more women joined, the rhetoric associated with feminism evolved into a fuller, more specific vision. The author traces the genesis of this later phase to competing explanations of oppression and remedies for its effects offered during the movement's expansion, which led to dissension and factionalization.

The major rhetorical vision which emerged from these divisions was one of "mainstreaming", wherein its adherents adapted feminist issues to the existing social order. Kroll describes the vision,

Built upon the classic assumptions and values of American society, the rhetors of the mainstream typically accepted the victim dramas but tempered them for consumption in the wider public. Thus, oppression turns into injustice or unfairness, and victimization became a temporary state that was easily remedied by personal actions. ...Accepting rather than challenging the dominant social order, they call for change only in the rights and numbers of women to participate in the decision-making policy games that controlled public life. They advocate inclusion of women in all echelons of status and power, rearranging the players but preserving the game and its rules.41

A prominent distinction found between the earlier and later rhetoric is the belief that a woman's lot was self-determined, as opposed to socially sanctioned. Kroll credits this element of "mainstreaming" with helping to provide a more encompassing vision, one less threatening and hence, accessible to greater numbers of women. Simultaneously, the vision became more acceptable to society as a whole.
Here we see female rhetors adopting precisely the postures which Campbell claims are inherently paradoxical. While the author does acknowledge Campbell's concerns in the opening paragraphs of her article, she does little to answer them. Kroll places Campbell's analysis of feminist rhetoric in the stage of the "early years" of critical inquiry, and states that later critics choose a "wider scope for their analyses and shed light on the diversity within the movement and changes over time." Recall that a basic premise of Campbell's argument was that no matter how traditionally-cloaked feminist rhetoric was (or is) it is by its very nature a radical act. At no further point in her work does Kroll address this issue, yet her analysis places "mainstreaming" firmly in the center of traditional American (read "male-centered") values.

Campbell would argue that the oxymoronic nature of women's rhetoric is still prevalent, regardless of the developmental stage feminism finds itself in. Ironically, this same argument reappears in "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not to Be a Woman", published in the same volume of "Communication Quarterly" as Kroll's article. In this second piece examining feminist rhetoric, Campbell makes the claim that the 19th century Woman Movement and current day feminism constitutes one rhetorical movement "typified by an ideological conflict between the concepts of 'womanhood' and 'personhood'." Additionally, both groups share a common rhetorical strategy, consciousness-raising. It would appear that Kroll's argument is based upon the premise
that women's rhetoric is not paradoxical, as the "mainstreaming vision" advocates the sharing of cultural values, without attacking the psychosocial reality.

Phyllis M. Japp combines the previous two perspectives in "Esther or Isaiah?: The Abolitionist-Feminist Rhetoric of Angelina Grimke."45 The critique of two of the most famous occasions in Grimke's public speaking career argues that this orator assumed entirely different personae for her appearances. Further, the author argues, this assumption of roles by Grimke foreshadowed "a century and a half of feminist expressions and dramatizes the continuing dilemma of women reformers."46

Japp's analysis is significant in that it clearly identifies the presence of the dual nature of female rhetoric. She also indirectly addresses both Campbell's and Kroll's concerns in this article. While evidently suspending judgment as to the "rightness" of either position, her work has heuristic value in that it provides us with a conceptualization scheme not found in previous articles.

The assumption of the role of the Biblical slave Esther is defined as one of pragmatic supplication on the part of Grimke. Testifying before the Massachusetts legislature in 1838 on the issue of abolition, Grimke was verbally harassed by male spectators. She began her speech with the tale of Esther, the Queen of Persia who had been enslaved. Using "personal charms" she had persuaded the king to spare the lives of her fellow slaves. Grimke chose to persuade "by the truths", and
thanked God that she lived in "an age of the world enlightened and too moral to admit of the adoption of (seduction) to obtain as holy an end." Japp notes, "Thus while she assumed Esther's posture, she refused to stoop to Esther's means..." Grimke affirmed her right to testify by "working carefully within the traditional role of woman, supported by the biblical precedent of woman's obligation to speak when the exigencies of a situation demanded", concludes Japp in this section.

Several months later at the Annual Convention of the Woman's Anti-slavery Society in Philadelphia, Grimke faced more public opposition to her actions. Fellow abolitionists had even asked her not to appear, fearing that the hostility engendered would harm their cause. Anti-abolitionists rallied crowds to heckle and harass, making Grimke's appearance a strenuous one. Rather than depending on Esther, however, this time Grimke assumed a role more closely aligned to that of Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet. "Via the prophetic persona, as one chosen of God to present God's message, she admonished the uncommitted, exhorted the faithful, and rebuked the opposition." According to Japp, Angelina adopted a decidedly "male" posture on this occasion.

From her discussion of slavery, Grimke then moved to the "woman question." Directing her remarks to the females in the audience, she exhorted,

Men who hold the rod over slaves, rule in the councils of the nation; and they deny our right to petition and remonstrate against the abuses of our sex and of our kind. We have these rights, however, from our God. Only let us exercise them.
Japp asserts, "...not only did Angelina's persona establish a woman as prophet, her vision clearly implied that women were the new 'chosen' because men had failed to fulfill the covenant." Grimke's words signaled a direct challenge to male dominance and power, a significant change from her supplication several months earlier.

The next morning the mob returned and burned the hall to the ground, and Angelina retired from public speaking soon after.54

In comparing the two personae, Japp notes,

The efficacy of Esther's supplication... was based on the presumed innocence and purity of woman. The very idea of a female rhetor, as Karlyn Kohrs Campbell points out, is a "violation of the female role", presuming qualities of self-reliance and independence at odds with the concept of womanhood. A woman who dares to play Isaïah has undermined the essence of "womanhood" necessary to be a true Esther. ...Esther is controlled by the scene in which she lives: the static traditional world in which she lives...(a world which) defines woman and dictates her actions. ...As Isaïah, woman controls the scene she surveys.55

The two conflicting definitions of woman found in the personae adopted by Grimke are echoed in current feminist rhetoric, the author asserts. One can find Esther in the "woman-as-slave" metaphor of feminism. Similarly, the forcefulness of Isaïah can be discerned in more strident demands of the movement. However, Japp makes no final judgment as to the efficacy of either stance when she concludes,

Certainly, finding themselves pulled between the conciliatory Esther and the defiant Isaïah has cost contemporary feminists much
in personal anguish as well as in legislative gain. Although both personae will undoubtedly remain part of future feminist rhetoric, Smeal\textsuperscript{56} has declared emphasis on the second, a self-confident appropriation of male-dominated territory. Angelina solved her personal conflict between the two personae by her retirement. But, at what price? Ten years after Pennsylvania Hall she wrote to her husband: Why is it that we are not happy?...the fear comes over me like a dark cloud...we are not fulfilling our destiny."\textsuperscript{57}

What is apparent from the current literature dealing with feminist rhetoric is the continued struggle to categorize females as "citizens" or "women." The case that women's rhetoric is informed by a different set of choices and operates under a different set of constraints than that of men's appears to have been established in the literature. The question remains as to the value traditional criticism has in analyzing female speaking. While Campbell asserts that standard methods fail in this realm, review of the literature leads one to believe that the jury is still out on this particular issue, as numerous scholars continue to analyze women's rhetoric according to time-honored standards.

**Review of the Literature Relevant to Methodological Concerns**

The first question to be addressed in this test of Campbell's argument is the extent to which the rhetoric of the LFLRA can be characterized as traditional, rather than "anti-rhetorical." Discussion will focus on O'Connor's assessment of antebellum rhetorical criteria, for as Griffin tells us,
...the critic must judge the discourse in terms of the theories of rhetoric and public opinion indigenous to the times. This principle means that the critic will operate within the climate of theory of rhetoric and public opinion in which the speakers and writers he judges were reared, and in which they practiced; in other words, that he will measure practice in terms of the theories available, not to himself, but to the speakers and writers whom he judges.58

Antebellum Rhetorical Theory

The prevailing standard across time for rhetorical criticism has been the Aristotelian tradition. Aristotle identifies the function of rhetoric as not only that of successful persuasion, "but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances in each case allow."59 "He believed in the 'effectiveness of truth' when presented to the popular audience persuasively and with proper argument and knowledge", notes O'Connor.60 For purposes of the current study, only the major points of Aristotle's philosophy will be addressed. Following that, examination of the mid-19th century rhetorical ideal will take place.

Aristotle's form of proper argument includes not only logical reasoning, but appeals to the emotions as well. Two of his three "modes of proof" center on this idea. The first of these modes, "ethos" focuses on the speaker; an effective speaker must possess the qualities of good sense, good will and good moral character. Such qualities must be made manifest through the speech to the audience, in order to inspire trust and confidence.
"Pathos" or the pathetic appeal, centers on the audience's emotions. The speaker must be aware of, and address her/himself to the feelings of the hearers. "Our judgments when we are pleased", warns Aristotle, "are not the same as when we are pained or hostile."61

"Logos", or logical proof, is a form of persuasion whereby "speakers prove a truth or an apparent truth by means of persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question."62 The speaker must possess both knowledge of the topic and the ability to find supporting materials with which to "invent" her/his arguments. "Invention" in this sense is defined as "the search for, and discovery of, such arguments as would support the probability of a theme or proposition and convince the persons whom the speaker wished to persuade."63

Aristotle provides us with a classification of topics from which arguments may be derived. Among the valid lines of argument he suggests are definition, division, cause and effect, likeness, contrariety, circumstances of time and place, and testimony. O'Connor outlines the process of invention,

Using these "topics" common to a great number of subjects...together with "special topics" related directly to the case under consideration, the orator can "invent" arguments by answering self-posed questions, as, for example, "What is the cause of the point under discussion?" and "What would be the effect of the proposed changes". ...After such exploration and investigation, the speaker is better prepared to use the facts of the actual case as proof of the truth or probability of his theme or proposition.64
Arguments, in the rhetorical sense, are drawn from generally accepted premises, or what is generally considered to be true, hence, conclusions are probabilistic. These arguments are affected by the use of either enthymemes or examples. An enthymeme proceeds from a general premise to a particular case by way of a major premise, a minor premise to a conclusion. It is similar in nature to a syllogism in formal logic. To be most effective, examples should follow enthymemes in speaking, as a form of supplementary evidence. Other than this particular prescription, Aristotle does not offer specific directions on where to place arguments in an address. However, "ethos" and "pathos" should be present throughout the speech.

Aristotle offers further classification with his delineation of the three types of speech, the forensic, the deliberative, and the epideictic. "The chief element in deciding to which type a speech belongs", states O'Connor, "is the scene or place where the orator delivers his address." Deliberative speaking is found in legislative bodies; forensic, in a courtroom; and epideictic is found on ceremonial occasions.

An individual speech might also contain two distinct kinds of appeals, the first based on argument directed to the reason of the audience; the second based on emotions to the will of the audience. This additional Aristotelian classification of types of appeals was "amputated" from most discussions of his work until it was revived by 18th century writers. It was labeled at that time the "conviction-persuasion" dualism.
and represents one area of emphasis found in the British Period not usually considered under the Classical Period.

Writers from the British Period represent the major influence on early American orators and it is from these works that the mid-19th century "ideal" may be determined. Examination of the required texts of American colleges early in the century has led O'Connor to conclude that Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres* was the most popular book of the time. George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* and Richard Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* represent the other most frequently used sources. Additionally, John Quincy Adam's Harvard lectures based on Aristotelian philosophy were well circulated during the antebellum period.66 Golden, et al., have classified Blair as a bellettristic scholar who, like the epistemologists Campbell and Whately, borrowed heavily from the ancients.67

The Aristotelian influence is evidenced by these scholars' dependence upon the ethical, logical, and pathetic modes of proof, and the recognition of the influences of the occasion upon the speaker's choices.68

Beginning with Blair, O'Connor finds that while there is evidence that he agreed with Aristotle on ethical proof, the two part company on pathos and logos. Blair advocated that appeals to the emotions were not essential to all speeches, but should be included "if there be room for it." Pathos, to Blair, was a division of a speech which should follow the "argumentative" part. This distinction provides evidence that Blair adhered to the "conviction-persuasion" duality.
While Blair did agree with the Aristotelian emphasis on logic, or argument, he rejected invention and the classification of topics as an "artificial system of oratory." Rather, he stressed the arrangements of arguments (dispositio) in his discussion of logical proof. "Firmly grounded though it was upon the Aristotelian concept of rhetorical theory, Blair's interpretation of rhetorical proof is not a stereotyped copy of it", O'Connor concludes.

Blair also updates the division of types of public speaking, labeling them as "the eloquence of popular assemblies", "the eloquence of the bar", and "the eloquence of the pulpit."

Richard Whately exhibits strong adherence to Aristotle's principles as outlined above, but a distinction is found in his belief of the conviction-persuasion duality. He maintains that while "impassioned appeal" (pathos) is sometimes necessary, there are some cases which do not call for it. He places logos at the center of his rhetorical philosophy, however, "it was the business of logic to judge arguments, not to invent them."

George Campbell publicly criticized both Blair and Whately for their advocacy of syllogistic reasoning in argument. Logical proof consisted of two kinds for Campbell, intuitive evidence and deductive evidence. Further, he advises the speaker to interest the hearer by use of emotional appeals when the apparent truth is not evidenced by logical appeals alone. "This necessary moving of human passions in order to persuade the audience is accomplished by appeals to honor, pride, self-love, patriotism, or pity."
C'Conner concludes her analysis,

Briefly, it can be noted that the writers of the textbooks of rhetoric which were well known and popular in the America of the mid-nineteenth century agreed with the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle that logical proof was of first importance in persuasive speaking. The agreement went further for there was unanimity concerning the need to appeal to the emotions of the audience and concerning the value of the orator of his being intelligent, highly moral, and of good will.73

The major distinctions found are in individual discussions on the value of invention and topics, in the exemplification of pathos and in the amount of emphasis placed upon style and ornamentation.74

Critical analysis of the rhetoric associated with historical advocacy of labor reform would be incomplete without recognition of the context in which it occurred.

Bormann offers that "the notion that situation effects rhetoric which then affects the subsequent course of events is a venerable one in rhetorical criticism."75 He provides evidence for this claim by citing the first edition of Speech Criticism,

Thonssen and Baird argued that the critic could not understand a piece of rhetorical discourse until the audience, historical background, specific occasion, speaker's previous biography, and specific purpose were documented. Once the speech was accounted for in terms of the context from which it arose, then the critic's task was to complete the analysis by discovering the speech's effect, immediate and long-range, on the unfolding of history.76
As noted in Chapter I, both Cathcart and Andrews, in their texts on rhetorical criticism, concur with the validity of analyzing the context in which public speaking occurs. Further, Simons notes that,

The notion that situational factors impel and constrain rhetorical choices antedates contemporary situationalists such as Black, Bitzer and me by well over 2,000 years. Appear before a law tribunal, said Aristotle, and you had better speak differently than on a ceremonial occasion or before a deliberative assembly...the principle that discourse must be adapted to particular types of situations remains eminently sound.77

While many scholars acknowledge the impact of the situation on public speaking throughout the history of inquiry, Lloyd Bitzer's definition of "The Rhetorical Situation"78 provides the most comprehensive framework for analysis.

Bitzer proposes that it is the situation which calls the discourse into existence. "Rhetoric," he claims "is situational, rhetorical discourse does obtain its character-as-rhetorical from the situation which generates it."79 Further, rhetorical works are characterized by the circumstances of the historic context in which they occur.

