

Reminder of the assignment scenario:

You have been hired as a historical consultant by Digital_History, a start-up web company, that wants to create learning units about Western Civilization. The challenge? They want to lure in investors with a sample unit. Upon what topic should they focus their energies? As one of the company's historical consultants, you have been approached to make a recommendation. To persuade the company director, Dr. Ima Goody, you need to demonstrate that you understand the events, why the topic is appealing, and why you believe it is the most significant out of those listed (consult "Doing History" for a refresher about significance and historians' point-of-view).

Out of the following topics occurring from the 1600-1800s, which one is so significant, that it should become the chapter that is developed to win over investors?

The topics under consideration thus far are:

- Witchcraft
- The Mind of an Age: Science and Religion Confront Eighteenth-Century Natural Disasters (this could include the so-called "Age of Reason" or a combination of the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment)
- Staging Absolutism
- The French Revolution and the expansion of Human Rights
- Labor Old and New
- Imperializers and the Imperialized

Please note: The topic that I am selecting to demonstrate is not on this list.

Best Evidence (without ignoring contrary evidence) to demonstrate that the Expansion of Political Rights to women is sooooo significant that Digital_History should make this topic the first unit to develop.

Foundational Knowledge that is Crucial

Discovering the Western Past, 7th edition:

Extending rights to women were raised during the American and French Revolutions. (p. 267-268)

Napoleon's Civil Code of 1804 restricted married women's rights and made them subordinate to men.

Single women may have had more rights in theory, but increasingly restricted with legislation during the nineteenth-century (p. 269)

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (August 1789) declared that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good."

During the French Revolution, Olympe de Gouges challenged revolutionaries and demanded that the Declaration be extended to women in September 1791. As Lynn Hunt points out, "De Gouges went to the guillotine in 1793, condemned as a counterrevolutionary and denounced as an 'unnatural' woman."

(Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*, 124)

The periodic debates about the expansion of political rights to women connected motherhood, nationalism and duty. Advocates argued that their roles as mothers demanded that they be given political rights; opponents argued that being mother took much time, but also jumped to the conclusion that women were emotionally, intellectually, morally, and physically inferior to men, and so they should not have equal rights. (270)



In making the notes below, I had to remind myself that the goal was NOT to summarize everything that the authors said, but to look for evidence that they saw motherhood and political rights as significant without ignoring evidence that might undermine my goals.

Body Paragraph 1:

In *Discovering the Western Past*, several women and one man between 1848-1941 argued that the expansion of rights to women was crucial to the future of the nation.

Jeanne Deroin (1805-1894) in speeches during the French Revolution of 1848-1849 argued that women must and could contribute to "the great task of social regeneration." (275) She even argued that women, who are raising the sons of France, "cannot be slaves" that is not be given equal rights (275) She also argued that the unique ability of women giving birth was a "sacred function" and essential to the "human race". No progress until women are given equal rights. (276)

Juliette Lambert (1836-1936), in a retort to Pierre Poudhon, argued that what the political age needed was the woman's touch, her unique strength and "love of humanity". (281) The future of France depended upon "institutions of mutual help, of guarantees, and of charity." These were qualities that Lambert suggests women possess which are positives, not negatives. (281)

Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), an Italian nationalist who wanted to create an Italian nation based on the principles of democracy, published his ideas in 1860 about the family being "sacred" to the future of the Italian nation. And that women should be "partner and companion ... equal in your civil and political life." (283)

Anna Maria Mozzoni (1837-1920) called for a new civil code that gave Italian women equality. She is making a sound argument in favor of political rights because women are already contributing to the public life in Italy. She makes an argument for equality, but her rhetoric is not as impressive as other authors. (284-285) [I don't think this evidence undermines my interpretation, but may not be the best evidence.]

Lily Braun (1865-1916) was writing for a socialist German newspaper. By the time that she is writing, the German Empire has been in existence for a couple of decades. Her perspective is original as she is from the hobbles class but advocated for working class women to be extended many rights. To her, the future of Germany is in the children that they raise. Since so many of those German children come from the working class, they need better working conditions, better education, right to vote, and maternity leave. (286-287) She declares, as she draws to a close, "Clear the road for our children!" should be the slogan that unites all their demands. (287) Braun clearly felt passionate about the cause of women by using metaphors of battle, "Women, your maternal duties call you to battle." (288)

Nelly Roussel (1878-1922) wrote in 1904 on behalf of French women and used the battlefield metaphor as well. She is a contemporary of Braun. Does this demonstrate that the women's movement has become more aggressive, more combative, more intense, which suggests significance? Roussel spoke, "But on our own battlefield, we mothers find no glory to be garnered." Roussel is using battlefield metaphor to suggest the intensity of her goals. She rebuked Frenchmen for wanting them to raise sons as soldiers, but not giving women the rights of citizenship.

Margherita Sarfatti (1880-1961) was an Italian fascist who supported Mussolini's reign. In 1933, she wrote an article for the New York Herald Tribune Sunday Magazine to win over support for Italian Fascism. Though in a dictatorship, and so the right to vote might not be relevant, she emphasizes the essential, significant role that women play as mothers and the bedrock of the family. Sarfatti used language "the religion of family life" and that a mystical bond between generations united all Italians. She too references the future of Italy rests on women giving birth and raising children contributes to the "social order" with "political result[s]". Women make sacrifices as mothers but in return the Italian nation greatly appreciates. (292)

Vérine (a.k.a. Marguerite Lebrun) wrote in 1941, in the context of the German defeat of France. She supported the Vichy (fascist) regime of Marshal Petain. Writing at a time of "defeat," she appears to look for redemption in "God-Work-Family-Fatherland". Women can "sacrifice" for the "Fatherland" and contribute by "protect[ing] public health". (293) What is more women will contribute to resolving the crisis facing France by raising good men. (293) Good men, in her point of view, would be fascists.

Commented [LS1]: Might want to turn this into two or three body paragraphs to make it easier for the reader to follow. Working memory can only hold so much information at any given time!

Commented [LS2]: This could be language that I use in my paragraph topic sentence.

Body Paragraph 2

Even the opponents to the expansion of rights to women leave the impression that the topic is of great significance.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) was a French socialist and reformer with three daughters, and he was opposed to women getting equal rights because they were allegedly inferior physically, mentally, and morally. In this speech, he was exploring what women's contributions to the French republic should be. He essentially argues that women "will be fatally and juridically excluded from all political, administrative, doctrinal, industrial governance and from all military action." He arrived at this conclusion by using scientific language to claim that women were physically inferior. (278) What I don't know is how serious his ideas were received. If I trust the editors of *Discovering the Western Past* then Proudhon represents the mainstream.

Almroth E. Wright (1861-1947) published his *Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage* in 1913. His ideas are not much different from Proudhon though they are writing several decades apart. He argued that Great Britain's decline would be guaranteed if women gained the right to vote, "And nothing could in the end more certainly lead to war and revolt than the decline of the military spirit and loss of prestige which would inevitably follow if man admitted woman into political co-partnership...." WOW! British decline guaranteed! Those are powerful words. (290) He then proceeds to elaborate upon women's inadequacies to justify his argument. (291)



Commented [LS3]: Well this might become body paragraph 3. I need to consider the length of my body paragraph 1 and whether or not I will overwhelm my reader if I make the paragraph too long. BTW, I do not believe paragraph length should be dictated by some magic number arrived at arbitrarily in a high school English class.

Commented [LS4]: This sentence is starting to sound like a paragraph topic sentence.