



Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric

By Carol Mattingly

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In this richly illustrated study, Carol Mattingly examines the rhetoric of the temperance movement, the largest political movement of women in the nineteenth century.

Tapping previously unexplored sources, Mattingly uncovers new voices and different perspectives, thus greatly expanding our knowledge of temperance women in particular and of nineteenth-century women and women's rhetoric in general. Her scope is broad: she looks at temperance fiction, newspaper accounts of meetings and speeches, autobiographical and biographical accounts, and minutes of national and state temperance meetings.

The women's temperance movement was first and foremost an effort by women to improve the lives of women. Twentieth-century scholars often dismiss temperance women as conservative and complicit in their own oppression. As Mattingly demonstrate, however, the opposite is true: temperance women made purposeful rhetorical choices in their efforts to improve the lives of women. They carefully considered the life circumstances of all women and sought to raise consciousness and achieve reform in an effective manner. And they were effective, gaining legal, political, and social improvements for women as they became the most influential and most successful group of women reformers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Mattingly finds that, for a large number of women who were unhappy with their status in the nineteenth century, the temperance movement provided an avenue for change. Examining the choices these women made in their efforts to better conditions for women, Mattingly looks first at oral rhetoric among nineteenth-century temperance women. She examines the early temperance speeches of activists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who later chose to concentrate their effort in the suffrage organizations, and those who continued to work on behalf of women primarily through the temperance topic, such as Amelia Bloomer and Clarina Howard Nichols. Finally, she examines the rhetoric of members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union—the largest organization of women in the nineteenth century.

Mattingly then turns to the rhetoric from perspectives outside those of mainstream, middle-class women. She focuses on racial conflicts and alliances as an increasingly diverse membership threatened the unity and harmony in the WCTU. Her primary source for this discussion is contemporary newspaper accounts of temperance speeches.

Fiction by temperance writers also proves to be a fertile source for Mattingly's investigation. Insisting on greater equality between men and women, this fiction candidly portrayed injustice toward women. Through the temperance issue, Mattingly discovers, women could broach otherwise clandestine topics openly. She also finds that many of the concerns of nineteenth-century temperance women are remarkably similar to concerns of today's feminists.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

With rare common sense and a good ear for the written and spoken word, Mattingly (English, Louisiana State Univ.) shows how temperance women built the 19th century's largest reform movement and women's organization, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, by presenting their arguments and themselves in familiar language and dress. By lobbying for liquor control laws and other reforms, women extended the "women's sphere" into politics and mobilized public support for women's causes, including divorce reform and suffrage. The temperance women used fiction, platform speeches, and public display in their ethical appeals and drew on their church backgrounds to speak and write in ways that won support across regional, racial, and even class lines, though accusations of nativism and racism sometimes embarrassed the movement. Mattingly rediscovers the rhetorical roots of temperance reform and offers new readings of women's literature and public performance. Highly recommended for academic and large public libraries.—Randall M. Miller, St. Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia
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Review

“The speeches made by women who participated in the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) provide a vivid picture of how nineteenth-century women used rhetoric to present their dissatisfaction with the law and the lack of rights granted to women at the time.... A valuable contribution to the discipline of [American] literature, in particular to rhetoric and women’s studies, the volume is informative and highly recommended for undergraduates and graduate students. An excellent addition to scholarly literature.”—*Choice*

“With rare common sense and a good ear for the written and spoken word, Mattingly shows how temperance women built the nineteenth century’s largest reform movement and women’s organization, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, by presenting their arguments and themselves in familiar language and dress.... Mattingly rediscovers the rhetorical roots of temperance reform and offers new readings of women’s literature and public performance. Highly recommended.”—*Library Journal*

"I am pleased to have this excellent book-length exploration of the rhetoric of nineteenth-century temperance women to rely on. Given the continuing dearth of such in-depth studies of women's rhetoric, I am confident that other scholars will greet this work as enthusiastically as I have. Particularly noteworthy about the WCTU activists whom Professor Mattingly chronicles is their attention not only to defending women's right to speak but also to providing practical instruction in how to do so."—**Patricia Bizzell**, College of the Holy Cross

"This study contributes new voices and perspectives to our histories of women. Mattingly shows that the women of the temperance movement were smart, politically savvy, and reasonable, considering their conditions at the time. Most significantly, she shows how they used their intelligence to solve their problems

through social action, using a network of education and organization of an astonishing magnitude."—**Catherine Hobbs**, University of Oklahoma

About the Author

Carol Mattingly is director of the Writing Center at the University of Louisville.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Russell Bussey:

Nowadays reading books become more and more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. Associate programs you got of course the knowledge the actual information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want send more knowledge just go with knowledge books but if you want really feel happy read one having theme for entertaining such as comic or novel. The Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric is kind of reserve which is giving the reader erratic experience.

Benjamin Aldridge:

Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric can be one of your nice books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric but doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource data that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can easily drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial imagining.

Justin Oliver:

Are you kind of busy person, only have 10 or perhaps 15 minute in your day time to upgrading your mind talent or thinking skill also analytical thinking? Then you are experiencing problem with the book when compared with can satisfy your limited time to read it because all of this time you only find reserve that need more time to be study. Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric can be your answer as it can be read by a person who have those short free time problems.

Mildred Shaw:

What is your hobby? Have you heard that question when you got students? We believe that that concern was given by teacher to the students. Many kinds of hobby, Every individual has different hobby. So you know that little person similar to reading or as reading become their hobby. You have to know that reading is very important along with book as to be the issue. Book is important thing to add you knowledge, except your

teacher or lecturer. You find good news or update concerning something by book. Different categories of books that can you choose to adopt be your object. One of them is actually Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric.

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