

WOLFGANG MIEDER

“THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY WOMEN’S SOULS”:
THE PROVERBIAL RHETORIC FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS
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Abstract: While much is known about the proverbial rhetoric of such well-known American male politicians and social reformers as John Adams, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Martin Luther King, and Barack Obama, there has been no such interest in the proverbial speech of female public figures. And yet, even a cursory glance at the letters, speeches, and essays of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) clearly reveals that these two nineteenth-century feminists are any time the equals of the male political giants when it comes to the employment of proverbial language during the fifty years of their unceasing, emotive, and aggressive struggle for women’s rights. The partial justification of referring to Stanton and Anthony as “rhetorical giants” is due to their incredibly effective use and innovative manipulation of proverbial wisdom and proverbial metaphors in the service of feminist rhetoric. Advocating and teaching go hand in hand to a certain degree, and no wonder that Stanton and Anthony often saw themselves in the role of educating women in demanding their self-evident rights as equals of men. Since proverbs among other functions often take on a didactic function, it should thus not be surprising that they would call on them to add generational wisdom to their arguments. Of course, that is not to say that these forward-looking reformers did not also disagree with some of the traditional messages of proverbs! In other words, both Stanton and Anthony made use of proverbial language in whatever way it served their social reform purpose. There is no doubt that proverbs are strategies for dealing with typical situations, and it is thus a natural consequence that for these two feminists they become verbal signs for recurrent social situations that need to be questioned and changed as far as the role of women is concerned. Following some introductory remarks, numerous proverbs and proverbial expressions are discussed in their rhetorical contexts under seven headings: 1. The proverbial partnership of two nineteenth-century feminists; 2. Proverbial language in

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letters of social activism; 3. Folk proverbs in the service of arguments for women's rights; 4. Proverbial quotations in pointed sociopolitical writings; 5. Classical phrases and proverbial quotations in published essays; 6. The proverbial fight for educational and professional justice for women; and 7. The golden rule as a proverbial sign of equality.

Keywords: Susan B. Anthony, anti-proverb, argumentation, Bible, context, didacticism, education, equality, essay, feminism, gender, golden rule, justice, letter, metaphor, politics, quotation, reformer, rhetoric, sign, social activism, speech, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, strategy, wisdom, women, women's rights

While much is known about the proverbial rhetoric of such well-known American male politicians and social reformers as John Adams, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Martin Luther King, and Barack Obama (Mieder 2000, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2010a; Mieder and Bryan 1997), there has been no such interest in the proverbial speech of female public figures. And yet, even a cursory glance at the letters, speeches, and essays of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) clearly reveals that these two nineteenth-century feminists are any time the equals of the male political giants when it comes to the employment of proverbial language during the fifty years of their unceasing, emotive, and aggressive struggle for women's rights. Of course, they have been praised for their masterful use of the multifaceted English language, but their rather obvious reliance on folk speech in general and proverbs and proverbial expressions in particular has with but one exception received no attention by linguists, cultural historians, folklorists, and paremiologists (Mieder 2013). The many biographies and studies about both Stanton and Anthony go into great detail about their fascinating lives and their progressive sociopolitical causes as they relate to women, but for the most part they fail in analyzing how their fight for abolition, temperance, gender equality, and women suffrage in particular was verbalized and proverbialized in such a way that their messages effected social change over time (O'Connor 1954; Lutz 1959; Clarke 1972; Griffith 1984; Barry 1988; Ward 1999; Gornick 2005, Ridarksy and Huth 2012). In other words, it is one thing to scrutinize what these two effective orators and essayists said in the cause of civil and women's

rights, but it is also of significance to analyze how they used what aspects of language to bring their message across. Just as Abigail Adams (1744-1818)—an early American feminist without a political voice—employed proverbs and proverbial phrases to argue for women's rights in her plethora of letters to her family and many friends (Mieder 2005: 56-89), so did Stanton and Anthony also rely on Biblical and folk proverbs to make their relentless case for the equality of men and women before the law and in social interaction.

The neglect of noticing the proverbial nature of Stanton's and Anthony's language is also apparent in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's otherwise superb two-volume study *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (1989a-b) that presents and analyzes nineteenth-century female rhetoric as it was practiced by them and some of their significant contemporaries in the struggle for women's rights. In her informative introduction Campbell points out that "men have an ancient and honorable rhetorical history" dating back to ancient Greece and classical Rome, while "women have no parallel rhetorical history" since "for much of their history women have been prohibited from speaking" especially in the public arena (Campbell 1989a: I, 1). She defines rhetoric as "the study of the means by which symbols can be used to appeal to others, to persuade. The potential for persuasion exists in the shared symbolic and socioeconomic experience of persuaders (rhetors) and audiences [as well as readers]; specific rhetorical acts attempt to exploit that shared experience and channel it in certain directions" (Campbell 1989a: I, 2). And she goes on to state that rhetorical analysis has focused on "the rhetor's skill in selecting and adapting those resources available in language, in cultural values, and in shared experience in order to influence others" (Campbell 1989a: I, 2). This makes perfect sense, but those linguistic resources available to women are exactly the aspects that have not been looked at in detail by scholars interested in the feminist movement over time. To be sure, Campbell even speaks of a "feminine style" of the suffragists, whose "discourse will be personal in tone, relying heavily on personal experience, anecdotes, and other examples. It will tend to be structured inductively (crafts are learned bit by bit, instance by instance, from which generalizations emerge). [...] The goal of such rhetoric in empowerment, a term contemporary feminists have used to refer to the process of persuading listeners [or readers] that

they can act effectively in the world, that they can be agents of change” (Campbell 1989a: I, 13). As will be seen, proverbs as generalizations of human behavior and expressions of social norms will add considerable weight to the “rhetorical creativity” (Campbell 1989a: I, 15) of feminists, and it is surprising that the vast scholarship on Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in particular has not stressed this invaluable aspect of the rhetoric of the women’s rights movement (see Fuss 1989, Waggenspack 1989: 91, Strange 1998: 18, DuBois and Smith 2007). As will be shown, the partial justification of referring to Stanton and Anthony as “rhetorical giants” (Campbell 1989b: 212) is due to their incredibly effective use and innovative manipulation of proverbial wisdom and proverbial metaphors in the service of feminist rhetoric.

Advocating and teaching go hand in hand to a certain degree, and no wonder that Stanton and Anthony often saw themselves in the role of educating women in demanding their self-evident rights as equals of men. Since proverbs among other functions often take on a didactic function, it should thus not be surprising that they would call on them to add generational wisdom to their arguments. Of course, that is not to say that these forward-looking reformers did not also disagree with some of the traditional messages of proverbs! In other words, both Stanton and Anthony made use of proverbial language in whatever way it served their social reform purpose. There is no doubt that “proverbs are strategies for dealing with situations” (Burke 1941: 256), and it is thus a natural consequence that for these two feminists they become verbal signs for recurrent social situations that need to be questioned and changed as far as the role of women is concerned.

They were masterful rhetoricians and employed all registers of the English language, just as that great British orator Winston S. Churchill did in the following century. When Churchill was made an honorary citizen of the United States on April 9, 1963, President John F. Kennedy described Churchill’s rhetorical grandeur with the following words: “In the dark days and darker nights when England stood alone—and most men save Englishmen despaired of England’s life—he mobilized the English language and sent it into battle” (Mieder 1997: 66). The same could be said about these two untiring advocates of women’s rights.

They mobilized the English language to battle social ills, with Susan B. Anthony on two occasions brilliantly describing her fifty years of fighting for the women's cause with the anti-proverb "These are the times that try women's souls" (SBA, Jan. 14, 1856; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 138-139; and SBA, III, 228; June 7, 1876). By simply replacing the word "men" in Thomas Paine's proverbial statement "These are the times that try men's souls" from 1776 with "women" (Shapiro 2006: 576), she was able to encompass the trials and tribulations of half of the population! And Elisabeth Cady Stanton performed a similar linguistic trick, when at the beginning of the women's rights movement she changed the proverb "All men are created equal" to the inclusive "All men and women are created equal" (ECS, I, 78; July 19-20, 1848; see Aron 2008: 89-96). That revolutionary declaration served as the proverbial motto in their dedicated struggle for equality of the sexes, and as will be seen throughout the pages of this book, proverbs and proverbial expressions played a major role in their constant struggle and lasting success.

The proverbial partnership of two nineteenth-century feminists

Once Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony met in 1851, they formed a very close friendship that lasted for five decades until Stanton's death in 1902. They met numerous times at home and at conferences, and they were in constant epistolary contact with each other. With such cooperative and trustworthy spirit informing their work, it should not be surprising that their personal correspondence is a touching testimony to their heartfelt friendship. In their letters to each other they could let their guard down, so to speak. They include honest statements about life's small or large problems, its successes and failures, as well as its joys and sorrows. Both women rely on proverbial expressions in particular to add color and emotion to their epistles to each other. Six years after their first meeting, Elizabeth Cady Stanton makes the following quite cocky comment to her friend, prophesying with two proverbial phrases that they will make many a man shake in his boots or turn over in his grave as they will fight for women's rights for decades to come:

You [Susan B. Anthony] and I [ECS] have a prospect of a good long life[,] we shall not be in our prime before fifty & after that we shall be good for twenty years at

least[.] If we do not make old [Charles] Davies shake in his boots or turn in his grave I am mistaken. (ECS, I, 351-352; Aug. 20, 1857)

In order to advance their women's agenda, it was of utmost importance for them to stay focused, something that Stanton expressed in two sentences to her friend that declare that they should follow the proverb's advice "Let the past be the past" and that they should not waste their proverbial powder on temperance issues because they have much bigger fish to fry as the proverbial phrase has it, and those "fish" represent the fight for women's rights: "Now, Susan [B. Anthony], I do beg of you to let the past be past, and to waste no powder on the Woman's State Temperance Society. We have other and bigger fish to fry" (ECS, June 20, 1853; cited from DuBois 1981: 57; see also O'Connor 1954: 79-83).

Self-doubt as far as the women's rights movement was concerned only seldom enters the picture, even if certain friends appear to disagree with some of their views. The proverb "Time will tell" served Anthony well to put her friend Susan's mind at rest: "All the old friends, with scarce an exception, are sure we are wrong. Only time can tell, but I believe we are right and hence bound to succeed" (SBA, January 1, 1868; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 295). They must think positively and plow ahead, and when things look tough and Stanton appears to be faltering perhaps, then Anthony cites the Bible proverb "Sour grapes will set teeth on edge" (Jeremiah 31:29) and the classical proverb "Nature abhors a vacuum" in order to convince her friend to push ahead, putting her on a bit of a guilt trip in addition to it all by stating that she owes it to herself and her friend:

"Sour Grapes will set teeth on edge" still it seems—
Now you [ECS] [know] *nature abhors a vacuum*—& if
you at head of our National Committee [*don't*] step
boldly to the front at Washington—such a *truckling*
growlers will— *Somebody* surely will be there—& you
owe it to yourself & the cause to be there first— I was
almost going to say—to *me too*—for *our obligations* to
the *movement are one*—that is to *hold the helm* & keep
the ship from running on to shoals & quicksands—
(SBA, II, 449; Sept. 10, 1871)

Susan B. Anthony can get on quite a proverbial role, when she wants to convince Stanton of a certain idea or plan of action. In a letter of July 10, 1872, she first alludes to the classical proverb "The mountain labored and brought forth a mouse" (see Harder 1925-1926) and subsequently cites the two proverbial phrases "To keep the pot boiling" and "To put something in a nutshell" to add some metaphorical expressiveness to her pleading for continued action in the cause:

The mountain has brought forth its mole, and we are left to comfort ourselves with the Philadelphia splinter as best we may, and [Isabella] Hooker and Anthony propose to make it as large as possible. Hooker and self go to Philadelphia at 7 this eve, and in A.M. she to New Haven and I to Rochester.

Now we must keep the pot boiling by every possible means. First by issuing an appeal to the women of the U.S. to take hold of the *promise* of the Republicans and hold them to it, and demand more and more. [...] Now do you [ECS] at once, put in a nut-shell what you think *more* or different. (SBA, II, 516; July 10, 1872)

But action also meant traveling hundreds of miles under difficult circumstances, and here are two telling excerpts of letters from 1878 and 1879 by Stanton to Anthony, indicating by the descriptive proverbial comparison "To be (feel) like a squeezed sponge" that she is utterly worn out by her constant traveling and lecturing. Surely her long trips with little sleep and many lectures as well as writing speeches and essays must have taken their toll:

I reached home Saturday night and found a telegram asking for my [sp]eech as the Committee intended to print it. I sat up last night until four [o']clock to copy it and sent off this morning 150 pages of manuscript. I got [so] interested in "National Protection for National Citizens" that the night [s]lipped away and I felt neither tired nor sleepy. But to-day I feel like [a] squeezed sponge and have done nothing. With love, Good-night, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. (ECS, III, 374; 14. Jan. 1878)

I [ESC] have been wandering, wandering ever since we parted; up early and late, sleepy and disgusted with my

profession, as there is not rest from the time the [lecturing] season begins until it ends. Two months more containing sixty-one days still stretch their long length before me. I must pack and unpack my trunk sixty-one times, pull out the black silk trail and don it, curl my hair, and pin on the illusion puffing round my spacious throat, sixty-one more times, rehearse “Our Boys,” “Our Girls,” or “Home Life,” sixty-one times, eat 183 more miserable meals, sleep in cotton sheets with these detestable things called “comforters” (tormentors would be a more fitting name) over me sixty-one more nights, shake hands with sixty-one more committees, smile, look intelligent and interested in every one who approaches me, while I feel like a squeezed sponge, affect a little spring and briskness in my gait on landing in each new town to avoid making an impression that I am seventy, when in reality I feel more like crawling than walking. With her best foot forward, Yours. (ECS, III, 440; March 26, 1879)

Notice, however, that the over-tired Stanton nevertheless closes her letter with a literal interpretation of the proverbial phrase “To put one’s best foot forward”. No matter how worn out, she will march on doing her best for the women’s rights movement.

