Language and Social Change:
The Canadian Movement for Women's Suffrage, 1880-1918

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the print discourse of the Canadian women’s suffrage movement from the 1890s to the 1910s and investigates how suffragists positioned not only themselves but also suffrage sceptics through their utterances. Grounded in both rhetorical analysis and the study of nineteenth-century Canada, this work contributes to our understanding of the discourse of social and political movements.

Lloyd Bitzer’s concept of the rhetorical situation is used to show how suffrage debates were aligned with debates about temperance, social reform, and imperialism. Michel Foucault’s notion of the statement—claims which have acquired authority independent of situation—helps expand the concept of the rhetorical situation to better theorize how suffrage utterances travelled through various genres and situations. The repeated dismissal of English suffrage militancy is here analyzed through the lenses of uptake and genre. Militancy received uptake in front-page reports, on women’s pages, and in letters to the editor. Anne Freadman’s notion of genre as residing in the interrelationships between utterances helps theorize the wide-reaching discursive effects—rather than direct influence—which English militant activism had on the Canadian suffrage campaign.

Audience design offers a way of thinking about how suffragists addressed different audience groups and called them toward different types of action. Erving Goffman’s and Herbert C. Clarke’s approach to audience leaves behind the dyad of writer and reader and
grasps the complexity of how some audience members are directly addressed, while others are positioned as side participants or distant bystanders and overhears. A general tendency among Canadian suffragists was to cast men as overhears—incidental readers who were expected not to collaborate but to witness the ongoing debate. The most predominant addressees of suffrage texts, middle- and upper-class women who were not yet suffragists, were often interpellated as inert and immoral. In fact, suffragists' appeals to morality in their audience address were part of an effort to convert middle-class women's moral capital into access to political power. These appeals to morality also participated in a fundamental re-interpretation of citizenship as founded on moral rather than economic qualifications and on concern for the moral quality of Canadian society.
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Introduction

What Does It Mean to Study the Canadian Suffrage Debate Rhetorically?

This dissertation analyzes the English-Canadian suffrage discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from the perspective of language studies and rhetorical theory. My work intersects two fields which are significantly under-researched in Canada—the study of the Canadian suffrage movement and the rhetorical study of historical discourses. With the growing recognition of the need for feminist Canadian historiography, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a wave of social historical studies on the early Canadian feminist movement. Studies from this period include Wayne Roberts’ “‘Rocking the Cradle for the World’: The New Woman and Maternal Feminism” published in Linda Kealey’s collection A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada (1979), Carol Lee Bacchi’s Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists (1983), and Veronica Strong-Boag’s The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada (1976), “Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load” (1986), and “‘Ever a Crusader’: Nellie McClung, First-Wave Feminist” (1986). By the 1990s, studies of Canada’s early feminists increasingly included analyses of their racial theories. Sociologist Mariana Valverde set the tone of this discussion first with her book The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada (1991) and in her
influential essay "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism" (1992) which placed eugenic thought firmly within the philosophy of early feminism. Janice Fiamengo with her articles "A Legacy of Ambivalence" (2000) and "Rediscovering Our Foremothers Again" (2002), Cecily Devereux with "New Woman, New World" (1999) and Growing a Race: Nellie L. McClung and the Fiction of Eugenic Feminism (2005), Jennifer Henderson with her book Settler Feminism and Race Making in Canada (2003), and Tracy Kulba with "Feminist 'Memory Work' and the Production of Real Womanhood" are among the literary scholars who have taken up the critical discussion of racism in the early women's rights movement since Valverde published her work on moral reform discourse. The increased scholarly interest in Canada's early feminists has also been mirrored by renewed investigations of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Canadian literature.¹

However, despite the renewed attention to a range of early Canadian feminist writing little research has been done on the language and rhetorical dimension of Canadian reform movements. In addition, the amount of scholarly attention that is being paid to Canada's early feminism, intensified and diversified as it has been for the last decade, does not compare to the vibrancy and variety of the field of British and American suffrage research. This is particularly confounding given the fact that suffrage on its own is only

one among several intensely studied areas of turn-of-the-century British and American
women’s movements, others of which include the temperance, labour, New Woman, social
reform, and modernist movements. Contemporary Canadian scholarship is clearly in need
of more and new research on the Canadian suffrage movement.

Most of the existing research about Canadian suffrage has been undertaken from the
perspective of social and feminist history. In 1950, Catherine L. Cleverdon wrote her
influential history, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*, which is still considered a
landmark study on of topic. In 1983, Carol Lee Bacchi followed up with a feminist
revisionist discussion of Canadian suffrage. Mariana Valverde and Cecily Devereux have
analyzed the racist and imperialist underpinnings in their articles of the 1990s, and
Devereux recently expanded this work with a critical study of suffragist Nellie McClung’s
involvement in eugenistic discourse. The small volume of Canadian suffrage research is
partly the result of the limited number of suffrage print materials produced at the time and
the fact that only a small number of archival sources have survived the dissolution of
Canada’s numerous suffrage societies. Canadian suffragists were also not as likely to
engage in the spectacular activities that made the British and American campaigns so
famous, public, and multiply represented, including street protests; public advertising
through handbills, banners, posters, and sandwich boards; the heckling of politicians; acid
and arson attacks on property; and the brutal yet iconic hunger strikes which followed
suffragists’ imprisonment for protest activities. However, despite the seemingly smaller
public profile we cannot say that Canadian suffragists were less active and prolific than
their American and British counterparts. Many of their activities were simply not as well
documented. Among the more colourful activities by Canadian suffragists were various

mock parliament performances in which women took the roles of male politicians to ironic effect, a number of plays and exhibits, the sale of suffrage postcards and souvenirs, the organization of speeches and speaking tours featuring suffragists from Canada and abroad, the setting up of information stands at local fairs and events, the collection of petitions, and the arrangements of deputations to provincial and federal politicians.

Canadian suffragists' work is best documented and was most publicly represented in the discussions which editors of women's pages in local and provincial newspapers conducted in tandem with their readers. It is these discussions—on women's pages, in editorials, newspaper reports, magazine essays, and letters to the editor—which form the primary material of this dissertation. Some of the key serial publications on which this analysis draws are Woman's Century (the journal of the National Council of Women of Canada), The Champion (the publication of the Political Equality League of Victoria), and the various women's pages of newspapers such as in the Toronto Globe, the Toronto World, the Manitoba Free Press, and in weekly news magazines such as Saturday Night and the Grain Growers' Guide.

To clarify my method of researching these materials, early on in this project I spent many months systematically surveying a wide range of serial publications. I thoroughly browsed through copies of magazines such as Busy Man's Magazine (later renamed Maclean's Magazine), Canadian Magazine, Canadian Monthly, Saturday Night, University Magazine, and The Week, copying articles, letters, and opinion pieces which discussed women's suffrage in particular or women's rights and political activities in general. I spent many hours in front of microfilm machines, winding my way through various newspapers and reading their women's pages, editorials and letters to the editor, as well as news
coverage of issues concerning women's rights. I also conducted archival research at Archives Canada, in the British Columbia Archives and the Archives of Ontario, and at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and the Victoria University Archives in Toronto. Among the materials which I studied there were the papers of various women's organizations, the papers of Nellie McClung and Flora MacDonald Denison, the suffrage letters and petitions which were sent to provincial politicians, and the parliamentary debates on women's suffrage. The research questions of the following chapters arose as much from my reading of these materials as they did from my study of recent suffrage research and rhetorical theory. Through an ongoing process of re-reading my primary material, the specific articles and letters which are discussed in this thesis were chosen as particularly fitting but by no means exclusive examples of the rhetorical issues which they illustrate.

When I speak of suffrage I use the term as describing the campaigns aimed to secure provincial and federal voting rights for women. This is a generalized way of thinking about the Canadian suffrage campaign—the landscape of voting qualifications was in fact much more varied, with elections for municipal governments, school boards, provincial legislatures, and the federal parliament each following different sets of legislation and, therefore, entailing different qualifications and varied ways of registering voters. In many provinces some women—often only those who were property holders and unmarried or widowed—were able to vote for or even be elected to municipal governments and school boards much earlier than they were allowed provincial and federal voting rights. For instance, propertied widows were beginning to be allowed to vote municipally in British Columbia in 1873. In 1884, married or unmarried women householders were allowed to vote in school trustee elections in Victoria, and unmarried female property
holders could vote in municipal elections in Ontario (see Strong-Boag, ""The Citizenship Debates""). Women property owners in Manitoba were allowed to vote in municipal elections since 1887, and women ratepayers could elect and be elected as school trustees since 1890 (see Cleverdon). While Canadian suffrage organizations had the establishment of equality in all municipal, provincial, and federal elections as their goal, the term women's enfranchisement could, nevertheless, refer to various levels of elections and various sets of voting qualification depending on the particular campaign issue at hand.

In broad brushstrokes, a history of the provincial and federal women’s suffrage campaigns usually begins with the founding of the Toronto Women’s Literary Club in 1877 or its reincarnation as the Dominion Women’s Enfranchisement Association (DWEA) in 1889. Toronto was indeed an early and continual hub of Canadian suffrage activity. The Toronto Women’s Literary Club as well as the DWEA were led first by Emily Howard Stowe (who held a US American medical degree and was the first Canadian woman to practice medicine, albeit without a licence) and later by her daughter Augusta Stowe-Gullen (the first woman doctor with a degree from Canada). The 1890s were challenging times for Canadian suffragists. While several provinces witnessed the birth of organized suffrage activity and many newspaper and magazine articles provided proof of growing interest in women’s rights, suffrage as a movement did not always grow and in fact waned in some regions. Alongside Toronto, Saint John had one of the longest-standing suffrage organizations with the New Brunswick Women’s Enfranchisement Association founded in 1894 and modelled after Toronto’s DWEA. However, even though the Saint John activists campaigned for a quarter of a century, popular support among the general public of the province did not really increase. Like all the other Maritime provinces, New Brunswick
remained quite isolated from the suffrage activities in the bigger provinces, and even from the activities organized by the associations which carried a national claim in their name. Suffrage campaigns across the country stood and fell with the efforts of a usually small group of local suffrage organizers. Local campaigns were also aided by cross-provincial and national network ties. Occasionally, suffrage organizations could be marred by divisions between women with different conceptions of suffrage and social reform and diverging opinions on which political methods were legitimate for Canadian women to engage in.

From its founding, Toronto’s Dominion Women’s Enfranchisement Association was part of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), the national umbrella organization for a large variety of women’s organizations under the leadership of Lady Ishbel Aberdeen (wife of Lord Aberdeen, Canada’s Governor General from 1893 to 1898). While the NCWC harboured organizations which actively campaigned for suffrage, like the DWEA and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the NCWC took several years before it threw its own name behind the campaign. After the organization had officially distanced itself from the pursuit of women’s suffrage in 1894, it turned around in 1904 and established a standing committee on suffrage. The standing committee was lead until 1921 by Augusta Stowe-Gullen who since 1903 had been the president of the DWEA. In 1910, the NCWC finally endorsed women’s suffrage as a result of a majority vote at the Halifax convention.

The year 1910 marked a general upswing in events, resulting in the widening of networks and the founding of numerous suffrage clubs. The former DWEA had been renamed the Canadian Suffrage Association (CSA) in 1907, and experienced renewed
vigour with a new slate of executive members. Flora MacDonald Denison was elected first as secretary, and later, from 1911 to 1914, as president. She brought her public profile as columnist for the Toronto *Sunday World* to the job, and she also spent much of her time, effort, and money on her suffrage work, and travelled to represent Canadian suffragists at events in New York, Copenhagen, Budapest, and London, England. Another energetic organizer who joined the CSA executive during this period was Dr. Margaret Blair Gorden, holder of a medical degree from the University of Toronto’s Trinity College. The campaigns of the CSA stimulated suffrage activities not only in Toronto but across the country. Similar organizations were founded in other provinces in the following years. For instance, the British Columbia Political Equality League came into existence in 1911, the Winnipeg Political Equality League in 1912, the Saskatchewan Women Grain Growers in 1914, and the Edmonton Equal Franchise League in 1914. A few years after the founding of many of these clubs, suffragists’ work started to pay off when legislatures began to introduce provincial suffrage bills. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta (in that order) led the way in 1916, British Columbia and Ontario followed in 1917 (although Ontarian women could not hold office until 1919), Nova Scotia in 1918, the Yukon and New Brunswick in 1919 (women could not hold office in New Brunswick until 1934), Prince Edward Island in 1922, Newfoundland in 1925 (only for women over the age of 25), Quebec in 1940, and the Northwest Territories in 1951.

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2 Ahead of the other provinces, Manitoba had already had a suffrage association once before, the Manitoba Equal Franchise Club from 1894 to 1904. It was run by Amelia Yeomans who later also became president of the Manitoba WCTU and vice-president of the Dominion WCTU. The Equal Franchise Club ceased to exist when Yeomans left Winnipeg in 1904.
One of the important implications of the earlier provincial suffrage bills was that they enabled women in these provinces to also vote in federal elections. The Canadian Franchise Law of 1885 (which was, in fact, Canada’s first federal franchise law) stipulated that the federal government had to rely on provincial voters’ registration lists for its elections and thus follow each individual province’s voting qualification. Therefore, by 1917, in the middle of the First World War, the federal Union government (a coalition of the Conservative party and pro-conscription Liberal party members) under Sir Robert Borden knew that female citizens living in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario would already be able to vote in the upcoming federal election. In 1917, the most contentious issue for the upcoming election was the legislation of conscription to the Canadian armed forces. Borden’s government had introduced the Military Service Act in July 1917 since, after three years of war, voluntary enrolment was dwindling and Canada’s supply of soldiers needed to be replenished urgently after losses such as those of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Quebec voters in particular were strongly opposed to conscription, feeling that Canada had no business participating in an imperial war between European nations. Under these volatile political conditions Borden’s government aimed to secure its voters’ base with the War-Time Elections Act (or Military Voters Act) introduced in September 1917. This act included a partial enfranchisement of women. According to the Act, conscientious objectors and citizens who had been born in an enemy country and had immigrated to Canada since 1902 were stripped of their right to vote. In turn, the Act extended the vote to soldiers who served in the Canadian or British armed forces, to women who served as nurses, and to women who were wives, widows, mothers, or sisters of soldiers serving overseas if these women were British subjects and at least 21 years old. In the five provinces which had already granted women the vote without
any such restrictions this meant that a portion of their women voters had thus been disenfranchised for the upcoming federal election.

As Gloria Geller illustrates, the reception of this restrictive franchise law was mixed among Canadian suffragists. While many patriotic suffragists agreed that such limited enfranchisement would help ensure conscription, others saw it as an erosion of the principle of equal suffrage with men, and yet others could not reconcile the military motivation of this law with their pacifist beliefs. Among politicians and the general public, too, there was strong opposition to the War-Time Elections Act. Amid the controversy, Borden pledged that if re-elected he would introduce a universal woman franchise law. According to Cleverdon, estimates of the newly enfranchised members of the electorate ranged from half a million to one million (130). When the Borden government was returned to power it was generally assumed that the government owed its victory to the votes of those women who had for the first time been allowed to cast their federal ballots. In March 1918, only two days after the speech from the throne, the Prime Minister rose to sponsor the introduction of a new woman franchise bill. After some discussion about what technical form women’s federal voting rights should take in relationship to provincial franchise law, the government settled on allowing women the vote on the same qualifications as men were allowed to vote in each province. In May 1918 the Act to Confer the Electoral Franchise upon Women received royal assent. The right for women to also be elected to the House of Commons was included without much fanfare in the Dominion By-Elections Act of July 1919, and the entire set of laws was newly assembled and reaffirmed in the Dominion Elections Act of 1920. As for the Senate, it was not until 1929 that Canadian women were allowed to be appointed as senators, after Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney,
Emily Murphy, and Irene Parlby in their now famous “Persons Case” were successful on appeal to the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council, then Canada’s highest court of appeal.

This dissertation undertakes a rhetorical study of the printed material of the Canadian suffrage movement. It offers new ways of understanding the discourse of social movements and asks questions about the kind of speech which sets out to affect social and political change. As such, it is not a study of the history of how Canadian suffrage writers were trained and instructed in writing and speaking, and which rhetorical strategies they developed in their political campaign. This is also not a study of the rhetoric of suffrage as a historic discourse insofar as a rhetoric of something assumes that there was something particularly rhetorical, something particularly persuasive, effective, and artful about this discourse. Rather than a question of argument, training, or artistry, I follow in Lloyd


Compared to the volume and variety of this recent work on nineteenth-century writing by American women, there certainly is a need for rhetorically informed research on the history of writing and writing instruction in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Canada.
Bitzer’s steps and understand rhetorical to refer to a pervasive desire for producing some sort of effect, for doing things with our words, a desire which arises out of a rhetorical situation and makes us speak. In that sense, all discourse is rhetorical. However, some discourses carry their rhetorical nature more tangibly on their sleeves than others, and they often have ambitious, even heroic, visions about the need to which their speech responds and the effect which their speech is anticipated to have. Among these kinds of discourses are the debates which suffragists produced—and which we continue to produce—about the need for society’s political and social change.

It may seem paradoxical in light of my emphasis on the desire for social and political change, but I wish to suspend the notion of strategy as we pursue rhetorical analyses of social and political movements. In the fourth edition of Edward P.J. Corbett’s Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, Corbett and Robert J. Connors vividly illustrate how central the idea of language as strategy often is in rhetorical studies:

[W]e must adopt and adapt those strategies that will best achieve our end. Strategies is a good rhetorical word, because it implies the choice of available resources to achieve an end. It is no accident that the word strategy has military associations, for this word has its roots in the Greek word for army. Just as a general will adopt those resources, those tactics, which are most likely to defeat the enemy in a battle, so the marshaller of language will seek out and use the best argument, and the best style to “win” an audience. (2)

I disagree with a conception that views rhetoric as the scheme which an individual speaker follows when using language. My study does not think of a speaker as someone who
always strives to adopt the strategy which best serves his or her ends, or who is constantly thinking about what such a strategy might be. Speakers are rarely “marshallers of language” who persistently search for the tactical style and argument which will help them win (nor, for that matter, are most military campaigns the well-run, smartly-planned affairs which the words strategy and tactics tend to imply). As I am pondering the question “What are the conditions in which suffragists said the things they did?”, I am less interested in the characteristics and decisions of the individual speaker and more in how the rhetorical situation—with its historically formed subject positions, genres, audiences, and moral and cultural capital—facilitates and invites certain responses over others. Such an approach allows us to revisit, and re-think, some longstanding questions of research on early feminism, questions such as: why did Canadian suffragists favour a maternal feminism and a moralistic approach in thinking about citizenship; why were they not more concerned with achieving true equality and social justice for all women and for all Canadians; and why were they so conservative and did not engage in more spectacular demonstrations of their activism, or perhaps even in what were then considered militant measures?

Mustering concepts such as the rhetorical situation, audience design, uptake, genre, and moral capital, I would like to advance a view of rhetoric which suspends searches for causal links and speaker’s intentions or strategies, and instead conceives of discourse as constituting a heterogeneous network of positions and exchanges in which utterances are dispersed in multiple and often contradictory ways. Such a network is highly regulated by social and institutional rules and structures. As sociologist Anthony Giddens stipulates in his theory of structuration, these rules and structures are maintained and reproduced through the repetition of the acts and utterances of individuals. But even though social and
political structures depend on these constantly repeated acts and utterances, they also tend to be quite stable, and thus usually continue to perpetuate their unjust and oppressive practices, including those against women. At the same time, however, each repetition also carries the possibility for new inflections and for expressing a desire for change.

In the case of a political movement, like the suffrage movement, those desires, too, must be re-iterated again and again, at least until the wanted change occurs (or until the desire or sense of possibility for change dissipates). As my chapter on situational rhetoric illustrates, the political and social change which suffragist speakers desired, expressed from within the rhetorical situations in which they spoke, had to become an accepted truth within institutional and social structures before it could come into being as a legal and material change. One of the institutions in which the idea of women's suffrage needed to be accepted were newspapers and magazines, another were women's clubs and associations. As soon as suffrage had become an established idea in women's clubs, and as soon as clubs devoted to advocating women's suffrage were beginning to be formed, these associations with their debates, social events, resolutions, and petitions virtually became founts not only for the proliferation of suffrage talk, but also for the production of further exigences, and, therefore, rhetorical situations.

The subsequent chapter on uptake and genre continues to study the production of utterances within rhetorical situations. Using Anne Freadman’s concept of uptake, I trace how discussion of English suffragette militancy travels through different genres of Canadian public discourse, from suffragettes’ speeches or actions in England to Canadian front-page reports to women’s page columns to letters to the editor. Studying the reception, the uptake, of English militancy in Canada allows us to see a dimension of influence within
the transnational movement of suffragism which is not usually presented in the many recent histories of international exchange and global networking among late nineteenth-century European, British, and North American women reformers. As news of English militancy reached the Canadian public sphere, Canadian suffragists were forced not only to take up the issue of militancy in their discussions but also to respond to the many unfavourable and often anti-suffragist condemnations by other Canadian journalists and writers. While suffragists were compelled to respond, we have to remember that their responses were uptakes—they took a discursive object from a set of possible objects—and thus we should not think of them as obvious reactions caused directly by the rhetorical situation. As my analysis of the surprisingly favourable newspaper reviews of Emmeline Pankhurst's speeches makes clear, uptake does not follow along a singular, causal chain; instead, its route can be unexpected and multifarious.

In Bitzer's definition of the rhetorical situation, audience is one of the constraints with which speakers have to deal when articulating exigences. Audience also provides an opportunity to further ponder how suffrage speakers dispersed their utterances. I trace this dispersal not so much in a material sense but in terms of how different audience constituents were interpellated and thus politically positioned through suffrage texts. I introduce Herbert Clark's notion of audience design in this chapter, a term which is used in pragmatic linguistics (it originally derives from Erving Goffman's work on footing) in order to grasp how speakers in oral interaction designate some audience members as addressees, some as side participants, while others remain bystanders or overhearers. In conjunction with Maurice Charland's theory of "constitutive rhetoric," an analysis of audience design allows us to see how suffragists created the audience constituency of the
suffrage-sceptical, somewhat selfish, middle-class woman who, with the help of moral appeals, became one of the key addressees of suffrage speech. In contrast, male politicians, while sometimes directly addressed through letters and in meetings, were more often positioned as overhearers to the exchanges between suffragists and suffrage-sceptical women. As overhearers they were expected to witness Canadian women’s expressions of how popular and urgent the idea of enfranchising women was, in the hopes that they would thus change their parliamentary policy accordingly.

Finally, I turn to the question of moral capital in suffrage speech. As Mariana Valverde has shown in *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, questions of morality saturated every possible public and social issue in turn-of-the-century Canada to the point that whole branches of philanthropic activity were dedicated to the task of morally reforming Canadian society. As a result, the public debates of this time are excellent case studies for an analysis of how moral capital operates—moral capital, in Valverde’s terms, meaning a kind of authority which is akin to but not the same as economic and cultural capital. Suffragists frequently highlighted the moral capital which middle-class women had accrued as a result of their efforts for the well-being of their families, their philanthropic work, and their distance from the sphere of corrupt and economically motivated politics. One of the prominent features of Canadian suffrage discourse was, in fact, suffragists’ attempt to convert their moral into political capital. They argued that it was most of all their moral authority which qualified them for political participation and that the country was in dire need of the kind of moral uplift which women voters would presumably provide. Suffragists posited women as ideal citizens by insisting on moral capital as the prime political qualification, and thus were an important part in a larger, historic shift that saw
Canadian citizenship redefined on the basis of Anglo-Canadian morality rather than on the basis of property.
Chapter 1

Situational Rhetoric and Social Change

The Canadian women's suffrage movement and the social reform discourses surrounding it—for women's property rights, for temperance, against prostitution—tended to posit a variety of legislative changes as their goal. When suffragists expressed their ideas for legal changes, they spoke with high hopes and ambitions about the possibilities of these changes. They saw wide-reaching promise in these changes, and made vast claims about the positive effects such changes would have on Canadian society. In his introduction to Catherine Cleverdon's landmark history of Canadian suffrage, historian Ramsay Cook characterizes the Canadian suffrage movement as having had an “often naïve optimism” (xviii) and making “utopian claims” (xix). These utopian speculations about the future made suffragist arguments vulnerable to conservative critics who could easily “shift the argument away from the principle to the promised, but unprovable, results” (xix). By introducing unreasonably far-reaching claims to the discussion, feminists “ensured that the movement would ultimately be judged a failure” (xix). Not surprisingly, several analyses of the suffrage movement have followed Cook's method of assessment and have evaluated the immediate results of the movement against its promises. For example, in an appended chapter called “Women in Canadian Politics” at the end of her 1950 history of The Woman...
Suffrage Movement in Canada, Catherine Cleverdon evaluates the results of women’s activism according to the following question: “How well have Canadian women lived up to the hopes of those who blazed the trail?” (267). To produce this appendix, Cleverdon corresponded with suffragists about their assessments of the situation; and she also considered statistics such as the number of women in Canadian politics. Among others, Cleverdon quotes Dr. Charlotte Whitton, the later Ottawa mayor, who judges women’s active involvement in politics quite harshly when she says of Canadian feminists: “We remain the most inert, in the consciousness or use of our power, of women in nations the world over” (267). Cleverdon herself suggests that if public office-holding be the yardstick, “Canada has made a poorer showing than the two larger English-speaking democracies, even when allowance has been made for the disproportion in population” (270). Like Cleverdon, John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager also emphasize that, of the very few Canadian women who gained political office after general suffrage was introduced, a few were not declared suffragists, and many had a decidedly conservative view on women’s rights and women’s role in politics. They characterize the post-war suffrage movement as disillusioned and call their chapter “An End to Idealism.”

When arguing for suffrage, early Canadian feminists made great promises and had high hopes, and in this way, they set the standard by which their achievements would be measured. The historical research following the suffrage movements takes suffragists up on their own suggestions and compares the effects of women’s rights and women’s role in politics against the initial hopes and speculations. These discursive features—a movement which formulates very specific needs, goals, and promises, and historical research which uses these goals to assess the effectiveness of the movement—invite us to investigate
Canadian suffrage discourse in terms of situational rhetoric. Rather than measuring success, situational rhetoric provides a complex understanding of what forces were at work in the production of suffrage utterances, offering a more nuanced picture of how to understand its successes. Lloyd Bitzer was the first to formulate a set of paradigms for situational rhetoric in 1968 in his article “The Rhetorical Situation” in the inaugural issue of *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. He described that the study of situational rhetoric conceives of language interaction between speakers and their audiences as functional and goal-oriented. He posited that our experience within our historical situations leads us to recognize problems—he calls them exigences—and invites our suggestions for change. Many of these social needs, or exigences, are rhetorical (they can be changed by discourse) and thus they ask to be addressed to audiences who have the capability of responding to them. While most of these exigences are of an everyday nature (such as “Can you hold this door for me?”), some of them set themselves more epic goals (such as “We must make Canadian society more civil.”). There are also constraints within each situation, constraints which determine how an exigence can be addressed and by whom.

Lloyd Bitzer’s rhetorical situation is a well-thumbed and multiply revised notion in rhetorical studies. In their reassessment of Bitzer’s theory, Mary Garrett and Xiaosui Xiao note that while Bitzer’s theory has seen multiple revisions and additions, the rhetoricians who have continued to discuss his work still accept and confirm the general usefulness of his concept. Carolyn Miller’s 1992 discussion of *kairos* in the rhetoric of science—*kairos* meaning timeliness, the sense of an utterance’s fitness to the situation—also testifies to the continuing influence of Bitzer’s idea: while discourse is always situational, there are also situations in which a speaker’s formulations of exigence, an audience’s reception of
arguments, and a desire for change, come together in a particularly felicitous way. An analysis of the debates about women's suffrage strongly invites discussions of situational rhetoric in the sense of timeliness of arguments. Canadian women had been making public arguments for suffrage since at least the 1880s, but it was not until the year 1918 with its particular situations—characterized, for instance, by a federal election during wartime, by the growing number of women's organizations, and by the increasing presence of women in higher professions—that Canadian women of British citizenship were granted the right to vote in federal elections.

While Bitzer's notion of situational rhetoric allows for a close analysis of individual rhetorical situations, it does not provide enough tools to place a rhetorical situation within its larger discursive field. In an attempt to broaden our conception of situational rhetoric, this chapter will therefore place the situational rhetoric of the Canadian women's suffrage movement within the context of Michel Foucault's theory of discursive formation. This theoretical move will allow us to conceive of rhetorical situations less as isolated moments and more as part of larger systems of discourse; it will enable us to lay open the influence of far-reaching traditions of rhetorical positioning. Foucault's theories introduce an awareness of the historical conditions of and relationships between subject positions that is missing from Bitzer's theory. In this way, these two theories complement each other.

Foucault's theory of discourse in The Archaeology of Knowledge (first published in 1969) and "The Order of Discourse" (first published in 1971) provides us with a thorough account of how discourse functions as a system. His theory describes the requisite formation of objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, strategies, and truth claims. These two texts are generally considered part of Foucault's earlier work, his archaeological phase.
While providing his most thorough elucidation of his notion of discourse, this earlier work has also been criticized for not being thorough enough in thinking about the possibility of social and political change. In his introduction to "The Order of Discourse," Robert J.C. Young characterizes Foucault's theory of discourse as having a "powerful determinism" (50). Foucault is so intent on emphasizing how very organized and controlled discourse is that he leaves very little room for considerations of how individual subjects can instigate and participate in the types of discourses that affect change. As a result, what they can say and how they can act seems strictly limited by their society's discursive formations.

Likewise, Barbara Biesecker notes that since in Foucault's theory "individuals emerge always and already as particular lived-expression of the limits and possibilities of a discursive formation," there seems to be no possibility for "human agency, rhetorical intervention, social change" ("Coming to Terms" 151). Only in Foucault's later work, says Young, do we note a shift towards "emphasis on the instability of the discontinuous segments of discourse, and the possibility of the resistance as well as the exercise of power" (50). In *Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault continually reminds us to consider discourse

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4 Similar critiques of the lack of possibility for human agency and social change in Foucault's theory of discourse include Carole Blair and Martha Cooper's "The Humanist Turn in Foucault's Rhetoric of Inquiry," Frances Bartkowski's "Epistemic Drift in Foucault," and Nancy Hartsock's "Foucault on Power."

5 See, for instance, Neil Brenner's article "Foucault's New Functionalism" which has as its central question: "Why did Foucault insist on the centrality of resistance to all power relations but devote his studies of modernity almost exclusively to an analysis of modern forms of power, without ever examining corresponding forms of resistance?" (679). Brenner argues that this imbalance is a result of the functionalist manner in which Foucault theorizes power—functionalist meaning focussed on the effects which power has in a given social context. He says that while Foucault subsumes resistance in his functionalist view of power, it is—unlike power—"not a functionally coordinated system," but rather composed of "clusters of counter-functions which lack the common targets characteristic of power relations" (698).
as an event, as a practice, or, as Bruce Herzberg says, as a "form of action" (73). Discourse acts in the world, and thus inevitably constitutes and changes it. But how can we figure deliberate attempts at changing a situation into Foucault's system?

In contrast to Foucault's discursive theory, situational rhetoric has so far not been as capable of accounting for the more systemic forces of discourse. Bitzer refers only in passing to "the presence of certain environmental constituents which form a structure" as a condition for rhetorical interaction ("Functional" 23). When Bitzer speaks of "structure," he means the rhetorical situation itself, not so much the larger discursive field in which it is located. What makes situational rhetoric so interesting for our discussion is that it renders the reaching for change one of its central tenets. Bitzer contends that a situation is only rhetorical if a need for change is addressed to an audience which can help facilitate that change. Bitzer understands the meaning of "rhetorical" to be focussed on the possibility of instigating change through communication, through the use of language. Exigences are rhetorical when they are "capable of positive modification and when such modification requires or invites messages that engage audiences who can modify those exigences through their mediating thought, judgment, or action" ("Functional" 27). In that sense, Bitzer's definition of "rhetorical" is a functional and pragmatic one. It differs from traditional and neo-classical definitions which focus on persuasion. In fact, persuasion is only one among many possibilities for rhetorical exigences; when, as in one of Bitzer's examples, a hobby gardener asks an expert about what is afflicting his tomato plants, the expert does not need to persuade the gardener to follow up on his advice, he simply needs to instruct him. Rather than persuasion, the key element of the rhetorical in Bitzer's sense is that rhetorical exigences require or invite an utterance to be addressed to a mediating
audience. Bitzer also insists that our political and social contexts and our individual and collective experience constantly invite change, that they are full of possible exigences. He says, "all of us recognize that we rightly seek to alter those aspects of the environment and of ourselves that are thought to be other than they should be" ("Functional" 26). Thus, situational rhetoric allows us to see the reaching for change as a perpetual component of the discursive system.

This chapter will, first, review the key elements of Bitzer's theory of situational rhetoric, as well as relate this discussion to some of the work which has been done on situational rhetoric since Bitzer. Thinking about the situationality of rhetorical statements allows us to shed further light on a recurring discussion in suffrage scholarship: the distinction between suffrage arguments made on the basis of equality rights between men and women, and arguments for expediency. Today, arguments for expediency are routinely characterized as opportunistic or conservative, and are often referred to when analyzing the racism and imperialism underlying suffragist arguments. However, conservative, imperial, and racist as they are in our contemporary judgement, these arguments were also deeply anchored in their particular situations. Being aligned with other political discussions of social and political needs, i.e. of rhetorical exigences, was a successful position for suffrage speakers; it helped their claims gain authority. By being aligned with the imperial and racist discourse of the time, suffrage claims could become true in a way that could be shared by large portions of the Canadian populace. One key institutional structure to aid in this process of gaining truth and agreement on issues related to the female franchise were the large variety of women's clubs and suffrage associations. These clubs created opportunities to formulate suffrage claims, to bring them into circulation in a variety of
genres, to gain publicity through acting as a serious organization, and thereby to establish the political needs of women within the rules and parameters of public politics.

**Beyond Bitzer’s Rhetorical Situation**

In his original article of 1968, Bitzer describes rhetoric as pragmatic. He says:

[Rhetoric] functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world; it performs some task. In short, rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. (302)

According to Bitzer, rhetoric is called forth by rhetorical situations, by situations which call for rhetorical interventions. In “Functional Communication” he explains that in his view rhetoric does not commence “with attention to speaker intention and artistry, nor with focus on language resources, the argumentation process, or natural psychological processes”; rather, it commences with “the critical relation between persons and environment and the process of interaction leading to harmonious adjustment” (25). Bitzer thus adapts a classical understanding of rhetoric for his purposes. He defines three factors which constitute the rhetorical situation and which provide the components for this adjustment. They are audience, exigence, and situational constraints.

Chapter 3 discusses aspects of audience design and analyzes how suffragists addressed male politicians as well as other women who were not yet suffragists. Sometimes these two kinds of audience were addressed separately, sometimes they were addressed by one utterance, but each time suffragist audience design was rhetorical in
Bitzer’s sense. As male lawmakers were more directly encouraged to introduce and vote for suffrage bills, female audiences were addressed in such a way as to associate those who were against suffrage with such negative qualities as upper-class privilege, ignorance, and lack of moral sensibility. Since chapter 3 will speak more about audience, let us concentrate on exigence for now.

The exigences, or social needs, formulated by the social reform discourse at the turn of the century constitute a rich field for analysis. As Bitzer says in “Functional Communication,” expressions of exigence and suggestion for its remedy are essential for situational rhetoric. Bitzer defines exigence as “an imperfection marked by urgency; . . . a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (“Rhetorical” 304). He adds that speaker and audience can differ about the factual conditions of the situation and the interest they have in it. He lists a variety of possibilities for these differences, such as (1) speakers and audiences perceive the factual conditions in variant ways, (2) while agreeing on the factual conditions, they nevertheless experience different exigences, or (3) the factual conditions and exigences are so complex that disagreements necessarily arise (“Functional” 30).

Carolyn Miller has offered a lucid rethinking of Bitzer’s definition of exigence in “Genre as Social Action.” For her, exigence is neither a cause of rhetorical action nor an intention, but a “social motive” (158). In an oft-quoted passage, she formulates:

Exigence must be located in the social world, neither in a private perception nor in material circumstance. . . . Exigence is a form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests, and purpose that not only
links them but also makes them what they are: an objectified social need.

(157)

If exigence is a form of knowledge then it can be contested, debated, and opposed. Because exigence is social, it also changes and is subject to attempts at being changed. But influencing the course of its change can be a slow task and involve great effort—particularly if the exigence in question addresses an ambitious, epic social need. As Craig Smith and Scott Lybarger say, “exigences are everywhere shot through with perceptions and the institutional forces that . . . exercise power of constraint upon discourse” (197).

What we perceive as a rhetorical need, in other words, does not have its source in the situation alone but also in the longer-standing interests of institutional structures and their participants—and the question of longer-standing structures and interests is where Foucault is helpful for our discussion.

Suffrage discourse exemplifies the way that an agreement on questions and answers, on situations and their exigence, is not always easily achieved. In fact, debates about what constitutes the situation and its exigence and what possible responses are warranted by the situation are an integral part of the discursive process. For instance, in the debates between suffragists and anti-suffragists, suffragists insisted that societal changes such as increased immigration and urbanization made it necessary for women to leave the domestic sphere, to work either philanthropically or for sustenance, and to become politically and socially active. They argued that these changes produced an exigence, the need for women to be more involved in running things. Anti-suffragists, on the other hand, said that these same

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6 See Wendy Mitchinson for some numbers on Canadian urbanization.
changes provided a different exigence, the need for women to become more strictly focused on the domestic sphere in order to counterbalance the bad influences that immigration and urbanization had on the family. The diversity of opinions on the constituents of the situation was an integral part of the debate. Discussants were trying to discern and propose answers to the question of what exactly was happening in and to Canadian society and how to respond to these social developments.

One of the criticisms brought repeatedly against Bitzer centres on his assumption that a rhetor arrives at a rhetorical situation as if from the outside. Craig Smith and Scott Lybarger see Bitzer’s model as “markedly modernist” (197), and favour a postmodern approach which takes account of cultural fragmentation. They ask us to investigate the multiple perceptions of exigence by multiple audiences and “the plethora of constraints they impose on or derive from any situation” (210). Barbara Biesecker suggests that thinking through Derrida’s notion of diference allows us to move the debate away from questions of origin and away from the assumption that subjects are stable when interacting within a rhetorical situation. She says that, instead, the rhetorical situation is “an event that makes possible the production of identities and social relations” (126), and that “neither the text’s immediate rhetorical situation nor its author can be taken as simple origin or generative agent since both are underwritten by a series of historically produced displacements” (121).

