DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS-ENGLISH

SEMESTER -III

GLIMPSES OF LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

OPEN ELECTIVE 305

BLOCK-2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

Postal Address:

The Registrar,

University of North Bengal,

Raja Rammohunpur,

P.O.-N.B.U., Dist-Darjeeling,

West Bengal, Pin-734013,

India.

Phone: (O) +91 0353-2776331/2699008

Fax: (0353) 2776313, 2699001

Email: regnbu@sancharnet.in ; regnbu@nbu.ac.in

Wesbsite: www.nbu.ac.in

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

GLIMPSES OF LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

BLOCK 1

BLOCK 2

BLOCK 2 GLIMPSES OF LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

This block give introduction to Life and work of Eliot along with his literature Tradition and Individual Talent .Block also gives insight in life of Simone de Beauvoir- Life and work It also discuss Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to *The Second Sex-Volume 2and volume Block discuss* Chris Cuomo (ed.) and their philosophical writing The Feminist Philosophy Reader

Unit -8 In this Chapter you will learn about background behind life and works of Eliot. It gives insight about the various aspects of Eliot. It helps to achieve following objectives:

Unit-9 In this Chapter you will learn about Eliot and his Tradition and Individual Talent . This essay provides insight of his Eliot works . It provides critical analysis and summary of the Play and helps to understands it more.

Unit-10 In this Chapter you will learn about background behind life and works of Simone de Beauvoir. It gives insight about the various aspects of Simone de Beauvoir

Unit-11 In this Chapter you will learn about Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to The Second Sex. Its helps to understand the critical aspects of the same along with its analysis.

Unit-12 In this Chapter you will learn about Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to The Second Sex. Its helps to understand the critical aspects of the same along with its analysis. Unit will put light on the influence and cultural repercussions of the novel.

Unit-13 This unit help to learn about the life and work of Chris Cuomo . It gives the insight on education of the writer along with his publications. Unit also describes his famous work The Feminist Philosophy Reader and paper in it- To the Second Sex.

Unit-14 In this Chapter you will learn about *Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo* (ed.)- The Feminist Philosophy Reader. It gives insight of the various aspects of the feminism along with its approaches and components

UNIT: 8 ELIOT – LIFE AND WORK

STRUCTURE

8.0 OBJECTIVE

In this Chapter you will learn about background behind life and works of Eliot. It gives insight about the various aspects of Eliot. It helps to achieve following objectives:

- Life of Eliot
- Poetry of Eliot
- Plays of Eliot
- Literary Criticism of Eliot
- Nonfictions, Essays and Posthumous Publications: of Eliot

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Thomas Stearns Eliot OM (26 September 1888 – 4 January 1965) was a poet, essayist, publisher, playwright, and literary and social critic Born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a prominent Boston Brahmin family, he moved to England in 1914 at the age of 25 and would settle, work and marry

there. He became a British subject in 1927 at the age of 39, subsequently renouncing his American passport.

Considered one of the twentieth century's major poets, Eliot attracted widespread attention for his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915), which was seen as a masterpiece of the Modernist movement. It was followed by some of the best-known poems in the English language, including The Waste Land (1922), "The Hollow Men" (1925), "Ash Wednesday" (1930), and Four Quartets (1943).[4] He was also known for his seven plays, particularly Murder in the Cathedral (1935) and The Cocktail Party (1949). He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948, "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry"

8.2 LIFE

Early life and education

The Eliots were a Boston Brahmin family with roots in England and New England. Eliot's paternal grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, had moved to St. Louis, Missouri, to establish a Unitarian Christian church there. His father, Henry Ware Eliot (1843–1919), was a successful businessman, president and treasurer of the Hydraulic-Press Brick Company in St Louis. His mother, Charlotte Champe Stearns (1843–1929), wrote poetry and was a social worker, a new profession in the early 20th century. Eliot was the last of six surviving children. Known to family and friends as Tom, he was the namesake of his maternal grandfather, Thomas Stearns.

Eliot's childhood infatuation with literature can be ascribed to several factors. First, he had to overcome physical limitations as a child. Struggling from a congenital double inguinal hernia, he could not participate in many physical activities and thus was prevented from socialising with his peers. As he was often isolated, his love for literature developed. Once he learned to read, the young boy immediately became obsessed with books and was absorbed in tales depicting savages, the Wild West, or Mark Twain's thrill-seeking Tom Sawyer. In his memoir of Eliot, his friend Robert Sencourt comments that the young Eliot "would often curl up in the window-seat behind an enormous book, setting the drug of dreams against the pain of living." Secondly, Eliot

credited his hometown with fuelling his literary vision: "It is self-evident that St. Louis affected me more deeply than any other environment has ever done. I feel that there is something in having passed one's childhood beside the big river, which is incommunicable to those people who have not. I consider myself fortunate to have been born here, rather than in Boston, or New York, or London."

From 1898 to 1905, Eliot attended Smith Academy, where his studies included Latin, Ancient Greek, French, and German. He began to write poetry when he was fourteen under the influence of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. He said the results were gloomy and despairing and he destroyed them. His first published poem, "A Fable For Feasters", was written as a school exercise and was published in the Smith Academy Record in February 1905. Also published there in April 1905 was his oldest surviving poem in manuscript, an untitled lyric, later revised and reprinted as "Song" in The Harvard Advocate, Harvard University's student magazine. He also published three short stories in 1905, "Birds of Prey", "A Tale of a Whale" and "The Man Who Was King". The last mentioned story significantly reflects his exploration of the Igorot Village while visiting the 1904 World's Fair of St. Louis. Such a link with primitive people importantly antedates his anthropological studies at Harvard.

Eliot lived in St. Louis, Missouri for the first sixteen years of his life at the house on Locust St. where he was born. After going away to school in 1905, he only returned to St. Louis for vacations and visits. Despite moving away from the city, Eliot wrote to a friend that the "Missouri and the Mississippi have made a deeper impression on me than any other part of the world."

Following graduation, Eliot attended Milton Academy in Massachusetts for a preparatory year, where he met Scofield Thayer who later published The Waste Land. He studied philosophy at Harvard College from 1906 to 1909, earning a B.A. in 1909 and a M.A. the following year. Because of his year at Milton Academy, Eliot was allowed to take a B.A. after three years instead of the usual four. While a student at Harvard, Eliot was placed on academic probation and graduated with a pass degree (i.e. no honours). His B.A. was in an elective program best described as

comparative literature, and his M.A. English Literature. Frank Kermode writes that the most important moment of Eliot's undergraduate career was in 1908 when he discovered Arthur Symons's The Symbolist Movement in Literature. This introduced him to Jules Laforgue, Arthur Rimbaud, and Paul Verlaine. Without Verlaine, Eliot wrote, he might never have heard of Tristan Corbière and his book Les amours jaunes, a work that affected the course of Eliot's life. The Harvard Advocate published some of his poems and he became lifelong friends with Conrad Aiken, the American writer and critic.

After working as a philosophy assistant at Harvard from 1909 to 1910, Eliot moved to Paris where, from 1910 to 1911, he studied philosophy at the Sorbonne. He attended lectures by Henri Bergson and read poetry with Henri Alban-Fournier. From 1911 to 1914, he was back at Harvard studying Indian philosophy and Sanskrit. Whilst a member of the Harvard Graduate School, Eliot met and fell in love with Emily Hale. Eliot was awarded a scholarship to Merton College, Oxford, in 1914. He first visited Marburg, Germany, where he planned to take a summer programme, but when the First World War broke out he went to Oxford instead. At the time so many American students attended Merton that the Junior Common Room proposed a motion "that this society abhors the Americanization of Oxford". It was defeated by two votes after Eliot reminded the students how much they owed American culture.

Eliot wrote to Conrad Aiken on New Year's Eve 1914: "I hate university towns and university people, who are the same everywhere, with pregnant wives, sprawling children, many books and hideous pictures on the walls ... Oxford is very pretty, but I don't like to be dead." Escaping Oxford, Eliot spent much of his time in London. This city had a monumental and life-altering effect on Eliot for several reasons, the most significant of which was his introduction to the influential American literary figure Ezra Pound. A connection through Aiken resulted in an arranged meeting and on 22 September 1914, Eliot paid a visit to Pound's flat. Pound instantly deemed Eliot "worth watching" and was crucial to Eliot's beginning career as a poet, as he is credited with promoting Eliot through social events and literary gatherings. Thus, according to biographer John Worthen, during his time in England Eliot "was seeing

as little of Oxford as possible". He was instead spending long periods of time in London, in the company of Ezra Pound and "some of the modern artists whom the war has so far spared... It was Pound who helped most, introducing him everywhere." In the end, Eliot did not settle at Merton and left after a year. In 1915 he taught English at Birkbeck, University of London.

By 1916, he had completed a doctoral dissertation for Harvard on "Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley", but he failed to return for the viva voce exam.

Marriage

Before leaving the US, Eliot had told Emily Hale that he was in love with her; he exchanged letters with her from Oxford during 1914 and 1915 but they did not meet again until 1927. In a letter to Aiken late in December 1914, Eliot, aged 26, wrote, "I am very dependent upon women (I mean female society)." Less than four months later, Thayer introduced Eliot to Vivienne Haigh-Wood, a Cambridge governess. They were married at Hampstead Register Office on 26 June 1915.

After a short visit alone to his family in the United States, Eliot returned to London and took several teaching jobs, such as lecturing at Birkbeck College, University of London. The philosopher Bertrand Russell took an interest in Vivienne while the newlyweds stayed in his flat. Some scholars have suggested that she and Russell had an affair, but the allegations were never confirmed.

The marriage was markedly unhappy, in part because of Vivienne's health problems. In a letter addressed to Ezra Pound, she covers an extensive list of her symptoms, which included a habitually high temperature, fatigue, insomnia, migraines, and colitis. This, coupled with apparent mental instability, meant that she was often sent away by Eliot and her doctors for extended periods of time in the hope of improving her health, and as time went on, he became increasingly detached from her. The couple formally separated in 1933 and in 1938 Vivienne's brother, Maurice, had her committed to a mental hospital, against her will, where she remained until her death of heart disease in 1947.

Their relationship became the subject of a 1984 play Tom & Viv, which in 1994 was adapted as a film of the same name.

In a private paper written in his sixties, Eliot confessed: "I came to persuade myself that I was in love with Vivienne simply because I wanted to burn my boats and commit myself to staying in England. And she persuaded herself (also under the influence of [Ezra] Pound) that she would save the poet by keeping him in England. To her, the marriage brought no happiness. To me, it brought the state of mind out of which came The Waste Land."

Teaching, banking, and publishing

After leaving Merton, Eliot worked as a schoolteacher, most notably at Highgate School, a private school in London, where he taught French and Latin—his students included the young John Betjeman. Later he taught at the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, a state school in Buckinghamshire. To earn extra money, he wrote book reviews and lectured at evening extension courses at the University College London, and Oxford. In 1917, he took a position at Lloyds Bank in London, working on foreign accounts. On a trip to Paris in August 1920 with the artist Wyndham Lewis, he met the writer James Joyce. Eliot said he found Joyce arrogant—Joyce doubted Eliot's ability as a poet at the time—but the two soon became friends, with Eliot visiting Joyce whenever he was in Paris. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis also maintained a close friendship, leading to Lewis's later making his well-known portrait painting of Eliot in 1938.

Charles Whibley recommended T.S. Eliot to Geoffrey Faber. In 1925 Eliot left Lloyds to become a director in the publishing firm Faber and Gwyer, later Faber and Faber, where he remained for the rest of his career. At Faber and Faber, he was responsible for publishing important English poets like W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and Ted Hughes.

Conversion to Anglicanism and British citizenship

On 29 June 1927, Eliot converted to Anglicanism from Unitarianism, and in November that year he took British citizenship. He became a warden of his parish church, St Stephen's, Gloucester Road, London, and a life member of the Society of King Charles the Martyr. He specifically identified as Anglo-Catholic, proclaiming himself "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic [sic] in religion". About 30 years later Eliot commented on his religious views that he combined "a

Catholic cast of mind, a Calvinist heritage, and a Puritanical temperament". He also had wider spiritual interests, commenting that "I see the path of progress for modern man in his occupation with his own self, with his inner being" and citing Goethe and Rudolf Steiner as exemplars of such a direction.

One of Eliot's biographers, Peter Ackroyd, commented that "the purposes of [Eliot's conversion] were two-fold. One: the Church of England offered Eliot some hope for himself, and I think Eliot needed some resting place. But secondly, it attached Eliot to the English community and English culture."

Separation and remarriage

By 1932, Eliot had been contemplating a separation from his wife for some time. When Harvard offered him the Charles Eliot Norton professorship for the 1932–1933 academic year, he accepted and left Vivienne in England. Upon his return, he arranged for a formal separation from her, avoiding all but one meeting with her between his leaving for America in 1932 and her death in 1947. Vivienne was committed to the Northumberland House mental hospital, Stoke Newington, in 1938, and remained there until she died. Although Eliot was still legally her husband, he never visited her. From 1933 to 1946 Eliot had a close emotional relationship with Emily Hale. Eliot later destroyed Hale's letters to him, but Hale donated Eliot's to Princeton University Library where they were sealed until 2020. When Eliot heard of the donation he deposited his own account of their relationship with Harvard University to be opened whenever the Princeton letters were.

From 1938 to 1957 Eliot's public companion was Mary Trevelyan of London University, who wanted to marry him and left a detailed memoir. From 1946 to 1957, Eliot shared a flat at 19 Carlyle Mansions, Chelsea, with his friend John Davy Hayward, who collected and managed Eliot's papers, styling himself "Keeper of the Eliot Archive". Hayward also collected Eliot's pre-Prufrock verse, commercially published after Eliot's death as Poems Written in Early Youth. When Eliot and Hayward separated their household in 1957, Hayward retained his collection of Eliot's papers, which he bequeathed to King's College, Cambridge, in 1965.

On 10 January 1957, at the age of 68, Eliot married Esmé Valerie Fletcher, who was 30. In contrast to his first marriage, Eliot knew Fletcher well, as she had been his secretary at Faber and Faber since August 1949. They kept their wedding secret; the ceremony was held in a church at 6:15 am with virtually no one in attendance other than his wife's parents. Eliot had no children with either of his wives. In the early 1960s, by then in failing health, Eliot worked as an editor for the Wesleyan University Press, seeking new poets in Europe for publication. After Eliot's death, Valerie dedicated her time to preserving his legacy, by editing and annotating The Letters of T. S. Eliot and a facsimile of the draft of The Waste Land. Valerie Eliot died on 9 November 2012 at her home in London.

Death and honours

Eliot died of emphysema at his home in Kensington in London, on 4 January 1965, and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium. In accordance with his wishes, his ashes were taken to St Michael and All Angels' Church, East Coker, the village in Somerset from which his Eliot ancestors had emigrated to America. A wall plaque in the church commemorates him with a quotation from his poem East Coker: "In my beginning is my end. In my end is my beginning."

In 1967, on the second anniversary of his death, Eliot was commemorated by the placement of a large stone in the floor of Poets' Corner in London's Westminster Abbey. The stone, cut by designer Reynolds Stone, is inscribed with his life dates, his Order of Merit, and a quotation from his poem Little Gidding, "the communication / of the dead is tongued with fire beyond / the language of the living."

The apartment block where he died, No. 3 Kensington Court Gardens, has had a blue plaque on it since 1986

8.3 POETRY

For a poet of his stature, Eliot produced a relatively small number of poems. He was aware of this even early in his career. He wrote to J.H. Woods, one of his former Harvard professors, "My reputation in London is built upon one small volume of verse, and is kept up by printing two or

three more poems in a year. The only thing that matters is that these should be perfect in their kind, so that each should be an event."

Typically, Eliot first published his poems individually in periodicals or in small books or pamphlets and then collected them in books. His first collection was Prufrock and Other Observations (1917). In 1920, he published more poems in AraVosPrec (London) and Poems: 1920 (New York). These had the same poems (in a different order) except that "Ode" in the British edition was replaced with "Hysteria" in the American edition. In 1925, he collected The Waste Land and the poems in Prufrock and Poems into one volume and added The Hollow Men to form Poems: 1909–1925. From then on, he updated this work as Collected Poems. Exceptions are Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats (1939), a collection of light verse; Poems Written in Early Youth, posthumously published in 1967 and consisting mainly of poems published between 1907 and 1910 in The Harvard Advocate, and Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909–1917, material Eliot never intended to have published, which appeared posthumously in 1997.

During an interview in 1959, Eliot said of his nationality and its role in his work: "I'd say that my poetry has obviously more in common with my distinguished contemporaries in America than with anything written in my generation in England. That I'm sure of. ... It wouldn't be what it is, and I imagine it wouldn't be so good; putting it as modestly as I can, it wouldn't be what it is if I'd been born in England, and it wouldn't be what it is if I'd stayed in America. It's a combination of things. But in its sources, in its emotional springs, it comes from America."

Cleo McNelly Kearns notes in her biography that Eliot was deeply influenced by Indic traditions, notably the Upanishads. From the Sanskrit ending of The Waste Land to the "What Krishna meant" section of Four Quartets shows how much Indic religions and more specifically Hinduism made up his philosophical basic for his thought process. It must also be acknowledged, as ChinmoyGuha showed in his book Where the Dreams Cross: T S Eliot and French Poetry (Macmillan, 2011) that he was deeply influenced by French poets from Baudelaire to Paul Valéry. He himself wrote in his 1940 essay on W.B. Yeats: "The kind of poetry that I needed to teach me the use of my own voice did not exist in

English at all; it was only to be found in French." ("Yeats", On Poetry and Poets, 1948).

8.4 PLAYS

With the important exception of Four Quartets, Eliot directed much of his creative energies after Ash Wednesday to writing plays in verse, mostly comedies or plays with redemptive endings. He was long a critic and admirer of Elizabethan and Jacobean verse drama; witness his allusions to Webster, Thomas Middleton, William Shakespeare and Thomas Kyd in The Waste Land. In a 1933 lecture he said "Every poet would like, I fancy, to be able to think that he had some direct social utility . . . . He would like to be something of a popular entertainer and be able to think his own thoughts behind a tragic or a comic mask. He would like to convey the pleasures of poetry, not only to a larger audience but to larger groups of people collectively; and the theatre is the best place in which to do it."

After The Waste Land (1922), he wrote that he was "now feeling toward a new form and style". One project he had in mind was writing a play in verse, using some of the rhythms of early jazz. The play featured "Sweeney", a character who had appeared in a number of his poems. Although Eliot did not finish the play, he did publish two scenes from the piece. These scenes, titled Fragment of a Prologue (1926) and Fragment of an Agon (1927), were published together in 1932 as Sweeney Agonistes. Although Eliot noted that this was not intended to be a one-act play, it is sometimes performed as one.

A pageant play by Eliot called The Rock was performed in 1934 for the benefit of churches in the Diocese of London. Much of it was a collaborative effort; Eliot accepted credit only for the authorship of one scene and the choruses. George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, had been instrumental in connecting Eliot with producer E. Martin Browne for the production of The Rock, and later commissioned Eliot to write another play for the Canterbury Festival in 1935. This one, Murder in the Cathedral, concerning the death of the martyr, Thomas Becket, was more under Eliot's control. Eliot biographer Peter Ackroyd comments that "for [Eliot], Murder in the Cathedral and succeeding verse plays offered a

double advantage; it allowed him to practice poetry but it also offered a convenient home for his religious sensibility." After this, he worked on more "commercial" plays for more general audiences: The Family Reunion (1939), The Cocktail Party (1949), The Confidential Clerk, (1953) and The Elder Statesman (1958) (the latter three were produced by Henry Sherek and directed by E. Martin Browne). The Broadway production in New York of The Cocktail Party received the 1950 Tony Award for Best Play. Eliot wrote The Cocktail Party while he was a visiting scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study.

Regarding his method of playwriting, Eliot explained, "If I set out to write a play, I start by an act of choice. I settle upon a particular emotional situation, out of which characters and a plot will emerge. And then lines of poetry may come into being: not from the original impulse but from a secondary stimulation of the unconscious mind."

8.5 LITERARY CRITICISM

Eliot also made significant contributions to the field of literary criticism, strongly influencing the school of New Criticism. He was somewhat self-deprecating and minimising of his work and once said his criticism was merely a "by-product" of his "private poetry-workshop" But the critic William Empson once said, "I do not know for certain how much of my own mind [Eliot] invented, let alone how much of it is a reaction against him or indeed a consequence of misreading him. He is a very penetrating influence, perhaps not unlike the east wind."

In his critical essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot argues that art must be understood not in a vacuum, but in the context of previous pieces of art. "In a peculiar sense [an artist or poet] ... must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past." This essay was an important influence over the New Criticism by introducing the idea that the value of a work of art must be viewed in the context of the artist's previous works, a "simultaneous order" of works (i.e., "tradition"). Eliot himself employed this concept on many of his works, especially on his long-poem The Waste Land.

Also important to New Criticism was the idea—as articulated in Eliot's essay "Hamlet and His Problems"—of an "objective correlative", which posits a connection among the words of the text and events, states of mind, and experiences. This notion concedes that a poem means what it says, but suggests that there can be a non-subjective judgment based on different readers' different—but perhaps corollary—interpretations of a work.

More generally, New Critics took a cue from Eliot in regard to his "'classical' ideals and his religious thought; his attention to the poetry and drama of the early seventeenth century; his deprecation of the Romantics, especially Shelley; his proposition that good poems constitute 'not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion'; and his insistence that 'poets... at present must be difficult'."

Eliot's essays were a major factor in the revival of interest in the metaphysical poets. Eliot particularly praised the metaphysical poets' ability to show experience as both psychological and sensual, while at the same time infusing this portrayal with—in Eliot's view—wit and uniqueness. Eliot's essay "The Metaphysical Poets", along with giving new significance and attention to metaphysical poetry, introduced his now well-known definition of "unified sensibility", which is considered by some to mean the same thing as the term "metaphysical".

His 1922 poem The Waste Land also can be better understood in light of his work as a critic. He had argued that a poet must write "programmatic criticism", that is, a poet should write to advance his own interests rather than to advance "historical scholarship". Viewed from Eliot's critical lens, The Waste Land likely shows his personal despair about World War I rather than an objective historical understanding of it.

Late in his career, Eliot focused much of his creative energy on writing for the theatre; some of his earlier critical writing, in essays such as "Poetry and Drama", "Hamlet and his Problems", and "The Possibility of a Poetic Drama", focused on the aesthetics of writing drama in verse.

Check Your Progress I:

Q1.Discuss in brief about the early life of Eliot.

Answer……

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Q2. Give your analysis on works of Eliot

Answer……

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8.6 NONFICTION:

Christianity & Culture (1939, 1948), The Second-Order Mind (1920),Tradition and the Individual Talent (1920), The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism (1920), Homage to John Dryden (1924), Shakespeare and the Stoicism ofSeneca (1928), For Lancelot Andrews (1928), Dante (1929)

8.7 ESSAYS:

The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933), After Strange Gods(1934), Elizabethan Essays (1934), Essays Ancient and Modern (1936), The Idea of aChristian Society (1940), A Choice of Kipling's Verse (1941) made by Eliot, with an 6essay on Rudyard Kipling London, Faber and Faber., Notes Towards the Definitionof Culture (1948), Poetry and Drama (1951), The Three Voices of Poetry (1954), TheFrontiers of Criticism (1956), On Poetry and Poets (1957)

8.8 POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS:

To Criticize the Critic (1965), The Waste Land:Facsimile Edition (1974), Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917 (1996)

8.9 GRIDIRON OF THE RESEARCH

It is in this context that the relevance of T.S. Eliot‟s writings under the Biblical impact becomes more and moreclear. Eliot who had an acute modern sensibility was more modern and more civilizedthan most of his contemporaries but his true perception of modernity helped him towarn

the society of evils of unrestricted modernism and irrelevant and the subservientfaith in the new ways of life, which were thriving without regard for the vital and theliving past. For this reason, he tried to show the way towards God advocating throughthe holy Bible. This is what we have tried to unravel in the study.

A man with a profound and complex attitude toward life, Eliot engaged themodern world and entered into dialogue with its intellectuals in numerous fields,writing with a comprehensive range on poetry, fiction, drama, literary criticism,humanism, religion, cultural and economic theory, education, world politics and othertopics of intellectual importance. Indian influences, both Hindu and Buddhist, arescattered everywhere in the works of T. S. Eliot. For instance, the three "shanties"which mean the peace blessings provide The Wasteland a long poem of 1920 the status of an Upanishad, as in the Indian tradition only Upanishads are given the triple

benedictions at the end. While acknowledging the Brihadaranyaka–Upanishad, Eliotchanges the advice of Prajapati to the three kinds of intelligent forms who came tohim as disciples: gods, anti-gods, and man. In the ancient Sanskrit, the final advice tothe gods is given by Prajapati which is to be disciplined, to control themselves,because gods tend be victims of arrogance; the anti-gods are advised to becompassionate, because they tend to be brutal and vicious; and the men are advised tobe giving, because they tend to become victims of selfishness.

On the other hand, the references such that of the Holy Grail and the myth of king Fisher in The Wasteland reflects the Christian mythology. In the Cocktail Party Celia Coplestone exhibit the Christian martyrdom as the result of the sin of adultery andworks towards the Nirvana, the Buddhist philosophy is then reflected in the end of thismorality play. Martyrdom of Becket along with the sermon he delivered which is thesermon delivered on the eve of Christmas and some of the verses included in AshWednesday and Journey of the Magi are drawn from the Anglican liturgy, again showingEliot's inclination towards Christian element drawn from the holy Bible and the Liturgy.

His prose such as The Idea of a Christian Society, Notes Towards Tradition and Culture and

Religion and Literature too gave the message to his readers on the behaviour of a trueChristian. Eliot was always trying to make his readers seek the almighty by laying downthe code of conduct for them through his poetry, drama and essays. To fulfill his divinepurpose he took allusions from the Hindu Philosophy, The Buddhist Philosophy andPatanjali along with the Christian liturgy and the Holy Bible, as he was a devoted Christian and a great scholar who studied Sanskrit and eastern philosophy for his collegedegrees. As Leavis said: Eliot‟s poetry commits the crisis of modern philosophy, triesto get back the traditional life view for the modern people, and constructs an idealisticand artistic social order for them, which is just as what Leavis says—"The origins ofthe dominant Anglo-American traditions of criticism in the mid-twentieth are ofcourse complex…. And philosophy and religion would be replaced by poetry inmodern society…and the single most influential common figure was the American poet, dramatist and critic T. S. Eliot.

Since the beginning, literature had been amedium of critical support for such Judeo-Christian religious doctrines as creation,covenant, exile, incarnation and redemption, and a source of relative stability forvarious moral and social orders based on their premises.

Eliot argued that this association between religion, literature and society hadhappened when society was moderately healthy and its various discourses in somerelation with one another were not always perfectly harmonious. So literature hadbeen either a monolithic reflection or a mode of subversion of society and religion, aseach discourse sets up its own creative and prophetic energies over and against theothers for a totalizing hegemony on its own terms.2 Gardener said, "I arrived at thecriterion that a religious poem was a poem concerned in some way with revelationand with man's response to it."

The fact that certain poems of Eliot have been included in the Faber Book of Religious Verse suggests that, at least, Gardner regardsthem as 'religious poems'. However, where Gardner feels the necessity to createcriteria by which to recognize religious literature, Eliot questions the validity of the concept of 'religious literature' as a distinct body of works, suggesting that allliterature is to some extent religious: I am convinced that we fail to realize how completely, and yet how

irrationally, we separate our literary from our religiousjudgments. If there could be a complete separation, perhaps it might not matter: butthe separation is not, and never can be, complete.4 Although Eliot speaks of religionin general, his personal focus is on Christianity; he explicitly states his desire for "aliterature which should be unconsciously, rather than deliberately and defiantly,Christian" (FK). In the context of a parallel desire for a world which is in itselfChristian, the idea that all literature is somehow connected with religion assumes thatthe basis for religion is something which transcends the individual mind; and from the Christian point of view, of course, this is emphatically so. As far as Christianity isconcerned, there is only one true religion; therefore, the world is 'Christian', createdby the Christian God, even if it does not realize this. The existence of this viewpointmust at least be acknowledged in order to fully understand Eliot's view of allliterature as being 'religious'.

Ideas of religion are always contentious, and ideas of revelation are often more so,even within the context of a religion. Christians believe that the revelation of God tohumankind in His incarnation on earth was for all mankind and for all time; so allliterature must on one level be "concerned with revelation and man's response to it": itmust constitute some kind of response, even if neither positive nor conscious, to thatrevelation. However, we must remember here that all Gods in Hindu philosophy arealso the incarned humans who came to balance the evil and the good. Eliot's conversion was no "Road to Damascus" experience, that 'revelation' would be agradual process mirrored in the body of his poetry as a whole. This has beensuggested by B. Rajan, who asserts that-Eliot's poetry is an advance, an inch-by-inchmovement up the stairway in which the end is significant because it both remembers and fulfils the beginning.

This sense of memory and fulfillment supports the idea of a gradual revelation,realized over a period of time; it also suggests a structure to Eliot's poetic hand whichis almost Biblical, reflecting the way in which the Old Testament prophecies lookforward to the New Testament and the coming of Christ, are fulfilled in him, and areremembered by him as he uses their language in direct quotations, adapted quotations,and a subtle

but complex framework of allusions. The parallels with Eliot's poetry areimmediately apparent. If this "advance" occurs in the macrocosm of the body ofEliot's poetry, it also occurs in the microcosm of a single poem; the image of the"stairway" immediately calls to mind Ash Wednesday, which mimetically reproducesthe struggle of the sinner through repentance and purgation and self- realization. Thepoet strives towards both the desired redemption and the finished poem: redemptionby the Word within the word. The poetic act itself, the ascent of the stair, represents

Eliot working out his own salvation in fear and trembling as he portrays this in almostall the leading characters of his plays, be it Gerontion, Harry, Celia or Becket.

Religion and poetry, spiritual and poetic development, seem here to be inseparably tangled. The idea of this dual advancement and improvement is reflected in theopinions of those critics who would describe Four Quartets as Eliot's greatest work, a literary and spiritual triumph; Watkins, however, argues that- After Eliot turned toAnglo-Catholicism in 1928, his poetic power began to wane. Because the subject ofhis later poetry treats a great and noble religious faith, a believer wishes to regard it asgreat and noble poetry. Moreover, presumably genuine Waste Landers would like tofind in the later poetry not only art but also the end of the search for grounds forbelief.

Toien offers a different view again of interlinked poetic and spiritual development; he sees Eliot's poetry as a progression "from the barren aimlessness" of The WasteLand to the highly directed, intensely focused Christian mysticism of his last major work, Four Quartets.