Bitzer points out the pragmatic nature of rhetoric, claiming that discourse which is produced in response to a situation "functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world." If the rhetor is successful in altering the reality of the audience to such an extent that they are moved to become mediators of change, then persuasion has occurred.
Bitzer provides the following outline of the relationships between rhetoric and situation:

1. rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to a situation;

2. a speech is given rhetorical significance by that situation;

3. a rhetorical situation must exist as a necessary condition for rhetorical discourse;

4. a situation is rhetorical insofar as it needs and invites discourse capable of participating with situation and thereby altering its reality;

5. discourse is rhetorical insofar as it functions (or seeks to function) as a fitting response to a situation which needs and invites it;

6. The situation controls the rhetorical response in the same sense that the question controls the answer and the problem controls the solution. 80

He defines the rhetorical situation in the following manner, "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed, if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence." 81 The three main elements of his definition then are, EXIGENCE, AUDIENCE and CONSTRAINTS. Each is defined:

Exigence: an imperfection marked by an urgency, a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be. An exigence which can not be modified is not rhetorical. ...In any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected.
Audience: a rhetorical audience is composed of persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change.

Constraints: sets of persons, events, objects and relations which are part of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence. Standard sources of constraint: beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests and motives.\textsuperscript{82}

In conclusion, Bitzer claims that a situation must somehow prescribe the response that fits..."a situation which is strong and clear dictates the purpose, theme, matter and style of response." The power of the situation constrains the response. He also warns that the exigence which generates discourse must be "located in reality". In other words, the exigence and complex of persons, objects, events and relations which generate rhetorical discourse must be objective and publicly observable historic facts, and be available for scrutiny by the observer or critic who attends to them. Further, he notes that some rhetorical responses persist over time, because they speak to situations which persist, which are in some measure universal.\textsuperscript{83}

Since its publication nearly two decades ago, "The Rhetorical Situation" has found its way into numerous communication studies and texts.\textsuperscript{84} Its frequent appearance in the literature may be summarized by two characteristics: its flexibility and its controversial nature.

Patton has outlined the major criticisms leveled at the situational approach in his article, "Causation and Creativity in Rhetorical Situations: Distinctions and Implications."\textsuperscript{85}
He divides the charges into the following categories: objections to the definition of situational elements predominantly in objective terms; objections to the presumed causal force of situational elements; objections to the supposedly minimized role of the agent, especially in terms of perception and creativity in rhetorical action.86

After presenting specific negative responses to the situational approach, Patton argues that all critics share a basic assumption:

Because Bitzer stresses the controlling influence of the situation itself, then the situation must exert causal force which negates or severely restricts the role of mitigating circumstances and the freedom and creativity of rhetors and audiences...in short, the interpretations of Bitzer's position assume, not that discourse is determined, but that it is predetermined by the universally controlling nature of the rhetorical situation.87

He concludes that Bitzer's critics may in effect be depicting his approach as one based on a fatalistic theory of knowledge and action.88 Such a theory assumes that an individual's output is not affected by her or his own choices or efforts. Given this, Patton concludes that "a rhetor's decision...to even speak at all would be rendered causally irrelevant."89

He dismisses these charges as unjustifiable, citing Bitzer's observation that "situations manifest varying degrees of complexity and clarity" and pointing out that "the fundamental thrust of the theory is toward grounding rhetoric in historically observable sets of circumstances which are distinct and particular."90

Patton then wrestles with another major criticism of the situational approach, the charge that it is deterministic.
Acknowledging the variety of meanings attached to this term, he draws from the many aspects of its usage two "fundamental ingredients": a belief in universal laws and a notion of predictability. He addresses the question, "does the situational theory offer a universally true causal law for the production of discourse?" and answers it with Bitzer's own words,

While the existence of rhetorical address is a reliable sign of the existence of situation, it does not follow that a situation exists only when the discourse exists. Each reader probably can recall a specific time and place when there was opportunity to speak on some urgent matter, and after the opportunity was gone he created in private thought the speech he should have uttered earlier in the situation. It is clear that situations are not always accompanied by discourse.

Patton asserts that various factors affect the individual's decision to engage in discourse related to a rhetorical situation, not the least of which lie within the rhetors' "emotional and cognitive structures." He then points out the centrality of individuals' choices to the situational approach and ultimately to the constituting of the controlling exigence found within a situation. The form and substance of the response, he states, are entirely dependent on what the rhetor decides about the nature of the situation, its urgencies and expectations. "They must sort through the various dimensions of the conditions encountered, eventually selecting an issue or problem for primary attention." If the rhetor deems it possible to affect or modify this issue, or some key aspect of it, through the instrumental
use of language, then the rhetor has generated the controlling exigence."93 (emphasis added)

The rhetor's involvement in the situation then, leads Patton to conclude that elements of situational theory are not representative of universal causal law. Instead, he suggests that it functions as a "concise explanatory system."94 Such causal explanations are non-deterministic as definitions of exigences and constraints are the responsibility of the rhetor. This burden facilitates rhetorical creativity, for "as rhetors and audiences encounter the elements of the situations, their perceptions involve a blending of subjective experience with the external or objective features to which they have access."95 Discourse is created from the recognition of the external conditions and the subjective processes of the individual.

Additionally, Patton points out that a critic's account of the situation may differ from the perceptions of the rhetor. A critic may possess new factual information at the time of the analysis which the rhetor did not have. "In such cases," he asserts, "the critic's account may become truly explanatory by calling attention to key features of the situation which the rhetor failed to perceive or misperceived to some degree."96

Patton concludes then that perception "constitutes a necessary link in the situational theory between the variety of internal and external situation conditions and purposive responses."97 He cautions that the role of perception does not reduce situational theory to relativism, as it holds that
"if perceptions, alike or different, eventually lead to the production of genuinely rhetorical discourse, those perceptions must present an account of phenomena which are public and observable in the sense of being accessible to other participants and observers. 98

The rhetorical critic then must account for the historical conditions in any assessment of how and why rhetors define controlling exigences and formulate purposeful discourse. 99

Finally, Patton claims that the situational theory

"offers a way to explain and evaluate perceptions in terms of the accuracy and clarity with which they reflect observable, historical features of situations and the constructive potential of the responses to which they may lead for the solution of genuine problems. 100

Patton's comprehensive response to Bitzer's critics and his additional insights regarding perception and rhetorical creativity help us to recognize the heuristic value of the propositions of "The Rhetorical Situation." Further proof of this is found in two examples from the current literature.

Makau's "Judicial Invention in First Amendment Governmental Regulation Cases," 101 investigates the effectiveness of judicial invention given the "rhetorical demands" created by the constraints found in Supreme Court decision-making. She claims that "appropriate judicial responsiveness to the rhetorical constraints imposed on judicial invention in First Amendment cases is vital to the preservation of free speech," 102 and to substantiate this, identifies the rhetorical constraints relevant to the Court. Makau locates those in the "nature of the American tribunal system" which "generates beliefs and concurrent expectations
shared by members of the Court's composite audience." The most prevalent expectation, shared by all members of the audience, is that of impartiality on the part of the Justices. In addition, the author finds that the audience also believes that the Court must function only as a judicial element of this tribunal, "distinguishable from the legislative and executive branches." 103

These and other expectations engendered by the specific subject area of First Amendment cases serve to constrain the Court. Stating her criteria of appropriate judicial responsiveness as "necessarily (requiring) sensitive, coherent, and persuasive argumentation," 104 Makau determines through her analysis of specific cases that "judicial invention...falls short of the demands imposed by this context."

Another illustration of the usefulness of rhetorical situation is Zarefsky's "The Lincoln-Douglas Debates Revisited: The Evolution of Public Argument". 105 After noting that these very famous debates have been given little attention by rhetorical scholars, the author takes as his task addressing how "the rhetorical choices displayed in the text functioned in the context of the situation." 106 He begins his analysis by noting that history, politics and culture served to shape the rhetorical situation of the debates. He points out that not only were the principals constrained by each other, but by the political climate of Illinois as well. Recognition is also given to the cultural factors of "nostalgic reverence for the founding fathers, widespread racial prejudice, veneration of the symbol of Union, distrust
of extremists, and patterns of population growth" as constraining the choices of Lincoln and Douglas. 107

What emerges from textual analysis are four patterns of argument which recur throughout the debates; these are, conspiratorial, legal, historical, and moral. Zarefsky determines that these patterns were adaptations to the constraints of the public forum and the exigences present. He asserts that analysis of argument patterns "implies something of value about the general nature of public argument":

Public argument is a complex phenomenon; it is not a series of linear moves from premises to conclusions. One claim sets up another, and the conclusion of one becomes the component of another, in a subtle interweaving of positions. One who seeks to reconstruct public argument must take the bits and pieces where they are to be found, recognizing that controversy develops over time. Values and morals change through the slow accretion of claims, evidence, and warrants interacting with and affecting one another until one eventually can recognize the emergence of a new argumentative stance. Analysis of texts like the Lincoln-Douglas debate transcripts enables a clearer view of how competing positions are transformed in the crucible of public debate. 108

As Makau and Zarefsky's analyses illustrate, Bitzer's ideas can be utilized in very different contexts. The value of "The Rhetorical Situation" to this study will be illustrated in Chapter IV.

However, additional consideration must be given to a central constraint found in any study of 19th century women's rhetoric, the "Cult of True Womanhood." All scholars of women's antebellum rhetoric cited earlier identify the existence of a "woman's
sphere" in their analyses. American 19th century ideology held that "true women" were happiest in the home, and that society was best served by their domesticity. It is argued that the "True Womanhood" represents a "myth" which constrained the rhetors of the LFLRA.

In their work *Subliminal Politics*, Nimmo and Combs define myth as a "credible, dramatic, socially constructed representation of perceived realities that people accept as permanent, fixed knowledge of reality while forgetting (if they were ever aware of it) its tentative, imaginative, created and perhaps fictional qualities." Further, they note that one of the implications of myth is its pragmatism. "A myth is told, not for the sake of amusement, but in order to promote some practical purpose." Four general uses of myth are delineated: myths aid comprehension by providing "easily grasped, emotionally satisfying ways of reducing the disorder of things." Secondly, myths forge common bonds. They can create and maintain a sense of community. Thirdly, myths offer identities, by helping to give one a sense of self. Lastly, myths help us get our way, by providing a means of identification with others.

Further insight into the notion of myth are found in Joseph Campbell's *Myths, Dreams and Religion*. The following is an outline of what Campbell describes as the functions of myth,

1. myth serves to reconcile the consciousness with the preconditions of its own existence - "redemption through affirmation."
2. myth serves a cosmological function by providing a formula through which one is able to render a precise image of the universe;

3. myth serves a sociological function by validating and maintaining some specific social order, "authorizing its moral code as a construct beyond criticism or human denigration";

4. myth serves a psychological function providing justifications for a particular social construction of reality thereby "it serves to shape individual aims and ideals of various social groups."114

Further discussion of the myth of True Womanhood as a rhetorical constraint appears in Chapter IV.

Source of Rhetorical Data

Much of rhetoric of the LFLRA has been collected by labor historian Philip M. Foner in his work *The Factory Girls*.115 Foner notes that while renewed interest in the lives of the operatives has been sparked by the current feminist movement, it was the case that little attention had been paid to the "militant" factory workers. The book consists of the compilation of the letters, petitions, articles, poetry, and speeches of the members of the LFLRA and other operatives, which the author has drawn from their original publication sources. These include the *Lowell Offering*, the *Voice of Industry*, the *Operatives' Magazine* and *Young Ladies Album*, and the *Olive Leaf and Factory Girl's Repository*, all edited and published by the workers themselves. Other sources include newspapers of the time and historical document collections found throughout New England.
The Factory Girls is divided into eight parts, the first two dealing with the nature of factory life and the image of the "genteel" female operatives. Next, the rhetoric of "militant factory girls" and the female labor reform associations is presented. Following this are the letters and speeches of three "pioneer women labor leaders", Sarah Bagley, Huddah J. Stone, and Mehitabel Eastman. The rhetoric directly related to the Ten-Hour Movement represents the fifth section, followed by "other causes", "women's rights", and the "end of an era."

Foner offers little in the way of comment throughout the book, instead he chooses to let the texts speak for themselves. After examining copies of both the Lowell Offering and the Voice of Industry, as well as reviewing other historical treatments of the "factory girls", I have found Foner's compilation to be representative of the rhetoric of the LFLRA. His comprehensive gathering of the public and private documents of the "militant" factory workers is a valuable asset for the study of their efforts. Hence, rhetorical analysis in this study will focus primarily upon the texts contained in The Factory Girls.

It is my intent then, to first utilize Bitzer's ideas in describing the rhetorical situation of the Ten-Hour Movement. This discussion will be supplemented by analysis of the mythic dimensions of the Cult of True Womanhood. Next, textual analysis of the rhetorical artifacts of the LFLRA will be accomplished through the Neo-Aristotelian format described earlier. Finally, discussion will turn to conclusions and implications. Detailed explication of the method follows in Chapter III.
NOTES - CHAPTER II


2 Ibid., p. 196.

3 K. E. Altman, "Rhetorical Criticism of Discourse by Women: A Review of the Literature", manuscript in progress, p. 5.


6 Ibid., p. 252.

7 Ibid., p. 257.


10 Ibid., pp. 188-189.


12 Ibid., p. 42.

13 Ibid., p. 127.

14 Ibid., p. 133.

16 Ibid., p. 65.

17 Ibid., p. 66.


19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 354.

21 Ibid., p. 351.

22 Flexner, Century of Struggle, p. 44.


24 Patricia Scileppi Kennedy and Gloria Hartmann O'Shields, We Shall Be Heard, (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1983).

25 Boase, ed., The Rhetoric of Protest and Reform

26 Frances McCurdy [citing in] Ibid., p. 204.

27 Betty Boyd Caroli In "Women Speak Out For Reform" [citing in] Ibid., p. 218.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 J. Harold Beaty In "Labor in the Age of Protest" [citing in] Ibid., p. 61.

31 Donald K. Springen In "Labor's Political Allies" [citing in] Ibid., p. 75.

33 Ibid., p. 244.

34 Ibid., p. 245.


38 Kroll, "From Small Group", p. 147.

39 Ibid., p. 142.

40 Ibid., p. 145.

41 Ibid., p. 142.

42 Ibid., p. 139.

43 Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not To Be a Woman", Communication Quarterly 31, No. 2 (Spring 1983): 101-108.

44 Ibid., p. 101.


46 Ibid., p. 344.

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., p. 341.
50 Ibid., p. 342.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., p. 343.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., pp. 344-345.
56 Current President of the National Organization of Women
57 Japp, "Esther or Isaiah?", p. 346.
60 Ibid., p. 100.
61 Ibid., p. 102.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 103.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p. 109.
66 Ibid., p. 110.
68 Ibid.
69 O'Connor, Pioneer Women Orators, p. 113.
70Ibid., p. 114.
71Ibid., p. 118.
72Ibid., p. 119.
73Ibid., p. 122.
74Ibid.
75Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision", p. 221.
76Ibid.

79Ibid., p. 16.
80Ibid., p. 17.
81Ibid.
82Ibid., pp. 17-18.
83Ibid., p. 20.
86Ibid., p. 37.
87Ibid., p. 38.
88Ibid., p. 39.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., p. 40.
92 Ibid., p. 41.
93 Ibid., p. 42.
94 Ibid., p. 44.
95 Ibid., p. 49.
96 Ibid., p. 50.
97 Ibid., p. 54.
98 Ibid., p. 47.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., p. 55.
102 Ibid., p. 1.
103 Ibid., p. 7.
104 Ibid.
106 Ibid., p. 163.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., p. 182.
110 Ibid., p. 16.

111 Ibid., p. 18.

112 Ibid., p. 20


114 Ibid., p. 139-144.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

No analysis of social movement rhetoric is complete without recognition of the context which gave rise to the public response. As indicated in the literature review, Bitzer's delineation of the elements of a rhetorical situation provides us with a critical framework for this purpose. In order to determine the extent to which the rhetoric of the LFLRA can be classified as traditional then, this study will first address the situation utilizing Bitzer's ideas.

