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Compare the Two Speeches

Below are the two main written versions of Sojourner's speech. The original, on the left, was delivered by Sojourner and transcribed by Marius Robinson, a journalist, who was in the audience at the Woman's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio on May 29, 1851. And Gage's version is on the right, written 12 years later and published in 1863. The full text of each version follows the synopsis below so you can see the differences line by line. I have highlighted overt similarities between the two versions. While Frances Gage changed most of Sojourner's words and falsely attributed a southern slave dialect to Sojourner's 1863 version, it is clear the origin of Gage's speech comes from Sojourner's original 1851 speech. It is interesting to note that Marius Robinson and Sojourner Truth were good friends and it was documented that they went over his transcription of her speech before he published it. One could infer from this pre printing meeting, that even if he did not capture every word she said, that she must have blessed his transcription and given permission to print her speech in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle*. [Library of Congress Link to Sojourner's Speech >](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1851-06-21/ed-1/seq-4/) (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1851-06-21/ed-1/seq-4/>)

**Marius Robinson's transcription:
Published June 21, 1851 in the
The Anti-Slavery Bugle**

The oldest account of Truth's speech that provides more than a passing mention of it was published by Marius Robinson on June 21, 1851 in the Salem *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, a few weeks after

**Frances Gage's innacurate version:
23 April 1863 issue of the
New York Independent**

The most common yet **inaccurate** rendering of Truth's speech—the one that introduced the famous phrase "Ar'n't I a woman?"—was constructed by Frances Dana Gage, nearly

the speech was given. This version was not the first published account of the Akron speech, but rather the first attempt to **convey what Sojourner Truth said in full.**

1. May I say a few words? I want to say a few words about this matter.
2. I am a woman's rights.
3. (a) I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man.
4. (b) I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that?
5. I have heard much about the sexes being equal; I can carry as much as any man, and can (c) eat as much too, if (d) I can get it.
6. I am as strong as any man that is now.
7. As for intellect, all I can say is, (e) if women have a pint and man a quart - why can't she have her little pint full?
8. You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much, for we cant take more than our pint'll hold.
9. The poor men seem to be all in confusion, and dont know what to do.
10. Why children, if you have woman's rights, give it to her and you will feel better.
11. You will have your own rights, and they wont be so much trouble.
12. I cant read, but I can hear.

twelve years after the speech was given by Sojourner at the Akron conference. Gage's version first appeared in the New York *Independent* on April 23, 1863.

1. Well, chillen, whar dar's so much racket dar must be som'ting out o'kilter.
2. I tink dat, 'twixt de niggers of de South and de women at de Norf, all a-talking 'bout rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon.
3. But what's all this here talking 'bout?
4. Dat man ober dar say dat women needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have de best place eberywhar.
5. Nobody eber helps me into carriages or ober mud-puddles, or gives me any best place.
6. -And ar'n't I a woman?
7. Look at me.
8. (a) Look at my arm.
9. (b) I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me.
10. -and ar'n't I a woman?
11. I could work as much as (c) eat as much as a man, (when (d) I could get it,) and bear de lash as well
12. -and ar'n't I a woman?
13. I have borne thirteen chillen, and seen 'em mos' all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard

13. I have heard the bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin.
14. Well if woman upset the world, do give her a chance to set it right side up again.
15. The Lady has spoken about Jesus, how he never spurned woman from him, and she was right.
16. When Lazarus died, Mary and Martha came to him with faith and love and besought him to raise their brother.
17. And Jesus wept - and Lazarus came forth.
18. And how came Jesus into the world?
19. (f) Through God who created him and woman who bore him.
20. (g) Man, where is your part?
21. But the women are coming up blessed be God and a few of the men are coming up with them.
22. But man is in a tight place, the poor slave is on him, woman is coming on him, and he is surely between-a hawk and a buzzard.
14. -and ar'n't I a woman?
15. Den dey talks 'bout dis ting in de head.
16. What dis dey call it?
17. Dat's it, honey.
18. What's dat got to do with women's rights or niggers' rights?
19. (e) If my cup won't hold but a pint and yourn holds a quart, wouldn't ye be mean not to let me have a little half-measure full?
20. Den dat little man in black dar, he say women can't have as much rights as man 'cause Christ wa'n't a woman.
21. Whar did your Christ come from?
22. Whar did your Christ come from?
23. (f) From God and a woman.
24. (g) Man had nothing to do with him.
25. If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn de world upside down all her one lone, all dese togeder ought to be able to turn it back and git it right side up again, and now dey is asking to, de men better let 'em.
26. Bleegeed to ye for hearin' on me, and now ole Sojourner ha'n't got nothin' more to say.

Hear The Original Speech

Click on the red arrow below to hear the original transcription of Sojourner's 1851 speech.

Listen to the original Marius Robinson 1851 historically correct transcription of Truth's "Ain't I a woman" speech.



**THE SOJOURNER TRUTH
PROJECT**

"I am a woman's rights"

~Sojourner Truth

HEAR THE READINGS (/THE-READINGS)

The Sojourner Truth Project is brought to you by **Leslie Podell**. The project was born out of a translation/transcription assignment for her "Documents as Objects" class at California College of the Arts.

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This is an open source dynamic document. Please feel free to contact me to discuss ideas/concepts that I may have overlooked or if you feel something needs better wording etc. I welcome all comments and constructive criticism. Thank you so much for visiting The Sojourner Truth Project site. [please connect with us \(/take-action/\)](#).

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