

**UCLA**

**UCLA Historical Journal**

**Title**

Constrained Yet Not Forgotten: Continuities in Feminist Intellectual History, 1945-1972

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8v07m86r>

**Journal**

UCLA Historical Journal, 16(0)

**Author**

Tarrant, Shira

**Publication Date**

1996

**Copyright Information**

Copyright 1996 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

# Constrained Yet Not Forgotten: Continuities in Feminist Intellectual History, 1945–1972

SHIRA TARRANT

**A**CADEMIC ACCOUNTS of recent women's political history and feminist intellectual developments tend to focus either on the turn-of-the-century suffrage movement or on Second Wave feminism; activities between these two eras, in contrast, are somewhat obscured. The historical myth is that after winning the right to vote, American feminists of the 1920s and 1930s retreated from the public limelight to enjoy the comforts of domesticity. After brief forays into the factory to support the 1940s war effort, the myth continues, Rosie and her companions quietly returned home again, voicing their anger and dissatisfaction with women's condition only when the social and political upheavals of the late 1960s provided an appropriate outlet. But feminist politics never entirely disappeared. Emerging from this myth of feminist inactivity is therefore a curious and inviting gap regarding women's intellectual efforts toward sociopolitical change during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

During World War II women entered the labor force in record numbers and many wished to remain there after the war ended. This change on the homefront generated debate about women's proper role in society. Domestic ideology, a revision of the nineteenth century "cult of domesticity," glorified the homemaker, arguing that woman's true source of happiness resided in the home and that working women endangered children's well-being and threatened family cohesion. In 1947, psychiatrist Marynia Farnham and her partner, Ferdinand Lundberg, attacked feminism as the source of America's social problems. The independent woman was an oxymoron, they claimed: Women were created to be biologically and psychologically dependent on men.<sup>2</sup>

Margaret Mead, Viola Klein, and Simone de Beauvoir, preeminent scholars

of the postwar period, fought against these currents of domestic ideology in an effort to maintain a feminist tradition in intellectual life. Not only do Mead, Klein, and de Beauvoir represent theoretical progress which transcends national boundaries, but they reflect cross-disciplinary developments, as their work emerges from the fields of anthropology, sociology and philosophy, respectively. The work of each conveys a feminist interest with the social features of gender, and the relation between dominant ideology and the political status of women.

These three seemingly disparate minds are united by their critical attention to the social construction of gender, particularly questions regarding the in-nateness of sex roles (Mead), the sociology and the social construction of knowledge and epistemological dualism (Klein), and women as Other (de Beauvoir). Highlighted is the ambivalence, or interlinking tension, between theoretical issues of women as an essential being versus "woman" as a socially constructed category. While each scholar acknowledges the physical reality of the female body *qua* female, far greater emphasis is placed on the social forces which would deem this body inferior. Compared with modern standoffs between Anglo-American "individualist" feminism and French "relational" theory (or related stalemates in the equality/difference debate), there is no distinct split in theoretical allegiance down national lines found in the work of Mead, Klein, and de Beauvoir.

Understanding the political challenges and theoretical struggles facing women of the mid-twentieth century within the context of feminist intellectual history brings to light the ways in which the issues of the past are strikingly connected to those of today. Attention to the feminist past highlights historical antecedents to our present concern with the social construction of gender, and may perhaps even suggest ways out of more contemporary dilemmas concerning equality and difference, essentialism versus constructionism, and matters of epistemological dualism.

### **Post-World War II Political Climate and Ideological Trends**

Developments in the social sciences after the Second World War posed important questions regarding the character of human behavior and the relationship between freedom and the state. Academic works which questioned the links between women's political status and dominant concepts of womanhood also fall within this period of intellectual history. While Mead, Klein, and de Beauvoir labored in their ivory towers (or South Pacific islands), the quiet rumbling of cultural, legal, and political battles could be heard in America, Britain, and France. Ideological conflicts spilled over into the political realm just as certainly as political changes wore away at strongly held notions about the female character.

Feminism of the mid-twentieth century certainly lacked the vigor and organizational character of either the suffrage movement of the past, or the Second Wave of the future. Yet after passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, American women never entirely stopped organizing and theorizing, nor did feminists in England and France disappear during this period of time: modern feminism did not spring out of the abyss. It seems highly improbable that a powerful social and political crusade such as the women's movement could suddenly wither away, only to reappear just as quickly, and seemingly out of nowhere, around 1970.<sup>3</sup> There is, to the contrary, distinct evidence of women's political activity during the post-World War II period. To a large degree, legislative issues of the postwar years hinged upon the following concepts and tensions: Equality equals danger (i.e., removing special labor protections harms women); special protection equals danger (i.e., gender specific labor laws keep women in a secondary status and in "need" of special protection); and motherhood versus wage labor, or the conflicts between women's role as nurturer and worker.

In the United States, the National Woman's Party (NWP), the League of Women Voters, and efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) continued the fight for women's rights throughout feminism's putative dry spell. The NWP was, in fact, instrumental in defining the boundaries of American feminism during these decades.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the NWP advocated passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, first introduced into Congress late in 1923. The ERA initiated a long and bitter debate between those who argued for equal opportunity, compensation, and recognition for women's work efforts, and those who sought to protect woman's difference—essentially, her capacity for maternity.

Supporters of protective legislation such as maximum hours or minimum wage worried that without such legal restrictions, women were easily exploited and their health endangered. The American Federation of Labor (AFL), for example, supported legislation limiting women's work hours, since these laws "protected women's needs," but objected to the proposed equal pay law of 1945 because it reduced women to wards of the state and perpetuated the assumption that women "need" special protection.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, the AFL argued that while women were *too strong* to need equal pay legislation, they were at the same time *too weak* to work equal work weeks. One aspect of Margaret Mead's argument—that women cannot be at once too weak *and* too strong—indirectly reflected sex-based protective labor legislation disputes such as these.