To begin, the "exigence", that "imperfection marked by urgency" will be identified. What caused the female operatives of Lowell to begin organizing and publicly agitating for the Ten-Hour day? Particularly helpful in determining the answer to this question are several histories of working women. Dublin's Women at Work\(^1\) provides an in-depth analysis of the experience of the subjects under analysis here. Foner's Women and the American Labor Movement,\(^2\) specifically his chapter, "The Battle for the Ten-Hour Day", also offers insight into the situation.

These same sources plus more general histories of American working women will provide the background necessary for determining the audiences of the movement, as well as the constraints of the situation.
Bitzer informs us that a rhetorical "audience" is made up of persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change. Any public campaign will necessarily consist of more than one audience in this sense. Who were the groups of people the LFLRA sought to persuade? Essentially, all messages were aimed at the legislature as that was the audience identified by the leaders as having the power to restrict hours of labor. However, a movement does not operate in isolation, so the question remains, who were the audiences of the LFLRA? The documented histories of the women cited above will help to answer that question. However, in order to determine more fully the rhetorical audiences, one must look at the rhetorical artifacts and their sources. Sillars asserts that a critic of movements should focus on "messages of all shapes and forms,"3 be they verbal or nonverbal, spoken or written. What do the speeches, articles, and letters of the members of the LFLRA tell us about their audiences? Is there identification of a specific audience? If not, the critic must ask additional questions. Where was the speech given? Where did the article appear? Could the artifact be directed at more than one audience simultaneously?

Directly connected to these questions is a concern for the identification of "constraints." Bitzer tells us that standard sources of constraint are beliefs, attitudes, facts, traditions, and motives, among others. This necessitates isolating such elements of the situation and offering reasonable assessments
of the relationship between them and the rhetoric. Again, history helps us to discover what the constraints were in this situation. The critic must ask how the attitudes, beliefs, etc., appear to constrain the choices and decisions of the rhetors. To that end, discussion of this topic will focus on what historians have told us about the society in which the rhetors operated and how that had impact on their rhetoric.

The Rhetorical Analysis

This study is interested in determining how "traditional" the form of argument of the LFLRA was thus textual analysis will be accomplished through Neo-Aristotelian method. Recall that Campbell tells us that the oxymoronic nature of women's rhetoric is prevalent regardless of "how traditional" its style is. As this dissertation seeks to test Campbell's argument by focusing on a group of female rhetors who utilized standard forms of persuasion, it becomes necessary to evaluate the extent to which they fulfilled basic canons of rhetoric. As determined by O'Connor, the rhetorical ideal of the 19th century was firmly based in the tradition of Aristotle and it is his philosophy which provides the criteria for "standard tools" of analysis.

As a system of criticism, Neo-Aristotelianism focuses on effectiveness. It asks the question "Were the strategies employed under each canon the best possible choices for the audiences addressed in the existing situation?"
In order to determine the answer to that question, as well as to illustrate how traditional the persuasion was, the following will be accomplished:

1. Analysis of the goals and strategies of the LFLRA
2. Analysis of the ethical appeals
3. Analysis of the pathetic appeals
4. Analysis of the logical appeals

Determination of the goals of the LFLRA will be made by analysis of the Association's constitution. The strategies utilized by the group are documented within both Dublin's and Foner's histories.

Texts of the public speeches, letters, and articles authored by the members of the LFLRA provide the data for analysis of the ethical, pathetic, and logical appeals. Similarly, these texts will be used for critique of organization and style.

The following guidelines offered by Cathcart will provide a standard for judgment of effectiveness. To begin, an effective rhetor must appear credible in the minds of the audience. Thus, when analyzing a message for ethical appeals, I will take into account what the audience knows of the speaker prior to the rhetorical transaction. Next, I will attempt to locate evidence of good taste, sincerity, and common sense in the message. Determination of the degree to which the situation called for high ethos will be established. Underlying this is a concern for how well the choices of the rhetors of the LFLRA reflect a recognition of that need. Finally, I will look for credibility as a function of strategies within the message.
Effective persuasion should focus on the "whole person", therefore textual analysis will be done to locate evidence of pathetic appeals. Further, I will consider these appeals for possible existence of shared values between the rhetor and the audience.

Next, logical appeals will be considered for as Cathcart tells us, rhetorical appeals based on advocating a "plan of action" include not only appeals to the emotion, but reasoned arguments as well. Additionally, I will determine whether or not such arguments were invented from Aristotle's "common topics", as such will help to determine the skills of the various rhetors.

Finally, I will analyze the texts for considerations of style and organization, as both play a role in determining the extent of the traditional nature of the LFLRA's rhetoric. Language use reveals the rhetor's awareness (or lack) of the power of words to clarify, create identification with the audience, and to please hearers. Coherent organization of messages is also important to effective persuasion.

In sum, analysis of the rhetorical situation and artifacts should provide the answer to the first question of the study, "how traditional were the rhetors of the LFLRA?" Consideration of the method to answer the second question, "did they attack the psychosocial reality of their audiences?" follows.

In order to determine the "reality" of antebellum America, I will identify the prevailing myths and ideologies of the
As Nimmo and Combs, along with Campbell and Balthrop argue, these represent the bond which holds a diverse society together. Using these authors' ideas as a framework, I will look at the relationship between the rhetoric of the LFLRA and the prevalent assumptions of "womanhood" during the period in which they operated. Data will come from the following sources: Welter's *Dimity Convictions*; Smith-Rosenberg's *Disorderly Conduct*; Cott's *The Bonds of Womanhood*; and Berg's *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism*. All four provide comprehensive insight into the experiences of women in the 19th century.

Together, consideration of the form of the rhetoric of the LFLRA, and whether or not it constituted an attack on the psychosocial reality of the time will inform this study's primary concern: is Karlyn Campbell's description of the oxymoronic nature of women's discourse accurate? And, further, what does that tell us about traditional methods of rhetorical criticism?
NOTES - CHAPTER III


CHAPTER IV
THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

Essential to any study of women in 19th and early 20th century America is the acknowledgement of the existence of what I have chosen to label the "myth" of True Womanhood. Author Barbara Welter, in her 1976 work Dimity Convictions,¹ has provided one of the most comprehensive discussions of this phenomenon, and it is from her chapter "The Cult of True Womanhood" that most of the following is drawn. Additional insight comes from Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's Disorderly Conduct.²

Welter has found evidence for the "cult" in the following sources: all American women's magazines published for longer than 3 years throughout the decades of 1820 - 1860, numerous books published during this period, religious tracts, sermons, cookbooks, women's diaries, letters, memoirs and novels.³ Her description of 19th century America shows the clear dichotomy between male and female spheres: "...the American man was a busy builder of bridges and railroads, at work long hours in a materialistic society. ...Woman...was the hostage in the home."⁴

According to the formula of the myth, an American woman possessed the following characteristics, what Welter identifies
as "cardinal virtues" - piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. It was upon such characteristics that woman judged herself and was judged by others. The chief of these virtues was piety, "from which all else would follow" according to the logic of the time.\textsuperscript{5} It was believed that women were naturally pious, and they were admonished to pray rather than think. Church work was seen as a natural extension of women's sphere rather than any threat to home and hearth. Welter provides a quotation from a chapter of a religious society tract of the time illustrating this notion: "As no sensible woman will suffer her intellectual pursuits to clash with her domestic duties she should concentrate on religious work which promotes these very duties."\textsuperscript{6} For 19th century Americans, religion was vital to women, "irreligion was almost too awful to contemplate."\textsuperscript{7}

Similarly, a woman was viewed as unnatural if she was not pure. "...to be guilty of such a crime, in the women's magazines at least, brought madness or death," according to Welter.\textsuperscript{8} Men, however, might attempt to defile a woman and, in such cases, it was the female who was charged with stopping any such action. Such will on the part of a woman provided evidence for her "superiority and power" over men, and she was lauded for her morality. "Men could be counted on to be grateful when women thus saved them from themselves."\textsuperscript{9}

The third virtue, submission, was viewed as the most "feminine" of the myth.
Men were supposed to be religious, although they rarely had time for it, and supposed to be pure, although it came awfully hard to them, but men were the movers, the doers, the actors. Women were the passive, submissive responders.\textsuperscript{10}

True women were in the need of protectors and were warned on frequent occasions to "submerge" any talent they may have had in order to procure one in the form of a husband. "True feminine genius", according to one author, "is ever timid, doubtful, and clingingly dependent; a perpetual childhood."\textsuperscript{11}

Domesticity, the final virtue, found its legitimation in the Bible. St. Paul's admonition that women should remain hearth-bound was seen as complete justification for keeping women from the public sphere. "Home was supposed to be a cheerful place," according to Welter, "so that brothers, husbands and sons would not go elsewhere in search of a good time."\textsuperscript{12} The hearthside represented a haven for the busy 19th century male, and it was woman's duty to keep it well-ordered and secure.

The following roles were ascribed to the 19th century homemaker: she was to be first "an adornment of civilization", proof that her husband had "made it" in the new industrial jungle; secondly, she was expected to function as a nurse; next her job consisted of being "morally uplifting". Other expectations included having a "special affinity for flowers", a mastery of all forms of needlework, cooking, midwifery, and child-rearing. Such skills would bring her closer to God, bringing the myth full circle. Marriage was seen as
...that sphere for which woman was
originally intended, and to which she is
so exactly fitted to adorn and bless, as
the wife, the mistress of a home, the solace,
the aid, and the counsellor of the ONE, for
whose sake alone the world is of any consequence
to her.\textsuperscript{13}

Welter points out that "real women" often suffered from
comparisons to True Womanhood, and as the 19th century evolved
and women's roles expanded, guilt and confusion lingered. She
notes,

...the women's magazines and related
literature had feared this very dislocation
of values and blurring of roles. By careful
manipulacion and interpretation they sought
to convince woman that she had the best of
both worlds - power and virtue - and that
a stable order of society depended upon her
maintaining her traditional place in it.
To that end, she was identified with everything
that was beautiful and holy.\textsuperscript{14}

Smith-Rosenberg attributes the creation and sustaining
of the myth directly to industrialization as she tells us that,

...(recent) Historians of women began
to examine the ramifications of economic
discrimination against women, pointing to
the ways it spread out in a ripple effect
to alter virtually all forms of social relations.
Low wages, the absence of upward mobility,
depressing and unhealthy working conditions
all made marriage an attractive survival
strategy for working-class women. Once married,
women found the workplace even more firmly
closed against them. A vicious cycle of
economic and psychological dependency emerged,
with few if any escape routes even for women
of talent and ambition.\textsuperscript{15}

The creation of such a system, Smith-Rosenberg argues,
provided evidence for a social and economic vision shared by
males which "in the face of violent economic change, reasserted
male social cohesion,"16 which she terms a key social function of the economic oppression of women. Further, she identifies the Cult of True Womanhood as a symbol of the confining social ideology which reinforced pervasive patterns of economic discrimination. By keeping women in their "place", the system was perpetuated (and still is). Women who violated their sphere by entering the labor force were viewed as unnatural although, paradoxically, they were expected to adhere to the norms advocated by the myth.

True Womanhood, then, is representative of "myth" in all senses proved by Nimmo and Combs and Campbell. It defined an individual woman's function, and by extension, male expectations as well. It served to render order in the chaotic new world of Industrial America by providing guidelines for life. Its adherents and those who extolled its virtues saw themselves as being morally justified. It created common bonds amongst members of the new bourgeois, and served as a socially-accepted "reality", albeit a socially created one, for all citizens.

Dalton has argued that the myth is still with us in a more updated form, pointing to the feminist backlash of the previous decade and identifying the True Woman as precursive to "The Total Woman" and "The Positive Woman".17 Evidence of the myth's longevity lends credence to its power. True Womanhood has had a profound effect upon working women and their efforts at labor reform in our culture, as will be illustrated in the
following chapter. Its assumptions underlie most of the rhetors' socialization and is vital to the understanding of their experiences.

American Society and the Lowell Factory Girls, 1820-1840

By far, one of the most prevalent American values of the time was what Robertson has termed "independent individualism";

"the generations of Americans who grew up after the Revolution were and are impatient with the remnants or existence of dependence, inequality, and restrictions on individual freedom which they found and find in their lives." \(^{18}\)

Stemming from this need for independence was another American trait, that of self-determinism. Leading one's own life, working at the job of one's choice, worshipping according to one's own faith; in general, being in charge of one's own destiny, was revered by the culture.

Intrinsically related to these values was the country's strong religious fervor. American saw itself as carrying out God's plan, and its Destiny was Manifest. Upholding Christian virtues was everyone's duty, but none moreso than the females'. "The nineteenth century required women to be religious, and increasingly the church became a female institution as men put their energies elsewhere", notes Welter\(^{19}\). Women were expected to guard the "old values" on which the United States was founded, while men expanded their horizons. This was accomplished by the creating and sustaining of the myth of True Womanhood. Piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness, however were at direct odds with Robertson's description of
those characteristics valued by the "generations following the Revolution."

The fevered expansionism characteristic of this generation brought the shattering of most accepted visions of life. Smith-Rosenberg notes the effect that the industrial, transportation and commercial revolutions had upon early 19th century America,

By the 1840s, the world that colonial Americans had carefully crafted lay in fragments. Yet the form the new order would take was not yet clear. Conflicting economic, social, and ideological systems battled for hegemony. The obsolete coexisted with the novel. So much was new that all appeared uncertain. 20

As noted in the discussion of the mythic qualities of the "Cult", the fragmentation caused by the revolutions of the time "sharply divided men's and women's experience". 21 No clearer evidence can be found of this division than in the investigation of the principal medium of the day, public speaking. "Oratory" was the primary method of spreading news and information as well as advocating social reform. Americans, according to O'Connor, took to heart their right of free speech, and pontificated publicly on a multitude of subjects. 22 The Lyceum movement was at its peak during the Jacksonian period, and depending on the size of the town or village, one might hear a speaker nearly every night of the week.

However, as previously stressed, public speaking by women to "promiscous" (e.g., mixed-sex) audiences was socially unacceptable. In her study of co-education at Oberlin College, Hosford ably articulates the various reactions of the public to this newly-evolving phenomenon,
"The religious called it unscriptural... the cultured thought it unseemly, the cynical found in it material for their bitterest sneers, the evil-minded felt free to make a woman orator the target of vulgarity."\textsuperscript{23}

Indeed, it was the case that many women chose to have their speeches delivered by men to avoid censure.\textsuperscript{24} Even within the confines of the reform-oriented movements of the day, this issue was hotly debated. In 1839, O'Connor reports, the American Anti-Slavery Society spent three sessions attempting to decide whether or not a woman was a "person", and if so, whether she should have full membership rights (including the right to address the group). When it was decided by male members that women could be members in good standing by paying their dues, Abby Kelly, a pioneer orator, was appointed to serve on a committee. When this was announced, a large portion of the group, "including clergy", promptly seceded.\textsuperscript{25} The Connecticut chapter of this society called a constitutional re-organization meeting in 1840 for "the sole purpose of excluding women from voting or speaking in the society", according to the report of its proceedings.\textsuperscript{26}

Henry C. Ludlow, moderator for the meeting expressed his feelings clearly when he exclaimed

\begin{quote}
I will not sit in a chair where women bear rule. I vacate the chair. No woman shall speak or vote where I am moderator. I will not countenance such an outrage on decency. I will not consent to have women lord it over men in public assemblies. ...Where woman's enticing eloquence is heard, men are incapable (sic) of right and efficient action. She beguiles and blinds men with her smiles and her bland and winning voice.
\end{quote}
...I had enough of woman's control in the nursery. Now I am a man. I will not submit to it. (original emphasis)²⁷

With these broader cultural norms in mind, a closer examination is made of the smaller society in which the women of Lowell worked, to provide insight into their rhetorical situation as rhetors for labor reform.

The dawn of the 1800's saw a rural, agrarian New England. Small, single-family farms were the norm and those women who were employed outside of their own homes served largely as "helpers" in neighboring farm households. The work was mostly part-time and/or seasonal, with the majority of those women employed being unmarried and young. Their duties were usually confined to the house itself, but occasionally they were hired as extra hands in the field. The pay for such work was minimal and often services were traded by the women with no money being exchanged. Such employment practices continued long after the Industrial Revolution, but with the coming of the machinery, new opportunities arose for women.

