

TRANSATLANTIC WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: CULTURAL AND LITERARY PERSPECTIVES

Feminist Role Models of the 1960s

1. Introduction

- ❖ Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (1947):
 - Influence of Sigmund Freud

"Feminism [...] was at its core a deep illness,[...] the more educated the woman is, the greater chance is of sexual disorder."

- ❖ "The problem" of the housewife of the 1950s

2. Betty Friedan

- ❖ Writer, activist
- ❖ *The Feminine Mystique* (1963); critique of Freudianism; demystification of "the happy housewife" image; identified "woman's problem" as identity crisis
- ❖ In 1966 co-founded US National Organization for Women (NOW)
- ❖ Other works:
 - *It Changed My Life* (1976)
 - *The Second Stage* (1981)
 - *The Fountain of Age* (1993)
 - *Beyond Gender* (1997)
 - *Life So Far* (2000)

3. Gloria Steinem

- ❖ Writer, journalist
- ❖ Advocate of an alliance between Civil rights and women's rights
- ❖ The 1970 Senate speech:

"During 12 years of working for a living, I have experienced much of the legal and social discrimination reserved for women in this country. I have been refused service in public restaurants, ordered out of public gathering places, and turned away from apartment rentals; all for the clearly-stated, sole reason that I am a woman. And all without the legal remedies available to blacks and other minorities. I have been excluded from professional groups, writing assignments on so-called "unfeminine" subjects such as politics, full participation in the Democratic Party, jury duty, and even from such small male privileges as discounts on airline fares. Most important to me, I have been denied a society in which women are encouraged, or even allowed to think of themselves as first-class citizens and responsible human beings."

- ❖ In 1972 she launched *Ms.* Magazine

4. Radical Feminism

- ❖ Men identified as oppressor *class*:

"We identify the agents of our oppression as men.... All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism, etc.) are extensions of male supremacy.... *All men* receive economic, sexual and psychological benefits from male supremacy. *All men* have oppressed women."

5. Robin Morgan

- ❖ Poet, writer, anti-war activist
- ❖ In 1968 helped to create W.I.T.C.H (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) a group of radical feminists who wanted to do guerilla theaters

"The oppressed have a right to class hatred against the *class* that is oppressing them.... I *hate* that class."

- ❖ Notable works:
 - *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970)
 - *Going Too Far* (1978)
 - *Sisterhood is Global* (1984)
 - *Sisterhood is Forever* (2003)

6. Valerie Solanas

- ❖ Sexually abused by her father, aggressive towards men
- ❖ *S.C.U.M Manifesto* (1967) – Society for Cutting Up Men

"The male is a biological accident: the Y (male) gene is an incomplete X (female) gene, that is, has an incomplete set of chromosomes. In other words, the male is an incomplete female, a walking abortion, aborted at the gene stage. To be male is to be deficient, emotionally limited; maleness is a deficiency disease and males are emotional cripples."

- ❖ Advocated creation of all-female society
- ❖ Attempted to murder Andy Warhol in 1968

7. Bibliography

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