Of course, both women constantly wish that they could “put their heads together” to get their massive work loads done, but the unmarried Anthony also is perfectly capable to write charming lines regarding love, marriage, and family as she knows them from her friend:

I wish you [ECS] were to be with us also— It is too cruel that you must be settled—fastened—so far away—so that I cant [*sic*] get to you without spending so much time & money— We ought to have our heads together for lots of the work before us now— Love to Maggie & Bob—& Congratulations to Kitt [Henry B. Stanton]— It must be fun to see him petting a lovely little girl!! Well—a fellow is pretty sure to get hit [get married]—at last—even if he does escape for so many years— Lovingly yours[,] *Susan B Anthony* (SBA, V, 500; Nov. 27, 1892)

However, references to work abound, and it is Susan B. Anthony who turns the proverb “You cannot have two bites at (of) a cherry” into its opposite in order to express that she will have to manage her busy schedule somehow. This proverb is no longer very popular, but it gives a wonderful bitter-sweet taste of what Anthony is facing:

Then I have a letter—giving me until *November 20th* to complete the Cyclopeda article—so that to get any time at all to be with you [ECS]—I shall have to make two bites of a cherry— Then there is another home attraction—and that is that the last of September Miss [Frances] Willard & Miss [Anna] Gordon are to bring Lady Henry Somerset—Lady “Isabel”—I like better—to visit me—and I must not miss this chance— (SBA, V, 642; Aug. 19, 1894)

But here is Susan B. Anthony’s last letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, her dear friend of over fifty years, who was to pass away on October 26, 1902. It summarizes one more time their unique and eventful partnership in the cause of women’s rights and their very special friendship:

We little dreamed when we began this contest, optimistic with the hope and buoyancy of youth, that half a century later we would be compelled to leave the finish of the battle to another generation of women. But our hearts are filled with joy to know that they enter upon this task equipped with a college education, with business experience, with the fully admitted right to speak in public—all of which were denied to women fifty years ago. They have practically but one point to gain—the suffrage; we had all. These strong, courageous, capable young women will take our place and complete our work. There is an army of them, where we were but a handful; ancient prejudice has become so softened, public sentiment so liberalized, and women have so thoroughly demonstrated their ability, as to leave not a shadow of doubt that they will carry our cause to victory. (SBA, VI, 451; before Oct. 26, 1902)

Sensing the end of her friend's life, Anthony appears to summarize their joint accomplishments, emphasizing that their "hearts are filled with joy" about their valiant strides toward women's rights. To be sure, woman suffrage had not been reached, but Stanton could rest assured that there was not a proverbial shadow of doubt that the final victory would eventually be won. This final epistle must have meant the world to the dying Elizabeth Cady Stanton, knowing that Susan B. Anthony would carry on the torch with the younger generation of feminists. Unfortunately, she too would not see the nineteenth amendment passed in 1920 that finally gave women the right to vote. It is often referred to as the Susan B. Anthony amendment, but there is also no shadow of doubt that she would have wanted it to carry the names of both yoke-fellows!

Proverbial language in letters of social activism

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony wrote not only numerous letters to each other, but they also corresponded with a multitude of contemporaries, including both women and men and high ranking government employees all the way to the President of the United States. More than their talks and essays they reveal the private lives of the two feminists, as they cover family life, their own anxieties, and, of course, also their constant struggle for women's rights. The epistles are filled with honest feelings, worries, and sociopolitical comments, especially regarding their work for various temperance and suffrage organizations. No matter how insurmountable the obstacles might have appeared, they carried on to make their dream of equal rights for women become a reality. There was nothing that could destroy the optimism of these two feminists.

Somatic phrases and proverbs play a considerable role in Stanton's letters, adding a highly emotional charge to her statements, to wit the following paragraphs that include the phraseologisms "To be bound hand and foot to something", "Two heads are better than one", and "To put one's heads together". It should be noted that in some of these references it is Elizabeth Cady Stanton as mother or grandmother who writes these comments, once again making modern readers wonder how this matriarch handled her incredibly busy life caring for her family and making a way out of no way for women of her time:

Many thanks for the beautiful presents which reached us in safety. I would have responded to your recent letters sooner but the truth is I am bound hand & foot with two undeveloped Hibernians in my kitchen a baby in my arms & four boys all revolving round me as a common centre. (ECS, I, 214; Dec. 6, 1852)

Dear Martha [Coffin Wright],

I have written my answer to cousin G. [Gerrit Smith] but before copying it for the press I should like to take counsel with you & add any good things that you may have thought of. As I am rather larger than you, suppose you come to me instead of my going to you. Come over in the first train some morning this week & we will criticize together. "Two heads are better than one" especially when one head is full of baby clothes & labour pains. I have a month grace still, yours in haste
E.C. Stanton. (ECS, I, 305; Dec. 17, 1855)

How many things you [Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Jr., the daughter of Theodore and Marguerite Stanton] will have to see & learn in this great world. I laugh to think how busy those little hands will be when you commence your investigations of all material things. I shall tell you of the amusing things your Father did when he was a wee fellow. There will be no end to all the nice chats we shall have, when we once put our heads together. Good night my pretty one, with love & kisses from your happy *grandmother*. (ECS, IV, 165; May 3, 1882)

At this point it should be noted that Susan B. Anthony mirrors her friend's use of somatic expressions that help her as well to describe her never-ending work and to vent her frustration over the reluctance of women to work for the goal of obtaining the ballot. Just as Stanton, she utilizes the proverbial phrases "To be bound hand and foot to something" and "To put one's heads together" to add emotive vigor to her statements. In the second passage the somewhat archaic phrase "To make bricks without straw" also appears:

I fairly tremble at that of Mrs [Clara] Colby's having to give up her paper as you [Elizabeth Harbert] had to

yours & I had to mine— And I shall work all I can to prevent the sad fate coming to her—as I would have done to have saved myself—had I known how—and to save you had it not been that I was bound hand & foot—head & heart & purse to Vol. III [of *History of Woman Suffrage*—!! I can't tell you how relieved I feel that it is done— (SBA, IV, 521; Oct. 19, 1886)

Instead of going around echoing one or another class of men, it is time for women to put their heads together and demand to have their opinions counted the same as those of the men who make possible “yellow journalism” and prize fighting. They who wish may waste their time trying to make bricks without straw—to change the conditions of society without votes—I shall go on clamoring for the ballot and trying not to antagonize any man or set of men. Don't you see, if women ever get the right to vote it must be through the consent of not only the moral and decent men of the nation, but also through that of the other kind? Is it not perfectly idiotic for us to be telling the latter class that the first thing we shall do with our ballots will be to knock them out of the enjoyment of their pet pleasures and vices? If you still think it wise to keep on sticking pins into the men whom we are trying to persuade to give women equal power with themselves, you will have to go on doing it. I certainly will not be one of your helpers in that particular line of work. (SBA, December ?, 1897; cited from Harper 1898-1908: II, 924)

As can be seen, nothing could make these women to refrain from expressing their dismay about the vexing opposition of men to equal rights for women. Turning to folk speech, Stanton cites the proverbial expression “To play cat and mouse with someone” and the proverbial comparison “To jump like parched peas on a hot shovel” to formulate a colorful invective:

Our legislative assemblies are simply playing with us [as] a cat does with a mouse. They agree among themselves to give us a good vote to keep us quiet, & they came so close to doing the thing outright in New York recently that two men in hot haste changed their votes at

the last moment. We have had hearings before Congress for eighteen years steadily, good reports good votes, but no action. I am discouraged & disgusted, & feel like making an attack on some new quarter of the enemies domain. Our politicians are calm & complacent under our fire, but the clergy jump round the moment you aim a pop gun at them like parched peas on a hot shovel. (ECS, IV, 504-505; April 27, 1886)

But speaking of the hope for women reaching the ballot box and voting, here are two segments from letters that indicate the pre-occupation with suffrage by Stanton. The first example is of special interest since it uses the proverbial expression "To burn one's bridges" in a positive rather than its traditionally negative connotation. The second text with the proverbial phrase "To shake in one's boots" is a satirical prophecy that men had better watch out in light of the fact that women will come on ever stronger in their demands for equal treatment:

Dear Mrs [Isabella Beecher] Hooker

Well I am glad you have burned all your bridges & feel ready to work with all the daughters of Eve, no matter if some have blundered. I am with you for the last long strong pull until we reach the ballot box. I would like to see your call [to join a suffrage organization] when you get one that suits you *before it goes to print*, because I want to be sure that it is worthy the occasion. (ECS, II, 452; Oct. 15, 1871)

With prayers, & songs treating questions of finance, the inviolable homestead, Labor & Capital & woman's suffrage, we could soon create such a furor as would make these scoffing republicans tremble in their boots. (ECS, II, 478; Feb. 2, 1872)

And to be sure, the suffrage ball is on a roll, as Susan B. Anthony declares proverbially in one of her letters around the same time in 1871. In a letter just a few weeks later, she characterizes opponents as "dead as doornails" (see Barrick 1978) and alludes to the Bible proverb "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:22), while at the same time stressing that she is full of vigor and hope that women will be enfranchised in due time:

How rapidly now the ball rolls on—it will henceforth go by its own momentum—almost— Still, not one of us can be excused from constant & earnest effort to help it forward— But how different the times now—then, ridicule & scorn for the few workers who dared to go forward— *now* honor & where there is genius and attraction in the person—profit and emolument—consequently now the strife on the part of the newly awakened, the enrolled workers—to push their way into prominence before the public—& to take the front seat of the public movement—it is pitiable to see—and yet it tokens well of the nearness of the attainment of our demand— (SBA, II, 399; Jan. 2, 1871)

Mrs. [Mary] Livermore, in her speech here in this city, said: “Some able lawyers have said”—not Victoria C. Woodhull had petitioned, and all Congress and the National Woman Suffrage Committee had chimed in with an amen—“that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments enfranchised women; but she preferred the surer process of education to this short cut. She could afford to wait.” I wish I had the report. I sent it to the Revolution. But all of them are “dead as doornails” to this new and living gospel, and we live fellers must leave them to be buried by the dead. I have never in the whole twenty years’ good fight felt so full of life and hope. (SBA, II, 415; Feb. 4, 1871)

Following this line of thinking, Anthony also relied on the proverb “Three times and out” to marshal women into action for getting people to sign petitions to encourage the federal government to pass the sixteenth amendment. And in yet another letter, she calls on the proverb “In union (there) is strength” to add weight to her argument for a united effort on behalf of women, strengthening her argument even further by the two somatic proverbial phrases “To see eye to eye” and “To stand shoulder to shoulder”:

In three of the most hopeful States of the Union we have marshalled the intelligent, the broad, the just, the generous voters, and seen them out-voted by their opponents three to one, each time. And I now say with the old ad-

age, "three times and out," and appeal to you and the friends everywhere to rally to the work of petitioning Congress for a 16th amendment. Help to roll up at least a million of signatures, that our Representatives and Senators at Washington may see that we Women Suffragists have a respectable constituency in every State, and one that Congressmen may not very long ignore with impunity. (SBA, III, 328; Oct. 14, 1877)

If all "the Suffragists" of all the States could but see eye to eye on this point, and stand shoulder to shoulder against any and every party and politician not fully and unequivocally committed to "Equal Rights for Woman," we should, at once, become a balance of power that could not fail to compel the party of highest intelligence to proclaim Woman Suffrage the chief plank of its platform. "In union there is strength." (SBA, III, 405-406; Aug. 9, 1878)

Major changes would have to be accomplished before this fight would be won, as Stanton had remarked at the beginning of the women's rights movement: "I should be a jewel in an Association for they say I am good natured, generous, & always well & happy. Oh what bliss is yet in store for us. All our talk about womans [*sic*] rights is mere *moonshine*, so long as we are bound by the present social system" (ECS, I, 215; Dec. 6, 1852). Their talk, writings, and actions proved to be no moonshine, as the proverbial phrase would have it. In fact, while the suffrage movement started with the basics of equal rights, somewhat ironically expressed by way of the "a, b, c" phrase, the march progressed slowly but surely into a powerful demand for elevating women out of their bondage: "In petitioning Congress for an act of emancipation [of women], we began with the a, b, c. of human rights, and have thus made ourselves a power of freedom with the people and their representatives" (ECS, I, 519; May 7, 1864). And to indicate that she really meant business, Stanton declares that she could never wash her hands of the emancipation of women. By changing the proverbial phrase "To wash one's hands of something" from the Bible (see Matthew 27:24) into the negative, she declares emphatically that she is in the fight to the end and that there is nothing that would turn her into a Pontius Pilatus!