Feminists continued this argument during the 1950s and 1960s. Supporters of the ERA, such as the National Woman's Party, maintained that special legal protections and exemptions for women effectively nullified sexual equality and

perpetuated discrimination. Members of the Women's Bureau and other ERA opponents argued that passage of the amendment would threaten the legal benefits that women had so painstakingly acquired over the years. They held fast the notion that nurturing families and society took precedence over women taking part in the opportunities of the marketplace. Labor unions vigorously continued to oppose passage of the ERA, claiming that women needed protective labor legislation—not equal rights—to gain the protection that men won by collective bargaining.<sup>6</sup> Overall, the ERA was shrouded by nuance, ambivalence, and tension, factors which contributed to its eventual defeat.

In Britain, the postwar nation was notably marked by the devastation of war and immediate economic concerns. The move from "warfare" to welfare state policy addressed the citizens' needs for economic well-being, but in so doing masked uncertainty and conflict over women's proper place. Health care policy, for example, minimized women's unequal position by providing maternity coverage and emphasizing careful spacing of children. At the same time, these policies linked women to parenting, placed sexuality within the locus of the family, and reinforced female behavioral prescriptions. The welfare state in Britain after the war was intended to "ease the lot of the breadwinner" and to improve the economic condition of his family. As a result, it left unexamined the predominating ideologies regarding women and domestic affairs. British welfare policies supported male-headed households not out of a conspiracy but simply because those in power did not think of doing things differently.<sup>7</sup> Even so, organizations such as the Six Point Group and the Open Door Council maintained their efforts to promote women's position throughout the postwar period by focusing on equal pay issues and other economic concerns.

After Frenchwomen gained political enfranchisement in 1944, they tended to participate within already established political parties and pressure groups, in voluntary associations, social work, and other traditionally "female" ventures. The concerns of more radical feminist activists were subsumed under the umbrella of socialist and other Left political groups until after the student uprisings of 1968.<sup>8</sup> With the Catholic church wielding strong authority over the French, the political Right feared that women's vote, along with increasing numbers of women in the workforce, threatened to destroy the family and traditional values. Embedded within France's postwar welfare state programs were conservative ideas about family, population, and reproduction. Pronatalist policies (contraception was illegal in France until 1967, and abortion until 1975) combined with only recently gained suffrage rights meant that French women still faced considerable pressure to maintain their traditional roles.

In the United States during the 1950s increasing numbers of women were

completing university degrees. Upon receiving these diplomas, however, they faced limited opportunities on the job market and great encouragement to marry. More women married right after World War II than ever before, and marriage and homemaking became requisite tasks in fulfilling social expectations of the 1950s. A 1962 Gallup poll revealed that women were committed to and fulfilled by “living through their husbands and children.” Yet most women also wanted their daughters “to have more education and marry later,” indicating the internal conflict produced by the pressures of domestic ideology, the political confines of the postwar period, and the desire for something more.<sup>9</sup> Post-World War II American ideology, Joanne Meyerowitz argues, was not in the least monolithic but “rife with contradictions, ambivalence, and competing voices.” Popular literature expressing post-World War II mass culture advocated “both the domestic and the nondomestic, sometimes in the same sentence.”<sup>10</sup> Although Meyerowitz’s research focuses on American ideological trends, her attention to cultural tensions is a theme that may be extended beyond national borders. In an important sense, Meyerowitz makes an argument similar to the sub-thesis here: The “problem” of the postwar era (whether in Britain, France, or the United States) was not merely that feminist politics was muffled, but that intellectual dissent from domestic ideology during this time has been overlooked, ignored, or suppressed.

Although quite a number of women were dissatisfied with their social and political condition, dissenting voices were unable to turn the tide of the postwar years. Even in the face of expanding educational opportunities for women and the *possibilities* of professional achievement, McCarthyism and Cold War pressures in America, economic burdens in Britain, and religious demands in France produced an atmosphere of conformity. An extensive and successful postwar feminism was still out of the question, and in spite of continuing intellectual debate regarding concepts of womanhood, postwar domestic ideology maintained a strong hold over the general public. The period from 1945 to the mid-1960s was particularly resistant to a women’s movement seeking further gains. With security and containment as the common theme, American Cold War and the domestic revival reinforced each other and reached out to the rest of the West. As historian Elaine Tyler May has pointed out, pervasive Cold War tendencies encouraged private solutions to social problems even though postwar domesticity never fully delivered on this promise.<sup>11</sup> Instead, the feminine mystique, combined with the rising popularity of Freudian psychology, defined feminist protest as a sign of neurosis and emotional instability.

Most feminist-minded thinkers agreed that discrimination against women based on crude ideas of masculine superiority must be eliminated. There was

general ambivalence, however, as to precisely what women's role *should* be. Postwar economic reconstruction, pronatalist welfare state policies, and domestic ideology combined to form a climate which certainly did not encourage a more overt political activism. Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor have noted that feminism managed to survive the doldrums mainly because it endured as an elite-sustained, academic enterprise.

Alongside the somewhat limited (but nevertheless evident) postwar endeavors to enact legal change in the status of women came scholarly contributions exploring women's position in her family, her workplace, in her body *politic*, and the ways in which the category "woman" was constructed and understood.

### **Margaret Mead: Socialization and Sex Role Ideology**

Never overtly claiming to be a feminist, Margaret Mead nevertheless made surreptitious mention of the connections between her work and the feminist movement, writing that clearing away historical and traditional misconceptions about gender difference "frees the mind from using the sort of arguments that have been invoked for and against the feminist movement."<sup>12</sup> Although Mead's work has been clouded by accusations of inadequate methodological rigor, it has been very influential in regards to conceptions of gender, culture, and politics.<sup>13</sup>

The publication of *Sex and Temperament* (1935) and *Male and Female* (1950) produced strong empirical evidence sharply contradicting cultural justifications for women's subordination. In *Sex and Temperament*, a study of gender roles in three dramatically differing South Pacific cultures, Mead concluded that attitudes and personality traits are socially produced. What are "male" roles in one culture may be "female" roles in the next; in a third culture, temperament and sex roles may be blended or less distinct. *Male and Female* continued Mead's developing concern with the relationships between culture, gender, and human potential. In a century of social science, where great weight has been attached to empirical evidence and cross cultural comparisons, Margaret Mead often helped to provide both, and no one did more to persuade more skeptical minds that what were commonly considered women's "natural roles" were more properly viewed as culturally constructed behaviors and expectations.