These early industrialists had one major problem to overcome: lack of a suitable workforce. Rural New England, with its small farms did not offer much in the way of a viable labor pool, and the traditional system of hiring whole families to work in the mills was not proving profitable. The answer to this dilemma was still found within the farm families, but is was the daughters of the households who would fill the vacancies in the ever-expanding factories. It was determined by industrialists
that "female aid in manufactures...prevents the diversion of men and boys from agriculture."^28 Hence, the emergence of America's first group of women workers.

Agents of the manufacturers recruited female workers from all over New England. Francis Lowell, an early founder of the mills, felt that these workers should not suffer the indignities felt by their British counterparts. Further, agents realized that "high wages alone would not convince God-fearing New England parents that they should permit their daughters to leave home and work in the mills".\(^29\) Consequently, what was to become known as "The Lowell System" was instituted.\(^30\)

To quell the suspicions of the Yankee farmers that their daughters would not be properly cared for in the city, the mill owners purchased boarding houses and employed matrons (usually widows) to run them. The factory operatives were expected to live in these company houses (nearly 75% of them did)\(^31\) and abide by the rules of the establishment. Dublin points out that "housing for female workers kept wage levels down, but it was also an instrument of social control." For women "company boardinghouses were part of a broader vision of corporate paternalism."\(^32\) Common to all houses was a ten o'clock curfew, and regular attendance at a worship service was required. The young women were expected to meet all callers in the common parlor, after introducing them to the mistress of the house. Individual boarding houses had idiosyncratic rules as well, but another commonality shared by most was an
apparent "pecking order" in living arrangements. Women who had been there the longest were entitled to larger rooms, with fewer roommates, while the newest members of the household shared dormitory-like accommodations in the attic. As each worker's status and tenure grew, so would her room size.

The women's lives were also regulated in the public sphere of the factories themselves. Male overseers were charged with not only seeing that standard employment rules were followed, but acting as "moral policemen" as well. The workers could be (and were) dismissed for "immoral conduct". Foner cites the example of one woman who was fired for being a "devil in petticoats." If an operative was "let go" by one company, her name was placed on a list that circulated throughout the mills of New England for the period of at least one year, effectively "black-balling" her from any chance at employment.

Such a paternalistic system both inside the factories and out served several functions. Dublin states, "Clearly there was no contradiction in the minds of the Boston Associates between their desire to protect the morals of women workers and their need to recruit a mill labor force. Ensuring the former evidently made the latter possible. (Paternalism helped)...to mold a tractable, disciplined labor force so vital to the smooth functioning of the productive process." It also lends credence to the overriding nature of the Cult of True Womanhood, and all that that myth represented.
Dublin argues that the Lowell system fostered an intense feeling of community amongst the workers, which in turn, led them to collective action. He defines "community" as the "development of bonds of mutual dependence". As the training of new workers within the factories was the responsibility of established operatives, a feeling of mutual support was readily established. Similarly, the living conditions of the boarding houses contributed to this sense of dependency. "A typical boarding house accommodated twenty-five young women, generally crowded four to eight in a bedroom." Such closeness forced acceptance of group norms upon the women. Dublin further supports his argument by pointing out the homogeneous nature of the workforce. The records of the Hamilton Manufacturing Company of Lowell illustrate this claim. During the year 1836, this company employed more than 1,000 workers in its 3 mills, of whom over 85% were female. These employees, typical of other Lowell factories, were predominantly native-born (less than 4% immigrants). Their ages ranged from 15 to 30 years of age, with women in their late teens and early twenties comprising the bulk of the workforce. As noted, very few of the women lived with their families, a separation which proved important in the heightening of the importance of peer group relationships, according to Dublin. As employees entering the Hamilton Company between the years 1827-1834, residents of the state of New Hampshire constituted 47% of those hired. Nearly 97% remained unmarried during their tenure in the mills, lending credibility to the belief that most of the factory
workers saw employment as a temporary stop between adolescence and motherhood. The vast majority did marry after leaving the mills.40

These factors, then, the structure of work and daily life combined with cultural homogeneity, fostered a strong sense of community. By experiencing a feeling of mutual support and dependency, the operatives of Lowell saw the advantages of collective action. "The sense of community enabled them to transform their individual opposition to wage cuts and to the increasing pace of work into public protest."41

Evidence also suggests that during the 1820s and 30s, the operatives of Lowell were not working out of desperate economic need. Most came from secure farming families, and the choice to work was very probably their own. Dublin sums up the motivation behind their exodus,

The mills offered individual self-support, enabled women to enjoy urban amenities not available in their rural communities, and gave them a measure of economic and social independence from their families. These factors made Lowell attractive to rural women and led them to choose work in the mills. The steady movement of family farm from sustenance to a commercial basis made daughters relatively "expendable" and gave fathers who otherwise might have guarded the family labor supply reason to allow them a chance on their own.42

The Depression of 1837, however, had substantial impact on the factors surrounding the impetus to work. This economic crisis dealt production levels in New England factories a severe blow. Thousands of workers were let go, and thousands more
were placed on part-time status. Fledgling trade unions fell
apart as more and more workers became unemployed. Simultaneously, small family-owned farms went under. When the mills re-opened in the early 40s, a new type of operative emerged - one who had to work. Many women no longer had the luxury of returning home. "As New England farms disappeared, the freedom of the mill operatives contracted. They could no longer escape. A permanent factory population became a reality."43

Impetus for the Ten-Hour Movement

Returning to full employment after the Depression of 1837, the female operatives faced some major changes in their daily lives, as production methods had been overhauled by owners desperate to make up for profits lost during the previous years. These changes constituted the exigence upon which the rhetorical situation of the Ten-Hour Movement revolved.

As noted in the methodology section, an exigence is "an imperfection marked by urgency;...a defect,...something waiting to be done." An exigence is deemed rhetorical when it is capable of being modified by discourse. Bitzer warns,

Frequently rhetors encounter exigences which defy easy classification because of the absence of information enabling precise analysis and certain judgement - they may or may not be rhetorical. ...In instances of indeterminate exigences, the rhetor's decision to speak is based mainly upon the urgency of the exigence and the probability that the exigence is rhetorical. In any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed, and the change to be affected."44
For the members of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association, the controlling exigence became the length of their work day. This was not the sole impetus for organization, however. Frustration was experienced by the workers due to the three major changes in production methods which greeted them upon their return: the speed-up, the stretch-out, and the premium system. "These policies were at the heart of the workers grievances" states Dublin.45

The "speed-up" and the "stretch-out" comprised the two sides of a double edged sword aimed at increasing productivity. The speed-up refers to the increase in speed of the machinery, while the stretch-out refers to the increase in the number of machines for which each operative was responsible. Dublin provides an excellent illustration of how these changes affected one worker, a weaver:

Early in 1842, she tended two looms running at 140 beats per minute and earned $14.52 over a four-week period. Over the next two years her workload was steadily increased. First she was assigned two more looms, though the speeds was reduced to 100 beats. Steadily the speed was increased until her four looms ran at 120 beats per minute in June 1844. Her earnings reached $16.92, up 16% over the two-year interval. The looms she tended now operated at 480 beats per minute (4 x 120) compared to only 280 beats earlier, an increase of more than 70%...the overseer and agent were pleased seeing that her output increased 71% while her earnings showed only a 16% gain.46

This example was not an isolated one, as records from the Hamilton Company reveal that the workload of spinners and weavers more than doubled during the period of 1840-1854, while wages remained the same.47
The premium system, the third element comprising workers' grievances, was a system designed to pit overseers of departments and shifts against one another, in a productivity competition. Enticed by hefty cash bonuses, the overseers became increasingly more demanding. This system also served to pit workers against one another, as those who proved most efficient were then clearly favored by the bosses, and such efficiency was used as a basis of comparison amongst workers. ..."This policy created a relentless pressure to increase production and in the process undermined human relations within the mill," notes Dublin.48

Frustrated workers attempted to show their dissatisfaction with these changes by organizing walkouts and other job actions, but were unsuccessful at modifications. With the reluctant acceptance that the new methods were firmly entrenched, the workers turned to a new cause, limitation of the hours of the work day. "Unable to halt what they perceived as the degradation of work, operatives sought to at least mitigate its ill effects by limiting the hours of labor."49 Thus, the length of the workday became the major exigence of the rhetorical situation, the one aspect of their worklives viewed by the operatives as being capable of modification through discourse. This became the organizing principle which dictated the audiences to be addressed by movement rhetors.

The Lowell Female Labor Reform Association

The key to effective redress was organization amongst workers. In the midst of a larger, region-wide bent towards collectivism,50
a dozen female operatives banded together to form the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association (LFLRA) in January of 1845. They selected Sarah Bagley, a veteran mill worker as their president and adopted the motto "Try Again." By June of 1845, their number had grown to 500.

The LFLRA affiliated itself with the larger New England Workingmen's Association (NEWA) and dedicated itself to spreading the word of labor reform. The women were active in all phases of the larger group, while simultaneously organizing other female associations throughout New England. Under the aegis of the LFLRA, Bagley started the Industrial Reform Lyceum, organized to provide a public forum away from the existing corporation-sponsored platforms.

Bagley also served on the NEWA's publications committee and contributed frequently to the "female department" of its newspaper The Voice of Industry. This department was originally edited by Huldah J. Stone, recording secretary for the LFLRA. Eventually, the LFLRA purchased The Voice outright and used its pages to publicize their views.

Flexner credits the LFLRA with succeeding in "channeling the energies of its members away from fruitless strikes to more effective tactics."51 She recounts that

...when one of the larger mills in Lowell tried to increase the workload from three to four looms, at the same time reducing wages a cent per piece, a meeting of the Association pledged that no such increased load would be accepted unless accompanied by an increase in pay. Almost every woman
weaver working for the mill signed the pledge
to this effect, and stuck to it; the attempted
speed-up was cancelled.52

The members of the LPLRA also spearheaded the petition
drive of the legislature for the ten-hour law. For these efforts,
the corporations attempted to blacklist the Association's members.
When news of Huldah J. Stone's plan to become a boardinghouse
keeper in Lawrence reached Lowell, an agent of the Middlesex
Company warned his counterpart in the newly-formed city, "Huldah
J. Stone a radical of the worst sort & late Editoress of the
Voice of Industry intends to get a Boarding House at the New
City. I write this to warn you to 'keep hands off her'."53

Bagley responded to the notion of blacklisting with characteristic
fervor,

What! Deprive us, after working thirteen
hours, of the poor privilege of finding fault
- of saying our lot is a hard one! Intentionally
turn away a girl unjustly persecuted, as
men have been persecuted, to our knowledge,
for free expression of honest political opinions!
We will make the name of him who dares the
act, stink with every wind, from all points
of the compass. His name shall be a by-word
among all laboring men, and he shall be hissed
in the streets, and in all the cities of
this widespread republic; for our name is
legion though our oppression be great.54

Despite the blacklisting, the Association flourished for
the next several years.

The Audiences of the Ten-Hour Movement

Bitzer defines the audience of a rhetorical situation as
being composed of persons who are capable of being influenced
by discourse and of being mediators of change.
The primary audience faced by the Ten-Hour advocates was that of the Massachusetts state legislature. It was believed that a law limiting work hours was the most effective method for dealing with the exigence. Members of the Labor Reform associations felt justified in turning to the government for redress of work-related grievances, as the legislature had granted the original charters legitimizing the corporations.

It was to this body that the movement's petitions were directed.

A secondary, but nonetheless important audience, were other workers. Not all mill operatives were as committed to the cause of labor reform as were the members of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association. The operatives were nearly evenly divided into two camps, according to Dublin, the "rebels" and the "loyalists." Using the categories established by Dawley and Faler in their description of workers of this time period, Dublin defines these two types in the following manner,

...both groups accepted the morality of their employers and spurned the preindustrial values and attitudes of an earlier era. They differed primarily in terms of their views of class relations. Loyalists saw the interest of the worker and employer as joined and thus, "held aloof from the labor movement."...Rebels...viewed the interests of workers and employers as opposed and saw collective action as the only means to secure their accustomed living standard and independence. Both...accepted the injunctions of the nineteenth century work ethic, but the loyalists also accepted its invocation of individualism and social mobility, while the rebels saw collective action as the only means to success and independence.
The rebels led by Bagley, Stone and other rhetors of labor reform took as their duty the recruitment of all workers. They met with opposition from the loyalists, led by Harriet Farley, editor of The Lowell Offering, the famous literary magazine written by mill girls and financially supported by the mills. Indeed in her editorial on the Ten-Hour Movement, following an unsuccessful attempt at legislative aid by the Association, Farley diminishes its impact, "It appears that the petitioners to the Legislature for a reduction of labor hours are but a very small proportion of the whole number of laborers. . . ."56 Farley and Bagley addressed each other regularly in the editorial pages of the Lowell Advertiser and the Voice of Industry debating the appropriateness of methods used to "raise the operative."57 Further discussion of this debate follows as it helps to illustrate the tension found between the two groups. Additionally, Foner credits this debate with providing Sarah Bagley with the impetus to organize the LFLRA.

Obtaining the support of the "rank and file" was a major task faced by organizers for the LFLRA. There existed a lack of knowledge amongst many workers, as one organizer's report illustrates. While out recruiting, this organizer asked an operative if she was currently a member: "'Oh,' said she, 'I belong to no religious society.'"58 Thus, unorganized mill operatives constituted a second audience for the rhetors of the Ten-Hour Movement.
The factory owners constituted an indirect audience, as most reform rhetoric was aimed at the legislature, although appeals were made for their support. Overseers and agents were addressed on a more individual level, rather than collectively as they were seen as extensions of the corporations.

The organized male working class of New England were viewed as natural allies, and the relationship between genders was a strongly supportive one. As noted, the LFLRA was affiliated with the New England Workingmen's Association, and many of the women held positions of power and leadership within that body. The women of the Association enjoyed full privileges within male organizations, a situation which would prove to be unique in American labor history. While unorganized male workers are not specifically mentioned in either Dublin or Foner, it seems safe to assume that they were part of the same audience that "loyalist" females were.

In sum, the primary audience of the Ten-Hour Movement as engendered by the LFLRA was that of the Massachusetts state legislature, with secondary audiences being comprised of unorganized workers, and the public at large. Discussion turns now to the constraints faced by the rhetors in addressing the cause of Labor Reform.

**Constraints**

Bitzer states that "constraints" affect all rhetorical situations. Essential to the study of the Ten-Hour Movement
is the delineation of those "sets of persons, objects and relations
which are part of the situation because they have the power
to constrain decisions and action needed to modify the exigence."
Among those standard sources of constraints listed by Bitzer
are beliefs, attitudes, traditions, images and interests, as
well as facts and documents. Additionally, for the purposes
of this study, the role myth as a constraint will be included.