This apparent "barren aimlessness" seems incompatible with revelation or a meaningful response to it; yet The Waste Land displays intense spirituality, and could even be described as "religious" according to Gardner'scriterion. More "barren aimlessness" can be seen in Eliot's pre-Waste Land poetry,although even Prufrock expresses a momentary desire to be an instrument ofrevelation as he contemplates Lazarus and John the Baptist. Most obviously concerned with the Christian revelation, however, is "Gerontion", whose speakerreflects on the

confusion and doubt which attends man's desire for revelation: Therespective voices of poet and Pharisees express a longing for revelation, a desire to"see a sign", but when the sign comes it is "Swaddled with darkness"; Gerontionseems to blame the silent word and the darkness for his incomprehension, but theBible verses to which Eliot may be alluding when he speaks of "signs" and "wonders"rather imply that the hearer is at fault. Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard... How shall we escape, if we neglect sogreat salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs andwonders, and with divers miracles. Whatever may be the arguments about Eliot, no one can deny the Christian Of hisearly works. Eliot has said, “The form in which I began to write, in 1908 or 1909, wasdirectly drawn from the study of Laforgue together with the later Elizabethan drama;and I do not know anyone who started from exactly that point.” Elsewhere he said: "The kind of poetry that I needed, to teach me the use of my own voice, did not existin English at all; it was only found in French,” and Leonard Unger concludes that,“insofar as Eliot started from an exact point, it was exclusively and emphatically thepoetry of Laforgue.” To a lesser extent, other Symbolists, the metaphysical poets,Donne, Dryden, and Dante influenced him. “His appreciation of Shakespeare,” writesSir Herbert Read “was subject to his moral or religious scruples.” With SamuelJohnson, whom, according to Sir Herbert, Eliot “honored above all other Englishwriters,” he shared “a faith in God and the fear of death.” God, birth, death, sin andsuffering, expiation of sins, salvation, martyrdom, redemption, revelation, andtemptation cannot be in the Christian domain they are found in every religion andphilosophy. When we discuss about Eliot we must interpret his work in both concernsthat is the eastern and the western philosophy as he was a master of both and his workcontain allusions from both fields. With all these statements of Eliot himself and theother renowned authors of the English Literature, it is very clear that Eliot was having a faith in god and the fear of death and he wrote to preach spirituality and religiontaking references from the east and the west. We can no doubt conclude that he wasinclined towards the

mystery of life and death and the sole purpose of human life onearth for that reason may be he studied eastern philosophy at the young age trying toexplore the human and the divine. Evolutional philosophy is applied to the study of literature as to everything else. It has shown that every great work of genius mustdepend on previous authors and the religion and philosophy contained in the availableliterature. Beautiful work of art comes out of traditional and individual influences. Inaddition, in case of Eliot it was religion and Philosophy too.

Our aim is to explore the works of Tom with special reference to the BiblicalAllusions and the Liturgical Usage in it. However, it cannot be denied that he washighly influenced by the Bhagavad-Gita as he studied eastern philosophy during hisHarvard years. He even wrote his thesis on philosophy however, he had never gone toget his doctor‟s degree from there. The following main influences can be found on him:-

1. French symbolists such as Mallarme, La Forgue, Baudelaire, Corbeere etc.
2. Imagists T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound
3. Oriental Philosophy of the Gita, the Upanishads, the Buddhist Philosophy
4. Dante
5. The Metaphysical Poets and John Donne
6. Contemporary English Life Style
7. Contemporary religious crisis amongst the civilization
8. Marital Life with Vivienne Haigh Wood

He drew his intellectual provisions from Dante, Shakespeare, the Bible, St. John of Cross and other Christian mystics, the Greek Dramatists, Baudelaire and theBhagavad- Gita. The Wasteland, Four Quartets, Ash Wednesday, Murder in theCathedral hall show influences of Indian philosophy and mysticism on him. Eliot wasa twenty-three years‟ old student at Harvard when he first came across Indian philosophy and religion. What sparked his interest in the Vedic thought is notrecorded but soon he was occupied with Sanskrit, Pali and the metaphysics ofPatanjali. He also read the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads as is apparent from theconcluding lines of the Wasteland. The Wasteland ends with the reiteration of the three cardinal virtues from the second

Brahmana passage in the BrihadaranyakaUpanishad: damayata-restraint, datta-charity, dayadhvam-compassion and the state ofmind that follows obedience to the commands is indicated by blessing ShantihShantihShantih, that Eliot himself roughly translated as "the peace that passethunderstanding". The Bhagavad made a more stable impression on Eliot. It is seenrelevant not only to the Wasteland but to the Four Quartets, The Dry Salvages andthe Family Reunion. The forbearance taught by the Bhagavad-Gita is highlighted inEliot‟s use of imagery drawn from several religions. As professor, Philip R. Headingshas remarked in his study of the poet, "No serious student of Eliot‟s poetry can afford to ignore his early and continued interest in the Bhagavad-Gita. In sagacity, Eliotfollows in the massive route of Emerson and Thoreau and the early transcendentalists.

There is a keener insight into what endure and should endure and incessant demandthat all traditions of literature, music, painting, architecture and philosophy be put tothere proper psychic or religious applications. In this way, Eliot‟s message is themessage of the Gita, of the essential utility of all activity: a message for all era but itmust be united with the resources, tenor and the viewpoint of his poems. Besides thiswhen we see the holy Grail legend, King Fisher myth in the Wasteland we find Eliotdemonstrating their sins and teaching men the importance of maintaining purity atbody and soul. When he tells men to turn towards God he works to remove hesitationin men with spiritual crisis and motivates them to ask God for mercy as the God isever ready to forgive, here he sounds like a catholic priest conducting Lenten AshWednesday mass service incorporating the prayers of catholic liturgy and Ash Wednesday‟s message teaching men to turn towards God asking for forgiveness. It is an attempt of ours to locate the similarities between the two great epics TheBible and the Bhagavad-Gita of Christian and Hindu religion and to compare theirexistence in Thomas Stearns Eliot‟s literature.

8.10 LET'S SUM UP

T.S. Eliot published his first poetic masterpiece, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in 1915. In 1921, he wrote the poem "The Waste Land" while recovering from exhaustion. The dense, allusion-heavy poem went on to redefine the genre and became one of the most talked about poems in literary history. For his lifetime of poetic innovation, Eliot won the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948. Part of the ex-pat community of the 1920s, he spent most of his life in Europe, dying in London, England, in 1965.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1.What were the various essays written by Eliot.

Answer……

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…….

Q2. Give your brief on Gridiron of the Research on Eliot.

Answer……

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8.11 KEYWORDS

1. An **inguinal hernia** is a protrusion of abdominal-cavity contents through the inguinal canal.
2. The **Igorot** are any of various ethnic groups in the mountains of northern Luzon, Philippines, all of whom keep, or have kept until recently, their traditional religion and way of life.
3. A **migraine** is a primary headache disorder characterized by recurrent headaches that are moderate to severe.
4. **Colitis** is an inflammation of the colon.
5. The **Upanishads**, a part of the Vedas, are ancient Sanskrit texts of spiritual teaching and ideas of Hinduism, some of which are shared with religious traditions like Buddhism and Jainism.

8.12 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What literary criticism Eilot faced?

2. What is Eliot biggest achievement in Early life?
3. “now feeling toward a new form and style”, Why eliot wrote this?
4. What he wrote to JH Wood? And Why?

8.13 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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6. London. 1972. Pp.377.
7. 4. Kermode, Frank. T.S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature", in Selected Prose of
8. T.S. Eliot ed. London. Faber and Faber Ltd., pp 97-106 (Abbrv. FK)

8.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 8.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 8.3

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Answer 1 : Check Section 8.7

Answer 2 : Check Section 8.9

UNIT: 9 ELIOT – TRADITION AND INDIVIDUAL TALENT

STRUCTURE

9.0 OBJECTIVE

In this Chapter you will learn about Eliot and his Tradition and Individual Talent. This essay provides insight of his Eliot works . It provides critical analysis and summary of the Play and helps to understands it more. It helps to achieve its following objective:

- Summary
- Analysis
- Its Three Parts
- Traditional Elements: Their Significance
- Dynamic Conception Of Tradition: Its Value
- The Function Of Tradition
- Sense Of Tradition: Its Real Meaning

9.1 INTRODUCTION

"Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) is an essay written by poet and literary critic T. S. Eliot. The essay was first published in The Egoist (1919) and later in Eliot's first book of criticism, "The Sacred Wood" (1920). The essay is also available in Eliot's "Selected Prose" and "Selected Essays".

While Eliot is most often known for his poetry, he also contributed to the field of literary criticism. In this dual role, he acted as poet-critic, comparable to Sir Philip Sidney and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "Tradition and the Individual Talent" is one of the more well-known works that Eliot produced in his critic capacity. It formulates Eliot's influential conception of the relationship between the poet and preceding literary tradition.

9.2 CONTENT OF THE ESSAY

This essay is divided into three parts: first the concept of "Tradition," then the Theory of Impersonal Poetry, and finally the conclusion.

Eliot presents his conception of tradition and the definition of the poet and poetry in relation to it. He wishes to correct the fact that, as he perceives it, "in English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence." Eliot posits that, though the English tradition generally upholds the belief that art progresses through change – a separation from tradition, literary advancements are instead recognised only when they conform to the tradition. Eliot, a classicist, felt that the true incorporation of tradition into literature was unrecognised, that tradition, a word that "seldom...

appear[s] except in a phrase of censure," was actually a thus-far unrealised element of literary criticism.

For Eliot, the term "tradition" is imbued with a special and complex character. It represents a "simultaneous order," by which Eliot means a historical timelessness – a fusion of past and present – and, at the same time, a sense of present temporality. A poet must embody "the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer," while, simultaneously, expressing their contemporary environment. Eliot challenges the common perception that a poet's greatness and individuality lie in their departure from their predecessors; he argues that "the most individual parts of his [the poet's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously." Eliot claims that this "historical sense" is not only a resemblance to traditional works but an awareness and understanding of their relation to his poetry.

This fidelity to tradition, however, does not require the great poet to forfeit novelty in an act of surrender to repetition. Rather, Eliot has a much more dynamic and progressive conception of the poetic process: novelty is possible only through tapping into tradition. When a poet engages in the creation of new work, they realise an aesthetic "ideal order," as it has been established by the literary tradition that has come before them. As such, the act of artistic creation does not take place in a vacuum. The introduction of a new work alters the cohesion of this existing order, and causes a readjustment of the old to accommodate the new. The inclusion of the new work alters the way in which the past is seen; elements of the past that are noted and realised. In Eliot’s own words, "What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art that preceded it." Eliot refers to this organic tradition, this developing canon, as the "mind of Europe." The private mind is subsumed by this more massive one.

This leads to Eliot’s so-called "Impersonal Theory" of poetry. Since the poet engages in a "continual surrender of himself" to the vast order of tradition, artistic creation is a process of depersonalisation. The mature poet is viewed as a medium, through which tradition is channelled and elaborated. They compare the poet to a catalyst in a chemical reaction, in which the reactants are feelings and emotions that are synthesised to

create an artistic image that captures and relays these same feelings and emotions. While the mind of the poet is necessary for the production, it emerges unaffected by the process. The artist stores feelings and emotions and properly unites them into a specific combination, which is the artistic product. What lends greatness to a work of art are not the feelings and emotions themselves, but the nature of the artistic process by which they are synthesised. The artist is responsible for creating "the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place." And, it is the intensity of fusion that renders art great. In this view, Eliot rejects the theory that art expresses metaphysical unity in the soul of the poet. The poet is a depersonalised vessel, a mere medium.

Great works do not express the personal emotion of the poet. The poet does not reveal their own unique and novel emotions, but rather, by drawing on ordinary ones and channelling them through the intensity of poetry, they express feelings that surpass, altogether, experienced emotion. This is what Eliot intends when he discusses poetry as an "escape from emotion." Since successful poetry is impersonal and, therefore, exists independent of its poet, it outlives the poet and can incorporate into the timeless "ideal order" of the "living" literary tradition.

Another essay found in Selected Essays relates to this notion of the impersonal poet. In "Hamlet and His Problems" Eliot presents the phrase "objective correlative." The theory is that the expression of emotion in art can be achieved by a specific, and almost formulaic, prescription of a set of objects, including events and situations. A particular emotion is created by presenting its correlated objective sign. The author is depersonalised in this conception, since he is the mere effecter of the sign. And, it is the sign, and not the poet, which creates emotion.

The implications here separate Eliot's idea of talent from the conventional definition (just as his idea of Tradition is separate from the conventional definition), one so far from it, perhaps, that he chooses never to directly label it as talent. Whereas the conventional definition of talent, especially in the arts, is a genius that one is born with. Not so for Eliot. Instead, talent is acquired through a careful study of poetry, claiming that Tradition, "cannot be inherited, and if you want it, you

must obtain it by great labour." Eliot asserts that it is absolutely necessary for the poet to study, to have an understanding of the poets before them, and to be well versed enough that they can understand and incorporate the "mind of Europe" into their poetry. But the poet's study is unique – it is knowledge that "does not encroach," and that does not "deaden or pervert poetic sensibility." It is, to put it most simply, a poetic knowledge – knowledge observed through a poetic lens. This ideal implies that knowledge gleaned by a poet is not knowledge of facts, but knowledge which leads to a greater understanding of the mind of Europe. As Eliot explains, "Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum."

9.3 ELIOT AND NEW CRITICISM

Unwittingly, Eliot inspired and informed the movement of New Criticism. This is somewhat ironic, since he later criticised their intensely detailed analysis of texts as unnecessarily tedious. Yet, he does share with them the same focus on the aesthetic and stylistic qualities of poetry, rather than on its ideological content. The New Critics resemble Eliot in their close analysis of particular passages and poems.

9.4 CRITICISM OF ELIOT

Eliot's theory of literary tradition has been criticised for its limited definition of what constitutes the canon of that tradition. He assumes the authority to choose what represents great poetry, and his choices have been criticised on several fronts. For example, Harold Bloom disagrees with Eliot's condescension towards Romantic poetry, which, in The Metaphysical Poets (1921) he criticises for its "dissociation of sensibility." Moreover, many believe Eliot's discussion of the literary tradition as the "mind of Europe" reeks of Euro-centrism. However, it should be recognized that Eliot supported many Eastern and thus non-European works of literature such as the Mahabharata. Eliot was arguing the importance of a complete sensibility: he didn't particularly care what it was at the time of tradition and the individual talent. His own work is heavily influenced by non-Western traditions. In his broadcast talk "The

Unity of European Culture," he said, "Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages and while I was chiefly interested at that time in Philosophy, I read a little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility." His self-evaluation was confirmed by B. P. N. Sinha, who writes that Eliot went beyond Indian ideas to Indian form: "The West has preoccupied itself almost exclusively with the philosophy and thoughts of India. One consequence of this has been a total neglect of Indian forms of expression, i.e. of its literature. T. S. Eliot is the one major poet whose work bears evidence of intercourse with this aspect of Indian culture" (qtd. in The Composition of The Four Quartets). He does not account for a non-white and non-masculine tradition. As such, his notion of tradition stands at odds with feminist, post-colonial and minority theories.

Harold Bloom presents a conception of tradition that differs from that of Eliot. Whereas Eliot believes that the great poet is faithful to his predecessors and evolves in a concordant manner, Bloom (according to his theory of "anxiety of influence") envisions the "strong poet" to engage in a much more aggressive and tumultuous rebellion against tradition.

In 1964, his last year, Eliot published in a reprint of The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, a series of lectures he gave at Harvard University in 1932 and 1933, a new preface in which he called "Tradition and the Individual Talent" the most juvenile of his essays (although he also indicated that he did not repudiate it.)

9.5 SUMMARY

The aim of this essay is to explore the meaning of the most well-known essay,“Tradition and the Individual Talent” by T.S. Eliot generally. This essay also looks at different viewpoints about this controversial essay as some critics assert that Eliot has written this essay to justify his own shortcomings, but they neglect the fact that Eliot not only writes an essay; he also saves the life of many writers who have been criticised by certain critics while evaluating their works for they connected the poetry to/with the poet, but Eliot taught them how to look at these two as two different things, however, some other critics praise it as it is a basis for

new critics to know how to evaluate any work. The researcher sums up the findings at the end of this essay.

Eliot's essay is one of the most successful essays written in the twentieth century and of which different interpretations are available. It was first published as an anonymous work in "The Egoist, a London literary review, in September and December1919", (Murphy, 2007: 405). This essay is a major "contributor" to the rise of modernism and "hegemony", (Reeves, 2006: 107) and Das considers it "a milestone in the field of literary criticism in the twentieth century" (Das, 2005: 229). Eliot's aim in writing his most famous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" is to emphasise the significance of the link of a poem by a poet to other poems by other authors, which was called "literary history" but in recent times termed "inter textuality" (Adams, 1971: 1).

The essay consists of three sections, in the first part of the essay T.S. Eliot gives a definition of tradition and looks at the connection of any poem by any poet to other poetry written by other writers that constitute "a literary tradition". In section two of the essay, Eliot examines the link between the poem and the poet. In the end, Eliot specifies the shortcomings and purpose of the essay, in other words; Eliot changes his emphasis from the author to the written work. No doubt this essay is a principle for the new critics to rely on in building up their theories of criticism (Das, 2005: 229).It is very rare to talk about tradition in English writings, although its name from time to time, is applied to deplore its absence. One cannot mention the word "the tradition" or to "a tradition"; mostly, the adjective is used instead one is saying the poetry of this writer and or that writer is "traditional" or very "traditional". The word might rarely appear except in a disapproving phrase. On the contrary, it is ambiguously approving, carrying the meaning, as to the masterpiece accepted, of some acceptable renewal archaeologically. It is hard to change this term concordant with English speakers barring this interesting mention to the comforting archaeological science(Tradition and the Individual Talent).

No doubt this word does not seem to be seen in one's evaluations of the existing writers; dead and living. It is noticed that each separate nation and race has both creative and critical turn of thinking, which belong to

itself. This becomes clearer of its negative aspects and limitations of its dangerous customs more than those of its creative intellect. One may know or may think that he knows, from the great amount of critical writing that is emerged in the French language the critical ways and approaches or custom among the French people; one then, might conclude that people are so unconscious that those who are from France, are more criticised than the English, and might even pride to themselves slightly in a way that the French are not more spontaneous. The French may perhaps are, and the English must know thatcriticism is unchangeable like breathing (Tradition and the Individual Talent). The word tradition has a wider meaning than the past or the present alone, but is the amalgamation of the two as well as the immediate and new information that poets can achieve as he explains in After Strange Gods, Traditions are not solely, or even primarily the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represents the blood kinship of 'the same people living in the same place' (Das, 2005: 230).

The significance of tradition is in such a way that Eliot warns readers and critics to perceive that tradition does not merely mean imitation of the previous writers as it is not something easy that every writer can do it; it needs great labour. Eliot explicates the meaning of tradition, which includes the "historical sense" of the amalgamation of the past and the present. So, when a writer intends to write he takes the history of European literature, from Homer to the present time of writing on his work, into consideration to enable him to produce a piece of literary work (Das, 2005: 231). One of the things that is taken into account when praising a poet, by the critics is the degree of resemblance to others and according to it, the least his work resembles other's works, the best it becomes and on the contrary, and it is called originality,

(Tradition and the Individual Talent).

Eliot also makes differentiation between individual talent and tradition. Some critics dwell on the notion that it is individual talent that can

constitute the tradition, but it should not be forgotten that these two, "tradition"and "the individual talent" are closely related to each other; one can complete the other, in other words; each of the two is dependent upon the other. Even those writers who reject the influence of tradition on the time that they comprise any piece of literary work, unknowingly, use certain words and expressions as well as ideas from the dead poets of the previous ages.In the process of evaluating the poet's work, critics pretend to discover individual aspects to the work and to explore the unusual "essence" of the writer. Critics become satisfied by the work if they find the work not similar to the previous works, especially from the works of the previous ages; critics strive to see the work precisely to find something isolated and different to appear interesting; this is, on the one hand (Traditionand the Individual Talent).

On the other hand, if critics intend to evaluate a poet without this prejudice, they shall often discover that both the best and even the most individual approaches of the poet's work might be those parts in which the late poets, his ancestors, declared their immortality very enthusiastically. Yet if the only form of tradition, of teaching, consisted in pursuing the ways of the present generation in front of the critics in a random or fearful devotion to its achievements, "tradition" with no doubt must be dejected. Critics have noticed many similar normal currents disappeared in the "sand" quickly; and newness is preferable reiteration. Tradition has a much wider importance, but it is not hereditary, and when one wants it, he must strive to gain it by unlimited effort.The greatest writers, Eliot argues, write from a sense of history. This sense of history, which one may call approximately necessary to someone who would stay to be a poet outside his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense includes an insight, not merely about the past, nevertheless, of its being there; the historical sense requires a writer to write not only with his own generation in his skeleton, but with an understanding that the entire European literature from Homer and within it, the entire literature of his own country has a concurrent existence and composes a similar order at the same time. This documented appreciation, which is a sense of the lack of time and of the "temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together", turns a literary figure "traditional". Furthermore, it is what,

that makes a writer most intensely become aware of his place in time, and of the living writers of his period (Tradition and the Individual Talent).

Poets, artists of any type, can have a complete meaning with the previous ancestors. His weight, his indebtedness is the appreciation of his link to the dead poets and artists. One cannot appreciate any writer independently he must be set, for "contrast and comparison", amongst the dead writers. This is considered as the aesthetics of literary works, not only historical criticism. The obligation that he shall follow, that he shalladhere, "is not one-sided"; whatever takes place in the time of creating a new work of art is something that occurs synchronously to all the works of art, which took precedence. The existing buildings mould a perfect order among themselves, which is adjusted by the commencement of the new artistic works amongst them. The existing order is perfect before the arrival of a new work; for order to continue after the supervening of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, significance of every work of art towards the all, are revaluated and this is agreement between the "old and the new". Whoever person has confirmed this notion

of order, of the design of European, of English literature, will not find it incredible that the past should be replaced by the present to the extent the present is led by the past.

Moreover, the poet who is familiar to this will be familiar with considerable hardships and responsibilities (Tradition and the Individual Talent).Surprisingly, he will be conscious also that he must certainly be judged by the principles from the past. The word judged is used, not amputated, by them; not judged to be similar to them in goodness or in being worse or even better than, the dead; and surely not judged by the standards of dead critics. It is two things, a judgment and a comparison, and the two are measured by each other (Tradition and the Individual Talent). The point of view that Eliot is facing difficulty to oppose is probably connected to "the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity to the soul" (Tradition and the

Individual Talent). Eliot asserts that the poet does not have a "personality" to express,but he has a particular medium, which is not even connected to personality, in which ideas and experiences mix in strange and unpredicted methods (Tradition and the Individual Talent).

The essay also suggests pondering at the edge of metaphysics or occultism, and confines itself to such realistic conclusions as can be practiced by the person in command who is absorbed in poetry. To deviate hobby from the poet to the poetry is an admirable aspiration; as it would contribute to a "juster" evaluation of actual poetry, which is to be either good or bad or both. The majority of people who value what one can express of heartfelt strong feeling in poetry, and the minority of people, is seen who can value scientific brilliance. However, very few know when there is the expression of significant emotion, emotion, which has its life to the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is not personal. As a result, the poet cannot obtain the sense of impersonality without succumbing himself completely to the work to be implemented. Moreover, he may not be able to understand what is to be done except if he experiences what is not only the present, but the past as well, but if he is aware, not of those who are dead and those who already living.). Furthermore, Meerpohl Marion states that Eliot believes that the past is always a continuous help for the present authors to understand the present situations in both literature and the community (Meerpohl, 2004: 15).

Eliot strove to consider the text as the Bible of the scholar rather than the poet as the work can carry the ideas of the author. Eliot is right when he states that critics must concentrate on the text for analysis rather than the writer because the text represents the writer; that is the reason the writer's biography should be separated from the text when analysing it as this would be helpful in keeping the impersonality of the work. The reason Eliot considers the impersonality of poetry as an important method in writing to follow – is too much concentration of the Romantic and Georgian poets as William Wordsworth believed that poetry stems from a very powerful feeling and emotion of the poet spontaneously (Wordsworth, 1984: 598). Eliot was different from the other critics or poets as he was not pursuing a new trend of writing without knowing

what it is. Eliot benefited from the works written over the past time, for his own works, and tradition is certainly one of those rich sources that one can rely on.To conclude, Eliot believes that a critic must have his emotions impersonalised.

This impersonality can be obtained via surrendering himself completely to the work that is to be done. The poet can be conscious of these things if he acquires a sense of tradition. A single author can contribute to the tradition when, for example, the poet becomes personal but his treatment of writing should not be subjective. Thus, it can draw the attention of all.

The poet must not surrender to anything less important than himself. He must surrender to something of a great value which is the tradition because there is nothing that Eliot has benefited from more than the past and tradition. The other writers share the same process in their writings, but it is hard to confess that one is writing of the influence of the culture of the previous dead poets. Some authors think that they are back-warded if they still in their period follow culture and even their predecessors as they may have forgotten that the greatness and the value of literary works or any other works, is not based on the period, but it is rather dependent on the merit and the quality of the work that the writer could present in all his power and strength.

Furthermore, there are many new writers who think that culture is no longer valuable or the past was only important for the past time; their works are not as good as those works that allude to the culture or the past events and even their works cannot turn them immortal, but as it is seen that the status of the dead poets or authors is called death in life, not, on the contrary, life in death. Culture is a strong castle for writers and authors, and it can serve writers in the same way if they want to, in their writings.

Moreover, culture and the individual talent are not two separated things; they are strongly linked as an individual's life is mainly amongst the culture, and that is why can leave an influence on him.The essay is very significant because it emphasises on the value of culture, which is almost forgotten by many writers and even critics while evaluating any literary work or composing any piece of literature. According to Eliot's view, no

work of art can stand alone without having a basis from the previous works by previous authors

9.6 ANALYSIS

'Tradition and the Individual Talent' was first published in 1919 in the literary magazine The Egoist. It was published in two parts, in the September and December issues. The essay was written by a young American poet named T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), who had been living in London for the last few years, and who had published his first volume of poems, Prufrock and Other Observations, in 1917. You can read 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' here.

'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919) sees Eliot defending the role of tradition in helping new writers to be modern. This is one of the central paradoxes of Eliot's writing – indeed, of much modernism – that in order to move forward it often looks to the past, even more directly and more pointedly than previous poets had. This theory of tradition also highlights Eliot's anti-Romanticism. Unlike the Romantics' idea of original creation and inspiration, Eliot's concept of tradition foregrounds how important older writers are to contemporary writers: Homer and Dante are Eliot's contemporaries because they inform his work as much as those alive in the twentieth century do. James Joyce looked back to ancient Greek myth (the story of Odysseus) for his novel set in modern Dublin, Ulysses (1922). Ezra Pound often looked back to the troubadours and poets of the Middle Ages. H. D.'s Imagist poetry was steeped in Greek references and ideas. As Eliot puts it, 'Someone said: "The dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did." Precisely, and they are that which we know.' He goes on to argue that a modern poet should write with the literature of all previous ages 'in his bones', as though Homer and Shakespeare were his (or her) contemporaries: 'This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal T. S. Eliot 2and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.'

In short, knowledge of writers of the past makes contemporary writers both part of that tradition and part of the contemporary scene. Eliot's own poetry, for instance, is simultaneously in the tradition of Homer and Dante and the work of a modern poet, and it is because of his debt to Homer and Dante that he is both modern and traditional. If this sounds like a paradox, consider how Shakespeare is often considered both a 'timeless' poet ('Not of an age, but for all time', as his friend Ben Jonson said) whose work is constantly being reinvented, but is also understood in the context of Elizabethan and Jacobean social and political attitudes. Similarly, in using Dante in his own poetry, Eliot at once makes Dante 'modern' and contemporary, and himself – by association – part of the wider poetic tradition.

Eliot's essay goes on to champion impersonality over personality. That is, the poet's personality does not matter, as it's the poetry that s/he produces that is important. Famously, he observes: 'Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.'

This is more or less a direct riposte to William Wordsworth's statement (in the 'Preface' to Lyrical Ballads in 1800) that 'poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. Once again, Eliot sets himself apart from such a Romantic notion of poetry. This is in keeping with his earlier argument about the importance of tradition: the poet's personality does not matter, only how their work responds to, and fits into, the poetic tradition.

Eliot's example of Homer is pertinent here: we know nothing of the poet who wrote The Odyssey for certain, but we don't need to. The Odyssey itself is what matters, not the man (or men – or woman!) who wrote it. Poetry should be timeless and universal, transcending the circumstances out of which it grew, and transcending the poet's own generation and lifetime. (Eliot's argument raises an interesting question: can self-evidently personal poetry – e.g. by confessional poets like Sylvia Plath, or Romantics like Wordsworth – not also be timeless and universal?

Evidently it can, as these poets' works have outlived the poets who wrote them.)

We might also bear in mind that Eliot knew that great poets often incorporated part of themselves into their work – he would do it himself, so that, although it would be naive to read The Waste Land as being 'about' Eliot's failed marriage to his first wife, we can nevertheless see aspects of his marriage informing the poem. And in 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca', Eliot would acknowledge that the poet of poets, Shakespeare, must have done such a thing: the Bard 'was occupied with the struggle – which alone constitutes life for a poet – to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal'. For Eliot, great poets turn personal experience into impersonal poetry, but this nevertheless means that their poetry often stems from the personal. It is the poet's task to transmute personal feelings into something more universal. Eliot is rather vague about how a poet is to do this – leaving others to ponder it at length.

Check Your Progress I:

Q1.Summarize Tradition and Individual Talent in your own words?

Answer……

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Q2. Discuss and analyse Tradition and Individual Talent .

Answer……

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9.7 A MANIFESTO OF ELIOT'S CRITICAL CREED

The essay Tradition and Individual Talent was first published in 1919, in the Times Literary Supplement, as a critical article. The essay may be regarded as an unofficial manifesto of Eliot's critical creed, for it contains all those critical principles from which his criticism has been derived ever since. The seeds which have been sown here come to fruition in his subsequent essays. It is a declaration of Eliot's critical creed, and these principles are the basis of all his subsequent criticism.

9.8 ITS THREE PARTS

The essay is divided into three parts. The first part gives us Eliot's concept of tradition, and in the second part is developed his theory of the impersonality of poetry. The short, third part is in the nature of a conclusion, or summing up of the whole discussion.

9.9 TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Eliot begins the essay by pointing out that the word 'tradition' is generally regarded as a word of censure. It is a word disagreeable to the English ears. When the English praise a poet, they praise him for those-aspects of his work which are 'individual' and original. It is supposed that his chief merit lies in such parts. This undue stress on individuality shows that the English have an uncritical turn of mind. They praise the poet for the wrong thing. If they examine the matter critically with an unprejudiced mind, they will realise that the best and the most individual part of a poet's work is that which shows the maximum influence of the writers of the past. To quote his own words: "Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice, we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual part of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.'

9.10 THE LITERARY TRADITION: WAYS IN WHICH IT CAN BE ACQUIRED

This brings Eliot to a consideration of the value and significance of tradition. Tradition does not mean a blind adherence to the ways of the previous generation or generations. This would be mere slavish imitation, a mere repetition of what has already been achieved, and "novelty is better than repetition." Tradition in the sense of passive repetition is to be discouraged. For Eliot, Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. Tradition in the true sense of the term cannot be inherited, it can only be obtained by hard labour. This labour is the labour of knowing the past writers. It is the critical labour of sifting the good from the bad, and of knowing what is good and useful. Tradition

can be obtained only by those who have the historical sense. The historical sense involves a perception, "not only of the pastness of the past, but also of its presence: One who has the historic sense feels that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer down to his own day, including the literature of his own country, forms one continuous literary tradition" He realises that the past exists in the present, and that the past and the present form one simultaneous order. This historical sense is the sense of the timeless and the temporal, as well as of the timeless and the temporal together. It is this historic sense which makes a writer traditional. A writer with the sense of tradition is fully conscious of his own generation, of his place in the present, but he is also acutely conscious of his relationship with the writers of the past. In brief, the sense of tradition implies (a) a recognition of the continuity of literature, (b) a critical judgment as to which of the writers of the past continue to be significant in the present, and (c) a knowledge of these significant writers obtained through painstaking effort. Tradition represents the accumulated wisdom and experience of ages, and so its knowledge is essential for really great and noble achievements.

9.11 DYNAMIC CONCEPTION OF TRADITION: ITS VALUE

Emphasising further the value of tradition, Eliot points out that no writer has his value and significance in isolation. To judge the work of a poet or an artist, we must compare and contrast his work with the works of poets and artist in the past. Such comparison and contrast is essential for forming an idea of the real worth and significance of a new writer and his work. Eliot's conception of tradition is a dynamic one. According to his view, tradition is not anything fixed and static; it is constantly changing, growing, and becoming different from what it is. A writer in the present must seek guidance from the past, he must conform to the literary tradition. But just as the past directs and guides the present, so the present alters and modifies the past. When a new work of art is created, if it is really new and original, the whole literary tradition is modified, though ever so slightly. The relationship between the past and the present is not one-sided; it is a reciprocal relationship. The past directs the

present, and is itself modified and altered by the present. To quote the words of Eliot himself: "The existing monuments form and ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered." Every great poet like Virgil, Dante, or Shakespeare, adds somebiing to the literary tradition out of which the future poetry will be written.