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7 For instance, in her reworking of situational rhetoric into the idea of “Genre as Social Action,” Carolyn Miller speaks critically of Bitzer’s “use of demand-response language” and what she considers his deterministic and materialist understanding of situation (155). Richard Vatz suggests that rhetorical situations are indeterminate and ambiguous, and that rhetors themselves create and shape the situations for their speech.
I would like to import into my discussion both Biesecker’s emphasis on the co-articulation of situation and subject, and Smith and Lybarger’s acknowledgment of the multiplicity of exigences and audiences. What draws me to theories of situational rhetoric is that they analyze the relationships between a historical moment, its rhetorical utterances, and these utterances’ attempts to affect social change. Turn-of-the-century Canadian social reform debates defined their historical moment by such changing circumstances as increasing immigration, women’s presence in the workforce and in professional programs, or the onset of the First World War. Suffragism was one among multiple debates which came to describe, and therefore shape, this historical moment. In describing the political situation and its exigences, suffragists offered responses to it in their speeches, newspaper columns, and magazine articles. They did so in an effort to use the means they had available to further their cause, or, more precisely, to further their multiple social reform causes of which suffrage was one. Situational rhetoric helps us theorize the rhetorical ways in which suffragists asked for a fundamental social and political change (to grant federal and provincial voting rights to women). According to Biesecker’s argument, the situations in which women came to formulate their arguments for suffrage provided them with possibilities to produce new political and social identities. In fact, feminist discourse at the turn of the century nicely highlights how the articulation of social identity is always unstable: feminists were particularly aware of constantly having to redefine and justify their subject positions. As chapter 4 makes clear, their utterances also needed to justify women’s very ability to speak about and act on the social questions of the day.

Biesecker’s approach is influenced by Foucault. When she emphasizes how speech constitutes its subjects, she speaks about what Foucault termed discursive formation. Like
Biesecker, Foucault is not concerned with questions of origin, he does not set out to find an underlying source of discourse, but is interested in how discourse functions at any one moment. When he defines the nature of his discursive theory in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, he does so by contrasting it against a number of existing approaches. For instance, he puts aside the “traditional unities of the book and the *oeuvre,*” the idea that there is a unity to the laws of constructing discourse, that discourse comes from “the primary ground of experience,” but also the notion that discourse emanates from “the situation of the speaking subject (with the context and the psychological nucleus that characterize it)” (89). By discarding interest in “the situation of the speaking subject” from his analysis, it might seem that Foucault is here at odds with Bitzer. But, in fact, Foucault uses the term “situation” in a way which corresponds to Bitzer’s way of using it. Within the theory of situational rhetoric “situation” does not mean the individual condition of the speaking subject, the subject’s experience, but a moment fertile with exigences, a moment in which discourse is produced in the coming together of speakers, audiences, desires, and constraints.

When Foucault insists that we understand discourse as an event he criticizes approaches which aim to make discourse transparent, such as structuralism and its concern for disentangling the relation between signifier and signified, the study of authors’ oeuvres in search for a source rather than the functions of texts, or deconstruction and its presupposition of “a limitless field of silent discourse, the great unsaid that must be restored to speech” (Herzberg 73). Categorically, Foucault turns against the idea that there is something beneath, behind, or obscured by discourse which needs to be unearthed or discovered. Discourse does not translate, represent, or hide the systems in which we live;
discourse is the system by which power operates. Accordingly, we must treat discourse as the event itself, as practice, as a form of action.

Foucault also emphasizes that speech is governed by rules that pre-exist it. He says that “the enunciating subject brings into existence outside himself an object that belongs to a previously defined domain, whose laws of possibility have already been articulated, and whose characteristics precede the enunciation that posits it” (Archaeology 107). This domain outside the speaking subject has great influence over who can speak and what can be said—it has great influence over the constraints which define the rhetorical situation. Foucault describes processes of exclusion, prohibition, and rarefaction as governing what can be said and by whom. In his view, discourse is not limitless and full of undiscovered possibilities waiting to be deciphered, but tightly controlled and restricted in the meaning it can produce. While Biesecker’s take on situational rhetoric cherishes how identities and social relations proliferate within situations, Foucault reminds us that at the same time these formulations follow tight controls and pre-existing laws. I will speak more about the power of pre-existing discourses in the following sections. For now, let us consider how in Bitzer’s view subsequent rhetorical situations influence each other and how this view can be related to Foucault’s theory.

In his own 1980 reassessment of his original 1968 theory, Bitzer, like Foucault, contends that situations are not isolated from one another, that “within a single frame of time and place, they may overlap and implicate one another” (“Functional” 24). The attempt to solve one rhetorical situation “may well generate another” (24-25). Despite observing the overlapping of rhetorical situations, Bitzer continues to view them as quite easily distinguishable. As mentioned above, when Bitzer speaks of situations implicating
each other, he is not concerned with the larger institutional discourses within which situational rhetoric takes place and which are so central to Foucault's analysis. Aside from that, we can still deduce from Bitzer's description the useful insight that arguments about the nature of exigence concern not only the exigence of the current rhetorical situation. For if we view rhetorical situations as intimately connected and dependent on each other, each discussion about exigence positions rhetorical situations vis-à-vis each other. As a result, we cannot say, really, where one situation ends and another begins. Therefore, my use of the term "rhetorical situation" shifts between smaller, isolated instances of rhetorical utterances and women's suffrage as a larger discursive phenomenon.

Let me provide another perspective to underline why shifting between smaller rhetorical moments and suffrage as a larger discourse is necessary. If we strictly followed Bitzer's meaning of "rhetorical," we could only consider as rhetorical the calls for suffrage which were addressed to those audiences who could grant suffrage. Thus, calls for suffrage which were made in front of Members of Parliament (MPs) who could introduce a suffrage bill or vote on one would be rhetorical in that strict sense. But a speech calling for suffrage at a public meeting which did not have MPs or members of provincial legislatures in attendance would not be rhetorical. It would not be rhetorical because the audience would
not have the ability to produce the change that is called for. Yet, the fact that the majority of provincial and federal parliamentarians eventually voted for suffrage was influenced by the variety and persistence of arguments in favour of suffrage, most of which were only indirectly addressed to politicians (a fact which I will discuss in chapter 3 on audience design). The final success of the suffrage campaign cannot be imagined without taking into account all the less successful rhetorical situations which had come before it.

One of the moves I suggest, then, is for our view of the rhetorical situation to include echoes and relations to other, related rhetorical situations, particularly if those situations are not quite rhetorical in Bitzer's sense. Keith Grant-Davie has already proposed thinking in terms of "compound rhetorical situations," situations which comprise discussions of a single subject by multiple rhetors and audiences (265). In his criticism and extension of Bitzer's model, Grant-Davie opens the model to also include not just one, but all participating rhetors. His definition of situational rhetoric comes to pivot on his idea that all these rhetors speak about the same topic. However, suffrage topics are more porous than Grant-Davie's description assumes. Speakers do not all agree on the particularity and nature of each rhetorical situation, and so we cannot assume that we can easily identify the borders and nature that define the "one subject" or topic which holds Grant-Davie's

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8 In her 1973 essay on “The Rhetoric of Women’s Liberation,” Karlyn Kohrs Campbell has argued that Bitzer’s rhetorical situation is not applicable to women’s movements because “the concept of the audience does not account for a situation in which the audience must be created under the special conditions surrounding women’s liberation” (85). She finds it difficult to view female audiences as rhetorical audiences in Bitzer’s sense, that is as potential agents of change. I take from Campbell that our understanding of the rhetorical situation needs to be revised in order to accommodate discourses such as those of women's movements, but I do not agree with her claim that women’s liberation forms such a stylistically and substantively unique discursive event that it stands far apart from other rhetorical situations.
situation together. In most cases suffrage is not even posed as the central issue of a suffragist’s utterance. Pro-suffrage commentators constantly move between diverse and related topics such as social control of lower-class women by middle-class Anglo-Canadians, public sanitation and the safety of merchandised foods, the necessity to raise wages for low-income mothers, or the need for middle-class women’s higher education.

More generally, Foucault’s theory of discourse thoroughly disabuses us of the idea that there ever is “one subject.” He argues that it is not an object of knowledge which connects statements about, for instance, mental illness. Rather, discourse on a particular object is always “constituted by all that was said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments, indicated its various correlations, judged it” (*Archaeology* 35). Because medical discourse divides mental illness differently than legal discourse, each of these discourses constitutes its own object. The speech that was produced about suffrage throughout the decades, therefore, is not unified by its representation of the same object of discussion. Therefore, to analyze suffrage as discourse means to pay attention to discursive conditions, to the fields in which the discussions occur, to the ways in which speakers participated, and to the kind of event that is constituted by speech—in other words, to all the elements which define a rhetorical situation.

Foucault recommends viewing the objects of discourse as “dispersed and heterogeneous” (*Archaeology* 37) and analyzing the degree to which they depend on one another, the way they “interlock or exclude one another” (38). He asks us to describe “systems of dispersion” rather than dialectics of conflict or chains of inference (41). Within Foucault’s phrase, the word “system” suggests an institutional unity while “dispersion” highlights division and heterogeneity. We can also liken our definition of a
rhetorical situation to the way in which Ludwig Wittgenstein described the classification of objects. The similarities between rhetorical situations do not lie in one characteristic, but are "overlapping and criss-crossing" like a thread made up of many diverse fibres. What we can capture in our analysis of these categories is not a detailed definition but a kind of "family resemblance" (49). Sometimes it is quite effective to analyze one individual fibre; at other times we need to look at the thread as a whole.

The Debate about Equality

Viewing the discussion of women's rights in terms of a criss-crossing network of exigences helps reframe a longstanding discussion about the presence and absence of equality rights in suffrage debates. Within American and British suffrage scholarship there are varying discussions of arguments which call for women's suffrage on the basis that women should have the same rights as men, and arguments which call for the legitimization of female voters because they will have a beneficial effect on particular imperial, racial, and social issues. This distinction has been described in differing terms and with various explanations. In 1965, in her very influential treatment of the American suffrage debate, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement*, historian Aileen Kraditor contrasted arguments "from natural rights" with arguments "from expediency," and thus emphasized
the pragmatic dimension of later suffrage discourse.\(^9\) Barbara L. Epstein, in her book on the American temperance movement, speaks of arguments from justice versus arguments from expediency, and rhetorical scholar Karlyn Kohrs Campbell contrasts arguments from natural rights with ones from morality in *Man Cannot Speak for Her*. Historian Sandra Stanley Holton characterizes the distinction as lying between “radical feminism” (or a “humanist perspective” which emphasizes the principle of gender equality) and “social feminism” (or an “essentialist perspective” which insists on innate female qualities that make women more moral and altruistic than men) (*Feminism and Democracy* 17). She notes that, rather than abandoning the humanist perspective, British suffragists “added, and gave increasing prominence to, an essentialist case for women’s political emancipation with little apparent awareness of some of the contradictions involved in so doing” (17). Holton is one among several critics also to point out that the differentiation between the two kinds of arguments “inevitably oversimplifies the historical reality” (17).

Canadian suffrage scholarship of the last twenty years, too, often distinguishes between pragmatic arguments for suffrage and those emphasizing a fundamental equality between men and women. Just how the two branches of arguments might have been linked or de-linked in the course of the Canadian suffrage campaign is imagined differently by

\(^9\) See also William O’Neill, *Everyone Was Brave*. O’Neill argued that the suffrage movement was a failure in so far as it did not produce true equality between men and women. His term “social feminism” refers to the activism of the early equality feminists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In his view, emphasis later shifted to the “unfeminist” goal of winning the ballot as an aid to reform.

Ian Tyrell reexamines Kraditor’s and O’Neill’s arguments in *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire: The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective*. His work emphasizes how effective the moral reform discourse of the WCTU was in establishing women’s rights in several countries.
different scholars. In one view, the co-existence of arguments for equal human rights and arguments for a maternal politics is phrased as a philosophical or logical contradiction. This contradiction is located between a belief in the equality and sameness of the political ambitions of men and women and a presumption of feminine superiority. In 1972, Veronica Strong-Boag observed that, accordingly, arguments fluctuate “erratically between the two philosophical poles, the confusion hidden for the short term in the overriding goal of enfranchisement” (Introduction ix). In her recent study of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century dramatic texts by Canadian women, Kym Bird speaks of “women’s contradictory relation” toward politics: on the one hand, “they struggle towards social and political emancipation,” while on the other “they affirm patriarchal structures and the ideology of separate spheres” (5).

Other scholars, such as Wayne Roberts in 1979, say that through their decades-long campaign suffragists unfortunately moved away from earlier ideals of fundamental equality rights. In saying so, Roberts echoes Kraditor’s prominent interpretation of the American suffrage debates, analyzing the relationship between equality and expediency as a question of chronology rather than logic. Roberts suggests that the National Council of Women of Canada’s (NCWC) 1910 endorsement of suffrage—an endorsement which proved to be a strong catalyst in the Canadian suffrage campaign—was part of “a general reform trend to divorce suffrage from the question of women’s human rights” (23). Roberts draws this conclusion because the NCWC “linked suffrage with women’s supposedly inbred capacities for self-denial and purity” (23). In other words, the NCWC based its suffrage arguments almost exclusively on a belief in women’s difference from men, emphasizing women’s supposed maternal qualities and desire for purity. Roberts, therefore, diagnoses a
deliberate trend to distinguish the question of suffrage from the question of women's human rights, questions which he considers intimately linked.

Scholarship since the 1990s by authors such as Mariana Valverde (""When the Mother""), Janice Fiamengo ("Rediscovering"), Jennifer Henderson, and Cecily Devereux (Growing a Race) has increasingly investigated patterns of racism and imperialism in first-wave Canadian feminist writings. From these discussions of racist underpinnings, new interpretations of the nature of suffrage arguments have arisen. In particular, the arguments of maternal feminists are revealed as being in close contact with racist and imperialist discourses. For instance, in her 1999 article "New Woman, New World," Cecily Devereux connects the rise of maternal feminism to the "expansionist discourses of the New Imperialism" (176). In the process, maternal feminism, with its concern for racial survival and national purity, replaces the by then much-vilified figure of the New Woman and her rebellious emphasis on female equality and independence. Devereux suggests that we can credit some of the success of the Canadian suffrage movement to women's "consciousness of their function in the progress of empire" and the attendant "much more persuasive, race-based (and deeply racist) rhetoric" which partly distinguishes the Canadian from the British suffrage campaign (180). Like Roberts and Kraditor, Devereux sees a change across time where earlier suffrage arguments tended to be more interested in equality and natural rights than later ones. But she does not attribute this change to a desire for expediency. For her, this shift is aligned with an increasingly prominent imperialist discourse and its influence on reform debates particularly in Canada.

Despite the simplifying tendency of this contrast between equality arguments and morality or maternal arguments, let us stay with it for a moment in order to draw out some
important issues of situationality. Holly McCammon, Lyndi Hewitt, and Sandy Smith come close to a discussion of the suffrage debate as a rhetorical situation when they engage in a sociological analysis of what they call strategic framing in U.S. suffrage argumentation. They apply framing theory in order to analyze the relationship between the composition of suffrage organizations and their use of arguments for justice and arguments for reform. The authors prefer to use the terms justice and reform in order to highlight how suffrage arguments were playing to differing beliefs; sometimes suffragists play to the belief that women are men's equals, and at other times to the idea that women should be given the ballot because they have unique womanly experiences and would bring a unique and reformist perspective to politics. The authors contend that much of "the framing work of movements is the outcome of an ongoing and strategic interaction between the movement and its broader environment"; they call this interaction "strategic framing" (531). "Framing" is the "interpretive and communicative work that movement actors do to bolster support for their movement and its cause" (530). Speakers provide certain frames for their arguments, they interpret conditions in a certain way, in order to win support from a variety of audience members such as "members, potential recruits, bystander publics, and policy makers" (530). In the course of suffrage campaigns frames are adapted dynamically to changing circumstances. In being responsive to the beliefs of audience constituencies, suffrage argumentation positions itself relative to pre-existing components of a situation. It does so in productive and active ways as differing types of responses are employed.

McCammon, Hewitt, and Smith are interested in finding out the factors which influence which frames actors emphasize at certain points of the debate. They find that on many occasions the interpretive frames used by American suffragists were not "simply
reflections of the collective identity of the various constituents of the movement," but rather that suffragists "shaped their arguments in ways that resonated with the beliefs and values of the audiences" and took advantage of the beliefs which were "present in the larger public discourse" (548). The authors find that the composition of suffrage associations' arguments changed when there was an anti-suffrage organization in their region, when they spoke to "social feminists" rather than "professional women," when politicians were their main addressees, and when they came from an area which was shaped by urbanization and industrialization. In other words, what arguments suffragists made at any one time depended less on the type of groups and organizations of which they were part and more on the audiences to whom they spoke and the social concerns that were present around them. This research indicates that the types of arguments are a function of the rhetorical situation.

As suffrage arguments resonated with current beliefs, they also spoke to current fears of, for instance, educated white voters being outnumbered by uneducated immigrant or black voters. While "framing decisions" respond to a "complex set of factors," the authors are able to identify a tendency (549). They find that justice arguments continued to be used throughout the U.S. suffrage campaign particularly when the primary audience were "lawmakers and professional women," whereas reform arguments were more frequent when addressing "social feminist organizations" (549). Unlike Kraditor, McCammon, Hewitt and Smith do not think justice arguments disappear; like Kraditor, though, they see an increased popularity of what they call reform arguments. In their analysis, factors that led to the increasing use of reform arguments were the entrance of a new generation of suffragists which had not been part of the abolition movement, the rising mobilization of anti-suffragists in the U.S., and the reform policies of the Progressive Era in American
politics. According to these authors, the way in which suffragists framed their arguments was "strategically motivated"—arguments did not "simply reflect" suffragists' views but "identity and strategy can work together" in the attempt to win the vote (548).

When McCammon, Hewitt and Smith speak of interpretive frames being responsive to the values of the audience and the beliefs of a larger public at the time, they speak of how particular suffrage arguments at particular times were rooted in analyses of their situation. By thinking of suffrage arguments in terms of strategic framing, they characterize these arguments as rhetorical moves, rather than as unshakeable convictions or unassailable proof. Suffrage arguments do not necessarily aim to become indisputable and imperative, but are, rather, formulated as practical reasons why women should be made part of political decisions. We can conceive of the arguments from natural rights and arguments from reformist or pragmatic (and also racist and imperial) concerns in terms of varying degrees and kinds of situationality. We can posit that suffrage arguments were formulated with the help of a variety of situational claims. As McCammon, Hewitt and Smith suggest, even arguments for equality, which on the surface appear to have a more universal rather than situational quality, are made with a particular audience in mind. Also, insofar as arguments from natural rights tended to emerge from the American anti-slavery movement, they were far from universal and, in fact, had a highly situational history.

As for the situationality in the Canadian suffrage debate, Canadian feminists declared, for instance, that Anglo-Canadian women needed political influence in order to further imperial goals and to guarantee the country's racial and social purity, that they deserved the vote because of their maternal responsibilities and abilities, and that a female electorate would bring more temperance and social reform activists into power. Such
descriptions of the political situation discursively produce exigences which are strongly tied to concerns that reach far beyond suffrage. These exigences arise from the discourse of the mother of the race; they are attuned to imperial, racial, and class anxieties; they take advantage of their links with the social reform movement; and they strongly align themselves with calls for temperance. When calls for suffrage were responsive to audiences and current public beliefs, they also opened for themselves rich possibilities for formulating exigences, for identifying problems that suffrage would solve.

The more the question of suffrage could be portrayed as relevant to a variety of other social concerns, the more a social need for suffrage could be made evident. The suggested need for suffrage could be made palatable to many different tastes. And perhaps this connection also functioned the other way around—a variety of social reform arguments could have been made palatable to suffragists who otherwise might have preferred to argue for natural equality rights. Suffrage arguments which claim that women should be able to vote because of principles of equality seemed to have had less recourse to exigences which arose from the social anxieties of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. We could propose that the rhetorical desire for exigence—the way in which our social contexts constantly invite suggestions for change and the way in which we constantly speak with a desire to effect change—does not easily facilitate formulations for fundamental equality rights. In turn-of-the-century Canada, suffrage writing more often found itself in the vicinity of discourses on temperance, immigration, prostitution, urban crime, or the First World War effort than of discussion on equal civil rights. The shifting articulations of exigences for women’s suffrage reflected this discursive landscape.
The positioning of suffrage arguments in relation to other debates also finds its expression in suffragists' activities across the spectrum of social reform. Carol Bacchi has traced the multiple memberships of those suffragists who were on the executive of suffrage organizations. She found that 25 percent of female suffrage executives were also members of temperance societies, and 37 percent participated in other reform organizations such as the Winnipeg's Women's Civic League, the McGill University Women's Club, societies for the "protection of the feeble-minded," child welfare associations, parks and playgrounds associations, or the Montreal Women's Club (5). Canadian suffrage organization came into its own within a vibrant landscape of social reform debates and amidst the formation of various associations for the betterment of Canadian society. While exigences are always aligned across discourses, suffrage discourse occurs in a landscape of exceedingly institutionalized and politically oriented ways in which Canadians participated in changing their society. In fact, the social reform movement constituted an expansive network for the continuing production of exigences. From a social reformer's perspective, Canadian civilization—still young and undeveloped—was in a perpetual need of redemption and progression.

The alignment of exigences in relation to each other follows political dynamics and positionings, and it constrains the resultant arguments. As they closely aligned themselves with temperance, suffragists spoke disparagingly of the negative influence that drunken immigrant and working-class husbands had not only on their families but also as voters. Immigrant and working-class men were an easy target which conveniently combined the interests of male, middle-class temperance activists and female, middle-class suffragists. The suggestion was that middle-class women were more qualified to vote and that they
would vote for temperance and against unconditional immigration. As a result, the underlying notion of female citizenship and political activism took the normative form of a middle-class voter who was concerned about the morals of the lower classes (see also chapter 4 on moral capital). Citizenship was configured not so much as a democratic right but as the Anglo-Canadian middle-class obligation toward producing and maintaining a socially purified and hierarchized society.

The demand of women’s participation in citizenship as a middle-class, Anglo-Canadian obligation is, on the one hand, a result of exigences from related debates such as those about temperance and the regulation of immigrant behaviour. As originating from aligned exigences, citizenship as obligation is, therefore, not the result of persuasion as it is used in a more classical understanding of rhetoric. On the other hand, the idea of citizenship as an obligation can also serve as a source for further exigences and demands. Wayne Roberts suggests that the women’s movement at the turn of the century might have pioneered “the modern concept of citizenship” (“Rocking” 19). When in 1909 women’s reformers confronted Ontario Premier Whitney’s opposition to female suffrage, they “challenged his view of a passive consumer relation between government and populace” (19). While Whitney argued that voting was a privilege which allowed legislators to gauge public opinion, suffragists insisted on voting as not a privilege but a duty. Citizenship as duty or obligation offers different possibilities for formulating exigences than does citizenship as privilege. While a privilege is granted at the government’s pleasure, a duty encourages citizens to oversee the activities of the government and its institutions. A citizen’s concern for all manner of social changes can be given political weight by being expressed as part of the duty to participate in the shaping and maintaining of one’s society.
The discourses of citizen's duty, social reform, racial purity, temperance, etc., offered a close-knit network of interrelated—and reciprocal—exigences, forming a market for exchange of exigences into which the question of natural rights and fundamental equality often did not fit as smoothly.

A Rhetoric of Movements: Women's Clubs and Associations

In "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," Barbara Biesecker proposes that we re-examine the "long-held conception of the rhetorical situation as an exchange of influences which defines the text as an object that mediates between subjects (speaker and audience)" (110). She questions the identity of that text and steers us away from understanding it as "constituted in a terrain different from and external to the particular rhetorical situation" (110). Biesecker asks us to rethink the rhetorical situation as an event structured "by a logic of articulation" (126). According to Biesecker, it is an event which marks "the articulation of provisional identities and the construction of contingent relations that obtain between them" (126). In other words, it is not a situation in which stable subjects influence each other in their actions, but it is a situation in which subject positions and their relations are formed. Extending the idea of articulation, we could say that as movements, the suffrage and temperance movements were constituted through a proliferation of articulations across different rhetorical situations. Thereby, the identity of the movement had to be constituted and come to life in many different situations. Part of the success of any movement is how well it can spread across diverse situations, and how well it can align itself with the characteristics and exigences of these situations. In this sense, a successfully articulated exigence is a well-repeated and oft-reformulated exigence.
A successful proliferation of suffrage articulations has to travel across different forms of articulation, it has to be effective in such diverse genres as in newspaper columns, during public speeches, in petitions, at meetings of women’s organizations, and during deputations to premiers and legislatures.

A few recent rhetorical studies make a similar point in relationship to examples of political change as they analyze how utterances often need to be repeated many times and in various genres for there to be a rhetorical effect. These studies often note how ineffective the individual utterance can seem in the context of the often long gestation periods needed for change to occur. John Brockman’s *Exploding Steamboats, Senate Debates, and Technical Reports* discusses how long it took for a campaign by American scientists and legislators to be successful in passing legislation that would stop the continuing human fatalities caused by exploding steam engines on steamboats. Even though in 1838 scientists at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia provided an authoritative report with up-to-date technical advice as well as a suggested draft of a bill to a Senate Select Committee, legislation was not passed and the explosions and deaths continued for another fourteen years. It was only through the cumulative effect of multiple rhetorical initiatives over an extended period of time that effective legislation came into being.

Similarly, in thinking about how civic engagement can be taught in university courses on rhetoric, Carolyn D. Rude observes that the adaptation of academic knowledge succeeds through multiple processes of persuasion over time, through “delivering a message repeatedly and in different media, actively seeking out audiences, and promoting action in response to the message” (272). Rude urges us to understand the rhetorical situation as “long-term, comprehensive, and complex” and to consider how “multiple
documents and other rhetorical acts may work together to change values and policies” (273).

The comprehensive and complex process which is required when instituting a desired change is part of the “mutual construing” of which Miller speaks when she describes exigence as social knowledge in “Genre as Social Action”—it is often an arduous and time-consuming process to produce a widely-shared opinion on the necessity of social and political change. Consequently, Wendy B. Sharer’s *Vote and Voice*, a rhetorical study of the political work which two American women’s organizations did after the vote was won, is conceived as an investigation into collective rhetorical practices. Sharer is interested in “the persistent persuasive practices that sustain movements in unfavourable times,” practices which “slowly, sometimes repetitively, cultivate broad receptivity to innovative arguments” (6). She also suggests that while those select individual texts which had a widespread impact deserve a place in the histories of rhetoric, we must also “remember the preceding rhetorical practices that cultivated a responsive audience for those texts” (6).

We should note that the view of rhetoric which is espoused by scholars such as Rude, Miller, and Sharer deliberately moves away from rhetoric as a study of canonical rhetors and famous speeches. While my analysis is motivated by many concerns which are similar to Sharer’s, I would like to go even further in distancing this study of political discourse from notions of strategic persuasive practices and innovative arguments. Biesecker argues in “Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric” that as feminist scholars of rhetoric we must learn to theorize the collective nature of discourse rather than focus on outstanding rhetors—something of
which Bitzer’s theory of the rhetorical situation can also be accused. For the feminist historiographer “the plurality of practices that together constitute the everyday must be conceptualized as a key site of social transformation and, hence, rhetorical analysis” (157).

According to Biesecker, not all feminist rhetorical research accomplishes that goal. For instance, she critiques Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s landmark study of 1989, *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, as continuing to plot its revisionist history “around the model of the individual speaking subject,” and thus attempting to produce a feminist rhetorical canon which perpetuates the view that effective rhetoric is “the outcome of strategic choices made among available techniques of persuasion on the part of an autonomous individual” (144). ¹⁰ Instead, Biesecker asks us to analyze the plurality of practices that constitute the everyday and suggests a feminist rhetorical analysis focussed on the collective nature of discourse. I would like to add that we must also pay attention to the collective processes which are involved when institutional structures produce discourse—discourse which can be feminist or not, everyday or out of the ordinary.

One of the collective environments in which multiple kinds of utterances could be produced and circulated were the many women’s clubs and organizations across Canada, including political equality leagues, branches of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, and women’s branches of professional organizations such as the Women Grain Growers’ Association. Other institutional structures which furthered the circulation of suffrage utterances included some religious organizations, labour groups, and newspapers, particularly those which invited suffragists to edit women’s pages. The proliferation of

¹⁰ For a response to Biesecker’s criticism, see Campbell’s “Biesecker Cannot Speak for Her Either.”
women’s clubs beginning in the 1890s and dramatically increasing after 1910 was a welcome and successful framework for an uptake of usually male-dominated, but generally non-controversial, genres connected to political and social engagement. Women in women’s associations kept minute books, wrote agendas, voted on propositions, circulated petitions, conducted recruitment drives, formed executives, and issued public statements.\(^{11}\) These women’s associations—only some of them were distinctly devoted to suffrage—concerned themselves with repeatedly producing rhetorical exigences.

Not surprisingly, from very early on women’s associations have been the most central element in the telling of Canadian suffrage history. Already in an 1895 review of “Woman Suffrage in Canada,” Edith M. Luke told the now canonical story of how in 1883 the Toronto Women’s Literary Club (founded in 1877) was reconstituted as the Canadian Women’s Suffrage Association—and thus the first Canadian suffrage society—with first Emily Howard Stowe and later her daughter, Augusta Stowe-Gullen, at the helm. Catharine L. Cleverdon’s authoritative study, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada* (1950), is structured in large part around provincial suffrage organizations. So much have suffrage associations become a dominant way of understanding the history of early Canadian feminism that Heather Murray in her book-length study of literary societies in nineteenth-century Ontario feels the need to remind us that, despite what most historical research on the Toronto Women’s Literary Club tends to suggest, we should not think of the club only in terms of its identity as a nascent suffrage organization. First and foremost

\(^{11}\) Composition theory might call this proliferation of writing among women club members a kind of “community literacy”: practices of knowledge production which developed outside a society’s long-established institutions (see, for instance, Miller, *The Formation of College English*).
it was still a literary club whose members read and discussed a good amount of literature—in addition to discussing politics. That our notion of the history of the suffrage campaign is clearly dominated by our understanding of the work of women’s associations and suffrage clubs is not just the result of the fact that women were more likely to save materials for archiving if these materials related to an established organization. It is also the result of women within organizational structures being more often inclined to write letters to premiers, to members of legislatures, and to editors and newspaper columns. Organized women were more likely to engage in situational rhetoric—to formulate exigences and social needs, and to address them to audiences which could help in remedying these needs—and they were more likely to collect these materials because they saw themselves as participating in a larger, an organizational effort to bring about these changes.

The organizational framework provided by women’s associations allowed women to garner attention—including newspaper reports—for activities such as the ones which Edith Luke names in her early history of Canadian suffrage. She mentions, for instance, how suffragists conducted a survey of women’s working conditions in Toronto companies, asked for the use of the Toronto Council Chamber for inaugurating the Canadian Woman Suffrage Association, sent petitions to local governments in favour of municipal voting rights for women, or organized speaking tours for American suffragists. These women’s organizations were productive sites for formulating and re-formulating exigences, and for bringing these exigences into circulation in a variety of genres.

As I mentioned, suffrage clubs and associations were only one part of the larger landscape of the Canadian club movement. One of the most active clubs, and the most supportive of women’s suffrage, was the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).
Branches of the WCTU had sprung up all across the continent and its members were actively engaged in various social reform projects. In Canada, the organization achieved national status as early as 1885 and was an outspoken supporter for suffrage even before national suffrage organizations became active. Also concerned with women’s issues—though only later supportive of suffrage—was the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC). Founded in 1893 by Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, the wife of Canada’s Governor General, it understood itself as an umbrella organization with which numerous local women’s clubs could become affiliated. Earlier on, these affiliations also included societies which did not endorse and even opposed the female franchise, among them many of the Local Councils of Women. But increasingly the NCWC became home to some of the many provincial and local suffrage societies, until in 1910 enough NCWC members were willing to vote for their organization’s support of female voting rights. While most suffrage organizations remained devoted to campaigning on a mostly local scale, the influence of the WCTU and the NCWC was particularly important in representing an image of a Canada-wide womanhood demanding civil rights.

In her famous 1915 feminist manifesto, In Times Like These, Nellie McClung describes women’s clubs as places where “[w]omen are helping each other to see,” where through interacting with each other they “are gaining a philosophy of life, which is helping them over the rough place of life” (34). For McClung, life’s roughness combined with the club-facilitated exchange of experiences is what “makes women think.” From this thinking

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12 In her study of the WCTU, historian Wendy Mitchinson notes that in the 1870s suffrage was still a divisive issue among WCTU members. But by the 1890s the union fully embraced women’s enfranchisement; as a result of “government intransigence” suffrage was “acknowledged as the weapon against the liquor interest” (“The WCTU” 159).
follow all manner of political conclusions, such as that “it is woman’s place to lift high the standard of morality” (34). McClung suggests that rather than be all too comfortable in their privileges, middle-class women should be interested in the welfare of others, that the unemployed remain just as hungry as they were if they are only fed on Christmas day, or that “the liquor traffic has contributed to the poverty and unworthiness of the parents” whose children are left in the care of the state (45). McClung argues that the sporadic acts of charity which philanthropically-minded women had dispensed for many years “merely smooth[ed] things over, without ever reaching the root” (46). Instead, through their newly formed “charitable institutions and philanthropic endeavours” women are now led “to do some thinking about causes” and about how social change might remedy these problems (46). In other words, women’s clubs are powerful agents of philanthropic activity, providing women with exigences and occasions for political participation.

In order to illustrate the necessity of women’s political organization, McClung tells the story of Mrs. B. The husband of Mrs. B.’s washerwoman had run away with all his wife’s earnings, leaving her with no home and all the children. In her attempt to help her employee, Mrs. B. finds out that the husband’s actions lie firmly within the rules of current property law. Appalled, Mrs. B joins a suffrage club and “makes speeches on the injustice of the law” (47). Mrs. B.’s philanthropic career begins “innocently enough, by making strong and durable garments for her washwoman’s children,” but it leads her “in the sacred realm of politics where prejudice says no women must enter” (47). Likewise, McClung continues, a woman is allowed to encourage factory girls to “walk in virtue’s ways all she likes,” but if she advocates changes in sanitation she “will find herself again in that sacred realm of politics—confronted by a factory act on which no profane female hand must be
McClung narrates a compelling development. First, by virtue of their roles and nature women are and should be interested in charity and in helping others. But the more they immerse themselves in this field, the more they come to understand deeper causes and connections, and the more they benefit from organizing and institutionalizing their charitable work. In turn, clubs and organizations enable new understandings and new political behaviours.

In McClung’s view, questioning women’s living conditions and organizing women’s clubs transports women firmly into the realm of politics—with its attendant rhetorical genres. Repeatedly, writers like McClung point out that long-established genres of female public engagement—such as dispensing food at Christmas, instructing female factory workers in virtuous behaviour, discussing household management issues in women’s pages—are limited in their ability to truly improve the conditions of women’s lives. McClung’s views are echoed by Mrs. Lawrence Doran, who in a letter about “Women Lagging Behind” to the women’s page of The Grain Growers’ Guide (a very reform-minded journal for Prairie grain growers’ associations) bemoans the triviality of some of the concerns that guide women’s-page discussions. She declares that women’s pages contain “[n]othing more soul-inspiring than complaints about the shortcomings of their husbands, their comparative power resisting temptations, when certain important family events are expected to occur; how many children they have who are old enough to read certain booklets, the amount of work to do, and their wages, or lack of wages.” Instead, she would rather see women engage in the kind of letter writing which men engage in. Mrs. Doran speaks of “splendid letters from men urging needed reforms and their opinions as to the best method to bring them about.” In other words, she would like women
to write letters which are situational and rhetorical in a more political sense, identifying political and social exigences and suggesting measures for their solution. Mrs. Doran would like more women to experience the same exigence she experiences, and react in the same way she does, by writing letters that espouse social and political reforms.

In the same issue of the *Grain Growers’ Guide*, Francis Marion Beynon, the magazine’s women’s page editor at the time, heartily agrees with Mrs. Doran. “[M]any women need to have a broader outlook on life,” Beynon says in her response to “Women Lagging Behind.” For that purpose she urges “the formation of Women’s Clubs” in order to interest women “in the question of the political standing of women.” Like McClung, Beynon sees a direct relationship between women’s political concerns, the form of their rhetorical utterances, and their organization through women’s clubs. Both Beynon and McClung suggest that women’s clubs offer women more effective ways of formulating social and political needs, or exigences, and of suggesting solutions for these needs. By broadening their political perspectives, members will learn how to address their grievances more forcefully and to the right audiences; in Bitzer’s sense, they will formulate their exigences in a more rhetorical way. At the same time, the rising membership in women’s clubs for which Beynon and McClung call will also lead to an increase in circulation of these exigences.

As part of the Canadian club movement, women deliberately appropriated organizational methods that had been established mostly by men for all manner of political and social purposes. There are a variety of studies which detail this kind of strategy within the early women’s movements: the adoption of existing structures which have proven popular and successful among men for women’s social and political needs. For instance,
Susan Zaeske describes how in the early 1800s American women created political roles for themselves in the absence of electoral rights through the writing and promoting of abolitionist petitions. Historian Michelle E. Tusan details how British women’s journals of the 1870s imitated the layout and style of established newspapers in order to give themselves the same credible appearance.

In her work on the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), Veronica Strong-Boag notes how women’s relationships to male organizers helped knit together the Canadian reform community. Most members of the NCWC, for example, were “the wives, mothers, daughters or sisters of progressively-minded men” (The Parliament of Women 32). That women’s organization followed the models laid out by male reformers is a “hardly surprising phenomena in an era characterized by extensive male cooperation” (32). Many women’s associations were founded as women’s branches of already existing, male-run missionary or trade societies, including one of the key provincial suffrage associations, the Saskatchewan Women Grain Growers. Like men’s provincial and national labour unions and Protestant church alliances, like the Canadian Manufacturers Association and the provincial grain growers’ associations, women’s organizations also started to move from the local level toward wider, provincial and national alliances. Several religious and welfare societies (e.g. the WCTU, YWCA, the Girls’ Friendly Society) and cultural

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13 For a Canadian example of how, through petitions, women were able to demand what was due to them in pensions and subsidies, influence decisions on moral issues and lobby governments without the vote, see Gail Campbell’s “Disenfranchised but not Quiescent: Women Petitioners in New Brunswick in the Mid-Nineteenth Century.”
associations (e.g. the Aberdeen Association, the Women’s Art Association of Canada) achieved national status by the 1890s (see Strong-Boag “Setting the Stage”).

The establishment of suffrage clubs and the borrowing of the formal structures of clubs, their debates and resolutions, speeches and votes, minutes and committees, was a way of creating the conditions for new rhetorical situations to come into being. Clubs gave women an institutionalized structure from which to formulate suggestions for social and political change. Foucault suggests in “The Order of Discourse” that in every society discourse is produced under the constant purview of institutions. Discourse is at once “controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures,” and it is controlled out of feelings of anxiety about the powers and dangers of discourse, to “gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality” (52).

