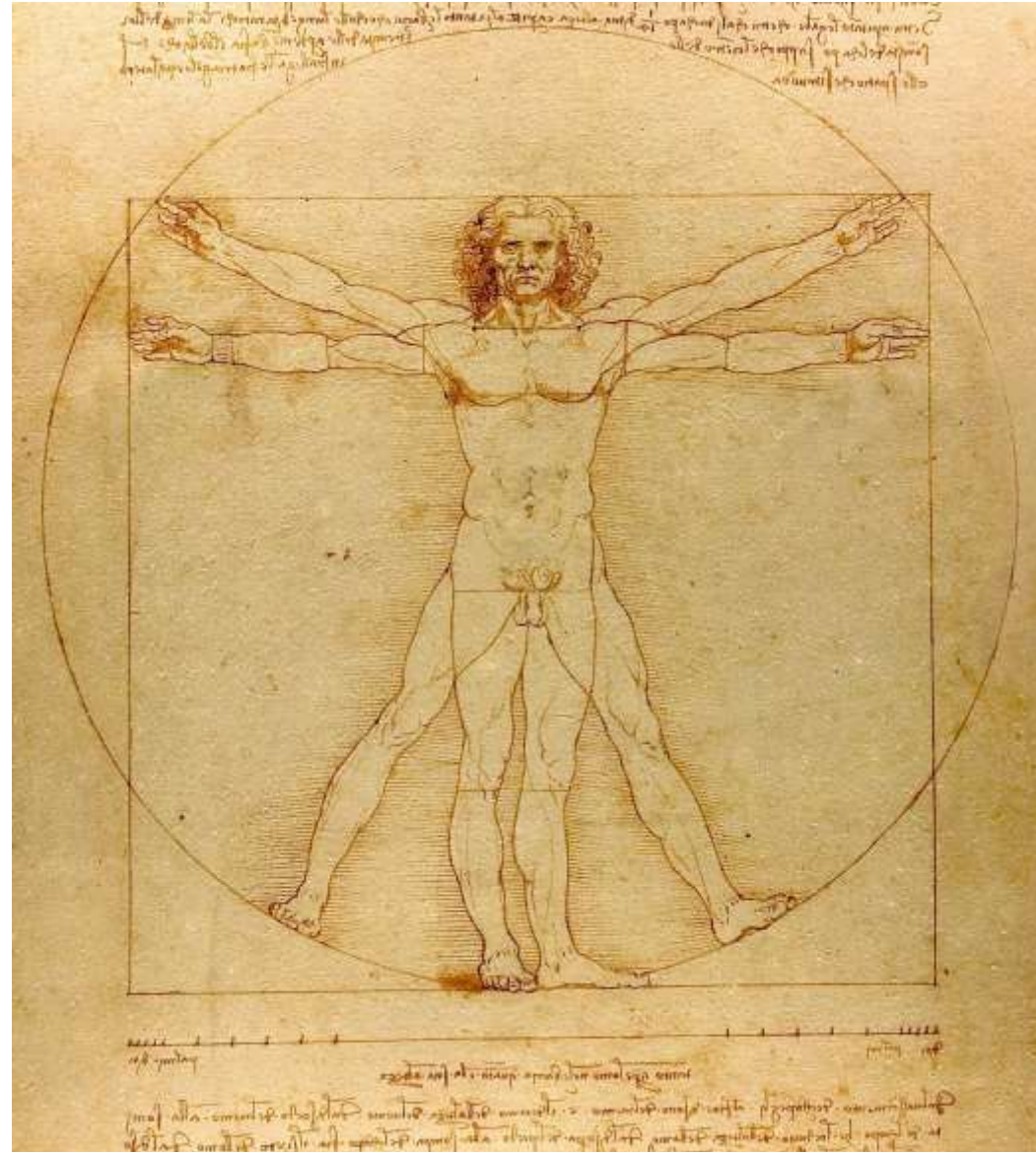


Where are
we going?

Philosophy in
the
Anthropocene

9. Difference





‘Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it’
– St Paul, Ephesians 5.22-5

‘As long as woman is for birth and children, she is as different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called man.’
– St Jerome, *Commentaries on the Letter to the Ephesians*, 16

‘*You* are the Devil’s gateway. *You* are the first deserter of the divine Law... *You* destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of *your* desert, that is death, even the Son of God had to die.’ – Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*.