Paramount to all constraints was that of the myth of "True
Womanhood" and the notion of "woman's sphere." Recall Campbell's
distinction of the sociological function of myth as "validating
and maintaining some specific social order, authorizing its
moral code as a construct beyond criticism or human endemiation."
True Womanhood, with all its admonitions regarding "piety,
purity, submissiveness and domesticity", provided for the sanctioning
of appropriate female behavior. Smith-Rosenberg notes the
tension between that segment of society for which the myth
was created (the new middle class) and those others who suffered
under its aegis:

Erecting the non-productive woman into
a symbol of bourgeois class hegemony, the
new bourgeois men of the 1820s, 1830s and
1840s formulated the Cult of True Womanhood,
which prescribed a female role bounded by
kitchen and nursery, overlaid with piety
and purity, and crowned with subservience.
The woman who rejected these constraints,
or who, pushed by poverty, entered the labor
force, were viewed as unnatural.59

By far, attitudes, beliefs and traditions had the greatest
impact on the rhetoric of the members of the LFLRA. Amongst
the most prevalent of these was the societal interdiction of
public speaking by women. Sarah Bagley and others began speaking out for the cause of labor reform just a few years after the Grimke sisters. The notion of a female public speaker was still very much taboo in 1845 when Bagley represented her organization at the convention of the New England Workingmen's Association. She acknowledged this attitude in her opening remarks:

For the last half a century, it has been deemed a violation of woman's sphere to appear before the public as a speaker, but when our rights are trampled upon and we appeal in vain to legislators, what shall we do but appeal to the people? Shall not our voice be heard, and our rights acknowledged here; shall it be said again to the daughters of New England, that they have no political rights and are not subject to legislative action?60

Additional insight into the constraints of this situation come from O'Connor, specifically from her chapter on rhetorical criteria. She spells out the significance of the locations where women spoke. Rhetorical scholars of the 18th and 19th century slightly altered Aristotle's division of the three types of speeches (e.g., deliberative, forensic and epidetic). This classification evolved into "the eloquence of popular assemblies", "the eloquence of the bar" and "the eloquence of the pulpit." O'Connor posits that "the popular usage of this term may have had an effect on women's entrance to the public platform",61 as the only place where it was deemed even semi-respectable for women to speak was the pulpit. Evidence shows that the women of Lowell spoke not only in labor conventions
but at holiday rallies and other "popular assemblies" of the day. Given that the members of the LPLRA were speaking during the same period of which O'Connor writes, it seems a reasonable assumption that they met with as much public hostility as the abolitionists and advocates of woman's rights.

Another major rhetorical constraint faced by the rhetors of reform was their own public image, carefully crafted and guarded by the mill owners, and the influential members of society. Recall that in order to quell suspicions about the character of the working "girl", the Lowell system was instituted. In addition to the rules governing factory behavior, living conditions and observance of the Sabbath, the operatives had an image to uphold, one characterized by quality, refinement and education. So prevalent was this image, that the operatives virtues were extolled throughout America and Europe.62

Foner cites the operatives' interest in "culture" as the primary reason for the attention showered on them by the public.63 Such an interest was unheard of when thinking of the laboring classes, particularly when contrasted with the visions of industrial hell emanating from Great Britain at the time. The operatives were frequent patrons of the library systems, and had access to the Lyceum as well. Foner finds evidence for this image of "culture-crazy girls" not only in the writings of the women, but in the novels, poetry and songs of the time.64 John G. Whittier, an eminent New England poet wrote of the operatives,
The Factory Girls of Lowell

Acres of girlhood, beauty reckoned by the square rod - or miles by the long measure! the young, the graceful, the gay - the flowers gathered from a thousand hillsides and green valleys of New England, fair unveiled Nuns of industry, Sisters of Thrift, and are ye not also Sisters of Charity dispensing comfort and hope and happiness around many a hearthstone of your native hills, making sad faces cheerful, and hallowing age and poverty with the sunshine of your youth and love! Who shall sueer at your calling? Who shall count your vocation otherwise than noble and ennobling?65

Charles Dickens, in his American Notes, expressed amazement at the workers' interest in lectures, literary circles and music and Improvement Circles.66 He described The Lowell Offering as "the first clear notes of real life in America."67 Anthony Trollope was quoted as calling Lowell a "philanthropic manufacturing college."68 The vicar of Scoresby, England so moved by the industriousness and "general superior tone of moral principal and propriety of behavior" of the operatives published a book about them. He included advice to the British for the improvement of female operatives there, based on what he observed in Lowell.

Indeed, Scoresby proclaimed The Offering, "the ninth wonder of the world" adding, "considering the source from which it comes."69

The Offering, a literary repository written and edited by the mill girls, and published between the years 1840-1845 did much to propagate this image. Eisler writes,

As Lowell was a showcase mill town and its women workers were the 'most superior operatives' so their magazine would be a
traveling mirror to reflect an ideal system. ...(The Offering) provided a fortuitous medium for those two expressions of distinctly American genius: public relations and packaging.70

The Offering was not characterized by its concern with conditions of labor, but rather with the literary skills of the operatives. Foner asserts that the major emphasis of this magazine was "to dispel the notion that factory work was degrading or that the mill operatives were exploited."71 Further, the majority of the contributions were escapist, and revealed little dissatisfaction with factory life. As noted earlier, its editor Harriet Farley was a "loyalist" who had little use for the "rebels" represented by Sarah Bagley. Ware summed up Farley's tenure as editor by stating that she "began by defending the operatives against the attacks levelled at the corporations, and finished by defending the corporations at the expense of the operatives."72

As this section identifying the operatives' public image as a constraint began with a quote by Whittier, so will it end. The following will serve to illustrate the dichotomy between myth and reality in the daily lives of the workers and the propagation of the myth,

Not as a matter of taste and self-gratification have many of them (factory girls) exchanged the free breezes...of the country for the close hot city, and the harshness and whirl of these crowded and noisy mills. Nor am I one of those who count daily toil, consuming the golden hours of the day, and only leaving the night for recreation, study and rest, as in itself a pleasurable matter. There have been many foolish essays written
upon the beauty and divinity of labor by those who have never known what it really is to earn one's livelihood by the sweat of the brow. ...Let such be silent.\textsuperscript{73}

The public image generated by The Offering had an effect on the reform advocates' ability to convince the general public that their plight as workers was unjust, as will be demonstrated more clearly in the following chapter. Suffice to say that the responsibility of exposing the factory system as exploitative was made doubly hard in the face of such a positive and glowing image.

The rhetors of the Ten-Hour Movement were similarly constrained by the attitudes and beliefs of their primary audience, the Massachusetts state legislature. As O'Connor has indicated, the only semi-respectable public platform for women was the pulpit. There is much evidence, however, to support that Bagley and others did not hesitate to speak wherever they found the opportunity.\textsuperscript{74} Hannah Mather Crocker, an early proponent of woman's rights summed up the prevailing attitude, "It would be morally wrong and physically imprudent for any woman to attempt pleading at the bar of justice as no law can give her the right of deviating from the strictest rules of rectitude and decorum. ..."\textsuperscript{75}

Historians such as Foner and Flexner have posited that this attitude undermined an invitation to the female operatives to speak to legislative investigation committees set up to hear their grievances. It was thought that no respectable woman would have the courage to appear, thus the matter could
be disposed of in committee. This strategy backfired as all the women who were invited testified.

Other female operatives, particularly those Dublin has identified as "loyalists", served also as an audience whose attitudes constrained the members of the LFLRA. That there was tension between those agitating for labor reform and those who viewed themselves as partners with management in industry is evidenced by the spirited debate of Sarah Bagley and Harriet Farley, the editor of The Offering. Bagley started this war-in-print by claiming at an Independence Day labor picnic that her submissions to The Offering critical of factory conditions had been refused. Farley responded in the Lowell Courier through the aegis of its editor, William Schouler. Farley denied ever rejecting any article by Bagley. The debate continued throughout the next several weeks in the pages of the Courier, the Lowell Advertiser and the Voice. Bagley's scorn was hardly contained in one missive when she wrote,

Mr. Editor: I notice by the Advertiser of last week that I have been favored with a specimen of refined literature, from the pen of one of the geniuses of the age, and feel myself highly honored with a passing notice from such a high source, although it comes in the form of personal abuse. ...

Miss Farley has been a defender of the rights of the operatives, it would seem, for she has not only defended them, but exposed "all the abuses she has known" to exist. It is somewhat strange that the operatives have not better appreciated her labors in that department. (Original emphasis.)
The debate appears to have ended late in the summer when members of the LFLRA were invited to a meeting with members of Farley's Improvement Circle for the purpose of a "private comparison of these principles." Amelia Sargent, a "rebel" reported on the evening for the Voice, and quoting Bagley noted,

Miss Farley's remarks that she never felt disposed to croak or whine about factory life, reminds us of the answer of a petted and pampered negro slave who perchance lived in luxury and ease, being his master's favorite, when interrogated about becoming free, "they say slavery is an evil, but me no feel it." 78

The factory owners also impeded the worker's efforts regularly. Dublin notes,

In numerous ways mill management attempted to thwart the labor reform movement. In both Lowell and Manchester, reformers were denied the use of city hall for their meetings. Overseers were said to have discharged workers found to be subscribing to the Voice of Industry. Activists also had to be careful about the corporate blacklist, for if they missed work by attending a meeting they might well be discharged. 79

A mill owner's response to the call for the ten-hour day illustrated a commonly-held attitude and argument against the cause,

I verily believe there are a large number of operatives in our cotton mills who have too much spare time now...(to reduce working hours) would increase crime, suffering, wickedness and pauperism. 80

The Lowell community's attitude as manifested by its "prominent" citizens, and press were not sympathetic to the cause. A Lowell physician, "Spectator" wrote "sneeringly" of the operatives'
associations and agitation, criticizing them for not preparing themselves to function within the home and to operate as "the power behind the throne." He advocated the more subtle manipulation of men using this traditional strategy.\(^81\) (An operative's response to "Spectator" will be discussed in the next chapter.)

Foner notes that Sarah Bagley, Huldah Stone and Mehitable Eastman also faced hostility from middle-class men during their travels for reform. The most frequent charge levied against them was that they were "unfeminine."\(^82\) Other examples of the tension between the workers and the middle-class can be found in women's articles and letters to the *Voice*.\(^83\)

The rhetorical situation faced by the female advocates of labor reform was by no means an easy one. Constrained by the myth of "woman's sphere", fighting against their "romantic" image, seen as troublemakers by unorganized workers and the community at large, the rhetors faced many difficulties. The question of how "traditionally" (according to rhetorical criteria of the time) they dealt with these constraints remains to be seen.
NOTES - CHAPTER IV


3 Welter, *Dimity Convictions*, p. 204.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 21.

6 Ibid., p. 22.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 23.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 25.

11 Ibid., p. 28.

12 Ibid., p. 29.

13 Ibid., p. 31.

14 Ibid., p. 37.


19 Welter, *Dimity Convictions*, p. 17.

20 Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct*, p. 79.

21 Ibid., p. 88.


23 Ibid., p. 24.

24 Ibid., p. 25.

25 Ibid., p. 33.

26 Ibid., p. 36.

27 Ibid.


30 This was also referred to as "The Lowell System".


32 Ibid., p. 77.


34 Ibid.


37 Ibid., p. 47.

38 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 27.

39 Ibid., p. 29.

40 Ibid., p. 32.


42 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 40.

43 Foner, Women and Labor Movement, p. 56.


46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., p. 111.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., p. 112.


52 Ibid.

53 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 121.

54 Bagley quote, "What deprive us of our lot?", in Flexner, p. 58.

55 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 123.


58 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 124.


62 Eisler, Lowell Offering, pp. 34-35.


64 Ibid., p. 20.

65 Ibid., p. 22.

66 Ibid., xx.

67 Ibid., p. 58.

68 Ibid., xxi.

69 Foner, Factory Girls, p. 27.

70 Ibid., p. 36.


72 Ibid, p. 57.

73 Ibid., p. 53.

74 See Chapter V.


77 Ibid., p. 68.

78 Ibid., p. 71.
79 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 120.

80 Foner, Factory Girls, p. 73.

81 Foner, Women and Labor Movement, p. 70.

82 Ibid., 71.

83 See Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

THE RHETORIC OF THE LOWELL FEMALE LABOR REFORM ASSOCIATION

As discussed in Chapter 4, the "rebels" of Lowell who sought redress of their grievances took as their first order of business the task of organization.

Excerpts from the constitution of the LFLRA provide insight into the goals and strategies of the group:

Whereas we, the Operatives of Lowell, believing that in the present age of improvement nothing can escape the searching glances of reform; and when men begin to inquire why the Laborer does not hold that place in the social, moral and intellectual world, which a bountiful Creator designed for him to occupy, the reason is obvious. Our merciful Father in his infinite wisdom surely, has not bestowed all his blessings, both mental and moral on a favored few, on whom also he has showered all pecuniary gifts. No! to us all has he given minds capable of eternal progression and improvement.

It now only remains for us to throw off the shackles which are binding us in ignorance and servitude and which prevent us from rising to the scale of being for which God designed for us.

But how shall this be done? How shall the mass become educated? With the present system of labor it is impossible. There must be reasonable hours for manual labor, and a just portion of time allowed for cultivation of the mental and moral faculties and no other way can the great work be accomplished...

Art. 8th. Any person signing this Constitution, shall literally pledge herself to labor actively for Reform in the present system of labor.
Art. 9th. The members of this Association disapprove of all hostile measures, strikes and turn outs until all pacific measures prove abortive, and then it is the duty of every one to assert and maintain that independence which our brave ancestors bequeathed us, and sealed with their blood.¹

The sections of the constitution quoted above yield significant information about the group as rhetors. To begin, their most fundamental argument for reform is found in its opening paragraph, that as laborers, they did not have the time to develop themselves to their fullest potential. Next, the constitution reveals the "righteousness" of the cause, by the positioning of reform as "God's work". Thirdly, we find that the rhetors are challenging the system of labor, a point which becomes more significant as this analysis continues. Next, recognition is given to the principles of democracy, so revered in their culture. The constitution also clearly states that a signer must pledge herself to "labor actively" in the cause for reform, a distinction noted for its challenge to the myth of "True Womanhood." Lastly, the document ends by evoking the "spirit of '76", an appeal to the shared value of patriotism in 19th century America.

The rhetors of the LFLRA spread the word of reform through various methods. They sent representatives throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire in order to recruit new members. This proved successful as chapters were formed in Fall River, Waltham, Dover, Manchester, and Nashua.²
They also realized the "power of the press" and started their own magazines and periodicals in response to the timidity of the *Offering*.

Such papers as *The Factory Girl*, *Wampanoag and Operatives Journal*, and the *Factory Girls' Album and Operatives Advocate* all came into being during the first half of the 1840s. These and *The Voice of Industry* became the outlets for much of the workers' grievances and arguments for reform.

The *Voice* invited the "Factory Girls of Lowell" and other workers "whether they agree with us or not" to,

> Make the *Voice* a medium of communication; for it is your paper, through which you should be heard and command attention. The press has been too long monopolized by the capitalist non-producers, party demagogues and speculators, to the exclusion of the people, whose rights are dear and valid.

Originally, the LFLRA contributed to this paper's "Female Department" and several months after this invitation was issued, they bought it outright.

Huldah J. Stone, secretary of the Association, traveled throughout New England soliciting subscriptions, simultaneously speaking for the Ten-Hour day.

Recognizing the need to gain as much worker support as possible the LFLRA sponsored numerous events for the operatives. These picnics, dances and fairs combined a blend of music, socializing and propaganda." These were, according to reports, enthusiastically attended.

The LFLRA also aligned itself with the larger New England Workingmen's Association, and while Sarah Bagley informed the members of that group that the LFLRA claimed "no exalted place"
in the labor movement, "the male delegates knew enough about the militant and inspired leadership of Bagley to elect her vice-president of the association," notes Foner.9 She was assigned a leading role in the campaign for the Ten-Hour day. The LFLRA also published and distributed "factory tracts", pamphlets describing life in the mills as it really was, as opposed to the "shining image" propogated by the owners.

The most prevalent strategy of all was the petition campaign. Dublin explains that "given the failure of skilled workingmen relying on economic actions (in previous years), women operatives looked to the legislature for redress of their grievances.10 In 1842, the operatives from Fall River submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature and were denied a hearing. In 1843, 1,600 Lowell operatives signed a similar petition and met with similar results. In 1845, the petitioners were finally granted a hearing, but after investigation, the committee appointed by the legislature declined to take up their cause. (Further discussion of this hearing follows.)