It was Mead, in fact, who was invited to write the Introduction to the 1963 *Report on the President's Commission on the Status of Women*. The Commission, established by John F. Kennedy in 1961, was formed to study education, home and community services, private employment (particularly jobs under federal contract), employment in the federal government, labor standards, and federal

social insurance and taxes as they affected women. The President's Commission also explored in depth the legal treatment of women with respect to civil and political rights.<sup>14</sup> In her introductory essay, Mead wrote that both legal and social changes were necessary to expand women's participatory membership in American democracy. When compared with the relatively few high-ranking positions held by women in government and private industry, Mead observed that the great gains made by twentieth-century women in education, health, and literacy provided "a puzzling contrast between our claim to freedom of opportunity and our actual accomplishments."<sup>15</sup>

By the time the Commission's Report was completed, Lyndon B. Johnson had made fifty-six presidential appointments of women to responsible government posts. Mead, in her constant vigilance toward culture-bound ideology, cautioned that the Commission could only lay the foundation for removing legal restrictions to women's opportunity. Men and women "are freer to act because of the recommendations that have been made [by the Commission's Report], but the document itself is permissive, not coercive" wrote Mead. "If women regard these greater possibilities as essentially threatening to their sense of themselves as persons, they will be unable to take advantage of the legal support given to their greater freedom."<sup>16</sup>

By her attention to internalized coercion and ideological aspects of subordination, Margaret Mead clearly helped to change the terms upon which the debates about womanhood and legal constraint were based. In the Commission's Report she wrote that to the extent that men achieve a sense of masculinity through situations in which "women know less, earn less, achieve less, and win less recognition than they do, efforts to put the recommendations of the Commission into practice will be effectively, even though often unconsciously, sabotaged."<sup>17</sup>

The clear refrain heard throughout Mead's work was her observation that some form of sex-patterned behavior is found within each and every society. In contrast with the widespread appeal of unmovable Freudian "law," however, Mead was able to demonstrate that distinctions in behavior and divisions in labor according to sex were culturally specific customs. "We know of no culture that has said, articulately, that there is no difference between men and women" beyond the way the sexes biologically create the next generation.<sup>18</sup> All cultures have institutionalized the roles of men and women, but not necessarily in terms of opposition, or dominance and submission. The notion that behavior of the sexes is forever and unalterably innate, wrote Mead, must "be swept from the mind like tattered autumn leaves from the garden-paths before it is possible to



think clearly at all."<sup>19</sup> Human nature is almost unbelievably malleable and readily responsive to cultural conditions. Gender roles, Mead argued, are the product of particular cultural conventions, not examples of some essential ideal of feminine selflessness and masculine competitiveness. Although characteristic differences within a sex are enormous, attributes are synthetically assigned as masculine or feminine. "Every known society creates and maintains artificial occupational divisions and personality expectations for each sex that limit the humanity of the other sex."<sup>20</sup>

While acknowledging the need to take maternity into account in explaining sex roles and cultural patterns, Mead scorned biological determinism, a popular justification for female passivity and legal paternalism. As an example, drawing from psychoanalytic theory and the work of analysts such as Karen Horney, Mead suggested that women envied the privilege and power that societies granted to men, emphasizing that "power envy" ought not to be confused with penis envy. Counterbalancing any envy that girls *might* have was "the envy little boys often exhibited for the remarkable reproductive organs of the female sex." Primitive societies in which male ceremony imitated pregnancy and child birth clearly displayed examples of "womb envy."

Mead remained convinced that temperament was partly due to genetics, but for many years she carefully avoided direct discussion about the relation between individual differences and genetic endowment. Mead was concerned that any attempt to decipher this issue would lead to distortions of her work by others who evoked the crude dichotomy of nature versus nurture, and by those who manipulated biological theories of difference to justify and reinforce social inequalities. Mead argued passionately that "as long as people tend to move so quickly from concepts of diversity to concepts of superiority" questions of genetics and difference "cannot and should not be studied."<sup>21</sup>

Questions of genetics aside, how is it, Mead asked, that while "some peoples think of women as too weak to work out of doors, others regard women as the appropriate bearers of burdens, because their heads are stronger than men's"?<sup>22</sup> If there is any law regarding men and women, it must be that much behavior distinguished by the sexes, and even some physical characteristics, is produced by social custom. This maxim of Mead's delivered quite a blow to a well-entrenched belief system based upon domestic ideology and popularized Freudian explanations of the "female character." The sting and vitality of Mead's argument emerged from her focus on the cultural dynamics which contribute to the social construction of gender: "Whereas it would be futile to protest against unalterable laws (unjust though they may be), it was reasonable and advisable to protest against unjust customs."<sup>23</sup>

Mead's focus on dichotomized and culturally constructed gender roles not only reflected political disputes of her day, but directly anticipated the work of subsequent feminist theorists. Kate Millett later argued in *Sexual Politics* (1970) that profound sociopolitical change occurs only by re-examining traits such as strength and weakness, violence versus passivity and intellect versus compassion—traits typically categorized respectively as masculine and feminine.<sup>24</sup>

Earlier, significant attention to Mead appeared in Betty Friedan's 1963 critique, *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan was well aware of Mead's work—and quite offended by it. Friedan's interpretation of Mead has certain transitive qualities: via *The Feminine Mystique*, Mead comes to resemble a monster-like Freudian anti-feminist. Although Mead ostensibly rejected the old adage “biology is destiny,” stated Friedan, she conducted her anthropology through a Freudian lens. In *Male and Female*, argued Friedan, Mead's “truly revolutionary vision of women” was subtly transformed into a celebration of woman in the female role—defined by her sexual biological function.