‘As every man’s house is his Castle, so is his family a private Commonwealth, wherein if due government be not observed, nothing but confusion is to be expected.’ – Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman*, 1630


‘The man being as he is, most apt for the sovereignty being in government, not only skill and experience to be required, but also capacity to comprehend, wisdom to understand, strength to execute, solicitude to prosecute, patience to suffer, means to sustain, and above all, a great courage to accomplish, all which are commonly in a man, but in a woman very rare.’ – Edmund Tilney, *A Brief and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Marriage, called the Flower of Friendship*, 1571



‘Had God intended Women only as a finer sort of Cattle, he would not have made them reasonable. Bruits, a few degrees higher than Drils or Monkies, (which the Indians use to do many Offices) might have better fitted some men's Lust, Pride, and Pleasure; especially those that desire to keep them ignorant to be tyrannized over.’ – Bathsua Makin, 1673

‘The divine right of husbands, like the divine right of kings, may, it is hoped, in this enlightened age, be contested without danger ...

My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat him like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists — I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body’ – Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792



‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’.

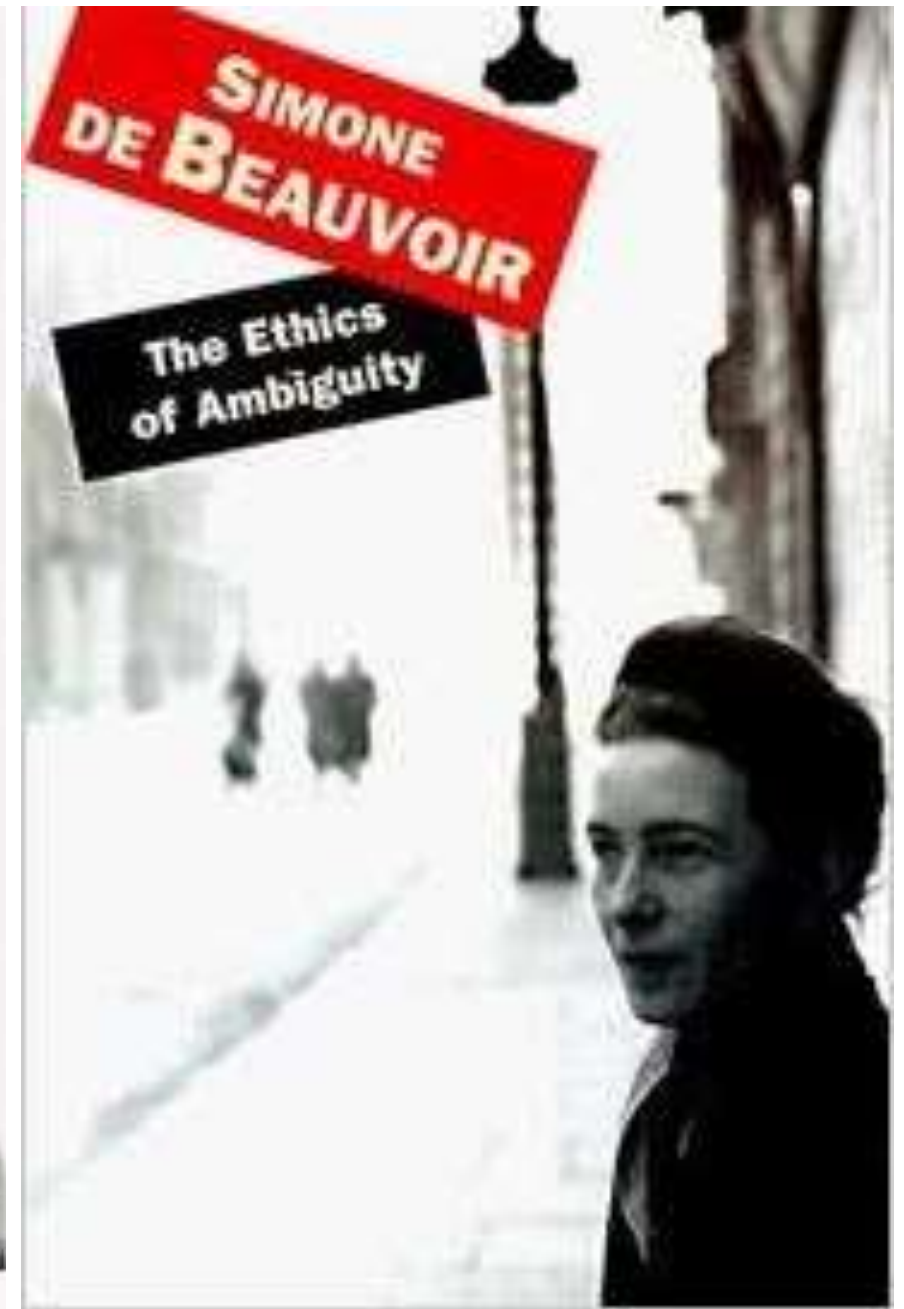
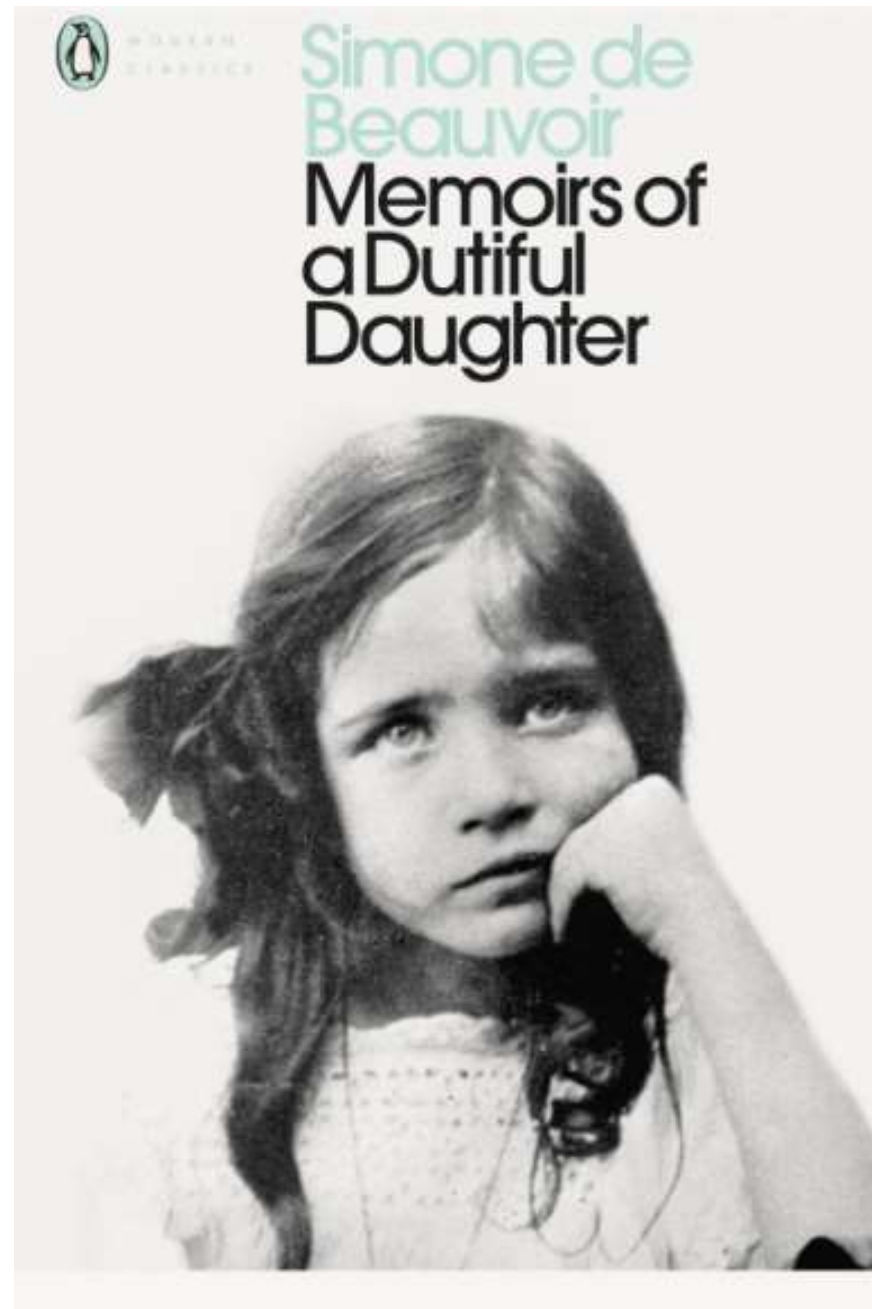
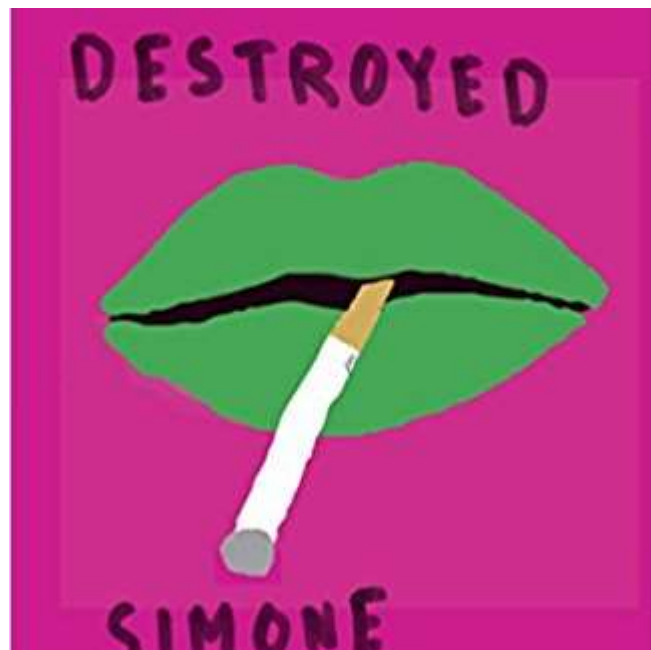
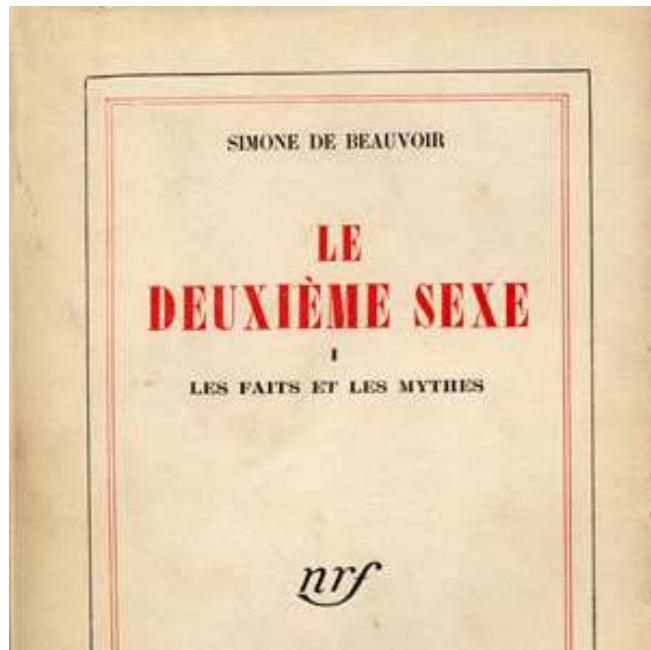


Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986)

- Existentialist, Feminist, writer, novelist, journalist, activist and lifelong Parisian
- Major works include the novels *She Came to Stay* (1943) and the *Mandarins* (1954); *Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947) and *The Second Sex* (1949)
- Youngest to pass the *aggregation* in philosophy
- Long-term association with Sartre
- An exploration and commitment to individual freedom, through our relations with others

'I wish that every human life might
be pure transparent freedom.'





Prolific and varied writer

Novels: *She Came to Stay* (1943); *The Blood of Others* (1945); *All Men are Mortal* (1946); *The Mandarins*; *The Woman Destroyed* (1967); *When Things of the Spirit Come First* (1979)

A play: *Who Shall Die?* (1945)

Travel: *America Day by Day* (1954); *The Long March* (1957)

Book-length essays including *The Coming of Age* (on growing old) (1970); *Pyrrhus & Cineas* (1944); *Ethics of Ambiguity*; *The Second Sex*

Journalism and memoir: inc. a four-volume autobiography (1958-72); *Farewell to Sartre* (1981)

Simone de Beauvoir
The Second Sex



The Second Sex (1949)

- Major feminist work, one of the first philosophical accounts of femininity
- Quickly put on Vatican's Index
- Begins with the question: 'what is woman?'
- In two parts explores 'facts and myths' and 'lived experience'
- 'it is not women's inferiority that has determined their historical insignificance: it is their historical insignificance that has doomed them to inferiority'



Eight Kiddies under 15!

Has Rinso of Capital Wash Bros. been in your house for...? Mrs. Mark and Mrs. Lillian. Rinso's Suds for mother and husband.

RINSO'S ARE GOOD! ANOTHER PAIR OF HANDS ON WASH-DAY! THOSE BIG, THICK SUDS WASH AWAY DIRT QUICK-SMART... GET WHITES AND COLOURED'S BRIGHT AS A BUTTON!

NO OLD-FASHIONED BAR SOAP'S FOR ME! I WASH-UP THE MODERN WAY, WITH RINSO, THOSE UNCLE SUDS GET DISHES DONE IN HALF THE TIME.

Rinso's thicker, richer suds take the hard work out of wash day!

Well, sure, but there comes a week, Mrs. Platter says, when after two or three weeks and weekends for her big family of 11. And her two boys every single article looking brighter than new, despite constant washing, and she's quiet in the Rinso on the laundry shelf. After wash time, you'll see a big pile high with big, thick Rinso suds, for Rinso's just won't quit enough to stop with their big family washings.

Like thousands of American families, the Platters have proved that Rinso's Suds, richer suds are best for everything — whites, coloureds, dyes.

RINSO is the only product recommended by the makers of all leading washing machines

Page 42

The American Women's Mirror - Jan. 12, 1951

Woman as Other

- 'Man is defined as a human being and woman as a female – whenever she behaves as a human being she is said to imitate the male.'
- Traditional scientific, philosophical and political ideas about femininity have produced an ideology of women's 'natural' difference and inferiority
- 'Man' is presented as the absolute, neutral human type, whereas Woman is always the 'Other'
- Myths of the 'eternal feminine' – passionate, submissive, in tune with nature and emotions, passive, docile, etc. – subjugate women



Over to you

In groups, let's discuss the broad argument of the Introduction and a more general understanding of Beauvoir's arguments

How have women traditionally been subjugated? How do these forms of disempowerment continue into Beauvoir's day (and since?)

‘humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. ... she is simply what man decrees’ (15)