Within any discourse there develops a desire to control the conditions of this discourse. Women who formed literary clubs, temperance societies, and political equality leagues were thus producing the conditions that governed the discourse under the purview of these societies. In this way—creating institutions whose role is to exclude by controlling

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14 In her article on “The WCTU: ‘For God, Home and Native Land’,” Wendy Mitchinson lists the following Canadian women’s clubs which were formed in the latter part of the nineteenth century: the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Eastern and Western Division (1876), the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church (1881), the Girls’ Friendly Society of Canada (1882), the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Canada (1885), the Woman’s Auxiliary to the Board of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (1885), the Woman’s Baptist Missionary Union of the Maritime Provinces (1885), the Dominion Women’s Enfranchisement Association (1889), the Woman’s Art Association of Canada (1890), the Dominion Order of the King’s Daughters (1891), the National Council of Women of Canada (1893), the Young Women’s Christian Association (1893), the National Home Reading Union (1895), the Aberdeen Association (1897), the Victorian Order of Nurses (1898), the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (1900) (225).
utterances and memberships—they were aiming to *include* themselves in the political field. Let me give a few examples of such exclusions.

A general system of exclusion was at work in the way in which Canadian women’s clubs favoured an Anglo-Canadian middle-class membership. Carol Bacchi provides some statistics from her study of the executives of Canadian suffrage organizations. Her sample includes 156 female and 44 male suffrage leaders\(^\text{15}\):

- 60 percent of the women were employed outside the home, mostly in professions such as journalism, medicine, teaching, law, commerce. In comparison, in 1911 only 14.3 percent of the total female population was gainfully employed. The housewives among the suffrage leaders tended to have husbands who were professionals, clerics, or businessmen.\(^\text{16}\)
- Of 156 female executive members, 33 held an MA or a doctoral degree, 17 had a BA, 13 had attended normal school, 12 graduated from Ladies’ Colleges and Collegiate Institutes, and 5 were educated privately. Over 50 percent of the male executives held university degrees.
- Almost all the members of the executive were native-, British-, or American-born, and were either Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, or members of other Protestant churches. (4-5)

This tendency to include only certain members of society in the executive of suffrage societies evidently re-enacts systems of social and professional exclusion that were already firmly in place in Canadian society. While, along with other reform societies, suffrage organizations spoke for the welfare of working- and lower-class women, they had very few of these women among their ranks. Indeed, in 1895, Agnes Maule Machar criticized the

\(^\text{15}\) Bacchi does not provide an exact list of organizations. She also does not mention the time span covered in her survey, but seems to imply that she studied the composition of suffrage society executives from 1877 to 1918. She focuses on executives because there is not enough data on rank and file members. Names and identities of executives were gathered through searches of newspaper articles and association minutes and letters.

\(^\text{16}\) See also chapter 1 in Strong-Boag’s *The Parliament of Women* for a discussion of how voluntary activity related to women’s economic and educational status.
National Council of Women for its "class prejudice" and "high pretensions" which stood in the way of its claim to "represent the interests of the women of Canada" ("The Woman’s National Council" 968).

The tendency to favor certain kinds of suffrage members over others functions as a control for who was allowed to speak about suffrage and who was to represent Canadian suffrage associations in the Canadian public. The discursive control exerted by suffrage associations extended to the kinds of things that could be said about suffrage. Exclusionary practices were also in place on the level of utterances made by women’s clubs’ members. One kind of commentary which most Canadian suffrage organizations sought to control was the suggestion that Canadian suffragists were similar to or should adopt similar methods as English militant suffragettes. As I argue in chapter 2, the discussions about the inappropriateness of English militancy for the Canadian scene indicate Canadian suffragists’ fear of losing their status of inclusion in what was considered legitimate political behaviour. Suffragists and anti-suffragists alike were critical of the effects created by the image of the militant suffragette. Militant methods were considered to show women as having at once too much masculinity and not enough emotional control. As women were understood to still be in the process of learning how to act in the political field, emotional displays which were judged as unbecoming of women stood in the way of this newly learned political activity.

In the particular case of Flora MacDonald Denison the desires for controlling memberships and utterances come together when she was ousted from the Canadian Suffrage Association (CSA). In 1910, Denison had been one of the key founders of that organization, and was also its president. She is generally characterized as one of the most
egalitarian and uncompromising of Canadian suffragists (see Gorham; Williams), and she frequently expressed her sympathy with the situation of the English militant suffragettes. She was also an ardent critic of the more conservative policies of some of the Local Councils of Women (see Gorham). In 1914, Denison’s approval of militancy resulted in the annulment of her membership in the CSA. During a visit to England in 1913, Denison decided to sign on as a member of Emmeline Pankhurst’s Women’s Social and Political Union and also spoke at a large meeting at Caxton Hall. Several members of the Canadian Suffrage Association thought such a membership not becoming of the president of their organization, and Denison was forced to resign her presidency. After having worked tirelessly as one of the most outspoken of Canadian suffragists and the person who most actively represented Canada at international suffrage conferences, Denison’s ousting from the organization spelt the saddening end of her involvement in the Canadian suffrage campaign. The Denison files at the University of Toronto’s Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library hold an extravagant leather booklet containing a beautifully hand-painted and handwritten card from thankful officers and members of the Canadian Suffrage Association. It commends Denison on her unceasing work for the ideals of equity and justice for women, and lists among her many accomplishments her participation in international suffrage conferences, her generosity toward other suffragists, and the writing of her suffrage column in the Toronto Sunday World. The appreciation which is expressed in this card indicates that her dismissal from the organization arose mainly from concerns about the public

17 After she moved to New York in 1916, she worked briefly as a paid speaker and organizer for the New York State Women’s Suffrage campaign; she also increasingly turned her attention to a group of Canadian followers of Walt Whitman’s philosophy. She published the Whitmanite magazine The Sunset of Bon Echo.
perception of the Canadian suffrage movement—concerns about being aligned with organizations which pursued suffrage by the highly controversial militant means (see chapter 2 on the Canadian reception of suffrage militancy).

We have come to see that the production of utterances within a rhetorical situation is rarely a momentary process. The request for a wide-reaching change such as granting women the vote for federal and provincial elections necessitates a longer-lasting commitment to this particular exigence. It necessitates that utterances be dispersed across different genres for longer periods of time. It necessitates the formation of institutional structures which facilitate and maintain this dispersal, and which at the same time also regulate the conditions of that dispersal. These conditions are restricting as much as they are enabling the production of suffrage utterances, for they regulate who can speak within and for the institution and which arguments will be made and how.\footnote{An example which illustrates how women’s organizations enabled women’s political influence while disabling other kinds of speech in the same process are the campaigns for literary censorship run by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and the National Council of Women of Canada between 1890 and 1914 (see Wilson).}

The Call for Women’s Votes as a Serious Speech Act

Having to articulate one’s cause again and again in multiple genres means that exigences are formulated and reformulated in many cases without actually producing the change which is so central to Bitzer’s conception. In other words, what Bitzer describes as the aim of rhetorical utterances in his strict sense, “to produce action or change in the world,” is rarely achieved (“Rhetorical Situation” 302). The constant deferral of the called-
for action—deferral of the kind of action which is hoped to be instigated by the utterance—results in the proliferation of instances of rhetorical situations. Many times when we witness a speaker issue calls for change, these utterances are part of a host of instances in which this and other speakers have formulated that same exigence and called for similar action. This is the way political campaigns are made—deferral of the called-for action is followed by on-going reiteration in multiple genres. In this sense, one of the most productive aspects of the utterance is maintaining and building a belief in the utterance’s ability to bring about change, rather than the possibility of immediate change. With an emphasis on the belief in rhetorical action, our question turns from “In what way is an utterance able to produce change?” to “How do utterances maintain a belief in the possibility of change?”

Earlier I analyzed the degree to which formulations of exigence tap into surrounding rhetorical situations and their exigences. We could also think of these connections between rhetorical situations and their exigences as context; and context is indeed a term which frequently occurs in discussions of situational rhetoric. Lloyd Bitzer, for instance, writes: “When I ask, What is a rhetorical situation?, I want to know the nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse” (“The Rhetorical Situation” 300). And Scott Consigny speaks of the rhetorical situation as “an indeterminate context marked by troublesome disorder which the rhetor must structure so as to disclose and formulate problems” (178). Where Bitzer’s context resembles an already ordered room which the rhetor enters, Consigny envisions a chaotic space in need of some sorting out. I would like to imagine a situation in which some items are prearranged by previous debates, but in which there are also possibilities for new formulations and alliances. Participants have to
contend with situational and institutional constraints in expressing the social and political changes they would like to bring about. The task, then, is not just to create a model for the individual rhetorical situation and its context, but to understand the connections and structures that reach across situations.

In his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault suggests the idea of the "associated field" and its production of "statements" in lieu of the notion of "context." He is careful to distinguish the two from each other. The associated field is a complex web which turns sentences into statements; it is "made up of all the formulations to which the statement refers (implicitly or not), either by repeating them, modifying them, or adapting them, or by opposing them" (110). A statement always borders on other statements, Foucault says, but the borders "are not what is usually meant by 'context'," where context means "all the situational or linguistic elements" which motivate a formulation (110).

Foucault uses the term "statement" to describe a particular kind of utterance; he does not mean statements in the way we do in everyday language. The statement is a concept quite idiosyncratic to Foucault and at times hard to grasp—Dreyfus and Rabinow, for instance, once call it an "exotic species of speech act" (48). For Foucault, statements are not even necessarily utterances or sentences, but they can also be an image, a map, or a phrase. Rather than following linguistic rules, the statement functions according to the truth conditions of authoritative discourse. It does so in such a way that different instances of uttering the same sentence can constitute differing statements; and also the other way around: different sentences can express the same statements. Foucault's own example is: "The sentence 'dreams fulfil desires' may have been repeated throughout the centuries; it is not the same statement in Plato and in Freud" (116).
The statement's believability depends on more than mere context. According to philosopher Hubert Dreyfus and anthropologist Paul Rabinow in their influential analysis of Foucault's methodology, statements flourish in cultures which provide methods that “allow privileged speakers to speak with authority beyond the range of their merely personal situation and power” (48). It is the basis of an accepted method of thinking and debating—not situation and personal experience—which enables the authorized subject to make a serious truth claim. Foucault characterizes the statement’s relation to its surroundings in the following way:

Too repeatable to be entirely identifiable with the spatio-temporal coordinates of its birth (it is more than the place and date of its appearance),
too bound up with what surrounds it and supports it to be as free as a pure form (it is more than a law of construction governing a group of elements),
it is endowed with a certain modifiable heaviness, a weight relative to the field in which it is placed, a constancy that allows of various uses . . . (117)

When we consider whether utterances are statements, or aspire to be statements, we, therefore, are asked to take into account more than their particular rhetorical situation. We are asked to view them within the field of truth claims to which they point. Foucault says that the analysis of statements is always a historical analysis. However, it is not one which questions “things as to what they are hiding, what they were ‘really’ saying, in spite of themselves,” but one which questions what it means for statements to have appeared when and where they did (123). Exigences, too, should be studied according to the question of what it means for them to assert themselves when they did.
Exigences do not only serve to articulate a situation which needs to be changed, and responses to exigences are not only suggestions for steps to be taken. Exigences and their responses must also be something that we believe to be true, and they need to be portrayed as such by their proponents. They are intimately tied up with the production and circulation of truth claims. Some of the claims that suffragists managed to establish as “in the true” are, for instance, the suggestion that almost all women were naturally in favour of temperance or prohibition legislation, that women politicians would be less corrupt and more caring than male politicians, or that women’s suffrage was a progressive development which would inevitably reach all Western nations. Anti-suffragists countered with claims of their own—that their engagement in politics makes women more masculine, hysterical, and unattractive, that interest in politics and interest in home life are mutually exclusive, or that men and women are equipped with fundamentally different psychological traits.

As Dreyfus and Rabinow explain it, statements are “just those types of speech acts which are divorced from the local situation of assertion and from the shared everyday background so as to constitute a relatively autonomous realm” (47-48). Statements occur in the context of other speech acts and are articulated against the background of the everyday, but it is not these everyday or pragmatic contexts in which Foucault is interested. When he speaks of statements, therefore, Foucault directs attention away from their rhetorical situation. Yet, his perspective helps us theorize how the process of formulating exigences gains from what has come before the respective rhetorical situation. Dreyfus and Rabinow say that the speech acts which form statements “gain their autonomy by passing some sort of institutional test, such as the rules of dialectical argument, inquisitional interrogation, or empirical confirmation” (48). By passing these tests, statements come to be true in a way
which is independent from their situational context. In order to avoid the ambiguity of the term “statement,” Dreyfus and Rabinow suggest calling Foucault’s statements “serious speech acts,” the kinds of speech acts through which “an authorized subject asserts (writes, paints, says) what—on the basis of an accepted method—is a serious truth claim” (48).

Dreyfus and Rabinow adopt the phrase “serious speech act” from J.L. Austin’s speech act theory. One of Austin’s central contentions is that the speech act derives its meaning not from the speaker’s intention but from the set of conditions within which it appears—and among these conditions is that the speaker speaks seriously. For Austin the serious speech act is the norm, whereas its counterpart, the non-serious speech act is “parasitic upon [the] normal use” of the serious speech act (22). The non-serious speech act is described as a speech act which is not backed up by the speaker’s conscious agreement—it could be uttered as irony, fiction, under duress, or accidentally (21). In contrast to Austin’s discussion of serious and non-serious speech acts, Dreyfus and Rabinow have something less situational in mind when they refer to Foucault’s statements as “serious speech acts.” In fact, they argue that Foucault did not consider his statements as speech acts because he is not interested in “the attempt to work out the rules which govern the production of each type of speech act” or “the local, pragmatic context” which is used

19 See Jacques Derrida’s “Signature Event Context” in Limited Inc for a critique of Austin’s view on the relationship between serious and non-serious speech acts. Limited Inc also includes a summary of John Searle’s “Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida” and Derrida’s subsequent rejoinder “Limited Inc abc....”

20 John Searle provides a more elaborate discussion of the non-serious speech act in fictional writing in “The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse.”
to define types of speech acts (47).\textsuperscript{21} It is the institutional tests—following rules of argument, interrogation, empirical confirmation, and evidence—which transform speech acts into "serious speech acts," which produce statements as something much more autonomous than Austin's or Searle's speech acts.

The idea that rhetorical utterances need to appear as true is also central to rhetorical theorist Maurice Charland's thinking about situational rhetoric. His eloquent defence of rhetorical studies in "Rehabilitating Rhetoric" is deeply informed by Bitzer's notion of rhetoric as functional communication. This pragmatism, says Charland, is the valuable contribution which rhetoric should make to critical and cultural studies, because too often the political focus of critical and cultural studies seems to be "displaced by the theorizing of pleasure or the pleasure of theorizing" (261). In Charland's words, rhetorical study has the ability to eliminate a blindspot of critical and cultural studies: "It is against their reluctance to admit the presence of the rhetorical tradition and to entertain rhetorical theory's challenge to think about politics and power pragmatically, from within a social formation's institutions and discourses, and from within the realm of the possible" (261). It is from within this realm of the possible that serious truth claims must emanate if they want to be rhetorically successful. In the process of producing new social knowledge, of offering "public interpretations of social experience," rhetoric makes "normative claims"—it forms prescriptives, it fosters ethical judgements (256). It does so "not in terms of what is, but in terms of what should be" (256).

\textsuperscript{21} For another discussion of whether Foucault's statements can be considered speech acts see also Carole Blair's "The Statement: Foundation of Foucault's Historical Criticism."
In other words, from within the experience of a particular situation, rhetoric articulates exigences and thereby imagines improved conditions and a better situation. But, cautions Charland, rhetoric can only succeed "to the degree its audience recognizes or discovers a ‘truth’ in these articulations" (256). In fact, audiences of rhetorical utterances are the agents of living and enacting these judgments; audiences are a "mediating ground" (256). Serious truth claims, therefore, must come to be shared in order to be considered true. It is for the speaker as much as the audience to achieve such commonality.

Foucault’s notion of the statement teaches us that institutionalized rules of discourse provide parameters, or constraints, for reaching this commonality, and that one of the markers of the established truth claim is that it seems to be independent (and independently true) of the particular situation in which it is uttered. While this might seem so, Charland’s and Bitzer’s notion of audience as a mediating ground reminds us that while the statement appears and re-appears as independent of its situation, this truth claim is still situated: it lives in the agreement, the mutual knowledge, between audience and speaker.

In the case of women’s suffrage discourse, the claim that women needed the vote in order to improve society and politics is a claim made with the aim of becoming a serious speech act, of passing the institutional tests of public debate and turning itself into a speech act which will be widely accepted as true. In terms of situational rhetoric, the hope that suffrage claims will become serious speech acts has to be translated into the belief that the desired rhetorical action (women gaining the vote) will in due course become a true and inevitable event. In the 1910s female suffrage did indeed come to be seen as an

22 See also Bitzer’s article “Functional Communication” where he calls audience the “mediating influence” by which an exigence can be modified (23).
unavoidable political change, particularly in the international context of more and more Western nations moving towards it. In his annual review of the year 1909 in Canadian politics, John Castell Hopkins characterizes the international movement toward suffrage as an event that eventually and unavoidably had to arrive in Canada. "It was bound to reach Canada sooner or later," he says, and continues with a list of countries, that the "United States experiments along the Woman's Suffrage line, the fact of all Australia and New Zealand having put the idea into operation, the continuous demand for women's aid in British electoral contests of the last 20 years, the great influence of the Primrose League in British politics, made it inevitable" (244). Further evidence of this sense of inevitability—regardless of the particular arguments on which the call for suffrage was based in any one situation—is provided by Canadian anti-suffragist writer Stephen Leacock when in 1915 in one of his scathing condemnations of women's campaign for the franchise he concedes:

Let it be admitted quite frankly that women are going to get the vote.

Within a very short time all over the British Isles and North America—in the United States and the nine provinces of Canada—woman suffrage will soon be an accomplished fact. (8)

A possible condition for how, in a Canadian context, the call for suffrage might become a serious speech act—for its passing of the institutional tests—was formulated when Ontario

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23 References to English-speaking or European nations which had already gained the vote for women became a recurring part of talk about suffrage. For instance, a 1909 Toronto World editorial in favour of suffrage says: "Female suffrage is in force now in Australia, New Zealand, and several of the United States. It has not brought about any revolution, nor will it when it comes in Britain or Canada" ("The Enfranchisement of Women").
Premier Whitney (along with a number of newspaper commentators\textsuperscript{24}) demanded evidence for the assertion that a female majority actually wanted to have voting rights. Whitney's stipulation relies on the question of quantity: we can only take suffragists' claim that women need voting rights seriously if we have evidence that they speak not only for themselves but for the majority of women. Whitney suggests that if the claim that Canadian society needs and Canadian women want female suffrage is to become a statement, then this claim needs to be distributed widely and be affirmed by a large number of Canadian women.

In a similar attempt at putting suffrage claims to the test, journalist and editor Goldwin Smith emphasizes the question of quality: of what quality—moral and rational—are the statements made by women who demand suffrage? Smith, a professed anti-suffragist, admits that when still living in England he had once signed one of John Stuart Mill's petitions for the equality of women. But upon entering North American society he "found the movement was received with mistrust by some of the best and most sensible women of his acquaintance" ("Female Suffrage" 69). According to Smith, these women "feared that their most valuable privileges, and the deepest sources of their happiness, were being jeopardized to gratify the political aspirations of a few of their sex" (69). Smith here

\footnote{24 For instance, anti-suffragist writer and physician Andrew Macphail writes in 1914: It is a matter of common knowledge that the feminist propaganda is confined to a small number of persons. Indeed it is their continual complaint that they cannot arouse their married sisters to a sense of the enormity which they endure. The average woman goes upon her way unmoved, loving and capable of being loved, now as beforetime, the subject of all verse, strong because she is weak, secure in the ideal, content to leave undisturbed that high, pure atmosphere in which men have decreed for themselves that she shall live and move and have her being. ("On Certain Aspects" 85)
echoes Whitney's rule of quantity. But, he adds, not only is the demand for suffrage not shared by all women, but the women who do share it are politically opportunist and have no regard for the happiness of all the other women. This is the kind of argument which was also used to discredit the more adventurous suffrage campaigners as hysterical and shrill and, therefore, an aberration of their sex. The more securely suffragists could position themselves within the parameters of conventional femininity, and the more persuasively they could claim to represent a majority of women, the more their calls for suffrage could be considered as "in the true." Smith is outlining his ideas about who is included in a believable, authoritative idea of woman and who are not, which women are qualified to make truth claims and which are not.

At this point, we can add another consideration to the issue of the earlier discussed equality arguments. We can argue that quite likely equality claims did not have the same status as serious speech acts (as statements which are "in the true" regardless of their situation) in turn-of-the-century Canada as they do now. At the same time at which the call for suffrage advertises itself as a serious speech act that is independent of the situation, it also bills itself as a fitting response to a particular rhetorical situation. Somewhat paradoxically, the statement for suffrage combines both the characteristics of the truth claim which is independent of the situation and the rhetorical claim which is very responsive to its situation—as perhaps any such political statement do. Bitzer describes the fitting response as that "word or phrase, a command, an argument, a speech" uttered in a situation which "clearly invite[d] a particular response" ("Functional" 37). Bitzer allows that sometimes situations invite several responses, and speakers can also misconceive the situation and which response befits it. Many suffrage arguments are exactly concerned
with convincing their audiences that women’s suffrage is a fitting response to the political and social situation. This case adds another possibility to Bitzer’s schema. Here, speakers are not so much reaching for the response that might be dictated by the situation, but rather attempting to convince their audiences of the fitness of their response. Among suffragists, the conviction that the claim for female franchise is both a serious speech act and a fitting response can serve as a point of identification and hopeful promise amid otherwise quite varied opinions. Whereas suffragists did not always agree on why exactly the country needed to grant women the vote (Should it be out of equality, a sense of nationality, concerns for class structure, Anglo-Canadian anxiety amid ethnic multiplicity?), or how to best argue and campaign for suffrage, they tended to agree on the question of suffrage per se.

My aim in this chapter has been to apply and modify Bitzer’s idea of situational rhetoric to the situation of women’s suffrage discourse. I suggest that the variety of situations in which arguments for female suffrage were uttered unsuccessfully (in Bitzer’s sense) does not mean that they were any less rhetorical. In fact, the success of suffragism as a movement can be measured by how well it managed to spread its utterances across different situations—even if most of the time these utterances were not rhetorically successful. Suffrage utterances were repeated under changing circumstances and with changing arguments. Since the change which rhetorical utterances are attempting to address did not always happen right away, Foucault’s idea of the statement can serve as a measure for the “rhetorical” in the absence of the intended change. In order to lead to the desired change, rhetorical utterances are not only utterances with the aim of changing a situation, but they must also be statements which their listeners increasingly come to
believe to be true. In the process, audiences of suffrage speech were intended to gain a new understanding of women as well as to come to share assumptions about the necessity of the enfranchisement of women. The claim for suffrage has to gain its authority by fitting itself into the political discourse at the time, by passing the institutionalized rules of various discourses, and by coming to be true in a way which is independent from the situational context of the utterance. The intertwined network of women’s and social reform clubs provided a multi-faceted venue for this gaining of authority, an institutional framework in which different arguments for suffrage could be formulated, re-formulated, circulated and thus controlled for the purpose of increasing their rhetorical effect.
Chapter 2

Uptake and Genre:
The Canadian Reception of Suffrage Militancy

The militant activism of English suffragettes between 1903 and 1914 was repeatedly reported in the Canadian press. In fact, reports on English militancy were among the few occasions when suffrage issues made it onto the front pages of Canadian newspapers. News about Canadian suffrage activities received limited coverage in mainstream media and, compared to British feminists, Canadian suffragists produced only a very small number of suffrage magazines and books.\(^{25}\) News about women’s rights activities in Canada reached the public mostly through meetings of women’s organizations, through speeches by Canadian, American, and British women’s suffragists,\(^{26}\) and through short reports in women’s pages of various newspapers. In the absence of prominent

\(^{25}\) As for journals devoted to suffrage, Canada’s most well-known magazine was *The Champion*, published by the Political Equality League in Victoria, British Columbia. Another suffrage magazine which has received some scholarly attention is *Freyja*, published by Icelandic women in Manitoba from 1898 to 1910 (see Kinnear).

\(^{26}\) Suffrage speakers who visited Canada from the United States were, for instance, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw (who came multiple times), Susan B. Anthony, Julia Ward Howe, May Wright Sewell, Mary S. Howell (involved in organizing work for the Dominion Women’s Enfranchisement Association in Toronto), and Senator Helen Robinson of Colorado. Aside from Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst, suffragist Mrs. Philip Snowden and suffragettes Barbara Wylie and Mrs. Borrmann Wells also came on visits from England (see, for instance, Cleverdon 16).
suffrage news from Canada, the public perception of suffragism was guided largely by newspaper commentary on English militant activities and American suffrage campaigns. Thus, reports on the militancy which occurred in other countries became an integral part of the public perception of the Canadian suffrage movement.

Canadian newspaper reports of British suffragette activities allow us to witness the manner in which the idea of militancy reached across the Atlantic. We are able to see how these activities were refigured in a Canadian context, calling for a positioning of Canadian suffragism in relation to English militancy. Lecture tours in Canada by English suffragettes Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst made this positioning even more imperative. Their visits left behind one of the lingering questions of Canadian suffrage research: even though Emmeline Pankhurst was well received in Canada, why did Canadian suffragists not adopt some of her forms of militant political protest? Why did they not engage in this genre of political action? Was there something particularly conservative about Canadian suffragism? I approach these questions through an analysis of how suffrage and anti-suffrage commentary positioned Canadian feminism in relation to suffrage militancy. Such
an analysis adds a new dimension to the historical work which traces the organizational and personal links between suffrage activities in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere.

In her 1975 study of English suffragettes in Canada, Deborah Gorham points out that women in England fought much longer and in more radical ways for suffrage than Canadian women. In his 1965 treatment of the Ontario suffragist campaign, Brian Tennyson also uses this question as his starting point. He writes: “Why did Ontario grant woman franchise in 1917, a year before the British government made its only partial concession? And how did it happen that it was William H. Hearst, a Conservative premier, who brought about this radical electoral change?” (115). Tennyson believes that Hearst’s sudden change of mind was not so much the result of successful suffrage campaigning but

27 For instance, Sandra Adickes’s “Sisters, Not Demons: The Influence of British Suffragists on the American Suffrage Movement” details how Harriot Stanton Blatch’s (daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton) and Alice Paul’s experience with British suffragism helped shape the American suffrage campaign.

In “From Anti-Slavery to Suffrage Militancy: The Bright Circle, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the British Women’s Movement,” Sandra Stanley Holton emphasizes the informal network among the women of the Bright family circle, a network which linked the early British and US American feminist movement. She notes that private hospitality and friendship were as important in the functioning of suffragism as were joint membership in organizations.

In “Woman Suffrage Around the World,” Ellen Carol DuBois counteracts views of the women’s suffrage movement as conservative and instead stresses the cooperation between different national movements as well as their roots in left-wing politics and international socialism.

Bonnie S. Anderson’s Joyous Greetings: The First International Women’s Movement, 1830-1860 investigates the similarities between twenty European and American women who wrote and lectured on women’s issues between 1830 and 1860. She finds that socialism and the anti-slavery movement helped build an alliance of international women activists.

Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism by Margaret McFadden traces the “pre-organizational matrix” of transatlantic networks and webs of friendships which bound together North American and European feminists from the 1820s to the 1880s.
special factors were at work in 1917—most prominently Canada’s participation in the First World War—which brought Ontario women the vote. Likewise, Carol Lee Bacchi asserts in her book on Canadian suffragism that “the relatively easy victory” was due to several factors: “the moderate character of the movement,” “the nature of its leadership” (meaning that most Canadian suffragists were social reformers and members of a social elite), and “political opportunism” (3). In contrast to the Canadian situation, Britain had a suffrage movement from the 1860s on. This movement manifested itself in the form of numerous political organizations for women, and was propagated in various publications, magazines, and novels. By the measure of its own mass publishing and public campaigning, Canadian suffragism was much less overt. Yet, English women were granted the vote at roughly the same time as Canadian women.\(^{28}\) Given this discrepancy, Gorham wonders if the more radical activities of English suffragettes were unnecessary. She concludes that this is not the case and that, instead, Canadian suffragists gathered strength from the struggles of women elsewhere and used them to their advantage. In terms of the relations between British militant and Canadian moderate suffragists, she suggests that “suffragettes’ supporters in Canada simply ignored those facts from which they did not feel they could draw strength” (109).

What Gorham describes as a selective gathering of strength I will consider as processes of positioning through genre and uptake. I use the terms *genre* and *uptake* in the

\(^{28}\) Since New Zealander women were the first to receive suffrage (in 1893), and since they did so after only a short campaign, the historical discussion of their suffrage movement also tends to emphasize the conservatism of the campaign (see Patricia Grimshaw’s landmark account *Women’s Suffrage in New Zealand*). Ellen Carol DuBois’ “Woman Suffrage Around the World” critically discusses the assumption that the less radical women’s suffrage movements were largely conservative movements.
way Anne Freadman has defined them. Texts become identified as being of a certain genre in their interaction with other texts. When a text finds a respondent, the text’s generic identity can be confirmed, but it can also be modified. Freadman’s understanding of genre as residing in the interrelations between texts and utterances is particularly appropriate for the Canadian discussion of militancy. While militancy can be said to have played an influential role in Canadian suffrage history, it has done so less through its practice and more through an ongoing discussion of its meaning. In Freadman’s terms, the issue of militancy received a great deal of uptake. Uptake in this sense is the selection of a discursive object. It can be the choosing of an answer to a question or invitation, the agreement or disagreement following a proposition or, in more concrete terms, an editor’s decision to include a report in a newspaper. Uptake crosses the boundaries between institutions and discourses; it mediates between genres. Suffrage militancy in England received uptake in the political reporting of Canadian newspapers. In turn, the news reports encouraged uptake by both suffragist and anti-suffragist columnists and letter writers, with suffragist uptake often challenging the generic status of the original news report. In the process of this uptake, respondents articulated their stance in relation to militancy. When suffragists discussed militancy they also oriented themselves toward larger questions of femininity and politics, women’s social role, or the nature of progress. The introduction of issues of militancy into the Canadian context thus appeared not so much as an act of support from across the Atlantic. Rather, it was one of the factors which determined how Canadian suffragism oriented itself within its discursive context.
The Rhetorical Function of Militancy

I roughly follow the convention of distinguishing between suffragists and suffragettes according to their use of activist methods. The term suffragist tends to describe sympathetic women and men as well as key organizers and officeholders who campaigned within the boundaries of accepted female conduct; suffragette refers to those who used what were described as militant methods. In Canada the distinction was used not only to differentiate methods of political engagement but also to set Canadian suffragists apart from English suffragettes. Our contemporary use of the distinction between militant and non-militant methods carries its problems. Many of the activities by militants would not have been called thus and would not have drawn as much indignation if they had been carried out by men.29 Between 1903 and 1908 during the British campaign, innocuous asks

29 The women’s page editor of Saturday Night magazine poignantly illustrated that the kinds of actions for which women were punished frequently went unnoticed when carried out by men:

One case which seems to annoy the Suffragettes a good deal and of which they have made much capital is that of Miss Brewster, who was condemned in Liverpool to six weeks’ hard labor for damaging—to the extent of three shillings and ninepence—her prison windows in August last. They point out that in Mr. Lloyd George’s constituency a number of men who broke the windows of the Conservative Club were not arrested and punished; and that a man recently arrested for knocking down a woman with a baby in her arms and loosening two of the woman’s teeth—she was not his wife so he couldn’t claim he was acting within his rights—was only fined five shillings and costs. (Madame, 12 Feb. 1910)

And in 1912, The Champion, the magazine of the Political Equality League in Victoria, ironically remarked:

The other day a political convention at Greenville, Tenn., ended in a fight, after six men had been knocked down with chairs. If anything of this kind had happened in a woman’s club it would have been quoted from one end of the country to the other as proof that women are unfit to vote. (“Corrected”)
such as asking a question at a public meeting or interrupting a speaker caused women to be labelled a “militant” suffragette. Even the more confrontational militant actions—such as the heckling of MPs and the attacks on property which intensified in 1912 and included setting fire to pillar mailboxes and empty buildings, pouring acid on golf courses, slashing paintings and smashing windows—did not reach the same level of destruction which many previous political campaigns by men had produced. For instance, an article in the Boston Woman’s Journal, reprinted in 1913 in Victoria’s suffrage magazine The Champion, explains that although militancy is “wrong in principle” and “will lessen public sympathy for the suffrage cause,” it is also true that “the destruction of property by these women does not compare with the destruction of property committed by Englishmen agitating for a vote in our grandfather’s time” (A.S.B. 18). The article argues that female suffrage militancy compare neither to contemporary rioting for universal manhood suffrage in countries such as Hungary, not the violence committed by Ulster men in Ireland in their protest against the Home Rule Bill, nor the bodily injuries and assaults caused by some of the anti-suffragists in England.

With the introduction of the term militancy to English, American, and Canadian suffrage discourse also came a longstanding debate about what militancy means, why it is needed, and in what way it was an accurate description. As I continue to use the term militancy in my discussion of it as a concept of its time, I, of course, do not wish to repeat its gendered biases. Recent research has questioned the way in which the term militant is still used to distinguish certain branches of the British suffrage campaign (most notably the work of the Women’s Social and Political Union) from what are called the “constitutional” suffragists (like the women of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies).
Constitutional suffragism set itself apart from militancy by pursuing the vote through conventional, or constitutional, action to the exclusion of protests and hunger strikes. These suffragists drew on several constitutionalist issues, including the constitution’s insistence on the sovereignty of the people, the provision that citizens could petition the government and demand audiences with government members, and the fact that before the introduction of universal manhood suffrage the voting citizen was not described as male.

As Sandra Stanley Holton says in *Feminism and Democracy*, militancy is the “mode of campaigning, a style of agitation” that is held as the distinction between the two types of campaign, not questions of suffrage as such (4). Holton argues that if militancy involved “simply a preparedness to resort to extreme forms of violence,” then many constitutionalists would also be militants (4). Even if we take “militant” to mean membership in particular organizations, this assumption is complicated by the fact that many women belonged to a number of diverse suffrage societies. The distinction between militant and constitutionalist is not only difficult to apply, it “also tends to obscure those currents within the suffrage movement which cut across it” (4).

In *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, Laura Nym Mayhall observes that even though scholars have long questioned the validity of a simple dichotomy between militant and constitutionalist, this dichotomy remains a powerful organizing principle for understanding the differences between suffrage societies. Mayhall notes that some historians characterize militancy as an aberration, “a period of excess in women’s political activism, and one not particularly productive,” while others see it as both “a culmination and a transcendence of late-Victorian women’s political activism” (7). To understand militancy as the most commemorative aspect of suffrage activity is to “accept one extreme end of the campaign
as the whole campaign and to miss the continuum along which suffragettes practiced militancy” (7). We should ignore neither “the vital debate within the suffrage movement itself,” nor the wider political culture of the late nineteenth century which was “steeped in the constitutionalist idiom and infused . . . with a popular consciousness of the right of resistance to political tyranny” (“Defining Militancy” 342-43). According to Mayhall, British suffragists borrowed from a longstanding tradition of radicalism, including middle and working-class movements, trade unionists, intellectual radicalism, and Ulster unionism. Likewise, Holton suggests that “long-standing Quaker forms of social protest” including tax resistance were one of the sources of early militant practices (“From Anti-Slavery to Suffrage Militancy” 215).

The large spectrum of, and fluid membership between, militant and constitutionalist organizations in Britain did not quite have an equivalent in Canada. Militancy tended to be a spoken-about practice from afar, an unusual genre of political action for women. For instance, American women’s rights activist Dr. Anna Howard Shaw emphasized the difference between English militancy and North American suffragism when she spoke to the International Congress of Women in Toronto in June 1909. Shaw first noted that this third quinquennial Congress was “the most enthusiastic and representative” of all the international meetings she had attended, indicating that suffragism was now not only “one of the most popular of movements” but also “one of the most fashionable” (“Militant Methods not Necessary” 1). Given this success, she declared that it was “not necessary for us on this continent to adopt the militant methods of some of the British societies,” and that instead North American suffragists should continue with the kinds of activities with which
they were “making magnificent progress”: “public meetings, literature and organization” (1). Further on in the same newspaper article, *The World* explains:

The British movement was promoted by two armies, one the constitutional and the other known as the revolutionary. The latter was the one which adopted the militant methods, but it was not so strong numerically as the constitutional branch. Their object was, however, the same. It was the same in every country—equal franchise for men and women. (1)

In order to clarify the situation of the British suffrage campaign for a Canadian audience, *The World* here makes a clear distinction between two types of suffrage campaigners. Yet, the comment that both kinds of campaigners pursued the same political goal offers a balance which was typical for Canadian suffragists’ relation to militancy, a balance between upholding their own credibility by distancing themselves from militancy and maintaining membership within an international movement that could also include the possibility of militancy if it were warranted by the situation in one’s country.

Of the very few Canadian actions that could be counted as militant or related to militancy most arose from a direct connection to the English suffragettes and the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU). For instance, perhaps the most prominent such event occurred when Olivia Smith, who was Canadian-born but lived in England and was associated with the WSPU, stood up from the speaker’s gallery of the Ontario Legislature and proclaimed her objections to the fact that the Ontario legislators had not granted justice to women (see Cleverdon 33; Gorham 104). When Barbara Wylie, an English suffragette whose brother was a member of the Saskatchewan legislature, went on a speaking tour in Canada from September to December 1912, she even seemed to have planned to establish a
Canadian branch of the WSPU. However, Canadian suffragists responded by publicly distancing themselves from any direct influence of the WSPU (see Gorham), much like they did when Emmeline Pankhurst had suggested earlier that Canadians, too, should have a militant suffrage organization.30 In fact, as Pankhurst arrived for her first visit to Canada in November 1909, the pro-suffrage Toronto World explicitly remarked on the absence of anything that could be called spectacular suffrage activity. After the train had arrived at Toronto’s Union Station, “a winsome, wistful woman quietly stepped from a rear coach” and was “quietly passed out thru the bustling crowd” (1). Despite the term “bustling crowd,” the scene is a decidedly stately one with “no ostentation, no noise of shouting, no waving of the battle-ensign, ‘Votes for Women,’ just a dignified movement towards a conveyance” (“Emmeline Pankhurst Suffrage Leader Here” 1).