9.12 THE FUNCTION OF TRADITION

The work of a poet in the present is to be compared and contrasted with works of the past, and judged by the standards of the past. But this judgment does not mean determining good or bad. It does not mean deciding whether the present work is better or worse than works of the past. An author in the present is certainly not to be judged by the principles and the standards of the past. The comparison is to be made for knowing the facts, all the facts, about the new work of art. The comparison is made for the purposes of analysis, and for forming a better understanding of the new. Moreover, this comparison is reciprocal. The past helps us to understand the present, and the present throws light on the past. It is in this way alone that we can form an idea of what is really individual and new. It is by comparison alone that we can sift the traditional from the individual elements in a given work of art.

9.13 SENSE OF TRADITION: ITS REAL MEANING

Eliot now explains further what he means by a sense of tradition. The sense of tradition does not mean that the poet should try to know the past as a whole, take it to be a lump or mass without any discrimination. Such a course is impossible as well as undesirable. The past must be examined critically and only the significant in it should be acquired. The sense of tradition does not also mean that the poet should know only a few poets whom he admires. This is a sign of immaturity and inexperience. Neither should a poet be content merely to know some particular age or period

which he likes. This may be pleasant and delightful, but it will not constitute a sense of tradition. A sense of tradition in the real sense means a consciousness, "of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations". In other words, to know the tradition, the poet must judge critically what are the main trends and what are not. He must confine himself to the main trends to the exclusion of all that is incidental or topical. The poet must possess the critical gift in ample measure. He must also realise that the main literary trends are not determined by the great poets alone. Smaller poets also are significant. They are not to be ignored.

9.14 WORKS OF ART: THEIR PERMANENCE

The poet must also realise that art never improves, though its material is never the same. The mind of Europe may change, but this change does not mean that great writers like Shakespeare and Homer have grown outdated and lost their significance. The great works of art never lose their significance, for there is no qualitative improvement in art. There may be refinement, there may be development, but from the point of view of the artist there is no improvement. (For example, it will not be correct to say that the art of Shakespeare is better and higher than that of Eliot. Their works are of different kinds, for the material on which they worked was different.)

9.15 AWARENESS OF THE PAST: THE POET'S DUTY TO ACQUIRE IT

T.S. Eliot is conscious of the criticism that will be made of his theory of tradition. His view of tradition requires, it will be said, a ridiculous amount of erudition. It will be pointed out that there have been great poets who were not learned, and further that too much learning kills sensibility. However, knowledge does not merely mean bookish knowledge, and the capacity for acquiring knowledge differs from person to person. Some can absorb knowledge easily, while others must sweat for it. Shakespeare, for example, could know more of Roman history

from Plutarch than most men can from the British Museum. It is the duty of every poet to acquire, to the best of his ability, this knowledge of the past, and he must continue to acquire this consciousness throughout his career. Such awareness of tradition, sharpens poetic creation.

9.16 IMPERSONALITY OF POETRY: EXTINCTION OF PERSONALITY

The artist must continually surrender himself to something which is more valuable than himself, i.e. the literary tradition. He must allow his poetic sensibility to be shaped and modified by the past. He must continue to acquire the sense of tradition throughout his career. In the beginning, his self, his individuality, may assert itself, but as his powers mature there must be greater and greater extinction of personality. He must acquire greater and greater objectivity. His emotions and passions must be depersonalised; he must be as impersonal and objective as a scientist. The personality of the artist is not important; the important thing is his sense of tradition. A good poem is a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. He must forget his personal joys and sorrows, and he absorbed in acquiring a sense of tradition and expressing it in his poetry. Thus, the poet's personality is merely a medium, having the same significance as a catalytic agent, or a receptacle in which chemical reactions take place. That is why Eliot holds that, "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon thepoetry."

9.17 THE POETIC PROCESS: THE ANALOGY OF THE CATALYST

In the second part of the essay, Eliot develops further his theory of the impersonality of poetry. He compares the mind of the poet to a catalyst and the process of poetic creation to the process of a chemical reaction. Just as chemical reactions take place in the presence of a catalyst alone, so also the poet's mind is the catalytic agent for combining different emotions into something new. Suppose there is a jar containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide. These two gases combine to form sulphurous acid when a fine filament of platinum is introduced into the jar. The

combination takes place only in the presence of the piece of platinum, but the metal itself does not undergo any change. It remains inert, neutral and unaffected. The mind of the poet is like the catalytic agent. It is necessary for new combinations of emotions and experiences to take place, but it itself does not undergo any change during the process of poetic combination. The mind of the poet is constantly forming emotions and experiences into new wholes, but the new combination does not contain even a trace of the poet's mind, just as the newly formed sulphurous acid does not contain any trace of platinum. In the case of a young and immature poet, his mind, his personal emotions and experiences, may find some expression in his composition, but, says Eliot, "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him "will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." The test of the maturity of an artist is the completeness with which his men digests and transmutes the passions which form the substance of his poetry. The man suffers, i.e. has experiences, but it is his mind which transforms his experiences into something new and different. The personality of the poet does not find expression in his poetry; it acts like a catalytic agent in the process of poetic composition.

9.18 EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

The experiences which enter the poetic process, says Eliot, may be of two kinds. They are emotions and feelings. Poetry may be composed out of emotions only or out of feelings only, or out of both. T.S. Eliot here distinguishes between emotions and feelings, but he does not state what this difference is, "Nowhere else in his writings", says A.G. George, "is this distinction maintained', neither does he adequately distinguish between the meaning of the two words". The distinction should, therefore, be ignored, more so as it has no bearing on his impersonal theory of poetry.

9.19 POETRY AS ORGANISATION: INTENSITY OF THE POETIC PROCESS

Eliot next compares the poet's mind to a jar or receptacle in which are stored numberless feelings, emotions, etc., which remain there in an unorganised and chaotic form till, "all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together." Thus poetry is organisation rather than inspiration. And the greatness of a poem does not depend upon the greatness or even the intensity of the emotions, which are the components of the poem, but upon the intensity of the process of poetic composition. Just as a chemical reaction takes place under pressure, so also intensity is needed for the fusion of emotions. The more intense the poetic process, the greater the poem. There is always a difference between the artistic emotion and the personal emotions of the poet. For example, the famous Ode to Nightingale of Keats contains a number of emotions which have nothing to do with the Nightingale. "The difference between art and the event is always absolute." The poet has no personality to express, he is merely a medium in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may find no place in his poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may have no significance for the man. Eliot thus rejects romantic subjectivism.

9.20 LET'S SUM UP

T.S. Eliot published his first poetic masterpiece, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in 1915. In 1921, he wrote the poem "The Waste Land" while recovering from exhaustion. The dense, allusion-heavy poem went on to redefine the genre and became one of the most talked about poems in literary history. For his lifetime of poetic innovation, Eliot won the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948. Part of the ex-pat community of the 1920s, he spent most of his life in Europe, dying in London, England, in 1965.

Check Your Progress Ii:

Q1. Discuss three parts of the essay.

Answer……

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Q2. What are the two experiences which enter the poetic process as described by Eliot.

Answer……

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9.21 KEYWORDS

1. **Simultaneous:** occurring, operating, or done at the same time.
2. **Homer** is the legendary author of the Iliad and the Odyssey, two epic poems that are the central works of ancient Greek literature
3. In literary criticism, an **objective correlative** is a group of things or events which systematically represent emotions.
4. **Plutarch**, later named, upon becoming a Roman citizen, Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus, was a Greek biographer and essayist, known primarily for his Parallel Lives and Moralia.
5. The **Mahābhārata** is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, the other being the Rāmāyaṇa.

9.22 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What influenced Eliot to be writing on Traditions?
2. What criticism he faced while working on it?
3. The Essay, was divided into how many parts, describe?
4. Explain Eliot as poet?
5. What are the functions of Tradition according to Eliot?

9.23 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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9.24 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 9.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 9.6

Check Your Progress Ii :

Answer 1 : Check Section 9.10

Answer 2 : Check Section 9.18

UNIT: 10 SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR- LIFE AND WORK

STRUCTURE

10.0 OBJECTIVE

In this Chapter you will learn about background behind life and works of Simone de Beauvoir. It gives insight about the various aspects of Simone de Beauvoir. It helps to achieve following objectives:

- Recognizing Beauvoir
- Situating Beauvoir
- Early years, Middle Years and Later Years
- Personal Life of Simone de Beauvoir
- Notable Works of Simone de Beauvoir

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir (UK: /də ˈboʊvwɑːr/, US: /dəboʊˈvwɑːr/ French: [simɔ̃dəbovwaʁ] (About this soundlisten); 9 January 1908 – 14 April 1986) was a French writer,

intellectual, existentialist philosopher, political activist, feminist and social theorist. Though she did not consider herself a philosopher, she had a significant influence on both feminist existentialism and feminist theory

De Beauvoir wrote novels, essays, biographies, autobiography and monographs on philosophy, politics, and social issues. She was known for her 1949 treatise The Second Sex, a detailed analysis of women's oppression and a foundational tract of contemporary feminism; and for her novels, including She Came to Stay and The Mandarins. She was also known for her open, lifelong relationship with French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre.

Simone de Beauvoir was probably best known as a novelist, and a feminist thinker and writer, but she was also an existentialist philosopher in her own right and, like her lover Sartre, thought a lot about the human struggle to be free. As a philosopher trained in the analytic tradition, I have to admit, I don't know a whole lot about existentialism, so I'm curious to discover on this week's show with guest Shannon Mussett how Beauvoir's feminist thought relates to her existentialist philosophy.

Beauvoir's most famous work was The Second Sex from 1949, a hugely influential book which laid the groundwork for second-wave feminism. Where first-wave feminism was concerned with women's suffrage and property rights, the second wave broadened these concerns to include sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, and so on. All that started with Beauvoir's The Second Sex, where Beauvoir outlines the ways in which woman is perceived as "other" in a patriarchal society, second to man, which is considered—and treated as—the "first" or default sex.

One of the most famous lines from that work is: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." What I think Beauvoir means by this is that the roles we associate with women are not given to them in birth, by virtue of their biology, but rather are socially constructed. Women are taught what they're supposed to be in life, what kind of roles they can or can't perform in virtue of being of "the second sex." Today we might express this idea using the distinction between sex and gender, where

one's sex is just a biological fact, but one's gender identity is socially constructed. In 1949, this was a truly radical idea.

So how does this idea relate to existentialist concerns about freedom? One of the main questions existentialists worry about is how to achieve "radical freedom," or the kind of freedom that comes from making decisions in what Sartre called "good faith." These are the decisions that come from and express an authentic self. If someone is living in "bad faith," they allow themselves to be ruled by identities imposed on them from the outside. Their decisions do not reflect who they truly are.

It makes sense, then, that if someone is taught her entire life that to be a woman, she must look a certain way, act a certain way, play a subservient role within her family, and work only certain kinds of jobs, it is going to affect her sense of freedom and authenticity. Being seen—and seeing yourself—as "the second sex" certainly seems to complicate the question of how to achieve this radical freedom existentialists worried about. Indeed, it makes the struggle to achieve this kind of freedom sound like a white male problem, something you have to be in a privileged position to even think about at all.

Although third-wave feminism often critiques second-wave feminism for its focus on the struggles of white middle-class women, ignoring the plight of women of color, poor women, women in the developing world, disabled women, etc., Beauvoir's insight about the experience of being a woman in a patriarchal world can naturally be extended to include the experience of being black in a white world, or being "other" in any world where you're constantly taught that you're second class. That's going to shape what you think your life choices are—it's going to change how you perceive your own freedom.

Beauvoir herself explicitly makes the connection between the plight of woman and the plight of the black slave, so I wonder what she would make of feminist thinking today and its critque of second-wave feminism. I also wonder what she would think about the progress women have made in the 65 years since she wrote The Second Sex.

I often think about the differences between my own life and that of my mother, who grew up in Ireland during the Second World War. She, like

all her sisters before her, had to leave school in her early teens in order to get a fulltime job to help support the family; that is, until she was married and pregnant and was no longer permitted to work outside the home. Her brother, of course, was allowed to complete his secondary education, pursue a career, and have a family.

As I was growing up, I too was taught that a woman's role in life was that of wife and mother. Almost all the adult women I knew did just that and most of the girls I grew up with repeated the pattern. Despite all this, things had changed sufficiently between my mother's generation and mine that not only did I attend college in Ireland, which was certainly not expected, but I went on to get a PhD in Philosophy, a discipline that to this day is very male-dominated.

Was I expressing my "radical freedom" in making these life choices? Was my mother living in "bad faith"? What Beauvoir might say is that, because of the very real differences in our situations, I saw and therefore had different choices than my mother. The gender roles prescribed for women were, for my mother, so strongly enforced on a social level and so deeply entrenched on a psychological level, that none of what I did seemed even remotely possible for her. It simply wasn't a choice that was available, given my mother's lived experience.

If we're going to talk about "radical freedom" at all, then it should be in the context of the real-life choices we are presented with in our lived experiences. It can't be an abstract choice to be free. This was one of Beauvoir's biggest insights.

10.2 RECOGNIZING BEAUVOIR

Some have found Beauvoir's exclusion from the domain of philosophy more than a matter of taking Beauvoir at her word. They attribute it to an exclusively systematic view of philosophy which, deaf to the philosophical methodology of the metaphysical novel, ignored the ways that Beauvoir embedded phenomenological-existential arguments in her literary works. Between those who did not challenge Beauvoir's self-portrait, those who did not accept her understanding of the relationship between literature and philosophy, and those who missed the unique

signature of her philosophical essays, Beauvoir the philosopher remained a lady-in-waiting.

Some have argued that the belated admission of Beauvoir into the ranks of philosophers is a matter of sexism on two counts. The first concerns the fact that Beauvoir was a woman. Her philosophical writings were read as echoes of Sartre rather than explored for their own contributions because it was only "natural" to think of a woman as a disciple of her male companion. The second concerns the fact that she wrote about women. The Second Sex, recognized as one of the hundred most important works of the twentieth century, would not be counted as philosophy because it dealt with sex, hardly a burning philosophical issue (so it was said). This encyclopedia entry shows how much things have changed. Long overdue, Beauvoir's recognition as a philosopher is now secure.

10.3 SITUATING BEAUVOIR

Simone de Beauvoir was born on January 9, 1908. She died seventy-eight years later, on April 14, 1986. At the time of her death she was honored as a crucial figure in the struggle for women's rights, and as an eminent writer, having won the Prix Goncourt, the prestigious French literary award, for her novel The Mandarins. She was also famous for being the life-long companion of Jean Paul Sartre. Active in the French intellectual scene all of her life, and a central player in the philosophical debates of the times both in her role as an author of philosophical essays, novels, plays, memoirs, travel diaries and newspaper articles, and as an editor of Les Temps Modernes, Beauvoir was not considered a philosopher in her own right at the time of her death.

Beauvoir would have appreciated the fact that her current philosophical status reflects our changed understanding of the domain of philosophy and the changed situation of women, for it confirms her idea of situated freedom—that our capacity for agency and meaning-making, that whether or not we are identified as agents and meaning-makers, is constrained, though never determined, by our situation. She would also have appreciated the fact that while her works were instrumental in effecting these changes, their lasting effect is a tribute to the ways that

others have taken up her philosophical and feminist legacies; for one of her crucial contributions to our ethical and political vocabularies is the concept of the appeal—that the success of our projects depends on the extent to which they are adopted by others

Beauvoir detailed her phenomenological and existential critique of the philosophical status quo in her 1946 essay Literature and the Metaphysical Essay, and her 1965 and 1966 essays Que Peut la Littérature? And Mon expérienced'écrivain. This critique, influenced by both Husserl and Heidegger, focused on the significance of lived experience and on the ways that the meanings of the world are revealed in language. Heidegger turned to the language of poetry for this revelation. Beauvoir, Camus and Sartre turned to the language of the novel and the theater. They looked to Husserl to theorize their turn to these discourses by insisting on grounding their theoretical analyses in the concrete particulars of lived experience. They looked to Heidegger to challenge the privileged position of abstract discourses. For Beauvoir, however, the turn to literature carried ethical and political as well as philosophical implications. It allowed her to explore the limits of the appeal (the activity of calling on others to take up one's political projects); to portray the temptations of violence; to enact her existential ethics of freedom, responsibility, joy and generosity, and to examine the intimacies and complexities of our relationships with others.

Beauvoir's challenge to the philosophical tradition was part of the existential-phenomenological project. Her challenge to the patriarchal status quo was more dramatic. It was an event. Not at first, however, for at its publication The Second Sex was regarded more as an affront to sexual decency than a political indictment of patriarchy or a phenomenological account of the meaning of "woman". The women who came to be known as second-wave feminists understood what Beauvoir's first readers missed. It was not sexual decency that was being attacked but patriarchal indecency that was on trial. The Second Sex expressed their sense of injustice, focused their demands for social, political, and personal change and alerted them to the connections between private practices and public policies. The Second Sex remains a contentious book. No longer considered sexually scandalous, its analysis of

patriarchy and its proposed antidotes to women's domination are still debated. What is not contested, however, is the fact that feminism as we know it remains in its debt.

As The Second Sex became a catalyst for challenging women's situations, Beauvoir's political and intellectual place was also reset. With regard to feminism, she herself was responsible for the change. After repeatedly refusing to align herself with the feminist movement, Beauvoir declared herself a feminist in a 1972 interview in Le Nouvelobservateur and joined other Marxist feminists in founding the journal Questions féministes. With regard to the philosophical field it took the efforts of others to get her a seat at the table; for though Beauvoir belatedly identified herself as a feminist, she never called herself a philosopher. Her philosophical voice, she insisted, was merely an elaboration of Sartre's. Those denials coupled with the fact of her life-long intimate relationship with Sartre positioned her in the public and philosophical eye as his alter ego. Decoupling Beauvoir from Sartre became the first priority of those interested in establishing her independent philosophical credentials. Sometimes the issue concerned Sartre's originality: Were the ideas of his Being and Nothingness stolen from Beauvoir's She Came to Stay? Sometimes they concerned matters of influence: What happened in their discussions and critiques of each other's work? Eventually these arguments abated and scholars turned from exclusive attention to the matter of Sartre's influence to the more fruitful question of influence in the broader sense. They began to trace the ways that she, like her existential-phenomenological contemporaries, took up and reconfigured their philosophical heritage to reflect their shared methodology and unique insights. We now understand that to fully appreciate the rich complexities of Beauvoir's thought, we need to attend to the fact that her graduate thesis was on Leibniz; that her reading of Hegel was influenced by the interpretations of Kojève; that she was introduced to Husserl and Heidegger by her teacher Baruzi; that Marx and Descartes were familiar figures in her philosophical vocabulary; and that Bergson was an early influence on her thinking.

10.4 EARLY YEARS

Simone de Beauvoir was born on 9 January 1908 into a bourgeois Parisian family in the 6th arrondissement. Her parents were Georges Bertrand de Beauvoir, a legal secretary who once aspired to be an actor, and Françoise de Beauvoir (née Brasseur), a wealthy banker's daughter and devout Catholic. Simone's sister, Hélène, was born two years later. The family struggled to maintain their bourgeois status after losing much of their fortune shortly after World War I, and Françoise insisted that the two daughters be sent to a prestigious convent school. De Beauvoir herself was deeply religious as a child, at one point intending to become a nun. She shed her faith in her early teens and remained an atheist for the rest of her life.

De Beauvoir was intellectually precocious, fueled by her father's encouragement; he reportedly would boast, "Simone thinks like a man!" Because of her family's straitened circumstances, de Beauvoir could no longer rely on her dowry, and like other middle-class girls of her age, her marriage opportunities were put at risk. De Beauvoir took this opportunity to take steps towards earning a living for herself.

After passing baccalaureate exams in mathematics and philosophy in 1925, she studied mathematics at the InstitutCatholique de Paris and literature/languages at the Institut Sainte-Marie [fr]. She then studied philosophy at the Sorbonne and after completing her degree in 1928, she wrote her diplômed'étudessupérieures [fr] (roughly equivalent to an MA thesis) on Leibniz for Léon Brunschvicg (the topic was "Le concept chez Leibniz" ["The Concept in Leibniz"]). De Beauvoir was only the ninth woman to have received a degree from the Sorbonne at the time, due to the fact that French women had only recently been allowed to join higher education.

De Beauvoir first worked with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Claude Lévi-Strauss, when all three completed their practice teaching requirements at the same secondary school. Although not officially enrolled, she sat in on courses at the ÉcoleNormaleSupérieure in preparation for the agrégation in philosophy, a highly competitive postgraduate examination which serves as a national ranking of students. It was while studying for the agrégation that she met ÉcoleNormale students Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Nizan, and René Maheu (who gave her the lasting nickname "Castor", or

"beaver"). The jury for the agrégation narrowly awarded Sartre first place instead of de Beauvoir, who placed second and, at age 21, was the youngest person ever to pass the exam.

Writing of her youth in Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter she said: "...my father's individualism and pagan ethical standards were in complete contrast to the rigidly moral conventionalism of my mother's teaching. This disequilibrium, which made my life a kind of endless disputation, is the main reason why I became an intellectual."

10.5 MIDDLE YEARS

From 1929 to 1943, de Beauvoir taught at the lycée level until she could support herself solely on the earnings of her writings. She taught at the LycéeMontgrand [fr] (Marseille), the Lycée Jeanne-d'Arc (Rouen) [fr], and the Lycée Molière (Paris) [fr] (1936–39).

During October 1929, Jean-Paul Sartre and de Beauvoir became a couple and, after they were confronted by her father, Sartre asked her to marry him on a provisional basis: one day while they were sitting on a bench outside the Louvre, he said, "Let's sign a two-year lease". Though de Beauvoir is quoted as saying, "Marriage was impossible. I had no dowry", scholars point out that her ideal relationships described in The Second Sex and elsewhere bore little resemblances to the marriage standards of the day. Instead, they entered into a lifelong "soul partnership", which was not sexual but not exclusive, nor did it involve living together.

Sartre and de Beauvoir always read each other's work. Debate continues about the extent to which they influenced each other in their existentialist works, such as Sartre's Being and Nothingness and de Beauvoir's She Came to Stay and "Phenomenology and Intent". However, recent studies of de Beauvoir's work focus on influences other than Sartre, including Hegel and Leibniz. The Neo-Hegelian revival led by Alexandre Kojève and Jean Hyppolite in the 1930s inspired a whole generation of French thinkers, including de Beauvoir and Sartre, to discover Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.

Check Your Progress I:

Q1. Discuss middle life of Simone de Beauvoir .

Answer……

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Q2. Discuss middle life of Simone de Beauvoir.

Answer……

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10.6 PERSONAL LIFE

De Beauvoir's prominent open relationships at times overshadowed her substantial academic reputation. A scholar lecturing with de Beauvoir chastised their "distinguished [Harvard] audience [because] every question asked about Sartre concerned his work, while all those asked about Beauvoir concerned her personal life." Beginning in 1929, de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre were partners and remained so for fifty-one years, until his death in 1980. De Beauvoir chose never to marry or set up a joint household and she never had children. This gave her the time to advance her education and engage in political causes, to write and teach, and to have lovers.

Perhaps her most famous lover was American author Nelson Algren whom she met in Chicago in 1947, and to whom she wrote across the Atlantic as "my beloved husband." Algren won the National Book Award for The Man with the Golden Arm in 1950, and in 1954, de Beauvoir won France's most prestigious literary prize for The Mandarins in which Algren is the character Lewis Brogan. Algren vociferously objected to their intimacy becoming public. Years after they separated, she was buried wearing his gift of a silver ring. However, she lived with Claude Lanzmann from 1952 to 1959.

De Beauvoir was bisexual, and her relationships with young women were controversial. Former student Bianca Lamblin (originally Bianca Bienenfeld) wrote in her book Mémoiresd'unejeunefilledérangée (English: Memoirs of a Disturbed Young Lady), that, while she was a student at Lycée Molière, she had been sexually exploited by her teacher de Beauvoir, who was in her 30s at the time. In 1943, de Beauvoir was

suspended from her teaching job, due to an accusation that she had seduced her 17-year-old lycée pupil Natalie Sorokine in 1939. Sorokine's parents laid formal charges against de Beauvoir for debauching a minor and as a result she had her licence to teach in France revoked.

In 1977, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and much of the era's intelligentsia signed a petition seeking to abrogate the age of consent in France.

10.7 NOTABLE WORKS

She Came to Stay

De Beauvoir published her first novel She Came to Stay in 1943. It is a fictionalised chronicle of her and Sartre's sexual relationship with Olga Kosakiewicz and Wanda Kosakiewicz. Olga was one of her students in the Rouen secondary school where Beauvoir taught during the early 1930s. She grew fond of Olga. Sartre tried to pursue Olga but she rejected him, so he began a relationship with her sister Wanda. Upon his death, Sartre was still supporting Wanda. He also supported Olga for years, until she met and married Jacques-Laurent Bost, a lover of Beauvoir.

In the novel, set just before the outbreak of World War II, Beauvoir creates one character from the complex relationships of Olga and Wanda. The fictionalised versions of Beauvoir and Sartre have a ménage à trois with the young woman. The novel also delves into Beauvoir and Sartre's complex relationship and how it was affected by the ménage à trois.

She Came to Stay was followed by many others, including The Blood of Others, which explores the nature of individual responsibility, telling a love story between two young French students participating in the Resistance in World War II.

Existentialist ethics

In 1944 de Beauvoir wrote her first philosophical essay, Pyrrhus etCinéas, a discussion on existentialist ethics. She continued her exploration of existentialism through her second essay The Ethics of Ambiguity (1947); it is perhaps the most accessible entry into French

existentialism. In the essay, de Beauvoir clears up some inconsistencies that many, Sartre included, have found in major existentialist works such as Being and Nothingness. In The Ethics of Ambiguity, de Beauvoir confronts the existentialist dilemma of absolute freedom vs. the constraints of circumstance.

Les Temps modernes

At the end of World War II, de Beauvoir and Sartre edited Les Temps modernes, a political journal which Sartre founded along with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and others. De Beauvoir used Les Temps Modernes to promote her own work and explore her ideas on a small scale before fashioning essays and books. De Beauvoir remained an editor until her death.

Sexuality, existentialist feminism and The Second Sex

The Second Sex, first published in 1949 in French as Le DeuxièmeSexe, turns the existentialist mantra that existence precedes essence into a feminist one: "One is not born but becomes a woman" (French: "On ne naît pas femme, on le devient"). With this famous phrase, Beauvoir first articulated what has come to be known as the sex-gender distinction, that is, the distinction between biological sex and the social and historical construction of gender and its attendant stereotypes. Beauvoir argues that "the fundamental source of women's oppression is its [femininity's] historical and social construction as the quintessential" Other.

De Beauvoir defines women as the "second sex" because women are defined in relation to men. She pointed out that Aristotle argued women are "female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities", while St. Thomas referred to woman as "imperfect man" and the "incidental" being. De Beauvoir asserted that women are as capable of choice as men, and thus can choose to elevate themselves, moving beyond the "immanence" to which they were previously resigned and reaching "transcendence", a position in which one takes responsibility for oneself and the world, where one chooses one's freedom.

Chapters of The Second Sex were originally published in Les Temps modernes, in June 1949. The second volume came a few months after the first in France. It was quickly published in America due to the quick

translation by Howard Parshley, as prompted by Blanche Knopf, wife of publisher Alfred A. Knopf. Because Parshley had only a basic familiarity with the French language, and a minimal understanding of philosophy (he was a professor of biology at Smith College), much of de Beauvoir's book was mistranslated or inappropriately cut, distorting her intended message. For years, Knopf prevented the introduction of a more accurate retranslation of de Beauvoir's work, declining all proposals despite the efforts of existentialist scholars. Only in 2009 was there a second translation, to mark the 60th anniversary of the original publication. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier produced the first integral translation in 2010, reinstating a third of the original work.

In the chapter "Woman: Myth and Reality" of The Second Sex, de Beauvoir argued that men had made women the "Other" in society by application of a false aura of "mystery" around them. She argued that men used this as an excuse not to understand women or their problems and not to help them, and that this stereotyping was always done in societies by the group higher in the hierarchy to the group lower in the hierarchy. She wrote that a similar kind of oppression by hierarchy also happened in other categories of identity, such as race, class, and religion, but she claimed that it was nowhere more true than with gender in which men stereotyped women and used it as an excuse to organize society into a patriarchy.

Despite her contributions to the feminist movement, especially the French women's liberation movement, and her beliefs in women's economic independence and equal education, de Beauvoir was initially reluctant to call herself a feminist. However, after observing the resurgence of the feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, de Beauvoir stated she no longer believed a socialist revolution to be enough to bring about women's liberation. She publicly declared herself a feminist in 1972 in an interview with Le NouvelObservateur.

In 2018 the manuscript pages of Le DeuxièmeSexe were published. At the time her adopted daughter, Sylvie Le Bon-de Beauvoir, a philosophy professor, described her mother's writing process: Beauvoir wrote every page of her books longhand first and only after that would hire typists.

The Mandarins

Published in 1954, The Mandarins won her France's highest literary prize, the Prix Goncourt. The book is set after the end of World War II and follows the personal lives of philosophers and friends among Sartre's and de Beauvoir's intimate circle, including her relationship with American writer Nelson Algren, to whom the book was dedicated. Algren was outraged by the frank way de Beauvoir described their sexual experiences in both The Mandarins and her autobiographies. Algren vented his outrage when reviewing American translations of de Beauvoir's work. Much material bearing on this episode in de Beauvoir's life, including her love letters to Algren, entered the public domain only after her death.

10.8 LATER YEARS

De Beauvoir wrote popular travel diaries about time spent in the United States and China and published essays and fiction rigorously, especially throughout the 1950s and 1960s. She published several volumes of short stories, including The Woman Destroyed, which, like some of her other later work, deals with aging.

1980 saw the publication of When Things of the Spirit Come First, a set of short stories centred around and based upon women important to her earlier years[ambiguous]. Though written long before the novel She Came to Stay, de Beauvoir did not at the time consider the stories worth publishing, allowing some forty years to pass before doing so.

Sartre and Merleau-Ponty had a longstanding feud, which led Merleau-Ponty to leave Les Temps Modernes. De Beauvoir sided with Sartre and ceased to associate with Merleau-Ponty. In de Beauvoir's later years, she hosted the journal's editorial meetings in her flat and contributed more than Sartre, whom she often had to force to offer his opinions.

De Beauvoir also wrote a four-volume autobiography, consisting of: Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter; The Prime of Life; Force of Circumstance (sometimes published in two volumes in English translation: After the War and Hard Times); and All Said and Done. In 1964 De Beauvoir published a novella-length autobiography, A Very Easy Death, covering the time she spent visiting her ageing mother, who

was dying of cancer. The novella brings up questions of ethical concerns with truth-telling in doctor-patient relationships.

In the 1970s de Beauvoir became active in France's women's liberation movement. She wrote and signed the Manifesto of the 343 in 1971, a manifesto that included a list of famous women who claimed to have had an abortion, then illegal in France. Some[who?] argue most of the women had not had abortions, including Beauvoir. Signatories were diverse as Catherine Deneuve, Delphine Seyrig, and de Beauvoir's sister Poupette. In 1974, abortion was legalised in France.

Her 1970 long essay La Vieillesse (The Coming of Age) is a rare instance of an intellectual meditation on the decline and solitude all humans experience if they do not die before about the age of 60.