Anything that is outward, all forms and ceremonies, faiths and symbols, policies and institutions, may be washed away, but that which is of the very being must stand forever. Nothing, nobody could abate the all-absorbing, agonizing interest I feel in the redemption of woman. I could not wash my hands of woman's rights, for they are dyed clear through to the marrow of the bone. (ECS, I, 436; July 12, 1860)

Perhaps not surprisingly, both Stanton and Anthony repeatedly drew on animal metaphors in the form of proverbs, proverbial expressions, and proverbial comparisons to strengthen their arguments against the inhumanity of treating women as second-class citizens or to show that women are perfectly capable to advance their cause by whatever means available to them. The following references may well serve as examples to show how such phraseologisms as “The rats are leaving the sinking ship”, “As secretive as an oyster”, “To play cat and mouse with someone”, and “Every pig will burn its nose in the hot swill” helped them in bringing their points across with accessible folk speech:

I see your [Anna Dickinson] speech is not [in] *The New Republic*—is *not woman*—but only the *black man*—whom, as I told you they would—The republicans *have thrown overboard*— I tell you *Anna rats*—that is *female rats* ought to know enough to leave a sinking ship— I just told this to Mr. Train—he says you ought to write that *stinking ship*—he says with ten minutes talk he could convince you that *woman* is *your* mission. (SBA, II, 114; Nov. 28, 1867)

Who [*sic*] can we trust with anything. I begin to think our only safety is in living like oysters each within a shell of secrecy without human sympathy or confidence. Only think of that item going the rounds of the papers that I said in Maine that I was convinced that all Mrs [Victoria] Woodhull's statements were false. I said no such thing, but I did say the words she put in my mouth were wholly untrue. (ECS, II, 536; Nov. 19, 1872)

Mrs [Elizabeth] Harbert—to day—tells me of her plan to get out her “*New Era*[”]—as a *Quarterly*!! and asks my

opinion—and I have “*sat down*”] on the prop[os]al *heavy*—telling her if any of us had money or brains to invest in the newspaper line—we ought to concentrate both upon the *one paper now in existence*— It does seem a *craze* to start papers— Mrs [Lillie] Blake writes as if she expected me personally to set about working for *The Question*— Well, “every pig will burn its nose in the hot swill.” (SBA, IV, 15-16; March 23, 1887)

But of special interest is what Susan B. Anthony does with the proverbial expression “To be a dog in the manger” that is part of an old fable tradition (Mieder 2011). It is a most fitting animal metaphor for human behavior that far too often is informed by envy, selfishness, and meanness. This figurative phrase is perfectly suited to express the inhumane disregard for the needs of others, and it served Anthony well to vent her frustration about people acting like a dog in the manger. Here are two references that include the phrase, with the first one adding the proverbial expressions “To be (get) between two millstones” and “To throw overboard” for good measure:

I’ll tell you a little *private opinion* of mine— “I think the Bureaus are *real humbugs*”—that is, my dealings with them doesn’t give me much faith— “The dog in the manger” principle—The “rule or ruin” idea is their basis of action— If there were a cooperative Bureau it might greatly help— But as now Boston against both New York & Brooklyn & they against each other—each & all trying to defeat the success of every lecturer in the hands of any but self—viz you see the poor things are ground to powder between the mill stones— I’ll tell you what I’ve done *thrown* each & all overboard—until I see them in brighter light than now—I like my *own self*—*no business management* [*sic*] best— (SBA, II, 389; Dec. 23, 1870)

How I do wish it could be as in the olden time—that the *Ex. Committees* of the state & New England societies would be called together—& we all together study *how* to *press* on the good work— I have made no engagement for Monday the 4th—& if you [Caroline Dall] can see any way to help me to meet some of the *real workers*—

not “*dogs in the manger*” sort of people—I should love to see them— (SBA, III, 273; Nov. 24, 1876)

There were frustrations and obstacles enough, both human and pecuniary. But resignation simply was not an option for either Stanton or Anthony, even though the problem of raising money for the cause appeared insurmountable at times. In this regard, there is a fascinating use of the Biblical proverbial phrase “To adore (worship) the olden calf” (Exodus 32:4) by Stanton. In fact, she calls for a “golden calf” so that there would be money enough to support the ongoing feminist struggle. Upon careful reading of this paragraph, it should also be noted that “the sinews of war” is an allusion to the proverb “Money is the sinews of love and war”. Stanton’s audience would doubtlessly not have missed this mere “kernel” (Norrick 1985: 45) of the proverb.

I think we are making some progress, but it is a sore tax on human patience to be forty years going through this moral wilderness with no one to give us manna, & no pillar of light to lead the way, & no Moses in direct communication with the ruler of the universe[.] But all this could be endured if we only had a golden calf whose ears & tail & legs could be thrown into the United states [*sic*] mint by piecemeal to supply us with the sinews of war. But alas on the distant horizon we see no coming calf, to say nothing of rich women who will share their abundance with us instead of giving bequests to Harvard Yale & Princeton, to educate theological striplings for the ministry. (ECS, IV, 147; Jan. 29, 1882)

Despite being plagued by money worries, the two friends moved on, with Anthony frequently comparing their commitment to “herculean labor”, a proverbial phrase from classical mythology. The image of Hercules performing his many seemingly insurmountable tasks is a perfect fit since it implies that the suffragists will succeed with their work just as the strong Hercules did. Here is but one of several references to the “herculean labor”, this time, toward the waning years of their careers, linking the need of finding money to support the incredible work that was done by the early feminists:

I am perfectly willing to bequeath to the young women who are today taking up the suffrage work all of the labor, but I am not willing that they shall have to do the begging to pay for that work, which I have been compelled to do for the last fifty years. I verily believe that more than half of my spiritual, intellectual and physical strength has been expended in the anxiety over getting the money to pay for the Herculean work that has been done in our movement. The strain, of course, has not been so perfectly intense and immense as was your [Jane Stanford] strain while the suit against your estate was pending, but nevertheless it has been so great that I am not willing that the next generation of women shall be compelled to endure it. (SBA, VI, 211; April 25, 1898)

But Anthony never gave up, declaring in one of her letters proverbially: "I shall keep pegging away so long as there is any hope to making ends meet" (SBA, II, 421-422; March 5, 1871). In another letter she simply chose a proverb to declare that the fight must go on: "'Don't give up the Ship'—shall be our motto" (SBA, IV, 318; Dec. 15, 1883), and there is also this one-liner from 1886: "Well—the world jogs on slowly—*too slowly*—for me— Still it jogs!!" (SBA, IV, 495; March 16, 1886). Citing the proverb "Time flies", she had earlier characterized her ceaseless fight for women's right as "How time flies when head, heart & hands are full to brim with work— Who would have believed I should not have written you a line since the Kansas victory" ((SBA, II, 121; Jan. 1, 1868).

Folk proverbs in the service of arguments for women's rights

Both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony delivered innumerable speeches during the fifty years of their vigorous involvement in the women's rights movement. Especially between the years 1869 and 1881 they logged thousands of miles crisscrossing the country on their suffrage mission. They had signed up with various lyceum booking agencies that arranged their popular lecture tours that for twelve years gave them the opportunity to speak before local audiences with their speeches receiving even broader distribution by way of newspaper reports (Banner 1980: 110-111 and 121-124, Waggenpack 1989: 31-32). As Ann D. Gordon signifies with her essay appropriately entitled "Taking

Possession of the Country” (1999), the two women on the lecture circuit were indeed taking a hold of the nation:

No reformers—indeed, no politicians—rivalled the miles logged by Stanton and Anthony as they crisscrossed the country in the decade after 1869 to take their case for woman suffrage to the people. Leaving home in October or November, with trunk, portmanteau, and several lectures ready for the season, they stayed on the road until spring. With their lives centered somewhere in the Midwest, they adapted to the discomforts of strange beds, dirt, sleeping on trains, and schedules that conceded nothing to ill health. When Anthony boarded the Michigan South Railroad one evening in Ohio, “there sat Mrs. Stanton all curled up—gray curls sticking out—fast asleep—.” The travelers talked until the time came to change trains for their next destinations. [...] This was grueling work. As fast as the railroads extended their reach, Stanton and Anthony traveled new lines, reaching California just two years after the transcontinental line opened. Stanton lectured in Texas in 1870, and in 1871 Anthony toured the Pacific Northwest and went into British Columbia. At the termini of rail traffic, they hopped aboard sleighs, boats, stages, and horses to journey farther into the country. They made an enormous sweep across the continent and returned time and again to many towns throughout the decade. (Gordon 1999: 163-164)

The stamina of both women is beyond belief, with Stanton having born seven children to boot. While traveling, they would constantly edit their repertoire of lectures when tiredness would not keep them from working. At the foundation of their struggle lay the call for equal rights for women, an agenda that both women pursued with absolutism that bordered on fanaticism, arguing “that the rights and responsibilities of individual citizenship be granted to women on the same terms that they were granted to men, and [demanding] that state, church, and family adapt to that truth” (Ginzberg 2009: 193). They fought for equal rights by whatever means possible, with powerful words being their most effective weapon. They bombarded their listeners with facts, arguments,

and stories that also included humor, irony, satire, and cynicism. Their oratory could reach eloquent heights but also did not shy away from everyday “plain English and plenty of it” (see Sherr 1995: 132) characterized by their inclusion of folk speech in the form of proverbs and proverbial expressions. In fact, Stanton emphasized this need to use “plain English” in their communications on several occasions (see the index of proverbs and proverbial phrases). This stylistic feature has almost completely been ignored by the considerable scholarship on Stanton and Anthony, even though they frequently employ such designations as adage, axiom, maxim, motto, principle, proverb, saying, etc. to signal their intentional use of proverbial wisdom. Their proverbially informed rhetoric obviously meant something to them, and there is no doubt that it added much colloquial and metaphorical expressiveness to their speeches.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s speech on “Woman’s Rights”, considered by her to be her first full-fledged public speech, was delivered several times in September and October of 1848 after the successful Woman’s Rights Convention held from July 19-20, 1848, at Seneca Falls, New York (see Wellman 2004). It was her manifesto regarding women’s rights, and to be sure, it is replete with proverbial language that set the tone for the dozens of speeches that were to follow. The following paragraphs speak for themselves, but their arguments are most certainly strengthened by the enclosed proverbs and proverbial expressions (here cited for easy identification before Stanton’s statements):

Give an inch, take an ell.

Let us now consider man’s claims to physical superiority. Methinks I hear some say, surely you will not contend for equality here. Yes, we must not give an inch lest you claim an ell, we cannot accord to man even this much and he has no right to claim it until the fact be fully demonstrated, until the physical education of the boy and the girl shall have been the same for many years. If you claim the advantage of size merely, why it may be that under any course of training in ever so perfect a development [*sic*] of the physique in woman, man might still be the larger of the two, tho’ we do not grant even this. (ECS, I, 101; Sept. ?, 1848)

Rights and wrongs.

We, the women of this state have met in convention within the last few months both in Rochester and Seneca Falls to discuss our rights and wrongs. (ECS, I, 103; Sept. ?, 1848)

No just government can be formed without the consent of the governed.

We [women] ourselves are thrust out from all the rights that belong to citizens—it is too grossly insulting to the dignity of woman to be longer quietly submitted to. The right [to vote] is ours, have it we must—use it we will. The pens, the tongues, the fortunes, the indomitable wills of many women are already pledged to secure this right. The great truth that no just government can be formed without the consent of the governed, we shall echo and re-echo in the ears of the unjust judge until by continual coming we shall weary him. (ECS, I, 105; Sept. ?, 1848)

To set the wolf to keep (care for) the sheep (lamb).

In nothing is woman's true happiness consulted, men like to call her an angel—to feed her with what they think sweet food nourishing her vanity, to induce her to believe her organization is so much finer [and] more delicate than theirs, that she is not fitted to struggle with the tempests of public life but needs their care and protection. Care and protection? such as the wolf gives the lamb—such as the eagle the hare he carries to his eyrie [i.e., aerie]. Most cunningly he entraps her and then takes from her all those rights which are dearer to him than life itself, rights which have been baptized in blood and the maintenance of which is even now rocking to their foundations the kingdoms of the old world. (ESC, I, 106; Sept. ?, 1848)

Woman is the weaker vessel. (1 Peter 3:7)

I think a man who under the present state of things has the moral hardihood to take an education at the hands of woman and at such an expense to her, ought as soon as he graduates with all his honours thick upon him take the

first ship for Turkey and there pass his days in earnest efforts to rouse the inmates of the Harems to a true sense of their present debasement and not as is his custom immediately enter our pulpits to tell us of his superiority to us “weaker vessels” his prerogative to command, ours to obey—his duty to preach, ours to keep silence. (ECS, I, 109; Sept. ?, 1848)

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (golden rule). (Matthew 7:12)

Oh! for the generous promptings of the days of chivalry—oh! for the poetry of romantic gallantry,—may they shine on us once more—then may we hope that these pious young men who profess to believe in the golden rule, will clothe and educate themselves and encourage poor weak woman to do the same for herself—or perchance they might conceive the happy thought of reciprocating the benefits so long enjoyed by them and form societies for the education of young women of genius whose talents ought to be rescued from the oblivion of ignorance. (ECS, I, 109; Sept. ?, 1848)

Judge not from appearances.

Many men who are well known for their philanthropy, who hate oppression on a southern plantation, can play the tyrant right well at home. It is a much easier matter to denounce all the crying sins of the day most eloquently too, than to endure for one hour the peevish moanings of a sick child. To know whether a man is truly great and good, you must not judge by his appearance in the great world, but follow him to his home—where all restraints are laid aside—there we see the true man his virtues and his vices too. (ECS, I, 111; Sept. ?, 1848)

To be hen-pecked.

On the other hand we find the so called Hen-pecked Husband, oftentimes [*sic*] a kind generous noble minded man who hates contention and is willing to do anything for peace. He having unwarily caught a Tarter [*sic*] tries to make the best of her. He can think his own thoughts and tell them too when he feels quite sure that she is not

at hand,— he can absent himself from home as much as possible, but he does not feel like a free man. (ECS, I, 111; Sept. ?, 1848)

To pull a string.

There seems now to be a kind of moral stagnation in our midst. Philanthropists have pulled every string. War, slavery, drunkenness [*sic*], licentiousness and gluttony have been dragged naked before the people and all their abominations fully brought to light. Yet with idiotic laugh we hug these monsters to our arms and rush on. Our churches are multiplying on all sides, our Sunday schools and prayer meetings are still kept up, our missionary and tract societies have long laboured and now the labourers begin to faint—they feel they cannot resist this rushing tide of vice, they feel that the battlements of righteousness are weak against the mighty wicked, most are ready to raise the siege. (ECS, I, 114; Sept. ?, 1848)

Body and (or) soul.