In the absence of Canadian suffrage militancy, there were at least two separate instances when comments on the possibility of militant action were made by outsiders to the Canadian suffrage campaign, and as a result were quickly denied by Canadian suffragists. After one of the suffrage bills by Labour MLA Allan Studholme fell through in 1911, the Toronto News suggested that suffragists were about to embark on a militant campaign, quoting an unidentified Miss Browne. Promptly, the secretary of the Toronto Suffrage Association, Dr. Margaret Johnson, wrote a letter emphatically denying any such plans (Cleverdon 35). Also, when Prime Minister Robert Borden received a WSPU delegation on his trip to England in 1912, the British suffragettes suggested that “militant methods might be urged upon their adherents in Canada” and that the nature of Borden’s

30 As Ian Fletcher outlines, the WSPU’s attempts to establish Canadian branches were part of its desire to be not only a national but also an imperial organization, to give its agitation an imperial scope and dynamic.
reply "will regulate very much the kind of advice we give our friends in Canada" ("Little Comfort for the Suffragettes" 7). Borden said about this discussion that he had "no complaint to make against the presentation of the case of the Women's Social and Political Union, except the suggestion implying a threat of the introduction into Canada of militant tactic" (7). The WSPU followed the meeting with a press release promising a "vigorous campaign" in Canada and immediate steps to "strengthen existing organizations throughout the Dominion," judging that "such an agitation will meet with success" ("Suffragettes to Organize Dominion" 1). However, Flora MacDonald Denison—otherwise one of the most outspoken WSPU defenders—immediately challenged such plans by explaining that "Premier Borden is held in the highest esteem by the members of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada" and agreeing with Borden's views that "the militant spirit would not gain any headway here":

"Our policy is to gain supporters for our cause through peaceful methods," continued Mrs. Denison. "We want the press on our side, and we want the movement to spread through example and by correct instruction regarding our principles." ("Little Comfort")

In the absence of a militant campaign in Canada, militancy tended to be a practice against which Canadian suffragism was contrasted—most notably by its opponents but, as Denison's response shows, also by suffragists themselves. It mattered little to the commentators to which specific and multiple organizations British suffragette women belonged. In fact, among the many British suffrage organizations it was almost only the WSPU which was mentioned by name in Canadian reports and therefore dominated the Canadian perception of the otherwise diverse English suffrage campaign. The complex
relations that existed between British suffrage organizations thus appeared flattened from the Canadian vantage point, particularly in the newspaper debates which are the focus of this study. Commentators often spoke of militancy in a way that confirmed the view that it was potentially violent and presumed a neat division between militancy and other forms of political activity.

By 1909 in Canada, criticism of militancy regularly included detailed mention of the militant activities of which the writers disapproved. In a letter to the Toronto World in November 1909, one of the paper's readers calls suffragettes "the aggressive and dissatisfied ones" (J.E.M.S. 6). They are "wielding their tongues and their pens and are using their clenched fists and physical violence" (6). In the face of these acts, "all right-thinking women of the old land as well as Canada are bowing their heads in sorrow and pain, because of the indignity that is being heaped upon their sex" (6). In the same month, a Toronto Globe editorial declares that Canadians disapprove of

- endangering people's lives by throwing acids, or of breaking up political meetings, or of mobbing the Prime Minister of the Empire, or of horse-whipping another Minister in the presence of his wife on a railway platform,
- or of smashing with missiles the ornamental windows of an historical hall,
- or of striking policemen whose disagreeable duty is to make both men and women keep the public peace . . . ("The Militant Suffragette Movement" 6)

Newspaper readers would recognize such level of detail as references to previous reports about some of the activities of the British suffrage campaign. The Globe writers felt that Canadian suffragists, like British suffragettes, might also contemplate militant action, and therefore had to be discouraged with the help of strong, critical terms describing British
militancy. In fact, in June of the same year the *Globe* had already published an editorial which demanded that Canadian suffragists distance themselves strongly from British militants. The editorial was by no means anti-suffrage. In fact, it was for the sake of the success of the women's suffrage movement that the editor called for a clear disavowal of militancy—or, in other words, for strengthening the genre border between female militancy and accepted political activism:

> Slapping policemen's faces, stabbing their horses with pen-knives, and throwing stones through the windows of public offices will soon set the suffrage movement back for another quarter of a century at least. Suffragettes elsewhere have a certain moral responsibility in this matter. The freaks of the London ladies should have been discountenanced everywhere else. If they had been met with frank and decided disapprobation outside of London and of Great Britain, the mischief done to the cause would have been less than is now unavoidable. (“Folly of English Suffragettes” 6).

Where Holton and Mayhall emphasize the continuities between militancy and constitutionalism, Canadian commentators at the time insisted on observing a gap widened by questions of femininity and morality. For them, militancy produced a division of womanhood, one in which aggressive, "unwomanly" women were seen to discredit all women through their behaviour. In 1912, *The Champion*, one of Canada's very small number of suffrage magazines, asks Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence to respond to the following comment: "One of the most frequent objections brought forward here [in Canada] ... is this, that the conduct of the Militants in England proves the unfitness of Canadian women
to vote" ("Interview with Mrs. Pethick Lawrence" 14). Because militant action would
diminish Canadian suffragists as women it would also disqualify their very ability for
political participation. It is in relation to this division between militancy and proper
femininity that Canadian suffragists were asked to declare their opinions on militancy.
Therefore, it is to this division that I will refer to when using the term militancy. In
highlighting contemporary understandings of militancy my aim is not to resurrect a
questionable distinction, but to analyze how this division functions rhetorically. From our
contemporary viewpoint, there are no clear or stable boundaries between what are or were
considered militant or non-militant activities, and by whom, and at what point. But there
are imagined boundaries which speakers tend to portray as stable. It is precisely as a
continually re-imagined boundary, a boundary between different genres of political
engagement, that the distinction between militancy and non-militancy becomes a
productive site for an analysis of genre.

The Genre of News Reports

Canadian suffrage debates gained great prominence when Emmeline and Sylvia
Pankhurst visited Canadian cities as part of speaking tours organized by American suffrage
organizations. Emmeline Pankhurst first came to Toronto in November 1909. Two years
later, in 1911, she went on a more extensive tour across Canada during which she gave
speeches in Toronto, Montreal, Port Arthur, Winnipeg, and Victoria. Her first visit came at
a time of increasing suffrage activity in Canada. Only five months before her first visit, in
June 1909, Toronto had hosted the fourth International Congress of Women, an event
which was attended by feminists and suffragists from Canada, the US, and various
European countries. In the wake of the International Congress of Women, John Castell Hopkins writes in his *Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs* that the question of woman suffrage "came in 1909 as, practically, a new issue to Canadians" (244). He explains:

The real shock of agitation, however, will date historically from the interest aroused in Canada by the 'force' platform of the Suffragettes in England during this year. There had been Societies in Canada for urging the question on public attention but, though earnest in their efforts, they had not been conspicuous or powerful. (244)

Compared to British suffragettes, Canadian suffrage organizers evidently did not carry out a successful media campaign. Hopkins’ comments indicate that newspaper readers who were not themselves active in the suffrage movement now came to view all suffrage—the British, American, and Canadian campaigns—through the reports on militant activities.

The Canadian debate on suffrage militancy coincided with the growing importance of women’s pages in Canadian newspapers. Since a number of women’s page editors were feminists, women’s pages increasingly discussed the politics of social reform and the activities of women’s organizations. For instance, Sara Curzon (co-founder of the Women’s Canadian Historical Association and Women’s Art Association, author of the feminist comedy “The Sweet Girl Graduate” and the drama “Laura Secord, the Heroine of 1812”) had a women’s issues column in the *Canada Citizen* for two years and also worked as its assistant editor; Flora MacDonald Denison (president of the Canadian Suffrage Association) wrote a weekly column on women’s rights in the Toronto *Sunday World*; Lillian Beynon Thomas (key member and first president of the Political Equality League of
Manitoba) wrote under the pseudonym Lillian Laurie for the *Manitoba Free Press* and also edited its woman's page; Francis Marion Beynon (also a founding member of the Political Equality League in Manitoba) became editor of the women's page of the *Grain Growers' Guide* in 1912.

However, as Marjory Lang has shown, female journalists remained limited to the woman's page despite these inroads into the profession. They were not invited to write on political or economic issues in other parts of the newspaper. Women's journalism was considered inferior, gossipy and personal: good for the newspaper's sales, but not for its front page. As well, there were restrictions on how political the writing on women's pages could become. Lang explains that women's page editors were often allowed to run their pages as they saw fit, except for when they ventured into topics such as national and international politics (151). Barbara Freeman suggests that Faith Fenton was fired from the women's department of the Toronto *Empire* for her suffragist views, while the more cautious, less outspoken feminist Kit Coleman was allowed to stay on.

The division between political reporting on the front pages and commentary by female journalists on the woman's page created unique conditions for the reception of suffrage militancy. Before women's page writers could take a position on militant events, dispatches from London and New York reported about them on the news pages. These were among the few occasions that suffrage issues received front-page attention. Between newspapers, reports varied in subtle ways in the language used to describe militant activities. On February 19, 1909, for instance, both the Toronto *World* and *Globe* reported on an attempt by women of the Women's Freedom League to gain access to British Prime Minister Asquith. In the process, 24 women were arrested and eight received jail sentences.
after refusing to pay fines. The *World*, one of the most pro-suffrage newspapers in Canada, subtitles the event a “Determined Attempt to Break in on Asquith,” thus highlighting the conviction of those involved (“Suffragettes Fight the Police”). The *Globe*, on the other hand, stresses their failure when subtitling “Another Unsuccessful Suffragette Raid” (“Women Used Their Fists on Police”). Similarly, on June 30, 1909, the *World* emphasizes Asquith’s desire to be shielded from women activists with the headline “Army of Police Protect Asquith from Suffragettes.” The *Globe*, in contrast, points to the resulting incarceration: “London Police Have Mrs. Pankhurst in the Toils.” Both headlines are followed by the same dispatch from the Associated Press.

The reporting on suffragette activities on newspapers’ front pages conjoins the tradition of partisan reporting with developments relating to the idea of journalistic objectivity. Canadian newspapers at the turn of the century were steeped in their partisan tradition. Paul Rutherford calculates that by 1900 there were 37 politically independent Canadian dailies (with a combined circulation of 572,461) compared to 77 partisan papers (with a combined circulation of 660,699) (213). Most publishers and editors were still deeply invested in politics and the idea of journalistic objectivity was only beginning to take hold. Andrew M. Osler suggests that objectivity as a journalistic principle arose more from “the demands of technology and economics than social philosophy” (92). For instance, Osler argues, the great wire services enabled by the telegraph, such as the Associated Press, found the appearance of objectivity to be a necessary condition. They would otherwise not have been able to serve their wide variety of client newspapers, each representing different social and political beliefs. Time constraints and the limited reliability of telegraphic transmission also forced a briefer, to-the-point kind of reporting.
As for economic reasons, publishers recognized that too much political partisanship could limit their readership; and they were increasingly dependent on maintaining and expanding readership for the purposes of securing advertising revenue. Minko Sotiron alerts us to the fact that at the turn of the century, the attribute *independent* did not mean an absence of party affiliation, but the financial freedom that increasingly allowed proprietors to “shrug off direct party control” while still remaining politically interested (115).

Until well into the First World War, Canadian political parties were notorious for neither declaring themselves in favour of suffrage nor rejecting it outright. Party leaders most commonly claimed that they would support suffrage if they were convinced that it was a pressing political issue and that the majority of women would want it. In turn, suffragists tended not to affiliate with or lobby for any particular political party. We could interpret a newspaper’s tacit support of or resistance to suffragism as either an expression of a non-official feeling within the respective party or a sign of editorial independence from party politics. Most notably, the front pages were no longer the place for political commentary, including on women’s issues, that they had been in the nineteenth century. Instead of attracting readers with fervent political opinions, as they had done in the past, newspapers increasingly recognized the sales value of reporting on spectacular news events. News reports focussing on unusual events came to replace political opinion pieces on Canadian front pages. Sotiron observes that “competitive pressures led to graphic innovations, sensationalism, and entertainment and reduced political comment” (106).

News reports on suffragette activities are thus part of a currently evolving genre, reflecting technological and economic changes to the practice of newspaper writing. The conditions of the genre framed the reporting on suffrage; but the activities of militant
suffragettes also lent themselves favourably to certain kinds of newspaper reporting, in particular to the reporting of the spectacular. Literary scholar Barbara Green argues that British feminists managed not only to align spectaculacy, publicity, and femininity, but also to exploit that alignment for their ends. The “spectacles of suffrage”—pageants, processions, sandwich boards, postcards, pins, photographs, confessional writings—were intended to advertise feminism, to win public attention, and to manipulate the codes of commodity culture. Newspaper reporting—getting onto front pages as well as writing their own accounts—was an integral part of suffragists’ tactics. As John Mercer suggests, in the years between 1908 and 1912 the Women’s Social and Political Union did not only step up its militant campaign but also developed “commercialised propaganda, an integrated propaganda department, and a nationwide chain of shops,” while its newspaper, Votes for Women, reached new heights of circulation (479). Mercer argues that the successes of both branches of activity—militancy and propaganda—conditioned each other. Suffragettes’ own writing was also a spectacular kind of reporting, albeit a more sympathetic kind which emphasized suffragettes’ heroism and portrayed campaigners as victims of injustice.

Genres of Response

News page reporting on spectacular suffrage activities in Britain calls for and sets the stage for a response to these activities by Canadian suffragists. In Anne Freadman’s terms, news reports offer an invitation for genres of response. In “Anyone For Tennis?”, Freadman rejects thinking of genres in the sense that “a text is ‘in’ a genre” (that a text is describable in terms of the rules of one genre) as well as the sense that “genre is ‘in’ a text” (that the features of a text will correspond to the rules of the genre) (48). Instead, she
proposes to think of genres as pairs or groups of texts. It is in the relation, the interaction, between texts that genre becomes defined—in the movement from, for instance, question to answer, invitation to response, theory to refutation, brief to report. In this way, texts play their partners: they can call for a particular genre as respondent; they can make other genres less likely to occur in their wake; or they can play several games at once, inviting multiple partners into the dialogue.

It is now a tradition in new-rhetorical genre theory to view genres not as formal or stylistic categories, but in their function of producing “social action” (Miller, “Genre as Social Action”), “shaping written knowledge” (Bazerman), or forming “discourse communities” (Swales). In her definition of genres as residing in relations between texts, Freadman as well is guided by the idea that we do things with words, that rhetoric is “socially effective speech” (“Anyone for Tennis?” 41). Genre has memory and produces culture, she says. Genre comes through the constant “adaptation of remembered contents to changed contexts,” and a good deal of politics is involved in the crossing of generic boundaries, in the interplay between texts (41). In the case of Canadian reporting on militancy, we can say that a good deal of politics is involved in both how Canadian news editors take up reporting on suffrage activities from overseas and how suffragists respond to that uptake in their columns, letters, and reports.

Headlines, in fact, constitute a particular kind of uptake, defining the genre of activities on which they report. News reporting on English suffragettes with its emphasis on breaking parliamentary rules, resisting police, risking arrests, and carrying out hunger strikes produced a sensationalist image of suffragism. In 1909, leading up to Emmeline
Pankhurst’s first visit to Toronto in November, the Toronto *Globe* ran the following headlines for its reports on English suffrage militancy:

“Women Used Their Fists on Police: Another Unsuccessful Suffragette Raid in London” on February 19, 1909 on page one.

“Umbrellas and Fists: Used on Policemen’s Faces by Angry Suffragists” on March 31, 1909 on page one.

“Apostle of Suffrage: Fair Martyr from Old Land Visiting Ottawa” on June 5, 1909 on page one.

“Female Hooligans’: Mr. John Burns to the Suffragettes” on June 5, 1909 on page eight.


“Folly of English Suffragettes,” an editorial, on July 2, 1909 on page six.

“Suffragettes Triumph: Interview with Home Secretary Granted” on July 9, 1909 on page one.

“Militant Leader Fined: Miss Pankhurst not Sentenced to Jail” on July 10, 1909 on page one.

“Suffragettes Jailed: Fifteen Refused to Pay Fines Imposed” on July 13, 1909 on page three.
“Ready to Sacrifice Lives; Suffragettes Undismayed: Mrs. Pankhurst Says the Cause Continues Its Advance,” the report of Mrs. Pankhurst’s Toronto appearance, on November 22, 1909 on page one.

And “The Militant Suffragette Movement,” an editorial, on November 22, 1909 on page six.

Headlines like these reveal a journalistic preoccupation with the spectacular activities of suffragettes, even though in Canadian newspapers were there not accompanied by the photographs that elsewhere characterized sensationalist reporting. The reports following these headlines did not represent the bulk of the political work by the diverse British suffrage organizations, and instead placed the famous Pankhursts and their WSPU in the limelight, leaving many other organizations and key organizers unmentioned.

Sensational news reporting called most prominently for some kind of refutation as its respondent. This could take the form of refuting either militant practice per se or questioning the sensational characterization of suffragettes. For instance, after some newspapers published reports that New York suffragists were about to adopt militant methods in 1911, the woman’s page editor of the Manitoba Free Press cautions: “It is heard to say how much truth there is in this report, for perhaps there has never been a movement more grossly misrepresented than the suffrage movement in England” (“Canadian Women Should Win Quietly” 9). She also mentions a report which was circulating at the time about militancy being taken up elsewhere in Canada and judges that this report, too, “was nothing more than one of those unfounded statements about the suffrage cause” (9). Clearly, there were not only the colourful headlines and news reports which challenged Canadian suffragists to position themselves in relation to English
militancy. Along with the reports there also circulated rumours and conjecture about when and where Canadian suffragists would turn to militancy, all necessitating that Canadian suffragists, too, take up the issue in order to clarify their position.

One prominent type of response which was intended to refute the characterization of suffragettes in front-page news was a conversion account: the narration of a first-person encounter with a real-life suffragette, an encounter which happened to convince the writer that suffragettes were not who they appeared to be in the news reports. In leading up to an example of such a conversion account, let me first provide you with a short account of what was published in same Canadian newspaper in the days leading up to my example of a refutation account. On July 1, 1909, the *Manitoba Free Press* ran a report whose headline read “Suffragettes Once More in Action.” It was subtitled “Lively Skirmishes between Police and Women—Scratching, Biting and Kicking,” describing how British suffragettes attacked members of the House of Lords and Commons. The report said that the majority of suffragettes “carried stones, and tricked the police by wrapping them in paper or their handkerchiefs,” that they “scratched, bit and kicked,” and when they were unable to get through police lines, they “dropped to the street and rolled in the dust” (5). The report tells us that 116 suffragettes were arrested. On July 10, 1909, the *Free Press* printed a follow-up article, explaining that the London police court had ruled the suffragette protest unconstitutional and had fined the leaders of the raid, Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Haverfield, $25 or a month’s imprisonment (“Miss Pankhurst Fined”).

Seven days later in the *Manitoba Free Press*’ women’s section, Lillian Beynon Thomas (writing as Lillian Laurie) narrates her encounter with a suffragette. In a cross-country tour following the International Congress of Women, Thomas, along with other
suffragists, takes a train ride with Chrystal MacMillan, a delegate from Scotland, who is asked to explain the difference between a suffragist and a suffragette. As MacMillan recounts the history of the suffrage movement in Scotland, Thomas comments that a chance traveller “would not have believed that the modest, brown-eyed girl who spoke so moderately and reasonably of her country belonged to the much maligned class of suffragettes” (Laurie 5). To tell the truth, “in all the women who spoke at that little meeting, and there were representatives from seven or eight nations, there was not one woman who could by even the most prejudiced be called ‘mannish,’ and yet they were all business-like and practical women, devoted to securing what they believe is justice for those of their own sex” (5). In the course of the discussion, a Mrs. Grandion speaks up, explaining that the majority of “the accounts in the papers of the measures to which the suffragettes have resorted . . . are yellow journalism of the most despicable kind” (5). When Mrs. Grandion describes her participation in a street parade, Thomas exclaims: “It appeared impossible to me. She was so modest, so cultured, such a thorough lady. . . . I felt if she and those other women had been in a street parade that the street parade was a pretty good thing and was a necessary thing or they would not have been there.” Thomas concludes her article by expressing pity that not more Canadians had “an opportunity to see real suffragettes and learn that the women in England who are fighting for justice are not doing so because they like to, but because they feel they should” (5).

31 Thomas only calls her “Miss MacMillan,” referring to Chrystal MacMillan, one of the speakers at the International Congress of Women (see Oldfield).
32 I have not been able to identify Mrs. Grandion.
Thomas' account answers to more than one generic partner. It is positioned at multiple generic junctures: responding to newspaper reports such as the above cited, as well as to the oral accounts by the suffragettes on the train which are here translated into writing for a larger audience, and to the anti-suffrage commentaries and letters to the editor which evoke the mannish and unsexed woman as a consequence of women's involvement in politics. Thomas counters preceding accounts which were critical of militant suffragism with her first-hand experience of the ethos of the suffragette speaker. Through her experience she is so convinced by these women's accounts that she can conclude that any street parade which counts them among its participants, even if such an event was a spectacle, must be a worthwhile and necessary political event. The suffragettes' reputation—as militant, mannish women—is here set apart from their real-life speech and appearance. The act of experiencing, of being an eye-witness to, the demeanour of the suffragettes on the train provides proof of their very unspectacularity and their unquestionable femininity. The attention to suffragette ethos brings into focus the aims of suffragette activities—concern for women's rights and social reforms—and draws attention away from some of their methods.

The principle of the conversion account as centred on questions of ethos is one we can also observe in the reporting on Emmeline Pankhurst's visits to Canada. After the suffragette had been unfavourably portrayed in news reports, her very presence provided proof of an unexpectedly agreeable ethos. Elements of this very presence were her clothing, facial expressions, elocution, and manner. The reports of Emmeline Pankhurst's visits to Canada are particularly remarkable for the frequency with which they mention her physical appearance and style of speech. Journalists appear surprised not to find a
“hatchet-faced old dame ... whose speech was punctuated with strong epithets; a woman to whom menace was a stock in trade, and browbeating a diversion”; these are the words of one of the more anti-suffrage editorialists, the Colonel of *Saturday Night* (17 Nov. 1909).\(^{33}\) Instead, the Colonel encountered “a lady, singularly attractive in appearance, graceful in carriage, dignified in bearing, and a public speaker of culture as well as force” (1). On its front page, the Toronto *Globe* describes Pankhurst as a “slight, intellectual-looking woman of splendid voice, and possessing remarkable power as a speaker” (“Ready to Sacrifice Lives”). In an editorial on the same day the *Globe* also praises how the “discussion of her theme was characterized by perfect self-possession, unfaltering command of material, a ready sense of humor, white heat enthusiasm, and surprising self-control” (“The Militant Suffragette Movement”). During her second visit, two years later, the *Manitoba Free Press* gives an even more impressive account of Pankhurst’s ethos and power of persuasion:

A pale, slight woman, with a somewhat tired expression on her countenance, Mrs. Pankhurst on first appearance seems to give the lie to the expectation that she is a born leader or champion of any cause. But on rising to speak she becomes all on a sudden the most animated of platform speakers. Her eyes sparkle with a lively glow as she warms to the subject and as at times she speaks of the sadder things, her voice has a mellow, tender note, impressive beyond the power of any written word. She has

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\(^{33}\) Frederick Paul was editor of *Saturday Night* from 1909 to 1925, and therefore was quite likely the person behind the signature “The Colonel.” Since I have not been able to corroborate this information, I will continue to refer to him as “Colonel.” In their index to *Saturday Night* Grace F. Heggie and Gordon R. Adshead do not even carry an entry for the name “Colonel” (they have entries for many other pseudonymous names).
none of the quips and tricks of oratory but in simple and direct language she speaks her message forth. Here and there is a sally of naïve wit, here and there a defiant challenge, but none of the rough and ready boisterous [sic] eloquence which is so often connected with the political platform. ("Mrs. Pankhurst Addresses Large Winnipeg Audience" 1)

In these examples, Emmeline Pankhurst’s performance is repeatedly contrasted with the assumptions she does not fulfil: instead of appearing a born leader she is pale, slight, and somewhat tired; instead of dazzling with tricks of oratory her language is direct and simple; instead of rough and boisterous eloquence she shows wit and defiant challenge. Less than three months later, Emmeline Pankhurst’s daughter, Sylvia, received a similar reception. Rose Rambler reports on the Toronto Globe’s “Woman at Work and at Play” page that Sylvia Pankhurst’s “youth, her earnestness, her modesty and entire lack of self-consciousness” won her much sympathy. Contrary to what many might have thought, “[a]gressiveness could not be thought of in connection with her” (5).

It is as if the Pankhurts’ commentators—from the anti-suffragist Colonel in Saturday Night to the sympathetic news editors of the Manitoba Free Press and the women’s page writers of the Toronto Globe—could not help but be astonished by the way in which these women defied what was expected of a militant suffragette. This astonishment, being made explicit in detailed comparisons of expectation and experience, alerts us to the fact that these journalists were aware of how their accounts related to those published earlier. They understood that while their response played, in Freadman’s terms, with the genre of Pankhurst’s performance, it also played against the genre of previous, sensational news-reporting on suffragette militancy. Such a journalistic position has
important implications: it lent credence to Pankhurst's political ideas, and it portrayed the journalists as being persuaded by Pankhurst's performance.

While the writers of these commentaries show themselves as surprised, compelled, and to some degree persuaded by Pankhurst, we should not imagine there to be a chain of persuasion leading from Pankhurst's intention to her performance, and then to the journalists' commentary. For, as Freadman says, "Uptake is first the taking of an object; it is not the causation of a response by an intention" (48). Uptake occurs from a set of possibles. Freadman critiques speech-act theory for attempting to erase these possibles, for setting aside "the heterogenous antecedents and sequels of an utterance in the interests of philosophical rigor and classificatory unity" ("Uptake" 48). Part of the heterogeneity of antecedents is that they are valued differently. While in this historical instance many readers might have expected, and valued, uptake to come in the form of harsher criticism of Pankhurst's appearance, the more likely form of uptake happened to be praise for her oratory (albeit with reservations, as we will see). From the perspective of speech act theory, the similarity with which different journalists responded to Pankhurst's speeches might appear an inevitable result of Pankhurst's performance. Freadman's emphasis on the

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34 In "A Rhetorical View of Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary Acts" Paul Newell Campbell also critiques the "simplistic cause-effect process" which Austin uses as the basis for his speech acts (291). Campbell points out that Austin confines his thinking on intentionality to speakers only, that "nowhere is there a reference to the intentions of audiences," and that, hence, Austin makes it "quite possible to assume that effects are produced regardless of the intent of hearers or readers" (291-92). Instead, we must come to see that "both speakers and listeners act, rather than implying that the speaker acts while the listener is acted on" (292). To urge, persuade and compliment are acts, and to be urged, persuaded and complimented are acts also. A speaker's speech acts have a listener's speech acts as their effect—and not merely in the sense that listeners respond but also in the sense that listeners create their own meanings while listening.
heterogeneity of antecedents, however, makes us realize how unusual the similarity of the different journalists' responses is and invites us to ponder why the responses were so alike.

Genres for Political Action

My argument in this chapter is that the rhetorical function of “militancy” in Canadian suffrage debates can be most lucidly analyzed by thinking about it in terms of genre. So far I have discussed genres of speaking about militancy—how they played each other and how in doing so they positioned participants in the debate. When they discussed militancy, these genres aimed to lay out the conditions of another genre, the genre of militancy as a political practice. The discussions of militancy functioned as what Janet Giltrow calls “meta-genre”: they were part of a prolific tradition of talk about genre, of the wordings and explanations which surround a genre and aim to control its production. Returning to the earlier cited discussions of militancy by Holton and Mayhall, we can explore some of the ambiguities of the use of the term militancy when we listen to comments about militancy with an ear to what they say about genre. Holton and Mayhall themselves occasionally conceive of militancy as genre. When Holton says that militancy was defined as a mode of campaigning (rather than a kind of suffrage), this is a reference to genre. When Mayhall insists on militancy being derived from other, male, instances of political radicalism and constitutional argument, she locates it within a tradition of genres of political protest. In doing so, Mayhall traces the uptake of militancy from what Freadman calls “heterogeneous antecedents.” In this case, uptake travels the boundaries of gender-specific genres of political activity.
Pankhurst herself phrases the history of militancy in the terms of genre and uptake. When telling the history of the suffragette movement to her Canadian listeners, she assures her audience that militant action was not taken “except under strong provocation” (“Mrs. Pankhurst Addresses Large Winnipeg Audience” 1). She details some of these provocations: since the 1860s women had been campaigning yet the Prime Minister said “he had no time to hear the women as he was occupied with the voters”; and when after a minister’s speech two suffragists displayed their banners and asked “Will the Liberal government give women the vote?” they were “dragged from the hall with their clothes torn and their hands bleeding . . . flung into the street and there they held a meeting of protest and were immediately arrested” (14). Throughout their campaign, “the women never took a single step forward without being pushed back first of all by their opponents” (14). When repeated petitions, deputations, and questions—these being the accepted genres of female political engagement than suffrage militancy—found no listeners, and the authors of these petitions, deputations, and questions were in fact punished, suffragettes asked themselves: what would men do in such a situation? Pankhurst points out that when men fought for suffrage, they were impatient and at times violent. In contrast, “Our methods are but mild and moderate compared with theirs and were only resorted to after all conciliatory and patient methods had been quite exhausted” (14). This explanation for taking up militant methods seems to have formed the core of Pankhurst’s speech, for the Victoria Times, too, reports her as saying that “[p]etitions had failed, meetings had failed, letters to the newspaper had failed” (“Mrs. Pankhurst and the Suffrage” 13). Although so many MPs had converted to suffragism that they seemed to have a majority in the House their efforts still failed and they decided “to imitate the methods of the men” beginning with “strictly constitutional methods adopted by men” but later, seeing that men were “not at all averse to
being unconstitutional,” they “imitated them there” as well (13). Two years before, upon Pankhurst’s first visit to Canada, the Toronto World had judged such reasoning as “above all things reasonable” and put the case very succinctly: when the WSPU women realized that “no body of people outside the constitution had ever been able to obtain constitutional rights by constitutional means,” there was nothing left to do but “adapt former masculine methods to feminine conditions” (“Mrs. Pankhurst’s Appeal to Reason” 6).

Freadman suggests that perhaps the most important thing about our knowledge of genres is “our knowledge of the differences between genres,” our awareness that there is “a significant politics involved both in the crossing of generic boundaries, and in their closing” (45). Pankhurst’s careful way of describing the uptake of militant methods indicates that she understands that the movement is at a critical junction of uptake: the use of political genres that are acceptable for men but not for women. Such political genres included demonstrations, destruction of public property, heckling of politicians, and resistance to police arrests. In this respect, we can identify the question of this uptake as the crux of the Canadian militancy debate. The commentators previously quoted as impressed by Pankhurst’s performance were very alert to the issues of gender-specific uptake and identify such uptake as the source of their reservations. In its 1909 editorial on the occasion of Pankhurst’s first visit to Toronto, the Toronto Globe observes that Pankhurst spent by far the greatest amount of her talk saying what “might have been said by any advocate of woman suffrage who was opposed to resorting to what she very aptly called ‘civil war’” (“The Militant Suffragette Movement”). In other words, rather than make militant arguments for suffrage, Pankhurst actually spoke in a way in which a constitutionalist suffragist might have spoken. The editorial here makes a clear distinction
between endorsing what Pankhurst says as an advocate of women's suffrage, and what she says as an advocate of militancy. The fact that Pankhurst did not exactly promote militant methods in her speeches made the editor wonder all the more about whether they are necessary and justified. Consequently, the editorial warns Mrs. Pankhurst that the people of Canada do not approve of her methods and that the cheers she received for her speech were not for her militancy but for her eloquence and effective pleas for women’s suffrage.

The threat of women taking up political genres that are exclusive to men provides occasion for separating Pankhurst's effective appeals for female suffrage from her choice of activist genre. But how can this separation convincingly be made when Pankhurst details so carefully that it was the lack of success of constitutionalist actions which were considered more feminine and more acceptable which drove suffragettes to militancy? Several commentators suggest that the Canadian situation was sufficiently different to prevent such a lack of success. That is, these writers forecasted that Canadian suffragists would not fail if they pursued suffrage through moderate means. A number of journalists argued that if Canadian suffragists were to adopt militant methods, that strategy would actually be detrimental to their gaining the vote. They believed that women's position and men's relationship to women in Canada was so much more conducive to the improvement of women's rights that more conventional means would inevitably lead to suffrage. The Colonel in one of his editorials in *Saturday Night* muses:

Here, on the North American continent, we neither invite nor desire our mothers, sisters and wives to mix themselves up in political affairs. They take no part in campaigns of this character . . . . We hold out women to be above such things . . . . we of the North American continent may
compliment ourselves on the fact that we have elevated women to a position which they do not occupy in any other part of the world. It may be a mistake, perhaps it is, but we men are nevertheless rather proud of the fact that chivalry in its best and deepest sense has not been altogether lost. (27 Nov. 1909)

He continues: “Canadian men and American men are about the last on earth to treat women cavalierly or unfairly. If a majority of American and Canadian women really desire an equal franchise with men, they will unquestionably obtain it” (1).

For suffrage sceptics the pressing question in terms of genre and uptake was: how to deter Canadian women from taking up the practice of militancy? Editorials like the Colonel’s tacitly acknowledged the legitimacy of the suffrage campaign while at the same time attempting to regulate its means of political activism. Such tentative embrace of women’s rights in most cases included the condition that first suffragists needed to prove that a majority of Canadian women actually wanted the vote. In fact, Ontario Premier Whitney, a staunch anti-suffragist, announced that once suffragists could convincingly demonstrate a female majority, he would not stand in the way of the female franchise. The underlying estimation was that this would not be the case anytime soon, as an editorial in the Toronto *World* explains: “Sir James Whitney has expressed himself ready to accord equal liberties to women when they desire them. It must be said, however, that he appeared to assume that there was no immediate prospect of the pledge being claimed” (“The Enfranchisement of Women”). As anti-suffragists found themselves compelled to denounce militant actions, they tended not to denounce female suffrage as such. When suffrage sceptics encouraged Canadian suffragists to pursue their aims by non-militant
means, they tacitly declared their tentative endorsement of the outcome achieved by such means. This tentative endorsement constitutes a complicated political play on uptake: because they would like to prevent the Canadian uptake of a particular political method they suggest alternative means and thus somewhat inadvertently find themselves endorsing the goals for which those methods were employed.

The optimistic assessment that Canadian parliamentarians might be friendlier than English politicians with respect to granting women's rights was shared by many suffragists. The suffragist women's page editor of *Saturday Night*, for instance, writes in one of her editorials that suffragette methods are "masculine methods" and therefore not appropriate in Canada. She reasons: "If woman is to be a reforming force in politics, she must preserve her dignity. More than that, she must learn to govern her own emotions if she would make her influence felt" (Madame, 27 Nov. 1909). Only a very small number of Canadian suffragists considered the practice of militancy for Canadian purposes (see Bacchi 34; Sperdakos 290-94). Suffrage supporters and opponents both participated in a proscription of militant genres. Many Canadian suffrage writers explained that while militancy might be in order in Britain, Canadian women did not need such extreme measures yet. However, they also cautioned that in the case that petitions, public meetings, and deputations to politicians did not achieve their goal, then Canadian women would not be hesitant to take up more controversial measures. What united suffragists and suffrage sceptics in the debate about militancy was the desire to discursively establish predictable relations between political methods and their effects. This was particularly necessary in the face of methods which were new and controversial, and which challenged established conventions. The participants in this discussion were deeply concerned with the conditions for uptake. They
attempted to regulate patterns of uptake: what were the conditions that could justify Canadian women drawing from the repertoire of militant activism?

What makes the Canadian militancy debate such a fruitful venue for drawing out the roles of genre and uptake in the game of political positioning is the fact that it was so ostensibly and self-consciously concerned with the politics of genre and uptake. Between 1900 and 1918, women’s journalism and women’s suffragism were still relatively new fields of female engagement in public life. This newness created the opportunity for questions of genre to arise—questions about the genres for political writing on women’s pages as well as for women’s public campaigning in relationship to male political campaigns. The reporting on suffrage militancy in Britain, therefore, raised far-reaching concerns for Canadian discourse at the time, concerns that go beyond the direct contact which suffragettes like Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst had on their Canadian speaking tours. Freadman’s notion of genre as residing in the interrelationships between texts and utterances allows us significant insight into the wide-reaching discursive effects which English militant activism had on the Canadian suffrage campaign.
Chapter 3

Patterns of Audience Design in Canadian Suffrage Writing

From a rhetorical perspective, one of the questions which we might ask in studying Canadian suffrage discourse is: how did suffragists try to convince others of the merits of suffragism? What were their methods of persuasion? Considering suffrage rhetoric as situated in its time and social context, we can further inquire: how did suffragists' arguments respond to the situation, to their various listeners and readers? Who were their audiences and how did suffragists shape their arguments to address their readers and listeners? Many rhetorical researchers have come to pursue such questions as questions of persuasion. However, I would like to espouse an alternative approach and analyze in what ways the rhetoric of suffrage was concerned with audience design. As Herbert Clark suggests in *Arenas of Language Use*, audience design comprises the language means by which speakers design their utterances for particular audiences as well as design audiences by means of their utterances. These language means include how speakers rely on shared knowledge with some of their listeners, or how they disclose or conceal something from audience members. By side-stepping persuasion and instead considering audience design, this discussion will not be guided by questions of rhetorical effectiveness, logic, or appropriateness. In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Kenneth Burke points out that the concept of persuasion functions at such a level of generalization that rhetoricians with historically
antagonistic views (he mentions Cicero, Crassus, Aristotle, Isocrates, Quintilian, and Augustine) can assume they are all studying the same object (49). Rather than striving for a unifying goal for rhetorical study, this analysis will pursue a distinct way of thinking about audience.

A study of audience design (as distinct from a study of audience) is interested in the way in which suffrage texts situated and imagined different audience constituents, and how the imagining of these audience constituents responded to suffragists' ideas for social and political change. Because Canadian suffrage writing was almost exclusively published in regular newspapers and magazines, Canadian suffrage articles were circulated among a general audience. Suffrage writers had to consider a variety of readers, often with widely differing interests and varying views on suffrage. Within this arena of newspaper publishing, suffrage writers sometimes addressed other suffragists directly by giving instructions and campaign suggestions. But they also used more indirect means of subject positioning when imagining the identities of women who were not yet suffragists, and when speaking of Canadian politicians and their possible support for suffrage.

One of the most prominent and recent considerations of audience in rhetorical studies is the audience addressed / audience invoked debate, catalyzed by Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford's article of the same name.35 A few years before this article, Douglas Park had observed that "the meanings of 'audience'" tend to diverge in two directions: one "toward actual people external to a text" and the other "toward the text itself and the

35 For a summary of Ede and Lunsford's influence on subsequent discussions of the rhetorical notion of audience, see, for instance, Mary Jo Reiff's "Rereading 'Invoked' and 'Addressed' Readers Through a Social Lens."
audience implied there” (249). Ede and Lunsford call these the rubrics of audience
addressed (the reality of a writer’s audience) and audience invoked (the audience as a
construction of the writer). Instead of further separating the two, they suggest that we see
audiences as real and imagined at the same time. When writers are asked, by editors for
instance, to adapt their discourse to the needs and expectations of a real audience, they
need to imagine who this audience is and what its needs are. In Ede and Lunsford’s view,
the most complete understanding of audience thus “involves a synthesis of the perspective
[of] audience addressed, with its focus on the reader, and audience invoked, with its focus
on the writer” (167). Therefore, in most rhetorical situations we might find it difficult to
make an analytical distinction between the audience as addressed and the audience as
invoked.