In an interview with Betty Friedan, de Beauvoir said: "No, we don't believe that any woman should have this choice. No woman should be authorised to stay at home to bring up her children. Society should be totally different. Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one. It is a way of forcing women in a certain direction.

In about 1976 de Beauvoir and Sylvie Le Bon made a trip to New York City in the United States to visit Kate Millett on her farm.

In 1981 she wrote La Cérémonie Des Adieux (A Farewell to Sartre), a painful account of Sartre's last years. In the opening of Adieux, de Beauvoir notes that it is the only major published work of hers which Sartre did not read before its publication.

She contributed the piece "Feminism – alive, well, and in constant danger" to the 1984 anthology Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology, edited by Robin Morgan.

After Sartre died in 1980, de Beauvoir published his letters to her with edits to spare the feelings of people in their circle who were still living. After de Beauvoir's death, Sartre's adopted daughter and literary heir ArletteElkaïm would not let many of Sartre's letters be published in unedited form. Most of Sartre's letters available today have de Beauvoir's edits, which include a few omissions but mostly the use of pseudonyms. De Beauvoir's adopted daughter and literary heir Sylvie Le Bon, unlike

Elkaïm, published de Beauvoir's unedited letters to both Sartre and Algren.

De Beauvoir died of pneumonia on 14 April 1986 in Paris, aged 78. She is buried next to Sartre at the Montparnasse Cemetery in Paris

10.9 WAS SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR AS FEMINIST AS WE THOUGHT?

Simone de Beauvoir is a feminist icon. She didn't just write the feminist book, she wrote the movement's bible, The Second Sex. She was an engaged intellectual who combined philosophical and literary productivity with real-world political action that led to lasting legislative change. Her life has inspired generations of women seeking independence, and this was largely attributed to her unconventional relationship with the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, which seemed like a love that didn't come at the cost of her freedom or professional success.

But in the decades since Beauvoir's death in 1986, several waves of previously unknown letters, diaries and manuscripts have shocked readers who thought they knew her. Her letters to her American lover, Nelson Algren, showed the depth of her passion for another man. Letters to Sartre revealed not only that she had lesbian relationships, but that her lovers were young and her students. There is no doubt now that she hid both significant professional successes and serious moral failings from the story she told in her autobiographies. So what are we to make of the author of The Second Sex, 70 years on from its publication? In light of what she didn't tell us, was she as feminist as we thought?

The short answer? It depends on what it means to be feminist and which Beauvoir you have in mind. (The long answer took a book to write.) But it is now clear that Beauvoir's most questionable moments played an important role in transforming her convictions; that she condemned her own actions and renounced the philosophy that underpinned some of her and Sartre's most infamous behaviour; and that she became several different kinds of feminist over the course of her career. There are chapters of Beauvoir's life that read less like liberated sex and more like case studies in sexism – but there are also instances where she decided to call it out, even when that meant accusing herself. Her life raises a

question she had to live: are we the sum of all of our actions, or the sum of our worst?

Evaluating the feminism or "worst actions" of a 20th-century philosopher whose life has been highly politicised is no easy task. In the 20th and 21st centuries, a wide variety of feminisms have emerged, often contradicting each other and frequently invoking strong progress narratives to show how previous generations' (or even contemporary opponents') efforts were wanting. The contents of these progress narratives vary widely depending on the political and historical context: for example, the UK celebrated its centenary of women's suffrage (for women married and over 30, admittedly) in 2018, but French women only gained the right to vote two-and-a-half decades later, in 1944. So it was surprising to discover, when researching the reception of The Second Sex in France in 1949, to find it – and feminism in general – vociferously dismissed as passé.

Beauvoir claimed women's lives should not be reduced to erotic plots – as her life has persistently been reduced

Gradually surprise gave way to suspicion, as a pattern emerged in reviews: again and again, Beauvoir was criticised for thinking "feminism was still relevant", for writing female protagonists in her novels, and spending too many pages on women's points of view. "What about men?" reviewers asked. What they liked best was the Beauvoir who told them what it was like to be with Sartre, the woman who fuelled imaginary fires with fictions of free love.

Although philosophers and scholars of French literature have recognised Beauvoir's intellectual importance and independence for decades, representations of her life have often focused disproportionately on her early adulthood, when she formed her legendary romantic "pact" with Sartre. One day in 1929, near the Carrousel du Louvre, they decided theirs would be an open relationship, forsaking no others: they were "essential" to one another, they said, but would keep "contingent" lovers on the side. In 1929, this was a curious arrangement – and it has continued to intrigue readers.

Less attention has been given to the content of Beauvoir's own philosophy, before and after she met Sartre. It is this dimension of the newly released diaries and letters that makes it especially interesting to reconsider her life and legacy. Tarnished or not, she was a woman who claimed that women's lives should not be reduced to erotic plots – and her life has persistently been reduced to an erotic plot. And what she said about feminism repeatedly made people angry – so if she was passé, what was there to be angry about?

Behind the mythical persona was a philosopher who wanted women to be "free to choose themselves". Human beings were "the sum of their actions", and she believed it would be reassuring to think that we each have a foreordained destiny, a unique raison d'etre that justifies our existence. But it would also be false. For Beauvoir, each human being is a becoming without a blueprint. She started developing this view in the late 1920s, before she met Sartre, and began to publish her philosophical disagreements with him in the 1940s – but by then they were both become famous in France and her ideas were often credited to him. (And outside France, important texts by Beauvoir were untranslated.)

Beauvoir developed her ethics after rejecting the perspective that underpinned her relationships with women in the 1930s and early 1940s. These ethics would also lay the philosophical foundations for The Second Sex. Here, she claimed that the desire to feel that one's existence is "justified" affects women differently than men, because women are expected to justify their existence by loving others. She argued that becoming a woman was difficult in distinctive ways, because history, literature, psychoanalysis and biology presented women with incompatible myths of femininity instead of encouraging them to become free, fallible and fully human.

In 1949, her critics described her as anti-women, anti-maternal, anti-marriage. But although she thought economic work helped women, she did not think that work by itself could make women free, nor that marriage and motherhood were without value. The goal of The Second Sex was to help women cultivate a confidence in their own vision of the world – to recognise the value of their own freedom – that she later called rapport à soi (self-rapport). Because women couldn't live up to all

the incompatible myths of femininity, Beauvoir thought, they often felt like failures. Instead of asking themselves what they wanted for their lives, they berated themselves for not being what others wanted.

Beauvoir's novels were often criticised for having female characters who did not live up to her feminist ideals. But after cataloguing stifling stereotypes of femininity, Beauvoir did not want to furnish new galleries with oppressive mythical portraits. She did not want to write "strong women" who reinforced women's feelings of division and inadequacy. In a period when possibilities for women's lives were differently constrained than they are today, she wanted her reader to be able to dream, fail and dream again, always in the knowledge that failing didn't make them a failure.

Whatever else it was, Beauvoir's feminism was not triumphalist and her literary strategy was risky when she turned to writing her own story. Over the four volumes of her autobiography she hid times when she failed to live up to her own standards – and she hid some when she exceeded even her own dreams for herself. She never set out to be the woman who wrote the feminist bible, and the life she lived before she did contained several things she wished could be otherwise. But the catch about becoming is that you can't undo the past; you can only renegotiate its meaning as you look to the future.

When Beauvoir wrote about her life she acknowledged that there were some "unavoidable discretions" that prevented her from telling all. She made no secret of the fact that her life was distorted by her omissions – but that is one of the reasons why it is so interesting to read it again in light of them. The word distortion comes from the Latin torquere – to twist, to torture. As a person, Beauvoir had to live with her distorted public persona for decades, and sometimes its consequences were twisted and torturous. But whether or not you like your feminism triumphalist or your autobiographies transparent, Beauvoir's chapter in the history of feminism is one to interrogate, not ignore – because of what she did and what she thought, and also because of the way what she did has been too often used to distract people from what she thought.

10.10 LET'S SUM UP

Simone de Beauvoir was born in Paris, France, in 1908. When she was 21, De Beauvoir met Jean-Paul Sartre, forming a partnership and romance that would shape both of their lives and philosophical beliefs. De Beauvoir published countless works of fiction and nonfiction during her lengthy career—often with existentialist themes—including 1949's The Second Sex, which is considered a pioneering work of the modern feminism movement. De Beauvoir also lent her voice to various political causes and traveled the world extensively. She died in Paris in 1986 and was buried with Sartre.

Check Your Progress Ii:

Q1. Discuss later life of Simone de Beauvoir.

Answer……

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Q2. Give brief about notable work of Simone de Beauvoir.

Answer……

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10.11 KEYWORDS

1. A **monograph** is a specialist work of writing or exhibition on a single subject or an aspect of a subject, often by a single author or artist, and usually on a scholarly subject.
2. **Social theories** are analytical frameworks, or paradigms, that are used to study and interpret social phenomena
3. **Atheism** is, in the broadest sense, an absence of belief in the existence of deities.
4. **Bourgeoisie**,a sociologically-defined social class, especially in contemporary times, referring to people with a certain cultural and financial capital belonging to the middle.
5. The **agrégation**is a competitive examination for civil service in the French public education system.

10.12 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

6. Explain briefly, “She came to stay”?
7. Was he a feminist as we thought?
8. Give brief:
    a. Recognizing Beauvoir
    b. Notable work
    c. His though on Existentialist
    d. Personal life

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10.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 10.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 10.4

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Answer 1 : Check Section 10.8

Answer 2 : Check Section 10.7

UNIT: 11 SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR- INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND SEX-VOLUME 1

STRUCTURE

11.0 OBJECTIVE

In this Chapter you will learn about Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to The Second Sex. Its helps to understand the critical aspects of the same along with its analysis.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The Second Sex was published in 1949, at a time when feminism was not yet widely discussed as a pressing social issue. It is widely considered to be a formative text of second-wave feminism. This strain of feminism shifted focus from gaining certain legal rights—such as suffrage, property rights, etc.—toward considering how sexism also impacted women across many different spheres of their lives. Although this wave is often attributed to the 1960s, de Beauvoir's text arguably helped to lay the foundations for the kinds of thinking that defined second-wave feminism. By considering the many ways in which femininity was significant in determining women's outcomes across different spheres of society, de Beauvoir helped to push feminist thinking in new directions.

After the publication of de Beauvoir's text, feminists would consider many of the issues she had raised, such as the ways in which gender and sexuality are interrelated.

de Beauvoir's work is also radical because it broke from existent theories for explaining differences between genders. Throughout her text, de Beauvoir rejects schools of thinking such as liberalism, Marxism, or psychoanalytic theory. Instead, she constructs her own model for how we should understand femininity in a philosophical perspective. Some critics have pointed out that, in order to do this, she relies heavily on Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy. However, de Beauvoir makes use of this philosophy in new ways, to think through how gender shapes people's relative abilities to find purpose in their lives. In this way, she continues to be innovative even when drawing from someone else's ideas.

At the same time, de Beauvoir's text was also important because it drew parallels to other social justice movements of her time. For example, she compares the situation of all women to the respective situations of African Americans, Jews, the colonized, and the proletariat. This comparison between different oppressed groups helped to bolster some of her thinking and give her ideas greater validity. However, more recently critics have pointed out that de Beauvoir does not take into consideration how these different identities can intersect. Although her text was important for second-wave feminism, feminist theory has come a long way since then. Today, readers may object to the fact that de Beauvoir primarily considers the situation of white, European women without acknowledging how intersectional identities can impact many of the concepts she discusses.

11.2 THE SECOND SEX: WOMAN AS OTHER

In her memoir The Force of Circumstance, Beauvoir looks back at The Ethics of Ambiguity and criticizes it for being too abstract. She does not repudiate the arguments of her text, but finds that it erred in trying to define morality independent of a social context. The Second Sex may be read as correcting this error – as reworking and materially situating the

analyses of The Ethics of Ambiguity. Imaginary caricatures will be replaced by phenomenological descriptions of the situations of real women.

Where Beauvoir's earlier works blurred the borders separating philosophy and literature, her later writings disrupt the boundaries between the personal, the political and the philosophical. Now, Beauvoir takes herself, her situation, her embodiment and the situations and embodiments of other women, as the subjects of her philosophical reflections. Where The Ethics of Ambiguity conjured up images of ethical and unethical figures to make its arguments tangible, the analyses of The Second Sex are materialized in Beauvoir's experiences as a woman and in women's lived realities. Where The Ethics of Ambiguity speaks of mystification in a general sense, The Second Sex speaks of the specific ways that the natural and social sciences and the European literary, social, political and religious traditions have created a world where impossible and conflicting ideals of femininity produce an ideology of women's "natural" inferiority to justify patriarchal domination.

Beauvoir's self-criticism suggests that her later works mark a break with her earlier writings. We should, however, resist the temptation to take this notion of discontinuity too far. Rather than thinking in terms of breaks it is more fruitful to see The Second Sex in terms of a more radical commitment to the phenomenological insight that it is as embodied beings that we engage the world. Our access to, awareness of, and possibilities for world engagement cannot be considered absent a consideration of the body.

Before The Second Sex, the sexed/gendered body was not an object of phenomenological investigation. Beauvoir changed that. Her argument for sexual equality takes two directions. First, it exposes the ways that masculine ideology exploits the sexual difference to create systems of inequality. Second, it identifies the ways that arguments for equality erase the sexual difference in order to establish the masculine subject as the absolute human type. Here Plato is her target. Plato, beginning with the premise that sex is an accidental quality, concludes that women and men are equally qualified to become members of the guardian class. The

price of women's admission to this privileged class, however, is that they must train and live like men. Thus the discriminatory sexual difference remains in play. Only men or those who emulate them may rule. Beauvoir's argument for equality does not fall into this trap. She insists that women and men treat each other as equals and that such treatment requires that their sexual differences be validated. Equality is not a synonym for sameness.

The Second Sex argues against the either/or frame of the woman question (either women and men are equal or they are different). It argues for women's equality, while insisting on the reality of the sexual difference. Beauvoir finds it unjust and immoral to use the sexual difference as an argument for women's subordination. She finds it un-phenomenological, however, to ignore it. As a phenomenologist she is obliged to examine women's unique experiences of their bodies and to determine how these experiences are co-determined by what phenomenology calls the everyday attitude (the common-sense assumptions that we unreflectively bring to our experience). As a feminist phenomenologist assessing the meanings of the lived female body, Beauvoir explores the ways that cultural assumptions frame women's experience of their bodies and alienate them from their body's possibilities. For example, it is assumed that women are the weaker sex. What, she directs us to ask, is the ground of this assumption? What criteria of strength are used? Upper body power? Average body size? Is there a reason not to consider longevity a sign of strength? Using this criterion, would women still be considered the weaker sex? A bit of reflection exposes the biases of the criteria used to support the supposedly obvious fact of women's weakness and transforms it from an unassailable reality to an unreliable assumption. Once we begin this questioning, it is not long before other so-called facts fall to the side of "common sense" in the phenomenological sense.

What is perhaps the most famous line of The Second Sex, translated in 1952 as "One is not born but becomes a woman" and in 2010 as "One is not born but becomes woman", is credited by many as alerting us to the sex-gender distinction. Whether or not Beauvoir understood herself to be inaugurating this distinction, whether or not she followed this distinction

to its logical/radical conclusions, or whether or not radical conclusions are justified are currently matters of feminist debate. What is not a matter of dispute is that The Second Sex gave us the vocabulary for analyzing the social constructions of femininity and a method for critiquing these constructions. By not accepting the common sense idea that to be born with female genitalia is to be born a woman this most famous line of The Second Sex pursues the first rule of phenomenology: identify your assumptions, treat them as prejudices and put them aside; do not bring them back into play until and unless they have been validated by experience.

Taken within the context of its contemporary philosophical scene, The Second Sex was a phenomenological analysis waiting to happen. Whether or not it required a woman phenomenologist to discover the effects of sex/gender on the lived body's experience cannot be said. That it was a woman who taught us to bracket the assumption that the lived body's sex/gender was accidental to its lived relations, positions, engagements, etc. is a matter of history. What was a phenomenological breakthrough became in The Second Sex a liberatory tool: by attending to the ways that patriarchal structures used the sexual difference to deprive women of their "can do" bodies, Beauvoir made the case for declaring this deprivation oppressive. Taken within the context of the feminist movement, this declaration of oppression was an event. It opened the way for the consciousness-raising that characterized second-wave feminism; it validated women's experiences of injustice. What from an existential-phenomenological perspective, was a detailed analysis of the lived body, and an ethical and political indictment of the ways that patriarchy alienated women from their embodied capacities, was, from a feminist perspective, an appeal that called on women to take up the politics of liberation.

Several concepts are crucial to the argument of The Second Sex. The concept of the Other is introduced early in the text and drives the entire analysis. It has also become a critical concept in theories that analyze the oppressions of colonized, enslaved and other exploited people. Beauvoir will use it again in her last major work, The Coming of Age, to structure her critique of the ways that the elderly are "othered" by society.

Notes

Beauvoir bases her idea of the Other on Hegel's account of the master-slave dialectic. Instead of the terms "master" and "slave", however, she uses the terms "Subject" and "Other". The Subject is the absolute. The Other is the inessential. Unlike Hegel who universalized this dialectic, Beauvoir distinguishes the dialectic of exploitation between historically constituted Subjects and Others from the exploitation that ensues when the Subject is Man and the Other is Woman. In the first case those marked as Other experience their oppression as a communal reality. They see themselves as part of an oppressed group. Here, oppressed Others may call on the resources of a common history and a shared abusive situation to assert their subjectivity and demand recognition and reciprocity.

The situation of women is comparable to the condition of the Hegelian Other in that men, like the Hegelian Master, identify themselves as the Subject, the absolute human type, and, measuring women by this standard of the human, identify them as inferior. Women's so-called inadequacies are then used as justification for seeing them as the Other and for treating them accordingly. Unlike the Hegelian Other, however, women are unable to identify the origin of their otherness. They cannot call on the bond of a shared history to re-establish their lost status as Subjects. Further, dispersed among the world of men, they identify themselves in terms of the differences of their oppressors (e.g., as white or black women, as working-class or middle-class women, as Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist or Hindu women) rather than with each other. They lack the solidarity and resources of the Hegelian Other for organizing themselves into a "we" that demands recognition. Finally, their conflict with men is ambiguous. According to Beauvoir, women and men exist in a "primordial Mitsein": there is a unique bond between this Subject and its Other. In contesting their status as inessential, women must discover their "we" and take account of the Mitsein. Beauvoir uses the category of the Inessential Other to designate the unique situation of women as the ambiguous Other of men. Unlike the Other of the master-slave dialectic, women are not positioned to rebel. As Inessential Others, women's routes to subjectivity and recognition cannot follow the Hegelian script (The Second Sex, xix–xxii).

This attention to what Beauvoir, borrowing from Heidegger, calls a "primordial Mitsein" may be why she does not repeat her earlier argument that violence is sometimes necessary for the pursuit of justice in The Second Sex. Often criticized as one mark of Beauvoir's heterosexism, this reference to the Mitsein is not made in ignorance of lesbian sexuality and is not a rejection of non-heterosexual sexualities. It is a recognition of the present state of affairs where the heterosexual norm prevails. If patriarchy is to be dismantled we will have to understand how heteronormative sexuality serves it. We will have to denaturalize it. To Beauvoir's way of thinking, however, the institutional alienations of heterosexuality ought not be confused with the erotics of heterosexual desire. The realities of this desire and the bond of the "primordial Mitsein" that it forges must be taken into account: not only is it used to enforce women's isolation and to support their inability to identify a common history, it is also responsible for the value and relationship that Beauvoir calls the "bond", a situation-specific articulation of the appeal found in in The Ethics of Ambiguity.

A brief but packed sentence that appears early in the The Second Sex alerts us to the ways that Beauvoir used existential and Marxist categories to analyse the unique complexities of women's situation. It reads,

Hence woman makes no claim for herself as subject because she lacks the concrete means, because she senses the necessary link connecting her to man without positing its reciprocity, and because she often derives satisfaction from her role as the other. (p. 10)

This statement needs to be read in the context of Beauvoir's ethical-political question, "How can a human being in a woman's situation attain fulfilment?"

Between the statement and the question we discover that the ethical-political issue of fulfilment does not concern a woman's happiness. Happiness may be chosen or accepted in exchange for the deprivations of freedom. Recalling the argument of The Ethics of Ambiguity we know why. As Others, women are returned to the metaphysically privileged world of the child. They experience the happiness brought about by bad faith—a happiness of not being responsible for themselves, of not having

to make consequential choices. From this existential perspective women may be said to be complicitious in their subjugation. But this is not the whole story. If women are happy as the other, it may be because this is the only avenue of happiness open to them given the material and ideological realities of their situation. Beauvoir's existential charge of bad faith must be understood within her Marxist analysis of the social, economic and cultural structures that frame women's lives. Though Beauvoir will not argue that these structures deprive women of their freedom, neither will she ignore the situations that make the exercise of that freedom extremely difficult. Her assertion that woman feels a necessary bond with man regardless of a lack of reciprocity, however, escapes existential and Marxist categories. It is crucial to Beauvoir's analysis of women's condition and draws on the notion of the appeal developed in The Ethics of Ambiguity. In making an appeal to others to join me in my pursuit of justice I validate myself and my values. Given that my appeal must be an appeal to the other in their freedom, I must allow for the fact that the other may reject it. When this happens, I must (assuming that the rejection is not a threat to the ground value of freedom) recognize the other's freedom and affirm the bond of humanity that ties us to each other. In the case of women, Beauvoir notes, this aspect of the appeal (the affirmation of the bond between us) dominates. She does not approve of the way that women allow it to eclipse the requirement that they be recognized as free subjects, but she does alert us to the fact that recognition in itself is not the full story of the ethical relationship. To demand recognition without regard for the bond of humanity is unethical. It is the position of the Subject as master.

Moving between the statement that women are pleased with their alienated status as the Other and the question, "How can women achieve human fulfillment?", Beauvoir argues that women's exploitation is historical, and therefore amenable to change. As an existential situation, however, women are responsible for changing it. Liberation must be women's work. It is not a matter of appealing to men to give women their freedom, but a matter of women discovering their solidarity, rejecting the bad faith temptations of happiness and discovering the pleasures of freedom. Further, though Beauvoir alerts us to the tensions

and conflicts that this will create between men and women, she does not envision a permanent war of the sexes. Here her Hegelian-Marxist optimism prevails. Men will (ultimately) recognize women as free subjects.

The last chapters of The Second Sex, "The Independent Woman" and the "Conclusion", speak of the current (1947) status of women's situation—what has changed and what remains to be done. Without ignoring the importance of women's gaining the right to vote and without dismissing the necessity of women attaining economic independence, Beauvoir finds these liberal and Marxist solutions to women's situation inadequate. They ignore the effects of women's socialization (the subject of volume two of The Second Sex) and they are inattentive to the ways that the norm of masculinity remains the standard of the human. The liberated woman must free herself from two shackles: first, the idea that to be independent she must be like men, and second, the socialization through which she becomes feminized. The first alienates her from her sexuality. The second makes her adverse to risking herself for her ideas/ideals. Attentive to this current state of affairs, and to the phenomenology of the body, Beauvoir sets two prerequisites for liberation. First, women must be socialized to engage the world. Second, they must be allowed to discover the unique ways that their embodiment engages the world. In short, the myth of woman must be dismantled. So long as it prevails, economic and political advances will fall short of the goal of liberation. Speaking in reference to sexual difference, Beauvoir notes that disabling the myth of woman is not a recipe for an androgynous future. Given the realities of embodiment, there will be sexual differences. Unlike today, however, these differences will not be used to justify the difference between a Subject and his inessential Other.

The goal of liberation, according to Beauvoir, is our mutual recognition of each other as free and as other. She finds one situation in which this mutual recognition (sometimes) exists today, the intimate heterosexual erotic encounter. Speaking of this intimacy she writes, "The dimension of the relation of the other still exists; but the fact is that alterity has no longer a hostile implication" (The Second Sex, 448). Why? Because lovers experience themselves and each other ambiguously, that is as both

subjects and objects of erotic desire rather than as delineated according to institutionalized positions of man and woman. In Beauvoir's words, "The erotic experience is one that most poignantly discloses to human beings the ambiguity of the condition; in it they are aware of themselves as flesh and as spirit, as the other and as the subject" (The Second Sex, 449). The concept of ambiguity, developed abstractly in The Ethics of Ambiguity, is erotically embodied in The Second Sex and is identified as a crucial piece of the prescription for transcending the oppressions of patriarchy. This description of the liberating possibilities of the erotic encounter is also one of those places where Beauvoir reworks Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment. For in drawing on Merleau-Ponty's descriptions of the ways that we are world-making and world-embedded subject-objects, she reveals the ways that it is as subject-objects "for the world", "to the world", and "in the world" that we are passionately drawn to each other.

11.3 SUMMARY

Simone de Beauvoir begins her introduction by explaining that she chose to write a book about women because there is still a controversy over what it means to be a woman in the first place. Is "femininity" biological, or defined by behaviors, or nonexistent in the first place? She begins to define the category of "woman" by considering the fact that she feels the need to define herself first and foremost as a woman, while men do not feel the need to identify so overtly with their masculinity. Woman is "the Other" because man defines himself as essential to the world, and sees himself as the subject by which woman is defined. de Beauvoir also gives women responsibility for changing this duality, however, pointing out that woman must redefine herself as the subject in order to change her situation. She does explain that it is more difficult for women to change this dynamic than it would be for the proletariat, Jews, or African Americans to rebel against their oppression, because women cannot simply overthrow their oppressor—women do need men in order to survive.

De Beauvoir points out that writing about this duality is difficult because men and women both have such strong biases. To resolve this problem,

she proposes a framework in which we do not consider how to achieve "happiness," because this is impossible to measure, but rather how to define and achieve women's "freedom." In the first part of her work, she will consider three different perspectives on how to define women: biological data, the psychoanalytical point of view, and the point of view of historical materialism.

In her chapter on biological data, de Beauvoir primary considers two questions: "What does female represent in the animal kingdom? And what unique kind of female is realized in woman?" . She points out that division into two sexes is actually not universal in nature. For example, one-celled animals reproduce individually and hermaphroditic species do exist. She concludes that, when considering evolutionary theory, neither biological system can be called "superior." She disputes the assumptions of philosophers like Plato and Hegel, who believe that division into two sexes is a natural state of being. She also points out that social theories that discriminate against women based on biology either make false assumptions or are too bold in their analogies; the relationship between gametes and gonads cannot be equated to the relationship between women and men. For example, two scientific biases against female biology are particularly misguided: females are not more "passive" nor the guarantors of reproduction, since sperm and ovum actually meet on an equal basis to lead to new life.

Overall, de Beauvoir cautions against assuming anything about the "battle of the sexes" in humans based on facts from nature. She cites several examples of different species in which the two sexes interact in very different ways, with either male or female dominating the other. In humans, she points out that puberty is more like a crisis for women, which weakens them more than it does men. For women, the body becomes "something other than her" in the sense that women must deal with childbirth and other functions that do damage to their own bodies, while men remain comfortable in their skin. Based on this, she points out that older women beyond reproductive age are sometimes considered a separate sex because reproductive capacity is so central to how we define females. She does concede that such biological facts about humans are important to consider in order to understand the female condition overall.

However, she does not believe they lock women into any particular destiny, but are rather one piece of the puzzle.

De Beauvoir ends this chapter on biology by pointing out once again that we should not assume that nature reflects any subjective values. She also points out that certain traits are relative; for example, "weakness" is only negative relative to humans seeking a particular kind of "strength." Biology is not enough to define the human condition because humans living in society are not simply a species in nature, but rather a group that depends on economic and social factors to contextualize its values. Moving forward, de Beauvoir wants readers to consider biological data in economic, social, and psychological contexts. Biology is not enough to explain why woman is "the Other" in society.

In her chapter on the psychoanalytical point of view, de Beauvoir evaluates and criticizes theorists such as Freud. Regarding Freud, she explains that he assumes women feel like damaged versions of men, but refutes this on the basis that society, not their own subconscious, teaches them to feel this way. Overall, she criticizes psychoanalysis for ignoring the question of choice and value and instead believing that certain drives are simply human givens. For de Beauvoir, values are involved in explaining how sexuality works in the first place. She references Sartre's Being and Nothingness to explain her own theory that humans are actually focused on a "quest for being," and sexuality is only one part of this quest.

De Beauvoir outlines certain ways in which her own theories will diverge from those of psychoanalysis. First, she does not limit herself to assuming that sexuality is a given, but rather defines it as something shaped by societal values. Second, by assuming that women operate in a world shaped by values, she affords them a greater degree of freedom; women are not simply unconsciously acted upon by certain drives or impulses, but rather have to choose between different values in everything they do. de Beauvoir rejects psychoanalysts' vision of girls as torn between their father's "viriloid" and their mother's "feminine" tendencies. Instead, she sees women as caught between the role of an object or Other and the possibility of their freedom.

Finally, in her chapter on historical materialism, de Beauvoir considers the role of history in shaping the difference between men and women. She considers Engels' explanation that history is shaped by technology, and the development of private property led to women's devaluation in society, as men became the breadwinners. However, she dismisses this theory as surface-level because it does not account for how these values developed in the first place. She points to factors shaping women's condition that lie outside labor distribution; for example, childbirth and sexuality. Because these are not accounted for by historical materialists like Engels, she believes it is necessary to go beyond this theory in order to fully explain women's condition in society.

To summarize, de Beauvoir rejects Freud's sexual theories and Engels' economic theories on the same basis: psychoanalysts base everything in sexuality while historical materialists base everything in economic situations, and de Beauvoir believes that the real answer lies somewhere in between. Once again, she emphasizes that the world is shaped by human values, and a human quest toward transcending ourselves. These are the most fundamental factors driving how we think of biology, psychoanalysis, and history.

In the first chapter of this section, de Beauvoir takes for granted her previous conclusion that when one of the two opposed sexes has an advantage over the other, it will prevail and oppress the other. Now, she moves on to consider how men might have gained the historical advantage necessary to impose their domination on women. She concedes that ethnological information about primitive human society is limited, and it is difficult to draw conclusions with certainty. However, she posits that the balance of male production and female reproduction did not naturally lead to one dominating the other, since both were equally valuable to society. Instead, it is because humanity does not seek only survival, but rather to surpass itself, that men eventually came to dominate. This is the core of de Beauvoir's existential perspective on the dynamics between men and women.

According to de Beauvoir, it is only in surpassing the animal condition that humans can find meaning—by defining their own humanity as separate from the existence of animals. Women's role in producing

children entails a simple, passive submission to biological necessity, one that even animals can perform. However, men's role in inventing new things and asserting their power over their environment surpasses the capacities of animals and allows men to recognize their own humanity and their future potential. She posits that it is only in risking one's life on dangerous expeditions, such as the hunting tasks allotted to men, that man can rise above animals. Even though women might contribute new life to the world through reproduction, she dismisses it as a repetition of the same life in different forms. Men, on the other hand, go beyond repetition by taking on new projects and inventions. Their activities create foundational values for society.

In the next chapter, de Beauvoir goes on to consider primitive societies and their valuation of women in order to debunk certain myths about these systems. She describes the advent of institutions, which began only when nomads settled the land and had the need for laws and order. She also explains that certain societies associated women with childbirth, and worshipped women's role in producing new life. However, she argues that even in these societies, woman was still considered an "Other;" she can only be worshipped in the first place because she is considered to be not a peer, but outside of the human order. This means that society has always been centeredaround men, rather than an equal consideration of both sexes. It also means that woman is still always defined by men: they created women as idols in the first place, and therefore can also destroy these idols. Furthermore, these female idols were based in male fear, not love or respect. Once agriculture gave way to creative labor, men could reclaim control over both children and crops, and women lost all power they may have had as idols. de Beauvoir concludes the chapter by stating that men would go on to struggle with how women could be both servants and companions. Shifting attitudes about this would shape women's role throughout history.