Petitioning for the Ten-Hour day reached its peak in 1846, when some 10,000 citizens of Massachusetts signed on. Of these, 4,000 were from Lowell, illustrating that the motto of the LFLRA "Try Again!" was heeded. This petition yielded the following response from the legislative committee:

(admitting it had the power to define the hours of labor) that it could not deprive the citizen of [the right to] make his own contract...any restriction would injure business, and the result will be, the laborer is sure to suffer.11
Other events hurt the movement in Massachusetts as well. In September of 1845, the members of the Female Labor Reform Association of Allegheny City and Pittsburgh, "incensed by legislative stalling"\textsuperscript{12} called for a general strike. Some 5,000 workers responded, and they remained out of the factories for nearly a month. Desperate after so long a time, some of the workers attempted to return to their jobs. The strikers, however, had other ideas. They "went from factory to factory, broke open the gates, seized the workers at the machines, and dragged them outside."\textsuperscript{13} While male supporters were present at these scenes, the actions were carried out entirely by females. Foner notes the repercussions,

> The sight of hundreds of women daring to break open the factory gates and toss out the strikebreakers by sheer force so antagonized conservative middle-class groups that the factory women found it impossible to gain public support. The employers were adamant, contending that they could not decrease working hours as long as New England mills continued to operate on a thirteen- or fourteen-hour basis.\textsuperscript{14}

However, it was the failure of this larger group's efforts to win any concession that served to discourage many New England workers from joining in an Independence Day general strike called for by the LRLRA in 1846.

The only group to meet with a measure of success during this time period was the Manchester association, for in 1847, New Hampshire legislated the Ten-Hour day. However, employers made certain that clauses be inserted stating that special
contracts could be drawn allowing the operatives to work more hours if they desired. Then the workers were presented with the alternative of signing these special contracts or getting fired. Their efforts to battle the contracts proved futile, and workers who refused to sign them were fired and subsequently blacklisted... 15

Massachusetts finally passed legislation for the Ten-Hour day, in 1874, nearly three decades after the LFLRA had disbanded.

Was the failure of the Ten-Hour day in the 1840s linked to ineffective rhetoric? Examination of the appeals and arguments of the women will hopefully yield an answer to that query.

Analysis of the Rhetoric of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association

Ethical Appeals

An effective rhetor exhibits good will, good sense and evidence of moral character. Any consideration of ethical appeals, however, must be prefaced by determination of what the audience knows of the rhetor prior to the rhetorical trans-action. As indicated in the previous chapter, the rhetors of the LFLRA were constrained by the myth of "True Womanhood" and their own public image. Partial evidence of their ethos, however, may be found within the confines of these constraints.

Welter indicates that a "true woman" was seen as being morally superior to men, a characteristic derived from her
naturally pious nature. Berg notes that some 19th century writers expressed the belief that women possessed an "inherent inclination for holiness."16 "The female is naturally prone to be religious. Hers is a pious mind. Religion seem[ed] almost to have been entrusted by its author to her particular custody", wrote several antebellum ministers.17

Women were exalted for their inherently "good" nature as well. A magazine article, typical for the time, acclaimed women for possessing

all the virtues that are founded in the sensibility of the heart...pity, the attribute of angels, and friendship, the balm of life, delight to dwell in the female breast. What a forlorn, what a savage creature would man be without the meliorating offices of the gentle sex!18

True women were guardians of the race, as they were charged with instilling their morality in their children. Cott explicates the rationale underlying this responsibility,

Statesmen of the Revolution had said that the republic of the United States would be great or weak as its citizens' characters were so; they believed as John Adams said in 1778, linking the Puritans to the Jacksonians in a chain of reasoning, that "the foundations of national Morality must be laid in private families." This ideology colored by customary belief in women's domestic influence on men, strengthened by awareness of women's child-rearing obligations and faith in the malleability of infant character- hinged the success of the national experiment on women's success in their sphere.19

Hence, by virtue of her gender a woman of this period was viewed as inherently moral. Further, as Berg arguss, "the
single set of responsibilities and duties for all females applied regardless of position." (emphasis added)  

Refusing to acknowledge distinction or difference, the ethos of the woman-belle ideal spoke in the singular: to the female, never to females; to the mother, never to mothers; and to the wife, rather than to the wives. The myths of womanhood strove to demonstrate the oneness of the entire sex, whose duties and privileges never changed because they flowed from an inferior and particular feminine nature.  

Thus, even though the women of Lowell existed in an expanded sphere by virtue of engaging in wage-labor, they were subject to the prescriptions of the myth. Additional evidence for this claim is found in the previous chapter's description of the operatives' image as propagated by the factory owners. The "virtuous Yankee mill girl" was publicly acclaimed, not only in this country, but in Europe as well. Evidence of the rhetors attempting to instill an image of themselves as "moral beings" is found primarily in the artifacts dealing with issues of class. As with much of their situation, the women were trapped in a double-bind with regard to the myth of True Womanhood and class relations. On the one hand as women, they were supposedly inherently moral, but as workers, they were snubbed by the middle-class.

A frequent ethical appeal on the part of the women was to position their cause as a moral one. Evidence of this is found in many of their speeches, reports and writings.

In her secretary's report to the Voice, Huldah J. Stone wrote,
God speed thee in thy holy mission gentle
"voice" mayest thou speak comfort to the
despairing - whisper Hope to the ear, and
pour balm into the heart lacerated and festering
with cankering cares of life- reclaim the
wandering, sin-enslaved wretched and lost
ones of Our Father's family, and invite them
into the bonds of fraternal love and union-
thus shalt thou be a blessing in thy day
and generation!22

A "Ten-Hour Woman" wrote of her support for the movement,

I could say much on this part of the
subject, but forbear for the present, and
conclude by saying to the mechanics, fear
not, your cause is just and must triumph.
Be strong, be united and be assured that
"Woman is upon your side, Full armed for
moral fight,For brothers aye, and sister's
wrongs, For God and human right.23

Sarah Bagley, in an 1846 report to the New England Workingman's
Association said,

We are happy in being able to impart
cheering and hopeful intelligence to the
laborers and operatives of New England, through
our report to this convention. Our prospects
were never more flattering-our faith in the
final and complete success of this humane
and righteous enterprise, never more strong
or well grounded at the present time...Our
oppressors are making the discovery that
we are earnest in this great, - this mighty
Reform! that there is talent, integrity and
a true, laudable zeal in our ranks, which
will not be looked down, or thwarted in its
noble design, to elevate humanity...We shall
continue to labor unitedly, and untiringly
to establish again on this sin-polluted earth,
the reign of Justice, equity and love.
Let us all be true to ourselves, mentally,
morally and physically, and the blessings
of high heaven, will crown our labors with
abundant success. Our pathway will be strewn
with flowers which never fade our hearts,
retain the freshness and vigor of youth until
the last sands of life have run, and death
like a kind friend, shall give us a welcome
passport to the joys of heaven- the home
of Angels!24
Not only did the operatives position their cause as a holy one, they also demonstrated their morality by frequently quoting or referring to the Bible, a strategy used by their sister reformers of this period. O'Connor determined that knowledge of the Bible was considered synonymous with "high moral character" during the antebellum period.

"Ada" a contributor to the Voice, argued for the end of oppression, basing her plea upon the "Golden Rule." Entitled "The Universal Brotherhood", the article begins,

"Do unto others, as ye would that they should do to you", is a great precept, given to us by our great Teacher, as a rule and guide of action, towards all mankind. The Savior gave us this for practice; he well knew what course of conduct would insure the greatest amount of happiness, to his creatures. And why has the world so long neglected to accept of this great lesson fraught with so many blessings if practiced.25

Sarah Bagley sprinkled her rhetoric with such maxims as "by their fruits ye shall know them",26 and "it is more blessed to give than to receive."27 Additionally, both she and Huldah Stone referred to Biblical parables and stories in their speeches and writings.28

Ethical appeals showing the rhetors' "good will" toward the audience were based upon the culturally-shared values of patriotism, Christian benevolence, and the rights of "man", a legacy from the Revolutionary period.

One of the most frequent examples of ethos is found in the use of patriotic appeals to the audience. "Thank heaven
we live in a land blessed with Gospel light and freedom", wrote Huldah Stone, "where there are no distinctions; all are one in Christ." Such fervor is evidenced in other sources,

The "Ten Hour System" recommends itself to every Patriot and lover of his country, as a means of security against a monarchial form of Government, being introduced into the boasted land of the free.29

Fathers of our own happy, free New England! Do you sanction this long hour system? Are you willing that your sons, aye, and your daughters, too, shall thus go out into the world? Are you the sons of those who fought so nobly the battles of freedom? Are you the sons of the father of '76? If so, let your voices be heard in thunderous tones, and your hands be stretched forth to save us from the same evils that threatened us when they declared themselves free from a foreign power.30

(To the workingmen)...How long, O, how long, will ye suffer these things thus to be? You have the power, and you will not use it, to represent yourselves, and not as you now do...Our illustrious ancestors bequeathed this power to redress your wrongs, through the ballot box, and will you not use it?31

The use of the patriotic appeal on the part of the speakers shows a knowledge of the values shared by their audiences. New England, and in particular, Massachusetts, has always seen itself as the birthplace of patriotism, and the rhetors of the LFLRA used patriotic appeals to their fullest advantage.

However, there appears to be a conflict between this type of identification with the general audience and the more direct attacks upon capitalism. For instance, Sarah Bagley wrote,

We would not venture an opinion that those who oppose the labor reform movement, are less humane than others; but we insist
that those who oppose it on account of dollars and cents, have low and sordid views of human existence, or they do not represent themselves truly. 32

Truth shall be our guide; we will do no wrong—tell no falsehood knowingly. But oppression however slight, abuse of trust however trivial, insolence from whatever source, and whether from the agent, the overseer or petty tender, in the capacity of under clerk, from the Bank managers, men in authority of city government, or gentlemen of the professions, whether Doctor, Lawyer or Priest, we will punish as it merits, without stint or reserve... We war with oppression in every form—with rank, save that which merit gives. 33

Amelia Sagent, an active member of the LFLRA had no difficulty recognizing the "enemy" in this war,

We are but one amongst a thousand, what shall we do that our influence may be felt in this vast multitude? We answer that there is in this city an Association called the Female Labor Reform Association, having for its professed object, the amelioration of the condition of the operative. Enrolled upon its records are the names of five hundred members—come then, and add five hundred or rather five thousand more, and in the strength of our united influence, we will soon show these drivelling cotton lords, this mushroom aristocracy, who so arrogantly lord it over God's heritage, that our rights can not be trampled upon with impunity; that we will no longer submit to that arbitrary power which has for the last ten years been so abundantly exercised over us. 34

This appears to be in direct violation of a basic principle of effective rhetoric (eg., identification with audiences) yet careful reading of the artifacts leads to the conclusion that they were in fact attacking a system, rather than individuals. They believed in humanity's inherent goodness, and their power to persuade the "cotton lords" to see the light. Huldah Stone wrote,
We have unbounded confidence in the power and omnipotence of correct principles diffused in the minds of men—those principles which are founded on eternal justice and impartial goodness! The National Reform movement we believe to be based in this sure foundation, and we pray God to strengthen and greatly increase its numbers of active and efficient friends until our country shall be free indeed. Every man who earns his daily bread honestly, and who is sufficiently enlightened on the subject, will if he has any humanity or love for his country, give his whole influence on this side of this great National Reform! 35

Sarah Bagley, after initially questioning the humanity of movement opponents, also places hope in the education and enlightenment of the capitalists. After briefly describing the working conditions of the operatives, she writes,

It is truly painful to hear the complaints of this unfortunate class. As the day dawns upon them, they regret it is not past, and as the evening closes, and they retire, they wish it would not so soon be morning. Is there a human heart that would destine the fair daughters of New England to such an existence? Is there a man in our city, nay; is there a man in this universe that would perpetuate such a state of things? We are sure there is not... We are fully aware that if a reduction in the hours of labor were to take place, everyone whether capitalist or agent, would feel a great deal of satisfaction. It is not in the human heart to love misery; and when the question shall be fairly settled, (as it surely will be) the bright and joyous hearts and happy faces will more than compensate for the trifle that capital may lose. 36

The overall strategy, then, of this type of appeal appears to be the separation of the men from their "evil" system.

The rhetors were appealing to the basic humanity of these audiences to establish good will. While at times their rhetoric was caustic, they seem to be inspired by an almost religious fervor.
Like other reform movements of the time, they did not shrink from confrontation, but were encouraged that eventually the "better nature" of their audiences would emerge and their word would be heeded.

Thus, taking full advantage of that element of the myth of True Womanhood which deemed women inherently moral, the rhetors of the LFLRA further identified their cause as righteous. They appealed to what were shared cultural values of patriotism and Christian benevolence and mollified their attacks on the system by stating their trust in the humanity of the factory owners and legislators.

**The Pathetic Appeals**

Persuasive discourse, as has been noted, appeals to the whole person; not just to the intellect, but to the emotions as well. Examination of the texts yields numerous instances of pathetic appeals, and also evidence that these reformers were aware of the conviction/persuasion duality.

Passionate appeals were found in the texts dealing with the operatives' state of health, as Sarah Bagley illustrates,

> With but the few moments allowed to take their food, which is swallowed without being half masticated, and the pores of the skin being encrusted, or nearly so, with cotton dust, it is not strange that so many of their number fall prey to consumption and find an early grave.37

Another writer to the *Voice* describes this situation in even more emotional terms,
They must toil on, and they do toil on. But day by day, their over-tasked systems give way. -A dizziness in the head, or a pain in the side, or the shoulders, or the back admonishes them to return to their country homes before it is too late. But too often these friendly monitions are unheeded. They resolve to toil a little longer. -But nature cannot be cheated, and the poor victim of a false system of Industrial Oppression is carried home— to die! Or if her home is far away and disease comes on too rapidly, she goes to the Hospital, and soon, in the Stranger's Burial Ground may be seen another unmarked grave.38

Lest one credit this writer with an over-active imagination, she quickly assures the reader, "This is no fancy of mine, no studied fiction— (would God that it were) but sober truth."39

One of the most blatant appeals to the sympathies of the audience is found in the "letters from the Child of the Hills", published in the Voice in October and November of 1946. Excerpts from the first letter illustrate,

Dear Mr. Voice: I am but a child; yet I always read the Voice when I can get it; it makes me feel sad sometimes, too, when you tell about the factory boys and girls how long they work and how little money they get for doing so...I read and hear that the people are rich and make them work so long and hard; and that they send men all over the country to tell wrong stories, and get the girls to come here; and when they get here they find out how much they have been cheated; but a great many of them are too poor to get back to their homes and so they have to stay and work in the mills, and then they get sick and die, some of them...Do the rich people, Mr. Voice, ever put their children into the factories? I should think that they would if they are such nice healthy places as they tell off; (sic)40
The second letter consists mainly of a harrowing tale of the death of a factory girl who lived in the "child's" neighborhood. No question as to its authenticity is found, but the extent of the "child's" knowledge of key issues in the reform movement leads one to conclude that perhaps the letters were written by a well-intentioned operative.

Evidence that the women were aware of the conviction-persuasion duality is found in many of the texts. Very often the "formula" is the same, a passage describing the "facts" of conditions, followed by an illustration of how one operative suffered. After describing a typical operative's initiation into the mills, Amelia Sargent writes, "Here, too, comes up a case which strikingly illustrates the petty tyranny of the employer,"

A little girl, some 12 or 13 years of age, the daughter of a poor widow, dependent on her daily toil for a livelihood, worked on one of the Corporations, boarding with her mother; who dying left her to the care of an aunt, residing but a few steps from the Corporation but the poor little creature, all unqualified as she was, to provide for her own wants, was compelled to leave her home and the motherly care bestowed upon her and enter one of these same large boarding houses. We do but give these facts in this case and they need no comment for everyone must see the utter heartlessness which prompted such conduct toward a child.41

Such appeals to human compassion are found throughout the texts. It would appear that these female rhetors were very much aware of the impact such pathetic appeals could have upon their audiences. However, here too, these texts may appear
to be a violation of the premise of good will toward the factory owners. I would argue again, that such strategies were designed for the purpose of awakening the consciences of this audience. "...when the conscience speaks in thunderous tones," wrote Sarah Bagley, "its voice must be heard."