Suffrage writing is an example of discourse in which speakers conspicuously
attempt to employ imagined aspects of audience in order to affect change in real audiences.
Suffrage speech is part of a historical moment during which women’s identities as real
audiences and speakers were under question while women were in the process of imagining
new political and social roles for themselves. In other words, the possible outlines of
addressed audiences, the very identities of real readers, were far from clear and were
constantly up for debate. In turn, by being debated, these identities are negotiated in the
textual realm of imagined subjectivities and audiences.

Ede and Lunsford write with a pedagogical aim; they are most concerned about
audience as part of composition theory, as part of teaching writing. Composition theory
poses particular questions about audience. For instance, when instructors teach first-year
writing courses at universities and colleges, what do they tell their students about audiences
and how do they instruct them in composing texts for audiences? In his book *Audience and Rhetoric*, James E. Porter critically notes that when composition texts proclaim audience as a vital concern they usually think of “the flesh-and-blood reader, assuming that writers will produce more effective prose if they systematically ‘consider’ or ‘be aware of’ the values, background, and knowledge of the receiver” (2). Likewise, when Ede speaks of “audience analysis,” she means the writer’s understanding of audience in the process of writing, the taking into account of “experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of an audience” (“Audience” 140). Porter calls this approach “audience heuristics” and critiques its frequent assumption of a “static and homogeneous readership” as well as its emphasis on audience as external to the text. In contrast to such heuristics, this paper will consider audience analysis not as an investigation into how audience awareness was achieved in the process of writing, nor as an empirical study of historical audiences. Rather, I am interested in understanding the ways in which writers in a particular, historical situation position different types of readers, and how they thus imagine the course of their political argumentation. How do suffrage writers tend to address different audience constituents with the aim of political change?

To bring my approach in this chapter to a point: audience analysis here means understanding how suffragists imagined and addressed a range of different audience constituents such as the middle-class women who are called to action and the overhearing men who are imagined to witness the debate. A study of audience design (as opposed to a study of audience) is thus concerned with a flexible network of audience positions which may be imagined for particular, real readers, but which (more interestingly) constitutes its readers in differing roles and situates them within a political narrative. Sometimes suffragists turned quite imperatively toward their imagined audiences by instructing them
in direct and specific ways about how to act politically. For instance, J.E. Frith ends a letter to the Grain Growers' Guide by exclaiming in an optimistic tone: "Out with petitions and it will surprise the world what Canada can and will do for the promotion of the fair and lovely of this progressive country" (8, my emphasis). A few days later, in August 1912, another letter writer, calling herself Progress, reiterates the same feeling partly in response to Frith's letter:

I believe there are thousands of women in the three Prairie Provinces who are in favor of woman's suffrage and I feel sure they will be only too pleased to sign a petition once it gets started. So out with petitions and let us have them all ready to present to our legislators when Parliament assembles next fall. (12, my emphasis)

These are just two of many examples of the use of imperative expressions in suffragists' writing. The audience design of these imperatives might seem obvious: they are aimed directly at other suffragists—often at suffragists who are assumed to be key organizers—to offer them suggestions on how to conduct the political campaign. But such seemingly direct imperatives in fact imply a more complex notion of audience relations. Frith's and Progress's letters are not personal letters to suffrage organizers asking them to please send out copies of petitions. They are public letters sent, in Frith's case to the general editor of the news magazine of the Prairie grain growers' associations, and in Progress's case to the editor of the women's page of that same publication. These letters were not directly addressed at any one suffrage organizer, and so they offered their imperatives for uptake by any one of the Grain Growers' Guide's readers. They also presented themselves to be
overheard by the other readers, that majority which would not feel directly addressed by the call to send out petitions, the majority which was made witness to the call.

Once we take into consideration the presence of these overhearers, Frith's and Progress's request for more petitions seems anything but direct. We might wonder whether these letter writers were really and practically committed to getting more petitions on the way because we can imagine more successful, more direct means to accomplish that. We might even say that perhaps Frith and Progress were more interested in talking about petitions, and being heard talking about them, than in helping suffrage organizers with the demanding work of wording petition demands, circulating them and rallying for them, collecting and tallying the results, and organizing meetings to present the results to politicians.

Not all suffrage texts contain imperative expressions. In this chapter I will attempt to tease out some general patterns in suffrage audience design. I will do so with the help of theories by Maurice Charland (on constitutive rhetoric), Kenneth Burke (on identification), and Erving Goffman and Herbert Clark (on addressees and overhearers). In the process of analyzing the recurring features of the audience design of Canadian suffragist texts, the following sections will speak about how suffragists addressed privileged women who were not yet suffragists as one of their main audience groups, how the level of identification with these not-yet suffragists was reflected in suffrage speech, and how, in contrast, male audience members were treated not like potential suffragists but as overhearers, as listeners from whom little response was expected.
Constitutive Rhetoric as Audience Design

Suffrage writers who worked for newspapers were in almost all cases employed not as political journalists but as editors of or columnists on women’s pages. Their main audience on women’s pages was other women. But since most Canadian women’s journalism was part of mainstream daily or weekly news publications, men were also among its readers, particularly if those men had strong opinions in either a pro- or anti-suffragist direction. Letters to the editor give evidence of the presence of male readers. Women’s page reporting was therefore not simply a speaking by and for women, but also took potential male readers into account. Among the potential women readers there was a great diversity of positions. At the time of the suffrage debates, changing female identities were subject to much scepticism among men and women. As women became more active in the social reform movement, as they increasingly entered a number of professions that had previously been reserved for men,\textsuperscript{36} and as economic conditions forced women to earn money for their survival, the changing position of women was a constant topic of debate.

\textsuperscript{36} The opening of public high schools to women in the middle of the nineteenth century and the increase in private schools and colleges for women led to a growing interest among women for higher education (see Strong-Boag’s \textit{Parliament of Women}). Professions most frequently taught at women’s colleges, such as teaching, nursing, social work and library science, received a large influx of women and were generally seen as reconcilable with feminine ideals. Women experienced more resistance when they tried to enter university. It was only in 1875 that Canada saw its first female university graduate at Mount Allison in Sackville, New Brunswick, followed by women graduating from other Maritime schools in 1879, 1884, and 1885, and in 1884 and 1885 from university colleges in Ontario (Strong-Boag 12-13). In 1883, Augusta Stowe-Gullen was the first women to receive a Canadian medical degree—though, as in the case of her mother, Emily Stowe, there were already a few female physicians in Canada who had received medical education elsewhere. The first Canadian woman to graduate from dentistry was Josephine Wells in 1893. In 1897, Clara Brett Martin was the first woman admitted to the Ontario Bar, followed by the first female lawyers in New Brunswick in 1906, British Columbia in 1912, and Nova Scotia in 1917 (Strong-Boag 16).
Such a debate was felt to be important for society as men and women were keenly aware that the social fabric as a whole was affected by the rise of female independence. The changes in women's identities created unique conditions for audience design since the very way in which female audience groups were constituted became part of the discussion.

I argue that the uncertainty surrounding women's positions was used to arrange audience groups for rhetorical effect. In "Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric," Barbara Biesecker makes a similar point when she, more generally, speaks about the feasibility of using Foucault's theory of discourse for theorizing social change. She notes that it is precisely the uncertainties and contradictions which are inherent in discursively shaped subjects that make it possible for change to occur from within that discourse:

Given that subjects emerge at the heterogeneous intersections of multiple and, presumably, incompatible, interpellations—race, gender, and class—they cannot be made to cohere as Subjects. Hence, by reading the subject itself as a site of multiple and contestatory inscriptions, one can . . . locate a reservoir of revolutionary potential in the gaps, fissures and slippages of the nonidentical "I." (152, emphasis in original)

Biesecker's description makes clear that all subjects are shaped discursively in multiple and contradictory ways. However, at particular historical moments certain types of subjects tend to be even more contested and interpellated in more heterogeneous ways than others. Women who were publicly, politically, and philanthropically active at the turn of the century formed such a strongly contested group of subjects. Despite the confusions and possible accusations which tended to
result from such contestation, there was also the "revolutionary potential" which Biesecker mentions—a potential which speakers not only experienced as a motivation for their own speech but also used in positioning their audience constituencies for political purposes.

With the help of his theory of constitutive rhetoric, Maurice Charland explains how the rhetorical positioning of an audience constituency can have political force. Charland synthesizes Kenneth Burke's notion of identification with Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation. Charland suggests that in Burke's view audiences do not exist apart from the speech by which they are to be persuaded. Burke's identification can be likened to Althusser's interpellation which "always already" presumes the subject position of the addressee. By conjoining identification and interpellation, Charland criticizes the idea that audiences are free to chose, free to be persuaded. His case study centres on the emergence of the term *Québécois* in the late 1970s among supporters of Quebec sovereignty. While before the sovereignty movement there were Francophones and Anglophones, French- and Anglo-Canadians, now there was also the category of *Québécois*. Anyone who called themselves or others by that name imbued themselves or others with a desire for nationalism and national independence. Charland suggests that when French-Canadians were addressed as *Québécois* they were not persuaded to support sovereignty, but that the call for sovereignty was already inherent in the subject position circumscribed by *Québécois*. The rise of the term *Québécois* describes more than the circulation of a new descriptor. Rather, it signifies the introduction and proliferation of a forceful and rebellious political position. The interpellative force of the term *Québécois* is different from persuasion. To interpellate audience members as *Québécois* is not the same as providing
them with arguments, evidence, and appeals in order to persuade them to choose to support sovereignty. In the sense that persuasion implies that a choice is offered to the listener, constitutive rhetoric in fact leaves no room for persuasion.

Charland's analysis demonstrates how public discourse at certain historical times creates subject positions which inescapably contain directives for action. He says that what is important about constitutive rhetoric is "that it positions the reader toward political, social, and economic action in the material world"; it is "in this positioning that its ideological character becomes significant" (141). Such political positioning is ideological because it tends to presuppose, rather than lay open, how it has been historically formed, on what values it is founded, and what its contradictions are.

The Canadian suffrage movement did not have a focal term in the way that French-Canadian nationalism did. Nevertheless, it is useful to think through Charland's concept and consider the ways in which women were addressed by both suffragists and anti-suffragists. The notions of woman and mother were a central social and political issue at the time of the suffrage debates. But woman and mother were also contested terms between suffragists and anti-suffragists; they were not terms upon which suffragists could lay exclusive claim. Therefore, to interpellate someone as a mother in early twentieth-century Canada did not have the same stable and formative effect as to call someone Québécois in the late 1970s. As much as suffragists tried to constitute mother for their political purposes, anti-suffragists continually reminded female reformers that they were not to abandon the characteristics that formed an essential womanhood and motherhood. Above all, anti-suffragists said, women needed to remain attentive to their roles as mothers and wives, and
to be mindful of their femininity. Anti-suffragists portrayed suffragism and women’s interest in politics as a threat to traditional womanhood. For anti-suffragists, female activism conjured the figure of the feared “mannahish” or “unsexed” woman who is not a good woman to be a mother or wife. Although the nature in which audience members were interpellated as women and mothers was contested between suffragists and anti-suffragists, the interpellations themselves were no less compelling than being called a Québécois. Either interpellation was constitutive, creating its audience and shaping identities in the moment of address. Either interpellation left no room for choice, no room for persuasion, for the thus constituted audiences.

Canadian suffragists occasionally protested the use of the terms woman and mother by anti-suffragists. Nellie McClung, for instance, is outraged when one member of parliament demands that women “go home and reform their own sex before they came looking for any reforms by men” (“New Citizenship” 195). She responds: “No one would have dared to speak so illogically to men. Think of telling half-a-dozen men to go home and reform all mankind!” She observes that men “are very prone to speak of women, as a class, of women—women in bulk, making each individual responsible for the sins of all” (194). On other occasions suffragists were themselves prone to speak of “women in bulk.”

Because of its use by both pro- and anti-suffragists, the political action inherent in woman could be conservative or progressive; it could speak of traditional male authority as

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For some prominent anti-suffragist writers see, for example, Stephen Leacock’s “The Woman Question,” Andrew Macphail’s “On Certain Aspects of Feminism” and “The Psychology of the Suffragette,” and Goldwin Smith’s “Woman’s Place in the State” and “Female Suffrage.”
well as of an emerging female one. After all, woman was not a term invented for the historic moment. But noun phrases that described certain types of women could be more responsive to the moment. Public discourse at the turn of the century frequently pondered the fate of new roles for women with the help of popular noun phrases. There was much discussion of, for instance, the business woman, the shop girl, the working girl, the factory girl, the unwed mother, the club woman, the society woman, or the platform woman.

The term platform woman, for instance, saw wide usage with the aim of discrediting the numerous English suffragists who were busy giving public speeches. As the following example will show, suffragists also attempted to re-signify unfavourable meanings of such

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38 Ann Heilmann and Valerie Sanders argue that among the many things which British feminist and anti-feminist writers of the Victorian period share is most prominently their preoccupation with “questions of femininity, each side laying claim to ‘authentic’ as opposed to the other camp’s ‘artificial,’ flawed, corrupted or unsexed femininity” (289). They also provide evidence of the fluidity of the boundary between feminist and anti-feminist positions—some Victorian woman writers invoked the woman rebel while distancing themselves from political demands while dedicated feminist writers at times embraced anti-feminist positions.

39 To give a sample of Canadian articles on the working girl: Busy Man’s Magazine (later renamed Maclean’s) ran articles on, for instance, “Smoothing the Way of the Working Girl” (Austin), “Guarding the Interests of Our Working Girls” (Parker), and “As the Working Girl Sees It” (Westwood). For a discussion of the working girl and the shop girl in Canadian literature, see Lindsey McMaster’s “The Urban Working Girl in Turn-of-the-Century Canadian Fiction.”

40 For a discussion of the factory girl in nineteenth-century American fiction see Amal Amireh’s The Factory Girl and the Seamstress: Imagining Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction.

41 See Karen Murray’s work on the emergence of the category of the “unwed mother” in turn-of-the-century Toronto.

42 See Anne Ruggles Gere and Sarah R. Robbins on the notion of the club woman in the United States, how it differed between European- and African-American clubs, and how they developed models for literacy in their club publications.
noun phrases. In a *Nineteenth Century* article, republished in the Canadian magazine *The Week*, Margaret Lonsdale catalogued what she saw as the drawbacks of women's increased public speaking. When women feel strongly towards a subject, she argued, they become "mentally warped" and narrow-minded about it; "calm judicial quality" is absent from their speech (315). There is also "a gradual hardening of the countenance and of the external manner and address, indicating too surely the real repression going on within of much that is lovable and admirable in woman" (315). Thus, the woman who frequently speaks in public turns into an unwomanly, a hardened woman. As such, she becomes the subject of many jokes and derogatory phrases; according to Lonsdale, "that dreadful woman" was only one of the milder ones of these derogatory terms. Lonsdale believed that despite the prominence which was accorded to these platform women, they are "distasteful to the good sense and refined feeling of the majority" with the effect that "female influence in the world is degenerating" (316). Would it not be more effective, she asks, to maximize the good influence women have in their small, private sphere rather than exert bad influence in public? Lonsdale was in favour of women exerting their influence on the world, but she was uncomfortable with how publicly speaking women had been portrayed by anti-feminists.

In a letter to the editor, Sarah Anne Curzon—then president of the Canadian Women's Suffrage Association—responds to Lonsdale's article by quoting a report on a recent suffrage meeting in Manchester. There, women speakers had pointed out that the kinds of actions which tended to discredit women "varied with the century," and had Miss Lonsdale lived in earlier days she might have been maligned even for publishing an article in *Nineteenth Century*. The work women did as public speakers is a result of a "desire
which every woman ought to feel to throw her weight into the scale in the direction of righteousness and goodness.” The suffragists at the Manchester meeting, and Curzon with them, attempt to turn around Lonsdale’s conclusions on the image and political effectiveness of platform women. They do so by emphasizing the honourable impulse behind women’s public speaking and portraying them as at the cutting edge of social progress. The honourable impulse that drives platform women toward public speaking ought also to motivate other women to become public advocates of women’s rights.

In Kenneth Burke’s terms, Curzon’s letter attempts to turn a term which was usually used in a dyslogistic way into a more eulogistic term. In A Rhetoric of Motives, Burke takes up Jeremy Bentham’s discussion of “question-begging appellatives” in the latter’s Book of Fallacies. Bentham argued that the most effective way of disguising circular reasoning, i.e. begging the question, is to state an argument with the help of single appellatives. Vituperative (dyslogistic) terms such as lust, avarice, luxury, covetousness, or prodigality state an argument rather than making it—and so do laudatory (eulogistic) terms such as industry, honour, piety, generosity, and gratitude. These terms have the force of an assumption without appearing in the form of an assumption, and as a result “the speaker has an opportunity to establish this very assumption in the mind of his hearer” (Burke 94, emphasis on original). According to Bentham, the frequent use of dyslogistic and eulogistic terms removes speech from the realm of logical argumentation and places it within the realm of “moral science.” As Burke points out, Bentham’s quest for neutral appellatives is idealistic and naïve. Most discourse is imbued with eulogistic and dyslogistic “tonalities,” as Burke calls them (98). In “Constitutive Rhetoric,” Charland refers to this kind of discourse as ideological, as “the discourse that presents itself as always
only pointing to the given, the natural, the already agreed upon” (133). As a result, most discourse engages in moral positioning with the help of assumption-laden appellatives (for more on moral positioning in suffrage discourse see chapter 4).

The treatment of noun phrases such as *the platform woman* was always underlined with moral concerns and political purposes. In fact, moral concerns dominated suffrage discourse to the point that noun phrases could be created exclusively for outlining the moral dimensions of female identity—witness Lonsdale’s example of the “dreadful women.” As an anti-suffragist, Stephen Leacock describes female reformers as belonging to the class of “the Awful Woman,” an “old maid” with spectacles who preaches the doctrine of woman’s rights. The “Awful Woman” might seem to be a new phenomenon, says Leacock, but in fact she is directly descended from the “Roman sibyls,” the “medieval witch,” and the “English scold” (8). Like other anti-suffragists, he categorizes the women’s rights activist not by her political arguments but by disparaging her in terms of her character. He alleges that because she could not find a husband, likely because she is too argumentative, she
spends her time rousing other women into politics. By capitalizing and repeating the phrase “the Awful Woman,” Leacock signals that such women are alike and form a class of their own, and that their identity is inherently detestable.

The coining of noun phrases by participants in the suffrage debate was a practice which occurred in parallel to the social categorizations undertaken for the sake of governmental and philanthropic policies. Karen Murray has traced the emergence of the category of the “unwed mother” among social reformers in turn-of-the-century Toronto. She finds that unwed mothers did by no means present a prominent and visible social problem that could then catch the eye of social reformers. Rather, social workers and religious leaders actively “helped to render unwed mothers a social classification amendable to regulation and reform” (275). It was because unwed mothers could so easily be positioned as characters which were open to reform that they became a popular object of

43 Leacock’s satirical description of the “Awful Woman” and his reasoning that she lacks a husband is not the most hostile example. The Colonel of Saturday Night in one of his editorials in December 1910 makes a similar argument. He speaks about English militant suffragettes with much malice:

Absurdly lenient treatment for this gang of female rowdies has unquestionably much to do with their persistency. Six months hard labor, with a double sentence for a second offence would probably clear the London atmosphere in a wonderfully short time. . . .

Britain’s public men have an ample share of responsibilities as it is without being obliged to spend a goodly portion of their valuable time dodging a lot of turbulent, crotchety, peevish old cats.

The chief difficulty appears to be that these fighting suffragettes have not a sufficient number of home ties and home interests. A good lusty family each, with a house to look after, would do wonders toward soothing the average rock-throwing female rowdy that is now the bete noire of English political life. (1)

The Colonel’s tirade is directed specifically against English militant suffragists, rather than women’s rights activists in general. For this purpose, he employs the term “female rowdy” in much the same way as Leacock uses the “Awful Woman.” See also Flora MacDonald Denison’s measured response to The Colonel (“From a Suffragette”).
social workers' attention. Unwed mothers were "'ideal' deviant subjects" who could be directed "towards 'appropriate' behaviour considered conducive to the health and welfare of the city, society and nation" (275). As a result, the phrase "unwed mother" functioned not only as a new social classification, but also came to contain directives for future behaviour. It was a term that could be used to interpellate women with the aim of compelling them to live according to the ideals of the liberal state. Murray’s study serves as a useful illustration that an audience group—in this case an audience which serves as object of social reform initiatives—does not pre-exist the social reform discourse but is constituted through its repeated utterances. Charland calls this "the ideological 'trick'" of constitutive rhetoric: presenting that which is most rhetorical—the existence of a particular yet imagined group of people—as extra-rhetorical, as pre-existing the moment of address ("Constitutive Rhetoric" 137).

Like social reformers, suffragists attempted to mobilize imagined groups of women by distinguishing types of female identities, by locating them within the social and moral fabric, and thus orienting them toward a desired future action. In her article on "Moral Capital," Mariana Valverde suggests that this emphasis on moral subjectivities is common in moral reform movements. She argues that the aim of these movements is "not so much to change behaviour as to generate certain ethical subjectivities that appear as inherently 'moral'" (216). Correct actions are assumed to follow from these subjectivities, "but the subjectivity is more important than the behaviour, as it is in the realm of cultural capital" (216). Women who were not yet suffragists were interpellated as occupying an immoral or hypocritical position with the aim of compelling them to abandon this position and to identify instead with what was implied to be a more moral and more politically potent
identity. Nellie McClung, for instance, mocks the arguments of anti-suffragist women as “anemic and bloodless” with an “indefinable sick-headache, kimona, breakfast-in-bed quality . . . that repels the strong and healthy” (In Times 63). Such a woman is a “gentle lady” who does not like to hear “distressing things,” and who responds to the plight of female factory workers with an exclamation such as this one:

“Now, please do not tell me about how these ready-to-wear garments are made, because I do not wish to know. The last time I heard a woman talk about the temptation of factory girls, my head ached all evening and I could not sleep.” (63)

The term “lady” itself was falling from favour and was increasingly used to criticize the women so addressed. In her women’s column in Saturday Night, Madame writes that it would be a pity if the use of “that over-worked word ‘lady’” was taken up again (12 Mar. 1910; see also McMaster). McClung characterizes the “gentleness” of privileged women as a self-interested escape from an understanding of and caring for the lives of less privileged women. A letter writer signing with the name of Elizabeth likewise speculates in the Toronto Globe that anti-suffragists belong to the “well-fed, well-clothed, well-protected class who do not care to be roused out of their comfortable homes to lend a helping hand to their less fortunate sisters who have to go out into the world to earn their bread” (12).

McClung and the letter writer Elizabeth criticize an upper-class attitude among privileged women. When these women are portrayed as idle and unhealthy, they are also shown to diverge from the notion of a more hardy Canadian womanhood and the ideal of a vigorous “mother of the race.” For instance, McClung explains that the women’s rights movement, misunderstood and maligned as it often was, represented in fact “a spiritual
revival of the best instincts of womanhood—the instinct to serve and save the race” (*In Times* 66). In contrast, the “anti-suffrage attitude” among some women—in particular among the mocked “gentle ladies”—was in McClung’s view “not so much a belief as a disease” (62). Suffragists’ dyslogistic noun phrases for privileged and socially unconcerned women thus work as a contrast to their eulogistic self-characterization as maternally concerned female activists. The dyslogistic address of not-yet-suffragist women is, therefore, also a moment of audience design in which suffragists characterize themselves by selectively emphasizing certain features of their audience members.

Distaste for privileged women was often exhibited with the aim of obligating these women to take more interest in politics and women’s issues. In November 1912, *The Champion*, the monthly magazine of the Political Equality League of Victoria, published a detailed account of the first discussion of the Study Club, a club devoted to “free and full discussion of various topics of interest to the ‘new woman’” (“The Study Club” 6). That day the club was to debate “Fundamental Reasons for the Enfranchisement of Women,” and judging by the written report, the concept of “The Mother of the Race” took centre stage among these fundamental reasons. By the very nature of motherhood, the report states, “racial progress and development is largely in the hands of women,” and therefore the rights and privileges of citizenship should also be in the hands of women. The report asks:

> Look at the people as you go down the street and ask, Isn’t there room for improvement in the human specimens you meet? What is the reason for the manifest imperfections? What is woman going to do about it? What can she do while her sex means her subjection? (6)
These improvements in “racial health” are described as something which women can diagnose more clearly than men, and for which women bear unique responsibility: “We must go forward as women or racial progression must cease, for we are the mould in which the future race is cast” (7). The hailed “racial progression” is thought to be thwarted by conditions such as “a double standard of morality, drink and disease, enforced maternity, sickly and imperfect children, sweated labour, man-made standards for women” (7). The relationship between men and women as it is laid out by this report writer is more oppositional to men and their role in society than most Canadian suffrage articles. “We women have got to take the broader view—the step forward,” says the article, “We are the Mother of the Race, not the subject of the man” (7, emphasis in original).

Despite the juxtaposition to men and their dominance, the unified “we” among women as “mothers of the race” comes with occasional divisions. The article on “The Study Club” also distinguishes between those women who have already woken up to their feminist task, and those who have not. When posing the question of what a woman can do while she is in subjection, the report writer offers as an answer that “first of all, before she can do anything, she must wake up to the responsibilities of her position, and become conscious of her own ignorance and lack of development” (6). Privileged women who are not yet suffragists are at once in a position of great possibility while at the same time their thinking about the world is stunted and undeveloped. McClung posits that it is the “comfortable and happily married woman—the woman who has a good man between her and her world, who has not the saving privilege of having to work” who “has the greatest temptation not to think at all” (In Times 34). In such a state, a “sort of fatty degeneration of conscience” takes place, which is “disastrous to the development of thought” (34).
According to this view, the women who live comfortably without the need to work are not yet aware of, not yet awake to, the woman question. By not challenging their own thinking they also do not fulfil their potential as caring “mothers of the race” within Canadian society. We have to remind ourselves that this constitutive rhetoric around the suffrage-sceptical woman obfuscates the fact that vocal female anti-suffragists were in most cases very educated and politically minded women.44 We must note, therefore, how well suffragists managed to portray the act of thinking itself as, by default, a suffragist act.

According to Charland, constitutive rhetoric does what rhetoric as persuasion cannot do. While rhetoric as persuasion requires a “subject-as-audience” who is “already constituted with an identity and within an ideology,” it has no way of accounting for this audience (134). Constitutive rhetoric, in contrast, helps us understand how audiences are constituted in the moment of utterance. What is more, together the theory of constitutive rhetoric and the theory of audience design allow us to see not only how audiences are constituted in the moment of utterance, but also how utterances constitute not only one audience but a range of different audience positions. I have analyzed examples of how suffragists’ audience design hopes to compel these addressees—the middle- and upper-class women who were not yet suffragists—to political action by virtue of moral obligation and class authority. I have noted that the method was not so much one of persuading by rational argument, but to compel by calling forth subject positions which are anchored in

44 For a discussion of how much the key organizers of US-American anti-suffrage organizations resembled suffragists in terms of class, education, and range of political activities, see, for instance, Jane Jerome Camhi’s Women Against Women and Thomas J. Jablonsky’s The Home, Heaven, and Mother Party. See also Elna C. Green’s Southern Strategies and Susan E. Marshall’s Splintered Sisterhood.
social and moral ideals. By relegating female suffrage sceptics to undesirable subject positions, suffragists could also reinterpret the notion of traditional womanhood in their own favour. In other words, in tandem with constituting their audience of suffrage-sceptical middle-class women as occupying an unfavourable position these writers also constituted their audience of suffragist women as occupying a position of desirable woman-and motherhood. In contrast to the languishing "gentle lady" McClung can thus describe suffragists as unselfish and working toward a "revival of the best instincts of motherhood" (In Times 66). Muriel, another letter writer to the Globe, explains that the woman who wants the vote "is really the earnest woman with the mother-heart, ready to do and dare anything for her family" (12). In similar letters, suffragists are also called "thoughtful women," "true women," "earnest women," the "intelligent Canadian womanhood," "the most serious-minded of our women," and "good women."

Constitutive rhetoric makes itself known most explicitly in noun phrases which are used to highlight the inherent morality of certain positions or denounce the immorality of others. As a result, the task of the listener is not to participate in the weighing of arguments but to recognize the almost inescapable rightness of certain actions and positions and thoroughly reject those which are portrayed as immoral. In our examples, we are speaking about the rightness of being a maternally concerned, and therefore suffragist, woman, along with the lack of rightness among the socially apathetic and mentally lazy ladies. Anti-suffragists, for their part, used these terms of rightness in reverse. Charland notes that because of the presence of rightness we should be critical of the term persuasion—the language of rightness is not one of choices, and constitutive rhetoric does not envisage its audience as free to be persuaded. The process instead is "akin more to one of conversion
that ultimately results in an act of recognition of the ‘rightness’ of a discourse and of one’s identity within its reconfigured subject position” (“Constitutive Rhetoric” 142). The language of rightness is integral to constitutive rhetoric, and, therefore, to the ideology of social movements.

In the sense that the actions proposed by social movements are always underlined by morality, the study of audience design in movement discourse always has to contend with this moral language. The moral parameters under which suffrage discourse functioned are inseparable from its audience design and its political impulse. As Mariana Valverde’s and Cecily Devereux’s recent research on early Canadian feminism demonstrates, we should not attempt to divorce this language of morality and rightness from the feminist claims of which it is part. Research on early feminism has long debated the tension between the feminist accomplishments of turn-of-the-century Canadian women and the morality that we now find problematic. In “A Legacy of Ambivalence,” Janice Fiamengo thoroughly reviews how the discussion of early Canadian feminism has shifted from a 1970s celebration of its egalitarian impulses at the cost of recognizing its more unsavoury elements, to debates about the role of its racism since the 1990s. In 1992, in her landmark article “‘When the Mother of the Race Is Free’,” Valverde argued that we should no longer view the racism and racist theories of Canadian feminists as an aberration. Rather, her article made the case for racism as an integral part of early feminism. In her

\[45\] In 1996, Philip N. Cohen made a similar argument with regards to the American suffrage movement, describing it as pursuing an exclusive citizenship based on whiteness, and, therefore, being nationalist and racist at the same time. Like Valverde, he challenges that earlier studies had not taken this racism serious enough, attributing it instead to heightened emotions in a political moment or the pernicious ideological influence of white men.
2005 study of Sara Jeannette Duncan’s feminism, Fiamengo points out that instead of “assessing early Canadian women writers against an evolving ideal of subversion, resistance, and liberation,” we, as contemporary feminist scholars, should refrain from making our political judgment the guiding principle of our research (“Baptized” 277). We should “pay more attention to the writer’s context than to our own” (278).

Following in Valverde’s footsteps, Cecily Devereux moves beyond the task of identifying eugenic thought in early feminism in her study of Nellie McClung and eugenic feminism. Pushing the question further, she asks instead:

What does it mean to characterize eugenics in Canada as a movement “led” by feminists? And to concomitantly characterize first-wave feminism as a movement that is tainted and undermined by its involvement in the full spectrum of eugenical ideas, from birth control and the protection of mothers to the sterilization of the putatively “unfit”? (16)

In Devereux’s view, early feminism did not simply adopt eugenic argumentation from elsewhere, but was in fact one of the driving forces behind imagining and circulating such argumentation. Devereux suggests that under these circumstances the idea of moving today’s feminism forward—and away from its earlier racist and eugenical ideas—is part of the problematic notion of progress so inherent in eugenics. The desire to dissociate current feminism from earlier racism is “itself an indication of the extent to which western feminism is still invested in a theory of upward social movement” (140). The question for Devereux is not “How far have we come?”, but “How has feminist ideology changed?” (140). In terms of my discussion of audience design in this chapter, Devereux’s latter question could be rephrased as: how have the terms of rightness changed with which
feminists interpellate their audiences? What are the terms under which feminists at different historical moments attempt to compel their audience constituents to take up certain subject positions?

I have argued that the political force of suffrage discourse, like most social movement discourse, is better understood not in terms of persuasion, but in terms of interpellating certain audience members so as to identify them with the rightness of the discourse. Among suffragists this rightness relied on the ideas of moral obligation among middle-class Canadians and on their notions of racial and social health. In the process, suffragists' use of the idea of "good womanhood" came to include an endorsement of suffrage, sometimes without the need of "good women" to explicitly declare themselves to be or stand apart as a collective of suffragists. Since suffragism was only one element, a controversial element, of social reform discourse, it could be played with varying degrees of outspokenness.

An Onlooker writes to Saturday Night that those who oppose the franchise, those who are "fearful of every thing not stamped by custom and convention," misunderstand the woman's movement. They lose sight of the fact that woman's suffrage is "only one phase of a much bigger movement," the inspiration of which is altruism, the "unselfish object being the bettering of the condition of those less fortunate than themselves, especially their sister women" (29). For this, women will need the vote because "it will enable them to have a more determining voice in the great social changes which are just ahead of us" (29). Despite its eloquent support of the female franchise, the letter concludes, "Perhaps I might say that I am not a Suffragette, nor do I want the vote, as my work limits me to a smaller sphere of action, but I am one interested in the big movements of the day and their portent
for the future” (29). Paradoxically, the writer calls for support of women’s suffrage through an appeal to socially concerned womanhood, while at the same time insisting that one does not need to be a suffragist in order to do so. The larger concern for social reform includes the call for suffrage to the degree that commitment to suffrage is not always required. A confession to suffragism is not always what holds the collective of suffragist women together. Or, as will become clearer in the following section, even when suffragist speakers disagree on suffragism with some of their female audience members they could still build agreement with them on other social issues.

Comparing this positioning by suffragists to Charland’s example of the peuple Québécois, we notice that the constitutive rhetoric of Canadian suffragists is much less of a rallying cry. Unlike French-Canadian sovereigntists, suffragists did not necessarily hail suffrage sceptics as one of their own, as suffragists, but as potential converts to suffragism. In Charland’s example the support of sovereignty was already part of the term; for Canadian suffragists the position “idle woman” did not contain support for suffrage but the moral imperative that was to make these women turn toward suffragism. Suffrage rhetoric in this case fashions itself more as a moral positioning than a rebellious uprising. Compared to French-Canadian sovereigntism, a different network of audience positions is required for a political movement such as suffragism, a movement which is so dependent on politicians’ goodwill and the public perception of women (whether they are intimately involved in the movement or not). Suffragists could rarely afford to engage in radical distinctions between supporters and enemies. Unlike sovereigntists, whose aim is, after all, to govern their own country, suffragists needed to emphasize their willingness to co-operate in existing politics, even if that meant appeasing anti-suffragist politicians and not crossing
the boundaries of accepted behaviour (see the previous chapter on the Canadian discussion on militancy).

Identification between Suffragist and Anti-Suffragist Women

In “Rhetoric—Old and New,” Kenneth Burke posited his notion of “identification” as the key term for a new rhetoric, a key term which was meant to replace “persuasion” as the unifying element of diverse rhetorical theories. According to Burke, rhetoric relies on the “consubstantiality” of speakers, their shared feelings, thoughts, and actions. Burke describes identification as creating a sense of unity in response to division. In A Rhetoric of Motives, he says that when speakers earnestly affirm identification with their audiences, this happens because there is division. In the above examples we can note that suffragists seem more inclined to point out what divides them from female suffrage sceptics rather than what unites them. Burke also says that since identification involves division, it involves us “in matters of socialization and faction” (45). Socialization, however, does not only exist in the moment of utterance. It has a history and is embedded in assumptions that do not always need to be uttered. Michael Holquist describes utterances as border phenomena—taking place between speakers, between what is said and what is not said, and therefore “drenched in social factors” (61). As “social phenomenon par excellence, the utterance is shaped by speakers who assume that the values of their particular community are shared, and thus do not need to be spelled out in what they say” (61). With regards to the disparaging noun phrases used to describe other women, we can argue that suffragists have enough points of identification with suffrage-sceptical women, so much so that they do not forego identification by emphasizing division. Despite their criticism of other
women's snobbishness and laziness, suffragists rely on assumptions of class and racial authority that closely unite them with suffrage sceptics. Their lives are so similar that rather than searching for points of identification, they feel that they can afford to focus the discussion on what distinguishes their political views from each other.

On August 21, 1912, Francis Marion Beynon writes a column about the letters she continually receives for the women's page of the *Grain Growers' Guide*, whose editor she had become earlier that year. She leads into her column by emphasizing that many letter writers equate recent improvements of the women's page with the increasing publication of readers' letters. Beynon agrees that for her, too, "the real vital feature of this page which is attracting women is the letters from other women giving a new and interesting point of view" (9). In fact, in order to increase the page's significance she would like to receive even more letters. In previous columns, Beynon had repeatedly explained her suffragist views. But she now assures potential letter writers:

You do not need to agree with all my views on the woman question to be a useful and welcome member of this club. Indeed you can very decidedly disagree with them and say so, if you please, and your letter will find its way into print as readily as any other. (9)

Beynon declares that regardless of this variance in views, women should "tolerate differences of opinion in each other on a few questions outside of which we, being all women together, have a thousand other needs in common" (9). She asserts that she and her

46 On Beynon's work as a journalist and member of the social reform movement in Winnipeg see Ramsay Cook, "Francis Marion Beynon and the Crisis of Christian Reformism."
readers are so alike and identify with each other so much that any political differences will seem small in comparison.

Under such circumstances it is, in fact, these very differences which enliven the discussion and make women's politics more relevant to readers. Beynon ends her column by saying:

When you come to fully realize as I do that the very cream of this page is your letters full of bright suggestions and quaint turns of speech I think you will be even more interested in the work than you are today. (9)

We might argue that the similarities to which Beynon alludes are not only based in women's experiences as women, but also as English-speakers (and writers), as educated to a certain degree, as subscribers to the newspaper of the Prairie grain growers' associations—in other words, as sharing similar social positions within Prairie society.

Suffragists' emphasis on how women's views might differ in only a small, controversial area—suffragism—also helps them to elude the dilemma of declaring identification around suffragism. As a result, they do not need to come out as suffragists, or even agree on suffragism, in order to think of themselves as a political force. They can more easily identify around the notion of women as caretakers and mothers, a way which only indirectly leads to an embracing of suffragism. As Onlooker demonstrates in her 1910 letter to *Saturday Night*, women who are in favour of suffrage do not always want to identify as suffragists. Rather than declaring a particularly suffragist identity, and running the risk of being accused of appearing "mannish," suffragists emphasize the ways in which they are like other women, and in particular the way in which they are good mothers. As much research has illustrated, claims of maternal feminism serve as major arguments in
justifying women’s political engagement while maintaining traditional values rooted in a separation of spheres. In “Answers to an Anti-Suffragist,” Francis Marion Beynon declares that individual motherhood is not good enough for the present day: “We want a new spirit of national motherhood—mothers whose love for their own children teaches them love for all children” (287). Flora MacDonald Denison writes in her column in the Toronto *World* that everyone woman “with a mother heart and a mother love needs the ballot to assist in making laws to protect everybody’s child, anybody’s child” because children are “the Great Asset of the nation’s to-morrow” (“Under the Pines”). According to Denison’s wording, suffragist women need not actually be mothers in order to have this nation-saving impulse—it is the mother love of which every woman is assumed to be capable which makes her into a concerned activist. And Sonia Leathes explains in her thorough 1914 article on “Votes for Women” that:

The individual interests of yesterday have become collective interests of today. The individual responsibilities of the home-maker of yesterday have become the collective interests of the home-maker of to-day. And collective interests are controlled by parliament, by legislation, and by the expenditure of public funds which are all in turn controlled by the elector’s ballot. (77)

Like Beynon and Denison, Leathes emphasizes how a mother’s caring extends to everyone’s children. She continues that since “all these matters strike at the very heartstrings of the mothers of all nations, we shall not rest until we have secured the power vested in the ballot,” and that the people who are effected by government policies are “our children every one” (78). Canadian mothers, according to such maternal feminist
arguments, share many concerns even if they might differ in the solutions proposed to these concerns. If we turn Beynon, Denison, and Leathes's argument around, then a mother who has not turned to suffragism is also a mother who has not translated her concern for her children's wellbeing into a concern for the nation's children, for its citizens.