In the third chapter, de Beauvoir links women's role with private property and the question of inheritance. She explains that the advent of private property helped men to define women as property, as well, which led them to value sexual fidelity. If a woman was not a virgin or faithful to her husband, his ability to pass on his property to his own children

would be threatened. Thus, women came to be treated as property, as well. de Beauvoir explains that this was true across a number of religions, from Judaism to Islam to Christianity. However, not all societies had the same rules; for example, in Egypt women could maintain equal social standing when they married. Overall, however, the more entrenched a woman is in social structures, the less free she is. It is only by escaping to the edges of society—through "low" professions such as prostitution—that women escaped their role as property, though they had to sacrifice wealth and comfort to do so. She ends the chapter by considering the situation of women in Ancient Rome, who had economic independence but no political power. Thus, they are an example of "false emancipation" because, though they may be economically free, they still have no means of challenging male primacy.

In her fourth chapter, de Beauvoir considers the role of Christianity in shaping women's position in society. She analyzes Christian demonization of sexuality as the root of its discrimination against women, who represent a temptation. She also describes Germanic traditions in which women are respected and well treated under the law as long as they remain man's property and give up individual rights. She also dismantles the myth that "courtly love," meaning more romantic visions of love, improved women's position; rather, poets still attacked women as lazy, coquettish, and sinful. However, she does point out that in poorer families men are more likely to have reciprocal relationships with their wives, out of necessity.

Nevertheless, over time the position of privileged women did change. In the Italian Renaissance, individualism became celebrated across both sexes. Women could join in freethinking activities and sponsor the arts, or run their own salons. However, they were only allowed to participate in such cultural activities because these did not tangibly change the political landscape. Women who acted as courtesans, lead salons, or worked as actresses gained a foothold in cultural activities previously barred to them. However, this still remained the domain of the elite and was not open to less well-off women. Overall, de Beauvoir concludes that democratic and individualist ideals of the 18th century did somewhat help women's position in society.

In her fifth chapter, de Beauvoir points out that the French Revolution did not actually change the fate of women. It was run by men and focused on bourgeois values, leaving working class women behind. In the anarchic phase of the revolution, women enjoyed some kind of freedom, but this ended when society was reorganized; the Napoleonic Code reinstated old ideas of women as primarily wives and mothers. By contrast, the reform movement of the 19th century did seek justice in equality, though Proudhon proved an exception. These movements tended to recognize that women were most exploited by the capitalist system: employers could afford to pay them less than men, which in turn inflamed the anger of the male workers they displaced.

De Beauvoir also considers the dilemma of balancing reproductive work with productive work. Women's fertility was variously controlled by the state over the course of history. Christian morals helped to make abortion a crime, which in turn forced women to focus more on reproduction than production in the labor force. In the 19th century, being able to work and having more freedom to control their reproduction helped change women's condition. Nevertheless, the feminist movement advanced slowly because of the class divisions that split the women involved. de Beauvoir thus believes feminism made its greatest advances in Soviet Russia, because these class divisions were also addressed.

In conclusion, de Beauvoir points out that man have written all of women's history. Even the feminist movement is not autonomous, but has often been affected by politics and social context. Throughout history, women mostly could not or would not act for their own benefit. She condemns anti-feminism's false conclusions about history: that "women have never created anything grand" and "woman's situation has never prevented great women personalities from blossoming." In fact, de Beauvoir points out that circumstances have prevented women from rising to their potential greatness, and reiterates that women need both abstract rights and concrete possibilities in order to have true freedom to create. The burdens of marriage are still heavier on women, since it is more difficult to balance work with domestic duties. However, marriage still represents the best way to advance a woman's situation, which

means women turn to marriage over advancing in their careers, thus perpetuating the cycle of less skilled women workers. Women thus have to exert greater "moral effort" to choose independence, since the path of independence is more difficult for them than it is for men.

In her first chapter, de Beauvoir establishes her central theories regarding how men have mythologized women. She begins by reiterating that men established woman as the Other in order to subjugate her economically. However, she goes on to claim that this position suited men's "ontological and moral ambitions" as well. She explains her philosophical approach: men are constantly trying to impose themselves on the world in order to prove their own sense of being, but the highest state they can achieve is actually one in which they renounce this more active form of being in favor of a more passive form of existence. However, achieving this state requires constant effort. Thus, men have contradictory impulses to life and rest, existence and being. They turn to women to solve some of these problems because women are neither their male peers, nor a totally foreign being. Man wants to possess woman in order to prove his being.

De Beauvoir explains that this conception of women varies by culture. In wealthier countries, women are idolized because men have no other struggles by which to give their lives meaning. However, in socialist countries the other is not a category, and women are considered to be human beings. Nevertheless, one constant in men's conceptions of woman is their ambivalence about them. Man connects woman with Nature: for him, both represent life and death at the same time. Man thus projects his own mortality onto woman. This leads to men's disgust with menstruation, in particular, because it represents feminine fertility, which also reminds men of mortality.

Overall, men are also caught between fear and desire of women. This ambivalence is reflected in their perspectives on virginity; in some cultures it is reviled because it represents women's separation from men, but in others it is prized because it represents their ability to belong only to one man. By possessing women, men also want to metaphorically subjugate Nature, which represents a similarly passive and unexpected resistance to men's advances. However, part of this desire for possession

involves inevitable failure, since woman remains Other and cannot be fully possessed. Sex is also complicated for men, because it represents furthering the human species and thus reminds him of his own individual insignificance. Thus, religions in which mortality is celebrated, such as Islam, tend not to fear women, but for religions in which sexuality is sinful, women represent all evil earthly temptations. Men are always disappointed by women because they represent all the things men want, as well as everything they fear.

De Beauvoir also examines literary representations of women to show how men mythologize them. In art, women are often celebrated precisely because they are a mysterious Other. Women are often muses, but this also means that they do not create anything themselves. Instead, they simply serve as inspiration. Men also value women as an audience for their art because they view them not as peers, but rather as an Other who is just separate enough from the world to view it more objectively than they can. Woman is often represented as a sphinx because she is mysteriously caught between an angel and a devil.

In the second chapter of Part 3, de Beauvoir analyses a number of novelists to show how most tend to mythologize women and reinforce her status as other. The one exception to this list—which includes Montherlant, D. H. Lawrence, Claudel, and Breton—is Stendhal, whom she credits for depicting women as human beings. Overall, she concludes that these male novelists tend to depict woman as a privileged other, meaning she represents positive forces as long as she sticks to the submissive role they assign to her. All of these novelists believe the ideal woman is the one who embodies the other and can reveal something about man to himself. They all expect women to be altruistic in ways that are not required of men.

In the third chapter of the section, de Beauvoir considers how these myths affect everyday life. She defines the difference between static myths, which assume that a certain idea is a given and project it onto different situations, and concrete reality. In reality, women cannot be encompassed by a single idea. This often leads to frustration for men who try to understand them. Because myths attempt to summarize women as a whole, under a single idea, men cannot accept it when

women break this mold in reality. In particular, the connection between women and nature allows men to explain much of her suffering as something "natural" and impossible to change. Moreover, the myth of feminine "mystery" allows men to believe that women are impossible to understand, instead of spurring him to come to terms with what he does not understand. In reality, de Beauvoir points out that all people are mysteries to one another.

De Beauvoir explains that, in actuality, women have learned to be mysterious in order to protect themselves. Because men oppress them, they have learned to be deceptive and hide their real feelings. de Beauvoir praises authors who write about women without mystery, and points out that this does not make their work less compelling. In general, she argues that getting rid of these myths about women would not take away from men's experiences, but would rather ground these experiences in truth. Currently, men believe that "real women" are those who accept their role as the Other. However, for de Beauvoir, this is the opposite of the truth. She celebrates a new trend in which women who occupy professional positions are eroticized. Perhaps this signifies that new myths, more favourable to women's liberation, will come about.

Check Your Progress I:

Q1. What are some of the main similarities and differences between Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex' and Franz Fanon's 'Black Skin, White Masks'?

Answer……

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Q2. Give brief summary on Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex' .

Answer……

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11.4 ANALYSIS

De Beauvoir begins her book by stating that the subject of woman is "irritating" to write about, especially for women themselves. She

establishes early on that her book is meant as a corrective; she is not writing this because the subject is particularly compelling to her on its own, but because she feels the need to respond to earlier analyses of femininity that she feels are too flawed not to address. Thus, she spends the first section of this book responding to different systems for defining femininity—the biological, the psychoanalytical, and the historical or economic. She is not yet advancing her own opinions or making the case for a new system, but rather dismantling existing systems of thought.

De Beauvoir is also careful to address her own biases, in order to train readers in recognizing bias in general throughout the rest of the book. In the first paragraph of her introduction, she points out, "It is hard to know any longer if women still exist, if they will always exist, if there should be women at all, what place they hold in this world, what place they should hold." She admits to the difficulty of defining femininity or womanhood, inviting readers to be critical even in their approach to her ideas. Later, she also writes, "If I want to define myself, I first have to say, "I am a woman'; all other assertions will arise from this basic truth." This admission serves to reveal her own bias upfront. However, it also alerts readers to the impossibility of writing about this subject without bias.

De Beauvoir's tone is often ironic, inviting her readers to laugh at the absurdity of certain assumptions and sway them toward her own interpretation of a situation. For example, in her first paragraph, she mentions followers of the theory of the eternal feminine, who "whisper, 'even in Russia women are still very much women.'" She does not simply dismiss the theories of these believers outright by pointing out why they do not make sense. Instead, de Beauvoir paints a picture of their behavior and attitude in order to ridicule them; they "whisper" this belief to themselves, as though it were a closely guarded secret, and state "even in Russia," as though Russia were an alien place for women to exist. Early on, then, de Beauvoir establishes a somewhat bitter tone in regards to previous theorists who perpetuated sexist notions. She does not have much patience for assumptions she believes to be ridiculous.

De Beauvoir is also careful to break down her aims and frameworks at the beginning and end of each chapter. She uses the construction "we

will…" to outline her objectives. For example, at the end of her introduction, she states, "So we will begin by discussing women from a biological, psychoanalytical, and historical materialist point of view." In this way, she invites readers to share in her goals and follow her in her journey through these various theories. This construction also makes clear that she is writing her own social theory, clearly broken down into different sections and arguments. Despite her occasionally ironic tone, de Beauvoir is writing a serious and thorough explanation of her beliefs, and not a personal polemic on the topic.

Furthermore, de Beauvoir makes frequent use of questions in order to stimulate her readers' thinking and help them follow along with her logic. In her chapter on biological data, she does not simply state her own opinion, but rather begins by considering two foundational questions: "What does the female represent in the animal kingdom? And what unique kind of female is realized in woman?" By phrasing these frameworks for the chapter as questions, de Beauvoir invites her readers into her thought process. She began to consider this topic through these questions, and allows readers to begin in the same place. This way, as she lays out her answers, she is better able to keep readers engaged in her logical process. She also allows readers to consider the subject themselves before presenting them with her opinion, leaving room for a more critical reading of the text.

De Beauvoir begins this section with a declaration. She writes that "this world has always belonged to males, and none of the reasons given for this have ever seemed sufficient." Once again, she reiterates her central thesis that men have controlled women's narratives. In this section, however, she takes a stronger stance on previous explanations for gender dynamics. While her first section considered alternative explanations for differences in gender, this section dismisses earlier theories as insufficient. Instead, de Beauvoir intends to provide her own take on history, without consulting others' work as heavily as she did in the previous section.

The tone of this section reflects the fact that de Beauvoir is now writing her own version of events, as opposed to critiquing others'. She writes more assertively, making declarative statements and crafting her own

narrative. For example, she begins her third chapter by stating, “Once woman is dethroned by the advent of private property, her fate is linked to it for centuries: in large part, her history is intertwined with the history of inheritance.” By beginning this sentence with “once woman is dethroned,” de Beauvoir indicates she is jumping straight back into the historical narrative she is weaving for her readers across the chapters of this section. She is also making connections between different concepts, building her analysis of the situation.

In this section, de Beauvoir also includes many historical references. It is clear that she has researched the history of women’s treatment across cultures and times very closely. She provides detailed examples from Ancient Rome, Egypt, and Greece in order to support her hypothesis that living on the outskirts of society historically equates with more abstract power for women. These examples reveal certain patterns that de Beauvoir draws on to support her claims. Her use of these examples also supports de Beauvoir’s efforts to construct her own theories, by providing her with new evidence to build on. They form the basis of her contributions to feminist theory, as they differ from those of previous theorists.

Moreover, de Beauvoir’s choice of examples from history helps to illustrate the ambiguities and nuances of women’s place in history. These varied examples show that no woman’s situation was exactly the same across place and time. For example, she discusses Goddess Mothers in Egypt maintaining their status after marriage, as well as hospitality prostitution in Greece. As such, these details prevent de Beauvoir from making any generalizations that seem too sweeping or unfounded. This in turn ensures that she follows her own advice not to oversimplify women’s conditions the way that theorists like Freud and Hegel tended to do. She fulfils her initial promise to readers to deliver full information and consider all facets of a situation.

In her last chapter, de Beauvoir concludes the section by tracing the history of the feminist movement up to the present and shifting to a broader discussion of theory. Across these chapters, she has provided a largely chronological account of women’s place in history. Thus, it makes sense for her to conclude with the most recent session at the UN

Commission on the Status of Women. After summarizing this event, de Beauvoir goes on to point out what kinds of work she believes is still left undone. By providing a factual history first, she is able to better support her theoretical assertions about the present moment. In conclusion, she provides a bold statement on the entire history she has summarized up to this point: men have written all of it. This statement indicates a shift toward the broader theorizing she will be doing in the rest of the book.

De Beauvoir begins her first chapter of this section on a more philosophical note. She establishes the kinds of existential theories that form the core of most of her analysis. In order to do this, she uses more general language and theoretical vocabulary. For example, she makes use of phrases such as "tragedy of the unhappy consciousness" and "dialectical reversal." This shift in tone signifies that she is providing readers with some of her own theories regarding how humans in general approach their lives and find meaning in existence. Her terminology and sentence structure becomes more complex as she considers more complex subjects.

Throughout the first chapter, de Beauvoir analyzes several different literary passages in order to prove her point about how women are depicted as an Other in mythology. As in the previous section, she makes careful use of evidence to support her points. However, whereas she had previously drawn on historical research, she is now performing close readings of literature. This represents a different approach to evidence and analysis in her work. In addition to drawing patterns from history, de Beauvoir can also look closely at an author's words to deconstruct their arguments. This inclusion of close reading demonstrates the importance de Beauvoir places on word choice and sentence construction. She demonstrates how to read critically to her readers, who can then apply these skills to her text, as well.

In the second chapter of Part 3, de Beauvoir does not include as much of her own philosophy. Instead, she focuses on summarizing and evaluating the works of certain novelists who wrote about women. She often adopts the voice of the author she is describing, using some of the language they would use to describe women. For this reason, she loses some of her personal voice and does not engage as much with the philosophical

terminology she brought up in her first chapter. However, she is occasionally sarcastic, as she engages with some of the authors' more offensive ideas. In this way, her voice does continue to come through in this chapter.

Throughout this second chapter, de Beauvoir's tone also becomes more critical and straightforward. Instead of unfolding her own ideas, she must quickly summarize and debunk other authors' conceptions of women. Her sentences become shorter and more abrupt as she spends her energy on pointing to the reasons a given author's idea is flawed. For example, when describing the novelist Montherlant, she simply states, "Montherlant wants woman to be despicable." In other parts of her work, de Beauvoir tends to expand on her ideas more than she does in this chapter. However, given her aim of efficiently dismantling previous theories, this more straightforward tone is used effectively.

Toward the end of this second chapter, de Beauvoir returns to her own theories and speaks in generalities. Though she has just deconstructed specific authors' exact approaches to women, she concludes the chapter by making general statements about where these authors fit into a bigger picture. She reduces each author to the one factor in which they locate transcendence. So, for example, she associates Lawrence with the phallus and Claudel with God. This allows her readers to come away from the chapter with one most important piece of information they can hold on to for each author. It allows conveys de Beauvoir's message that these authors are reductive in their treatment of women. Just as they reduce women to certain symbols, she reduces these authors all to a single symbol, as well.

11.5 LET'S SUM UP

Written in 1949, The Second Sex had two main ideas: that man, who views himself as the essential being, has made woman into the inessential being, "the Other," and that femininity as a trait is an artificial posture. Sartre influenced both of these ideas. The Second Sex was perhaps the most important writing on women's rights through the 1980s. When it first appeared, however, it was not very popular. The Second Sex does not offer any real solutions to the problems of women except

the hope "that men and women rise above their natural differentiation (differences) and unequivocally (firmly) affirm their brotherhood." The description of Beauvoir's own life revealed the possibilities available to the woman who found ways to escape her situation. Hers was a life of equality, and she remained a voice and a model for those women not living free lives.

The fourth instalment of her autobiography, All Said And Done, was written when Beauvoir was sixty-three. In it she describes herself as a person who has always been secure in an imperfect world: "Since I was 21, I have never been lonely. The opportunities granted to me at the beginning helped me not only to lead a happy life but to be happy in the life I led. I have been aware of my shortcomings and my limits, but I have made the best of them. When I was tormented by what was happening in the world, it was the world I wanted to change, not my place in it." On April 14, 1986, Simone de Beauvoir died in a Paris hospital. Sartre had died six years earlier.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II:

Q1. Analyse and discuss Simone de Beauvoir The Second Sex.

Answer……

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Q2. How many De Beauvoir analyze Monique's situation and attitude from the viewpoint of her own classical feminism?

Answer……

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11.6 KEYWORDS

- **agnation:** *(n)* patrimonial succession. Inheritance is exclusively through the male line of the family.
- **alienation:** *(n)* Marxist diction for the worker's estrangement from himself, his work, and his species. Most powerful in Beauvoir's usage is the woman's alienation, an estrangement from her own body recognized as beyond her control.

- **alterity:** *(n)* usually paired terms that are different, one from the other, in one or more ways, not reciprocal. Derived from the same root as alternative, this relation occurs between paired terms (i.e. male/female) in which opposition is the principle of relation, and one term—male—is subject and individuated, while the other—female—is summarized and objectified.
- **binarism or binary opposition:** *(n)* an opposing pair. Binarism refers to two terms paired in opposition.
- **existential morality:** *(n)* in which the subject experiences freedom only by perpetually moving beyond it to other freedoms. The individual justifies his existence in experiencing it as an indefinite need to transcend himself, a commitment to moving beyond selfish concerns to a larger world.
- **existentialism:** *(n)* begins with the premise that existence precedes essence. Existence is a process which consists of forever bringing people into being.
- **immanence:** *(n)* in existentialist thought, a mode of being attributed to the inwardness of the woman. Woman, constricted by nature and nurture by the biology of reproduction and a masculine culture that sees her as less able to tackle worldly things, exists primarily within the body's boundaries, concerned with self-image, sexuality, and maternity.

11.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Why did Richards mother make him go to the store even though she knew he might get beaten again?
- Why does Beauvoir described married woman as parasites ?
- Why do you think the author (doesn't look like there is) chose this title to begin with? What was their idea of making this title "The Second Sex"? Why or why not?
- Identify the characteristic elements of classical feminism in this The Second Sex

11.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 11.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 11.3

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Answer 1 : Check Section 11.4

Answer 2 : Check Section 11.5

UNIT: 12 SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR- INTRODUCTION TO *THE SECOND* SEX-VOLUME II

STRUCTURE

12.0 OBJECTIVE

In this Chapter you will learn about Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to The Second Sex. Its helps to understand the critical aspects of the same along with its analysis. Unit will put light on the influence and cultural repercussions of the novel. This unit helps to understand following aspects:

- Reception and Influence
- Cultural Repercussions
- Summary
- Analysis

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The Second Sex (French: Le DeuxièmeSexe) is a 1949 book by the French existentialist Simone de Beauvoir, in which the author discusses the treatment of women throughout history. Beauvoir researched and wrote the book in about 14 months between 1946 and 1949 She

published it in two volumes, Facts and Myths and Lived Experience (Les faits et les mythesand L'expériencevécue in French). Some chapters first appeared in Les Temps modernes. One of Beauvoir's best-known books, The Second Sex is often regarded as a major work of feminist philosophy and the starting point of second-wave feminism.

12.2 RECEPTION AND INFLUENCE

The first French publication of The Second Sex sold around 22,000 copies in a week. It has since been translated into 40 languages. The Vatican placed the book on its List of Prohibited Books. The sex researcher Alfred Kinsey was critical of The Second Sex, holding that while it was an interesting literary production, it contained no original data of interest or importance to science. In 1960, Beauvoir wrote that The Second Sex was an attempt to explain "why a woman's situation, still, even today, prevents her from exploring the world's basic problems." The attack on psychoanalysis in The Second Sex helped to inspire subsequent feminist arguments against psychoanalysis, including those of Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique (1963), Kate Millett's Sexual Politics (1969), and Germaine Greer's The Female Eunuch (1970). Millett commented in 1989 that she did not realize the extent to which she was indebted to Beauvoir when she wrote Sexual Politics.

The philosopher Judith Butler writes that Beauvoir's formulation that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" distinguishes the terms "sex" and "gender". Borde and Malovany-Chevalier, in their complete English version, translated this formulation as "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman" because in this context (one of many different usages of "woman" in the book), the word is used by Beauvoir to mean woman as a construct or an idea, rather than woman as an individual or one of a group. Butler writes that the book suggests that "gender" is an aspect of identity which is "gradually acquired". Butler sees The Second Sex as potentially providing a radical understanding of gender.

The biographer Deirdre Bair, writing in her "Introduction to the Vintage Edition" in 1989, relates that "one of the most sustained criticisms" has been that Beauvoir is "guilty of unconscious misogyny", that she separated herself from women while writing about them. Bair writes that

the French writer Francis Jeanson and the British poet Stevie Smith made similar criticisms: in Smith's words, "She has written an enormous book about women and it is soon clear that she does not like them, nor does she like being a woman."Bair also quotes British scholar C. B. Radford's view that Beauvoir was "guilty of painting women in her own colors" because The Second Sex is "primarily a middle-class document, so distorted by autobiographical influences that the individual problems of the writer herself may assume an exaggerated importance in her discussion of femininity.

The classical scholar David M. Halperin writes that Beauvoir gives an idealized account of sexual relations between women in The Second Sex, suggesting that they reveal with particular clarity the mutuality of erotic responsiveness that characterizes women's eroticism. The critic Camille Paglia praised The Second Sex, calling it "brilliant" and "the supreme work of modern feminism." Paglia writes that most modern feminists do not realize the extent to which their work has simply repeated or qualified Beauvoir's arguments. In Free Women, Free Men (2017) Paglia writes that as a sixteen-year-old, she was "stunned by de Beauvoir's imperious, authoritative tone and ambitious sweep through space and time", which helped inspire her to write her work of literary criticism Sexual Personae (1990). Christina Hoff Sommers dismissed The Second Sex, writing that its "reputation as a masterpiece, a work of art, or even an inspiring manifesto, depends heavily on no one reading it." Sommers described the book as a "tangle" containing "sweeping declarations", and that Beauvoir "made no effort to distinguish relevant from irrelevant material", and was careless in her use of evidence.

12.3 CULTURAL REPERCUSSIONS

The rise of second wave feminism in the United States spawned by Betty Friedan’s book, Feminine Mystique, which was inspired by Simone de Beauvoir’s, The Second Sex, took significantly longer to reach and impact the lives of European women. Even though The Second Sex was published in 1949 and Feminine Mystique was published in 1963, the French were concerned that expanding equality to include matters of the family was detrimental to French morals. In 1966, abortion in Europe

was still illegal and contraception was extremely difficult to access. Many were afraid that legalization would "take from men "the proud consciousness of their virility" and make women "no more than objects of sterile voluptuousness"". The French Parliament in 1967 decided to legalize contraception but only under strict qualifications.

Social feminists then went further to claim that women "were fundamentally different from men in psychology and in physiology…" and stressed gender differences rather than simply equality, demanding that women have the right of choice to stay home and raise a family, if they so desired, by issue of a financial allowance, advocated by the Catholic church, or to go into the workforce and have assistance with childcare through government mandated programs, such as nationally funded daycare facilities and parental leave. The historical context of the times was a belief that "a society cut to the measure of men ill served women and harmed the overall interests of society". As a result of this push for public programs, European women became more involved in politics and by the 1990s held six to seven times more legislative seats than the United States, enabling them to influence the process in support of programs for women and children

Check Your Progress I:

Q1. Discuss the influence of Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to *The Second Sex-Volume II*.

Answer……

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Q2. Give a brief summary on Cultural repercussions of Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex' Volume II .

Answer……

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12.4 SUMMARY

In the first chapter of Volume II, Part 1, de Beauvoir analyzes how girls are typically treated throughout their childhood. Her central claim is that girls are not born into womanhood, but rather are raised to identify with

certain traits we associate with "femininity" and being a "woman." This claim distinguishes de Beauvoir's theories from Freud's. Whereas Freud believed that women think in certain ways because of their anatomy, de Beauvoir believes they only come to think in these ways over time, based on how they are socialized by adults and peers. So, for example, she explains that girls tend to show the same aptitudes and attitudes as boys until the age of twelve or so. It is only through puberty and the differential treatment of adults that they begin to behave differently and become "women." The process of being weaned, or separated, from parents is part of what shapes boys and girls differently: whereas girls are treated more gently for a longer time, boys are quickly taught to be independent and more active. Although this is initially more painful for boys, it also shows them that they are more deserving or respect while indicating to girls that they must rely on protection and are considered weaker than boys.

De Beauvoir considers the question of how children's genital differences shape their identities. She believes that adults value and praise a boy's sexuality in compensation for his earlier weaning; this teaches him to identify his sexuality with his independence and transcendence. On the other hand, girls' sexuality is neither praised nor acknowledged, which leaves them more confused and often leads them to wish they were boys. They cannot project themselves into any body part, the way boys fixate on a penis as an external and important organ, so they tend to compensate by playing with dolls. They are also more attention-seeking because they do not have a single body part on which they can focus their attention and pride, so they desire adults' attention on their bodies as a whole—they make themselves into objects. This analysis differs from Freud's theory of "penis envy," which assumes that girls are born feeling like they are missing something because they do not have a penis.

As they enter puberty, de Beauvoir believes girls run up against limitations that do not exist for boys. They are given responsibilities in the house earlier on than boys. However, they learn that women are limited to these kinds of chores. Thus, although they might mature faster, they are also stuck in this state for the rest of their lives, while boys get to explore and grow over time. Although mothers might seem all-

powerful to children, girls learn over time that it is actually their fathers who have power over everything. At the same time, they are taught to approach love by submitting to the will of men; stories like those of "Cinderella" and "Sleeping Beauty" teach them to be patient and good in order to wait for a man to reward them with love. In learning of their own limitations as they grow up, they are analogous to black people in the United States, who encounter similar limitations in American society. Moreover, they are taught that sex is mysterious and unclean, which leads them to feel disgust with their own growing bodies. For women, sex and puberty are associated with shame and pain. de Beauvoir concludes by arguing that raising women to accept themselves and their bodies without shame would help to avoid many of these problems.

In the second chapter, de Beauvoir focuses on female adolescence. She characterizes this period as one primarily spent waiting for Man. While women are for men only one factor in a complete life, for women, men and marriage are the only goal they can aspire to. Just as boys start to develop more aggressive games in adolescence, girls are encouraged to become more passive. de Beauvoir claims that their awareness of their physical weakness leads them to lose confidence in everything else about themselves, as well. She explains that it is not because of relative weakness that women cannot work like men, but rather the limitations placed on them that make them weaker. The self-control and passivity expected of girls mean they become lazy, tense, and bored. They also begin to think of themselves as objects and become obsessed with their own appearance, because this is the only thing men care about when they approach women. They grow up to be confused because they are divided between accepting their feminine destiny to be passive, and rebelling against it. In response, they become secretive and tormented.

In the third chapter, de Beauvoir describes how girls react to their sexuality. Overall, she characterizes their sexual awakening as a violent act. While men transition smoothly and remain at the center of their sexuality, women must accept domination. Women are always expected to be passive and submissive, while men are encouraged to be active. Men’s sexuality can often seem threatening to women. Moreover, sex can be complicated by the danger of conceiving a child. This threat leads

women to feel alienated from the pleasurable aspects of the experience, as they focus on fearing its potential consequences. According to de Beauvoir, it would be best if girls could slowly get to know their sexual partners, avoid anything that could come across as violent, and not feel any time pressure.

De Beauvoir believes that sex is complicated by the unequally distributed power between men and women. A woman's pride can be hurt if a man is too violent, but also if he is too detached. Women also approach sex from a more difficult position because they are conflicted about giving in to their desires. Their sexuality is less by physical touch, in the way a man's is, and more by the situation as a whole. One of the main tensions in a sexual encounter can come from the fact that men approach sex as a battle, making it inherently violent and unequal. Women can also tend to be more masochistic in their approach to sex. de Beauvoir claims that this is because their pleasure and pain are linked, as losing their virginity and giving birth are both painful aspects of an otherwise pleasurable act. Sometimes, girls can feel guilty after giving themselves up to men, and respond by wanting to punish themselves. Often, this punishment takes the form of being "frigid or unresponsive during sex. de Beauvoir concludes this chapter by reflecting that women's sexuality is shaped by their entire social and economic situation.

In the fourth chapter, de Beauvoir analyzes homosexuality. Overall, she claims that women are not lesbians because of their anatomical "destiny" but because of their social context. She explains that homosexuality should not be judged as better or worse than heterosexuality, but rather as a response to certain social conditions. It is primarily a response to the fact that women are expected to be sexually passive when they are in heterosexual relationships. Women resent that they are limited in their femininity, and can turn to homosexuality in order to feel more equal overall. Moreover, sometimes women might reject femininity if they are unattractive and feel that they would be disdained in heterosexual relationships. Love between women can be more equal, but also more turbulent, because women are open with one another in ways they are not with men, meaning that passionate arguments can arise. de Beauvoir

concludes by writing that homosexuality is chosen based on one's situation.

De Beauvoir concludes her text by analysing why women often lose themselves to narcissism, love, or mysticism, before explaining what the present situation of the "independent woman" is like. She begins by describing how narcissism is an attitude that emerges from women's oppressive social situation. She defines narcissism as a process of alienation, in which women view themselves as an object and place supreme value on their physical being. As de Beauvoir has already established, women cannot exist as subjects themselves, so they seek transcendence by losing themselves in something else. For some women, this "something else" is the object that they represent in society. de Beauvoir explains that, though this may seem illogical, it is "because they are nothing that many women fiercely limit their interests to their self alone." Because women cannot aspire to create or contribute anything, they fixate on themselves more than men do.

De Beauvoir explains that narcissism is more likely in women because they are encouraged to identify their entire selves with their physical appearance, unlike men. Moreover, women tend to have a strong sense of nostalgia for their childhood, because this was a time before they came to be seen as objects. She believes women suffer in adulthood from being expected to embody certain general types, such as a wife or mother, instead of being treated as individuals in the way that children and men are. Women feel misunderstood and have a weak grip on reality, which leads them to fixate on themselves even more. They want to be recognized as important by those around them because they have no important skills or products to offer the world, besides the bare fact of their existence. These kinds of women never build genuine connections with others because they insist on being the center of everyone's existence and do not truly know themselves or the reality around them. Although narcissists may appear strong and self-absorbed, they are actually weak because their entire self-worth depends on how important they are to others.

In chapter 12, de Beauvoir explains how women in love can also lose themselves fully in their love affairs without being truly understood.

According to de Beauvoir, love is all-consuming for women; they devote themselves entirely to pleasing the man they love. However, for men, love is just another piece of their lives, as opposed to their entire existence. Women will inevitably be disappointed by their lovers because they expect too much of them. By putting the beloved man on a pedestal, a woman sets herself up to be devastated when that man acts human and appears flawed. At the same time, there is another contradiction inherent in women's love for men: they want men to be godlike but they also want to possess them entirely. Similarly, women want to give themselves up entirely to men but also want men to fully appreciate this sacrifice and give them access to the world through their love. de Beauvoir believes that many women find self-worth only through the fact that a man loves them.