At times [Mead] seems to lose her own anthropological awareness of the malleability of human personality, and to look at anthropological data from the Freudian point of view — sexual biology determines all, anatomy is destiny. At times she seems to be arguing in functional terms, that while woman's potential is as great and various as the unlimited human potential, it is better to preserve the sexual biological limitations established by nature. At times she says both things in the same page . . .<sup>25</sup>

According to Friedan, Mead's influence had been paradoxical. While postwar ideas of womanhood might have taken from Mead her visions of the “infinite variety of sexual patterns” and “women's great untested human potential,” glorification of the female sexual function instead became a cornerstone of the feminine mystique.<sup>26</sup>

The product of Mead's lifetime dedication to her research is visible when we look closely at its influence upon Second Wave feminist ideas about women's cultural and political subordination, yet it tends to be implicit. While Margaret Mead is considered quite influential in the field of anthropology, her explicitly feminist contributions tend to go unrecognized by more recent theorists. Mead's thesis rejecting innate sex roles, for example, is no longer a startling revelation. A more compelling point is that while concepts of innate versus learned behavior and the problems of gendered dualism were vigorously discussed during the 1970s, it was also quite common for theorists to overlook (or misinterpret) Mead's contributions to our knowledge about the cultural or social construction of gen-

der roles and the relation between sex divisions and women's political status—observations Mead made well before the Second Wave of feminism emerged. Given Friedan's interpretation (and the popularity of *The Feminine Mystique*), however, Mead had less of an explicit influence on Second Wave feminist theory than she might otherwise have had.

### **Viola Klein: How We Know What We Know About Women**

In Britain, Mead's contemporary, Viola Klein (?-1973) was beginning to investigate the structure and sociology of knowledge. By approaching her discipline with attention to what she termed "the back and forth relation between scientific knowledge and social change," Klein was able to focus on ideologically constructed notions about women while remaining in the mainstream of sociology. Klein pointed out that theories of femininity are as varied as the scholars who devise them. Descriptions of the feminine character and a list of her traits, wrote Klein, "could be extended almost indefinitely, in proportion to the number of authors considered." What is considered essential to any concept of womanhood "depends to a large extent on personal bias and valuations, and on the social-historical vantage-point of the observer."<sup>27</sup> Quite simply, Viola Klein questioned how social scientists could extricate the "truth" from the social environment since social science theories reflected the ideologies of one's generation and "the idiosyncrasies of their time."<sup>28</sup>

Klein's survey of various accounts of womanhood by intellectuals such as Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud, and Alfred Adler was framed by her belief that theories of femininity form the basis of debate over "practical activities in the most various departments of social life," from questions of etiquette to problems of employment policy, political campaigning, and the advertising and selling of ideas.<sup>29</sup> As far back as Aristotle, wrote Klein, theories of womanhood had been constructed in dualist opposition to the meaning of manhood. Although epistemological dualism is an "effective principle for reducing chaos to a system," deducing a bi-polarity of human beings destroys not only chaos but variety.<sup>30</sup> To mistake "categories of thought for norms governing reality means forcing life into a straight-jacket. It is as impossible to do justice to human existence by applying to it epistemological criteria as it is to judge organic life by the application of geometrical norms."<sup>31</sup>

Klein's argument against epistemological dualism was not, of course, a plea for androgyny. Focusing on the reciprocal relation between scientific knowledge and social change instead enabled Klein to make the point that "the understandings people carry around in their heads" and their notions about ideal

social arrangements are interdependent concepts. Klein therefore asked how academic disciplines could be objective and fair to women given the fact that knowledge is related to perception, and perceptions about women have not tended to be very fair.

To resolve the problem of gender-biased presuppositions, Klein sought first to isolate physiological influences on sex difference by excluding sex-related traits which could be attributed to social function, historic tradition, and prevailing ideology.<sup>32</sup> Klein thought that only after accounting for these cultural patterns could one make a well-founded assessment of the “elusive feminine character.” Klein’s approach to “the woman question” also drew from the understanding that individuals may participate in two different cultural systems, “one of which is, by prevailing standards, regarded as superior to the other.”<sup>33</sup> From this perspective, personality traits of women might be compared with other groups such as immigrants, Jews, conquered people, “American Negroes” and “intellectuals who break away from the social groups and classes in which they originated without completely being free from their allegiance to them.”<sup>34</sup> Klein observed, however, that the issue is somewhat obscured in the case of women since over “the course of centuries women have developed many substitute gratifications which they consider privileges and to which they cling emotionally more than to equal rights.”<sup>35</sup>

Klein’s scholarly efforts were not merely confined to questions regarding the philosophy of knowledge and science. *Women’s Two Roles* (1956), co-authored with Alva Myrdal, *Working Wives* (1960), and *Employing Married Women* (1963), directly addressed issues of employment and opportunities for women primarily in terms of dominant ideological trends, but also based on survey data. Klein’s study revealed that as of 1960 many of the generalizations made about wage-earning women were based upon sentiment, not fact. Determining more clearly why married women entered the labor force, and how these women carried out their dual roles of part-time employment and full-time motherhood was important not only in terms of understanding society, but also because of the implications for practical aspects of various public policy decisions.

During World War II, and again during Britain’s economic crisis of 1947, increasing numbers of women left home to work. By 1957 fully one-third of British wives were gainfully employed.<sup>36</sup> There was, however, no trace of feminist impetus behind this employment rate. According to Klein’s survey respondents, home and family remained the focal point of women’s daily lives. The increasing number of working wives was the result of trends toward smaller families and a sense of obligation to work—not due to an urge for emancipa-

tion. Klein therefore determined that taking up work outside the home was not politically premeditated but the consequence of economic and personal circumstance.

Although postwar British women were greatly burdened by the demands of their dual roles, the sexual division of labor went unchallenged. Woman's dual role was presented as a solution to Britain's economic difficulties rather than as a problem in itself. The conflict between women's two roles, as wage earner and housewife, was a consequence of partial shifts in behavioral expectations in which two feminine ideals, two distinct ways of life, continued uneasily side by side.<sup>37</sup> Women had not achieved satisfactory political freedom, access to education, and opportunity for employment, stated Klein, because "women were generally retarded in their adjustment to the Industrial Revolution." Discrimination was merely part of the social and economic evolutionary movement through time: "Women should be regarded as latecomers in the evolutionary process rather than as one half of mankind kept in subjection by the other half."<sup>38</sup> Whether or not Klein's notion of women's "political retardation" is correct, she certainly captured the essence of feminist disputes not only in Britain, but in the United States in terms of equal rights issues, protective labor policies, and women's roles as mothers.