To throw to the wind(s).

The earth has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, for woman has never yet stood the equal with man. As with nations so with families. It is the wise mother who has the wise son, and it requires but little thought to decide that as long as the women of this nation remain but half developed in mind and body, so long shall we have a succession of men decrepit in body and soul, so long as your women are mere slaves, you may throw your colleges to the wind, there is no material to work upon, it is in vain to look for silver and gold from mines of copper and brass. (ECS, I, 114; Sept. ?, 1848)

The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. (Exodus 20:5)

How seldom now is the Fathers [*sic*] pride gratified, his fond hopes realized in the budding genius of the son—the wife is degraded—made the mere creature of his caprice and now the foolish son is heaviness to his heart. Truly are the sins of the Fathers visited upon the chil-

dren. God in his wisdom has so linked together the whole human family that any violence done at one end of the chain is felt throughout its length. (ECS, I, 114-115; Sept. ?, 1848)

These twelve folk and Bible proverbs, proverbial expressions and twin formulas appear on twenty-two pages of text (ECS, I, 95-116) and add up to about one phraseological unit per two pages. Anthony's speeches in comparison are less proverbial, but she too relies on metaphorical folk speech, as can be seen from her important speech "Is It a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?" that she delivered on January 16, 1873, at Washington, D.C. In this politically charged speech she cites a number of revolutionary quotations turned proverbs, but, as Stanton did, she also knows how to make effective use of the proverbial expression "To throw to the winds" in the first paragraph of the address:

To throw to the wind(s).

Our democratic-republican government is based on the idea of the natural right of every individual member thereof to a voice and a vote in making and executing the laws. We assert the province of government to be to secure the people in the enjoyment of their inalienable rights. We throw to the winds the old dogma that government can give rights. No one denies that before governments were organized each individual possessed the right to protect his own life, liberty and property. When 100 to 1,000,000 people enter into a free government, they do not barter away their natural rights; they simply pledge themselves to protect each other in the enjoyment of them through prescribed judicial and legislative tribunals. They agree to abandon the methods of brute force in the adjustment of their differences and adopt those of civilization. (SBA, II, 554; January 16, 1873)

All men are created equal.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

No just government can be formed without the consent of the governed.

Nor can you find a word in any of the grand documents left us by the fathers that assumes *for government the*

power to create or confer rights. The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the constitutions of the several states, and the organic laws of the territories, all alike, propose to *protect* the people in the exercise of their God-given rights; not one of them pretends to *bestow* rights.

All men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to *secure these*, governments are instituted among men, deriving their *just powers* from *the consent of the governed*. (SBA, II, 554-555; Jan. 16, 1873)

Taxation without representation is tyranny.

One-half of the people of this nation, to-day, are utterly powerless to blot from the statute-books an *unjust* law, or write there a *new and just one*. The *women*, dissatisfied as they are with *this* form of government that enforces “taxation without representation”—that compels them to obey laws to which they have never given their consent—that imprisons and hangs them without a trial by a jury of their peers—that robs them, in *marriage*, of the custody of their own persons, wages, and children, are—this half of the people—left wholly at the mercy of the other half, in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the declarations of the framers of this government, every one of which was based on the immutable principles of “*equal rights to all*.” (SBA, II, 555; Jan. 16, 1873)

To not give (change, yield) an iota.

Miss Sarah E. Wall, of Worcester, Mass., twenty years ago, took this position [of not paying taxes]. For several years the officers of the law distrained [*sic*] her property and sold it to meet the necessary amount; still she persisted, and would not yield an iota, though every foot of her lands should be struck off under the hammer. And now, for several years the assessor has left her name off the tax-list, and the collector passed her by without a call. (SBA, II, 561; Jan. 16, 1873)

A rose would smell just as sweet by any other name.

There is an old saying that “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” And I submit if the deprivation by law of the right of ownership of one’s own person, wages, property, children; the denial of the right of an individual to sue and be sued in the courts is not a condition of servitude most bitter and absolute, though under the sacred name of marriage. (SBA, II, 571; Jan. 16, 1873)

This speech is also about twenty-two pages long, but it includes only seven phraseologisms or about one per every three pages. This discrepancy between the frequency of proverb use is found throughout the speeches and writings of both women, with Stanton clearly being more proverbial than her friend.

This is not to say that Susan B. Anthony shied away from folk proverbs when they could clearly strengthen an observation or argument. At times they might not immediately be obvious, since she integrates them into the syntax of her sentences, to wit the expansion of the proverb “Money is power” in her description of constant financial woes: “Money being the vital power of all movements—the wood and water of the engine—and, as our work through the past winter has been limited only by the want of it, there is no difficulty in reporting on finance” (SBA, II, 61; May 9, 1867). This free use of supposedly fixed proverbs can also be seen in her break-up of the structure of the proverb “The last straw breaks the camel’s back” in a couple of letters where she replaces the standard “straw” by “ounce” to boot:

How I wish you [Rachel Foster] were made of *iron*—so you couldn’t tire out— I fear all the time—you will put on that *added ounce* [straw]—that breaks even the Camel’s back— You understand *just how* to make agitation—& that is the *secret* of successful work— (SBA, IV, 163; April 5, 1882)

The palm which the University [of Rochester] women sent is flourishing finely. I am glad they selected a palm, because it is a lasting reminder of that day when you [Fannie Bigelow] took me the rounds to get the money and pledges that proved the open sesame [*sic*] to the University. I shall never regret that day’s labor. It was

the added ounce [straw] that broke the camel's back in more senses than one. In the largest sense, the back of the superstition, bigotry, and selfishness that held those old doors shut tight against the women. (SBA, VI, 389; March 8, 1901)

Of course, she also cites proverbs in their traditional wording as she recalls having heard and learned them in her younger years:

I told them, when I arrived there [in Kansas], that I had been told in my youth that two wrongs will not make a right, and Kansas politicians were, to-day, trying to teach their people that two rights would make a wrong. These very men, who would cast their votes for enfranchising the black man, said that enfranchising the woman would be ruinous—that it would kill negro suffrage, and be an unjust thing. They were trying to prove that it would not be politically expedient to vote for woman's suffrage or advocate it in the State. (SBA, II, 106; Nov. 25, 1867)

Again and again Anthony relies on proverbs to argue the point that the women's rights movement must work to get the Congress of the United States to adopt a constitutional amendment. There is no use in working outside of the established political system, and if women were not to pursue this road, then other pressure groups would dominate Congress with their agendas. All of this is splendidly summarized with the proverb "Nature abhors a vacuum" that dates back to classical Latin times:

Our organization is for the purpose of working upon Congress to enfranchise half of the people and it is something we cannot secure in any other way but through Congress, and I believe in continuity. Nature abhors a vacuum and if this National Association deserts Washington some other body will come in and possess Washington and do the work. (SBA, V. 504; Jan. 16, 1893)

With her incredible enthusiasm and optimism for the cause of the right of women to vote, she is simply unwilling to accept setbacks or actual defeat. And folk wisdom like "A word to the

wise is sufficient” and “It is an ill wind that blows nobody good” is of good help in rationalizing political disappointments:

A word to the wise is sufficient. Let every Kansas man who wants the suffrage amendment carried demand full and hearty endorsement of the measure by his political party—be it Democratic, Republican, People's or Prohibition—so that Kansas shall win as did her neighbor state, Colorado. (SBA, V, 608; May 4, 1894)

I [SBA] am not so disappointed in the result with the Constitution Convention as I might be. It is an ill-wind that blows nobody good. This is not a Waterloo, but a Bunker Hill defeat. It only means that we will take a breath, renew and double our forces and renew our attack. Had the Constitution Convention consented to submit the question of woman suffrage to the voters this fall, I doubt if we could have carried our point. The people at large are not educated up to it, and we should have had insufficient time to have enlightened them. (SBA, V, 646; Aug. 22, 1894)

At all times Anthony remained focused on securing the ballot for women, arguing that in a way all women organizations had this right to vote as their ultimate goal. And it is certainly understandable that both Anthony and Stanton tired of the constitutional arguments that were ceaselessly leveled against granting women the right to vote. Thus in 1860 Stanton employed the three proverbial expressions “To sit on the fence”, “To hang like (have) a millstone around one's neck”, and “To sink or swim” in a powerful and satirical paragraph stating that women should free themselves from their subjugation by men (see Campbell 1989a: I, 101):

The Great Father has endowed all his creatures with the necessary powers for self-support, self-defence and protection. We do not ask man to represent us, it is hard enough in times like these for man to carry back-bone enough to represent himself. So long as the mass of men spend most of their time on the fence, not knowing which way to jump, they are surely in no condition to tell us [women] where we had better stand. In pity for

man, we would no longer hang like a millstone round his neck. Undo what man did for us in the dark ages, and strike out all special legislation for us; strike out the name, *woman*, from all your constitutions, and then, with fair sailing, let us sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish together. (ECS, March 20, 1860; cited from Campbell 1989a: I, 183)

Little wonder that a few months later Stanton in a moment of utter frustration turned to the utterly appropriate proverb “A burnt child dreads the fire” to vent her dismay:

I am actually nauseated with the word constitution[.] It is used as a cover for such base fraud & hypocrisy [*sic*]. I remember [Seymour Boughton] Treadwell, witnessed his vain efforts to get up meetings in Boston & have been bored with him by the hour. My soul has literally groaned under constitutional logic so long that I dread the subject as a “burnt child does the fire.” (ECS, I, 471; Dec. 16, 1860)

But here are two more telling examples of how Stanton never tires of finding popular phrases from folk speech to supplement her arguments with ever different metaphors. Her listeners must have been thrilled to hear her utter such proverbial expressions as “To pluck a goose” or proverbs like “Two dogs over one bone seldom agree” since such animal metaphors made her spirited lectures come alive with everyday imagery:

We find everywhere the radical trouble that our legislators do not intelligently attend to their proper work. In theory, their business is to take care of the whole community. In practice, to a great extent, their business is to take care for themselves and their party—terms which to a politician generally mean the same thing. We see, continually, our Congress and our Legislatures slighting the gravest public interests, and devoting themselves to squabbles in which the people is only the goose to be plucked. And the plucking is not the worst the goose has to suffer. What we complain of is, not chiefly that these gentlemen at Washington and Albany and Harrisburg and elsewhere, make us pay so heavily for their Ser-

vices. It is that we get so little in return. (ECS, II, 633; Aug. ?, 1873)

There is no danger that women will corrupt politics or that politics will corrupt them. But when the women vote they will be pretty sure to demand better and cleaner [*sic*] places for voting. Law should be a holy thing and the ballot box the holy of holies. It is claimed that the ballot for women will divide the family, or merely duplicate the voting. But it produces unpleasantness in the family now. Give two dogs a bone and they will fight over it. But give them two bones and there is peace immediately. Woman would not be so bothered and perplexed over the finance question as men are. (ECS, III, 83; May 30, 1874)

And yet, as her friend Anthony, she is not only concerned about women's rights. As a mother, she is especially interested in the proper upbringing of children. Thus, citing the proverb "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rocks the world" as folk wisdom regarding the importance of women in child raising, she wrote:

In common parlance we have much fine-spun theorizing on the exalted office of the mother, her immense influence in moulding the character of her sons; "the hand that rocks the cradle moves the world," etc, but in creeds and codes, in constitutions and Scriptures, in prose and verse, we do not see these lofty paeans recorded or verified in living facts. As a class, women were treated among the Jews as an inferior order of beings, just as they are to-day in all civilized nations. And now, as then, men claim to be guided by the will of God. (ECS, *Woman's Bible*, 1895, I: 102)

Ten years later, Anthony followed suit in a satirical comment during an interview, stressing that mothers do not have absolute control over what becomes of their boys once they leave the cradle, become young men, and come under the influence of misguided males that prove to be bad role models:

What does Grover Cleveland know about “sanctity of the home” and “woman’s sphere,” I should like to know? Why isn’t the woman herself the best judge of what woman’s sphere should be? The men have been trying to tell us for years. We have no desire to vote if the men would do their duty. Why are not the laws enforced in regard to saloons, gambling places and houses of ill repute? The women want a chance to see what they can do in making present laws effective. Mr. Cleveland remarks that the “hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.” That would be all right if you could keep the boys in the cradle always. (SBA, VI, 549; April 25, 1905)

But to return to Stanton and switch from boys to girls, one of her most successful lectures that she delivered many times on her speaking tours was “Our Girls” with plenty of advice for keeping young women in good health. Even though she does not cite the two proverbs “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise” (see Gallacher 1949; Barbour 1974: 12; Mieder 1993: 98-134) and “A healthy mind in a healthy body” directly in the following excerpts from that speech, there can be no doubt that her listeners recognized their wisdom:

The coming girl is to be healthy, wealthy, and wise . She is to hold an equal place with her brother in the world of work, in the colleges, in the state, the church and the home. Her sphere is to be no longer bounded by the prejudices of a dead past, but by her capacity to go wherever she can stand. The coming girl is to be an independent, self-supporting being, not as to-day a helpless victim of fashion, superstition, and absurd conventionalisms. (ECS, III, 489; winter 1880)

The coming girl is to have health. One of the first needs for every girl who is to be trained for some life work, some trade or profession, is good health. As a sound body is the first step towards a sound mind, food, clothes, exercise, all the conditions of daily life, are important in training girls either for high scholarship, or practical work. Hence, girls, in all your gettings get

health, it is the foundation of success in every undertaking. Sick men and women always take sickly views of everything and fail in the very hour they are most needed. One of the essential elements of health is freedom of thought and action, a right to individual life, opinion, ambition. (ECS, III, 492; winter 1880)

But there is a third proverb of great interest in this speech that Stanton identifies as a German proverb but that is not to be found in the standard German proverb dictionaries (see Wander 1867-1880). Obviously Stanton must have heard it from someone, perhaps not a German at all. But it also does not appear in proverb collections of other nationalities. Just the same, it states an incredibly important truth about the subjugation of women throughout history. Of course, typical for Stanton, she points out that this miserable state of affairs will surely change with better educated women ever more gaining on men in all fields of endeavor (the proverb is mentioned in Waggenpack 1989: 79):

An old German proverb says that every girl is born into the world with a stone on her head. This is just as true now as the day it was first uttered. Your creeds, codes, and conventionalisms have indeed fallen with crushing weight on the head of woman in all ages, but nature is mightier than law and custom, and in spite of the stone on her head, behold her to-day close upon the heels of man in the whole world of thought, in art, science, literature and government. (ECS, III, 504; winter 1880)

A Google search revealed one more reference that includes a slight variant of the proverb, once again identifying it as a German proverb. Stanton cited it in an earlier version of her "Our Girls" speech on January 23, 1869, at Sacramento, California, with parts of her lecture being reported three weeks later in the *Sacramento Daily Union*: "'Every woman is born into the world with a stone on her head,' says a German proverb" (February 16, 1869, vol. 36, no. 5582). But again, those are the only two occurrences of this "proverb", and it has yet to be located as such in any collection.