The situation of a woman in love can be very dangerous because women depend so much more on men than men do on women. de Beauvoir believes that many women worship the man they love in the same way they might otherwise worship God. Thus, when a love affair is broken off, a woman often finds herself completely ruined. She not only loses economic benefits, but also feels like she has lost her entire purpose for living. On the other hand, men can usually recover more easily from the end of an affair because their affairs do not give them purpose in life. Women are also more tormented by the process of waiting for their lover to come back to them, because they have no other way to spend their time. Women end up trying to pass the time until their lover comes back, whereas men spend their time more productively overall and do not feel this same painful waiting process. Therefore, women in love tend to feel constantly tortured by their situation. de Beauvoir believes that the solution to this painful and unequal situation is for men and women to have an equal recognition of each other's freedom, and to spend time together, not out of necessity, but because it benefits them both in the same way while allowing them to maintain their independence as well.

In chapter 13, de Beauvoir explains how religion and mysticism can be similar to the process of being in love or being consumed by narcissism. She believes that women turn to worshipping God if they do not have a man to worship. de Beauvoir characterizers the behavior of religious

women and women in love as basically the same. Women want to feel special and needed, as though some kind of important gaze is fixated on them; this can be achieved either through narcissism, romance, or mysticism. Similarly, all three of these things have the possibility of being integrated into more active and independent lives. However, for the time being, they are so all-consuming that they destroy many women who subscribe to them.

In the last part of the book, de Beauvoir considers how independent women are striving for liberation in her own time. She acknowledges that women have more rights and are allowed to work and claim independence; however, she also notes that these civic liberties are only abstract if economic autonomy is not also in place. Women still face a greater burden when they try to work outside of the home, because they remain economically disadvantaged, dependent on husbands, or limited by the extra work required of them at home. She believes that women can only achieve total freedom while working if she is in a socialist society. Overall, de Beauvoir believes women have only come "halfway" in terms of achieving true equality and independence because they still face extra challenges. For example, their femininity often contradicts their work. The more productive a woman is in society, the less "feminine" she is considered to be, and vice versa. For example, a woman who is considered dominant or intelligent can seem threatening or undesirable as a romantic prospect for men. For women who want to remain feminine while still pursuing their independent work, this presents a difficult dilemma.

De Beauvoir believes that this inequality persists most strongly in the sexual relations between men and women. Sex presents a contradiction for women who want to be independent, because the dynamics involved often subordinate women to men. For example, men are typically more dominant and initiate the encounter. This can seem like a threat to an independent woman's sense of autonomy, however. Therefore, relations with men can complicate a woman's ability to be productive and feel positive about her position in society. de Beauvoir also believes that the restrictions and expectations placed on mothers perpetuate inequality; because reproductive rights are still controlled by men, women still have

a disadvantaged position when it comes to reproduction. Overall, an independent woman in de Beauvoir's day was torn between her profession and her sexual life.

She does note that creative women such as actresses, dancers, and singers have always enjoyed a greater degree of independence that corresponds with their femininity. However, she regrets that artistic women do not produce works of genius the way that men do, because they start out in a disadvantaged and less confident position. Women cannot produce completely innovative and important work because they do not have the same grasp on reality and confidence in their position that men do. Nevertheless, de Beauvoir is confident that changing circumstances will allow women to rise to this same level of genius over time.

In the conclusion, de Beauvoir reiterates many of her main ideas. She notes that men and women in her day are still not satisfied with one another because their positions remain unequal, and thus detrimental for both genders. The two genders are still engaged in a "combat" because they both seek to dominate the other. However, in her day, de Beauvoir believes that women no longer want to subjugate men, but rather want to escape from the chains that have been put on them by these men. Women have been complicit in their oppression over time because they have not known any other possibility. In de Beauvoir's day, however, this situation is changing. People no longer believe as strongly in the idea of finding "equality within inequality," but rather are striving to make the situation equal for both genders. de Beauvoir points out that many people object to these changes and want to maintain traditional gender norms, but de Beauvoir dismisses this attitude as naïve and nostalgic. She believes that changes to women's social situation are entirely positive for all of society, and should be embraced. In fact, if women can exist for themselves they can still exist for men, as well. If both genders accept each other as subjects and equals, then they can love each other in more open, honest, and positive ways.

12.5 ANALYSIS

In the first chapter of Volume II Part 1, de Beauvoir makes consistent use of the third person. She writes about a general "she" who is experiencing all of the childhood developments she describes. This use of third person makes sense in context, since de Beauvoir is taking a psychoanalytical approach to her analysis of gender. In such an approach, the psychoanalyst—in this case, de Beauvoir—tries to embody the perspective of the patient—in this case, women in general—in order to understand what they are going through. However, this approach is complicated by the fact that de Beauvoir switches between analyzing particular cases of individual women and analyzing how these cases relate to the situation of women in general. Thus, her use of the third person "she" sometimes refers to a specific patient, and sometimes applies more broadly to the condition of all women.

In the second chapter, on "The Girl," de Beauvoir mixes her psychoanalysis with literary analysis, as well. She draws on characters from fiction to demonstrate how femininity can manifest differently across different personalities. In the previous section, de Beauvoir close read literary passages in order to make a point about different authors' intentions and attitudes about women. In this section, however, she does not approach these texts with close readings. Instead, she analyzes the characters they contain in much the same way that a psychoanalyst might analyze a patient. For example, she evaluates the character of Judy from the book Dusty Answer and concludes that she bestows love on others as a gift, and thinks of the Other as something marvelous to embody. In this kind of analysis, de Beauvoir thinks of this fictional character as a personality type, and an example that can shed light on the psychoanalysis of women in general.

In the third chapter, de Beauvoir analyses sexuality in more sweeping terms. She continues to rely on anecdotes to ground her analysis, occasionally providing an example of a patient or character who experienced her sexuality in a particular way. However, de Beauvoir also refers to secondary sources, mainly from doctors or psychologists, to provide further insights into potential theories. In this chapter, she tends to combine the evidence she makes use of, but begins and ends by providing readers with her broader thoughts on how this evidence fits

together. She also ends the chapter by transitioning to the question of homosexuality, demonstrating that the third and fourth chapters are closely connected.

De Beauvoir begins the last chapter of this section by noting certain misconceptions about homosexuality, which she hopes to dispel. In her first line, she notes, "people are always ready to see the lesbian as wearing a felt hat, her hair short, and a necktie." By illustrating this particular image for her readers, she demonstrates that she is in tune with their thinking and connects with their assumptions. This setup allows her to better disprove the validity of this image as she moves throughout the chapter.

De Beauvoir's discussion of "the lesbian" contains some ideas about sexuality that can come across as insensitive or inappropriate to modern readers. For example, she considers the possibility of women turning to homosexuality if they are "unattractive and malformed" in order to compensate by being more masculine. She also claims that more dominant women turn toward homosexuality in order to avoid being dominated by men. While these claims may seem absurd to modern readers, it is important to keep in mind the time period in which this text was written. Homosexuality was viewed differently in the 1940s, and, in keeping with de Beauvoir's own argument that views (for example, views about femininity, or about homosexuality) should be understood in relation to social facts, her analysis of homosexuality should be understood as an analysis of its position in relation to norms about gender and sexuality at the time.

This section is the longest in the book, and covers the different possible roles or situations for women in society: married woman, mother, socialite, prostitute or hetaerae, or old woman. Across all of these chapters, de Beauvoir analyses how these different roles affect the women who have to subscribe to them. She considers how these roles differ across history and culture, how different types of women adapt to these situations, and the ways in which each role is shaped by men and detrimental to women. Overall, she condemns each one of these situations for the ways in which, in their current form in society, they restrict and damage women.

In the fifth chapter of Volume II, Part 2, de Beauvoir discusses what aspects of modern marriage continue certain traditions that are oppressive to women. She characterizes the contemporary situation as a transition point, in which women have gained greater rights but continue to be treated unfairly in many ways. She explains that marriage remains unequal for women because it represents the only way for a girl to enter into society and be economically secure, while boys do not face the same pressure because they can work and live independently. Wives are expected to serve their husbands and take care of the house and children, instead of having their own interests or lives outside of the home. de Beauvoir points out that this means the wife can only interact with society through her husband, and has no sense of independence or future. She does not blame girls for choosing to marry instead of remaining single because she knows that marriage offers the most economic and social stability for them.

De Beauvoir also explains that women are often very conflicted about marriage because it is both beneficial and harmful to them. They often marry because they think they should, and end up in situations they did not expect. Because no one talks to them about what to expect, either from married life or from losing their virginity, many women feel violated by their first sexual experience with their husbands, and continue to feel miserable in their sexual relations. de Beauvoir also explains that most men are not in love with their wives, but rather think of them as property. Love and marriage generally do not go together for either gender because marriage is an oppressive and unequal institution. Marriage also destroys eroticism by making sex unpleasant for women and restrictive for men. To compensate for their lack of freedom outside the house, de Beauvoir claims that women often become domineering within the space of the home and fixate completely on housework. However, this work is largely meaningless because it does not create anything new or contribute to society, leaving women unhappy and unfulfilled overall. Throughout this chapter, de Beauvoir often references Sophia Tolstoy, the wife of the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy, to show how wives of creative men were reduced to a life that was in many ways the opposite of their husbands'.

Notes

In chapter 6, de Beauvoir analyses how motherhood continues to restrict women's already-limited freedom. She acknowledges that, for women, becoming a mother means fulfilling their natural duty, but reminds readers that true freedom comes from surpassing what is "natural." de Beauvoir discusses how unfair it is for men to restrict access to abortions because of religious or moral reasons, while still blaming women for getting pregnant accidentally and expecting them to take full responsibility for such mistakes. She also claims that miscarriages and traumatic pregnancies are connected with a woman's psychological well-being; for example, if women feel trapped and unhappy in their marriage, they are more likely to miscarry. de Beauvoir argues that women feel ambivalent about childbirth because it represents new life, but also the eventuality of their own death. She also explains that pregnancy can be fulfilling for certain women in all the wrong ways: they might feel like they finally have a purpose in life, but this is a dangerous mindset because, of course, pregnancy cannot last forever and thus cannot always provide women with a purpose. Often, women can be disappointed when the child is finally born and is not everything they expected it to be.

Some women can think of children as their double, or their reason for existing. This can become complicated as children get older because they develop their individuality and often disappoint their mothers. Motherhood can be positive if women approach it in a healthy way and do not expect their love to be reciprocated in the same way they offer it. However, this is rare, and more often de Beauvoir believes women take out their frustration on their children. Because women are so oppressed in their marriages, they often have suppressed instincts and frustrations that can flare up and negatively impact their children. The relationship between mothers and children is particularly complicated for mothers and sons, because a woman's son will be able to surpass her in terms of education, accomplishments, and social access. Mothers are likely to try to control and limit their sons, while thinking of their daughters as their doubles and relating to them more closely. However, when either a son or daughter attempts to be independent of their mother, women can react negatively and try to stop this process. Thus, the oppression of women is negative both for women and for their children.

In chapter 7, de Beauvoir describes how marriage also limits women's abilities to function in society. She claims that women can only try to show off and represent themselves to others in society, instead of having genuine connections with others. They express themselves through their wardrobes, which are often restrictive of movement and are designed only to make women appear attractive and limited. de Beauvoir argues that women's clothes are so important because women are essentially thought of as decorative objects. However, de Beauvoir does acknowledge that women can be more genuine in their friendships with other women. They do not have to hide their real emotions around other women, the way they do with their husbands. Nevertheless, even these friendships are limited, because women live in a masculine world that limits their abilities to fully escape men's grasp and be themselves. Thus, women often feel a rivalry with other women, since they are all competing for men's attention, and this destroys women's ability to remain true friends with one another. de Beauvoir believes that adultery and women's relationships with lovers are also shaped by their lack of freedom within their marriages; according to her, women often have lovers in order to take revenge on their husbands.

In her fourth chapter, de Beauvoir analyzes women who become prostitutes or are famous for their appearance. She believes prostitution is also a response to the problems that exist in marriage; by sleeping with prostitutes, men are looking for more fulfilling sexual encounters outside of their boring marriages. de Beauvoir also describes the sad situation of many prostitutes, who are forced to turn to this profession because they have no other options. More high-class prostitutes with wealthy clients—who are generally referred to as courtesans or hetaera—face a more complicated situation than prostitutes do. In many cases, they are associated with art in some way. For example, de Beauvoir claims that movie stars are a type of hetaera because their career depends on their appearance. These women may have a certain type of independence because they are given economic support from many different men. However, they do not have a true purpose in life because they are not creating anything fulfilling or new, but rather just using their appearance

to get by. Life for a hetaerae is all a performance, and is therefore still unfulfilling and unequal to a man's situation.

In her fifth chapter, de Beauvoir describes how old age changes women. She claims that most women fear aging because they depend on their appearance to get by in society. Old women are often faced with regrets, as well; they reflect back on a youth in which they were not able to accomplish anything beyond marriage and are generally frustrated with their situation. However, in some ways old age allows women greater freedom. They do not associate themselves as much with their physical bodies, and live more in their imaginations. Nevertheless, their situation remains tragic because they only gain these freedoms once they are too old to make use of them. For example, women discover their sexual preferences later, but cannot attract new lovers once they are older. de Beauvoir claims that, at this age, women place all of their hopes on their children and expect to live vicariously through them. This can be a negative situation for both the older mother and her child, as it is frustrating for both of them when the child wants to be more independent. For this reason, older women are often overly dominating of their children and children-in-law. de Beauvoir concludes this chapter on the discouraging note that women can never be both effective and independent at the same time.

In her sixth chapter, de Beauvoir summarizes how women's situations in society impact their characters in general. Overall, she argues that the woman's situation has remained largely the same throughout history, leaving her oppressed and unequal when compared to men. This means that her character has also remained mostly the same throughout history, since de Beauvoir believes that a woman's character is shaped by her social situation. Overall, de Beauvoir describes woman's character as: argumentative, petty, weak, immoral, selfish, and deceptive. However, she explains that women are like this because they must accept masculine authority, and this leads to many contradictions in their personalities and outlooks on life. Most of their faults are related to the fact that their opportunities are very limited. For this reason, much of feminine behavior should be interpreted as a protest against the masculine order. Women often turn to religion in order to find some

peace with their situation. de Beauvoir concludes by arguing that women try to justify their existence by believing that their servile position is actually glorified by God.

In her first chapter, de Beauvoir uses new kinds of evidence to support her arguments. She relies on surveys conducted in Belgium to prove that girls usually take initiative in pursuing marriage. These survey questions provide general and convincing evidence of her point that women push for marriage because it is more beneficial for them. Compared to her use of anecdotal evidence, this survey gives de Beauvoir's readers more objective proof of her points. While her reference to literary scenes, incidents that affected her friends, or specific patients might be more vivid, her reference to this survey is more convincing because it makes use of quantitative as opposed to qualitative evidence. By including this amongst anecdotes, de Beauvoir shows that her points are supported by both kinds of evidence.

De Beauvoir's first chapter on marriage shapes the rest of this long section. It is the longest chapter of the section, and lays the groundwork for the situations discussed in the other five chapters. de Beauvoir makes this clear upfront by referring to marriage as the defining factor for women's positions in society. The length and breadth of this chapter emphasizes its importance for the section. This importance is also made clear by de Beauvoir's frequent references to concepts first brought up in this chapter. In every other chapter, de Beauvoir analyzes how a woman's role—as a mother, socialite, prostitute, or older woman—relates to the institution of marriage. The conclusions to each chapter also relate back to the concept of marriage. For example, when concluding her chapter on motherhood, de Beauvoir explicitly states that "conjugal relations, homemaking, and motherhood form a whole in which all the parts are determinant."

In her second chapter, de Beauvoir occasionally repeats certain problematic conclusions about homosexuality. For example, she claims that some women are so traumatized by abortion that they become lesbians. Today, readers might object to this argument. It implies that homosexuality is a response to difficult life experiences, as opposed to a natural and normal sexual orientation, on par with heterosexuality. Her

characterization of miscarriages and different physical symptoms of pregnancy is also scientifically unsound; she claims that women experience pregnancy differently based on their psychological well-being. While there is some truth to the claim that mental health can affect physical health, de Beauvoir exaggerates this connection. In her fourth chapter, de Beauvoir also makes the questionable claim that prostitutes might generally have a lower IQ than other women. For all of these arguments, it is important to keep in mind that psychology was not as advanced in de Beauvoir's time as it is today. Although de Beauvoir's text was foundational for second-wave feminism, there are certain concepts that later waves of feminism have discredited.

When she discusses "the woman's situation and character" in her sixth chapter of this section, de Beauvoir speaks in general terms. Although she acknowledges that every woman is slightly different, she does apply stereotypes in order to speak of women as a whole. This may seem like unfair and irresponsible analysis to modern readers. However, it is important to realize that de Beauvoir is deconstructing these stereotypes to understand why so many people do believe that they apply to every woman. In this way, she is not accepting these stereotypes as valid or accurate, but rather is analysing how they came to exist in the first place.

Throughout this section, de Beauvoir reminds readers of some key themes and concepts by repeatedly referring to them in her analysis. For example, she returns to the idea of women being perceived as objects in order to build her analysis of women's positions in society. At the same time, she emphasizes the fact that it is women's social situation that shapes their characters, and writes about the different ways in which such specific social situations affect women. She also returns to the idea of transcendence in order to argue that marriage prevents women from being able to transcend in the same way that men do, through their work outside the home. Finally, she ends the section by arguing that women's positions in society force them to find "transcendence through immanence," meaning they redefine their servile positions as something heavenly and glorious.

The second to last section of de Beauvoir's work is focused on how women react to their situations. As such, she begins by making clear that

certain attitudes—such as narcissism, fanatical love, or mysticism—are not a fundamental or natural condition for women. She starts the first chapter, on narcissists, by stating that it has been asserted in the past that narcissism is simply a normal state for any woman. She goes on to debunk this concept as she traces how narcissism, love, and mysticism are all part of the same attitude and a reaction to the same conditions. This section of the text is thus more reactive, as de Beauvoir attempts to show how all three of these conditions are actually a response to the situations she has outlined in previous chapters. Overall, the section leans heavily on concepts previously mentioned, and is thus shorter than previous sections because it is largely rehashing material de Beauvoir has already made clear.

Until these last two sections, de Beauvoir's text focused on deconstructing the negative aspects of a woman's situation. In this last section of the text, however, de Beauvoir turns her attention toward the contemporary period and analyzes what aspects of woman's present situation have become more positive over time. This marks a decisive shift in tone, as she moves from criticizing other theories or situations to positing her own, more positive views on the contemporary condition of women. However, de Beauvoir is still careful to point out flaws and problems where she sees them. She retains a cautiously optimistic perspective, and continues to criticize the contemporary institutions that perpetuate gender inequality in her day.

In these last two sections of her work, de Beauvoir repeats herself more often than in other chapters. She returns to some of the recurring themes of the text, reiterating how they manifest in different kinds of women and how they impact women who attempt to be independent in her day. The chapters in these two final sections are more closely linked than others: she transitions from analyzing narcissists, to women in love, to women obsessed with mysticism by showing how these categories are all connected. de Beauvoir's interlinking of these concepts helps her to conclude her work more decisively, by emphasizing for readers how all previous sections have led to these particular categories. She ends with an analysis of the contemporary independent woman, in which she unites all of the concepts previously discussed to demonstrate how history,

psychoanalysis, biology, marriage, motherhood, old age, etc. all conspire to create the type of woman most common in her own day.

In her conclusion, de Beauvoir goes beyond a simple summary of her ideas. She begins by reiterating certain key concepts, such as women as Other, seeking transcendence through immanence, and woman's character as a function of her limited social circumstances. However, she also touches on new ideas. For example, she brings up the concept of oppression creating a state of war in order to make the stakes of her book even clearer. The oppression of women is not only negative for all women, but also creates a conflict that involves and negatively impacts men, as well. This analogy to a state of war allows de Beauvoir to draw all readers into her argument and leave them with a clear sense of purpose: ending such conflict in order to bring stability and peace to all of society.

De Beauvoir ends her text by hinting at the ways in which society could benefit and be entirely different after granting women true equality. She returns to the concept of romance being fraught and unpleasant for both genders in order to offer readers a solution: if women can exist for themselves, they can continue to exist for men as well and both men and women can find greater satisfaction in love. The fact that de Beauvoir emphasizes the centrality of romance at the very end of her text implies the degree to which romantic relations are the basis for interactions between the two genders, in all spheres of life. This focus on romance also allows de Beauvoir to end on a more optimistic note, by suggesting how one of the most exalted of human emotions—love—might become even more important and fulfilling if women were better treated throughout society. Readers leave the text with a compelling reason to support de Beauvoir's cause: by giving women greater rights, everyone can benefit in their personal lives, as well.

12.6 LET’S SUM UP

Written in 1949, The Second Sex had two main ideas: that man, who views himself as the essential being, has made woman into the inessential being, "the Other," and that femininity as a trait is an artificial posture. Sartre influenced both of these ideas. The Second Sex was

perhaps the most important writing on women's rights through the 1980s. When it first appeared, however, it was not very popular. The Second Sex does not offer any real solutions to the problems of women except the hope "that men and women rise above their natural differentiation (differences) and unequivocally (firmly) affirm their brotherhood." The description of Beauvoir's own life revealed the possibilities available to the woman who found ways to escape her situation. Hers was a life of equality, and she remained a voice and a model for those women not living free lives.

The fourth installment of her autobiography, All Said And Done, was written when Beauvoir was sixty-three. In it she describes herself as a person who has always been secure in an imperfect world: "Since I was 21, I have never been lonely. The opportunities granted to me at the beginning helped me not only to lead a happy life but to be happy in the life I led. I have been aware of my shortcomings and my limits, but I have made the best of them. When I was tormented by what was happening in the world, it was the world I wanted to change, not my place in it." On April 14, 1986, Simone de Beauvoir died in a Paris hospital. Sartre had died six years earlier.

Check Your Progress Ii:

Q1. Analyze in your own words about critical aspects of Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to *The Second Sex-Volume II*

Answer……

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Q2. Give brief summary on Simone de Beauvoir- Introduction to *The Second Sex-Volume II*.

Answer……

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12.7 KEYWORDS

- **mutilated:** *(adj)* used in this text to describe the objectified woman. This refers to the woman who has been reduced to feminine

reproductive anatomy, stripped of her individuality, and the elements of her being that make her "whole."

- **phenomenology:** *(n)* study of awareness or consciousness of experience from a first-person point of view
- **reciprocity:** *(n)* in existential thought, the ability to engage difference. Women respond, for example, to the paired term "male/female" by entertaining, in conciliatory fashion, the specifically individual differences among the sexes.
- **sublimation:** *(n)* an unconscious conversion of sexual energy. Sublimation is the substitution of an acceptable and creative act (art, music, etc.) for an impulsive and likely sexually inappropriate one.
- **transcendence:** *(n)* the moral position in existentialist thought. The individual subject, the existent, operates outside of pure self-interest, looking outside the self, functioning for the benefit of humankind.

12.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

9. Why do you think the author (doesn't look like there is) chose this title to begin with? What was their idea of making this title "The Second Sex"? Why or why not?
10. Which theory does de Beauvoir criticize for promoting the assumption of sexual difference in nature?
11. Which of the following are NOT terms de Beauvoir uses to define women in relation to men?
12. According to de Beauvoir, what most fundamentally guides human values?
13. To what groups does de Beauvoir NOT compare women, given their condition as the oppressed in society?

12.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 12.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 12.3

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Answer 1 : Check Section 12.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 12.4

UNIT: 13 CHRIS CUOMO (ED.)- LIFE AND WORK

STRUCTURE

13.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit help to learn about the life and work of Chris Cuomo. It gives the insight on education of the writer along with his publications.

Unit also describes his famous work The Feminist Philosophy Reader and paper in it- To the Second Sex.

Unit helps to achieve following objective:

- Education and career
- Research areas
- 13.5 Publications
- Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing
- Views of Chris Cuomo TO *THE SECOND SEX*-Simone de Beauvoir - *through The Feminist Philosophy Reader*

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Chris Cuomo is Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies at the University of Georgia. She is also an affiliate faculty member of the Environmental Ethics Certificate Program, the Institute for African-American Studies, and the Institute for Native American Studies (all also at the University of Georgia.) Before moving to the University of Georgia, Cuomo was the Obed J. Wilson Professor of Ethics at the University of Cincinnati.

13.2 EDUCATION AND CAREER

Cuomo received her doctorate in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin Madison in 1992.

Prior to her current appointment at the University of Georgia, Cuomo held appointments at the University of Cincinnati (where she was the Obed J. Wilson Professor of Ethics,) as well as at Cornell University, Amherst College and Murdoch University.[2] Besides her academic appointments, Cuomo has also received research grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the National Council for Research on Women, and Idea for Creative Exploration.

13.3 RESEARCH AREAS

Cuomo's work has covered a wide area, but her primary focuses have included attempts to articulate feminist philosophy on its own terms and interdisciplinary efforts to bridge the gap between theory and practice, especially in ways which join social and environmental concerns. She has also brought feminist approaches in to a wide variety of other theoretical fields, including environmental ethics, environmental justice, climate justice, and various forms of activism. Much of Cuomo's current research focuses on climate justice and how indigenous knowledge might inform us about the effects of climate change on particular landscapes.

13.4 PUBLICATIONS

Cuomo has authored or co-authored several books, including:

- Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing (1998)
- Whiteness: Feminist Philosophical Reflections (1999)
- The Philosopher Queen: Feminist Essays on War, Love, and Knowledge (2003)
- Feminist Philosophy Reader (a popular introductory textbook, co-authored with Alison Bailey.)

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1. Give brief about Education of Chris Cuomo.

Answer……

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Q2. Write a note on Research work of Chris Cuomo

Answer……

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13.5 FEMINISM AND ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES: AN ETHIC OF FLOURISHING

In *Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing*, Cuomo, in a significant departure from earlier scholars, proposes a theoretical framework for ecofeminism that emphasizes the feminism over the eco. Cuomo argues, far more strongly than traditional environmental ethicists, that the subordination of nature to man cannot be properly understood without first understanding the subordination of woman to man. A key component of the idea of Cuomo's ecological feminism is the idea of 'flourishing' - a condition wherein attention is paid not only to the interests of the person who does the valuing, but also paid to the interests of the thing that is being valued.

13.6 VIEWS OF CHRIS CUOMO TO THE SECOND SEX-SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

For a long time I have hesitated to write a book on woman. The subject is irritating, especially to women; and it is not new. Enough ink has been spilled in the quarrelling over feminism, now practically over, and perhaps we should say no more about it. It is still talked about, however, for the voluminous nonsense uttered during the last century seems to have done little to illuminate the problem. After all, is there a problem? And if so, what is it? Are there women, really? Most assuredly the theory of the eternal feminine still has its adherents who will whisper in your ear: 'Even in Russia women still are *women* '; and other erudite persons—sometimes the very same—say with a sigh: 'Woman is losing her way, woman is lost.' One wonders if women still exist, if they will always exist, whether or not it is desirable that they should, what place they occupy in this world, what their place should be. 'What has become of women?' was asked recently in an ephemeral magazine. 1 But fi rst we must ask: what is a woman? ' *Totamulier in utero,*' says one, 'woman is a womb.' But in speaking of certain women, connoisseurs declare that they are not women, although they are equipped with a uterus like the rest. All agree in recognizing the fact that females exist in the human species; today as always they make up about one half of humanity. And yet we are told that femininity is in danger; we are exhorted to be women, remain women, become women. It would appear, then, that every female human being is not necessarily a woman;

to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity.

Is this attribute something secreted by the ovaries? Or is it a Platonic essence, a product of the philosophic imagination? Is a rustling petticoat enough to bring it down to earth? Although some women try zealously to incarnate this essence, it is hardly patentable. It is frequently described in vague and dazzling terms that seem to have been borrowed from the vocabulary of the seers, and indeed in the times of St. Thomas it was considered an essence as certainly defined as the somniferous virtue of the poppy.

But conceptualism has lost ground. The biological and social sciences no longer admit the existence of unchangeably fixed entities that determine given characteristics, such as those ascribed to woman, the Jew, or the

Negro. Science regards any characteristic as a reaction dependent in part upon a *situation* . If today femininity no longer exists, then it never existed. But does the word *woman* , then, have no specific content?

This is stoutly affirmed by those who hold to the philosophy of the enlightenment, of rationalism, of nominalism; women, to them, are merely the human beings arbitrarily designated by the word *woman* . Many American women particularly are prepared to think that there is no longer any place for woman as such; if a backward individual still

takes herself for a woman, her friends advise her to be psychoanalyzed and thus get rid of this obsession. In regard to a work, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* , which in other respects has its irritating features, Dorothy Parker has written: 'I cannot be just to books which treat of woman as woman . . . . My idea is that all of us, men as well as women, should be regarded as human beings.' But nominalism is a rather inadequate doctrine, and the antifemininists have had no trouble in showing that women simply *are not* men. Surely woman is, like man, a human being; but such a declaration is abstract. The fact is that every concrete human being is always a singular,

separate individual. To decline to accept such notions as the eternal feminine, the black soul, the Jewish character, is not to deny that Jews, Negroes, women exist today—this denial does but rather a flight from reality. Some years ago a well-known woman writer refused to permit her portrait to appear in a series of photographs especially devoted to women writers; she wished to be counted among the men. But in order to gain this privilege she made use of her husband's influence! Women who assert that they are men lay claim none the less to masculine consideration and respect. I recall also a young Trotskyite standing on a platform at a boisterous meeting and getting ready to use her fists, in spite of her evident fragility. She was denying her feminine weakness; but it was for love of a militant male whose equal she wished to be. The attitude of defiance of many American women proves that they are haunted by a sense of their femininity.

In truth, to go for a walk with one's eyes open is enough to demonstrate that humanity is divided into two classes of individuals whose clothes, faces, bodies, smiles, gaits, interests, and occupations are manifestly

different. Perhaps these differences are superficial, perhaps they are destined to disappear. What is certain is that right now they do most obviously exist.

If her functioning as a female is not enough to define woman, if we decline also to explain her through 'the eternal feminine', and if nevertheless we admit, provisionally, that women do exist, then we must face the question: what is a woman?

To state the question is, to me, to suggest, at once, a preliminary answer. The fact that I ask it is in itself significant. A man would never get the notion of writing a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. 2 But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: 'I am a woman'; on this truth must be based all further discussion.

A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man. The terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity. In the midst of an abstract discussion it is vexing to hear a man say: 'You think thus and so because you are a woman'; but I know that my only defense is to reply: 'I think thus and so because it is true,' thereby removing my subjective self from the argument. It would be out of the question to reply: 'And you think the contrary because you are a man', for it is understood that the fact of being a man is no peculiarity. A man is in the right in being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong. It amounts to this: just as for the ancients there was an absolute vertical with reference to which the oblique was defined, so there is an absolute human type, the masculine. Woman has ovaries, a uterus; these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature. It is often said that she thinks with her glands. Man superbly ignores the fact that his anatomy also includes glands, such as the testicles, and that they secrete hormones. He thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection with the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively,

whereas he regards the body of woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it. 'The female is a female by virtue of a certain *lack* of qualities,' said Aristotle; 'we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness.' And St. Thomas for his part pronounced woman to be an 'imperfect man', an 'incidental' being. This is symbolized in Genesis where Eve is depicted as made from what Bossuet called 'a supernumerary bone' of Adam.

Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. Michelet writes: 'Woman, the relative being . . .' And

Benda is most positive in his *Rapport & Uriel:* 'The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems wanting in significance by itself . . . Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man.' And she is simply what man decrees; thus she is called 'the sex', by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex—absolute sex, no less. 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. 3

The category of the *Other* is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality—that of the Self and the Other. This duality was not originally attached to

the division of the sexes; it was not dependent upon any empirical facts. It is revealed in such works as that of Granet on Chinese thought and those of Dumézil on the East Indies and Rome. The feminine element was at first no more involved in such pairs as Varuna-Mitra, Uranus-Zeus, Sun-Moon, and Day-Night than it was in the contrasts between Good and Evil, lucky and unlucky auspices, right and left, God and Lucifer. Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself. If three travelers chance to occupy the same compartment, that is enough to make vaguely hostile 'others' out of all the rest of the passengers on the train. In small-town eyes all persons not

belonging to the village are ‘strangers’ and suspect; to the native of a country all who inhabit other countries are ‘foreigners’; Jews are ‘different’ for the anti-Semite, Negroes are ‘inferior’ for American racists, aborigines are ‘natives’ for colonists, proletarians are the ‘lower class’ for the privileged. Lévi-Strauss, at the end of a profound work on the various forms of primitive societies, reaches the following conclusion: ‘Passage from the state of Nature to the state of Culture is marked by man’s ability to view biological relations as a series of contrasts; duality, alternation, opposition,and symmetry, whether under definite or vague forms, constitute not so much phenomena to be explained as fundamental and immediately given data of social reality.’ 4 These phenomena would be incomprehensible if in fact human society were simply a *Mitsein* or fellowship based on solidarity and friendliness. Things become clear,on the contrary, if, following Hegel, we find in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility toward every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed—he sets himself up as the essential, as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object.

But the other consciousness, the other ego, sets up a reciprocal claim. The native traveling abroad is shocked to find himself in turn regarded as a ‘stranger’ by the natives of neighbouring countries.

As a matter of fact, wars, festivals, trading, treaties, and contests among tribes, nations, and classes tend to deprive the concept *Other* of its absolute sense and to make manifest its relativity; willy-nilly, individuals and groups are forced to realize the reciprocity of their relations.

How is it, then, that this reciprocity has not been recognized between the sexes, that one of the contrasting terms is set up as the sole essential, denying any relativity in regard to its correlative and defining the latter as pure otherness? Why is it that women do not dispute male sovereignty? No subject will readily volunteer to become the object, the inessential; it is not the Other who, in defining himself as the Other, establishes the One. The Other is posed as such by the One in defining himself as the One. But if the Other is not to regain the status of being the One, he must be submissive enough to accept this alien point of view. Whence comes this submission in the case of woman?

There are, to be sure, other cases in which a certain category has been able to dominate another completely for a time. Very often this privilege depends upon inequality of numbers – the majority imposes its rule upon the minority or persecutes it. But women are not a minority, like

the American Negroes or the Jews; there are as many women as men on earth. Again, the two groups concerned have often been originally independent; they may have been formerly unaware of each other's existence, or perhaps they recognized each other's autonomy. But a historical event has resulted in the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger. The scattering of the Jews, the introduction of slavery into America, the conquests of imperialism are examples in point. In these cases the oppressed retained at least the memory of former days; they possessed in common a past, a tradition, sometimes a religion or a culture.

The parallel drawn by Bebel between women and the proletariat is valid in that neither ever formed a minority or a separate collective unit of mankind. And instead of a single historical event it is in both cases a historical development that explains their status as a class and accounts for the membership of particular individuals in that class. But proletarians have not always existed, whereas there have always been women. They are women in virtue of their anatomy and physiology. Throughout history they have always been subordinated to men, 5 and hence their dependency is not the result of a historical event or a social change—it was not something that occurred.

The reason why otherness in this case seems to be an absolute is in part that it lacks the contingent or incidental nature of historical facts. A condition brought about at a certain time can be abolished at some other time, as the Negroes of Haiti and others have proved; but it might seem that a natural condition is beyond the possibility of change. In truth, however, the nature of things is no more immutably given, once for all, than is historical reality. If woman seems to be the inessential which never becomes the essential, it is because she herself fails to bring about this change. Proletarians say 'We'; Negroes also. Regarding themselves

as subjects, they transform the bourgeois, the whites, into ‘others’. But women do not say ‘We’, except at some congress of feminists or similar formal demonstration; men say ‘women’, and women use the same word in referring to themselves. They do not authentically assume a subjective attitude. The proletarians have accomplished the revolution in Russia, the Negroes in Haiti, the Indo-Chinese are battling for it in Indo-China; but the women’s effort has never been anything more than a symbolic agitation. They have gained only what men have been willing to grant; they have taken nothing, they have only received.

The reason for this is that women lack concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat. They are not even promiscuously herded together in the way that creates community feeling among the American Negroes, the ghetto Jews, the workers of Saint-Denis, or the factory hands of Renault.

They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men—fathers or husbands—more fi rmly than they are to other women. If they belong to the bourgeoisie, they feel solidarity with men of that class, not with proletarian women; if they are white, their allegiance is to white men, not to Negro women. The proletariat can propose to massacre the ruling class, and a suffi ciently fanatical Jew or Negro might dream of getting sole possession of the atomic bomb and making humanity wholly Jewish or black; but woman cannot even dream of exterminating the males. The bond that unites her to her oppressors is not comparable to any other. The division of the sexes is a biological fact, not an event in human history. Male and female stand opposed within a primordial *Mitsein* , and woman has not broken it. The couple is a fundamental unity with its two halves riveted together, and the cleavage of society along the line of sex is impossible. Here is to be found the basic trait of woman: she is the Other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another.

One could suppose that this reciprocity might have facilitated the liberation of woman.

When Hercules sat at the feet of Omphale and helped with her spinning, his desire for her held him captive; but why did she fail to gain a lasting power? To revenge herself on Jason, Medea killed their children; and this grim legend would seem to suggest that she might have obtained a formidable infl uence over him through his love for his offspring. In *Lysistrata* Aristophanes gaily depicts a band of women who joined forces to gain social ends through the sexual needs of their men; but this is only a play. In the legend of the Sabine women, the latter soon abandoned their plan of remaining sterile to punish their ravishers. In truth woman has not been socially emancipated through man's need—sexual desire and the desire for offspring—which makes the male

Dependent for satisfaction upon the female. Master and slave, also, are united by a reciprocal need, in this case economic, which does not liberate the slave. In the relation of master to slave the master does not make a point of the need that he has for the other; he has in his grasp the power of satisfying this need through his own action; whereas the slave, in his dependent condition, his hope and fear, is quite conscious of the need he has for his master. Even if the need is at bottom equally urgent for both, it always works in favour of the oppressor and against the oppressed. That is why the liberation of the working class, for example, has been slow. Now, woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage. Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores. In the economic sphere men and women can almost be said to make up two castes; other things being equal, the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors. In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolize the most important posts. In addition to all this, they enjoy a traditional prestige that the education of children tends in every way to support, for the present enshrines the past—and in the past all history has been made by men. At the present time, when women are beginning to take part in the affairs of

the world, it is still a world that belongs to men—they have no doubt of it at all and women have scarcely any. To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal—this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste. Man-the-sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justifi cation of her existence; thus she can evade at once both economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethicalurge of each individual to affi rm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing. This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it—passive, lost, ruined—becomes henceforth the creature of another's will, frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence. When man makes of woman the *Other* , he may, then, expect her to manifest deep-seated tendencies toward complicity. Thus, woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is often very well pleased with her role as the *Other* .

But it will be asked at once: how did all this begin? It is easy to see that the duality of the sexes, like any duality, gives rise to conflict. And doubtless the winner will assume the status of absolute.

But why should man have won from the start? It seems possible that women could have won the victory; or that the outcome of the conflict might never have been decided. How is it that this world has always belonged to the men and that things have begun to change only recently? Is this change a good thing? Will it bring about an equal sharing of the world between men and women? These questions are not new, and they have often been answered. But the very fact that woman *is the Other* tends to cast suspicion upon all the justifications that men have ever been able to provide for it. These have all too evidently been dictated by men's interest. A little-known feminist of the seventeenth century, Poulain de la Barre, put it this way: 'All that has been written about women by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and

party to the lawsuit.' Everywhere, at all times, the males have displayed their satisfaction in feeling that they are the lords of creation. 'Blessed be God . . . that He did not make me a woman,' say the Jews in their morning prayers, while their wives pray on a note of resignation: 'Blessed be the Lord, who created me according to His will.' The fi rst among the blessings for which Plato thanked the gods was that he had been created free, not enslaved; the second, a man, not a woman. But the males could not enjoy this privilege fully unless they believed it to be founded on the absolute and the eternal; they sought to make the fact of their supremacy into a right. 'Being men, those who have made and compiled the laws have favored their own sex, and jurists have elevated these laws into principles', to quote Poulain de la Barre once more. Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers, and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth. The religions invented by men reflect this wish for domination. In the legends of Eve and Pandora men have taken up arms against women. They have made use of philosophy and theology, as the quotations from Aristotle and St. Thomas have shown. Since ancient times satirists and moralists have delighted in showing up the weaknesses of women. We are familiar with the savage indictments hurled against women throughout French literature.

Montherlant, for example, follows the tradition of Jean de Meung, though with less gusto. This hostility may at times be well founded, often it is gratuitous; but in truth it more or less successfully conceals a desire for self-justification. As Montaigne says, 'It is easier to accuse one sex than to excuse the other.' Sometimes what is going on is clear enough. For instance, the Roman law limiting the rights of woman cited 'the imbecility, the instability of the sex' just when the weakening of family ties seemed to threaten the interests of male heirs. And in the effort to keep the married woman under guardianship, appeal was made in the sixteenth century to the authority of St. Augustine, who declared that 'woman is a creature neither decisive nor constant', at a time when the single woman was thought capable of managing her property. Montaigne understood clearly how arbitrary and unjust was woman's appointed lot: 'Women are not in the wrong when they decline to accept the rules laid

down for them, since the men make these rules without consulting them. No wonder intrigue and strife abound.' But he did not go so far as to champion their cause. It was only later, in the eighteenth century, that genuinely democratic men began to view the matter objectively. Diderot, among others, strove to show that woman is, like man, a human being.

Later John Stuart Mill came fervently to her defense. But these philosophers displayed unusual impartiality. In the nineteenth century the feminist quarrel became again a quarrel of partisans.

One of the consequences of the industrial revolution was the entrance of women into productive labor, and it was just here that the claims of the feminists emerged from the realm of theory and acquired an economic basis, while their opponents became the more aggressive. Although landed property lost power to some extent, the bourgeoisie clung to the old morality that found the guarantee of private property in the solidit of the family. Woman was ordered back into the home the more harshly as her emancipation became a real menace. Even within the working class the men endeavored to restrain woman's liberation, because they began to see the women as dangerous competitors – the more so because they were accustomed to work for lower wages.

In proving woman's inferiority, the antifeminists then began to draw not only upon religion, philosophy, and theology, as before, but also upon science—biology, experimental psychology, etc. At most they were willing to grant 'equality in difference' to the *other* sex. That profitable formula is most significant; it is precisely like the 'equal but separate' formula of the Jim Crow laws aimed at the North American Negroes. As is well known, this so-called equalitarian segregation has resulted only in the most extreme discrimination.

The similarity just noted is in no way due to chance, for whether it is a race, a caste, a class, or a sex that is reduced to a position of inferiority, the methods of justification are the same. 'The eternal feminine' corresponds to 'the black soul' and to 'the Jewish character'. True, the Jewish problem is on the whole very different from the other two—to the anti-Semite the Jew is not so much an inferior as he is an enemy for whom there is to be granted no place on earth, for whom annihilation is the fate desired. But there are deep similarities between the situation of

woman and that of the Negro. Both are being emancipated today from a like paternalism, and the former master class wishes to 'keep them in their place'—that is, the place chosen for them.

In both cases the former masters lavish more or less sincere eulogies, either on the virtues of 'the good Negro' with his dormant, childish, merry soul—the submissive Negro—or on the merits of the woman who is 'truly feminine'—that is, frivolous, infantile, irresponsible—the submissive woman. In both cases the dominant class bases its argument on a state of affairs that it has itself created. As George Bernard Shaw puts it, in substance, 'The American white relegates the black to the rank of shoeshine boy; and he concludes from this that the black is good for nothing but shining shoes.' This vicious circle is met with in all analogous circumstances; when an individual (or a group of individuals) is kept in a situation of inferiority, the fact is that he *is* inferior. But the significance of the verb to *be* must be rightly understood here; it is in bad faith to give it a static value when it really has the dynamic Hegelian sense of 'to have become'. Yes, women on the whole *are* today inferior to men; that is, their situation affords them fewer possibilities. The question is: should that state of affairs continue?

Many men hope that it will continue; not all have given up the battle. The conservative bourgeoisie still see in the emancipation of women a menace to their morality and their interests. Some men dread feminine competition. Recently a male student wrote in the *Hebdo-Latin:* 'Every woman student who goes into medicine or law robs us of a job.' He never questioned his rights in this world.

And economic interests are not the only ones concerned. One of the benefits that oppression confers upon the oppressors is that the most humble among them is made to *feel* superior; thus, a 'poor white' in the South can console himself with the thought

that he is not a 'dirty nigger'—and the more prosperous whites cleverly exploit this pride.

Similarly, the most mediocre of males feels himself a demi-god as compared with women. It was much easier for M. de Montherlant to think himself a hero when he faced women (and women chosen for his

purpose) than when he was obliged to act the man among men—something many women have done better than he, for that matter.

And in September 1948, in one of his articles in the *Figaro littéraire* , Claude Mauriac—whose great originality is admired by all—could 6 write regarding woman: ‘ *We* listen on a tone [*sic!*] of polite indifference . . . to the most brilliant among them, well knowing that her wit reflects more or less luminously ideas that come from *us* .’ Evidently the speaker referred to is not reflecting the ideas of Mauriac himself, for no one knows of his having any. It may be that she reflects ideas originating with men, but then, even among men there are those who have been known to appropriate ideas not their own; and one can well ask whether Claude Mauriac might not find more interesting a conversation reflecting Descartes, Marx, or Gide rather than himself. What is really remarkable is that by using the questionable *we* he identifies himself with St. Paul, Hegel, Lenin, and Nietzsche, and from the lofty eminence of their grandeur looks down disdainfully upon the bevy of women who make bold to converse with him on a footing of equality. In truth, I know of more than one woman who would refuse to suffer with patience Mauriac’s ‘tone of polite indifference’. I have lingered on this example because the masculine attitude is here displayed with disarming ingenuousness. But men profi t in many more subtle ways from the otherness, the alterity of woman. Here is miraculous balm for those afflicted with an inferiority complex, and indeed no one is more arrogant toward women, more aggressive or scornful, than the man who is anxious about his virility. Those who are not fear-ridden in the presence of their fellow men are much more disposed to recognize a fellow creature in woman; but even to these the myth of Woman, the Other, is precious for many reasons. 7 They cannot be blamed for not cheerfully relinquishing all the benefits they derive from the myth, for they realize what they would lose in relinquishing woman as they fancy her to be, while they fail to realize what they have to gain from the woman of tomorrow. Refusal to pose oneself as the Subject, unique and absolute, requires great self-denial. Furthermore, the vast majority of men make no such claim explicitly. They do not *postulate* woman as inferior, for today

they are too thoroughly imbued with the ideal of democracy not to recognize all human beings as equals.

In the bosom of the family, woman seems in the eyes of childhood and youth to be clothed in the same social dignity as the adult males. Later on, the young man, desiring and loving, experiences the resistance, the independence of the woman desired and loved; in marriage, he respects woman as wife and mother, and in the concrete events of conjugal life she stands there before him as a free being. He can therefore feel that social subordination as between the sexes no longer exists and that on the whole, in spite of differences, woman is an equal. As, however, he observes some points of inferiority—the most important being unfitness for the professions— he attributes these to natural causes. When he is in a co-operative and benevolent relation with woman, his theme is the principle of abstract equality, and he does not base his attitude upon such inequality as may exist. But when he is in conflict with her, the situation is reversed: his theme will be the existing inequality, and he will even take it as justification for denying abstractequality. 8

So it is that many men will affirm as if in good faith that women *are* the equals of man and that they have nothing to clamor for, while *at the same time* they will say that women can never be the equals of man and that their demands are in vain. It is, in point of fact, a difficult matter for man to realize the extreme importance of social discriminations which seem outwardly insignifi - cant but which produce in woman moral and intellectual effects so profound that they appear to spring from her original nature. The most sympathetic of men never fully comprehend woman's concrete situation. And there is no reason to put much trust in the men when they rush to the defense of privileges whose full extent they can hardly measure. We shall not, then, permit ourselves to be intimidated by the number and violence of the attacks launched against women, nor to be entrapped by the self-seeking eulogies bestowed on the 'true woman', nor to profit by the enthusiasm for woman's destiny manifested by men who would not for the world have any part of it.

We should consider the arguments of the feminists with no less suspicion, however, for very often their controversial aim deprives them of all real value. If the 'woman question' seems trivial, it is because

masculine arrogance has made of it a ‘quarrel’; and when quarrelling one no longer reasons well. People have tirelessly sought to prove that woman is superior, inferior, or equal to man. Some say that, having been created after Adam, she is evidently a secondary being; others say on the contrary that Adam was only a rough draft and that God succeeded in producing the human being in perfection when He created Eve. Woman’s brain is smaller; yes, but it is relatively larger. Christ was made a man; yes, but perhaps for his greater humility. Each argument at once suggests its opposite, and both are often fallacious.

If we are to gain understanding, we must get out of these ruts; we must discard the vague notions of superiority, inferiority, equality which have hitherto corrupted every discussion of the subject and start afresh.

Very well, but just how shall we pose the question? And, to begin with, who are we to propound it at all? Man is at once judge and party to the case; but so is woman. What we need is an angel— neither man nor woman—but where shall we fi nd one? Still, the angel would be poorly qualifyed to speak, for an angel is ignorant of all the basic facts involved in the problem. With a hermaphrodite we should be no better off, for here the situation is most peculiar; the hermaphrodite is not really the combination of a whole man and a whole woman, but consists of parts of each and thus is neither. It looks to me as if there are, after all, certain women who are best qualified to elucidate the situation of woman. Let us not be misled by the sophism that because Epimenides was a Cretan he was necessarily a liar; it is not a mysterious essence that compels men and women to act in good or in bad faith, it is their situation that inclines them more or less toward the search for truth. Many of today’s women, fortunate in the restoration of all the privileges pertaining to the estate of the human being, can afford the luxury of impartiality—we even recognize its necessity. We are no longer like our partisan elders; by and large we have won the game. In recent debates on the status of women the United Nations has persistently maintained that the equality of the sexes is now becoming a reality, and already some of us have never had to sense in our femininity an inconvenience or an obstacle. Many problems appear to us to be more pressing than those which concern us in particular, and this detachment even allows us to

hope that our attitude will be objective. Still, we know the feminine world more intimately than do the men because we have our roots in it, we grasp more immediately than do men what it means to a human being to be feminine; and we are more concerned with such knowledge. I have said that there are more pressing problems, but this does not prevent us from seeing some importance in asking how the fact of being women will affect our lives.

What opportunities precisely have been given us and what withheld? What fate awaits our younger sisters, and what directions should they take? It is significant that books by women on women are in general animated in our day less by a wish to demand our rights than by an effort toward clarity and understanding. As we emerge from an era of excessive controversy, this book is offered as one attempt among others to confirm that statement. But it is doubtless impossible to approach any human problem with a mind free from bias. The way in which questions are put, the points of view assumed, presuppose a relativity of interest; all characteristics imply values, and every objective description, so called, implies an ethical background.

Rather than attempt to conceal principles more or less definitely implied, it is better to state them openly at the beginning. This will make it unnecessary to specify on every page in just what sense one uses such words as *superior, inferior , better, worse, progress, reaction ,* and the like. If we survey some of the works on woman, we note that one of the points of view most frequently adopted is that of the public good, the general interest; and one always means by this the benefi t of society as one wishes it to be maintained or established. For our part, we hold that the only public good is that which assures the private good of the citizens; we shall pass judgment on institutions according to their effectiveness in giving concrete opportunities to individuals. But we do not confuse the idea of private interest with that of happiness, although that is another common point of view. Are not women of the harem more happy than women voters? Is not the housekeeper happier than the working-woman? It is not too clear just what the word *happy* really means and still less what true values it may mask. There is no possibility

of measuring the happiness of others, and it is always easy to describe as happy the situation in which one wishes to place them.

In particular those who are condemned to stagnation are often pronounced happy on the pretext that happiness consists in being at rest. This notion we reject, for our perspective is that of existentialist ethics. Every subject plays his part as such specifically through exploits or projects that serve as a mode of transcendence; he achieves liberty only through a continual reaching out toward other liberties. There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future. Every time transcendence falls back into immanence, stagnation, there is a degradation of existence into the *' en-soi '*—the brutish life of subjection to given conditions—and of liberty into constraint and contingence. This downfall represents a moral fault if the subject consents to it; if it is inflicted upon him, it spells frustration and oppression. In both cases it is an absolute evil. Every individual concerned to justify his existence feels that his existence involves an undefined need to transcend himself, to engage in freely chosen projects. Now, what peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she—a free and autonomous being like all human creatures— nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other. They propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego (*conscience*) which is essential and sovereign. The drama of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (ego)— who always regards the self as the essential—and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential. How can a human being in woman's situation attain fulfilment? What roads are open to her? Which are blocked? How can independence be recovered in a state of dependency?

These are the fundamental questions on which I would fain throw some light. This means that I am interested in the fortunes of the individual as defined not in terms of happiness but in terms of liberty. Quite evidently this problem would be without significance if we were to believe that woman's destiny is inevitably determined by physiological, psychological, or economic forces. Hence I shall discuss first of all the

light in which woman is viewed by biology, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism.

Next I shall try to show exactly how the concept of the 'truly feminine' has been fashioned— why woman has been defined as the Other—and what have been the consequences from man's point of view. Then from woman's point of view I shall describe the world in which women must live; and thus we shall be able to envisage the difficulties in their way as, endeavouring to make their escape from the sphere hitherto assigned them, they aspire to full membership in the human race.

13.7 LET'S SUM UP

Revolutionary and incendiary, *The Second Sex* is one of the earliest attempts to confront human history from a feminist perspective. It won de Beauvoir many admirers and just as many detractors. Today, many regard this massive and meticulously researched masterwork as not only as pillar of feminist thought but of twentieth-century philosophy in general.

De Beauvoir's primary thesis is that men fundamentally oppress women by characterizing them, on every level, as the *Other*, defined exclusively in opposition to men. Man occupies the role of the self, or subject; woman is the object, the other. He is essential, absolute, and transcendent. She is inessential, incomplete, and mutilated. He extends out into the world to impose his will on it, whereas woman is doomed to immanence, or inwardness. He creates, acts, invents; she waits for him to save her. This distinction is the basis of all de Beauvoir's later arguments.

De Beauvoir states that while it is natural for humans to understand themselves in opposition to others, this process is flawed when applied to the genders. In defining woman exclusively as Other, man is effectively denying her humanity.

The Second Sex chronicles de Beauvoir's effort to locate the source of these profoundly imbalanced gender roles. In Book I, entitled "Facts and Myths," she asks how "female humans" come to occupy a subordinate position in society. To answer this question—and to better understand her own identity—de Beauvoir first turns to biology,

psychoanalysis, and historical materialism. These disciplines reveal indisputable "essential" differences between men and women but provide no justification for woman's inferiority. They all take woman's inferior "destiny" for granted.

Check Your Progress Ii:

Q1. Write a note on Feminism and Ecological Communities.

Answer……

……

……

Q2. Give your critical view on The Philosophy Reader- To the Second Sex by Chris Cuomo.

Answer……

……

……

13.8 KEYWORDS

- **Aphasia** - Loss or impairment of the power to use or comprehend words usually resulting from brain damage.
- **Bad Faith** - Jean-Paul Sartre's term for the flight from liberty, for the wish to be a thing rather than a self and all the agonizing choices selfhood entails. De Beauvoir applies "bad faith" to women who opt for the easy, known life, who flee the possibilities of liberty for the asphyxiating safety of Otherness.
- **Bluestocking** - A reference to eighteenth-century literary clubs of intellectual women and a derogatory term for an intellectual woman. Men find bluestockings sexually unappealing, which is the primary reason women fear the label.
- **Gynaeceum** - An enclosed, supervised space where women in Ancient Greece were forced to spend their days, an extreme physical example of the immanence forced on women.
- **Hetaira** - A "kept" woman or courtesan, usually a cultivated woman who serves as a companion for a powerful man. Although hetairas are generally unmarried, they are equally enslaved to their sexual

role, for their livelihood depends on the generosity—i.e., sustained sexual interest—of their keeper.

- **Historical Materialism** - A marxist theory of history that perceives society and its institutions as the offshoots of an economic, or material, foundation. De Beauvoir agrees that humanity is not simply an animal species but a "historical reality," but it supplies no explanation for the sources of female subordination.
- **Immanence** - Webster's defines it as "remaining or operating within a domain or reality or realm of discourse . . . having existence or effect only within the mind or consciousness." De Beauvoir uses this term to designate the woman's destiny. Unlike men, who are forever reaching outward, imposing their will on the external universe, women are condemned to be closed-off and interior. The female world is circumscribed and small. Men have projects, activities, and accomplishments in the external world; woman has man.

13.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Discuss early life of Chris Cuomo
- List few of the publications of Chris Cuomo
- Explain the concept of myth from the text *The Second Sex* as explained by Simone de Beauvoir.
- Explain the concepts of Immanence and Transcendence which Beauvoir tries to show from the abstract *The Second Sex* (The Myth of Woman).
- What myths about women does Simone de Beauvoir refer to in *The Second Sex*?

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13.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 13.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 13. 3

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Answer 1 : Check Section 13.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 13. 6

UNIT: 14 ALISON BAILEY AND CHRIS CUOMO (ED.)- THE FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY READER

STRUCTURE

14.0 OBJECTIVE

In this Chapter you will learn about *Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo* (ed.)- The Feminist Philosophy Reader. It gives insight of the various aspects of the feminism along with its approaches and components. Unit helps to know about the following aspects:

- What Is Feminism?
- Feminism And The Diversity Of Women
- Feminism As Anti-Sexism
- Approaches To Feminism

14.1 INTRODUCTION

As this entry describes, feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms. Motivated by the quest for social justice, feminist inquiry

provides a wide range of perspectives on social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena. Yet despite many overall shared commitments, there are numerous differences among feminist philosophers regarding philosophical orientation (whether, for example, Continental or analytic), ontological commitments (such as the category of woman), and what kind of political and moral remedies should be sought.

Contemporary feminist philosophical scholarship emerged in the 1970s as more women began careers in higher education, including philosophy. As they did so, they also began taking up matters from their own experience for philosophical scrutiny. These scholars were influenced both by feminist movements in their midst as well as by their philosophical training, which was anything but feminist. Until recently one could not go to graduate school to study "feminist philosophy". While students and scholars could turn to the writings of Simone de Beauvoir or look back historically to the writings of "first wave" feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, most of the philosophers writing in the first decades of the emergence of feminist philosophy brought their particular training and expertise to bear on analyzing issues raised by the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, such as abortion, affirmative action, equal opportunity, the institutions of marriage, sexuality, and love. Additionally, feminist philosophical scholarship increasingly focused on the very same types of issues philosophers had been and were dealing with.

Feminist philosophical scholarship begins with attention to women, to their roles and locations. What are women doing? What social/political locations are they part of or excluded from? How do their activities compare to those of men? Are the activities or exclusions of some groups of women different from those of other groups and why? What do the various roles and locations of women allow or preclude? How have their roles been valued or devalued? How do the complexities of a woman's situatedness, including her class, race, ability, and sexuality impact her locations? To this we add attention to the experiences and concerns of women. Have any of women's experiences or problems been ignored or undervalued? How might attention to these transform our current methods or values? And from here we move to the realm of the

symbolic. How is the feminine instantiated and constructed within the texts of philosophy? What role does the feminine play in forming, either through its absence or its presence, the central concepts of philosophy? And so on.

Feminist philosophers brought their philosophical tools to bear on these questions. And since these feminist philosophers employed the philosophical tools they knew best and found most promising, feminist philosophy began to emerge from all the traditions of Western philosophy prevalent at the end of the twentieth century including analytic, Continental, and classical American philosophy. It should come as no surprise then that the thematic focus of their work was often influenced by the topics and questions highlighted by these traditions. Hence, as a result, a given question can be taken up and addressed from an array of views, sometimes, as discussed below, with quite contradictory answers.

Hence feminist philosophical scholarship is not homogeneous either in methods or in conclusions. Indeed, there has been significant debate within feminist philosophical circles concerning the effectiveness of particular methods within philosophy for feminist goals. Some, for example, have found the methods of analytic philosophy to provide clarity of both form and argumentation not found in some schools of Continental philosophy, while others have argued that such alleged clarity comes at the expense of rhetorical styles and methodological approaches that provide insights into affective, psychic, or embodied components of human experience. Other feminists find approaches within American pragmatism to provide the clarity of form and argumentation sometimes missing in Continental approaches and the connection to real world concerns sometimes missing in analytic approaches.

Founded in 1982 as a venue for feminist philosophical scholarship, *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* has embraced a diversity of methodological approaches in feminist philosophy, publishing work from all three traditions. Feminist scholarship in each of these traditions is also advanced and supported though scholarly exchange at various professional societies, including the Society for

Women in Philosophy, founded in the United States in 1972. Additionally, the Society for Analytical Feminism, founded in 1991, promotes the study of issues in feminism by methods broadly construed as analytic, to examine the use of analytic methods as applied to feminist issues, and to provide a means by which those interested in analytical feminist can meet and exchange ideas. philoSOPHIA was established in 2005 to promote Continental feminist scholarly and pedagogical development. The Society for the Study of Women Philosophers was established in 1987 to promote the study of the contributions of women to the history of philosophy. Similar organizations and journals on many continents continue to advance scholarship in feminist philosophy.

Many of the ways in which feminist philosophy is not monolithic will be discussed below. Nevertheless, it is worth noting here at the start that although feminist philosophers have intended that their work—unlike the traditional philosophy they criticize—be applicable to all women and reflect the diverse experiences of women, in practice it has not always been the case. One important limitation that feminist philosophers are trying to overcome is their insufficient attention to the many interacting ways that human beings are oppressed, for example, along lines of race, sexuality, ability, class, religion, and nationality. Feminist philosophy strives for inclusivity and pluralism, even if it falls short.

14.2 WHAT IS FEMINISM?

1 Feminist Beliefs and Feminist Movements

The term "feminism" has many different uses and its meanings are often contested. For example, some writers use the term "feminism" to refer to a historically specific political movement in the United States and Europe; other writers use it to refer to the belief that there are injustices against women, though there is no consensus on the exact list of these injustices. Although the term "feminism" has a history in English linked with women's activism from the late nineteenth century to the present, it is useful to distinguish feminist ideas or beliefs from feminist political movements, for even in periods where there has been no significant political activism around women's subordination, individuals have been concerned with and theorized about justice for women. So, for example,

it makes sense to ask whether Plato was a feminist, given his view that some women should be trained to rule (*Republic*, Book V), even though he was an exception in his historical context (see, e.g., Tuana 1994).

Our goal here is not to survey the history of feminism—as a set of ideas or as a series of political movements—but rather to sketch some of the central uses of the term that are most relevant to those interested in contemporary feminist philosophy. The references we provide below are only a small sample of the work available on the topics in question; more complete bibliographies are available at the specific topical entries and also at the end of this entry.