In Britain, post-World War II debate centered around married women's right to work, the right to equal pay, and the role of the welfare state in supporting family life. Although British activists, like their American counterparts, sought to increase opportunities and eliminate blatant legal and economic discrimination, they nevertheless moved within the confines of an ideological boundary associating women primarily with the role of nurturing family, hearth, and home. American and British politics presumed that motherhood and caregiving was a woman's primary job. The issue of how to reconcile motherhood with professional responsibilities was therefore never successfully solved. This omission was not surprising given the 1940s and 1950s attraction to role-conflict theory. This conceptual social sciences framework focused attention on the conflict between women's two roles and diverted attention from underlying presuppositions about gender. Viola Klein's work illuminating the conflicts between women's public and private roles was therefore consistent with broader trends in academia and politics both at home and abroad during the postwar years.

Klein's solution to the problem of combining motherhood and employment, answered in part, was for industry to modify labor policies by means such as flexible work hours and extended maternity leave. She stated that when attitudes and ideologies were gradually brought into line with technical and social

developments, greater participation by women in the economic, political, and cultural activities of the communities would result. Transforming the status of women and displacing the primacy of domestic ideology would require that the responsibility for making positive contributions to the national economy be shared by both women and men.<sup>39</sup>

### **Simone de Beauvoir: Essential Woman/Constructed Woman**

A third, and quite prominent, figure in post-World War II feminist intellectual history is Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986), best known for her comprehensive analysis of women in Western society, *The Second Sex* (1949). Simone de Beauvoir maintained an important public role throughout the Second Wave, signing a 1971 Manifesto along with other well-known women who had obtained illegal abortions, spearheading the campaign for free contraceptives, and eventually joining the *Mouvement de Liberation des Femmes* (MLF). Yet prior to the 1970s, de Beauvoir had distanced herself from feminism. De Beauvoir initially shied away from organized feminism because she believed the woman question would be automatically solved by socialism, and because women's groups before the MLF were generally reformist and legalistic. In 1972, de Beauvoir publicly came out as a feminist during an interview published in the French weekly, *Le Nouvel Observateur*. During later conversations with Alice Schwarzer, de Beauvoir specifically discussed her alliance with feminism, the goals of feminist politics, and dispelled charges of essentialism by clearly rejecting the notion that there exists a “feminine nature.”<sup>40</sup>

Written under the influence of World War II, *The Second Sex* turned upon philosophical issues of personal freedom and examination of social constraints on liberty, specifically in regards to the female sex. The book began with a question: “Woman? What is woman?” In her answer, de Beauvoir stated that woman is her biological capacity to reproduce and mother. She is an Hegelian “Other”; woman is her physical body. But de Beauvoir qualified this position toward the end of her famous treatise by observing that, “woman is made not born.” Thus *The Second Sex* is also an account of the social and historical causes of woman's oppression. The text is a philosophical (and, some would argue, essentialist) work, explicitly influenced by Hegelian (and Sartrean) phenomenology and its language of dualistic opposition.<sup>41</sup> Woman is that which is not man: “She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute — she is the Other.”<sup>42</sup> This tension between de Beauvoir's essentialist (i.e., “Woman is her biological capacity to reproduce”)

and social constructionist arguments (i.e., “Woman is made not born”) is an appropriate starting point for reading her work, as well as the source of sustained critique. (Many have read *The Second Sex* as yet another sample of anti-feminist, male-identified philosophy.)<sup>43</sup>

“Males and females,” wrote de Beauvoir, “are two types of individuals which are differentiated within a species for the function of reproduction.”<sup>44</sup> The egg, motionless and passive, awaits the free and agile sperm. The ovum, it is sometimes said, has the qualities of immanence, the sperm having the qualities of transcendence, meaning that men are presumed to be active and able to transform their environment, while women are considered passive, existing within themselves. The biological allegory must not be pushed too far, however, because “the truth is that these notions are hardly more than vagaries of the mind.” Although “it would be foolhardy indeed to deduce from such [biological] evidence that woman’s place is in the home”—there are such foolhardy persons.<sup>45</sup>

The task, claimed de Beauvoir, was to “view the facts of biology in the light of an ontological, economic, social, and psychological context.” De Beauvoir confronted the question of woman’s experience by contrasting the image woman has of herself with the image of woman projected on her. She noted that “the enslavement of the female to the species and the limitations of her various powers are extremely important facts; the body of woman is one of the essential elements in her situation in the world. But that body is not enough to define her as woman; there is no true living reality except as manifested by the conscious individual through activities.”<sup>46</sup> Where relations were based on equality, each reciprocally recognized that the Other was equally free. Where Otherness existed through relations of social or political inequality, however, reciprocity was abolished and replaced by relations of oppression and subjection. Biology was not a sufficient answer, therefore, to the question that she posed: “why is woman the *Other*? . . . We are concerned to find out what humanity has made of the human female.”<sup>47</sup>

For de Beauvoir, if women were Other it was because they had been defined as different by men in a system where Otherness and difference meant inferiority. It was therefore not woman’s Otherness per se but her subjection—the objectification of woman by man and the nonreciprocity of male and female relations—that de Beauvoir set out to explain. The problem “is not only that woman is the Other; she is the unequal Other.”<sup>48</sup> Since de Beauvoir had already made clear that deducing justifications for social inequality from biological premises was a foolhardy venture, then how did inequality come to be if not inscribed in nature?