It is then we see this subject in its true light— and he who had looked on calmly and indifferently, takes a more correct view. He sees the weary toiler as the child of some fond parent, whose affection is as strong and pure as his own.42

What the operatives’ strategy appears to be is continual assault on the system of labor, by pointing out the horrendous conditions under which they worked. This strategy might also be seen as an attempt at educating the uninformed public. It was a continued rhetorical effort, I would argue, to address the attitudes engendered by the glowing public image of factory life. As was the case with their ethical appeals, the pathetic appeals of the LFLRA appear to be based on the assumption that audiences required enlightenment. The same may be said of their logical appeals.

The Logical Appeals

By far one of the most recurrent arguments dealing with labor reform and especially the Ten-Hour movement was one based upon the denial of the operatives to develop themselves morally, physically and intellectually given the prevailing conditions. This may be seen as an attempt to address the argument that
reduced hours would lead to increased "crime and wickedness". As indicated previously, many rhetors invent arguments based upon personal knowledge, and hence, the operatives depended heavily upon their own experiences in developing this line of argument.

The most cogent example of this is found in the *Voice*, wherein a "Committee of Factory Girls" exhibit their syllogistic skills,

> From this it will be seen that in New England the operatives work on an average of the whole year, more than twelve and a half hours per day, exclusive of their going to and from their work. First, it is apparent that the hours of labor are too many.

> Second, that the minutes allowed to take their food are too few.

> Third, that these causes are sufficient to impair health, induce disease, premature old age, and death.

> Fourth, that these causes, conjointly with the bad effect of close and heated air, acting upon so large a number of females assembled in the manufactories of New England, must in time affect the physical condition of the people of New England. To say nothing of the intellectual degeneracy which must necessarily result from the want of mental recreation and cultivation.

> Fifthly, that no reason can be given why these evils should not produce the same terrible effects here, as in England, where their results are fully developed.

> Sixth, that as the British Parliament, from motives of humanity and public policy have been compelled to interfere in behalf of the operatives, prudence and mercy call upon our legislators to do likewise.

> Seventh, that the example of this State would be followed at once throughout New England."
Again, exhibited in this argument is an appeal to the "humanity" of the audience— the legislators. The authors of this petition clearly identify the problems of the system, and ask that they be ameliorated by the reduction of the hours of labor.

The operatives also showed their ability to invent arguments from many of the common topics delineated by Aristotle. Evidence of arguments invented from definition, contrariety, likeness, division, and degree is found throughout. Refutations based on the strategies of "turning the tables" and "reductio ad absurdum" are also found. Some examples follow.

"Defintion", O'Connor tells us, is "getting at the essential meaning so that the result can be used when reasoning on the point at issue."44

The Factory Girl, another newspaper of the period sympathetic to the operatives, published the following in 1845,

**Overseer.**— A servile tool in the hands of an Agent; who will resort to the lowest, meanest and most grovelling measures to please his Master, and to fill the coffers of a soulless Corporation.

**Operative.**— A person who is employed in a Factory, and who generally earns three times as much as he or she receives.

**Contemptible.**— For an overseer to ask a girl what her religious sentiments are, when she applies to him for employment.

**Dastardly.**— The conduct of an agent when he (instead of going himself) sends one of his minions to notify a watchman, that he is to be turned out to employ.

**Oppressive.**— To make two men do the work of three, without making an addition to their wages.45
The author of these "new definitions" chooses to label the overseer not in human terms, but rather as a "tool" of a "soulless corporation." This metaphor (or a similar one) is used frequently by the operatives. The strategy behind the use of equating an "oppressor" with a "tool" appears to be one in which the rhetor denies the "soul" of the subject. The logic behind the frequent use of the metaphor appears to be essential to the success of appeals to basic humanity. If an audience member does not heed these appeals, s/he can not possess a soul, and thus is merely an extension of the system.

One of the most prevalent analogies used by the operatives in their rhetoric was likening their lot to that of a Southern slave. Occasionally, references are made to the similarity of their situation to the "Russian serf" and the "Irish peasant." 46 A typical example of the slave analogy is found in Sarah Bagley's article entitled, "Voluntary?"

Whenever I raise the point that it is immoral to shut us up in a close room twelve hours a day in the most monotonous and tedious of employemnt, I am told that we have come to the mills voluntarily, and that we can leave when we will. Voluntary! Let us look a little at this remarkable form of human freedom... A slave too goes voluntarily to his task, but his will is in some manner quickened by the whip of an overseer. The whip which brings us to Lowell is NECESSITY. We must have money; a father's debts are to be paid, an aged mother to be supported, a brother's ambitions to be aided, and so the factories are supplied...Is this freedom? To my mind it is slavery, quite as really as any in Turkey or Carolina. It matters little as to the fact of slavery, whether the slave be compelled to his task by the
whip of the overseer or the wages of the Lowell Corporation. In either case it is not free will, leading laborer to work, but an outward necessity that puts free will out of the question.⁴⁷

Arguments from contrast appear frequently also, the most prevalent among these are based upon the "romantic" image of factory life versus reality.⁴⁸ A letter to the editor of the Voice, from Julianna provides a good example of this strategy,

Those who write so effusively about the "Beauties of Factory Life" tell us that we are indeed happy creatures, and how truly grateful and humbly submissive we should be. Can it be that any of us are so stupified as not to realize the exalted station and truly delightful influences we enjoy? If so, let them take a glance at pages 195 and 196 of Rev. H. Miles' book and they will surely awake to gratitude and be content. Pianos, teachers of music, evening schools, lectures, libraries, and all these sorts of advantages are, says he, enjoyed by the operatives. (Query—when do they find the time for all or any of these?) After all, it is easier to write a book than it is to do right. It is easier to smooth over and plaster up a deep festering rotten system, which is sapping the life-blood of our nation, widening and deepening the yawning gulf which ere long swallow up the laboring classes in dependent servitude and serfdom, like that of Europe, than it is to probe the very bottom of this death-spreading monster.⁴⁹

Again, the author is chiding "Rev. Miles" to recognize the inhumanity of the system.

Another major focus of the arguments is drawn from the common topic of "division". O'Connor found in her analysis that the "underlying majority of the arguments invented in this topic...is that of the dichotomy between the theory and
the practices of democracy." The same may be said of the labor reformers; however, there is also found a prevalent recognition of the division between the theory and practice of Christianity.

The constitution of the LFLRA illustrates awareness of the first dichotomy,

Shall we, Operatives of America, the land where Democracy claims to be the principle by which we live and by which which are governed, see the evil daily increasing which separates more widely and more effectually the favored few and the unfortunate many, without one exertion to stay the progress? God forbid!51

Sarah Bagley and others noted what they saw as hypocrisy between the principles of Christianity and the lack of support the LFLRA got from the clergy:

It would seem to many, that the religious part of the community should be first to engage in the work of improving the operatives, physically. Has the Master left no examples for your imitation? Has he never taken upon himself the improvement of those with whom he labored? Has he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and had compassion on those who were out of the way? Has he anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, and undo the heavy burdens of those who are bound? Who are his followers practically? "By their fruits ye shall know them."52

An excellent example of reutation is found in an argument invented by means of "reductio ad absurdum", dealing with the notion of women's "sphere". Huldah J. Stone wrote to her colleagues at the Voice,

"Why", said he, "no man that has any influence, or that is of any use to the cause will take it. Females are out of place while soliciting names to a workingmans paper.
Only think of it girls, how very "unfeminine" and out of place it would have been in this gentleman's eyes, had he lived in Christ's day, for Mary to have gone alone to the sepulchre where none but Jesus slept. No ladies there? Why in all probability he would not have received the news of the glorious resurrection from her lips had it been what his soul was panting to hear; for, O, shameful to relate, a female had dared to presume to know for herself somewhat of that blessed "truth" which was to elevate and make good and happy the race, and had even stepped out of her place (the back kitchen I suppose he meant) so far, as to go out and ascertain whether Christ was indeed risen, and to proclaim the glorious news to her friends and her kindred!53

"Operative", addressing herself to "Spectator", a Lowell doctor who admonished the reformers to use the "power behind the throne" rather than public activism for redress of their grievances, also shows her skills at refutation. Excerpts from one of her letters illustrate this point,

(But) I wish to show how utterly dependent woman is, upon man, for all she is permitted to be, in our present state of society, and how unjust the charge of the guilt of the world upon us. Man forms our customs, our laws, our opinions for us. He forms our customs, by raising a cry against us, if he thinks we overstep our prescribed limits. Woman is thought never to be out of here sphere when at home;...or by toiling in a cotton factory 14 hours a day. But let her step out, plead the cause of right and humanity,...a cry is raised "out of her sphere."

Not so with any man...

Man forms our laws, and by them we must abide, although we have no voice in making them...

Man forms our opinions, for he has the keys of knowledge in his own possession. Our colleges of education are formed expressly for him - and all offices, scientific, as well as political, military and ecclesiastical,
man fills. He directs our education he permits
us to pursue plain, practical science....
I think that I have proved that the
"power behind the throne" is powerless. 54

The women were also adept at refutation by means of introducing
additional evidence in opposition to that used by their adversaries.
Nowhere was this more obvious than in Sarah Bagley's response
to the report of Schouler's committee to the legislature regarding
the decision not to recommend a ten-hour law in 1845. Schouler's
report highlighted the testimony of the operatives called before
his committee. He concluded that while he advocated labor
reform "the remedy is not with us". The Voice printed a list
of resolutions denouncing the committee and its findings soon
after the report was issued. 55 Several months later it published
Bagley's "What was Omitted in The Report", a letter in response
to inquiries regarding the validity of the report. She wrote,

The Chairman of the Committee manifested
a great desire to bring out everything that
would look bright and beautiful upon the
side of the manufactories (sic). Now to
this I do not object - but I do object to
his wish to conceal the deformities of which
we had a right to complain, as he did most
assuredly did make strong efforts. For example,
a gentleman by the name of Herman Abbot,
who worked on the Lawrence Corporation, appeared
as a witness. After he was notified, he
went to the Counting Room and told Mr. Aiken
that he had been notified, and asked him
what he (Mr. Abbot) must do about going down.
"You must go", said Mr. Aiken, "but you must
say as little as possible." We learned this
fact while Mr. Abbot was being examined -
and as leave had been given a number of times
to the witness to ask questions, leave was
obtained to put a question to him, when the
following question was proposed - "Mr. Abbot,
did you have an interview with Mr. Aiken,
after you were notified to come here as a witness?" The Chairman looked daggers at
the enquiry, and told the witness that such
enquiries as it was a wish to implicate his
testimony. The enquirer assured him that
he had no such motives - but he was strenously
refused, until the Committee ruled that the
question be put - and Mr. Abbot answered
affirmatively.56

Contrast is now made to the excerpt regarding Mr. Abbot's
testimony in the "Commonwealth of Massachusetts Report":

Mr. Herman Abbot had worked in the Lawrence
Corporation 13 years. Never heard much complaint
among the girls about the long hours, never
heard the subject spoken of in the mills.
Does not think it would be satisfactory to
the girls to only work ten hours, if their
wages were to be reduced in proportion. Forty-two
girls work in the room with him. The girls
often get back to the gate before the bells
ring.57

Outraged though the operatives were at the committee's
response to their petition, they fought back in a very effective
manner. They resolved that,

The Female Labor Reform Association
deeply deplores the lack of independence,
honesty and humanity in the committee to
whom were referred sundry petitions relative
to the hours of labor - especially in the
chairman of that committee; and as he is
merely a corporation machine, or tool, we
will use our best endeavors and influence
to keep him in the "city of spindles", where
he belongs, and not trouble the Boston folks
with him.58

True to their word, the operatives were instrumental in
the campaign to defeat Schouler in his next election. However,
a high price was paid for that political activism. Schouler
retaliated against Sarah Bagley, and much of her credibility
was lost. The unseated legislator "employed highly modern smear tactics" against Bagley's reputation by linking her with a male reformer of the day whose "personal life was not above reproach." After the September 25, 1846 issue of the Voice "her name disappeared from the masthead of the paper, and no further mention of her was made in the labor reform movement", Foner informs us. She reappeared briefly in the public eye several years later, as the first woman telegraph operator in the United States, but how the remainder of her life was spent is shrouded in mystery.

Again, the logical appeals seem to be typified by the strategy of enlightenment on the part of the rhetors. If the truth were known, justice would prevail. Therefore, Schouler lost his credibility as a human being, and was labelled a "tool" of the "corporation". The rhetors of the LFLRA decried the lack of "humanity" of the part of the committee as well.

**Analysis of Message Organization**

The standard by which message organization is judged is by its logical progression (or lack of it). Examination of the overall plan of the text, and locations of the proofs within, should tell the critic how the rhetor perceived the problem and decided upon the most effective way to deal with it. As previously indicated there seems to be a fair balance between logical and pathetic appeals within the texts; however, ethical appeals based on the morality of the cause appear to be used
nearly to excess. A speech by Sarah Bagley to the NEWA illustrates,

Our cause is a righteous one - one which every philanthropist must, and will take a deeper interest in. It is a reform which will effect not only the Laborer but the whole entire community. Its great and leading object is to give the laborer more time to attend to his or her mental, moral and physical wants - to cultivate and bring out the hidden treasures of the inner being - to subdue the low, the animal nature, the true and the God-like which dwells in all the children of the common Parent. - With this high and holy aim in our view, we shall go on!

To all who are engaged in this great and humane cause with us, whether Associated or working individually, in the boundless field, we would say, be firm, be vigilant, be true to the sympathies and emotions of pity which a God of Infinite Love has implanted in every human soul, and cease not your exertions, until complete success shall have crowned your every laudable effort.62

Continued use of this kind of appeal leads to the conclusion that the rhetors were legitimizing their right publicly to agitate. They saw a bright future for themselves and the community, one that would be realized when the audience was made aware of its import. It also serves the purpose of forging bonds within the Association, as it exhorts members to recognize that they are engaged in God's work, and thus their individual efforts are meaningful. It provides additional evidence that the rhetors believed in the inherent "goodness" of humanity.

The Stylistic Features of the Rhetoric of the LFLRA

It is very difficult to divorce style from the content of the pathetic and ethical appeals. It would appear that
the rhetors had a knowledge and command of the language of the day, and used it well. Vivid imagery, frequent use of metaphors, illustrations from the Bible and other forms of literature show them to be as a group literate and skilled.

They used language for the purpose of identifying the shared values of their audiences in all forms of proof, ethical, pathetic and logical. Their references to such hallowed figures as the "fathers of '76", lend credence to this claim. Conversely, they used strong language for the purpose of labelling the factory system as "evil." For instance, the titles of several articles in the *Voice* clearly reveal their attitudes,

"The Voice of the Sufferers"
"Corporation Tyranny"
"The Evils of Factory Life"
"Some Beauties of Our Factory System - Otherwise, Lowell Slavery"
"Corporation Abuse"

Such a strategy may have been necessitated by the operatives' desire to embed the righteousness of their cause in the minds of their audiences. The society in which the rhetors operated, as may be recalled from the description of the rhetorical situation, was a very religious one. The original fervor inspired by "The Second Great Awakening" was diminishing, but its impact could still be felt. "Evil" was something to be confronted by moral beings, and struck down. If the rhetors could equate the conditions of factory life with this notion, while simultaneously appealing to the humanity of their diverse audiences, then they believed they would be successful in their movement.
Summary of Rhetorical Analysis

It is evident from this analysis that the persuasive strategies utilized by the LFLRA were "traditional" in their form and presentation. Unlike the women of whom Campbell wrote, they adhered to Aristotelian methods. They employed ethical, logical and pathetic proofs, and showed evidence of understanding the notion of effective rhetoric.