In the mid-1800s the term "feminism" was used to refer to "the qualities of females", and it was not until after the First International Women's Conference in Paris in 1892 that the term, following the French term *féministe*, was used regularly in English for a belief in and advocacy of equal rights for women based on the idea of the equality of the sexes. Although the term "feminism" in English is rooted in the mobilization for woman suffrage in Europe and the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, of course efforts to obtain justice for women did not begin or end with this period of activism. So some have found it useful, if controversial, to think of the women's movement in the United States as occurring in "waves". On the wave model, the struggle to achieve basic political rights during the period from the mid-nineteenth century until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 counts as "First Wave" feminism. Feminism waned between the two world wars, to be "revived" in the late 1960s and early 1970s as "Second Wave" feminism. In this second wave, feminists pushed beyond the early quest for political rights to fight for greater equality across the board, e.g., in education, the workplace, and at home. More recent transformations of feminism have resulted in a "Third Wave". Third Wave feminists often critique Second Wave feminism for its lack of attention to the differences among women due to race, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion and emphasize "identity" as a site of gender struggle. (For more information on the "wave" model and each of the "waves", see Other Internet Resources.)

However, some feminist scholars object to identifying feminism with these particular moments of political activism, on the grounds that doing so eclipses the fact that there has been resistance to male domination that should be considered "feminist" throughout history and across cultures: i.e., feminism is not confined to a few (White) women in the West over the past century or so. Moreover, even considering only relatively recent efforts to resist male domination in Europe and the United States, the emphasis on "First" and "Second" Wave feminism ignores the ongoing resistance to male domination between the 1920s and 1960s and the resistance outside mainstream politics, particularly by women of color and working class women (Cott 1987).

One strategy for solving these problems would be to identify feminism in terms of a set of ideas or beliefs rather than participation in any particular political movement. As we saw above, this also has the advantage of allowing us to locate isolated feminists whose work was not understood or appreciated during their time. But how should we go about identifying a core set of feminist beliefs? Some would suggest that we should focus on the political ideas that the term was apparently coined to capture, viz., the commitment to women's equal rights. This acknowledges that commitment to and advocacy for women's rights has not been confined to the Women's Liberation Movement in the West. But this too raises controversy, for it frames feminism within a broadly liberal approach to political and economic life. Although most feminists would probably agree that there is some sense of rights on which achieving equal rights for women is a necessary condition for feminism to succeed, most would also argue that this would not be sufficient. This is because women's oppression under male domination rarely if ever consists solely in depriving women of political and legal rights, but also extends into the structure of our society and the content of our culture, the workings of languages and how they shape perceptions and permeate our consciousness (e.g., Bartky 1988, Postl 2017).

Is there any point, then, to asking what feminism is? Given the controversies over the term and the politics of circumscribing the boundaries of a social movement, it is sometimes tempting to think that the best we can do is to articulate a set of disjuncts that capture a range of

feminist beliefs. However, at the same time it can be both intellectually and politically valuable to have a schematic framework that enables us to map at least some of our points of agreement and disagreement. We'll begin here by considering some of the basic elements of feminism as a political position or set of beliefs.

2 Normative and Descriptive Components

In many of its forms, feminism seems to involve at least two groups of claims, one normative and the other descriptive. The normative claims concern how women ought (or ought not) to be viewed and treated and draw on a background conception of justice or broad moral position; the descriptive claims concern how women are, as a matter of fact, viewed and treated, alleging that they are not being treated in accordance with the standards of justice or morality invoked in the normative claims. Together the normative and descriptive claims provide reasons for working to change the way things are; hence, feminism is not just an intellectual but also a political movement.

So, for example, a liberal approach of the kind already mentioned might define feminism (rather simplistically here) in terms of two claims:

i. (Normative) Men and women are entitled to equal rights and respect.
ii. (Descriptive) Women are currently disadvantaged with respect to rights and respect, compared with men […in such and such respects and due to such and such conditions…].

On this account, that women and men ought to have equal rights and respect is the normative claim; and that women are denied equal rights and respect functions here as the descriptive claim. Admittedly, the claim that women are disadvantaged with respect to rights and respect is not a "purely descriptive" claim since it plausibly involves an evaluative component. However, our point here is simply that claims of this sort concern what is the case not what ought to be the case. Moreover, as indicated by the ellipsis above, the descriptive component of a substantive feminist view will not be articulable in a single claim, but will involve an account of the specific social mechanisms that deprive women of, e.g., rights and respect. For example, is the primary source of

women's subordination her role in the family? (Engels 1845; Okin 1989). Or is it her role in the labor market? (Bergmann 2002). Is the problem males' tendencies to sexual violence (and what is the source of these tendencies?)? (Brownmiller 1975; MacKinnon 1987). Or is it simply women's biological role in reproduction? (Firestone 1970).

Disagreements *within* feminism can occur with respect to either the descriptive or normative claims, e.g., feminists differ on what would count as justice or injustice for women (what counts as "equality", "oppression", "disadvantage", what rights should everyone be accorded?) , and what sorts of injustice women in fact suffer (what aspects of women's current situation are harmful or unjust?). Disagreements may also lie in the explanations of the injustice: two feminists may agree that women are unjustly being denied proper rights and respect and yet substantively differ in their accounts of how or why the injustice occurs and what is required to end it (Jaggar 1994).

Disagreements between feminists and non-feminists can occur with respect to both the normative and descriptive claims as well, e.g., some non-feminists agree with feminists on the ways women ought to be viewed and treated, but don't see any problem with the way things currently are. Others disagree about the background moral or political views.

In an effort to suggest a schematic account of feminism, Susan James characterizes feminism as follows:

Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretations of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program. (James 1998: 576) James seems here to be using the notions of "oppression" and "disadvantage" as placeholders for more substantive accounts of injustice (both normative and descriptive) over which feminists disagree.

Some might prefer to define feminism in terms of a normative claim alone: feminists are those who believe that women are entitled to equal

rights, or equal respect, or…(fill in the blank with one's preferred account of injustice), and one is not required to believe that women are currently being treated unjustly. However, if we were to adopt this terminological convention, it would be harder to identify some of the interesting sources of disagreement both with and within feminism, and the term "feminism" would lose much of its potential to unite those whose concerns and commitments extend beyond their moral beliefs to their social interpretations and political affiliations. Feminists are not simply those who are committed in principle to justice for women; feminists take themselves to have reasons to bring about social change on women's behalf.

Taking "feminism" to entail both normative and empirical commitments also helps make sense of some uses of the term "feminism" in recent popular discourse. In everyday conversation it is not uncommon to find both men and women prefixing a comment they might make about women with the caveat, "I'm not a feminist, but…". Of course this qualification might be (and is) used for various purposes, but one persistent usage seems to follow the qualification with some claim that is hard to distinguish from claims that feminists are wont to make. For example, I'm not a feminist but I believe that women should earn equal pay for equal work; or I'm not a feminist but I'm delighted that first-rate women basketball players are finally getting some recognition in the WNBA. If we see the identification "feminist" as implicitly committing one to both a normative stance about how things should be and an interpretation of current conditions, it is easy to imagine someone being in the position of wanting to cancel his or her endorsement of either the normative or the descriptive claim. So, e.g., one might be willing to acknowledge that there are cases where women have been disadvantaged without wanting to buy any broad moral theory that takes a stance on such things (especially where it is unclear what that broad theory is). Or one might be willing to acknowledge in a very general way that equality for women is a good thing, without being committed to interpreting particular everyday situations as unjust (especially if is unclear how far these interpretations would have to extend). Feminists, however, at least according to popular discourse, are ready to both adopt a broad account

of what justice for women would require and interpret everyday situations as unjust by the standards of that account. Those who explicitly cancel their commitment to feminism may then be happy to endorse some part of the view but are unwilling to endorse what they find to be a problematic package.

As mentioned above, there is considerable debate within feminism concerning the normative question: what would count as (full) justice for women? What is the nature of the wrong that feminism seeks to address? For example, is the wrong that women have been deprived equal rights? Is it that women have been denied equal respect for their differences? Is it that women's experiences have been ignored and devalued? Is it all of the above and more? What framework should we employ to identify and address the issues? (see, e.g., Jaggar 1983; Young 1985; Tuana& Tong 1995). Feminist philosophers in particular have asked: Do the standard philosophical accounts of justice and morality provide us adequate resources to theorize male domination, or do we need distinctively feminist accounts? (e.g., Okin 1979; Hoagland 1989; Okin 1989; Ruddick 1989; Benhabib 1992; Hampton 1993; Held 1993; Tong 1993; Baier 1994; Moody-Adams 1997; M. Walker 1998; Kittay 1999; Robinson 1999; Young 2011; O'Connor 2008).

Note, however, that by phrasing the task as one of identifying the wrongs women suffer (and have suffered), there is an implicit suggestion that women as a group can be usefully compared against men as a group with respect to their standing or position in society; and this seems to suggest that women as a group are treated in the same way, or that they all suffer the same injustices, and men as a group all reap the same advantages. But of course this is not the case, or at least not straightforwardly so. As bell hooks so vividly pointed out, in 1963 when Betty Friedan urged women to reconsider the role of housewife and demanded greater opportunities for women to enter the workforce (Friedan 1963), Friedan was not speaking for working class women or most women of color (hooks 1984: 1–4). Neither was she speaking for lesbians. Women as a group experience many different forms of injustice, and the sexism they encounter interacts in complex ways with other systems of oppression. In contemporary terms, this is known as the problem of intersectionality

(Crenshaw 1991, Botts 2017). This critique has led some theorists to resist the label "feminism" and to adopt a different name for their view. Earlier, during the 1860s–80s, the term "womanism" had sometimes been used for such intellectual and political commitments; in 1990, Alice Walker proposed that "womanism" provides a contemporary alternative to "feminism" that better addresses the needs of Black women and women of color more generally. But given more recent work on trans issues such a gender-specific term would today raise many more problems than it would solve.

14.3 FEMINISM AND THE DIVERSITY OF WOMEN

To consider some of the different strategies for responding to the phenomenon of intersectionality, let's return to the schematic claims that women are oppressed and this oppression is wrong or unjust. Very broadly, then, one might characterize the goal of feminism to be ending the oppression of women. But if we also acknowledge that women are oppressed not just by sexism, but in many ways, e.g., by classism, homophobia, racism, ageism, ableism, etc., then it might seem that the goal of feminism is to end all oppression that affects women. And some feminists have adopted this interpretation (e.g., Ware 1970, quoted in Crow 2000:

Note, however, that not all agree with such an expansive definition of feminism. One might agree that feminists ought to work to end all forms of oppression—oppression is unjust and feminists, like everyone else, have a moral obligation to fight injustice—without maintaining that it is the mission of feminism to end all oppression. One might even believe that in order to accomplish feminism's goals it is necessary to combat racism and economic exploitation, but also think that there is a narrower set of specifically feminist objectives. In other words, opposing oppression in its many forms may be instrumental to, even a necessary means to, feminism, but not intrinsic to it. For example, bell hooks argues:

Feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all its forms. We must

understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression, and that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact. This knowledge should consistently inform the direction of feminist theory and practice. (Hooks 1989: 22)

On hooks' account, the defining characteristic that distinguishes feminism from other liberation struggles is its concern with sexism:

Unlike many feminist comrades, I believe women and men must share a common understanding—a basic knowledge of what feminism is—if it is ever to be a powerful mass-based political movement. In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, I suggest that defining feminism broadly as "a movement to end sexism and sexist oppression" would enable us to have a common political goal…Sharing a common goal does not imply that women and men will not have radically divergent perspectives on how that goal might be reached. (hooks 1989: 23) hooks' approach depends on the claim that sexism is a particular form of oppression that can be distinguished from other forms, e.g., racism and homophobia, even though it is currently (and virtually always) interlocked with other forms of oppression. Feminism's objective is to end sexism, though because of its relation to other forms of oppression, this will require efforts to end other forms of oppression as well. For example, feminists who themselves remain racists will not be able to fully appreciate the broad impact of sexism on the lives of women of color—nor the interconnections between racism and sexism. Furthermore because sexist institutions are also, e.g., racist, classist, and homophobic, dismantling sexist institutions will require that we dismantle the other forms of domination intertwined with them (Heldke& O'Connor 2004). Following hooks' lead, we might characterize feminism schematically (allowing the schema to be filled in differently by different accounts) as the view that women are subject to sexist oppression and that this is wrong. This move shifts the burden of our inquiry from a characterization of what feminism is to a characterization of what sexism, or sexist oppression, is.

As mentioned above, there are a variety of interpretations—feminist and otherwise—of what exactly oppression consists in, but the leading idea is

that oppression consists in "an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people" (Frye 1983: 10–11). Not just any "enclosing structure" is oppressive, however, for plausibly any process of socialization will create a structure that both limits and enables all individuals who live within it. In the case of oppression, however, the "enclosing structures" in question are part of a broader system that asymmetrically and unjustly disadvantages one group and benefits another. So, for example, although sexism restricts the opportunities available to—and so unquestionably harms—both men and women (and considering some pairwise comparisons may even have a greater negative impact on a man than a woman), overall, women as a group unjustly suffer the greater harm. It is a crucial feature of contemporary accounts, however, that one cannot assume that members of the privileged group have intentionally designed or maintained the system for their benefit. The oppressive structure may be the result of an historical process whose originators are long gone, or it may be the unintended result of complex cooperative strategies gone wrong.

Leaving aside (at least for the moment) further details in the account of oppression, the question remains: What makes a particular form of oppression sexist? If we just say that a form of oppression counts as sexist oppression if it harms women, or even primarily harms women, this is not enough to distinguish it from other forms of oppression. Virtually all forms of oppression harm women, and arguably some besides sexism harm women primarily (though not exclusively), e.g., body size oppression, age oppression. Besides, as we've noted before, sexism is not only harmful to women, but is harmful to all of us.

What makes a particular form of oppression sexist seems to be not just that it harms women, but that someone is subject to this form of oppression specifically because she is (or at least appears to be) a woman. Racial oppression harms women, but racial oppression (by itself) doesn't harm them because they are women, it harms them because they are (or appear to be) members of a particular race. The suggestion that sexist oppression consists in oppression to which one is subject by virtue of being or appearing to be a woman provides us at

least the beginnings of an analytical tool for distinguishing subordinating structures that happen to affect some or even all women from those that are more specifically sexist (Haslanger 2004). But problems and unclarities remain.

First, we need to explicate further what it means to be oppressed "because you are a woman". For example, is the idea that there is a particular form of oppression that is specific to women? Is to be oppressed "as a woman" to be oppressed in a particular way? Or can we be pluralists about what sexist oppression consists in without fragmenting the notion beyond usefulness?

Two strategies for explicating sexist oppression have proven to be problematic. The first is to maintain that there is a form of oppression common to all women. For example, one might interpret Catharine MacKinnon's work as claiming that to be oppressed as a woman is to be viewed and treated as sexually subordinate, where this claim is grounded in the (alleged) universal fact of the eroticization of male dominance and female submission (MacKinnon 1987, 1989). Although MacKinnon allows that sexual subordination can happen in a myriad of ways, her account is monistic in its attempt to unite the different forms of sexist oppression around a single core account that makes sexual objectification the focus. Although MacKinnon's work provides a powerful resource for analyzing women's subordination, many have argued that it is too narrow, e.g., in some contexts (especially in developing countries) sexist oppression seems to concern more the local division of labor and economic exploitation. Although certainly sexual subordination is a factor in sexist oppression, it requires us to fabricate implausible explanations of social life to suppose that all divisions of labor that exploit women (as women) stem from the "eroticization of dominance and submission". Moreover, it isn't obvious that in order to make sense of sexist oppression we need to seek a single form of oppression common to all women.

A second problematic strategy has been to consider as paradigms those who are oppressed only as women, with the thought that complex cases bringing in additional forms of oppression will obscure what is distinctive of sexist oppression. This strategy would have us focus in the

United States on white, wealthy, young, beautiful, able-bodied, heterosexual women to determine what oppression, if any, they suffer, with the hope of finding sexism in its "purest" form, unmixed with racism or homophobia, etc. (see Spelman 1988: 52–54). This approach is not only flawed in its exclusion of all but the most elite women in its paradigm, but it assumes that privilege in other areas does not affect the phenomenon under consideration. As Elizabeth Spelman makes the point:

…no woman is subject to any form of oppression simply because she is a woman; which forms of oppression she is subject to depend on what "kind" of woman she is. In a world in which a woman might be subject to racism, classism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, if she is not so subject it is because of her race, class, religion, sexual orientation. So it can never be the case that the treatment of a woman has only to do with her gender and nothing to do with her class or race. (Spelman 1988: 52–3)

Other accounts of oppression are designed to allow that oppression takes many forms, and refuse to identify one form as more basic or fundamental than the rest. For example, Iris Young describes five "faces" of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and systematic violence (Young 1980 [1990a: ch. 2]). Plausibly others should be added to the list. Sexist or racist oppression, for example, will manifest itself in different ways in different contexts, e.g., in some contexts through systematic violence, in other contexts through economic exploitation. Acknowledging this does not go quite far enough, however, for monistic theorists such as MacKinnon could grant this much. Pluralist accounts of sexist oppression must also allow that there isn't an over-arching explanation of sexist oppression that applies to all its forms: in some cases it may be that women's oppression as women is due to the eroticization of male dominance, but in other cases it may be better explained by women's reproductive value in establishing kinship structures (Rubin 1975), or by the shifting demands of globalization within an ethnically stratified workplace. In other words, pluralists resist the temptation to "grand social theory", "overarching metanarratives", "monocausal explanations", to allow that the explanation of sexism in a particular historical context will rely on

economic, political, legal, and cultural factors that are specific to that context which would prevent the account from being generalized to all instances of sexism (Fraser & Nicholson 1990). It is still compatible with pluralist methods to seek out patterns in women's social positions and structural explanations within and across social contexts, but in doing so we must be highly sensitive to historical and cultural variation.

14.4 FEMINISM AS ANTI-SEXISM

However, if we pursue a pluralist strategy in understanding sexist oppression, what unifies all the instances as instances of sexism? After all, we cannot assume that the oppression in question takes the same form in different contexts, and we cannot assume that there is an underlying explanation of the different ways it manifests itself. So can we even speak of there being a unified set of cases—something we can call "sexist oppression"—at all?

Some feminists would urge us to recognize that there isn't a systematic way to unify the different instances of sexism, and correspondingly, there is no systematic unity in what counts as feminism: instead we should see the basis for feminist unity in coalition building (Reagon 1983). Different groups work to combat different forms of oppression; some groups take oppression against women (as women) as a primary concern. If there is a basis for cooperation between some subset of these groups in a given context, then finding that basis is an accomplishment, but should not be taken for granted.

An alternative, however, would be to grant that in practice unity among feminists cannot be taken for granted, but to begin with a theoretical common ground among feminist views that does not assume that sexism appears in the same form or for the same reasons in all contexts. We saw above that one promising strategy for distinguishing sexism from racism, classism, and other forms of injustice is to focus on the idea that if an individual is suffering sexist oppression, then an important part of the explanation why she is subject to the injustice is that she is or appears to be a woman. This includes cases in which women as a group are explicitly targeted by a policy or a practice, but also includes cases where the policy or practice affects women due to a history of sexism, even if

they are not explicitly targeted. For example, in a scenario in which women are children's primary caregivers and cannot travel for work as easily as men, then employment practices that reward those who can travel can be deemed sexist because the differential is due to sexist practices. The commonality among the cases is to be found in the role of gender in the explanation of the injustice rather than the specific form the injustice takes. Building on this we could unify a broad range of feminist views by seeing them as committed to the (very abstract) claims that:

i. (Descriptive claim) Women, and those who appear to be women, are subjected to wrongs and/or injustice at least in part because they are or appear to be women.
ii. (Normative claim) The wrongs/injustices in question in (i) ought not to occur and should be stopped when and where they do.

We have so far been using the term "oppression" loosely to cover whatever form of wrong or injustice is at issue. Continuing with this intentional openness in the exact nature of the wrong, the question still remains what it means to say that women are subjected to injustice because they are women. To address this question, it may help to consider a familiar ambiguity in the notion "because": are we concerned here with causal explanations or justifications? On one hand, the claim that someone is oppressed because she is a woman suggests that the best (causal) explanation of the subordination in question will make reference to her sex: e.g., Paula is subject to sexist oppression on the job because the best explanation of why she makes $10.00 less an hour for doing comparable work as Paul makes reference to her sex (possibly coupled with her race or other social classifications). On the other hand, the claim that someone is oppressed because she is a woman suggests that the rationale or basis for the oppressive structures requires that one be sensitive to someone's sex in determining how they should be viewed and treated, i.e., that the justification for someone's being subject to the structures in question depends on a representation of them as sexed male or female. For example, Paula is subject to sexist oppression on the job because the pay scale for her job classification is justified within a framework that distinguishes and devalues women's work compared with men's.

Note, however, that in both sorts of cases the fact that one is or appears to be a woman need not be the only factor relevant in explaining the injustice. It might be, for example, that one stands out in a group because of one's race, or one's class, or one's sexuality, and because one stands out one becomes a target for injustice. But if the injustice takes a form that, e.g., is regarded as especially apt for a woman, then the injustice should be understood intersectionally, i.e., as a response to an intersectional category. For example, the practice of raping Bosnian women was an intersectional injustice: it targeted them both because they were Bosnian and because they were women.

Of course, these two understandings of being oppressed because you are a woman are not incompatible; in fact they typically support one another. Because human actions are often best explained by the framework employed for justifying them, one's sex may play a large role in determining how one is treated because the background understandings for what's appropriate treatment draw invidious distinctions between the sexes. In other words, the causal mechanism for sexism often passes through problematic representations of women and gender roles.

In each of the cases of being oppressed as a woman mentioned above, Paula suffers injustice, but a crucial factor in explaining the injustice is that Paula is a member of a particular group, viz., women. This, we think, is crucial in understanding why sexism (and racism, and other -isms) are most often understood as kinds of oppression. Oppression is injustice that, first and foremost, concerns groups; individuals are oppressed just in case they are subjected to injustice because of their group membership. On this view, to claim that women as women suffer injustice is to claim that women are oppressed.

Where does this leave us? "Feminism" is an umbrella term for a range of views about injustices against women. There are disagreements among feminists about the nature of justice in general and the nature of sexism, in particular, the specific kinds of injustice or wrong women suffer; and the group who should be the primary focus of feminist efforts. Nonetheless, feminists are committed to bringing about social change to end injustice against women, in particular, injustice against women as women.

Check Your Progress Ii:

Q1. What is Feminism?

Answer……

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Q2. Discuss how Feminism is conceptualized as Anti-Sexism

Answer……

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14.5 APPROACHES TO FEMINISM

Feminism brings many things to philosophy including not only a variety of particular moral and political claims, but ways of asking and answering questions, constructive and critical dialogue with mainstream philosophical views and methods, and new topics of inquiry. Feminist philosophers work within all the major traditions of philosophical scholarship including analytic philosophy, American pragmatist philosophy, and Continental philosophy. Entries in this *Encyclopedia* appearing under the heading "feminism, approaches" discuss the impact of these traditions on feminist scholarship and examine the possibility and desirability of work that makes links between two traditions. Feminist contributions to and interventions in mainstream philosophical debates are covered in entries in this encyclopedia under "feminism, interventions". Entries covered under the rubric "feminism, topics" concern philosophical issues that arise as feminists articulate accounts of sexism, critique sexist social and cultural practices, and develop alternative visions of a just world. In short, they are philosophical topics that arise *within* feminism.

Approaches to feminist philosophy are almost as varied as approaches to philosophy itself, reflecting a variety of beliefs about what kinds of philosophy are both fruitful and meaningful. To spell out such differences, this section of the SEP provides overviews of the following dominant (at least in more developed societies) approaches to feminist philosophy. The following are links to essays in this section:

- Analytic Feminism

- Continental Feminism
- Pragmatist Feminism
- Intersections Between Pragmatist and Continental Feminism
- Intersections Between Analytic and Continental Feminism
- Psychoanalytic Feminism

All these approaches share a set of feminist commitments and an overarching criticism of institutions, presuppositions, and practices that have historically favored men over women. They also share a general critique of claims to universality and objectivity that ignore male-dominated theories' own particularity and specificity. Feminist philosophies of most any philosophical orientation will be much more perspectival, historical, contextual, and focused on lived experience than their non-feminist counterparts. Unlike mainstream philosophers who can seriously consider the philosophical conundrums of brains in a vat, feminist philosophers always start by seeing people as embodied. Feminists have also argued for the reconfiguration of accepted structures and problematics of philosophy. For example, feminists have not only rejected the privileging of epistemological concerns over moral and political concerns common to much of philosophy, they have argued that these two areas of concern are inextricably intertwined. Part 2 of the entry on analytic feminism lays out other areas of commonality across these various approaches. For one, feminist philosophers generally agree that philosophy is a powerful tool for understanding ourselves and our relations to each other, to our communities, and to the state; to appreciate the extent to which we are counted as knowers and moral agents; [and] to uncover the assumptions and methods of various bodies of knowledge.

For another, feminist philosophers all generally are keenly attuned to male biases at work in the history of philosophy, such as those regarding "the nature of woman" and supposed value neutrality, which on inspection is hardly neutral at all. Claims to universality, feminist philosophers have found, are usually made from a very specific and particular point of view, contrary to their manifest claims. Another orientation that feminist philosophers generally share is a commitment to normativity and social change; they are never content to analyze things

just as they are but are instead looking for ways to overcome sexist practices and institutions.

Such questioning of the problematic of mainstream approaches to philosophy has often led to feminists using methods and approaches from more than one philosophical tradition. As Ann Garry notes in part three of the entry on Analytic Feminism (2017), it is not uncommon to find analytic feminists drawing on non-analytic figures such as Beauvoir, Foucault, or Butler; and because of their motivation to communicate with other feminists, they are more motivated than other philosophers "to search for methodological cross-fertilization".

Even with their common and overlapping orientations, the differences between the various philosophical approaches to feminism are significant, especially in terms of styles of writing, influences, and overall expectations about what philosophy can and should achieve. Analytic feminist philosophy tends to value analysis and argumentation, Continental feminist theory values interpretation and deconstruction, and pragmatist feminism values lived experience and exploration. Coming out of a post-Hegelian tradition, both Continental and pragmatist philosophers usually suspect that "truth", whatever that is, emerges and develops historically. They tend to share with Nietzsche the view that truth claims often mask power plays. Yet where Continental and pragmatist are generally wary about notions of truth, analytic feminists tend to argue that the way to counter sexism and androcentrism is through forming a clear conception of and pursuing truth, logical consistency, objectivity, rationality, justice, and the good. (Cudd 1996: 20).

These differences and intersections play out in the ways that various feminists engage topics of common concern. One key area of intersection noted by Georgia Warnke is the appropriation of psychoanalytic theory, with Anglo-American feminists generally adopting object-relations theories and Continental feminists drawing more on Lacan and contemporary French psychoanalytic theory, though this is already beginning to change (entry on intersections between analytic and continental feminism). The importance of psychoanalytic approaches is also underscored in Shannon Sullivan's essay Intersections Between

Pragmatist and Continental Feminism. Given the importance of psychoanalytic feminism for all three traditions, a separate essay on this approach to feminist theory is included in this section.

No topic is more central to feminist philosophy than sex and gender, but even here many variations on the theme flourish. Where analytic feminism, with its critique of essentialism, holds the sex/gender distinction practically as an article of faith (see the entry on feminist perspectives on sex and gender and Chanter 2009), Continental feminists tend to suspect either (1) that even the supposedly purely biological category of sex is itself socially constituted (Butler 1990 and 1993 or (2) that sexual difference itself needs to be valued and theorized (see especially Cixous 1976 and Irigaray 1974.

Despite the variety of different approaches, styles, societies, and orientations, feminist philosophers' commonalities are greater than their differences. Many will borrow freely from each other and find that other orientations contribute to their own work. Even the differences over sex and gender add to a larger conversation about the impact of culture and society on bodies, experience, and pathways for change.

14.6 INTERVENTIONS IN PHILOSOPHY

Philosophers who are feminists have, in their work in traditional fields of study, begun to change those very fields. The *Encyclopedia* includes a range of entries on how feminist philosophies have intervened in conventional areas of philosophical research, areas in which philosophers often tend to argue that they are operating from a neutral, universal point of view (notable exceptions are pragmatism, poststructuralism, and some phenomenology). Historically, philosophy has claimed that the norm is universal and the feminine is abnormal, that universality is not gendered, but that all things feminine are not universal. Not surprisingly, feminists have pointed out how in fact these supposed neutral enterprises are in fact quite gendered, namely, male gendered. For example, feminists working on environmental philosophy have uncovered how practices disproportionately affect women, children, and people of color. Liberal feminism has shown how supposed universal truths of liberalism are in fact quite biased and particular. Feminist epistemologists have called out

"epistemologies of ignorance" that traffic in not knowing. Across the board, in fact, feminist philosophers are uncovering male biases and also pointing to the value of particularity, in general rejecting universality as a norm or goal.

Entries under the heading of feminist interventions include the following:

- feminist aesthetics
- feminist bioethics
- feminist environmental philosophy
- feminist epistemology and philosophy of science
- feminist ethics
- feminist history of philosophy
- liberal feminism
- feminist metaphysics
- feminist moral psychology
- feminist philosophy of biology
- feminist philosophy of language
- feminist philosophy of law
- feminist philosophy of religion
- feminist political philosophy
- feminist social epistemology

14.7 TOPICS IN FEMINISM

Feminist critical attention to philosophical practices has revealed the inadequacy of dominant philosophical tropes. For example, feminists working from the perspective of women's lives have been influential in bringing philosophical attention to the phenomenon of care and care-giving (Ruddick 1989; Held 1995, 2007; Hamington 2006), dependency (Kittay 1999), disability (Wilkerson 2002; Carlson 2009) women's labor (Waring 1999; Delphy 1984; Harley 2007), and scientific bias and objectivity (Longino 1990), and have revealed weaknesses in existing ethical, political, and epistemological theories. More generally, feminists have called for inquiry into what are typically considered "private" practices and personal concerns, such as the family, sexuality, and the body, in order to balance what has seemed to be a masculine pre-

occupation with "public" and impersonal matters. Philosophy presupposes interpretive tools for understanding our everyday lives; feminist work in articulating additional dimensions of experience and aspects of our practices is invaluable in demonstrating the bias in existing tools, and in the search for better ones.

Feminist explanations of sexism and accounts of sexist practices also raise issues that are within the domain of traditional philosophical inquiry. For example, in thinking about care, feminists have asked questions about the nature of the self; in thinking about gender, feminists have asked what the relationship is between the natural and the social; in thinking about sexism in science, feminists have asked what should count as knowledge. In some such cases mainstream philosophical accounts provide useful tools; in other cases, alternative proposals have seemed more promising..

14.8 LET'S SUM UP

Feminists working in all the main Western traditions of contemporary philosophy are using their respective traditions to approach their work, including the traditions of analytic, Continental, and pragmatist philosophy, along with other various orientations and intersections. As they do so, they are also intervening in how longstanding basic philosophical problems are understood. As feminist philosophers carry out work in traditional philosophical fields, from ethics to epistemology, they have introduced new concepts and perspectives that have transformed philosophy itself. They are also rendering philosophical previously un-problematized topics, such as the body, class and work, disability, the family, reproduction, the self, sex work, human trafficking, and sexuality. And they are bringing a particularly feminist lens to issues of science, globalization, human rights, popular culture, and race and racism.

Check Your Progress Ii:

Q1. What are the various Approaches to Feminism?

Answer……

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Q2. Explain Normative and Descriptive Components.

Answer……

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14.9 KEYWORDS

- **Diversity:** the state of being diverse.
- **Philosophy**: the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline.
- **Inclusivity:** the practice or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of minority groups.
- **Pluralism:** a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist.

14.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- What do you think of feminism?
- What is the right approach to Feminism?
- What is the role of feminism in 19th Century?
- What's its impact on Politics?

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14.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Answer 1 : Check Section 14.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 14.4

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Answer 1 : Check Section 14.6

Answer 2 : Check Section 14.2