De Beauvoir's constructionist account of womanhood was based on her view that femininity is not "an unchangeable essence or a biological destiny."<sup>49</sup> The "character" of woman is not dictated to her "by her hormones nor predetermined in the structure of the female brain: *they are shaped and molded by her situation.*"<sup>50</sup> Womanhood is a constructed experience. When woman's body comes to signify Otherness, "female" becomes a metaphor for the incapacity to give meaning to experience. Hence, woman is precluded from becoming "the meaning-creating bodily subject of phenomenology."<sup>51</sup>

De Beauvoir's understanding of the causes of women's oppression began with an essentialist analysis of woman's physical difference yet incorporated elements of social constructionist exploration as well. Throughout *The Second Sex* de Beauvoir presented the female body as inherently passive, "caught within the iron grasp of the species," with a philosophical analysis of how and why women are trapped by their bodies. For de Beauvoir, it is true that womanhood is socially constructed, but this construction is built upon the basis of an oppressive female biology. Because of the constructionist aspect of de Beauvoir's philosophy, however, she is able in her later chapters to discuss the social forces that keep women in subjection, or how "woman is made not born." De Beauvoir looked first at material reality to understand consciousness, and then toward consciousness to analyze material reality.

In contrast with Margaret Mead and Viola Klein, de Beauvoir received a great deal more attention for the feminist theoretical aspects of her work. This attention (particularly by Americans) has been fairly recent, however, as de Beauvoir's work went virtually unmentioned in post-World War II United States. The recent revival of interest in de Beauvoir dates to the 1980s, coinciding roughly with the author's death in 1986. Despite her legacy as guide and guru of modern feminist theory, *The Second Sex*, like the Bible, "seems to have been much worshipped, often quoted, and little read" by American women at the time of its publication during the postwar era.<sup>52</sup> One reason for this initial postwar inattention to the French philosopher may be due to the fact that McCarthyism and anti-Communist frenzy in the United States meant that relatively few social thinkers openly risked professional marginalization and public condemnation during this era of conformity and careful conservatism. In this sense, de Beauvoir was a suspect intellectual figure because of her alliance with socialism and Left politics.

Simone de Beauvoir's later influence on Second Wave feminist theory, although significant, appears to be peculiarly implicit. For example, Second Wave theorists such as Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millett, intellectual figures who



we might expect to draw from de Beauvoir, are curiously silent about her. Notwithstanding her pronouncement of *The Second Sex* as “the definitive analysis of sexism,” Firestone (1970) devoted little more than one page to de Beauvoir in *The Dialectic of Sex* in spite of their similar views on reproduction and technology; Millett (1970) gave only cursory mention to de Beauvoir in *Sexual Politics* even though both authors approached feminist theory in part using literary analysis. Describing Simone de Beauvoir’s influence on her work twenty years after writing *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett admitted that she inadequately acknowledged her great debt to Simone de Beauvoir’s work. “I think de Beauvoir realized that I probably cribbed a whole lot more in what I was doing,” Millett recalled in 1989. “I had a section on D.H. Lawrence [in *Sexual Politics*] which was, I now realize, painfully indebted to [de Beauvoir’s] analysis of Lawrence in *The Second Sex*. Now I realize that I owed a great deal to what she had said.”<sup>53</sup>

Limited reference to postwar theorists by Second Wave feminists presents an interesting conundrum. Ellen DuBois reminds us that women’s liberation of the late 1960s and 1970s was blind to its own historical antecedents partly due to the determination of a movement characterized by youth and radicalism to reject any prior influence, and to see itself as something new on earth.

### Conclusion

By 1972 the women of France, Britain, and America had fully embarked upon the journey into Second Wave feminism. The writings of Juliet Mitchell, Kate Millett, Germaine Greer, and Shulamith Firestone, now considered among the classics of modern feminist theory, were in wide circulation by this time. In France, the Women’s Liberation Movement (MLF) of the late 1960s marked the inception of the Second Wave. Simultaneously, politically-minded groups formed in the United States and Britain to raise feminist consciousness, to counter female subordination, and to fight against inequalities in the law. Prior to Second Wave activism, the intellectual contributions of Margaret Mead, Viola Klein, and Simone de Beauvoir created a cohesive conceptual framework focusing on the social features of sexual difference, dominant ideology, and the political status of women. This general perspective would eventually inform public opinion and policy considerations, feminist political theory, and ultimately—if obliquely—feminism’s Second Wave.

The work of each woman comprises a significant contribution to the feminist intellectual tradition. Margaret Mead is a major, if controversial figure in anthropology. Yet Mead’s specifically feminist element—her evidence rejecting innate sex roles and her focus on gender socialization—tended to go unmen-

tioned by subsequent Second Wave feminist theorists. Viola Klein dedicated her work to the study of conflicting sex roles and labor issues, the social construction of knowledge, and epistemological dualism. Klein, too, is rarely quoted by initial Second Wave theorists, and her work remains somewhat buried in obscurity. Kate Millett and Juliet Mitchell, for example, wrote during the early 1970s that undermining women's financial dependence would pave the way for destroying the authority and economic structure of patriarchy. Yet they made only scant reference to Klein, who anticipated economic aspects of Second Wave theory when she wrote about women and labor during the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, Simone de Beauvoir is more readily associated with feminist political theory. *The Second Sex* received limited attention from the American public during the years immediately following World War II, however, and even though her work had a powerful influence on feminist ideas, the theorists of the Second Wave made almost no explicit mention of de Beauvoir.

An obvious question confronts us: Why didn't Mead, Klein, and de Beauvoir's *feminist* political theory take stronger hold on postwar minds? In what ways were they ignored? Although *The Second Sex* was well-received in France, when the English translation of *The Second Sex* first appeared in the United States it had to contend with various social and political obstacles. Sandra Dijkstra suggests that American intellectual and ideological predilections did not readily lend themselves to the density of de Beauvoir's book. Similarly, her Leftist leanings in the McCarthy era did not help in making her writings accessible in America.<sup>55</sup> Margaret Mead and Viola Klein were noted academicians, both influencing and reflecting ideological aspects of political conflict and public policy considerations regarding women. Yet Klein's focus on role-conflict theory meant that she never questioned whether womanhood and motherhood ought to go hand in hand—that would have to wait for the Second Wave. Mead's significant contributions to feminist thinking were easily perverted by Friedan into arguments glorifying women's sexual/biological function. Undoubtedly the post-1945 social and political climate in America, Britain, and France constrained feminist theorizing and was inhospitable to more radical attention to social and political inequality.