One thing is for certain, whatever cause Stanton might be championing, proverbs as rhetorical metaphors with the wisdom

of generations behind them are bound to come into play. When she expresses her disappointment with the way reconstruction is handled after the Civil War, she quickly adapts the proverb “Charity begins at home” to “Reconstruction begins at home”, and when she presses the state of New York to push for universal suffrage as part of the reconstruction effort the proverb “Example is better than precept” is well chosen to argue for serious action:

Reconstruction [Charity] begins at home. The President [Andrew Johnson] of the United States, in his veto of the District of the Columbia Suffrage bill, says: “It hardly seems consistent with the principles of right and justice for Representatives from States where the colored man is denied the right of suffrage, or holds it on property or educational qualifications, to press on the people of the District an experiment their own constituents have thus far been unwilling to try for themselves.” (ECS, II, 25; Feb. 19, 1867)

Is there anything more rasping to a proud spirit than to be rebuked for short comings by those who are themselves guilty of the grossest violations of right and justice? Does the North consider it absurd for its women to vote and hold office? So views the South her negroes. Does the North consider its women a part of the family to be represented by the white male citizen? So views the South her negroes. Example is better than precept. Would New-York, now that she has the opportunity to amend her own Constitution, take the lead by making herself a genuine Republic, with what a new and added power our representatives could press universal suffrage on the Southern states. The work of this hour is a broader one than the reconstruction of the Rebel States! It is the lifting of the entire nation into higher ideas of right and justice. It is the realization of what the world has never yet seen, a genuine Republic. (ECS, II, 26; Feb. 19, 1867)

These are serious issues, but the main drive for Stanton as for Anthony is women’s suffrage, and whoever joined the cause was advised not to do so half-heartedly since any procrastination or

unnecessary delay would be, proverbially speaking, dangerous to the cause: "The men and women who are dabbling with the suffrage movement for women should be at once therefore and emphatically warned that what they mean logically if not consciously in all they say, is next social equality and next Freedom or in a word Free Love, and if they wish to get out of the boat they should for safety get out now, for delays are dangerous" (ECS, II, 396; c. 1871). In the long run, it is not surprising that Stanton also turned to the fourteenth-century proverb "Might makes right" (Mieder et al. 1992: 410) to characterize men's willful dominance over women. When she used it for the first time, she integrated it syntactically in such a way that the normal structure of the proverb was lost, but her listeners will probably have recognized the proverb. The second time she introduced the proverb by calling it a "principle" with the intent of getting her audience to see the evil of this attitude:

As I read history old and new the subjection of woman may be clearly traced to the same cause that subjugated different races and nations to one another, the law of force, that made might right, and the weak the slaves of the strong. Men mistake all the time their reverence for an ideal womanhood, for a sense of justice towards the actual being, that shares with them the toils of life. Man's love and tenderness to one particular woman for a time is no criterion for his general feeling for the whole sex for all time. The same man that would die for one woman, would make an annual holocaust of others, if his appetites or pecuniary interests required it. Kind husbands and Fathers [*sic*] that would tax every nerve and muscle to the uttermost to give their wives and daughters every luxury, would grind multitudes of women to powder in the world of work for the same purpose. (ECS, II, 626-627; Aug. ?, 1873)

Society at large, based on the principle that might makes right has in a measure excluded women from the profitable industries of the world, and where she has gained a foothold her labor is at a discount. Man occupies the ground and holds the key to the situation. As employer, he plays off the cheap labor of a disfranchised class

against the employee, and thus in a measure undermines his independence, making wife and sister in the world of work the rivals of husband and father. (ECS, V, 366; Feb. 26, 1891)

And finally, befitting an optimistic sociopolitical reformer, there is Stanton's allusion to the proverb "Hope springs eternal" in her remarkable speech on "The Pleasures of Age" on her seventieth birthday on November 12, 1885. Arguing that the hopeful building of proverbial castles in the air is better left to young people (see Gallacher 1963), she maintains that the older generation is justified in being hopeful because of the positive social changes that have taken place:

The young have no youthful memories with which to gild their lives, none of the pleasures of retrospection. Neither has youth a monopoly of the illusions of hope, for that is eternal, to the end we have something still to hope. And here age has the advantage in basing its hopes on something rational and attainable. Instead of building castles in the air we clear off the mortgages from our earthly habitations. Instead of waiting for the winds of good fortune to waft us to elysian fields and heights sublime, we plant and gather our own harvests and climb step by step on ladders of our own making. After many experiences on life's tempestuous seas we learn to use the chart and compass, to take soundings, to measure distances, to shun the dangerous coasts, to prepare for winds and weather, to reef our sails, and when it is wise to stay in safe harbor. From experience we understand the situation, we have a knowledge of human nature, we learn how to control ourselves, to manage children with tenderness, servants with consideration, and our equals with proper respect. Years bring wisdom and charity, pity, rather than criticism, sympathy, rather than condemnation, for the most unfortunate. (ESC, IV, 456-457; Nov. 12, 1885)

Lest it be missed, this statement by the grand lady of women's rights concludes with yet another proverb. "Years bring wisdom" is certainly a truism that fits both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and

Susan B. Anthony as wise champions for women, with their rhetorical use of folk proverbs serving them well to bring their message across to women and men as well.

Proverbial quotations in pointed sociopolitical writings

There is no doubt that the articles and letters to the editor by both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony are less inspired by natural folk speech than their personal letters and speeches. Apparently they felt that the written word needed to be less colloquial and more intellectual for the reading public. This is particularly true for Anthony, who in comparison to Stanton is less proverbial in all of her writings and speeches. This is not to say that their published missives do not include proverbial metaphors, to wit the aggressive use of the proverbial expression "To throw down the glove", the Biblical phrases "Fire and brimstone" (Genesis 19:24, Psalms 11:6), "To be a wolf in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15), and the somatic phrase "To point a finger at someone" by Stanton:

We throw down the glove to any one who will meet us, in fair argument, on the great question of Woman's Rights. Depend upon it, this soon will be the question of the day. All other reforms, however important they may be, cannot so deeply affect the interests of humanity, as this one. Let it therefore be fairly and candidly met. Ridicule will not have any effect on those who seriously feel themselves aggrieved; argument is far better. (ECS, I, 88; July 23, 1848)

Our petitions will be sent to every county in the State, and we hope that they will find at least ten righteous women to circulate them. But should there be any county so benighted that a petition cannot be circulated throughout its length and breadth, giving to every man and woman an opportunity to sign their names, then we pray, not that "God will send down fire and brimstone upon it," but that the "Napoleons" of this movement will flood it with Women's Rights tracts and missionaries. (ESC, I, 288; Dec. 11, 1854)

You who have ridiculed your mothers, wives and sisters since you first began to put pen to paper, talk not of "filial

irreverence.” This is but a beginning, gentlemen. If you do not wish us to paint you wolves, get you into lambs’ clothing as quickly as possible. It is our right, our duty, to condemn what is false and cruel wherever we find it. A Christian charity should make me as merciful towards my enemy as my bosom friend; and righteousness would rebuke sin in either. (ESC, I, 298; Feb. ?, 1855)

Many a man who now wraps the mantle of complacency about himself, and points the slow unwavering finger of scorn at this maligned and persecuted woman, will perchance find her purer, nobler than himself, in that better land where all arts and disguises are removed, and each soul stands revealed in its true character. (ECS, II, 437; Aug. 10, 1871)

To be sure, the women’s struggle had its ups and downs, as can well be seen from two proverbial expressions that Stanton employs in her article on “The Boston Woman’s Suffrage Convention” that appeared on November 12, 1868, in the *Revolution*. There she laments the fact that, proverbially speaking, “like the milkmaid in the fable, our visions of glory were all suddenly dashed to the ground” (ESC, II, 186; Nov. 12, 1868), i.e., they counted their chickens before they were hatched just as the milkmaid did as she thought of the money that she would get for the milk before spilling it all (see Röhrich 1991-1992: II, 1034). But then, just a couple paragraphs further, she is happy to report that at least some “women have seized the bull by the horns, registered their names, gone to the polls and voted” (ESC, II, 186; Nov. 12, 1868). Such proverbial descriptions did not only entertain her readers but their folksy character might well have given them pause to reflect on their colorful message.

And here are two examples from a published letter to the editor by Anthony, employing the proverbial phrase “To put one’s shoulder to the wheel”, an interesting nominalization of “To cut through the red tape”, and an allusion to the Biblical phrase “To see the mote in someone else’s eye and fail to see the beam in one’s own eye. (Matthew 7:3):

Let all, then, come up to New York on the 10th of May,
and let us all put shoulder to the great wheel and push on

to victory now—most emphatically “*Woman’s hour.*” Let there be no laggards—no sticklers for red tapeism—but all stick together. (SBA, II, 316-317; April 7, 1870)

And it is a shame—*it is a crime*—for any of the old or new *public* workers to halt by the way to pick the “*motes*” out of their neighbors’ eyes. Not one of us, of course, but has blundered; but if only we are *each in earnest*, we shall each forgive, in the faith that that other, like ourself, is earnest—*means right*. How any one can stand in the way of a *united national organization* at an hour like this, is wholly inexplicable. (SBA, II, 317; April 7, 1870)

Stanton even used the traditional proverb “A place for everything, and everything in its place” (ESC, I, 172; Sept. ?, 1850; see Taylor 1975: 129-132) as a motto for her article on “Housekeeping”. As would be expected, she offers loads of advice to women, bringing to mind the modern self-help publications that often include didactic proverbs (see Eret 2001; Dolby 2005: 135-146). But here is Stanton’s conclusion on good housekeeping for women of her time:

Poor Barbary [unidentified person]! she accomplished so little and yet she was so tired when night came. I once ventured to say to her, that she might save a great deal of time and many steps if she would have a place for everything. She promptly replied, “I have no time to be orderly.” I saw by her manner, that Barbary was not prepared to take any suggestions, so I pitied her in silence. But to you who read about Barbary, let me say: have one place for every thing, and train your household to put things in their proper places. Then husband, children and servants can all wait on themselves. In an orderly house a child five years old can tell where every thing is. If you would save time and labor cultivate order. (ECS, I, 173-174; Sept. ?, 1850)

The “place”-proverb obviously was known to every reader, assuring an effective communication by way of traditional wisdom.