Analysis of their texts reveals that they were aware of the constraints engendered by the individual audiences, and adapted their rhetoric to them. They addressed themselves to the problem of the ignorance of the public about the reality of factory life by exposing harsh conditions. They sought to show themselves to the middle-class as moral and virtuous by aligning themselves with "God's work". They established good will by recognizing the "humanity" of their audiences, and appealing to their inherent goodness. Additionally, they identified with other laborers through their appeals for a united working class. That they managed some 4,000 signatures on a petition to the Massachusetts state legislature from the city of Lowell alone, provides some evidence that these particular appeals were effective. That they also got a hearing before that body and an admission that something should be done (just not by the legislators) would seem to indicate at least partial success.

Yet, for all appearances, their cause failed. It was not until 1874 that a Ten-Hour law was passed in Massachusetts.
They faced one constraint that their rhetoric was unable to
deal with, the societal attitudes engendered by the myth of
True Womanhood. Their rhetoric was turned around and used
against them by the legislature when it was decided that inter-
vention was not needed. Dublin tells us,

While the Ten Hour Movement was essentially
a labor struggle, it also reminded the operatives
that they were women workers, as opponents
regularly held their femaleness against them.
The negative report of the 1845 state investigative
committee argued that they should rely on
the good will of their employers, rather
than on legislative intervention. The implication
of this argument was that women could count
on the benevolent paternalism of the mill
owners for protection of their interests.64

Were they destined to fail regardless of the nature of
their rhetoric? In other words, were their actions viewed
as an attack on the psychosocial reality of the world in which
they operated?

Campbell has argued that feminist rhetoric may "meet the
demands of the strictest Aristoleian critic", yet it is "substantively
unique and inevitably radical because (it) attacks the fundamental
values underlying this culture."

Can the same be said of the rhetoric of the LFLRA? For
all purposes, the demand for a ten-hour work day appears to
be a reasonable one. These rhetors were not agitating for
a radical upheaval of antebellum society; they merely wanted
a shortened day in the mills. They chose to address this issue
by peaceful means, relying on rhetoric as opposed to violence
or strikes. When petitioning the legislature, they identified
themselves as "peaceable, industrious and hardworking men and women". Hardly a radical identification, given the Yankee work ethic. Yet, they were not "domestic" and surely they were not "submissive". Could it be that by their very act of speaking out they were viewed as somehow dangerous? Additionally, were they in effect challenging the fundamental values of the culture?

I would offer that the public advocacy for the ten-hour day may not have been as moderate as it first appears, precisely because the advocates were women. To begin with, one of the primary arguments they used for the lessening of hours was that it would allow them to develop themselves morally, physically and intellectually. This appears to be an appeal to the shared valued of the culture, however, was such development necessary (in society's mind) to a woman of the antebellum period?

First, examination is necessary of the desire to develop themselves morally and physically. It has already been established that according to the myth of "True Womanhood", females were inherently moral. Further, as "mothers of the race" their good health was important. Yet, the very act of arguing for the change in the system that would allow the operatives to develop themselves was paradoxical.

Cott tells us that,

A discernable social theory, which supported ...women's domestic value, prevailed at the time in many New England minds. Essentially, a secularization of the evangelical Christian view that society improved as more people
professed faith, it said that individual moral qualities determined (not only measured) social gain or failure. Consequently, the only reliable means of initiating social progress appeared to be by strengthening individual character rather than, for instance, reconstructing institutions.65

While the rhetors of the LFLRA were asking for the opportunity to expand themselves morally, they were doing so by advocating a reconstruction of the system, further they were doing so collectively.

The same paradox is found in the call for physical development, as Berg points out,

The precepts of the woman-belle ideal, which insisted that females were incapable of all arduous labor, refused to recognize the vast numbers of the sex forced to earn a livelihood and inhibited serious attempts to ameliorate the plight of working women.66

Working outside the home, no matter how financially necessary, also endangered the race, doctors argued. Smith-Rosenberg's examination of male physicians attitudes of this period reveals that,

The male medical vision of women's physiology and sexuality served to reinforce a conservative view of women's social and domestic roles. The male medical argument was simple: genitals determined gender, gender determined social role to which economic options were ineluctably associated. In other words, as legitimate roles outside the home developed during the mid- and late nineteenth century, male allopathic physicians began systematically to transpose the Cult of True Womanhood into a medical and scientific dogma. Any violation of the cult - such as demands for education or for employment outside of the home - called forth furious jeremiads from the profession. The nonreproductive woman endangered society - and herself.67
By engaging in paid labor, the women were trapped in a double-bind as far as their argument was concerned. They already represented a threat to the future of society, and society refused to see them as "true women" because of this, although they were expected to live up to the demands of the myth. They shouldn't have been in the workforce in the first place, the precepts of the Cult said, and any physical debilitation that resulted from this activity was due to the individuals' refusal to keep in her sphere.

Evidence of the paradox is located again when examining the operatives' desire to expand intellectually. Women's education was important in the early 19th century, but only insofar as it could be utilized within the confines of the home. As mothers, the women were expected to be able to instruct their children, as females were "the first and most important guardians and instructors of the rising generation".68 This created a dilemma for the operatives, as the purpose of such education was to equip women for the benefits of others, rather than for their own needs. Illustration of this point is found in the advice of male writers,

> Wish not to know what is improper for thee ... (learn) what is fit thou shouldst know ... for those who venture too boldly forth lose themselves in the depth of their own reasonings.69

A more pragmatic approach suggested that "a woman's knowledge of chemistry should extend no further than to the melting of
butter; [and] geography to a thorough acquaintance with every hole and corner in the house."

Knowledge for the sake of knowledge, then, was not a right granted women in the 19th century. Further, as single women operating primarily outside the confines of domesticity, intellectual development was not warranted.

I would conclude then, that what initially appears to have been an argument based on shared social values, was in effect a very radical challenge to those values. This argument, when viewed in relation to the precepts of the myth of True Womanhood, was actually a demand for the expansion of women's sphere. The rhetors or the LFLRA were asking for the time to develop themselves as human beings outside the confines of the home, an option not available to them as females.

Additionally, they confounded this dilemma by choosing to advocate their cause publicly. I believe the case has already been established that there existed strong prohibitions against women speaking in public, even those inspired by the righteousness of their cause and claiming to be doing the work of God. As the Reverend Joseph Titus of Hingham, Massachusetts advised women in 1832

the world concedes to you the honor of exerting an influence, all but divine; but an influence you lose the power to exert, the moment you depart from the sphere and delicacy of your proper character."

Nowhere is the oxymoronic nature of women's public advocacy more apparent than in this statement. Upon concluding analysis
of the activism and the rhetoric of the LFLRA, I would assert that it was, like Campbell's description of modern feminism, "substantively unique by definition", because it attacked the psychosocial reality of the culture in which it operated.

Discussion now turns to concluding remarks and implications.
NOTES - CHAPTER V


2 Thomas Dublin, Women at Work, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 120.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 62.

6 Ibid.

7 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 117.


9 Ibid., p. 75.

10 Ibid., p. 113.


12 Ibid., p. 77.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 78.

15 Ibid., p. 79.


17 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 199.


21 Ibid., p. 199.


23 Ibid., p. 217.

24 Ibid., p. 102.

25 Ibid., p. 145.

26 Ibid., p. 228.

27 Ibid., p. 178.

28 Ibid., see pages 109, 181, 187.

29 Ibid., p. 227.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p. 258.

32 Ibid., p. 222.

33 Ibid., p. 167.

34 Ibid., p. 137.

35 Ibid., p. 182.

36 Ibid., p. 225.

37 Ibid., p. 164.

38 Ibid., p. 94.

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 153.

41 Ibid., p. 137.

42 Ibid., p. 225.

43 Ibid., p. 219.


45 in The Factory Girls, p. 76.

46 Ibid., p. 136.


48 Ibid., see pages 78-92, passim.

49 Ibid., p. 85.

50 O'Connor, Pioneer Women, p. 203.


52 Ibid., p. 228.

53 Ibid., p. 192.

54 Ibid., p. 319.

55 Ibid., p. 243.

56 Ibid., p. 245.

57 Ibid., p. 240.

58 Ibid., p. 243.


62 in The Factory Girls, p. 111

63 Ibid., p. 84, 85, 132, 134, 260.

64 Dublin, Women at Work, p. 125.

65 Cott, The Bonds, p. 96.

66 Berg, The Remembered Gate, p. 96.


68 Cott, The Bonds, p. 118.

69 Berg, The Remembered Gate, p. 104.

70 Ibid.

71 Cott, The Bonds, p. 158.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Indicated in Chapter I was a concern for the value of utilizing traditional tools of criticism in the analysis of women's discourse. In concluding such an analysis, it was discovered that the rhetors of the LFLRA attempted to persuade by adaptation to audience norms and values. They recognized constraints and adjusted their rhetorical strategies to them. Their efforts were not successful. However, as Campbell also determines, such strategies result in the recognition that those values are not shared by women.

Berg asserted that the pervasive nature of the myth of True Womanhood denied that individual women possessed idiosyncratic characteristics. Hence, "duties and privileges never changed because they flowed from an inferior and particular feminine nature." Further, she determined, "this flawed being who lacked individual autonomy, did not qualify to share in the natural rights of humanity." In this case, the rhetors did not qualify for the rights of self-determinism and self-development.

I conclude that as female rhetors, members of the LFLRA created an "intense moral conflict" (to borrow Campbell's term) by appealing to values they did not qualify for, and as such were destined to fail.
By engaging in paid labor, members of the LFLRA violated the sanction of "domesticity." By choosing to address publicly their grievances, they refused to be "submissive." In doing these things, they were also less worthy of the labels "pious" and "pure." There were dire consequences for women who challenged the myth. James Fenimore Cooper wrote,

Alas! that women should ever so mistake their natural means to influence and guide... with a sacrifice of womanly conduct and grace. The person who would draw the sex from the quiet scenes that they so much embellish to mingle in the strifes of the world, who would place them in a station that nature has obviously intended men for is not their real friend.²

And, in an 1839 edition of The Ladies Garland,

Women never aim so suicidal a blow against their own interest as when they try to do away with or revolt against...[the] doctrine of their inferiority. They throw away their props, reject...guidance and guardianship and absolve the lords of creation from that protection which they are so willing to afford.⁴

Had the rhetors of the LFLRA chosen instead to ground their arguments in appeals based on the notion of "True Womanhood", in other words, those values which were ascribed to their gender, they would have driven themselves deeper into the paradox. Hypothetically, their argument could have centered completely around their roles as future mothers, the moral guardians of society. Such a strategy might have proved less radical and/or threatening to the society in which they operated. However, an appeal based on these values might have led the audience to conclude that women needed special protection in the workforce.
Some feminists have argued that "protective" legislation passed in the early part of the 20th century has proved more detrimental than helpful to working women. I would assert that had the LFLRA used such strategies the result would have been further legitimation of the myth, thus lessening the efficacy of future attempts at challenging its confining nature. The argument they chose was their only real hope of expanding the sphere. Their rhetoric, traditional though it was, represented a challenge to the myth.

V. William Balthrop provides insight into society's reaction when an ideology is attacked. He states that ideology is "imbued with the power of the cultural ideal, or the dominating myth."\(^5\) (While he uses different sources, his definition of myth remains consistent with those offered earlier in this study.)

At the first signs of attack, a culture's defense may not be particularly strong, believing that it is based upon truth and that merely stating the truth will eliminate sources of error. The assumption is that expressions of truth based upon cultural ideals will be as obvious to others as to those who accept them. When such statements are either not accepted - or worse yet - disputed, one begins to attribute not error but malevolence to those attacking. ...Escalating and continued attacks raise the importance of ideology still higher with the culture's hierarchy of meaning patterns, since it is the meaning of the culture's correctness that is under question.\(^6\)

If the rhetoric of the LFLRA is seen in this light, as an attack on prevailing ideology, then we may begin to see why it failed. Persuasion based on traditional precepts of rhetorical theory teaches us how to adapt to existing norms,
not create new ones. "Failure of the culture's ideology means that the underlying premise, the dominating myth, must also fail, for it is here that ideology draws its power as a cultural healer", claims Balthrop. The rhetoric of the LFLRA, based as it was upon the paradox of values for which it did not qualify, was not powerful enough to topple the dominant myth.

Continuing in this vein, however, it is possible to see where the rhetors of the LFLRA may have been successful on an entirely different level than their stated goal of a ten-hour day. Balthrop tells us that, "Although both ideology and cultural myths have extraordinary powers of explanation and endurance, they are not immune to change." He describes the process as one similar to the notion of Kuhn's explanation of scientific revolutions,

> It is as if...the existing paradigm is stretched to include an increasing accumulation of data such that it still holds, although no longer in the same shape as before with the same consequences, or that it stretch no further and alternative explanations must be discovered.

Historians such as Berg and Smith-Rosenberg studying reform movements in the antebellum period credit the women members with helping to "chip away" at the ideology of True Womanhood and fostering the beginning of feminism. Smith-Rosenberg finds that the New York Female Moral Reform Society provided its members with a sense of autonomy and solidarity. Berg credits the female benevolent societies of the years between 1800 and 1860 with transforming "the imprecise preceptions of women
throughout America into a compelling female ideology. The same may be true of the LFLRA, as its members clearly saw themselves as active, autonomous beings. Viewed from this perspective, then, perhaps the actions of the LFLRA were not futile, as they aided in the larger cause of creating a new ideology - feminism. They were not powerful enough to do it alone, however, and the tension between "True Womanhood" and feminism remains to this day. The oxymoron, Campbell tells us, is still prevalent in women's discourse.

I would conclude that traditional precepts of rhetorical theory fail to account for the oxymoronic nature of women's rhetoric. Persuasion through the adaptation to existing norms is not sufficient to deal with a rhetoric which exposes "intense moral conflicts."

Implications

Essential to the study of women's discourse, I believe, is recognition of its dual nature. Campbell describes it as the conflict between "personhood and womanhood", and Japp calls it the struggle between the "conciliatory Esther and the defiant Isaiah." Failure to recognize this tension results in incomplete analysis as it informs all of women's public discourse and advocacy.

In order fully to comprehend the nature of women's rhetoric, one must acknowledge the effects of mythical and ideological structures upon it. Forcing women's "substantively unique"
discourse into traditional effects-based categories results in a skewed picture. Similarly, while the situational approach advocated by Bitzer and others allows the critic to identify some of this tension, it does not address the paradoxical nature of women's discourse.

It might be further argued that such standard methods of criticism tell us little about the nature of social movement rhetoric in general. Most movements, the literature tells us, advocate a measure of change within society. This advocacy ranges from radical challenges to the existing ideology to well-tempered requests for consideration of new ideas. Yet, appeals stemming from this desire for change must be made to existing shared values if the rhetoric is to be judged "effective." It may be the case that such "causal" thinking will lead us, as critics, to misjudge the power of the movement's rhetoric. Further, with regard to the situation of female rhetors, appeals based on traditional values of "womanhood" might be judged technically correct by scholars, while leaving the rhetors little measure of success in terms of their advocacy.

I would submit that efforts toward a theory of feminist rhetoric based on the assumption that such activism represents ideological challenges would prove useful to the field. Results of this kind of analysis would not only inform students of women's discourse, but also social movement scholars and those interested in the relationship between communication and culture.
In addition, I believe that a fruitful area for possible research is found in the history of women's labor activities.

The Lowell Female Labor Reform Association represents only the start of this continued social agitation by women, and as indicated in Chapter II, this topic has rarely found its way into the literature.
NOTES - CHAPTER VI


2 Ibid., p. 100.

3 Ibid., p. 101.

4 Ibid.


6 Ibid., p. 344.

7 Ibid., p. 345.

8 Ibid., p. 344.

9 Ibid., p. 345.


11 Berg, The Remembered Gate, p. 265.
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