



Man Cannot Speak for Her: Volume II; Key Texts of the Early Feminists

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell

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The right to cast a ballot from a feminine hand occupied the attention and efforts of hundreds of women for more than a century in the US. In these two volumes, Campbell provides a basic understanding of two processes: the development of the rhetoric used by the women who argued for equal rights, and the constraints and sanctions applied to those women who affronted the norms of society's expectation that true women were seldom seen and never spoke in public. The first volume lays the foundation for the analysis of rhetorical style and content by its fine introduction and by a succession of chapters organized chronologically, with biographical sketches and excerpts from speeches. It includes a chapter specifically addressed to issues of sex, race, and class faced by African American women. Volume 2 is not a continuation of the first, but contains the texts on which the first volume is based. The biographical and historical sections are gracefully written and well organized, but the greatest value of the set lies in the actual words of the feminist leaders and Campbell's skillful analyses. Every women's studies program must have this available.

Choice

This collection of key speeches by national leaders provides a vivid and accurate documentary history of American woman's rights and suffrage movement from its beginnings in the 1840s through 1920. Offering many rare and previously unpublished selections, it brings together the work of fifteen notable reformers who played central roles in shaping and directing the movement and in articulating the diverse issues and viewpoints that characterized it. The discourses reveal the strategies used by early woman's rights advocates in adapting their appeals to varied audiences, responding to opposition, and advancing their cause in the political arena.

Each of the twenty-six selections is annotated to supply historical information that is likely to be unfamiliar to contemporary readers. The earliest speeches deal primarily with anti-slavery platforms and the repressive patriarchal laws that gave men complete control over property, women, and children. Several speeches by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth follow; Susan B. Anthony is represented by her famous speech in defense of her vote. Racial issues--especially lynching and Jim Crow laws--are addressed in speeches by Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell. Speeches by Anna H. Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt--leaders in the fight for woman suffrage--are also included. The volume ends with an address by Crystal Eastman laying out a feminist agenda that is pertinent today. This work and its companion volume make a significant contribution to our knowledge of the early woman's rights movement and the persuasive message it brought to the American people. It is a valuable source book for an introduction to women's studies or courses in American Public Address, women's rhetoric, and U.S. women's history.

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