Classical phrases and proverbial quotations in published essays

Both Stanton and Anthony assumed a much more educated cultural literacy from their readers. Thus Stanton delights to cite proverbs and proverbial expressions that go back to classical times and mythology, as for example the mere allusion to “Nero fiddles while Rome burns” and “Pandora’s box” (see Hirsch et al. 2002: 40 and 211; Mieder 2013a: 139-148):

Why do not you Boston women galvanize Mr [William Lloyd] Garrison into something higher & better than an admirer & adulterer of Abraham [Lincoln] with the foul serpent of slavery coiled up in his bosom. I say [Benjamin Franklin] Butler or [John Charles] Fremont or some man on their platform for the next President & let Abe finish up his jokes in Springfield. We have had enough of “Nero fiddling in Rome” in times like these, when the nation groans in sorrow, & mothers mourn for their first born. (ECS, I, 514-515; April 22, 1864)

The day is breaking; it is something to know that life’s ills are not showered upon us by the Good Father from a kind of Pandora’s box, but that it is His will that joy and peace should be ours. By a knowledge and observance of His laws the road to health and happiness opens before us, and Paradise will be regained on earth. (ECS, II, 352; May 17, 1870)

Susan B. Anthony’s repertoire of proverbial quotations also includes phrases that go back to classical times, notably her predilection towards the proverb “Caesar’s wife must be free from suspicion”. In the first of two references, she only alludes to it, assuming that her readers will make the connection. But in both paragraphs she argues, of course, against the so-called wisdom of the proverb that not only sets up more rigid rules for women but also enables men to control them. In other words, the proverb appears to condone a double moral standard, with the expectations for women’s morality being much higher than for men:

Woman’s subsistence is in the hands of man, and most arbitrarily and unjustly does he exercise his consequent power, making two moral codes: one for himself, with the largest latitude—swearing, chewing, smoking, drink-

ing, gambling, libertinism, all winked at—cash and brains giving him a free pass everywhere; another quite unlike this for woman—she must be immaculate. One hair's breadth deviation, even the touch of the hem of the garment of an *accused* sister, dooms her to the world's scorn. Man demands that his [Caesar's] wife shall be above suspicion. Woman must accept her husband as he is, for she is powerless so long as she eats the bread of dependence. Were man today dependent upon woman for his subsistence, I have no doubt he would very soon find himself compelled to square his life to an entirely new code, not a whit less severe than that to which he now holds her. In moral rectitude, we would not have woman less but man more. (SBA, May ?, 1870; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 385)

We do not want favoritism. What we want is justice. We do not ask that women who commit crimes shall go scot free. The rule is women are punished more surely and more truly for some offenses than men are. You know there are two moral codes, one code for man which allows not only freedom but license in what is called the pet vices, but there is another and a higher code for woman. She must not only be spotless but like Caesar's wife above suspicion. Put the ballot in the hands of woman to-day and you will see that the laws will be executed, and the woman who violates them will be punished equally with the man. She will hold man to as high a moral standard as he now holds her. (SBA, IV, 184-185; Oct. 13, 1882)

But speaking of morality, it is of special interest how Anthony interprets Archimedes' famous utterance "Give me a fulcrum, and I shall move the world" that has also been translated as "Give me but one firm spot on which to stand, and I will move the earth" and exists in additional variants today (Shapiro 2006: 24). The first reference is included in Anthony's major address on "Social Purity" that she delivered on April 12, 1875, at St. Louis. Using Archimedes' claim she argues that if men would only give women the right to vote, they would surely improve society:

She [SBA] protested against women occupying themselves so much in homes for the friendless, asylums, hospitals and other charitable associations. It is women's dependence and subjection that produces the evils which these institutions are established to meet, and it is for emancipation that women should work. If the ballot was in their hands they could easily compel an enforcement of the laws against liquor selling on Sunday, etc. Give woman the ballot for a fulcrum, and she will move the moral world. (SBA, III, 168; April 12, 1875)

The *Repub's know or feel sure* that *nearly every* individual woman of us will do all we can to help them—whether they do, or don't, help us—or *promise* to help us—thus you [Elizabeth Harbert] see, while our women will thus allow themselves to be used by and for the Party—while it *ignores our just claims*—we have no *fulcrum* on which to plant our lever— So we must go on—like the boy—trying, in vain, to lift our movement by the straps of its boots, into political recognition— I see no chance for us—at present— (SBA, III, 475; Oct. 12, 1879)

This second reference is from a letter of October 12, 1879, this time using part of Archimedes' proverbial quotation to stress that women basically lack the political basis to affect social change. However, by adding the proverbial expression "To pull oneself up by one's bootstraps" from folk speech to it (see Zimmer 2005), she emphasizes that women will without doubt continue their struggle for equality.

As would be expected from two brilliant women of the nineteenth century, they are well versed in proverbial quotations from various literary sources, using them with much agility to advance their various messages. Thus Anthony took William Shakespeare's proverbial line "Every inch a king" from his *King Lear* and changed it to "Every inch a woman" to pay a compliment to Prof. Kate Stephens in a letter to her brother Daniel Anthony of May 11, 1883:

But we did make an excursion to Potsdam—a jolly company of us, Mr. and Mrs. [Aaron and Ellen] Sargent and

their gifted daughter, Ella, also the professor of Greek in your Kansas State University at Lawrence, Miss Kate Stephens. I remembered the fact of her appointment four or five years ago, but had never seen her. She is "every inch a woman," dignified, easy, graceful, not a bit pedantic, and yet intelligent on every question, imparting information readily, speaking German like a native Dutchman, and interpreting the rapid utterances of the ever-present guide, for the edification of those of us to whom their jabber was worse than "Greek." (SBA, IV, 233; May 11, 1883)

And Stanton employs Shakespeare's rather non-descript but proverbial "There's the rub" from his *Hamlet* to state that men and above all legislators in England and elsewhere are against enfranchising married women in particular because of not wanting an equal in their homes:

Some of the women in the suffrage movement there [in England] see all this, and have made an active opposition to such half-measures, but the majority are blinded and cajoled by the special pleading of their friends in the House of Commons. Yet it is both pitiful and amusing to see that with all their care to keep the "spinsters" uppermost in the minds of their legislators, that whenever the bill comes up for debate the discussion always turns on the effect the enfranchisement of married women will have on the family. There's the rub. "Men hate," as John Stuart Mill says, "to have a recognized equal at their own fireside." (ECS, IV, 389; Jan. ?, 1885)

But Stanton also quotes from other literature, to wit "Self-preservation is the first law of nature" from John Donne (see his "Biathanatos" 1608; Mieder et al. 1992: 531, Shapiro 2006: 619) and "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow" from Lord Byron (Bartlett 2012: 395):

Now what should we think [all of this is a suppositious case mentioned by ECS] of the common sense of these men, if, in the valley of disfranchisement, they sat singing paeans to "universal" womanhood suffrage, instead of blocking the way by an educational qualification that

would be a real benefit to the voters, as well as to the State, and increase the chances of the men to secure political equality? “As self-preservation is the first law of nature,” they would say, “we must stop this inflowing tide of foreign women, a dead weight against us. Some of our native-born women are in favor of our emancipation, but the foreigners always vote against us.” (ESC, V, 667; Jan. 2, 1895)

Now is the golden time to work. Before another Constitutional Convention is called, see to it, that the public sentiment of this state shall demand suffrage for woman. Remember, “they who would be free must *themselves* strike the blow.” (ECS, I, 390; July 12, 1859; see Lord Byron, “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage” [1812], canto 2, stanza 76)

It might well be possible that Stanton heard “Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow” from her abolitionist friend and women’s rights champion Frederick Douglass, for whom this proverbial quotation of the nineteenth century became a *leitmotif* in his speeches and writings. Here is but his first recorded use of Byron’s original from August 5, 1847:

I [Frederick Douglass] would say to the colored men who have not learned their rights in this matter, that it is your business to make yourselves acquainted with them, “Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.” You must say, we feel this wrong, not only in a political view, but it strikes at our social enjoyment. Let us speak out freely, and as sure as right must triumph over wrong, so surely shall we be heard, and in the end will obtain in this state the political franchise. (cited from Mieder 2001: 229)

Neither Douglass nor Stanton called for violence in their struggle for social reforms, but they certainly want deliberate action in support of various causes.

This brings this discussion to a few statements by Stanton and Anthony that should or have taken on a quotational if not proverbial status. There is first of all Anthony’s “New rights bring new duties” with but one (!) Google hit, and that being the

following passage from a speech to a women's meeting on March 13, 1889, at Leavenworth, Kansas:

When you had no rights, no power to say yea or nay, you had no duty, no responsibility. But from that hour when the legislature conferred upon you rights and power to say yea or nay, your duty and your responsibility began. If there is a city or settlement in the state where the law is not enforced, it is the fault of the women as much as of the men. New rights bring new duties. Not only have you power over the liquor traffic but there are other sinks of iniquity in this city, as there are in every city in the nation and in the world. There are brothels and gambling houses. You have plenty of law but not enough exercise of it. You have the power to shut up every brothel and gambling hall as well as every grogshop. You cannot say it is the duty of the men alone. The women in Kansas must exercise their rights and not wait for the men. (SBA, V, 183; March 13, 1889)

Anthony might well have followed the structure of such proverbs as "New dishes bring new appetites" when she formulated her sententious remark. If it were to be brought to the forefront by way of the mass media, it could well still attain the general distribution and currency of a proverb. It makes perfect sense, it expresses an apparent truth, and it easily could fulfill the requirements of polysituativity, polyfunctionality, and polysemanticity that are part of the definition of proverbs (Krikmann 2009: 15-31; Mieder 2004a: 9 and 132). Sociopolitically speaking, Anthony's "New rights bring new duties" would have a multitude of instances where it would fit perfectly as a statement of a mature reaction to the demands of a democracy based on equal rights.

Turning to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, it can be said that late in her life she began using the statement that "The few have no right to luxuries until the many have the necessities" with variants like "The few have no right to the luxuries of life while the many are denied its necessities" (this latter form yielding 195,000 Google hits). Such varied formulations indicate that Stanton herself was still searching for the "perfect" form, and doubtlessly she would be pleased to know that her socially con-

scious sententious remark has become known but still awaits entry in quotation dictionaries. Due to its complexity, it will not become a folk proverb, but as a quotation it certainly merits to be employed in social arguments. That can be seen from just two paragraphs by Stanton from June 1897, indicating once and for all that she was not only concerned with women's rights, just as Frederick Douglass was not only occupied with African Americans or Martin Luther with civil rights. They all also dealt with the heartbreaking issue of poverty:

The religion of humanity centres [*sic*] the duties of the church in this life, and until the poor are sheltered, fed, and clothed, and are given ample opportunities for education and self-support, the first article in their creed should be, "The few have no right to luxuries until the many have the necessities." Merely to live without hope or joy in the present or future is not life, but a lingering death. Instead of spending so much time and thought over the souls of the multitude and over delusive promises of the joys to come in another life, we should make for them a paradise here. We are not so sure that the next sphere of action differs so widely from this. We may go through many grades before we enjoy "the peace that passeth all understanding" [Philippians 4:7]. If the same laws govern all parts of the universe, and are only improved by the higher development of man himself, we must begin to lay the foundation-stones of the new heaven and the new earth here and now. Equal rights for all is the goal towards which the nations of the earth are struggling, and which sooner or later will be reached. Such will be the triumph of true religion, and such the solution of the problem of just government. (ECS, VI, 148; June ?, 1897)

The first thought that always strikes me in celebrating the Fourth of July is the great work our fathers accomplished in laying the foundation stones of a republic and our duty to see that the principles they enunciated are fully realized. While we glorify their work we must struggle to attain greater heights than they ever reached and thus help the completion of a Government in which

all our citizens shall enjoy equal rights. The extremes of riches and poverty should be known nowhere under our flag. I would that the women of this republic might inscribe on their National banner this motto: "The few have no right to the luxuries of life while the many are denied its necessities." (ECS, VI, 150; June 30, 1897)

And finally then, there is the following paragraph that concludes Stanton's article on "War or Peace. Competition or Co-operation" published in the *Commonwealth* on May 21, 1898. As can be seen, she cites yet another variant of her luxuries vs. necessities sententious remark, she quotes the Bible proverb "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14), and then she concludes her hopeful statement for an improved humanity with the sententious remark "Progress is the victory of a new thought over old superstitions" placed into quotation marks:

The startling ideas of our seers and prophets from [Giuseppe] Mazzini, St. Simon [Claude-Henri de Rouvroy], [Charles] Fourier, Thomas Paine, down to [Henry Charles] Carey, John Stuart Mill, [Edward] Bellamy and Henry George, are now commanding the attention of our wisest thinkers, in all civilized countries. The cooperative idea will remodel political platforms, church creeds, state constitutions, social ethics, and make life worth living for all. Then the few will gladly give up the luxuries of life that the many may enjoy its necessities. When the State inscribes on its banner, "Equal rights to all," and our statute laws and constitutions are based on that idea, we shall have no need of suffrage associations. When the Church inscribes on its banner, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," all other creeds will sink into insignificance. When the masses are well sheltered, fed, clothed and educated, there will be no need of temperance societies, as the vice of intemperance and many other evils are the outgrowth of the despair of poverty. When we substitute co-operation for competition, all our fragmentary reforms will be united in one general movement. "Progress is the victory of a new thought over old superstitions." (ECS, VI, 221; May 21, 1898)

It is doubtful that Stanton is quoting someone here, for to this day there are but eight Google hits that cite Stanton as the source! She might simply have placed the sentence into quotations mark at the end of her article to stress the importance of her generalization. Be that as it may, it has not gained any currency and is therefore not included in dictionaries of quotations. But what is of importance is that Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her friend Susan B. Anthony as well as later champions for human rights like Martin Luther King widened their net of social reforms to include not only certain deprived groups like African Americans or women but also the masses and among them notably the poor. With folk and Bible proverbs as well as proverbial quotations and their own sententious remarks they led the way in “Making a way out of no way” as Martin Luther King summarized it all with a most fitting African American proverb (Mieder 2010a: 171-186). And Susan B. Anthony’s very own “New rights bring new duties” should, of course, also be part of a new world order based on equal rights for all people.

