

Third Stage in Writing Significance Essay 23 March 2016

Working thesis:

The expansion of political and civil equality for women is the most significant and appealing topic for the sample unit being developed by Digital_History because individuals acknowledged it at the time, entire populations could be affected by the changes, and remains relevant to feminism today.

Body Paragraph 1 – first draft

Evidence that political and civil equality is significant and appealing can be found in the writings of feminist advocates during the nineteenth century. Even before 1800, a minority of women and men were demanding equal rights for women in the context of debates during the American and French Revolution and influenced by the language of the Enlightenment. Yet during the nineteenth century, that debate appeared to have intensified as evident in the words of Jeanne Deroin, Juliette Lambert, Lily Braun, and even the Italian fascist, Margherita Sarfatti. Deroin, who was inspired to start a newspaper during the 1848-1849 French Revolution used language that encouraged all French men and women to be allowed to contribute to "the great task of social regeneration." (275) She suggested that women were fulfilling a "sacred function" and essential to the "human race," so they should not be treated as slaves but be given equal rights so they could contribute to society. Juliette Lambert, in her retort to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in 1858, spoke about the future of France being dependent on women being treated with equality. **That women, through their charitable and cooperative spirit, were not negatives, but positives.** (281) Writing forty years later in the German empire, Lily Braun, born into aristocracy but a socialist author, demanded that women be treated as equals in the work place, be paid fair wages, and be given the right to vote. Her demands were phrased in such a way that they give evidence to the significance of what she is saying. She even used the metaphor of battle to inspire women and presumably men to fight for their rights. She wrote, "Women, your maternal duties call you to battle." (288) This powerful battle cry was accompanied with a systematic and logical argument as to why the future of Germany depended upon all women, including the working class, should demand and be given equality. In a very different context, Margherita Sarfatti, who was touring the United States to promote Italian Fascism, argued in a 1933 article that women had a unique political role to play by contributing to the "social order" by virtue of their ability to give birth and raise children. (292) Over several decades there is convincing evidence that equal political and civil rights for women was a significant topic. The evidence is found in word choice such as the language of a battle and in how the women argued that the future of their countries depended upon the equality.

Body Paragraph 2 – first draft

Even opponents to expanding equal civil and political rights to women provide evidence that the subject was significant and appealing. If the selection of documents from *Discovering the Western Past* is representative of trends in point of view, then the words of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Almoth Wright, though published decades apart, testify to intense opposition to equality for women on the basis that women are physically, mentally, and morally inferior to men. Writing in 1858, Pierre Joseph Proudhon, who was a socialist and reformer with three daughters, opposed women getting equality. His reasons, which are offensive by today's standards, lead him to conclude, women "will be fatally and juridically excluded from all political, administrative, doctrinal, industrial governance and from all military action." (278) For him there is no room to negotiate because women cannot

Commented [SLM1]: By now I have engaged in pre-writing and reviewing material in the process, and so this part of the composition came much easier. The writing process also developed in these order presented here:

- wrote a working thesis;
- wrote the two body paragraphs;
- wrote conclusion,
- then the introduction.

Commented [SLM2]: I started writing a paragraph topic sentence, and this working thesis emerged instead.

Commented [LS3]: I am paraphrasing what Lambert wrote: "institutions of mutual help, of guarantees, and of charity." (281) As a writer, I am trying to avoid discussing Proudhon's ideas about women because that is not relevant in this paragraph.

escape their biological makeup. Almroth Wright, a medical doctor in Great Britain, warned in 1913 that if women were given the right to vote, that this would bring down the British empire more quickly than war. He contended that women's moral inferiority to men and their nurturing manner would mean "the decline of the military spirit and loss of prestige". (290) This is a powerful indictment against women being given the right to vote. What language would he use if women were given other rights and equal access to education? While it may be difficult to generalize from the more limited evidence from the opponents of expanding equal rights, if Wright predicted the end of the British empire if women's suffrage was granted, then the evidence suggests this topic was incredibly significant.

Conclusion – first draft

In conclusion, there are several examples dating from the late 1840s through the 1930s that suggest the subject of the expansion of political and civil rights to women was perceived as significant. That evidence originates from advocates such as Jeanne Deroin, Juliette Lambert, Lily Braun, and even the Italian fascist, Margherita Sarfatti, and from opponents such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Almroth Wright. The topic is also appealing because women's equality remains a subject of discussion in today's political and social world. During the twentieth century, European women gained the right to vote, they have gained access to the political arena and the business world and they have access to education. Whether or not they have gained full equality and equal pay, or whether or not they encounter glass ceilings in the work place is open to debate, but certainly this topic would give readers of Digital_History a historical context to contemplate this part of the history of Western Civilization.

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Introduction – first draft

The first online unit that Digital_History should create for its audience is the debate about the expansion of political and civil rights to women during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. They could call the unit, "Motherhood, Nationalism, and Politics." The topic is appealing because it remains relevant today as women in the west and throughout the world still seek equal treatment even if they may have been granted equal rights. In addition, the topic will appeal to audiences interested in seeing how the ideas of the Enlightenment, and the American and French Revolutions about equality, fraternity, and liberty were not always fulfilled in practice. Expansion of political and civil rights was also recognized as significant by those who contributed to the debate. As women gained the right to vote in the early twentieth century (e.g. Germany in 1918, United States in 1920, Great Britain in 1928, and France in 1944), one of their demands was achieved. Therefore, the expansion of political and civil equality for women is the most significant and appealing topic for the sample unit being developed by Digital_History because individuals acknowledged it at the time including French, German and British authors, some of whom advocated for expansion, and a few who were opposed, entire populations could be affected by the changes, and remains relevant to feminism today.

Commented [LS5]: I wrote this last. I did copy and paste my working thesis down here to remind myself where I had planned to go. I will need to revisit my working thesis.

Commented [LS6]: At this point in the composing, I am debating about whether or not to name the authors whom I will offer as evidence or use the more generic reference to advocates and opponents.

Commented [LS7]: I may have to revise my thesis because I am leading the reader to believe that I am going to write about these topics, and I am not. I will only be providing evidence that individuals saw the topic as significant at the time. I'm going to assume that the reader has the imagination that everyone could be affected and it impacts feminism today.