Mead, Klein, and de Beauvoir themselves initially rejected explicit affiliation with feminism. During the immediate postwar years, the social climate made feminist identification difficult or undesirable for several reasons. The legacy of 1920s feminism evoked unpopular images of militancy, sexual prudery, stridence, and selfishness. American labor organizers thought of feminists as members of the professional or leisured middle class, and therefore out of touch with

the realities of the working class. Postwar antifeminists labeled feminists as narcissistic at best, or neurotic at worst, which meant that only a brave few willingly risked such identification. Especially in Cold War America, disagreement with the mainstream during an era generally preoccupied with conformity left one fair game for dangerous charges of Communist sympathy.

If this trio of intellectuals initially distanced themselves from feminist politics, then why does it matter if Margaret Mead, Viola Klein, and Simone de Beauvoir were somewhat ignored (to varying degrees) by the Second Wave? What makes their theories significant? And what makes their theories distinctly feminist?

An important theme in the work of Mead, Klein, and de Beauvoir is their ideological commitment to individual self-realization for women. Women must take responsibility for transforming the dynamics of sociopolitical dominance by challenging governing ideology, destroying internalized self-hatred, and becoming economically self-reliant. Yet Mead, Klein, and de Beauvoir explicitly linked women's social status to men's power over them, calling attention to the relation between dominant ideology and the political condition of women while also acknowledging the institutionalized obstacles confronting women.<sup>56</sup> In other words, both material reality *and* consciousness must change.

Most importantly, each of these scholars questioned dominant concepts of womanhood and challenged the notion of "innate femininity," directing attention toward social influences on the construction and perceptions of gender. Mead's vision was that of unlimited and malleable human potential devoid of constricting sex role expectations. Klein's message was that we must sift through prevailing ideologies which limit perceptions about women's nature and capacities. For de Beauvoir, a new woman could only appear with the transformation of moral, social, cultural, and economic conditions. For her, difference and Otherness did not mean innate weakness and inferiority.

The feminist ideas emerging from America, Britain, and France during the postwar period anticipated contemporary tensions within modern feminist theory between Anglo-American "individualist" feminism (social constructionism) versus French "relational" (essentialist) feminism. As early as the eighteenth century, Claire Goldberg Moses argues, French and Anglo feminist theory was invested with both individualist and relational elements.<sup>57</sup> Attention to the roots of modern feminist theory in comparative perspective will perhaps lead to new ways out of this dichotomous theoretical dilemma. Margaret Mead, Viola Klein, and Simone de Beauvoir's theories certainly contain kernels of essentialism, but they also emphasize the social construction of gender as the cause and cure for women's subordinate status.

Finally, in focusing on the advancement of feminist political theory during the mid-twentieth century, I do not mean to suggest that the history of feminist thought has progressed in a strictly linear fashion. Perhaps there exist greater consistencies between the post-World War II years and Second Wave feminism than is commonly recognized. To some extent, ignoring certain developments in feminist theory and struggle during the “mid-wave” period clouds the strength, legitimacy, and consistency of the long feminist tradition.

---

#### NOTES

1. Marty Jezer writes, for example, that “between World War II and the publication of Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique* in 1963, only two feminist books appeared in print to offer an alternative vision of women’s place in the world [Ruth Herschberger’s *Adam’s Rib* and Simone de Beauvoir’s *Second Sex*].” This claim, and others like it, is patently untrue. Marty Jezer, *The Dark Ages: Life in the United States, 1945–1960* (Boston: South End Press, 1982), 227–228.
2. Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947). See also, Janet Angela Flammang, *The Political Consciousness of American Women: A Critical Analysis of Liberal Feminism in America* (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1980), chapter 5: “Postwar Death and Rebirth of Feminism”; and Elisabeth Houghton Hazard, *Women on the Right: Fighting for a New Social Contract* (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1987), chapter 3: “A New Definition of Womanhood.”
3. This observation is at the crux of Elizabeth Wilson’s evaluation of post-World War II British feminism. Elizabeth Wilson, *Only Halfway to Paradise, Women in Postwar Britain: 1945–1968* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1980), 2.
4. Despite its efforts toward women’s advancement, it is important to note that the National Woman’s Party carried with it certain conservative tendencies. In contrast with the Women’s Bureau, which intermittently embraced efforts to combat racism, the National Woman’s Party had no interest in minority civil rights except to insist that women be included in government positions and measures to fight racist policies. The NWP position on race was neither passive nor innocuous: by arguing that black men should not have rights that were denied to white women, the NWP used racist arguments to garner support for the ERA. Working in isolation from a network of progressive causes, as the postwar women’s movement did, invited the risk of reflecting and perpetuating the elitism, anti-Semitism, racism, and anti-communism of the larger society, all in the name of advancing women’s rights. Richard Nixon, Barry Goldwater, and Strom Thurmond, for example, each supported the ERA at one time; curious bedfellows, indeed. For further discussion see Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women’s Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990).
5. Correspondence from William C. Hushing to George Riley, 24 April 1951, Legislative Reference Files, cited in Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women’s Issues 1945–1968* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 46.
6. Further compounding labor conflicts was the fact that union membership by men far exceeded membership by women. Rupp and Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums*, 144–153. For discussion about the origins of conflict surrounding the ERA, see Nancy F. Cott, “Historical Perspectives: The Equal Rights Amendment Conflict in the 1920s,” in Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds. *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Regarding ideological conflicts and the ERA during the postwar years, see Harrison, *On Account of Sex*,