The proverbial fight for educational and professional justice for women

If “all men and women are created equal”, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton proclaimed on July 19-20, 1848, at Seneca Falls, New York, then it follows logically that women deserve equality on all sociopolitical fronts beyond the obvious right to vote as U.S. citizens. First among some of the issues beyond equal suffrage was equal education. Obviously Elizabeth Cady Stanton was extremely well qualified to comment on raising and educating children since she did so with vigorous commitment for her five boys and two girls. Little wonder that she developed two popular lectures simply called “Our Girls” and “Our Boys” that she began to deliver in 1869 and 1875 respectively and which she repeated during her speaking engagements throughout the country (see Waggenpack 1989: 74-75). Regarding the female gender, “she pleaded for a free and independent life for every girl. for clothes that would give her freedom of action, for an education which would enable her to support herself, for an equal opportunity in business and the professions” (Lutz 1940: 194). Regarding young males, she argued that they should be educated “to both embrace feminine as well as masculine virtues and cultivate

practical as well as abstract knowledge” (Strange 1998: 145). As a pair of influential lectures, they struck “at the root of sexism in the socialization and education of young children and portended the deep and abiding concern of twentieth-century feminists with expanding educational opportunities of girls and young women” (Strange 1998: 145). Both lectures “challenged traditional sex-role stereotypes” and “emphasized practical wisdom [and knowledge] over abstract knowledge” (Hogan and Hogan 2003: 423 and 426). Much of the advice given in these lectures is based on the common sense of Stanton as an experienced mother, but that is exactly what touched a nerve among her many listeners made up predominantly of parents in this case. Leaving the “boys” aside at this point, here is a bit of sapiential advice by mother Stanton to “girls” preoccupied with beauty, as it were (see Strange 1998: 134). It is solid advice, of course, but what a shame that in this case she did not cite the proverb “Beauty is only skin deep”:

Remember [you girls] that beauty works from within, it cannot be put on and off like a garment, and it depends far more on the culture of the intellect, the tastes, sentiments, and affections of the soul, on an earnest unselfish life purpose to leave the world better than you find it, than the color of the hair, eyes or complexion. Be kind, noble, generous, magnanimous, be true to yourselves and your friends, and the soft lines of these tender graces and noble virtues, will reveal themselves in the face, in a halo of glory about the head, in a personal atmosphere of goodness, and greatness that none can mistake. To make your beauty lasting when old age with the wrinkles and grey hairs come and the eyes grow dim and the ears heavy, you must cultivate those immortal powers that gradually unfold and grasp the invisible as from day to day the visible ceases to absorb the soul. (ECS, III, 497; winter 1880)

But she also makes use of the Bible proverb “Eat, drink, and be merry” (Ecclesiastes 8:15, Luke 12:19) to stress to the young girls that life is not only fun and games, marriage, and motherhood:

Your life work dear girls is not simply to eat, drink, dress, be merry, be married and be mothers, but to mould yourselves into a perfect womanhood. Choose then those conditions in life that shall best secure a full symmetrical development [*sic*]. We cannot be one thing and look another. There are indelible marks in every face showing the real life within. One cannot lead a narrow, mean, selfish life and hide its traces with dye, cosmetics, paint and balm. Regard yourselves precisely as the artist does his painting or statue, ever stretching forward to some grand ideal. Remember that your daily, hourly lives, every impulse, passion, feeling of your soul, every good action, high resolve and lofty conception of the good and true, are delicate touches here and there gradually rounding out and perfecting in yourselves a true womanhood. Oh! do not mar the pure white canvas or marble statue with dark shadows, coarse lines, and hasty chiseling. (ECS, III, 497; winter 1880)

As has been observed by Lisa Strange, “Stanton’s feminist vision stressed the importance of personal responsibility, complete self-sovereignty and self-sufficiency” (Strange 1998: 209). Twenty years later, she expressed similar ideas in a letter to the editor of the *New York Tribune*, stressing that “modern” women at the turn of the century need to occupy their very own space in society that involves more than her traditional roles of wife and mother. A good education will help women to gain such personal independence:

In the main, woman’s work is identical with man’s; that is, looking at men and women as individuals, differing in tastes, capacities and destinies, and not as two distinct classes. They should have alike, the highest and broadest education, prepared to fill all positions. To circumscribe the sphere of all women to wifehood and motherhood, to home life, to cooking and sewing, is to take a very narrow view of their destiny. Hundreds of women never marry, keep house, take care of children, nor choose nursing as a profession, hence, why fit them only for four places when they already fill four thousand? (ECS, VI, 356; Sept. 3, 1900)

Stanton might well have thought of her best friend when she composed these lines. After all, Susan B. Anthony had remained unmarried by choice—she did have suitors—in order to dedicate her energies to the women's rights movement. As a former teacher, she learned to appreciate the necessity of educating women in all subject matters, including the natural sciences: "When women come to care more for scientific facts—than the myths & superstitions of the past—we shall grow more rapidly than we can imagine now" (SBA, VI, 454; Oct. 28, 1902). Of course, just as her friend Stanton, she also maintained that women should not automatically feel that their only roles in life are wife and motherhood: "She must first be a woman—free, trained, above old ideas and prejudices, and afterwards the wife and mother. The old theory of wife and mother needing only the capacity to cook and scrub is rapidly going to the dark ages" (SBA, VI, 35; Jan. 31, 1896). And surely Stanton spoke for Anthony as well when she called for the best possible education of all the people in the land:

If, as a nation, we hope to celebrate the second centennial of our national life, we must give new thought to thorough education of our whole people. We should demand in our schools and colleges a knowledge of those practical branches of learning that self-government involves. Surely an intelligent understanding of the great principles of Finance, Land Monopoly, Taxes and Tariffs, the relations of Labor and Capital and the laws of Commerce are far more important in a republic than a knowledge of Homer and Virgil, their descriptions of the heroes of a forgotten age, or the speculations of Dante and Milton as to the sufferings of lost souls in the Inferno. The one vital necessity to the success of our experiment of self-government is the education of our people, and in the sciences rather than foreign languages and the classics. (ECS, III, 309-310; May 24, 1877)

This is a rather one-sided and pragmatic approach to education that most assuredly flies in the face of the modern ideal of a liberal education, but the key issue is that both Stanton and Anthony recognized that women needed to be granted equal access to education in order to become self-sufficient individuals ready to

compete with the male part of the population in the many tasks that confronted the American society.

There was work enough to do for men and women alike. They themselves were both educated “work-horses” in the same yoke, steadily moving forward in the service of the women’s rights movement. As the sixty-three-year-old Anthony observed in an interview on February 22, 1883, at Philadelphia before departing on a trip to Europe, “I am in perfect health and intend to occupy my time in the saloon [of the ship] writing and preparing for my future work, for I do not intend to be idle. Although I am going for recreation I shall combine some work with it, and shall probably deliver several addresses and lectures in different European cities before returning to America” (SBA, IV, 223; Feb. 22, 1883). About two years later she said in Pennsylvania, “I don’t know what religion is. I only know what work is, and that is all I can speak on, this side of Jordan. I can then on this morning talk simply of work” (SBA, IV, 421; June 6, 1885). This statement includes a splendid allusion to the proverbial expression “To cross the Jordan” that is a classical euphemism for dying (see Reid 1983). And there is also this short description of her life’s story: “The world is full of work & in so many places at the same time—that I do not [know] which thing to do first” (SBA, V, 642; Aug. 19, 1894) followed by her delightful employment of the folk proverb “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”:

To barely go to Washington and hold a convention, and hurry out of it immediately afterwards, does not and cannot accomplish much. Of course, as all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy and all play and no work makes him a mere toy, so all work before Congress and none in the States, or all work in the States and none before Congress, would result poorly. (SBA, VI, 226; May 27, 1898)

Surely Susan B. Anthony was anything but dull as she pressed her women’s rights agenda forward. Driven by her motto that “Failure is impossible” (Partnow 1992: 842; Sherr 1995), she plowed forward with enthusiastic strength that at times also gave her a chance to let her guard down for enjoyable moments with

family members, friends, and her soul-mate Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Obsessed by work themselves, both Stanton and Anthony had much to say regarding the role of women in the workforce where they traditionally have been treated as second-class citizens. And as the latter explains by way of the negation of the proverb "Father knows best", the proverbial expression "To know where the shoe pinches", and the proverb "The mother is the queen of the home", wives and mothers cannot develop their full potential if husbands continue to play first fiddle at home and in the workplace:

Woman's work commences early and ends late. To her is committed the chief care of the children, laboring more hours than man and gets no credit for anything. The property is supposed to be all earned by the husband, and the woman owned and supported by him too. If woman used the ballot, think you this false condition of things would continue? She must care for the children in almost every regard, and yet they early learn that mother's opinions and authority are worthy of little respect, as "father knows best." (SBA, II, 327; April 15, 1870)

The mother may have toiled over the same old and rickety cook-stove for many years, and repeatedly received a lecture for poor cooking or poor baking, but she must continue on in the same fatiguing and unhappy way for half a score of years more, while the father secures to himself all the modern improvements in machinery wherewith to accomplish his work. She can't see "where the shoe pinches" unless she wears it. (SBA, II, 327-328; April 15, 1870)

You are looking at the matter of sterilizing milk, which is a good thing, and of guiding children at pivotal times in their lives, which is also a good thing. But of all things, mothers need aid to shape the conditions that should surround the child outside as well as inside the home. The mother is said to be the queen of the home, but you all know that she is often the victim of circum-

stances and that she cannot have absolute sway in her own home. (SBA, VI, 426; Feb. 27, 1902)

Clearly mother and father must work together for the common good of the family. So Anthony has it right when she claims that the “sins of the fathers” of the proverb must be changed into the “virtues of the parents” that then can result in children that will grow into responsible and successful adults. For this to happen, wives must become the equals of husbands, and the best way to accomplish this social change is through her “intelligent emancipation”. Only then can she control and advance the development of the children in a proper way, proving that the proverb “Men are what their mothers made them” can actually be interpreted positively:

If the divine law visits the sins of the parents upon the children, equally so does it transmit to them the virtues of the parents. Therefore if it is through woman’s ignorant subjection to man’s appetites and passions that the life current of the race is corrupted, then must it be through her intelligent emancipation that it shall be purified and her children rise up and call her blessed. [...] I am a full and firm believer in the revelation that it is through woman the race is to be redeemed. For this reason I ask for her immediate and unconditional emancipation from all political, industrial, social and religious subjection. It is said, “Men are what their mothers made them,” but I say that to hold mothers responsible for the character of their sons, while denying to them any control over the surroundings of the sons’ lives, is worse than mockery, it is cruelty. Responsibilities grow out of rights and powers. Therefore before mothers can rightfully be held responsible for the vices and crimes, for the general demoralization of society, they must possess all possible rights and powers to control the conditions and circumstances of their own and their children’s lives. (SBA, May 30, 1901; cited from Harper 1898-1908: III, 1232)

This “unconditional emancipation” of women from all types of subjection is something that Anthony preached throughout her

long life, her goal being their total liberation from servitude and the absolute equality with men. To describe this assertion of their individuality as women, she turned to the Bible proverb "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19):

To be esteemed worthy to speak for woman, for the slave, for humanity, is ever grateful to me, and I regret that I can not be with you at your annual gathering to get myself a fresh baptism, a new and deeper faith. I would exhort all women to be discontented with their present condition and to assert their individuality of thought, word and action by the energetic doing of noble deeds. Idle wishes, vain repinings [*sic*], loud-sounding declamations never can bring freedom to any human soul. What woman most needs is a true appreciation of her womanhood, a self-respect which shall scorn to eat the bread of dependence. Whoever consents to live by "the sweat of the brow" of another human being inevitably humiliates and degrades herself. (SBA, Jan. ?, 1859; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 169)

No more dependency or subjection but only independence and equality is the message, but this self-assertion meant, as Stanton and especially Anthony well realized, also a change in the attitude towards work outside of the home. Playing off the proverb "A drowning man will clutch at a straw", Stanton found a fitting metaphor to explain that the newly emancipated women need no longer think that marriage with its pitfalls is their predestined role in life. They certainly should not feel compelled to hold on to a straw offered to them by irresponsible future husbands:

It is said that the 10,000 libertines, lechers [*sic*] and egotists would take a new wife every Christmas if they could legally and reputably rid themselves in season of the old one. [...] [This] objection is based on the idea that woman will always remain the penniless, helpless, resistless victim of every man she meets, that she is to-day. But in the new regime, when she holds her place in the world of work, educated to self-support, with land under her feet and a shelter over her head, the results of her own toil, the social, civil and political equal of the man

by her side, she will not clutch at every offer of marriage, like the drowning man at the floating straw. Though men should remain just what they are, the entire revolution in woman's position now inaugurated forces a new moral code in social life. (ECS, c. 1875; cited from DuBois 1981: 135)

The new position of women in the social order included for Stanton and Anthony also a new understanding of the role women could play in the work force outside of the home. Way too long had women been forced into a subservient corner in the home where their demands of life were reduced to accept the *status quo* that was well expressed by the proverb "Beggars must not be choosers". Quoting this wisdom and also playing off the Bible proverb "There is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), Anthony argues strongly that this must not remain the attitude as ever more women searched for gainful employment:

You remember the old adage, "Beggars must not be choosers;" they must take what they can get or nothing! That is exactly the position of women in the world of work today; they can not choose. If they could, do you for a moment believe they would take the subordinate places and the inferior pay? Nor it is a "new thing under the sun" for the disfranchised, the inferior classes weighed down with wrongs, to declare they "do not want to vote." The rank and file are not philosophers, they are not educated to think for themselves, but simply to accept, unquestioned, whatever comes. (SBA, ca. 1875; cited from Sherr 138)

In fact, Anthony argued strongly for women entering various professions without being discriminated because of their gender. Proverbially speaking, they should not have to run the gauntlet when looking for work, being sent from one place to another and turned down for most jobs. And Anthony understood that this situation would best be changed if more women could advance so far in a given work place that they would be the ones in charge of hiring new employees:

And it is precisely such a gauntlet that every girl who comes to St. Louis, Chicago or New York has to run

when she goes to solicit work in the shops or offices of our great cities. Now, what we must have everywhere is women employers as well as employes [*sic*]. We must have women employers, women superintendents, committees and legislators everywhere, ere a poor girl who is compelled to seek the means of subsistence, shall always find good, noble women. Nay, more than that, we must have women ministers, lawyers and doctors; that wherever women go to seek spiritual or legal counsel they will be sure to find the best and noblest of their own sex to minister to them. (SBA, III, 163; April 12, 1875)

She continued this line of thought by looking into the future, arguing that the proverb "The laborer is worthy of his hire" does not hold for women at the turn of the century since they for the most part would have to be classified as unskilled laborers. She foresaw that this would definitely change in the twentieth century, and yet she would be surprised to learn that well into the second decade of the twenty-first century women are still trying to break through the glass ceilings of some professional hierarchies:

We women must be up and doing. I can hardly sit still when I think of the great work waiting to be done. Above all, women must be in earnest, we must be thorough, and fit ourselves for every emergency; we must be trained, and carefully prepare ourselves for the place we wish to hold in this world. The time is passed when the unskilled laborer is worthy of his hire. More and more does the world demand specialists, and women must rise to her opportunities as never before. I shall not be here to see it, but the twentieth century will see as great a change in the position and progress of woman in the world as has been accomplished in this century, but it will have ceased to cause comment, and will be accepted as a matter of course. There will be nothing in the realm of ethics in which woman will not have her own recognized place, and all political questions, and all the laws which govern us will have a feminine side, for woman and her influence, in making and shaping of affairs, will have to be reckoned with. (SBA, VI, 376; Jan. 1, 1901)

But breaking through glass ceilings is only one side of the employment coin with the other side being the appalling salary gap between the genders for the same work that is also still an issue today. Remarkably so, the ever agitating Anthony was on to this discrepancy as early as October 8, 1869, when she wrote in *The Revolution*: “Join the union, girls, and together say, ‘Equal Pay for Equal Work’” (Dorr 1928: 87; Rees 1995: 146-147; Shapiro 2006: 23). Some thirty years later, with the move of women into the work force having become much more widespread, Anthony returned to her sententious remark turned proverb by then and became—how could it be otherwise!—an outspoken champion of its significant message:

What I have been working for all these years is just this. [...] Equal pay for equal work. There isn't a woman in the sound of my voice, who does not want this justice. There never was one—there never will be one who does not want justice and equality. But they have not yet learned that equal work and equal wages can come only through the political equality, represented by the ballot. (SBA, VI, 155; July 29, 1897)

It is of interest to note that in 1897 Anthony had no choice but to argue that the demand of “Equal pay for equal work” would have no way of becoming law as long as women did not have the right to cast their vote. More than hundred years later the struggle for equal pay for equal work is still going on, but great progress has indeed been made and it behooves modern women to give considerable credit for these advances to Susan B. Anthony in particular.