The Theory of Audience Design

In the sense that suffrage speech was always about much broader goals for female involvement in society, suffragists did well to address their utterances mostly to those women who could become activists like them. There were numerous conditions that made other women the most prominent audience of suffrage speech—suffragists placed themselves in a position of arguing for all women and so had an interest in having a majority of women on their side; the level of identification between these women made it easy for suffragists to phrase political involvement as a moral imperative for women; and in the face of several failed private members' bills and general government reluctance, a political campaign based on mobilizing women to participate in political equality leagues and suffrage events was the most promising way of keeping women's suffrage on the parliamentary agenda. However, both suffragist and anti-suffragist writers were also keenly aware that their debate was one among divided groups of women who each attempted to speak for womanhood in general on an issue that did not even lie within their realm of direct influence: as non-voters women could neither grant nor forbid each other the vote. Even if they managed to convince their readers, they still had not come closer to guaranteeing the kind of change or continuance they were looking for. Suffrage and anti-suffrage utterances were predominantly directed at each other, but not exclusively so.
These utterances frequently also had overhearing male readers in mind—most importantly, male readers with political influence.

Before I turn to discussion of how male readers are configured as overhearers in suffrage writing, let me first give an explanation of what I mean by “overhearer” as an analytical category of audience design. With his notion of “footing” developed in the 1970s, sociologist Erving Goffman provided the foundation for a theory of audience design. Goffman was concerned with different levels of participation in social encounters. In an early paper on “The Neglected Situation,” he proceeds from the insight that “the study of behaviour while speaking and the study of the behaviour of those who are present to each other but not engaged in talk cannot be analytically separated” (134). Goffman turned against the dyadic model of speech interaction and criticized the simplicity of the prevalent notions of speaker and hearer. What makes the dyadic speaker-hearer model so simplistic is a neglect for what Goffman calls the social situation—or, more precisely, a wide variety of possible social situations which might differ, for instance, in terms of whether one talks to someone of the same or different sex, of the same or different age, of the same or different social background, whether we speak on the phone or in person, to one listener or many, whether we have attentive listeners or listeners with varying signs of engagement, a routine conversation or an emergency situation. Goffman notes that it is not simply attributes of the social structure which are part of a social situation, but “the value placed on these attributes as they are acknowledged in the situation” (134). An analysis of audience design, then, is interested in the way in which social characteristics and the value attributed to them are used by speakers to position their audience constituents and by hearers to react to how they are being addressed.
In later work, and particularly in his 1979 essay “Footing,” Goffman makes more analytical distinctions between different types of participants. The term “footing” refers to how participants can change their footing in the course of a conversation, how they frequently turn *not only* from being a speaker to being a hearer and back again—these being the “primitive notions of speaker and hearer” (128) or “global folk categories” (129)—*but also* how they move between a number of smaller, more varied positions. For instance, some hearers are directly addressed in a conversation while others might not count as official participants. These unofficial hearers might intentionally be listening in on what is being said to other addressees and thus be “eavesdroppers”; or, they could inadvertently follow a conversation and so be in the position of “overhearers.” In turn, those who are visually present from the perspective of the speaker but who are not “ratified participants” are “bystanders” from the speaker’s point of view. Goffman notes that having bystanders attend a conversation “should be considered the rule, not the exception” (132). Bystanders can switch between the roles of overhearer and eavesdropper, and can also turn into participants in the course of a conversation. As an example, Goffman mentions how a passenger sitting in the front seat of a taxi can turn at one point to the driver and at another to his fellow passengers in the backseat, effectively “trusting the driver to determine whether to act as a nonperson or an addressee” (135).

Goffman draws a picture of great complexity for an analysis of audience positions in a social situation. Stephen Levinson asserts in an article on Goffman’s concepts of participation that Goffman’s work on language has shaped much work in linguistic pragmatics even if those linguists “may not always have succeeded in passing the credit back to its source” (161). One of the pragmatic linguists whose work on audience has been
influenced by Goffman is Herbert Clark. In *Arenas of Language Use*, Clark coins the apt term “audience design” for his analysis of how utterances are not only directed toward their addressees, but are also geared toward side participants and overhearers, and differently so. Clark turns Goffman’s terms into pragmatic linguistics by analyzing them from the level of speech act theory. In Clark’s scheme, addressees are the recipients of the speaker’s illocutionary act; it is to them that something is promised, an apology is given, or an assertion is being made. Side participants are witnesses to the illocutionary address; they are only sometimes and indirectly invited to collaborate. Overhearers are also witnesses, but unlike side-participants, the speaker has not placed them in that role. Overhearers’ existence might not even be acknowledged. For Clark, the most important role that non-addressees play in the conversation is to be informed of what is being said. He posits a principle of responsibility according to which participants are responsible for keeping track of the conversation. The principle of responsibility ensures that non-addressees recognize shifts in address so as to know when they are being addressed and called upon to demonstrate their knowledge of what has been said to other addressees.

47 Goffman distinguishes between ratified participants and unofficial participants (or bystanders). He divides unofficial participants into eavesdroppers and overhearers depending on their intentions. For Clark, not every hearer is a participant, only addressees and side participants are participants (side participants collaborate indirectly with the speaker, addressees collaborate directly). Bystanders, whose presence is recognized by speakers, and eavesdroppers, whose presence is not fully recognized, comprise the category of overhearers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goffman</th>
<th>Clark</th>
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<tr>
<td>ratified participant</td>
<td>participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>unofficial participant / bystander</td>
<td>overhearer</td>
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<tr>
<td>overhearer</td>
<td>eavesdropper</td>
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<td>addressee</td>
<td>side participant</td>
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Goffman, Clark, and Levinson study spoken conversations in which speakers are physically present. In Goffman's examples there are many visual clues that express participants' roles in the discussion—how far apart they are positioned from each other, whether they are turning their faces or bodies away or toward each other, if they are speaking with their hands in front of their mouths, or whether they are making eye contact with someone. Goffman notes that the difference between addressees and bystanders is "often accomplished exclusively through visual clue" ("Footing" 133). Writers and readers have none of these visual clues at their disposal when they are trying to determine the status of different participants. They are also not dealing with individual persons but with their notion of who is going to read their piece of writing—as Ede and Lunsford have pointed out, what might eventually turn out to be actual audiences must first be imagined audiences in the process of writing.

An analysis of general tendencies within audience design by Canadian suffragists can, therefore, not claim to be as precise and detailed as Clark's catalogue of pragmatic distinctions between hearers (and I have only given a very rough summary of Clark's theory). I borrow from both Goffman and Clark by applying the following analytical scheme.\(^{48}\) Addressees and side participants are ratified participants. They are, for instance, the kinds of readers that a letter, article, or column writer would expect to regularly read the news publication in which the piece is published. Ratified participants can also be readers

\(^{48}\) A table for my terms would look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ratified participant</th>
<th>unofficial participant / overhearer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>addressee</td>
<td>side participant</td>
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who will specifically read that piece of writing. Among these ratified participants, the addressees are those who are directly addressed: they are asked to take up the writer's ideas and put them into some kind of action. Side participants, like addressees, are very present as audience members, but they are not directly addressed at the moment—like the suffragist who finds herself reading about the apathy of the "gentle lady" in a women's page column. In line with Goffman's emphasis on the complexity and fluidity of participant roles, we have to keep in mind that participant roles can switch within the course of each text. A group of imagined readers who are the addressees in one sentence—say, stay-at-home middle-class wives—can become side participants in the next sentence—when the writer turns, for instance, to working mothers. In my scheme, overhearers and bystanders are the kinds of readers who might happen to read the text, but who are not assumed to participate in the conversation. Unlike addressees and side participants, overhearers are not directly asked to do something. Although a writer might describe what she expects overhearers to do in a given situation, she is not in fact asking them to do it.

In his revision to Clark's theory of audience design, linguist Keith Allan takes issue with Clark's use of speech act theory. In "Hearers and Speech Acts" (a co-written chapter in Clark's Arenas of Language Use), Clark and Carlson's central tenet is that "the speaker performs two types of illocutionary act with each utterance" (205). One of these illocutionary acts is what Clark and Carlson call the traditional kind, such as an assertion, promise, or apology; it is directed at addressees. The other is an informative act and is directed at everyone present in the situation, including addressees, side participants and overhearers. The informative act is "intended to inform all of them jointly of the assertion, promise, or apology" (205). Allan points out that Clark and Carlson fail to make a
distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, between acts which are carried
out in the actual utterance (the assertion, information, promise, or apology) and acts which
are carried out as an effect of an utterance (a middle-class wife starting to think seriously
about suffrage, or a suffrage organizer sending out a number of petitions). In contrast to
Clark and Carlson's conception, every participant is supposed to recognize the illocutionary
force of an utterance, says Allan, whether they will be the ones acting on it or not. Given
J.L. Austin's distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, Allan sees no need
to also separate traditional illocutions from those which are informative. Thus falls away
the distinction between addressees and other audience members on the basis of speech act
theory. A speaker sometimes does not even know who among the listeners will be the
addressee of the request to act, as in Allan's example of the lecturer telling students that,
"Anyone who wants a copy of last year's test, get it from the office" (510). Such an
utterance informs students of an action open to them, and in that respect the illocutionary
point is the same for all students. But only for some students will the utterance have a
perlocutionary effect, as only some of them will go to the office and ask for a copy of last
year's exam. Allan argues against Clark and Carlson's distinction that an utterance has
different illocutionary forces between addressees and other listeners. It might have
different perlocutionary effects, Allan says, but these would lie outside a study of language.

However, the kind of speech which aims to produce perlocutionary acts—which
aims for effects on audience members' feelings, thoughts, or actions—is exactly the speech
with which a rhetorical study of the discourse of social change must be concerned. Where
Allan challenges Clark and Carlson's distinction between different types of illocution,
rhetorical scholar Paul Newell Campbell critiques J.L. Austin's very separation of
illocution and perlocution. Austin’s distinction hinges on his claim that while illocutionary acts have a variety of effects, not all of these effects are perlocutionary, i.e. influence audience members’ feelings, thoughts, and actions. For instance, Austin implies that what he calls “non-serious speech acts” are not meant to produce perlocutionary effects because “non-serious” speech acts are, in his words, “parasitic,” “etiolated,” “not in the ‘full normal use,’” “joking,” “acting a part,” and “quotation and recitation.” In Austin’s speech act theory the effects of figurative language are severely downgraded while what he considers normal, serious language is viewed as of high importance. Campbell takes issue with the fact that within this scheme, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces are inherent in speech almost without regard for speakers and listeners. Austin’s notions of locutions and perlocutions “exclude both speaker and audience as determinants of meaning” (291). Instead, we have to take into account that speakers and audiences actively derive meaning according to their changing and varying intentions. As Campbell argues, not only is every illocution always a perlocution, but every perlocution has as its effect the further production of illocations. As a result of each speech act, audience members create their “own statements with their own meanings” simply by listening to speakers (292). In Campbell’s view, illocution and perlocution are so intimately tied together as to be analytically inseparable.

Given these critiques of the distinctions with which speech act theory operates, I would like to disengage the theory of audience design from the vocabulary of speech act theory and instead refigure it within a rhetorical vocabulary. As Campbell says, each utterance has effects on its audience. Some of these effects are intended by speakers while others are not, but whether they achieve them or not, speakers always have certain
expectations and intentions about the effects which their utterances will have on their listeners. The unique contribution of Clark's theory of audience design is that it alerts us to the fact that within the same utterance a speaker's expectations and intentions can vary between different audience constituencies.

In the chapter on situational rhetoric, I laid out how political debates can be analyzed through Lloyd Bitzer's functional notion of rhetoric: speech in a rhetorical situation is speech intended to have a very real effect in the world, it is speech aimed to produce change. Within a rhetorical theory of audience design we can thus posit that addressees are those readers of whom social and political action is expected in response to a stated exigence. While Bitzer says in "The Rhetorical Situation" that a rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are capable of being mediators of change, my analysis suggests that among all the audience members in a rhetorical situation only those who are addressees at that particular moment of the utterance are constituted as mediators of change.

By analyzing the situational rhetoric of Canadian suffragism, I limit the range of utterances under study to those which call for a particular kind of perlocutionary effect—an effect related to the bringing about of female enfranchisement. Such utterances are, for instance, suffrage articles and letters which call on suffragists to step up their campaign and which aim to oblige as-yet sceptical women to join the suffrage movement. I suggest that differences in addressing side participants, addressees, and overhearers become most evident when a speaker intends to spur some of her audience members into particular political and social acts. In these moments other audience members will be positioned not as addressees, but as side participants and overhearers to this address. While the instances
of direct address are sometimes quite evident, a discussion of the positioning of side participants and overhearers enters more tentative analytical territory.

Male Overhearers in Canadian Suffrage Writing

In its inaugural issue in August 1912, the editors of The Champion (the organ of the Political Equality League of Victoria) provided a report on a recent special meeting of Victoria’s Political Equality League at which its members received a set of practical suggestions for gaining more members and increasing existing members’ commitment to the cause of suffrage. The report also included the following paragraph:

A prominent member of the Cabinet of this country asserted the other day, in conversation, that the women of British Columbia are not interested in politics; that they do not care what laws are made or amended; that they are in fact content to leave the social and political welfare of the race in the hands of that half of humanity which contributes the largest percentage of inmates to our prisons! (Untitled 20, emphasis in original)

On the one hand, this passage serves to inform The Champion’s female readers of how fallacious the beliefs of British Columbian politicians still are about women’s interest in politics. This section is preceded by a passage that reminded its readers that “[c]onvictions are utterly valueless until they are translated into conduct, conduct involving effort and self-sacrifice,” thus inviting league members to convince British Columbian politicians otherwise and encourage them to demonstrate their commitment to suffrage. On the other hand, this passage also rebuffs the politicians who hold these beliefs and who might come
across the Equality League’s report. The anonymity of the “prominent member” might even make several politicians feel as if they were the object of this report. By withholding the identity of that cabinet member, the writer signals to all politicians that she is aware of their possible presence as readers. The editorial comment at the end—that the state is in the hands of the gender group which produces almost all prison inmates—is addressed, in its outrage, at other female readers, but is also a belated rebuttal to the anonymous politician and those who think like him. This report makes clear how female readers are expected to participate in this political conversation: to prove their political commitment through acts involving effort and self-sacrifice. What is required of male politicians is much more passive: to witness this commitment once it happens, and then to change their views on women accordingly.

From October 1912 to February 1913, the women at the Victoria Political Equality League conducted an impressive province-wide drive for petitions that were aimed to prove to the Premier of British Columbia, Sir Richard McBride, that the majority of women in the province desired to become voters. However, when presented with the remarkable results of the campaign—seventy-two women handed him “a petition bearing ten thousand signatures” which had been gathered from communities all across the province (Cleverdon 92; see also Davis “Our Great Question”)—the premier declared, to the suffragists’ great disappointment, that he was still unconvinced and that the government would continue to stand behind its by then ten-year-old policy to view such a proposal as not being in the public interest.

Despite the premier’s unfavourable response, the editor of The Champion was not ready to give up hope. She showed herself convinced that on the whole this failure would
in the end be "the ultimate good of the womanhood of the Province and for the Cause we have at heart" ("Editor's Notes" 4). She reasons somewhat surprisingly that the "responsibility for this refusal of justice" does not lie with the government at all. Instead, she turns to not-yet activist women to rally them finally into participation:

And that responsibility lies even more heavily on the shoulders of the very large body of women of position and influence in this land, who either decline to interest themselves in a question of such supreme urgency or who pursue the wholly unjustifiable line that success is bound to come to a matter of such vital importance, and that therefore they feel themselves under no obligation to give any personal support in either word or deed. (4-5)

These women, she continues, "who yet are practically indifferent as to the vindication of [their] honour" provide the justification for the government’s refusal (5). But already the government’s rejection has refreshed the resolve of the other, the "awakened women." Evidence of this resolve is provided by the messages which are pouring into the Political Equality League’s office:

Women who formerly had only a vague idea that in Britain women were throwing stones, now realize that the Women’s Franchise Movement is something which intimately concerns each one individually right through the world, and in a very practical manner in this country. Women who had never "worried themselves" for half an hour over any political question are now, right here in B.C., coming out on to political platforms and calling upon other women to *begin to think*, pointing out to them many tragic and
terrible facts which it has become every woman’s duty to look into and help
to put a stop to. (5, emphasis in original)

To be sure, the government’s unwillingness to introduce a women’s suffrage bill is unjust;
it is a “neglect of its duty,” a refusal “of that due attention which servants owe to their
employers” (5). However, the complaint by the report writer is addressed only indirectly at
the government and more directly at other women. Government politicians are being
informed about suffragists’ thinking, but this writer does not expect them to act on this
information. Instead, this report is addressed quite forcefully at indifferent women who are
expected to rouse themselves into suffragism in response to the government’s injustice.

In the same publication, Alice M. Christie insisted on a similar pattern of political
activity. Her reasoning about “Why Women Should Be Enfranchised” was not addressed
so as to convince legislators. It is suffragist women, not legislators, who are the ones to be
convinced by what is said by suffragists in their meetings and publications. As a result, it is
upon women to continue to bring their entreaties in front of legislators, not upon legislators
to listen closely. Christie argues that women are assets to their communities and its
governance just as much as men are—they pay taxes and do public service. In Christie’s
view women are in fact more likely to pursue a politics for “human life and human destiny”
against “sin, misery, crime and poverty” than for the benefit of their own “place and
power” and from “the business and financial viewpoint” as men tend to do (17). A female
ballot “would seek the uplift and preservation of the race” leaving men “freer to look after
the material prosperity of the community” (17). Therefore, for the “good of the race,” “it
behooves us to bring pressure to bear to get the Legislature to revise their Constitution and
to put in a suffrage amendment giving women legal recognition as free adult citizens” (18).
If the question is presented in the right light, “surely they will not hesitate to grant our just and righteous desire” (18). By referring to suffragist women with the personal pronoun we and legislators with they, Christie makes clear who her addressees are. But there is a listening role for legislators as well when in her last sentence she assures them that by finally granting women the vote they “may share in the privilege of helping along the evolution of the race and the dawn of a higher and better civilization” (18).

To add another example from a different province of the country, in July 1912, J.E. Frith writes in a letter to the editor of the Grain Growers’ Guide: “The men of Canada are gallant and have a desire to elevate woman to her proper place in politics as well as to any economic position in Canadian progress” (8). Frith holds this view against much evidence to the contrary. It is a view rooted in an idealized notion of Canadian civility which, as Daniel Coleman has shown, has a long history in the way in which Canadian society compared and continues to compare itself to other nations. Frith’s insistence on Canadian civility is also a reminder to Canadian men that they are supposed to be gallant and
therefore should be generous towards Canadian women. Given this ideal of the gallantry of Canadian men, what it takes is simply "a little closer understanding between our legislatures, parliaments and our women to bring about the long desired hope of the ladies of our land" (8). Given that this insight is followed by a call for suffragists to send out petitions, Frith makes clear that it is the task of female suffragists, not that of politicians or men, to work towards such an understanding.

Suffrage discourse in Canadian newspapers and magazines was most often directed at other women—female upper- and middle-class readers were called to become participants, to take political action, particularly if they had not yet committed themselves to the suffrage cause. Husbands and male politicians, on the other hand, were most often cast as overhearers. They were assumed to witness the debate, but were rarely addressed to participate directly in the campaign. Men's political agency was seldom called upon; they

49 In January 1916, Edith Lang writes about a suffrage recruitment drive for which a number of young women handed out handbills on busy Toronto streets. She judges the public response as sympathetic—except for the reaction shown by some young men. She chastises these men not only for being ungallant but also for evading the war and, therefore, shirking their responsibility in the upkeep of civilization:

The cold has been intense, but the workers consider it worth while, if only from the point of view of what they have learned of the attitude of the public on this matter. On the whole, the attitude was friendly and sympathetic. The only rebuffs came from younger men of the "knut" type, who, with hands in both pockets and a cigarette in their mouths, were either too much afraid of the cold or merely too discourteous to take out a hand to receive a handbill from a lady. It was really discouraging from the point of view of civilization to find the large proportion of these young fellows who are still untouched by the call of the heroic, while the best youth of our land is cheerfully giving its life in Europe in the cause of freedom for the world, and in so doing, is protecting not only their own honor, but the physical safety and well-being of those who are too slothful and indifferent to face hardship on their own or anyone else's account. (8, emphasis)

This is a rather brutal reminder of expectations of male gallantry, made blunter by the demand for male sacrifice to fight the war.
were only occasionally rallied to support and participate. On the contrary, in order to underline women’s achievements as political organizers the active involvement of men in the suffrage campaign was frequently downplayed while their status as background supporters and overhearing witnesses was foregrounded.

Male readers were often relegated to a position of witnesses even though a good number of men were interested in advocating suffrage. For instance, throughout the early 1900s there was a small but steady number of Members of the Legislative Assembly in Ontario and British Columbia who each year introduced private member’s bills to establish female franchise. In Ontario, Labour politician Allan Studholme particularly stands out with a record of helping to bring suffrage bills in front of the legislature at least four years in a row between 1906 and 1910 (see Cleverdon). While falling on deaf ears among other parliamentarians, Studholme’s initiatives received support from female suffragists in the form of a petition to Premier Whitney containing 100,000 signatures, a letter-writing campaign organized by the Toronto Suffrage Association, and an unauthorized call of protest from the visitors’ gallery by English suffragist Olivia Smith (Cleverdon 33).

Between 1884 and 1899, British Columbia saw eleven women's rights bills introduced to the legislatures, often by the same politicians (Cleverdon 86). On a few occasions, the votes came very close, but overall they were unsuccessful because no party chose to endorse suffrage (see Hale; Cramer). When in 1912 Dorothy M. Davis travelled the towns of British Columbia, organizing numerous meetings for a province-wide petition, she found

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Studholme, who grew up in England and emigrated to Canada in 1870, had a long history of involvement with labour unions and the Knights of Labor. In 1906, disenchanted with the policy of the Liberals, he was the first—and until his death in 1919 only—Labor MLA in Ontario, first sitting as an independent labour candidate and later as member of the Independent Labor party of his Hamilton riding (Heron).
that “while the welcome support I received from the women throughout the country far exceeded our expectations,” the support of men “was even more enthusiastic” (“Correspondence,” emphasis in original). In general, a significant number of male citizens supported the idea of suffrage, particularly those who were active in the temperance movement and in the farmers’ associations. Canadian newspapers were full of reports and announcements of suffrage talks held by men, and female suffragists worked together with many of these men in different organizations, including those devoted to suffrage.

Yet, female suffragists were often reluctant to grant men too much weight in their campaign. James L. Hughes, superintendent of education in Toronto, was one of the most prominent male suffrage campaigners. In 1895, he published a pamphlet on *Equal Suffrage*, rebuffing forty-two common arguments against suffrage and listing twenty-seven points in favour of it, including references to both the Old and the New Testament. Catherine Cleverdon credits his pamphlet and the attached written endorsements from leading churchmen with ending “any further serious debate on the religious aspect of the question” (8). Hughes also ran repeatedly as president of the Toronto Suffrage Club. Emily Stowe, however, was critical of his role in the club. In one of her speeches in 1890 she noted that the admittance of men as members to the suffrage club had a demoralizing effect. The “old idea of female dependence crept in and the ladies began to rely upon the gentlemen rather than upon their own efforts,” thus defeating the attempt of increasing

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51 When in November 1894 Amelia Yeomans formed the Manitoba Equal Franchise Club she also argued that while men were welcome to be members of the club it was women who should fill the executive posts in order to gain practice in planning and organizing (Cleverdon 51-52).
women's participation in politics (Stowe Papers). Stowe's concerns were not shared by all at the time, and one year later Hughes became president of the Toronto Suffrage Club.

A 1913 front-page report in the Toronto Globe fittingly illustrates that while male presence was an important factor for suffrage rallies, it was equally important to visually relegate these men to the sidelines. The report, entitled "Woman is Supreme at Lively Meeting," recreated some of the enthusiasm of the meeting through its colourful language. Things were "a bit topsy-turvy" at this "big meeting" which was called in order to campaign for a proposal to grant married women municipal franchise on the same terms as widows and unmarried women had already been granted it (1). The report emphasizes that women "peopled fully ninety per cent of the business seats in the body of the auditorium" while men "were largely relegated to the gallery" (1). Even the doorkeepers, collection-takers, and ushers were women, wearing white frocks with a "Votes for Women" ribbon across their chests. During the many speeches women "led the spirited applause which punctuated the proceedings," while men "were left to serenely indicate their approval in less demonstrative fashion" (1). Clearly, these men were side participants while the applauding women were the addressed audience group. Through the structure of this description the writer repeatedly makes clear that the meeting was fully in women's hands, that women proved to be capable organizers, that they could hold their own in a public arena, and that a large number of them was truly passionate about gaining political rights. At the same time, the presence of a smaller number of sympathetic men in the audience and on stage was an integral part of this political demonstration since each description of female attendees and organizers is shadowed by a comparative description of male attendees. "Femininity controlled the platform," but female suffragists were also "gallantly sharing the
honors with a galaxy of broadclothed gentlemen," most of whom were clergy (1). According to this description, suffrage organizers were evidently adept at placing their male audience in a secondary yet important role.

At a meeting like this, it was women who had to prove themselves as public speakers and political aspirants. The second half of the report argues that such proof was provided quite abundantly. The leader of the opposition in the Ontario legislature could not have "annihilated" the sitting premier, Sir James Whitney, more effectively than did Dr. Margaret Gordon (1); no "pulpiteer ever pleaded more earnestly the cause of human betterment and social improvement" than did Mrs. Archibald Huestis (1); no political reformer "ever more resolutely refused to be decoyed from the issue at stake" than did Flora MacDonald Denison (9); no campaigner "ever more potently summarized the situation" than did Mrs. L.A. Hamilton (9); no young progressive "satirized existing conditions with the vehemence" with which Jessie Melville did (9); no university professor "ever applied his teachings with the force and effect" as did Mrs. W.R. Lane (9); and no labour man "ever rallied more tellingly against the wholesale immigration of foreigners unable to understand the sacred responsibilities of the ballot" than did Constance Boulton (9). After this cascading description of outstanding performances, the last short paragraph of the report states in much plainer language that "[t]he ladies had lots of support" from at least thirteen male speakers who "spoke heartily on behalf of their cause" and "gave assurances of their best efforts in carrying the referendum by a mammoth majority" (9).

This description by the suffrage-supporting Globe newspaper downplays the heavy involvement of men on the platform in order to emphasize what it views as the most important feature of the event—that women staged a lively meeting with energetic female
speakers in front of a passionate female audience. The style of the report also indicates that it was equally as important to stage this rally in front of not only the enthusiastic women in the auditorium but also the sympathetic men in the gallery and, eventually, for the readers of the Globe. The female speakers are characterized in highly laudatory terms not simply for the sake of reporting, but as a way of proving their abilities for the benefit of a larger and possible more suffrage-sceptical audience. Many reports on suffrage activities developed such a layered audience design. Events where speakers addressed a live audience were frequently reported for the benefit of a newspaper or magazine readership, producing its own audience design in the process.

Like at the municipal franchise meeting in Toronto, suffrage speakers and writers most frequently addressed other women and cast male audience members in the role of side participants. In the case sending letters and deputations to premiers and leaders of parties, however, they also and repeatedly addressed male politicians. One of the ways in which male politicians were called to act in accordance with the suffrage campaign was to tell suffragists how they could convince politicians of the value of female suffrage. In 1913, in response to mounting sentiments in favour of suffrage Saskatchewan parliamentarians requested that the province's women provide proof of their desire for enfranchisement. The editor of the Grain Growers' Guide reports that during a discussion in the legislature practically "every member of the Legislature, regardless of party, approved of the principle" of women's suffrage, but that parliament nevertheless wanted that women

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52 That the pro-suffrage Globe had a large number of suffrage-skeptical readers is evident, for instance, in a letter debate in the newspaper's women's page in February 1910. Among the roughly forty letters about one third were written by readers with anti-suffragist views.
themselves express such a desire ("Woman Suffrage Find Favor" 6). The excuse for not introducing a female ballot right away was a weak one, critiques the editor, for "Slavery would still be flourishing had not men who believed in justice taken action without waiting for an uprising among the slaves" (6). Given such neglect of duty on the part of the legislators, he continues, it is now women’s task to act—be it through the "organization and the circulation of petitions" or by "setting forth their views in letters addressed to the Premier" (6). It seems almost as if the Saskatchewan MLAs refused to represent the female population, insisting that they did not know women’s views on the issue as a way to avoid introducing suffrage legislation at that particular time.

This kind of hesitation—demanding that women show more proof of their desire for the vote—allowed suffragists to mount specific campaigns in order to gather such proof. They could also insist that legislators follow up with endorsement of women’s suffrage once those conditions were fulfilled. In February 1916, after Manitoba had become the first Canadian province to pass a bill to allow women to vote, Edith Lang, editor of the National Equal Franchise Union’s section in the Woman’s Century (the organ of the National Council of Women of Canada), writes that,

the Suffragists of those Provinces where Governments are not yet favorable to our cause, should approach those Governments and ask for some definite statement as to what we need to do to convince them that this is a reform which will not “down,” and which the majority of men and women in both town and country need. (6)

Lang notes that this method of asking the government “to issue a ‘challenge’ to the women” has proved successful in Western provinces, and is now also being noticed by
some newspapers in Ontario. A few months later, the Canadian Suffrage Association followed the suggestion and sent a deputation to Ontario Premier Hearst. As had become common among governing politicians, the premier continued to insist that there was no unanimous demand for women’s suffrage and, in addition, wartime was not an opportune time for such proposals.

Following that refusal, on 21 March 1916 the West Algoma Equal Suffrage Association sent a letter to Ontario Premier Hearst, reprinted in the *Woman’s Century* (Long, May 1916). In the letter the West Algoma suffragists paint the premier as occupying a backward position when they claim that by not endorsing suffrage Ontario is losing its progressive edge to the Western provinces, that Ontarian men therefore seem to be less chivalrous and less just than western men, and that a Canadian nation at war ought to grant citizenship to its sacrificing women:

We have given liberally our priceless possessions, husbands, sons and bothers, for the defence of the Empire at the call of King and country, and having parted with those dearer to us than life itself, we plod on day and night under this ever increasing volume of sorrow and separation, working for their comfort and sustenance out there at the firing line, and in our hospitals, and proving our loyalty to our country by every test, although we had no share in bringing on this condition of affairs, notwithstanding which, men for some political reasons, withhold from us the well-earned right of citizenship. (8)

After this emotional appeal, the association ends its letter with the question “Will you kindly tell us upon what grounds the Enfranchisement of Women will be granted and
oblige?” (8). The premier responds twelve days later, and this letter, too, is published in the Woman’s Century. His government will grant women the vote, he says, once it feels that it is “in the best interests of our province and the womanhood of the country” and once there is a “sufficient body of opinion among the women of the province themselves in favor of the franchise” (M.L.L. 14). He accuses the suffragists of making claims that have “no justification in fact whatever,” and thus showing “how unfounded some of the grounds upon which you base your judgment apparently are” (14). Hearst’s was a typical response—a common uptake—that had been practised by several Canadian politicians before. His letter reveals some of the limits which suffragists frequently encountered when directly addressing particular politicians.

But, far from giving up, the West Algoma suffragists added another round to this letter exchange by sending a second letter to the premier trying to refute all his arguments. This letter, too, they sent to the Woman’s Century for publication (Long, Aug. 1916). From the premier they request a clearer indication of what constitutes a “sufficient body of opinion among women” because the majority of women they knew were in favour of it, and because each of the forty referenda that had been held in Ontario for municipal female franchise indicated a majority in favour of suffrage. They muster a variety of approaches in their attempt to convince Hearst. They mention that his resistance stands “in the face of the loyalty and incessant patriotic work” of women, that at their meeting even an invited anti-suffragist felt that his reasons were only excuses, and that his demand that women stay at home begs the question of “what would become of the patriotic work solicited by your Government for the comfort of the wounded and our boys in the trenches” (12).
Despite their letter exchange in the spring of 1916, it does not seem that Premier Hearst and the West Algoma suffragists came much closer to each other in their views on suffrage. While in the exchange of letters the suffragists and the Premier addressed each other directly, the publication of the letters in *Woman's Century* magazine creates another kind of audience design, one that functions like the audience design of an open letter. In the words of the letter itself the West Algoma suffragists are heard addressing the Premier, but in the magazine print copy he becomes a bystander to a different kind of address. The suffragists are now speaking to the readers of *Woman's Century*, informing them about what they requested of the Premier and what he said in response. Arguably, any correspondence by and with government members and sitting parliamentarians must always consider the possibility of such a changing and expanding audience, and try to foresee the political effects that might result. Any letter from, for instance, a government minister to, for example, a concerned citizens’ organization can potentially appear in a newspaper, be made part of a political campaign, and be used for subsequent debates in a variety of ways. At the intersection of parliamentary politics and print journalism, the producers of these utterances (politicians as well as citizens) always stand the risk of being made bystanders

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53 William Hearst abruptly decided to support women’s suffrage when he was under pressure at the beginning of the next legislative season in February 1917. As Cleverdon reports, N.W. Rowell, leader of the opposition, unsuccessfully demanded an amendment to the speech from the throne, an amendment which would call for the introduction of female suffrage. On the same date as Rowell’s motion, two members of Hearst’s party also tabled bills for provincial and municipal franchise. When these bills were scheduled for a second reading two weeks later, Hearst, to everyone’s surprise, paid tribute to women’s war work and suggested that, therefore, they should be allowed to participate in politics. He also insisted on his belief that most women did not desire the vote, but that by supporting it his Conservative government was in advance of public opinion. Cleverdon speculates that Hearst’s change of mind was facilitated by the recent wave of suffrage laws in Western Canada as well as by pressure from the Conservative government in Ottawa (41-43).
and overhearers to addresses which have their own past utterances as the subject of
discussion. Given that politicians are unlikely to change their minds as a result of each
letter and letter campaign addressed to them, such reporting—and re-positioning—of
utterances to a larger audience is a key element of social movements.

Therefore, the political results of this epistolary argument between Premier Hearst
and the West Algoma suffragists are perhaps to be sought less with the exchange partners
themselves and more with some of the side participants (e.g. members of other suffrage
organizations, and the readers of the magazine of the National Council of Women of
Canada) and potential overhearers (perhaps the members of Hearst’s governing party who
might decide to introduce their own suffrage bills).

Audience Design and Social Structure

At the beginning of this chapter I said that I am investigating the ways in which
suffrage writers positioned themselves in relationship to different types of readers, and
what clues this provides to the direction of their political argumentation. In the course of
the discussion, I have referred to categories such as “middle- and upper-class women,”
“working women,” and “male politicians.” These terms might evoke notions of real
readers and real audiences, when in fact their relationship to real audiences is more
complicated. Douglas Park explains that “audience” does not refer to people as such but to
“those apparent aspects of knowledge and motivation in readers and listeners that form the
contexts for discourse” (249). The language of rightness that is part of how audience
constituents are interpellated expresses speakers’ estimates of how their audiences might be
motivated to act. Park posits that the rhetorical meaning of audience as “people-as-they-are-involved-in-a-rhetorical-situation” is closely related to “what a discourse sets out to do and how it is shaped to accomplish that end” (249). Maurice Charland, who so carefully examines the dynamics between audiences as addressed and audiences as political, social, and economic actors, makes clear that “we cannot accept the ‘givenness’ of ‘audience,’ ‘person,’ or ‘subject,’ but must consider their very textuality, their very constitution in rhetoric as a structured articulation of signs”; we must “consider the textual nature of social being” (“Constitutive” 137). The concept that a privileged existence obligates its holder to social responsibility could not be maintained if it were not repeatedly invoked in writing and speech.

The aim of an argument such as Charland’s is not to deny the existence of social being or to make it disappear in textuality. After all, social being manifests itself in quite physical ways. But neither can it be separated from its textual nature. Carolyn R. Miller says of Bakhtinian addressivity that it is of a relational nature, that it links individuality with social structures. Miller states that addressivity provides “a specific mechanism by which individual communicative action and social system structure each other” (“Rhetorical Community” 72). In this analysis I have paid less attention to individual communicative action and more to the repetition of a pattern of audience design—a process which participates in the structuration of society.

In their 1996 article “Gendered Literacy in Black and White,” Anne Ruggles Gere and Sarah R. Robbins compare the literary cultures of the printed journals of European- and African-American women’s clubs. They argue that women’s clubs and their print journals often created quite intimate female literacy practices in the face of the domination of other
established, male print media. One effect of these club-based literacy practices was to take control over the representation of these women in the public press, to create "shared zones of privacy" that allowed them to circulate information among members, but which also helped manage when, how, and what information to communicate with a larger public (651). While often intimate and aimed to be a representation of their particular lives, Gere and Robbins find that this writing is far from un-political. They see it as an "agency-crafting move that can draw, in sometimes paradoxical ways, on 'discursive conventions' to shape individual and cultural change" (652). In the same way such print journals mirrored the parameters of other print products, the women acknowledged "the power of the larger culture to shape identity" while also recognizing "the ability of individuals and groups to make change in that culture" (674). Gere and Robbins lay out in some detail how these women negotiated their publications between these two forces.

From a perspective of audience design, the potential for cultural change which Gere and Robbins identify comes into existence at the juncture between the journals' addressees—members of the women's clubs—and overhearers among the larger public, in particular other speakers and writers with sometimes negative opinions of women's clubs. The way in which these audience constituents were positioned through women's club journals played a role in the identity-shaping effects which Gere and Robbins describe. These women were imagining and creating desirable subject positions for themselves, inviting other women to participate, and they did so in the imagined presence of overhearers from other print media, audience members of whom mostly witnessing, not participating, was required. The potential for collectively shaping female social roles
through writing arises at the intersection between female addressees and male and female overhearers.