- especially chapter 1, "The Equal Rights Amendment and the Ambivalent Legacy of World War II."
7. Wilson, *Only Halfway to Paradise*, 15–16.
  8. Claire Duchon, *Feminism in France: From May '68 to Mitterand* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).
  9. Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1992), 156.
  10. Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946–1958," *The Journal of American History*, 79 (March 1993): 1457–1458.
  11. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 208–209.
  12. Margaret Mead, *Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Publishers, 1950), 30.
  13. Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* has specifically come under attack on the basis of a theoretical flaw that was actually quite common to anthropology at the time the book was written; namely, the expectation of finding "a pervasive kind of homogeneity" in a culture. Mead later developed techniques for thinking about patterned contrasts and dynamics within a culture rather than characterizing the style of a culture as a whole. See Mary Catherine Bateson, *With a Daughter's Eye* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 285.
  14. "Letter of Transmittal" from the Commission chairs to President John F. Kennedy, 11 October 1963. Margaret Mead and Frances Balgley Kaplan, eds. *American Woman: The Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and Other Publications of the Commission* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 9–12.
  15. Mead, *American Woman*, 4.
  16. Mead, *American Woman*, 5–6.
  17. Mead, *American Woman*, 6.
  18. Mead, *Male and Female*, 8.
  19. Mead, *Male and Female*, 30.
  20. Mead, *Male and Female*, 372. In an uncharacteristically vehement tone, Mead claimed that American society's attempt to culturally and legally confine women to the home could be understood, based upon "primitive" exhibitions of envy, simply as men's efforts at preventing women from having too much power. See Mead, *Male and Female*, chapter 4, "Even-Handed, Money-Minded, and Womb-Envyng Patterns," and chapter 18, "To Both Their Own."
  21. Bateson, *With a Daughter's Eye*, 169. Given the urgency of Nazism as well as racism in America, Mead along with Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict instead devoted their anthropology to affirming the common potential of all people.
  22. Mead, *Male and Female*, 7.
  23. Dale Spender, *Women of Ideas* (1982; reprint, London: Pandora Press, 1992), 717–718.
  24. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics: The Classic Analysis of the Interplay Between Men, Women, & Culture* (1970; reprint, New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1990), 62. Millett makes only brief reference to Margaret Mead.
  25. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963), 137.
  26. Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, chapter 6, "The Functional Freeze, the Feminine Protest, and Margaret Mead."
  27. Viola Klein, *The Feminine Character: History of an Ideology* (1946; reprint, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 168.
  28. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 3.
  29. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 163.
  30. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 170.
  31. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 169

32. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 171
33. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 172.
34. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 171. Sociologist Helen Mayer Hacker was yet another intellectual of the postwar years who advocated minority group theory in order to understand women's cultural and political status, issues of marginality, and group self-hatred. See Helen Mayer Hacker, "Women as a Minority Group," *Social Forces*, 30 (October 1951): 60–69.
35. Klein, *The Feminine Character*, 174.
36. Because of biased wording of census questions, the Population Census had seriously underrated the number of wage-earning women in Britain. The General Register Office readily admitted responsibility for this error. See Viola Klein, *Working Wives: A Survey of Facts and Opinions Concerning the Gainful Employment of Married Women in Britain* (London: Institute of Personnel Management, 1960), 9.
37. Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1956), 10.
38. Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, 7.
39. Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, 196–197.
40. Alice Schwarzer, in Marianne Howarth, ed. *After The Second Sex: Conversations with Simone de Beauvoir* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
41. In contrast with arguments claiming that Simone de Beauvoir's philosophical analysis merely drew upon the work of her companion, Jean-Paul Sartre, new evidence concludes that it was in fact Sartre who relied on de Beauvoir's intellectual insights. See Kate Fullbrook and Edward Fullbrook, *Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre: The Remaking of a Twentieth-Century Legend* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).
42. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1989), xxii.
43. Catriona Mackenzie, for example, argues that de Beauvoir attempts to counter the masculinism of philosophy "by using certain philosophical concepts to *think* woman's experience. Her text thus works to expand the limits of philosophy while remaining within a specific conceptual problematic." Mary Evans objects to de Beauvoir's essentialist reading of woman's body, while Carole Pateman points out that de Beauvoir uncritically uses masculinist, or fraternal language. An inadequate translation is responsible for at least some objections to *The Second Sex*. According to Margaret Simons, a former student of de Beauvoir, over ten percent of the original French text was deleted during translation. Seventy-eight women originally mentioned by de Beauvoir have vanished. Simons observes that although the translator "didn't care to have discussions of woman's oppression belabored, he was quite content to allow de Beauvoir to go on at length about [man's superiority], as the pattern of deletions in the first history chapter shows." See Catriona Mackenzie, "Simone de Beauvoir: Philosophy and/or the Female Body," in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross, eds. *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 146; Mary Evans, "Simone de Beauvoir: Dilemmas of a Feminist Radical," in Dale Spender, ed. *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Women's Intellectual Traditions* (London: The Woman's Press, 1983), 348–365; Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 41; Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 78; and Margaret A. Simons, "The Silencing of Simone de Beauvoir: Guess What's Missing From *The Second Sex*," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 6 (1983): 559–564.
44. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 4.
45. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 13.
46. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 37.
47. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 36–37.
48. Sonia Kruks, "Gender and Subjectivity: Simone de Beauvoir and Contemporary Feminism," *Signs*, 18 (Autumn 1992): 100–101.

49. Kruks, "Gender and Subjectivity," 94.
50. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 597 (italics added).
51. Mackenzie, "Simone de Beauvoir," 147.
52. Mary G. Dietz, "Introduction: Debating Simone de Beauvoir," *Signs*, 18 (Autumn 1992): 78.
53. Penny Forster and Imogen Sutton, eds. *Daughters of de Beauvoir* (London: The Women's Press, 1989), 23.
54. See Millett, *Sexual Politics*, and Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1971).
55. Sandra Dijkstra, "Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan: The Politics of Omission," *Feminist Studies*, 6 (Summer 1980): 290-303.
56. Claire Goldberg Moses distinguishes between compassionate theorists— those who argue for increased opportunities for women, and feminist theorists— those who specifically link women's status with men's power. See Claire Goldberg Moses, "Debating the Present, Writing the Past: 'Feminism' in French History and Historiography," *Radical History Review*, 52 (1992): 79-94, especially p. 85.
57. See Moses for her argument that attention to the conflict between individualist and relational feminism is misdirected and that equating French feminist writing with difference is a uniquely American conclusion.