This cause obviously was dear to Anthony's heart, but it must be remembered that both she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton always mustered up enough energy and will power to take on ever new tasks, and it must not be forgotten that they were also aware of the fact that many sociopolitical problems could best be addressed and hopefully solved by women and men working together as equal partners. As Stanton observes with a fitting quotation from Alfred Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847), it is this supportive partnership that could conquer the work that lay ahead:

Yes, the spheres of man and woman are the same, with different duties according to the capacity of the individual. Woman, like all created things, lives, moves, and has her being obedient to law, exploring with man the mysteries of the universe and speculating on the glories of the hereafter. In the words of Tennyson they must be together

Everywhere

Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummetts dropped for one to sound the abyss
Of science and the secrets of the mind.

The question is no longer the sphere of a whole sex but of each individual. Women are now in the trades and professions, everywhere in the world of work. They have shown their capacity as students in the sciences, their skill as mariners before the mast, their courage as rescuers in lifeboats. They are close on the heels of man in the arts, sciences and literature; in their knowledge and understanding of the vital questions of the hour, and in the every day practical duties of life. Like man, woman's sphere is in the whole universe of matter and mind, to do whatever she can, and thus prove "the intentions of the Creator." (ECS, V, 724; Nov. 12, 1895)

How pleased both Stanton and Anthony would have been to know that there are now also modern proverbs that encapsulate through folk speech what they had fought for. Thus the traditional proverb "A woman's place is in the home" has been countered by the anti-proverb "A woman's place is any place she wants to be" (earliest reference 1918; see Litovkina and Mieder 2006), and modern feminists have coined the proverb "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle" (Mieder 1982; Stibbs 1992: 224; Doyle et al. 2012: 279-280) in 1976 to counteract the many anti-feministic proverbs from earlier times (see Kerschen 1998; Schipper 2003) No doubt, the proverbial fight for women's rights at the workplace is in very good hands and continues to make good progress.

The golden rule as a proverbial sign of equality

Finally, on a more philosophical level, it should not be surprising that Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, just as social reformer before and after them have done, turned to the so-called golden rule which in the Christian faith is found in the New Testament as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew 7:12; see Hertzler 1933-1934, Burrell 1997: 13-27; Templeton 1997: 8-12). It represents the ultimate proverbial law of life that calls for equal and treatment of all people. Already in July of 1848, right at the beginning of the crusade for women’s rights, Stanton and Elizabeth W. McClintock wrote a lengthy letter to the editor of the *Seneca County Courier* in which they accuse “religionists” of having forgotten the golden rule in their support of the unjust treatment of people:

Now, it seems to us, the time has fully come for this much abused book [the Bible] to change hands. Let the people no longer trust to their blind guides, but read and reason for themselves—even though they thus call down on themselves the opprobrious epithet of “infidel,” than which no word in our language is more misunderstood and misapplied. We throw back the charge of infidelity on the religionists of the present day, for though they assert their belief in the Divinity of Christ, they deny, in theory and practice, his Divine commands. Do they not rally around and support all the great sins of this guilty nation? What say they to the golden rule, and the injunction, “Resist not evil”? Why, the self-styled christians of our day have fought in and supported the unjust and cruel Mexican war, and have long held men, women, and children in bondage. (ECS, I, 89; July 23, 1848)

About six years later, Stanton returned to the golden rule in her widely acknowledged address to the Legislature of New York of February 14, 1854. Here “she pointed to the misogyny lurking behind the statutes defining the legal position of married women, and the tone of her speech revealed the intensity of women’s dissatisfaction with their current condition. [...] She linked logic, legal and historical evidence, and the Judeo-Christian tradition to make a case for women’s rights” (Campbell 1989a: I, 94-96). Various commentators have cited the following paragraph from

this speech, stating that by referring to the golden rule and actually citing it *verbatim*, Stanton invoked “God’s *rule of justice (a truth)*” (Waggenpack 1986: 176), that “justice suggested that all women want is the same protection the laws grant men” (Waggenpack 1989: 54), and that “women felt the same love of freedom and had the same ‘clear perception of justice,’ as any man” (Pellauer 1991: 52).

But if, gentlemen [the legislators], you take the ground that the sexes are alike, and, therefore, you are our faithful representatives—then why all these special laws for woman? Would not one code answer for all of like needs and wants? Christ’s golden rule is better than all the special legislation that the ingenuity of man can devise: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” This, men and brethren, is all we ask at your hands. We ask no better laws than those you have made for yourselves. We need no other protection than that which your present laws secure to you. (ECS, I, 254; Feb. 14, 1854)

As stated, scholars are well aware of this important passage arguing for women’s equality under the law by offering the golden rule as authoritative support of this demand. However, they apparently have completely ignored several very informative statements by Stanton in which she returned to the golden rule both as a religious but even more so as a secular law of humanity. Thus she argued vehemently against the misinterpretation of the Bible by the clergy, legislators, and others as an authority that supports such injustices as slavery and the subjugation of women:

“Servants obey your masters” outweighed the Golden Rule with the teachers of the people. When the Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850, the Northern pulpit made haste to teach that it was the duty of Christian men and women to catch “Onesimus” [a slave sent back to his owner by the apostle Paul] wherever they found him, and send him back to the house of bondage. The effort to abolish capital punishment is stoutly resisted by the same class of minds, for the same reason, though not one

text of Scripture can be found in favor of our barbarous system. (ECS, III, 447-448; May 11, 1879)

As one would expect, Susan B. Anthony also turned to the “golden rule”-proverb, and it is her convention speech of May 14, 1863, during the middle of the Civil War that deserves special attention (see Brigance 2005: 2). Accusing the country of having had nothing but war, with the war between slave and slaveholder being one of the worst, she argues that there must be no return to this despicable *status quo* after the war at hand. Above all, slavery must once and for all be eradicated and the Bible proverb “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” must be the guiding principle of a new beginning:

We talk about returning to “the Union as it was” and “the Constitution as it is”—about “restoring our country to peace and prosperity—to the blessed conditions which existed before the war!” I ask you what sort of peace, what sort of prosperity, have we had? Since the first slave ship sailed up the James river with its human cargo and there, on the soil of the Old Dominion, it was sold to the highest bidder, we have had nothing but war. When that pirate captain landed on the shores of Africa and there kidnapped the first stalwart negro and fastened the first manacle, the struggle between that captain and that negro was the commencement of the terrible war in the midst of which we are today. Between the slave and the master there has been war, and war only. This is but a new form of it. No, no; we ask for no return to the old conditions. We ask for something better. We want a Union which is a Union in fact, a Union in spirit, not a sham. By the Constitution as it is, the North has stood pledged to protect slavery in the States where it existed. We have been bound, in case of insurrections, to go to the aid, not of those struggling for liberty but of the oppressors. It was politicians who made this pledge at the beginning, and who have renewed it from year to year. These same men have had control of the churches, the Sabbath-schools and all religious institutions, and the women have been a party in complicity with slavery. They have made the large majority in all the churches

throughout the country and have, without protest, fellowshipped the slaveholder as a Christian; accepted proslavery preaching from their pulpits; suffered the words "slavery a crime" to be expurgated from all the lessons taught their children, in defiance of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." They have meekly accepted whatever morals and religion the selfish interest of politics and trade dictated. (SBA, May 14, 1863; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 228)

This statement echoes the use of the "golden rule"-proverb by her fellow crusaders against slavery. Here is what her friend Frederick Douglass, who cited the golden rule numerous times as an argument against slavery and the ultimate wisdom for equality (Mieder 2001: 95-103 and 184-192; Mieder 2004b: 141-146), said at approximately the same time:

The progress of our nation downward has been rapid as all steps downward are apt to be. 1st. We found the Golden Rule impracticable. 2nd. We found the Declaration of Independence very broadly impracticable. 3rd. We found the Constitution of the United States, requiring that the majority shall rule, is impracticable. 4th. We found that the union was impracticable. The golden rule did not hold the slave tight enough. The Constitution did not hold the slave tight enough. The Declaration of Independence did not hold the slave at all; and the union was a loose affair and altogether impracticable. (May 15, 1863; Blassingame 1985-1992: III, 573; Mieder 2001: 190)

And not a year later, still during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln also turned to the golden rule, attacking in particular the established church of the South for condoning slavery:

When, a year or two ago, those professedly holy men of the South, met in the semblance of prayer and devotion, and, in the name of Him who said "As ye would all men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them" appealed to the christian world to aid them in doing to a whole race of men, as they would have no man do unto themselves, to my thinking, they contemned and insulted God

and His church, far more than did Satan when he tempted the Saviour with the Kingdoms of the earth. (May 30, 1864; Basler 1953: VII, 368; Mieder 2000: 80-81)

One hundred years later, Martin Luther King preached a sermon in which he said that “The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men will do unto others as they will have others do unto themselves [Matthew 7:12]. The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men will love their enemies, bless them that curse them, pray for them that despitefully use them [Matthew 5:44]” (cited from Mieder 2010a: 268). For these social reformers the “gold rule”-proverb serves as a beacon of hope for what the world could be if humankind were to adhere to but this simple law of life.

But to return to Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s reliance on this Bible proverb, here is yet another unique passage with the “golden rule”-proverb where she shows herself as quite the scholar of comparative religion. She is absolutely correct in stating that the world’s religions all have the golden rule in one form or another, as has been shown by Albert Griffin in his *Religious Proverbs: Over 1600 Adages from 18 Faiths Worldwide* (1991: 67-69). Even though there are differences in these faiths, the common golden rule as the supreme moral guidepost should enable people everywhere to live in peace and enjoy their human right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness:

“Every race,” says a recent writer [Octavius Frothingham in his *The Religion of Humanity* (1873)], “above the savage has its Bible. Each of the great religions of mankind has its Bible. The Chinese pay homage to the wise words of Confucius, the Brahmans prize their Vedas, the Buddhists venerate their Pitikas, the Zoroastrians cherish their Avesta, the Scandinavians their Eddas, the Greeks their Oracles and the songs of their bards,” the Christians believe the New Testament to be divinely inspired, the Hebrews of our day accept with equal reverence the Old Testament, and thus all along each nation has had its own idea of God, religion, revelation; and each alike has believed its own ideas the absolute and ultimate. Much as these ‘Bibles’ differ in all that is transient and local, the texture of sentiment, the moral and religious principles are the same, showing a responsive

chord in every human soul, in all ages and latitudes. All Bibles contain something like the decalogue; the 'Golden Rule,' written in the soul of man, has been chanted round the globe by the lips of sages in every tongue and clime. This is enough to assure us that what is permanent in morals and religion can safely bear discussion and the successive shocks of every new discovery and reform. (ECS, III, 456-457; May 11, 1879)

More than a century later, presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama said something quite similar in his remarkable speech "A More Perfect Union" on March 18, 2008, at Philadelphia:

In the end then, what is called for is nothing more, and nothing less, than what all the world's great religions demand—that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Let us be our brother's keeper; Scripture tells us. Let us be our sister's keeper. Let us find that common stake we all have in one another, and let our politics reflect that spirit as well. (March 18, 2008; cited from Mieder 2009: 201; Mieder 2010b)

Complete adherence to the golden rule is by no means a reality in the modern age, and both Stanton and Anthony were well aware of the fact that it represents but an ideal state of humanity that all people can do no more but strive towards. They both did this with their souls and minds, and there is no doubt that their social reform activism was informed to a considerable degree by their effective proverbial rhetoric.

Nota bene: This article represents a condensation of some of the chapters in my book "*All Men and Women Are Created Equal*". *Elizabeth Cady Stanton's and Susan B. Anthony's Proverbial Rhetoric Promoting Women's Rights* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014). My earlier article "'What's Sauce for the Goose is Sauce for the Gander'. The Proverbial Fight for Women's Rights by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony," *Frazeologija v mnogoiazycchnom obshchestve*, ed. Elena Arsenyeva (Kazan': Kazanskii Federal'nyi Universitet, 2013), 21-38, is different from the book and this new article.

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