In my analysis of the dominant audience design in Canadian suffrage writing, I have moved away slightly from Goffman’s and Clark’s idea of how their notions of footing and audience design should be applied. I have analyzed not spoken but written, not individual and practically situated but patterned and accumulative utterances. As a result, I have not been very attentive to the constant changes in participant roles which Goffman identifies and have applied the notions of addressee and overhearer in a much less precise and more sweeping way. Charland’s notion of constitutive rhetoric and Burke’s thinking on identification have helped theorize the political impulses behind suffragist audience design. In my somewhat liberal use of Goffman and Clark, the notions of the addressee and the overhearer have been adapted from a focus on participation in a conversation to an emphasis on the social action that suffrage speakers imagine and thus demand as a response to their writing. An addressee, in my analysis, has become someone who is expected to act in the world in a certain way—often a way that is different from how he or she has acted before. An overhearer, on the other hand, is often cast as a witness to that demand, someone who is not expected to act now, but who is held at attention for future address, for possible future action.

What I have arrived at in my use of the notions of addressee and overhearer are categories that also coincide with Lloyd Bitzer’s ideas of audiences in a rhetorical situation (see also chapter one). For Bitzer, a rhetorical audience is an audience in a truly rhetorical
situation, a situation in which speakers speak to effect change in the world. A rhetorical audience is the necessary mediator for change, the kind of audience without which a speaker would not be able to put into effect the changes for which he or she is calling. Following my analysis of suffrage audience design, Bitzer’s paradigm becomes more nuanced when we take into consideration that not every member of a rhetorical audience is expected to carry out the same or any of the requested acts. At any one time only some audience members, the addressees, are called upon to carry out social action. In suffrage texts these addressees are most often other suffragists or middle-class women who could become suffragists; only sometimes are male politicians made addressees. Rhetorical address is often directed at readers of a certain social group—for instance, McClung’s “gentle ladies,” or working women, or suffrage organizers—with other readers standing by as side participants. Yet other readers are placed at an even more distant relationship from the speaker. They are the more unlikely audience members who do not belong to the core readership of a piece of writing, such as the suffrage-resistant male politicians who might happen to read the odd suffrage column but were not likely to do so with any regularity. Part of the rhetorical force of suffrage speech, then, comes not only from the attempt to impel addressees toward a desired social action, but also from mustering side participants and overhearers as witnesses to this address.

See also Chaim Perelman and Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca’s notion that rhetoric’s audience is the group the speaker or writer hopes to influence by argumentation (19).
In the first chapter, on situational rhetoric, I argued that in order to become established and facilitate the desired change, suffrage arguments had to travel through different situations and genres. The preceding chapter on audience design suggested that when suffragists addressed other women who were not yet suffragists, they engaged in constitutive rhetoric. Suffragists used moral imperatives when they interpellated suffrage-sceptical women, in this way situating them in unfavourable social positions. The processes analyzed in both chapters might be described as persuasion. However, I have refrained from using that term, speaking instead in terms of how speakers interpellate addressees morally and how rhetorical claims need to be able to travel through a variety of situations in order to gain authority. With its frequent emphasis on persuasion, rhetorical study has tended to presuppose an independent subject which changes its opinion as a result of having listened to good argumentation and effective appeals. But as Maurice Charland puts it, audience constituents are not really free to be persuaded and we have to consider in what way their actions are governed not by free minds but by discursive and social structures. Following my discussion of suffrage rhetoric in previous chapters—as situational, as governed by concerns about genre and uptake, and as constitutive of its interpellated audiences—this chapter will look toward sociological theory in an effort to
understand what it means to speak about political change from within a discourse of moral capital.

What unites the different rhetorical concepts I have used is the understanding that rhetorical study is concerned with how speakers speak from within particular situations in an attempt to do things with their words. For suffragist texts one of the hoped-for effects was a very ambitious one: the production of political and social change. Lloyd Bitzer, championing a rhetoric that views exigence (that is, social or political need) as a defining factor of a rhetorical situation, maintains that it is exactly the rhetorical situation which is the source not only of rhetorical activity but also for rhetorical criticism. In making this claim, Bitzer turns away from regarding the rhetor, his logic, or his persuasive intent as at the core of rhetorical analysis. Similarly, in “Rehabilitating Rhetoric,” Charland cautions that a rhetorical analysis focused on individual speakers, argumentation, and artistry suffers “from a number of political and theoretical blindspots” (254). He suggests that a rehabilitation of rhetoric will come about if rhetorical study takes a more active role within the debates of the human sciences. Rhetoric with its emphasis on how humans act through discourse and how that discourse is situated within the social formation and addressed to audiences can offer to the cultural critic its knowledge of “the publicly articulated motivations and reasons for actions, institutionalized practices, and relations of power” (256). According to Charland, rhetorical theory distinguishes itself from many other theoretical traditions by its ability to “think about politics and power pragmatically, from within a social formation’s institutions and discourses, and from within the realm of the possible” (261).
Aside from rhetoric, another field which continues to theorize the interfaces between discourse and social change comprises the sociological theories which have been inspired by poststructuralist thought. In particular, this chapter will look toward the sociological theory of moral regulation in order to elucidate how suffragists perceived "the realm of the possible" from within the social institutions of Canadian society. In the Canadian context, the work of sociologist Mariana Valverde has been indispensable in thinking about the roles of moral discourse and moral reform in turn-of-the-century Canada; a rhetorical analysis of suffrage writing has much to learn from her work. She analyzes the feminism and racism of this movement as well as its relationship to governmental policies. In her studies she offers ways of understanding how the moral discourse of reform movements functions separately from economic and political discourse. This chapter is an attempt to take up her idea of the relative autonomy of moral discourse and establish it as a question for rhetorical analysis.

In their writings, suffragists frequently posited women's moral authority as a qualification for political participation. In doing so they relied on the existing discourse of moral reform as they attempted to convert moral authority into something else—an avenue toward political citizenship. In their insistence on their moral capital (a concept I borrow from Valverde) suffragists posited a revised idea of what it meant to be an ideal citizen. This notion of citizenship was characterized by a concern for the moral make-up of the nation and its politicians rather than by a citizen's interest in the profitability of his land, property, and business. While this moral concern was shaped, ostensibly, by the perspective of white, middle-class Anglo-Canadians, it finds its most powerful articulation when it can be portrayed as independent from economic and class-based interests—a
citizen appears most moral and altruistic when his or her moral authority can be defined in autonomy from his or her economic or cultural stakes. By viewing citizenship through the lens of moral capital, thus shifting the categories which explain citizenship, suffragists in effect alter the rhetorical situation. In doing so, they create new exigences, and proceed to offer women's enfranchisement as a solution to these exigences.

My analysis of the moral capital of suffrage discourse will draw mostly on articles from two national Canadian journals—*Woman's Century*, the organ of the National Council of Women, and Madame's women's page in *Saturday Night* magazine—as well as on Nellie McClung's feminist manifesto *In Times Like These*.

**A Theory of Moral Regulation**

Generally, we can describe any attempts at social change as moments when speakers participate in existing social and discursive structures with the explicit aim of changing parts of these structures. The use of audience interpellation with the help of morally defined subject positions, for instance, is a way of participating in existing modes of moral regulation as well as an attempt to reposition suffragists and anti-suffragist women within the social formation. The processes of moral regulation have been theorized quite thoroughly by sociologists and socio-legal scholars over the last twenty years. One of the key foundational texts in this respect has been Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer's 1985 study *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*. In their view, moral regulation is the project of normalizing the premises of a particular social order: "Moral regulation is coextensive with state formation, and state forms are always animated
and legitimated by a particular moral ethos” (4). Moral regulation is the ongoing project of “normalizing, rendering natural” what are in fact “ontological and epistemological premises of a particular and historical social order” (4). The institutions which we identify as “the State” are made up of a repertoire of cultural activities. To study the processes of moral regulation, therefore, is to “grasp state forms culturally” rather than economically or politically (3). Turning away from a Marxist structuralist understanding, Corrigan and Sayer emphasize that the moral realm cannot be fully equated with and functions somewhat independently from economic and class structures.

The work of Corrigan and Sayer places great emphasis on understanding the relationship between “the social” and “moral regulation.” In his critique of Corrigan and Sayer, Mitchell Dean maintains that one of their most valuable contributions is to “overcome a naturalistic formulation of sociology” which presumed “the causal primacy of ‘the social’ as a sociological a priori” (146). Their work, says Dean, seeks to address not the process by which society “stamps itself on the personality of individuals,” but rather the way in which “identities come to be formed, re-formed and taken to be natural and normal” (146). In The Great Arch, “moral regulation is above all a project of normalization and naturalization of the premises of a specific social order” (Dean 149). Dean also diagnoses a lack of attention to the self-governing citizen, a need to address “the existence of spheres of self-regulation and self-formation” (155). In Dean’s view, the term “moral regulation” is part of that lack because the meaning of “moral” remains indeterminate and delineates no clear domain. He prefers to shift the discussion to a more Foucauldian understanding of “issues of ethical self-formation” instead (155). In his later lectures on how Greek philosophers thought about the self, Michel Foucault posited that practices of freedom are
practices of caring for the self, that the practice of caring for the self is also an inherently ethical practice. Moving away from “a morality of renunciation,” Foucault reflects on the “exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being” ("The Ethics of the Concern of the Self" 26). This is the concept of “ethical self-formation” to which Dean alludes when he rejects using the term “moral regulation.”

While we should welcome Dean’s emphasis on citizens’ self-formation, there are good reasons to continue speaking about “moral regulation” rather than “ethical self-formation.” As Foucault makes clear, care for the self and care for others are not two oppositional concepts as they are sometimes taken to be in the distinction between the self and the other. Rather, care for the self and care for others are activities which are often linked to each other, and whose relationship can shift or be negotiated. Foucault says that in the case of a free man in ancient Greece this meant that “a person who took proper care of himself would, by the same token, be able to conduct himself properly in relation to others and for others” (“The Ethics” 30); and it is quite possible that in societies where individual ways of caring for the self can take numerous forms, “the desire to control the conduct of others is all the greater” (41). As I continue to speak of moral regulation, therefore, I retain the term moral because it better emphasizes the influence suffragists hoped to have on others, the way in which their “desire to control the conduct of others

55 Foucault put it like this:

In the Greco-Roman world, the care of the self was the mode in which individual freedom—or civic liberty, up to a point—was reflected as an ethics. If you take a whole series of texts going from the first Platonic dialogues up to the major texts of late Stoicism—Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and so on—you will see that the theme of the care of the self thoroughly permeated moral reflection. ("The Ethics" 28)
[was] all the greater" because they were trying to expand the ways in which women could care for themselves. Also, the term *moral* is more akin to how women reformers themselves thought of their influence on others. Valverde notes in her "Editor's Introduction" that *moral* at the turn of the century was a pervasively used term which covered activities of which we now think as social or cultural. In fact, the concept of moral regulation does not exclude or stand in opposition to the practice of ethical self-formation. As Jennifer Henderson has shown, debates about women's role in the Canadian Dominion—including suffrage debates—were always concerned with ethical self-formation exactly because women's ability to govern others was still under question. The writers whom Henderson analyzes—Anglo-Canadian settler women—responded to this challenge to their competency by "staging exemplary self-regulations against backdrops of moral and racial 'inferiority'" (13). The "authority of the woman who could pronounce on problems of government" was based on her embodiment of certain norms of conduct (13). Women writers at that time stood to prove their capacity for moral self-formation precisely because they wished to instruct others in moral behaviour.

Corrigan and Sayer's perspective on moral regulation is frequently described—and often criticized (by Dean, for instance)—as a state-centred one because of its emphasis on how moral subjects are created through state action and legal organization in a capitalist society. Since *The Great Arch*, several scholars have augmented this view, paying closer attention to the private dimensions of the moral regulation project. While sometimes the private processes of moral regulation are viewed as extensions of state interests, at other times they are used to illustrate that the state does not have an exclusive hold on the formation of moral subjects. In *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, Valverde analyzes the
complex relationship between non-governmental charity organizations and the Canadian state at the turn of the century. She argues that in terms of moral regulation the “various levels of government often lagged behind the initiatives of churches and professional groups” partly because “explicitly moral campaigns are difficult for liberal democratic states to undertake” (The Age of Light 25). Liberal states have “a structural commitment to non-interference in private beliefs and activities of a moral and/or cultural nature” (25).

While states may have a monopoly over the legitimate use of force and may therefore be able to enforce behavioural rules, in order to facilitate the internalization of certain values among its subjects it must have “the full and active co-operation of the family and of voluntary organizations” (25).

In Canada, with its variety of Christian churches, the state “in the face of this obvious disunity . . . had little difficulty in portraying itself as neutral” (26). Valverde notes how remarkable it was that private organizations in Canada had such trust in the state. They went so far as to chastise their governments for not exercising enough power, and they did not show the mutual suspicion that was common, for instance, between charity organizations and poor law authorities in England. In Valverde’s view, another reason for the dominance of Canadian non-state social initiatives was the desire to make citizens internalize values rather than to enforce rules about behaviour. As a result, in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada, “many voluntary organizations were far more concerned about nation-building and even about strengthening the state than the state itself” (25). While “the criminal, the fallen, and destitute” were increasingly conceived of as subjects of therapeutic and reformatory strategies (rather than as subjects of punitive measures), the non-criminal citizen and particularly youths were also “being seen as
requiring a process of character-building" (27). Character-building, says Valverde, is the individual equivalent of nation-building; the concern for individual moral subjects was always part of a concern for the future of the nation.

Valverde's work enriches the general conception of a state-centred understanding of moral regulation, adding a Foucauldian perspective and asking us to pay heed to the complex relationships between governmental and private moral regulation. As she says in "The Mixed Social Economy as a Canadian Tradition," the aim of a Foucauldian analysis is not to assert the autonomy of the non-governmental sector but rather to point out "the complex web of relationships linking the two supposedly separate realms" and to analyze these sites and processes as "a mixed economy" (34). While Valverde makes a general case for the model of a mixed economy of moral regulation, she also views Canada as a particular example of such a mixed economy. In The Age of Light, Soap and Water, she elucidates the particular history of moral reform in turn-of-the-century Canada, tracing the linkages between different branches of social reform activity—from the myth of the white slave traffic to campaigns against prostitution, from concerns about the purity of food, milk, and water to city life and its social problems, from the social gospel and concerns over Christianizing Canadian society to immigration policy. Valverde's work thus describes the specific, Canadian history of the moral language which, as noted in the previous chapter, accompanied suffragists' use of constitutive rhetoric.

Much of the discussion following Corrigan and Sayer's work has been concerned with how to analytically weigh the relationship between state and private initiative, and whether to pursue a more Marxist analysis focussed on capitalist state formation or a Foucauldian analysis which traces the processes of "governmentality" (see also Curtis).
Canadian suffrage was organized in relative distance from the state: it did not receive political or financial support from the state; it only occasionally interacted with state institutions; and it expressed antagonism to the image the state held of its female subjects. But, in line with Foucault’s notion of governmentality, even acts that occur removed from state institutions have a governing effect and participate in the moral regulation of a society. As previous chapters have shown, suffragists made their most overt governing gestures to other women of their class, but they also attempted to morally regulate the lives of women from lower classes.

In her introduction to a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Sociology* on moral regulation, Valverde points out that despite the debate about state and private moral regulation, scholars in the loosely defined field of “moral regulation” concur that while “these regulatory processes are consistent with the economic processes of capitalism,” they are not shaped exclusively by economic class formation (vi). Processes of moral regulation, therefore, neither constitute an autonomous sphere of culture nor do they fully overlap with economic class formation. The relative independence of moral capital becomes visible in many commentaries by Canadian suffragists. Canadian suffrage discourse allows us to study how moral capital functioned as a rhetorically applied currency as suffragists highlighted women’s moral qualifications in the absence of their political and economic power.
Suffragists' Moral and Economic Visions of Canadian Society

The challenge which suffragists put to themselves was to formulate a vision of Canadian society that included women as voters and potential politicians. In this attempt, they relied repeatedly on the class and professional authority that many of them had already acquired as middle-class members of Canadian society, but also as journalists, teachers, physicians, lawyers, writers, organizers, and public speakers. Also, the notion of a national economic culture was frequently mobilized alongside concerns about the morality of female subject positions. Imagining the economic make-up of the country was a vital activity for understanding women's individual roles in Canadian society, and that economic vision was used to derive moral claims about the necessity for social change.

However, an analysis of the situational rhetoric of suffragists' economic vision does not argue that women became suffragists and made suffragist arguments because of their economic status as middle-class women. In other words, situational rhetorical analysis does not base itself on the Marxist concept of ideology; it does not suggest that women's
class position inevitably bred a particular kind of suffragist consciousness. Some historical research on suffrage has viewed suffrage arguments in just that way, shaped by a focus on the concept of ideology. For instance, in her 1983 book on Canadian suffrage, *Liberation Deferred?*, Carol Lee Bacchi views suffragist class privilege as a discrediting factor. Her study is guided by the insight that the women in Canadian suffrage organizations “belonged to a particular social and ethnic group, and the ideology connected with this collectivity clearly affected the way in which they interpreted their problems as women” (12). Bacchi’s thinking about a class-based ideology leads to her critique that while these organizers wanted greater political recognition as women, “as members of the social élite they had to seek that recognition in acceptable channels,” and thus “‘public housekeeping’ became the logical limit of their demands” (12). Underlying Bacchi’s analysis is her yearning for a more forceful and radical early feminism. She attributes the absence of that kind of feminism to a suffragist ideology which emanated from a particular Anglo-Canadian middle-class consciousness.

In his analysis of Kenneth Burke’s philosophy of language, Timothy Crusius summarizes Burke’s view on ideology in a very succinct way:

First, there is no such thing as an “objective situation.” Situations exist only as constructions, as interpretations. Second, these constructs based on orientations are hardly fatalistic. Ideologies are too fraught with conflict and contradiction to permit reliable prediction of behavior. Third, and finally, the relation between material conditions and discourse is genuinely interactive, dialectical, not causative. Discourse responds to situations as the speaker or writer interprets them. Situations also “respond” to discourse, in the sense that discourse constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs them. (80, emphasis in original)

It is the interactive nature between material conditions and discourse in which situational rhetoric is interested. While ideological analysis often sees a direct, causal link between speakers’ consciousness and the economic and social conditions in which they live, a rhetorical view emphasizes the process of uptake: the taking up of certain situational elements, social observations, and controversial issues from a variety of possible elements, observations, and issues.
As Valverde points out, the Marxist concept of ideology presupposes that “cultural practices and moral discourses are explainable by reference to ‘class interests,’” and that these class interests are formed in a pre-discursive way (“The Rhetoric of Reform” 65). In contrast, a rhetorical analysis with a poststructuralist bent stresses the multiplicity of possible responses and does not assume there to be predestined, causal connections between situations and their utterances. Going beyond an assessment of suffragists’ social status, a rhetorical study of suffrage discourse also needs to highlight the reflexivity—to use a sociological term—with which suffragists thought about women’s economic roles, and the way in which they brought this reflexivity to bear on their moral claims about women’s political role in Canadian society. Anthony Giddens links the concept of reflexivity to modernity and the ability of human agents to “know about what they do and why they do it” (xxiii). For Giddens, reflexivity consists of a “practical consciousness” of routines which are not articulated, as well as a “discursive consciousness” which explains and theorizes these routines (xxiii). His theory of structuration holds that “reflection on social processes (theories, and observations about them) continually enter into, become disentangled with and re-enter the universe of events that they describe” (xxxiii). For example, “it is impossible to have a modern sovereign state that does not incorporate a discursively articulated theory of the modern sovereign state” (xxxiii). Reflexivity, in this sense, is the ability of individuals and institutions to discuss their own and others’ situation and condition on a theoretical level, and therefore to participate in shaping that situation and condition. This understanding of reflexivity highlights that when suffragists speak they do not simply make different arguments for women’s political rights or different claims about women’s moral qualifications, but, rather, they offer new and changed political and moral positions for women to inhabit.
When suffragists tell anecdotes about how life under certain economic conditions leads to feminist thinking, our interest as rhetorical scholars is drawn not so much to the actual economic situation of the speaker, but to the way in which such narratives combine certain economic details about some women’s lives (sometimes their own, more often those of others) with moral and political claims. In the language of situational rhetoric, we are interested in how suffragists describe women’s economic situation in such a way that it not only serves as a call for action (an exigence) but also tries to generate among women a moral right to act. A discussion of the moral regulation engaged in by suffragist women, therefore, adds another dimension to my discussion of situational rhetoric in the previous chapters. The rhetorical situation here must provide not only a rhetorically constituted social need but also the very permission for certain speakers to act on that social need. The call for action, therefore, must be articulated in tandem with assurances of women’s ability to act.

Likewise, the legislative act of granting women the vote was sometimes phrased as recognition of the ability women had shown as political participants, particularly in relation to their support for the war. In the July 1916 issue of Woman’s Century, Edith Lang reports on a resolution sent to Ontario Premier Hearst by the Toronto branch of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). She quotes the resolution in full in order to encourage other WCTU members as well as other associations and societies to attempt to influence the government. The resolution lists several arguments outlining why the WCTU firmly believed in women’s franchise. One point asserts: “That Canadian women are qualified and ready to take an intelligent share in the affairs of their country, its needs and sacrifices, has been fully demonstrated during the present awful war” (Lang, July 1916).
The resolution also mentions that the provincial governments of Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan had already given women the ballot, and that WCTU members “confidently look to our Government to recognize the same qualities and grant the same rights to the women of Ontario” (14, my emphasis). At this point in the campaign—in the middle of the war, and after several provinces had already passed women’s suffrage legislation—the WCTU organizers declare that women have proven their ability to act politically and that, therefore, the rhetorical situation demands recognition of that fact through giving them the ballot.

Let us return to our consideration of how the description of different women’s economic situations fed into claims about women’s moral qualifications for politics. In her feminist anti-war manifesto, *In Times Like These*, Nellie McClung speaks about how women are no longer “contented with woman’s sphere and woman’s work,” and how such discontent may lead to “the stirring of ambition, the desire to spread out, to improve and grow” (44). “In the old days,” when women were busy with housework “from 5 A.M. to 5 A.M.,” one “did not hear much of discontent among women, because they had not time to even talk” (44-45). But recently, new appliances and industrially manufactured products have “given women more leisure than they had formerly, and now the question arises, what are they going to do with it?” (45). In McClung’s narrative, improved economic conditions provide women with some leisure time. However, what they are going to do with their discontent and their time is a moral question. Women will only find satisfactory solutions to this moral question only if they think thoroughly and carefully about their time. In this sense, McClung encourages women to translate a value which was gained as a result of economic developments—time—into a realm where moral capital can be generated. To
that end, McClung devotes a section of *In Times Like These* to the question of "Should Women Think?" Once women start to think in the way that McClung intends them to, they will (and here I follow McClung's own idiosyncratic list): "not wear immodest clothes," "see that it is woman's place to lift high the standard of morality," stop wearing bird plumage for adornment, refrain from serving liquor to their guests, and generally avoid "mak[ing] life hard for other women" (34).

McClung's narrative is one in which economic improvements provide some women with time to think. It is these women's moral abilities, however, which provide them with the right ways to think and act. As an undesirable alternative, McClung's writing also warns of the possibility of becoming a "comfortable woman" who, because of her unwillingness to think and to take an interest in other people, makes life hard for other women (34). In McClung's view, these women should not "babble of woman's sphere being her own home" and instead should realize the degree of their selfishness (34). On the other side of the spectrum there are also those women who do not have free time at their disposal, and therefore will not have much opportunity to think. In that sense, McClung's scenario excludes lower-class women from reflecting on their situation and thus developing the moral ability to lead other women (see also chapter one on how working-class women were generally excluded from suffrage clubs).

In their portrayal of women's economic situation, suffragists were reflexive about the effects of women's economic and political participation in a way that is consistent with Giddens's concept of structuration: suffragists did not separate their observations on life on a small scale (or what some sociologists might call the micro-level) from their portrayal of political structures and societal institutions (the macro-level). Rather, their description of
everyday social interaction always reflected the structure of society on a larger scale. In the
moral discourse of suffragists, the decisions which women could make about their personal
lives were assessed not only in their individual but also in their wider societal dimension.
The rhetorical challenge was to portray the connection between the everyday life of women
and the realm of governments and institutions in such a way that women’s everyday
activities could be seen as having an uplifting and civilizing effect on society at large. If
such a connection could be established, then moral and socially active women were already
participating in the larger realm of politics, and therefore qualifying themselves for a more
official ratification of that participation.

As Mrs. T. Trotter puts it in her article “Results of the Higher Education of
Women” in Acadia Athenaeum: “Civilization consist[s] of two principal facts, the progress
of Society and the progress of individuals” (133). And since “[e]very expansion of human
intelligence has proved of advantage to society,” then “the movement by which multitudes
of women are being lifted to a higher plane of intelligence must gradually elevate the whole
national life” (133). The image of the well-off, idle woman is not only an image that is
mobilized to increase the ranks of suffragists; it is also an image of a woman who does not
participate in the improvement of the national character. Trotter asserts that “many women
of the wealthy and fashionable classes” are “drones in the social hive” (134). They “make
the pursuit of their own pleasure the business of life, and dissipate their energies in a round
of amusements”; such living results in “loss of power to the Commonwealth” (134). To
the truly educated woman, however, such a life is “well nigh impossible” (134). The
educated woman has “tasted the joy of labor and achievement,” and she is not only
conscious of her powers but also “of the obligations growing out of their possession” (134).
It is in particular the study of social science—the rise of which came hand in hand with the rise of philanthropy—which has “brought her face to face with the need of the world”:

Like the educated man, she may make mistakes in her choice of methods and work. She may undertake that for which she is not fitted. She may sometimes become a fanatic in her zeal for reform. But she cannot rest in indolent ease at the expense of others’ toil. (134)

Despite all the new activities in which educated women participated as teachers, doctors, lawyers, and suffragists, Trotter assures her readers that such women did not neglect their homes. Even if some of them did, “it may be hoped that this rebound from the old order will soon right itself” as they recognize that they can wield their best influence at home: “For the true woman, the chivalrous devotion of husband, the love and reverence of children, and all the sweet, pure joys of happy domestic life, are worth more than any public applause or any rewards of fame” (138). According to Trotter, women are enabled to participate in the national project partly as a result of their education. On the one hand, an educated woman concentrates her productivity in the home, on the well-being of her family. On the other hand, the hard work and social awareness associated with education help to counteract a life focussed on amusements and lived in irresponsibility. In either case, the state to be avoided is to “rest in indolent ease” at the expense of others.

The work through which women were encouraged to participate in national life could in this view take a variety of forms: it could be housework and childrearing, paid labour, charity and volunteer work, political activism, or professional work as writers, lawyers and doctors. Discussions about which female positions were more moral and therefore more nationalist than others were frequently approached through a description of
women's economic situation. A writer who provides several examples of this approach is the female journalist who signed herself as Madame and wrote a substantial women's column for *Saturday Night* magazine from November 1909 to July 1910, called first "The Other Page" and later "One Point of View." The section consisted of a full page of short reports on national and international events, trends, and developments concerning women, featuring a portrait of a famous woman—usually of European nobility or the wife of a high-ranking Canadian politician. The reporting included a good deal of consistently pro-suffrage commentary.

Madame repeatedly placed women's financial situation at the centre of concerns for women's rights. On December 4, 1909, she declares "economy is a virtue, but even a virtue ceases to be such under some circumstances" (17). She admonishes both sides of the spectrum—women who earn little and save every penny, making their life "a continual scraping during which they deprive themselves of many sources of development" and women who "spend their all as they receive it and have no care for the morrow" (17). Each type of woman "lacks method" in her approach to money, and she advocates "the introduction into every home of the system of allowances" as a way of teaching women early on about how to handle their finances (17).

Again, on December 11, 1909, Madame speaks of how too much virtuous behaviour among some women is not a good thing. This time it is not scrupulous saving but

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57 Madame is obviously a pseudonym. However, since I have not been able to find out who was writing under that pseudonym at the *Saturday Night*, I will continue referring to her by her *nom de plume*. Grace F. Heggie and Gordon R. Adshead's index to *Saturday Night*, which provides names for many of the magazine's pseudonymous authors, is also not able to tell who Madame was.
excessive self-sacrifice that draws her criticism. "Charity begins at home," as is often stated, but "obviously it doesn't, that is if by home we mean ourselves instead of our family and our friends" (17). Women seem to make a profession of the job of self-sacrifice, Madame writes, so much so that "blotting out one's own personality in order that another may shine" becomes so persistent as to be "as a drug habit, quite as pernicious, and far more common" (17). Such women adhere to a "mistaken sense of duty," not realizing that a husband "wants something more than a dustless home and a well appointed table, that he needs a companion as well as a housekeeper" (17). In fact, the oft-evoked selfishness of idle ladies might be an outcome of such excessive self-sacrifice if women do not "consider how wrong it may be to assist in cultivating a spirit of idleness and dependence in the ones on whom they lavish their care and attention": "Many a life has been ruined and plenty of them marred by the over-devotion of mothers to children, of sisters to brothers, and of wives to husbands" (17). Madame engages in a complex project of moral regulation and attempts to discourage some women's excessive self-sacrifice on behalf of their families as well as other women's idleness and selfishness by placing them both in the context of each other.

From Madame's reports, a decidedly moderate ideal emerges of how women are to act. They are not to spend their money recklessly but they also should not forget to invest in their own development; they are to be charitable to others but also charitable to themselves. A woman who practises the right measure of spending and self-sacrificing will also participate in the upkeep of society in the right kind of way—not only when she fosters moderate behaviour in others but also because she disciplines herself with the aim of being a better, more independently contributing compatriot. In Madame's view, the rhetorical
situation which calls for the articulation of such guidelines for moderate spending and self-sacrificing is characterized by the need for women to become more independent moral agents.

One avenue to a morally fortified female position was the striving for financial self-sufficiency. In fact some of the social ideals according to which women were asked to live—such as self-sacrifice in motherhood and marriage and, if they lived among the upper classes, pride in the possibilities of their elevated positions—could become secondary to economic independence in Madame’s view. On January 29, 1910, she lauds Lady Affleck who, according to reports from overseas, was working as a saleswoman in a London department store because she “found it necessary to be self-supporting,” and after reviewing her qualifications “decided that as she knew a number of languages and had shopped in every big city in Europe” she would make a good salesclerk (17). The Globe had reported in December of the previous year that “owing to recent reverses” Lady Affleck, wife of Sir Robert Affleck, “is extremely hard up, and when Selfridges opened their store [in London] Lady Affleck was one of the 10,000 who applied” (“Lady Affleck as Saleslady”). A few days after the Globe article, a special cable to the Washington Post asserted that Lady Affleck’s presence was proving to be quite a marketing success for the newly opened department store as “crowds of Americans and English have swarmed to buy or at least look at the costumes, with surreptitious glances at the titled saleswoman” (“Titled Saleswoman a Boon”). As the article notes, Lady Affleck insisted on being treated in the same way as her fellow workers and receiving the same amount of pay, her desire being “to get on with my fellow-employes and to be promoted to the position of buyer”
In her article, Madame suggests that most women would have judged such a step as beneath them: "Pride has kept plenty of people in penury" (17). She criticizes the many women who value public opinion too highly and who for fear of losing caste would prefer to keep outward appearances rather than "set to work." She further declares:

Every woman, like every man, should be trained with a view to earning a living should the necessity arise. Matrimony should no longer be looked upon as the final refuge of the woman who has failed at everything else she has undertaken. Domestic life makes as many demands as business or the office, often even more, and it takes a trained mind to cope with its perplexities. (17)

Madame emphasizes the intellectual tasks which women master through their work either in or outside the home. She wants every woman’s work to be understood that way—neither women nor men should be given any reason to think of housewives as less accomplished than other female workers. At the same time, Madame’s declaration also discourages mothers and housewives from viewing their work in the home as a refuge from waged labour and its demands. Given the skills they have learned as workers in their homes they should not be hesitant to apply themselves in the labour market if their financial situation forces them to do so.

Through the concept of women as working members of society a sense of identification can be established among women of quite different means. It is not only women who leave the house for paid work who are working women, but also housewives
who go about their tasks in a business-like way. When Madame reports on a new school in England which offered courses on home economics for young wives rather than for domestic workers, she compares this education to that which prepares men for their jobs. The program lasts only six months, she says, during which a woman is supposed to learn "all the tricks of housekeeping and return to her home a duly qualified combination of sweeper, duster, cook, dish washer and manager" (12 Mar. 1910). Madame notes that the time span seems rather short when compared to the period which men devote to acquiring knowledge of their trade. In another section of the same column, Madame goes even so far as to say that almost all women who work—either in industrial, domestic or sales jobs, in positions with higher education, or at home as wives and mothers—come together under the banner of "working women," and that there is no need to set "working girls" apart from other women. Here we need to note that the term working girls was often used to highlight the opportunities for sexual promiscuity which were seen to arise for young women when they worked outside their homes (see McMaster). Madame’s re-categorization of “working girls” as “working women” therefore affirms that these young female workers are as morally upright as older working women.

Madame also asserts that most women are working women, be it “in the office, the school, the shop, or the home; and if circumstances are such that one cannot be sheltered in the home nest, by all means learn to be called a working woman, and be proud of the fact that the appellation has been well earned” (12 Mar. 1910). From this reflection on the economic circumstances of women who work either outside or in the home emerges the idea that women of widely different means could identify with each other as well as be proud and confident about the work they do. Madame rhetorically constitutes a unity
among working women which deliberately bridges their differences. She produces a sense of identification in the way in which Kenneth Burke describes it; and, as Burke notes, broad identifications are the ones which bridge deep division. In this case, the fragile unity is one which highlights the moral unimpeachability and social importance of a diverse range of female work.

The Moral Capital of Suffragist Women

Nellie McClung's notion of the "gentle lady" (see previous chapter) and Madame's of the women who "rest in indolent ease" at the expense of others are defined in quite detailed ways. These notions include women who neither pursue paid work nor do their own household work. In McClung's and Madame's view, the gain that comes from paid work or frugal house management is not only economic, but in large part also moral. While the previous chapter analyzed how moral subject positioning was used in addressing female audiences, I am now emphasizing that this audience positioning was part of a pervasive discourse on morality. It included suffragists' self-positioning as moral agitators, their vision of a moral womanhood, as well as their ideas about making Canada a moral society. Moral authority allowed suffragists a claim on politics—it was out of moral concern that they were interested in participating in politics, and it was through moral authority that they were qualified to do so.

As demonstrated above, the suffragist discussion about morality frequently related itself to economic questions. However, as Valverde explains, moral regulation does not fully overlap with economic class formation. The process in which the moral dimension of
our subject positions is defined is heavily influenced by who we are within the economic scheme of our society, yet our moral and class subjectivities are not identical. It seems that Madame narrates the case of Lady Affleck, the titled salesclerk, precisely because this story imbues the very idea of economic independence with moral authority at a time when the economic independence of women was not always viewed as valuable in and of itself. In telling the story of Lady Affleck, Madame valorizes an abstracted idea of economic self-sufficiency rather than one based only on the physical needs which drove most women to manual labour. In “Moral Capital,” Valverde suggests that moral attitudes provided their own rewards in the form of “moral capital.” The aim of moral reform in a “moral-capitalist setting” is not so much to change behaviour as to “generate certain ethical subjectivities that appear as inherently ‘moral’” (216). Being moral is not primarily “a set of visible actions,” but rather “the cultivation of a particular subjectivity requiring constant self-supervision” (220). An important aspect of Lady Affleck’s new identity as a working woman, therefore, was the moral capital which she gained in Madame’s eyes by re-shaping her subjectivity through economic self-sufficiency.

Much like Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital, Valverde’s moral capital is certified by institutions such as the church and the professional groups involved in moral regulation. Valverde believes that this process of certification is frequently used in such a way as to regulate the excesses of economic capital. The assumption of an intimate relationship between economic and moral capital was in fact central to middle-class philanthropy in the nineteenth century. The “morally debilitating effects of static wealth” were in need of being counteracted by “the bracing effects of hard work, deferred gratification, and investment” (“Moral Capital” 217). Likewise, extreme poverty was
viewed as an indicator of vice. The interaction of these circuits of capital (economic, moral, and cultural) is what Valverde terms the model of a “mixed economy.”

The conversion of moral capital into legal rights involves a rhetorical effort. It was necessary for suffragists to discursively establish what kinds of actions provide women with moral authority and how this authority might transfer into arenas of political and legal decision-making. Valverde’s model of moral capital is helpful in analyzing the way in which different elements of subject formation—gender, class, race, but also political rights and moral evaluations—were played against each other at a moment of attempted political change. Valverde herself describes moral reform discourse as “a dynamic through which gender, race and class constantly masked or repressed—but also signified—one another” ("The Rhetoric of Reform" 63). Within this dynamic, there are frequent moments of redefinition. For instance, rumours of incest were most often understood as arising from living conditions among the urban working classes, but by some turn-of-the-century feminists they were also portrayed as gender issues. Or, the “white slavery” panic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was discussed by feminists in England as forced prostitution imposed by abusive men, while working-class men tended to use it to highlight the economic power exerted by upper-class men over young lower-class women. Moral discourse, says Valverde, “is not ‘really’ about any one thing,” but can discursively be made to be about different issues (63). She suggests the term “slippage” as a “non-reductionist and non-essentialist concept drawing attention to the fluidity of social signifiers across competing explanatory categories” (64).

It is because such slippage can be made to go into different directions that it becomes a subject for rhetorical analysis. Slippage between explanatory categories is
rhetorical not only because it happens in the realm of language. It is also rhetorical in the sense that it can be used to facilitate new and revised understandings of social conditions. The shifting of explanatory categories changes participants' view of a situation, bringing forth different dangers and problems which can then become exigences. Slippage can also provide new suggestions for addressing old and new exigences. The constant possibility of slippage between social categories thus aids in the formation of rhetorical situations by offering ways of articulating new exigences and new calls for social action. For instance, when women's housework, which had been viewed as private, now also comes to be understood as public, this move offers new exigences such as the need for training and educating wives and mothers or the need for public policies that ensure women's safety and fair treatment as workers of the home.

In Canadian suffrage discourse, two categories which repeatedly were made to stand in for or weigh against each other were suffragists' morality and their identity as middle-class women. Canadian suffragists' economic privilege—and how it could be played for or against the credibility of suffragists—has long been a topic of discussion. In a 1919 article on the Canadian women's movement, journalist Marjory MacMurchy critically assessed the social standing of the Canadian women's movement in light of its claim to represent all women. MacMurchy herself was a founding member of the Canadian Women's Press Club and served as its president from 1909 to 1913. In her article, MacMurchy states that in the 1880s "the women of Canada began to organize themselves

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58 For more recent uptakes of this discussion, see Jennifer Henderson's Settler Feminism and Race Making in Canada (2003) and Cecily Devereux Growing a Race: Nellie L. McClung and the Fiction of Eugenic Feminism (2005).
with a definite plan to include women in all parts of the country in their bonds of organization” (155). She admits: “Generally speaking, the movement belongs to the well-to-do, but it cannot rightly be described as fashionable. It belongs indeed to the world, and to the times” (156). More specifically, the movement for women’s rights allowed women to become, as MacMurchy says, “members of a race which is moving on an upward course” (155).59 MacMurchy was aware that the women who participated in the movement were economically privileged—a fact which in the eyes of contemporary critics disqualified suffragism as fashionable, as a fad. “Fashionable,” here, is used as a dyslogistic term which draws negative attention to the class privilege of suffragist women. MacMurchy sets out to re-signify this dyslogism into a eulogism when she insists that suffragism is a serious movement because it is part of a much larger, international development, part of a larger scheme of civilizational progress for white societies.60 In other words, the authority of the suffrage movement does not come from its representative character (for it is not representative of all women), but from its role in the moral development of the nation.

59 MacMurchy’s description contains key issues which have been at the heart of our ongoing academic debate about the women’s suffrage movement: a concern for all women is contradicted by the fact that it was mostly middle-class women who steered suffrage organizations, and the establishment of an impressive international network of women’s rights activists sits uncomfortably with problematic ideals of civilization and progress.

60 On the international network of women’s suffragists as a symptom of globalization, see, for instance Leila J. Rupp’s Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women’s Movement (1998), Margaret H. McFadden’s Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism (1999), Bonnie S. Anderson’s Joyous Greetings: The First International Women’s Movement, 1830-1860 (2000), and Patricia Greenwood Harrison’s Connecting Links: The British and American Woman Suffrage Movements, 1900-1914 (2000). However, Canadian feminists are rarely part of these discussions. An example of recently developing research about Canadian feminists on the global scene is “Empire Girls and Global Girls” by Diana Brydon and Jessica Schagerl.
In many suffragist texts, women's moral authority became the central argument for enfranchising women—well ahead of arguments which posed equality as the key reason for female suffrage. Some writers posed moral authority as the exclusive qualification for women's participation in politics. In 1913, four years before some Canadian women gained the federal vote for the first time, A.H.F. Lefroy—whom legal historian R.C.B. Risk calls "one of the leading common law scholars in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century" (307)—wrote an article on the question "Should Canadian Women Have the Parliamentary Vote?" In this article, Lefroy lays out the way in which female suffrage "appeals most strongly to my own mind" (91). As a legal scholar, he declares his interest in the efforts which women's organizations, most notably the National Council of Women in Canada, were making in the direction of general law reform—suggestions they made, for instance, to raise the age of consent, to suppress the "white slave traffic," to secure separate trials for women to the exclusion of the male public, to establish juvenile courts, and to protect destitute children, the old, and the disabled. For Lefroy, the most notable thing about these suggestions for legal reform is that the women are:

willing to interest themselves in public affairs, with sustained energy and enthusiasm—not to gain anything for themselves, not with any axes of their own to grind, not even to gratify personal ambition, but in order to protect the ignorant, to support the weak, and to assist those who have no helper.

(93)

In contrast, men, in particular the members of the Canadian business community, tended to be so absorbed in their professions and their own striving for contentment that "they have not the surplus time or the surplus energy to search for and slay the hydra-headed brood of
abuses ever lurking in secret places in the body politic” (93). As a result, it was rare that legislative reforms “of a purely altruistic and philanthropic character” found their way into the statute books (93). If these women reformers do not find male voters to support their cause, Lefroy reasons, then to them even the most democratic government will appear autocratic and despotic. Under such circumstances, he asks: “Shall we not give them at least the leverage of the vote of themselves, and such of their sister women as they can carry with them in support of their platform?” (94).

Lefroy here suggests that feminists’ ideas for legal reforms were decidedly moral in that they were free from concerns for economic gain. As such they offered a level of altruism to the legal system that he did not see provided in the laws proposed by men. To him, the moral authority of feminist suggestions was visible particularly in the perceived absence of women’s economic stakes. Only rarely, says Lefroy, does it happen that wealthy men campaign for altruistic laws in the way that Canadian women’s organizations do. As examples he mentions a few aristocratic English legislators, all of whom appear to be “phenomenal men of abnormal sympathy and imagination” (93). In Lefroy’s description the ideal citizen (and politician) is no longer the citizen with an economic stake in the community but rather the moral citizen who is economically disinterested in the results of her politics. The moral qualities of this ideal citizen prove themselves most clearly in situations where moral discourse can act independently from economic considerations.

In many suffragists’ eyes, the moral virtues of women voters were in fact to cure the country of the negative moral influence of self-interested and corrupt politicians. In October 1909, an editorial in the Toronto World put the case in stark terms by exclaiming:
There is a large constituency of unenfranchised who have not been tainted by the objectionable methods of the past, whose moral sense is keener and purer, whose dearest aspirations are intimately associated with the introduction of genuine political and social reforms, whose whole interests lie in the direction of raising the standard of living, morally, intellectually and physically, throughout the Dominion and its provinces. ("The Time Has Come to Enfranchise Women")

According to the World, future women voters will have a tall order to fill for they "can and will be" nothing short of "the salvation of the Dominion" (1). The editor is sure that their influence in the home and in public life and their votes will always "be cast on the side that makes for purity in all departments of the state and for high character on the part of those who are ambitious to guide its councils" (1). For the World this promise of national salvation is the strongest case for granting women the franchise. The hour has come "to call in the women of Canada to redress the political, electoral and social evils from which the country suffers" (1).

The rhetorical effort involved in suffrage speech, then, was to parlay the moral capital of Anglo-Canadian middle-class women into avenues for participating in political decision-making. In many ways, the onset of World War One in 1914 drew attention away from the project of suffragism. As Carol Lee Bacchi puts it in her history of the Canadian suffrage movement, the war "divided the movement, accentuated pre-war differences, and proliferated worthy causes for women volunteerism" (142). But war-time Canada with its absence of Anglo-Canadian men also provided new means for suffragists to argue for greater political participation coming on the heels of women's help for the war effort. In
March 1916, reform novelist and historian Agnes Maule Machar wrote a spirited defence of “The Citizenship of Women” in *Woman’s Century*, the official organ of the National Council of Women of Canada. She said explicitly that women’s moral influence should be viewed as equal to men’s economic and military power:

One of the first duties of a citizen, is consideration for the interests and well-being of others. No functions are more important from this point of view than those of the “mother.” For, it is undeniable that the mothers’ self-sacrificing devotion to the infancy and development of the future citizen lies at the very foundation of the commonweal,—*second in no degree* to the material prosperity and outward security gained by the strong arms of its manhood. (9, my emphasis)

The individual vote functioned as a marker for “freedom and civic responsibility” for men as well as for women (9). And since women’s moral contribution as mothers and educators of future citizens was “second in no degree” to the material and military contribution of men, anything short of equal franchise “makes her an incomplete partner in the commonwealth” (9). Machar suggested that the “present colossal war” had shown by its “very magnitude and urgency” that “in war time the State must depend on its women, as well as on its men” as women had taken men’s places not only in the daily working of society, but also in war-related work such as the manufacture of ammunition and work in hospitals (9). But, according to Machar, it was in terms of moral strength that women had truly proven their ability to be full citizens: “the world war is certainly giving her a training that should make for a wider range of thought, stronger moral stamina, a more intelligent...
judgment on many aspects of life to which her attention is now for the first time forcibly drawn" (9).

At the 1916 annual convention of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, Nellie McClung was made chairwoman of a committee which was to unite suffragists from each of the Canadian provinces and to form, it was hoped, another federal suffrage association. By 1906, Emily Stowe’s former Toronto Women’s Literary Club had already fashioned itself into the Canadian Suffrage Association, and in 1914 another national organization—the National Equal Franchise Union—had split away from the CSA (see Bacchi). Under McClung’s leadership, the new committee within the WSPU immediately sent a letter to all suffrage societies in the country explaining that since so many suffragists had attended the convention, this was the right time to bring the question of suffrage to the fore. The letter concedes that perhaps the time might not seem so opportune to others, as “the great problem which confronts us all is the winning of the war” and that it would be “unfortunate to distract anyone from their patriotic duty” (“A Federal Equal Franchise” 7). But until women are given full rights as citizens, they “shall be seriously handicapped in dealing with the many problems arising from the war” (7). The morality of the whole nation would be at stake if women were not allowed to actively participate in politics:

The call of the Empire has come to our best men, who have and are responding in large numbers. It has not been heard by many of our foreign born men, nor by the careless, indifferent or selfish among our own people, and as a consequence the moral standard of the electorate of the Dominion is being seriously lowered, and in order to offset this deterioration, in a
measure, at least, we feel that the time has come for the full
enfranchisement of our own Canadian women. (7)

This letter by McClung’s WCTU committee on suffrage did not primarily conceive of
women’s suffrage as a matter of equality, but as a matter of upholding the Anglo-Canadian,
middle-class morality of a nation at wartime. In this way, the war effort with its political
possibilities became central to the Canadian suffrage campaign.61

In fact, support for the war had grown so pervasive that it became impossible for
pacifist suffragists to continue to work as writers and journalists. At the beginning of the
war, pacifist suffragists had not been rare figures in public discourse and most Canadian
moral reformers shared anti-militarist sentiments. For instance, Flora MacDonald Denison,
as the president of the Canadian Suffrage Association and upon request by the CSA,
published a pacifist pamphlet in 1914 called War and Women. Even Nellie McClung was
still an anti-militarist when she published In Times Like These in 1915, arguing that if given
the vote women would be extremely hesitant to send the nation to war because they had
given birth to and raised the country’s soldiers. Two years later, however, she had changed
her view. The Next of Kin: Those Who Wait and Wonder, published in 1917 and written
after her son Jack had joined the war, called for female war involvement for the purposes of
expediting the end of the war and achieving peace.

61 Bacchi notes that at the onset of the war the two rival organizations on the national
level—the Canadian Suffrage Association (CSA) and the National Equal Franchise Union
(NEFU)—collaborated in forming the Suffragists’ War Auxiliary with representatives of
each of the two organizations becoming vice-presidents. But while the NEFU suggested
concentrating on the war effort rather than on suffrage, the CSA was adamant in continuing
to produce petitions and deputations during the war (38, 159-60).
In a 1976 article, Ramsay Cook describes how by 1916 the atmosphere in Winnipeg had become so militarist that two of Canada’s most prominent suffragists—the sisters Francis Marion Beynon, editor of the women’s page at the *Grain Growers’ Guide*, and Lillian Beynon Thomas, women’s page editor for the *Manitoba Free Press*—left Winnipeg for New York. In a climate where public anti-war gestures cost some journalists, professors, and ministers their jobs, caused governments to cut funding to social organizations, and brought visits by the censorship bureau, anti-militarist suffragists found it too difficult to pursue their journalistic careers while maintaining their pacifist views. Barbara Roberts, writing more extensively on the events that led up to Francis Marion Beynon’s exile in “Women against War,” mentions the hostile mail and personal threats which Beynon received as a result of her outspoken anti-war columns—experiences which she later worked into her feminist and pacifist novel *Aleta Dey*.62

The presence of the war clearly changed the direction of some of the moral claims suffragists made about women voters. In other words, the war and its national politics changed the way in which suffragists circulated their moral capital. While before the war anti-militarism was an important part of how women’s political subject positions were imagined, during the war a pacifist stance could only be maintained to the detriment of

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62 For more discussion of the continued pacifism among Canadian suffragists, see also Barbara Roberts’s “Why Do Women Do Nothing to End the War?” Other Canadian feminists who remained pacifists were Violet McNaughton (leader of the women’s branch of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association and president of the Equal Franchise Board in Saskatchewan), Helena Gutteridge (labour and social activist, founder of the British Columbia Women’s Suffrage League), Laura Hughes (key figure in the attempt to establish a Canadian branch of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom), and Alice Chown (reformer, pacifist, and author of *The Stairway*). Like Beynon and Thomas, Hughes and Chown, too, relocated to the United States because their public condemnation of the war had made them the subject of threats and censorship.
one’s political and moral authority. What is more, a turn toward supporting the war effort promised even greater political returns for suffragist arguments than seemed possible before the war. Now, at a time of a new and heightened concern about the moral make-up of the nation and its citizens, Anglo-Canadian women could claim to represent the right kind of moral citizenship in order to counteract the lesser moral authority of immigrant and non-white men.

**Moral Regulation and Its Rhetorical Moment**

In the aftermath of the war (and as a result of women’s suffrage and increased immigration), Canada saw a more comprehensive debate about the nature of its citizenship. Historian Tom Mitchell, writing about the National Conference on Canadian Citizenship that took place in Winnipeg in 1919, suggests that by the end of the war an older, entrepreneurial notion of citizenship was being replaced with one that emphasized obligation and subordination to a collective national interest. Laissez-faire individualism with its reverence for economic assets gave way to the idea of citizenship as a deeper, moral bond that was less dependent on property and ownership. Mitchell calls the new way of thinking about citizenship a “moral economy” which “demanded a mutuality and equality of sacrifice between fighting men and those at home” (9). Moral status came to replace economic status, as became particularly clear in the criticism waged against wartime profiteers and politicians who had betrayed public faith. Mitchell points out that this moral economy arose from traditions of philosophical idealism and the Social Gospel movement. Both movements had “provided the intellectual framework for the pre-war
reform movement” (9) and now shaped the notion that Canada “should be based on a substantive citizenship of social, economic and political rights” (10).

As Gail G. Campbell has shown in a study of voting records in Albert County in pre-Confederation New Brunswick, even in a province that at the time had “the most restrictive franchise” in North America, men had been allowed to vote on a more universal scale than the property-bound franchise law stipulated. Until the 1850s, New Brunswick’s election law was strictly based on holding the deed to a freehold of a certain value even though countries such as the United States, France, and Prussia, had already adopted universal, white manhood suffrage. In line with John Garner’s argument of 1969, Campbell’s research proves that New Brunswick “was very much part of a British tradition in which custom and practice were at least as important as the letter of the law in establishing societal standards and values” (“The Most Restrictive Franchise” 168). While “only two-thirds of all voting-aged men were eligible to vote” in New Brunswick’s Albert County in the elections between 1846 and 1857, “over three-quarters of the county’s adult males” had access to the franchise in that same decade, partly as a result of voting reforms but also because some voters were permitted to cast ballots without legally qualifying for the franchise (187). Most of these voters owned parcels of land which did not meet the requirement for political participation. For these men, suffrage “was cautiously extended by judicious local officials to include a small select group of solid and respectable family men, landowners who were just a little poorer than their legally enfranchised neighbours” (188). While property was still the key qualifying factor, Campbell’s description makes clear that even in pre-Confederation New Brunswick suffrage was occasionally extended
on moral grounds also (at least as long as newly enfranchised men were also Anglo-Canadians).

From pre-Confederation New Brunswick through the debates preceding the federal Franchise Act of 1885 to the 1919 National Conference on Canadian Citizenship, Canada saw a slow turn away from land ownership as the key prerequisite for male franchise (or, as it was also called, the principle of having a "stake in the community"). As Veronica Strong-Boag makes clear in "The Citizenship Debates," throughout this period, the legal restrictions which categorically excluded women, First Nations, and Chinese Canadians were frequently contested. However, even in the face of frequent contestation, legislative change was slow coming. Women struggled until 1918 to gain full federal voting rights (1940 for women in Quebec), Asian Canadians until 1948, and Status Indians until 1960. Strong-Boag notes that Canadian federal politicians "proved generally more prepared to extend their privileges to poorer men of their own race than to women of their own class and race or men of other races" (90). Among these different groups it was Anglo-Canadian middle-class women (after white men with less property) who could most easily make the case for political inclusion. They could do so without challenging the developing notion of a citizenship which became "rooted in Anglo-conformity and related notions of service, obedience, obligation and fidelity to the state" instead of being fixated on property (Mitchell 8). They could do so by insisting on the moral capital they were gaining as active participants in the Canadian war effort, as philanthropic beacons of their communities, and as educated and caring middle-class women who declared they would pursue an altruistic vote on behalf of other, more disadvantaged women.
Suffragists’ insistence on their moral capital, therefore, was highly responsive to the political situation. In their use of moral capital, suffragists reacted to changes in the meaning of citizenship which increasingly highlighted moral qualification over property-based ones. Like the discussion around citizenship in general, the debate about the altruistic and patriotic contributions of politically interested women intensified as the First World War progressed. As well, Canadian suffragism shared a history with the moral reform movement, and the moral claims circulated by moral reformers easily and frequently crossed over into suffrage discourse. Most suffragists saw themselves as moral reformers and philanthropists first, and suffrage advocates second. In this responsiveness to situation, suffragists engaged what Aristotle calls *kairos*, often translated as qualitative time (as opposed to *chronos*, or quantitative time). As Carolyn Miller describes it in her rethinking of “*Kairos* in the Rhetoric of Science,” *kairos* means the right time for a certain utterance, the rhetorically opportune moment. It shows us “how discourse is related to a historical moment” and alerts us to “the constantly changing quality of appropriateness” (310). Judging from the longevity of the Canadian moral reform movement as well as the campaign for female suffrage, *kairos* for the kinds of moral arguments discussed above was perhaps not as constantly changing as it seems to be the case in Miller’s description. Given the pervasiveness of moral discourse at the time, late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century Canada was an opportune place to base suffragist arguments on the moral qualifications of a prominently reformist class of women.

This chapter has tried to offer a way of conceptualizing how suffragist claims about political rights and moral quality act together. We have seen that the idea of moral authority was deliberately distinguished from political and economic power so as to allow it to
circulate for the benefit of women’s political goals. Mariana Valverde’s theorization of moral capital arises from her study of the same time period in Canada as my analysis of the women’s suffrage movement. While she notes that the moral reform movement’s use of tropes and metaphors “was largely historically specific,” she also suggests that “the formal features of the discourse are certainly not unique” (“The Rhetoric of Reform” 61). The portrayal of women’s citizenship as truly moral because it allegedly excluded economic interests constitutes a lucid historical moment—lucid because it allows us to recognize moral capital as operating in relative independence from (and occasionally in juxtaposition to) economic and cultural capital. We can now bring our awareness of moral capital, gained from Canadian suffrage discourse as a historical case study, to other public debates and rhetorical situations in order to investigate how it operates in those settings.63

63 See, for instance, Arlene Kaplan Daniels’ work on upper-middle-class and upper-class women who made careers out of volunteer work in late twentieth-century America. In her introduction, she asks: “In a society where ‘the pursuit of the almighty dollar’ is given so high a value, how can the paradox of people willing to work for nothing be explained?” (xix). Daniels notes that throughout her multi-year study many of the women avoided discussing issues such as “the use of volunteering to acquire status or privilege,” the “use of philanthropy to ameliorate social conditions and therefore avoid more drastic social changes,” and “the place of money and power in the work of successful volunteers” (xx-xxi). Given our understanding of the circulation of moral and economic capital, we might say these volunteers highlight neither the moral capital they gain in the absence of monetary recompense nor the ways in which their moral capital is premised on their often abundant economic capital.
Conclusion

I started in my introduction with the claim that women’s suffrage discourse is an under-researched area within Canadian studies, that there is not the same wealth and diversity of scholarly attention to the Canadian suffrage movement as there is to the American and British suffrage campaigns. My answer to the absence of such research is not a primarily historical, literary, or theatrical study of Canadian suffrage activities. Rather, my approach in this dissertation is rooted in yet another understudied area in Canada: the rhetorical study of historical writing. With the help of this theoretical focus, my study offers insights which are particular to this historical moment—particular, for instance, to the way in which newspapers were edited in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada, particular to the private associations and philanthropic initiatives which were formed to pursue the social and moral issues of the time, and particular to the different social images of readers which suffrage writers typically had in mind when they addressed their audiences. Specific as my insights are to the Canadian women’s rights movement of the early twentieth century, I also develop these rhetorical concepts with the hope that they might be taken up for the study of other discursive moments. As much as this investigation is meant to provide answers to the theoretical questions which arose in the course of my reading of Canadian suffrage texts—questions about the movement’s rhetorical situations, the varieties and proliferations of its genres, the discursive uptakes within and outside the movement, its audience design, and its use of moral capital—an
investigation such as this is also always an exercise in producing more questions rather than in arriving at definitive answers.

Now, at the end of this process, the research questions which in my eyes emerge most clearly and most urgently are questions which carry my rhetorical investigations toward other examples of public political debate. Moving my findings toward the investigation of other past debates, I feel there is a true need for Canadian scholars to further engage with historical writing in a way that is thoroughly informed by discursive and rhetorical theory. The historical materials available for these kinds of study include all manner of genres, not only fictional and non-fictional book publications, but also letters and memoranda, flyers and handbills, newspaper and magazine articles, notebooks and scrapbooks.

The questions arising from my research also call for more analysis of public discourse in contemporary Canada. Let me give a few examples of such possible studies of contemporary discourse, examples as they suggest themselves in relation to the topics of each of my chapters.

My chapter on situational rhetoric takes up Lloyd Bitzer's idea that rhetorical utterances are functional calls for change; I expand this idea with the help of Michel Foucault's early work on statements as claims that have gained such authority that their truth value has become independent of the situation in which they are uttered. Applying these theoretical concepts to the Canadian debates on women's suffrage allows us to analyze the situational qualities of Canadian calls for suffrage and to recognize the discursive landscape in which suffrage claims gathered authority. Through this analysis, I provide a new, a situational way, of thinking about the longstanding discussion on the
degree to which early feminists argued for true, equal rights between men and women or whether they decided to make more conservative claims in order to sooner reach their goal of enfranchisement. Women’s organizations—which included suffrage organizations but also spanned the range of women’s literary societies, temperance unions, religious and charity groups, professional and trade associations, and patriotic and imperial organizations—played an important part in facilitating rhetorical calls for action. In other words, these organizations formed a social and discursive structure which was geared to the proliferation of exigences and, therefore, invited the production of speech aimed to affect social and political change.

Viewing these kinds of organizations as sites for an ongoing production of exigences raises the question whether organizations at other times and with other social and political goals fulfill that function in a similar way. Was the newness of these women’s organizations—for instance, most religious women’s associations were founded in the 1880s and 1890s, and a number of local and provincial suffrage organizations in the 1910s—a necessary factor which facilitated their ambitious claims for change? In turn, what are the circumstances under which established organizations might experience surges of confidence and determination which lead them to engage in extensive campaigns for social and political change, change which might lie far outside the range of activities with which such organizations usually concern themselves?

Aside from women’s suffrage, a more recent political movement which was facilitated through the production of exigences from within its organizations is the Japanese Canadian redress movement of the 1980s, a movement which sought both an apology by and compensation from the Canadian government for the forced dispossession, internment,
and relocation of Canadian citizens of Japanese descent during the Second World War. For instance, Roy Miki, in his documentary study *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice*, details the different and sometimes divisive discussions within different redress committees and within the National Association of Japanese Canadians, providing a sense of how the exigence of redress was discursively shaped and re-shaped throughout the campaign. What might a rhetorical reading of these discussions and of the documents produced by the Japanese Canadian redress movement reveal? How did this moment of intense debate about redress relate to the rhetorical situations around it? What were the other exigences in the public discourse of the time that allowed (or hindered) redress to become a widely traveled and authoritative claim? In “Struggling over Canada’s Past,” Joanna Clarke analyzes how newspaper articles and opinion pieces took up the questions of redress between 1980 and 2002. Her focus on uptake offers suggestions on the influence that different, concurrent redress movements had on each other, including not only Japanese Canadian, but also Chinese Canadian, Ukrainian Canadian, and Aboriginal redress movements. Further study of movements like these redress campaigns might ponder whether the need for political claims to travel through different situations and genres plays out differently for different movements, or, in terms of Clarke’s research, whether uptake follows different conditions in different rhetorical situations.

If we continue to pursue questions of situational rhetoric in the context of social movements, a continued rethinking of the rhetorical situation might also produce a better understanding of how boundaries between situations are constituted. The concept of uptake operates with quite precise boundaries because it focuses on individual utterances. Anne Freadman suggests that it is these boundaries between individual utterances which divide
and define genres; for instance, the move from question to response shapes both these genres, as does the move from request to offer, from newspaper article to letter to the editor. However, my study of the suffrage movement makes the case that we cannot reduce such an expansive political campaign to only the small situations which define uptake, that we also have to understand rhetorical situations as larger phenomena that comprise a variety of smaller situations. As a result of expanding this definition of the rhetorical situation, a question which remains is: are there are analytical benefits to defining the distinctions between smaller and larger situations more meticulously?

The possibility of militancy as a political genre within certain movements is an issue that continues to create public discussion and receive uptake in Canadian newspapers. In several more recent cases the routes of this uptake mirror the denunciations of suffrage militancy in Canada in the 1910s. For instance, just this year the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) declared June 29, 2007, a “national day of action” and encouraged Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals to participate in the rallies and events organized for that day. The stated goal of these events was for participants to show support for First Nations and thus to stand “for a stronger Canada.” A number of activists and commentators were highly critical of the AFN’s use of the phrase “day of action,” and some instead suggested that a national day of action should involve more forceful political activities such as blockades of roads and rail lines. The date of the AFN-organized events proved particularly useful for a disruption of transport services: on the eve of the Canada Day long weekend traffic blocks had the potential of inconveniencing large numbers of holiday travellers. These suggestions of disruptive protests were countered with statements from government officials, declaring that illegal acts would be investigated by police and that band councils who decided to
participate in and support blockades would experience cuts in government funding. On June 29, portions of Highway 401 ("Canada's busiest highway") were indeed closed for several hours, both by Native activists and also as a preventative measure by the Ontario Provincial Police; a few smaller highways were blocked in Southern Ontario and near Montreal; and CN was forced to cancel its passenger rail service from Toronto to Ottawa and Montreal (see Smith et al.). Sidelining the decidedly peaceful events that had been planned by the AFN, it was these suggestions of blockades which received by far the most attention in newspapers and newscasts, and which thus came to characterize for many readers and viewers what was meant by the creation of a "national day of action" on First Nations issues. These suggestions of blockades also prompted impassioned comments on the legality of this political genre and, more generally, the appropriateness of militant protests for the purposes of First Nations politics (see, for instance, the Globe and Mail editorial "Illegitimate Threat of a New Blockade").

Like the reception of English suffrage militancy, the discussion which led up to the "national day of action" is another example of the weighing of a particular genre of protest against an ideal of Canadian political civility. More generally, uptake is a process that is involved in the circulation of all genres and not only in the reception of the genres of militant activism. In this dissertation, the concept of uptake also allows me to highlight an important process of positioning that is not usually grasped by other means of historical investigation. Studies of transnational suffrage history usually trace connections through personal friendships between suffragists, through exchange of letters and print materials, and through the connections forged by speaking tours and visits to foreign suffrage organizations and international conferences. The positioning produced as a result of the
uptake of the news of English militancy is a more elusive dimension of suffrage as a
transnational movement. Although this dimension tends to be elusive to our methods of
historical research, it was a connection keenly felt by those Canadian commentators who
were so concerned about Canadian suffragists being swayed towards militancy. An
analytical focus on uptake can undoubtedly help analyze other moments in public
discussions when participants feel there to be strong causal connections between (or
negative effects of) different genres of public action.

The Canadian discussion of English militancy can also be conceptualized through
Kenneth Burke's concept of identification. In fact, as Burke and scholars after him have
suggested, we can view identification as the central question of rhetorical study. In Burke's
view, identification is to replace the much vaguer concept of persuasion. The term
identification is frequently mentioned in rhetorical analyses, yet it has not received the
detailed analytical attention it deserves. My work on audience design in this dissertation
can provide an avenue toward a deeper theorization of the role of identification. Rhetorical
scholars refer to identification as an ever-present process, but rarely investigate whether, for
instance, we should distinguish different types of identification. Or, perhaps we should
think of the process of identification as taking different forms, and should analyze what
distinguishes the routes along which identification can manifest itself. Also, processes of
identification might vary between different speech situations and it could be beneficial to
trace these variances. It seems to me that the pragmatic concept of audience design—
refigured, as it is here, within a rhetorical vocabulary—offers an excellent starting point to
rethink identification. Perhaps different positions of identification vary as fluidly as do the
audience positions which audience design produces: audience constituents who are
addressees of one sentence can become overhearers of the next sentence, and, likewise, audience constituents who are recipients of gestures of identification in one sentence might be distanced from the speaker’s position in another. In this dissertation, I refer to Burke’s concept in a common way, in the broad and general way in which most rhetorical scholars use it. In doing so, I use identification as an opening, a doorway that allows me to make the linguistic theory of audience design amenable to rhetorical analysis. To return the favour, the theory of audience design could, and should, also be used to enrich our understanding of identification.

Like audience design, moral capital is a term which I introduce to rhetorical study from elsewhere, in this case from the sociological theory of moral regulation. My use of the concept in this specific historical context—the social reform discourse of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada in general, and the campaign for women’s suffrage in particular—relies on Mariana Valverde’s extensive work on the moral discourse during this same time period. Moral capital was so ostensibly used in Canadian public discussion and social activism that this historical moment constitutes an excellent test case for analytically isolating moral capital from cultural and economic capital. And now that we have isolated it, we can also see it at work in other public debates and at other historical movements—for instance, in the British movement for the abolition of slavery (see Brown) or the international valorization of certain twentieth-century political figures such as Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi (see Kane). Since we have established some key parameters for identifying how moral capital circulates, our next task should be to tie it more closely into rhetorical analysis, to make it more thoroughly a rhetorical rather than a sociological or political concept. The concept of ethos, for instance, could be further
nuanced by viewing it in conjunction with moral capital. Or, perhaps the practices of using modal expressions in certain discourse communities, and the collective values expressed by the use of modal expressions, could be indexed to how moral capital circulates within these communities (see Giltrow, "Modern Conscience").

As these ideas for further research suggest, all manner of social groupings (from research communities to political rights movements to civic cultures) are constituted through rhetorical practices. When Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer suggest that we must grasp state forms not only politically but also culturally, I suggest that we must also grasp state forms and institutional structures rhetorically. How do language use, exigence, uptake, and audience design structure and regulate these communities? And how do discursive techniques respond to and shape rhetorical situations, how do they constitute the cultural contexts in which we operate?
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Appendix

Samples of Suffrage Print Material
Ode to Autumn

Satan of mist/fond mantle/mellow

Charm's friend/lost/mistress/faint

Consolations/more love to hand and feet

With fruits the voice of the echo-

more

With feet the voice of the cottage/fond

and full fruit with a gentle nature in the

shells

With small heart, to act huddling more

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Till, while they warm days will never
terrestrial

/Vichy.

For summer's with discomforted their

Where are the songs of spring/where are they?

This of them—then heath the music too.

When strange shrouds bone the everlasting
day

And mark the stillness where roses are

here

Only a wall/rudiments the gentle

along the river sail, blooms more

The woods away, blooms more

The woods and shells, to huddling more

And small and later flowers for the bees,

Till they warm days will never

terrestrial

/Ode to Autumn/

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Title page and first page of The Champion 1.8 (Mar. 1913).
"For King and Country"

"The Lord giveth the word:
The women that publish the tidings
are a great host."

Psalm LXVIII: XL
Our heartyest congratulations to the women of the National Equal Franchise Union and the Canadian Suffrage Association to inaugurate a campaign for a monster petition signed by the women of the West, first of all Canadian women, have been recognized as citizens, and Thursday, January 27, 1916, will become an outstanding date in the history, not only of the Province of Manitoba, but also in the annals of the Dominion, and, wider still, in the world’s records of the progress of Democracy.

The bill, giving women the right to vote in the Provincial elections, and also making them eligible to sit in that Parliament, was passed unanimously by all parties present in that House. Contrary to custom, several women, members of the Executive of the Political Equality League of Manitoba, were given seats on the floor of the house, while the galleries were packed to the uttermost with interested spectators.

The third and final reading of the bill, in the absence of Premier Norris, who was in Chicago on business, was moved by the acting Premier, Hon. T. H. Johnson, who came originally from Iceland, and whose compatriots have ever been the most ardent supporters of the women’s cause in Manitoba.

After the passing of the bill, “O, Canada” was sung, with great enthusiasm, then the women sang “For They are Jolly Good Fellows,” and when they had done, the women sang “For They are Jolly Good Fellows,” and when they had done, the men sang “For They are Jolly Good Fellows.”

The Political Equality League sent a telegram of greetings to Premier Norris, signed the “Women Voters of Manitoba,” and immediately on receipt of the news, the Executive telegraphed a message of congratulations to the League and all who had worked towards this historic date from the National Equal Franchise Union, and also cabled the news to the International Headquarters in London, England, in second and third hands. Women were discovered by an American woman working with the women in the British Dominions where the Governments are third and fourth hands.

The sending up of such a petition would fall within the sphere of the Ontario (Provincial) Equal Franchise Association, rather than that of the National Union, so your Secretary has forwarded the resolution to their Executive. It is well to recall that the C. S. A. did not publish statements of many years ago, without any success, but, of course, the whole public opinion on the Suffrage question has changed since then, and it might be worth doing again; and if the Ontario Government were to give their word, as did the Governments of the Western Provinces, that the signing of such a petition by a definite number of people, or by a definite percentage of the voters, would bring in a Government Bill at the earliest opportunity. It might even be well to approach the opposition and get them to give some such guarantee, to be redeemed directly they got into power, as was done with such success in Manitoba, where women worked with all the forces at their command to get Liberals elected—we know this was without success; but the forces now are, on the contrary, far too strong to be beaten by “indirect influence.”

But the work of the women convinced both parties that politics are certainly within “woman’s sphere”—and at the next election both parties had Women Suffrage on their party platforms.

We are sad to record the passing of a higher life of Mrs. Macintosh, the President of the Women’s Enfranchisement Association of the Union of South Africa, one of our colleagues in the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union. Her husband and some quite young children and our sympathy go out to them and to the Woman Suffragists of South Africa in their affliction. Your Secretary has written a letter to them expressing the good fellowship and sympathy of the members of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, and your Executive.

Miss Newcomb of the B. D. W. S. U., writes for the names of any Canadian Suffragists at present staying or living in England. There must be several at this time when so many of our comrades are over there to be near their loved ones, and if anyone will forward to me the names of friends across the water, I shall be glad to give them an introduction to those who think with them and whose companionship should prove very welcome.

While on, or near, the subject of the war, may I say that, through my intimate connection with the work of women in Europe, I have been able to help some of our Canadian Suffragists in their hunt for some loved one, “reported missing.” There are many agencies in England, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, etc., who are devoting vast energies and much money to tracing refugees, prisoners and other missing ones, and if any one should be in trouble, true this cause shall be only too glad to put them in touch with the proper agency.

The working up of such a petition would fall within the sphere of the Ontario (Provincial) Equal Franchise Association, rather than that of the National Union, so your Secretary has forwarded the resolution to their Executive. It is well to recall that the C. S. A. did not publish statements of many years ago, without any success, but, of course, the whole public opinion on the Suffrage question has changed since then, and it might be worth doing again; and if the Ontario Government were to give their word, as did the Governments of the Western Provinces, that the signing of such a petition by a definite number of people, or by a definite percentage of the voters, would bring in a Government Bill at the earliest opportunity. It might even be well to approach the opposition and get them to give some such guarantee, to be redeemed directly they got into power, as was done with such success in Manitoba, where women worked with all the forces at their command to get Liberals elected—we know this was without success; but the forces now are, on the contrary, far too strong to be beaten by “indirect influence.”

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War and Reforms.

Suffering, the ruined homes, the loss of the ill, and not only finally, but now is society pessimistic indeed not to see that give to times of peace, the first place as productive of great reforms, but history proves only by paying the price in tears and in blood.

A superficial view of the situation would give to times of peace, the first place as productive of great reforms, but history proves the contrary to be the case. Since the war, temperance legislation has made greater progress in Canada than in the twenty years preceding it. War brings out all the active and latent patriotism in a nation, and true patriotism must ensure the people their rights, and protection in the exercise of those rights; hence the splendid record of the year 1916.

With a unanimous response and a strong committee was formed with representatives from a large number of women's societies, who will subdivide the educational work among their societies, thus enlisting the services of thousands of women. Many organizations of men and women, which are not suffrage societies are co-operating in this work, and a list of popular speakers has been secured. In addition to the educational work continually carried on by means of local addresses, debates, lectures and the distribution of literature, the ministers of the churches are asked to give special sermons on the question. Thousands of petitions are in circulation and the only neglected districts are being canvassed as well as the more thickly populated counties of Old Ontario, and never again will any politicians dare to say that only the city women want the franchise. In order to avoid multiplication of organizations, the work is carried on principally through existing societies and this plan is much appreciated by busy women. Counties and cities are asked to:

Ontario Franchise Campaign

Many Men and Women Confess a Complete Change of Heart on the Equal Franchise Question.

Ontario Has Caught the Spirit of the Day and Is Getting in Line With Progress.

By Elizabeth Becker

THOUGH the dark cloud of war still hangs heavy over the world, one must be pessimistic indeed not to see that "somehow good must be the final goal of ill," and not only finally, but now is society beginning to reap the harvest produced by this terrible harrowing of the world. The suffering, the ruined homes, the loss of the

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Saskatchewan Women Will Vote on December 11th.

Saskatchewan women will be the first to use the ballot. On December 11th, a vote will be taken on the Government Dispensary System, which has been in use since the Legislature abolished the hotel bars. Women have been disfranchised on the same basis as men, and have been asked to register in time to be placed on the voters' lists for December 11th. In several districts more women than men had registered, and it has been felt that their use of the ballot will utterly abolish the liquor traffic in the Province.

Ontario Lining Up.

Old Ontario has lined up with the progressive provinces on the liquor question, but seems to be afraid that she may spoil her people by granting them so many liberties at once, and so the women who have done so much to sow the seed in the fruitful soil of the prairie provinces, will have their hands bound while the Western women are free to work for improved conditions for all.

Counties and cities are asked to:

NOW IS THE TIME.

At the outbreak of the war, all good suffragists plunged into patriotic work with increased fervour, for they had been doing patriotic work in times of peace. Many of them gave up all suffrage work for a time. Nearly all gave it second place, but now that the patriotic war work is well established, following a well planned routine, with many women at work who never before worked for anything but their own homes, they feel that now is the time to concentrate on suffrage work. Then too, many men and women, formerly indifferent and many formerly opposed, realize at last that with the depletion of the ranks of our young men, the great body of women than whom there is no one more vitally interested in the welfare of the community and the nation, is too great a force to longer excluded from active participation in the great problems to be dealt with during the war, and in the reconstruction period to follow. It is no compliment to the wise men of the East that they had had to have these facts demonstrated by the wiser men of the West, who realized early in the war that they must add to their power the wisdom of the women.

A New Weapon of Defense.

Patriotic women feel that the ballot is a weapon of national defence which they should be empowered to lay at the root of the tree of national evil, instead of merely lopping off the branches. Feeling that the time was ripe for a forward step, the Ontario Equal Franchise Association issued a call to its affiliated societies, and to other suffrage societies, to undertake a campaign. The summons met with a unanimous response and a strong committee was formed with representatives from a large number of women's societies, who will subdivide the educational work among their societies, thus enlisting the services of thousands of women. Many organizations of men and women, which are not suffrage societies are co-operating in this work, and a list of popular speakers has been secured. In addition to the educational work continually carried on by means of local addresses, debates, lectures and the distribution of literature, the ministers of the churches are asked to give special sermons on the question. Thousands of petitions are in circulation and the only neglected districts are being canvassed as well as the more thickly populated counties of Old Ontario, and never again will any politicians dare to say that only the city women want the franchise. In order to avoid multiplication of organizations, the work is carried on principally through existing societies and this plan is much appreciated by busy women. Counties and cities are asked to:

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