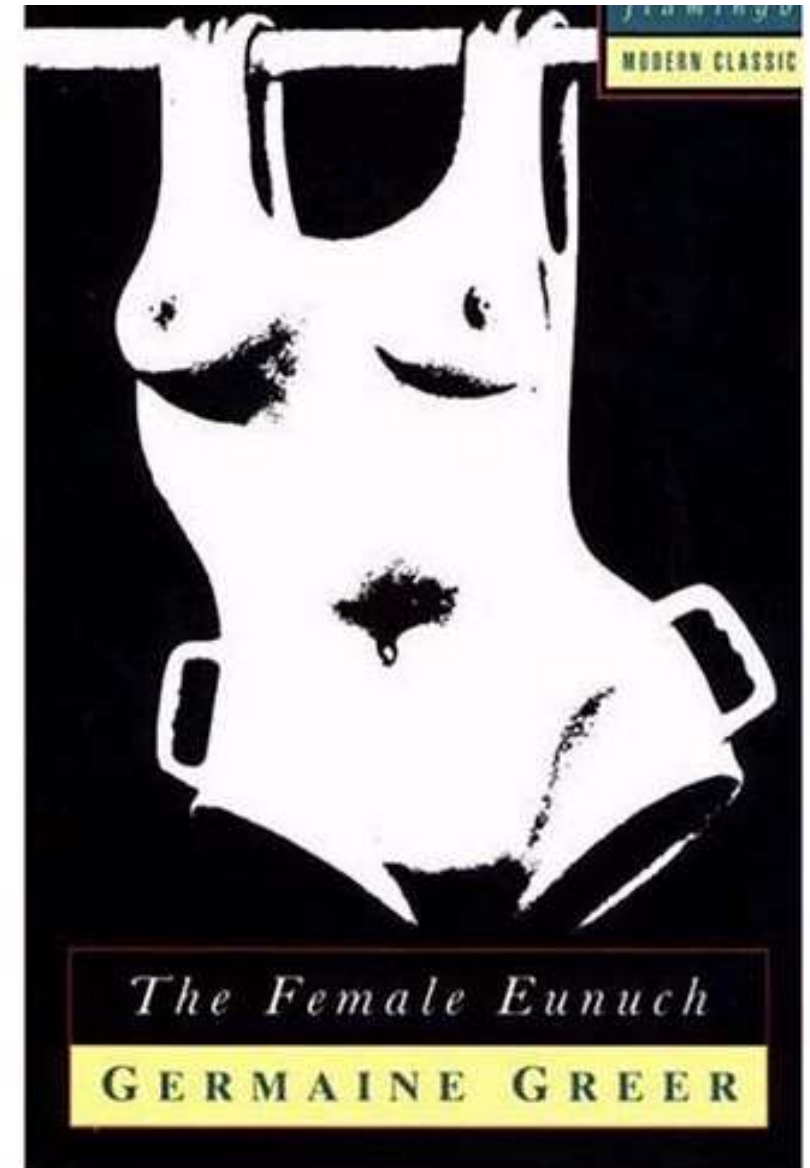
‘He is the subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other’ (16)

‘no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once sitting up the Other over against itself ... 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’.

‘But women do not say ‘We’, except at some congress of feminists’ ... The proletarians have accomplished the revolution in Russia ... 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.’

Becoming a woman

- Either speaking of an 'eternal feminine' essence or denying that 'women' exist is inadequate
- Yet men never write on masculinity – they adopt the universal perspective
- Instead of transcending and becoming free through work and creativity...
- Women are socially trained to fit roles like that of the wife, mother and prostitute, compelled to find meaning in a monotonous, passive existence
- Book historicises oppression, writes on menstruation, birth control and abortion, taboo topics (abortion illegal until late 1960s)



Levinas: 'Is there not a case in which otherness, alterity, unquestionably marks the nature of a being, as its essence ... ? I think that the feminine represents the contrary in its absolute sense ... Otherness reaches its full flowering in the feminine'

De Beauvoir: 'I suppose that Levinas does not forget that woman, too, is aware of her own consciousness, or ego. But it is striking that he deliberately takes a man's point of view, disregarding the reciprocity of subject and object. When he writes that woman is mystery, he implies that she is mystery for man. Thus his description, which is intended to be objective, is in fact an assertion of masculine privilege.' (16)



AND OTHER ESSAYS IN
AND SOCIAL THEORY
THROWING LIKE A
AND SOCIAL THEORY
FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY
THROWING LIKE A
GIRL AND OTHER
ESSAYS IN **FEMINIST**
PHILOSOPHY AND
SOCIAL THEORY

THROWING LIKE A GIRL
FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY
AND OTHER ESSAYS IN
GIRL **ESSAYS IN**
SOCIAL THEORY

Iris Marion Young (1949-2006)

- Feminist social and political theorist at University of Chicago
- Justice not about what an individual deserves, but should recognise how structural inequalities affect social groups
- “Polity and Group Difference” (1989)
- ... Politics of difference, championing a heterogeneous public, without pushing for difference-free universality
- *Throwing Like a Girl*: gender is also embodied, girls socialised to view themselves as fragile, restricting their body movement
- “Five faces of oppression”: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural domination, violence





Over to you

In groups, let's discuss Young:

Why do arguments for universal citizenship and democratic participation end up suppressing minorities?

‘First, the ideal that the activities of citizenship express or create a general will that transcends the particular differences of group affiliation ... has in practice excluded groups judged not capable of adopting that general point of view ... [and] tended to enforce a homogeneity of citizens’

‘Second, where differences in capacities, culture, values and behavioural styles exist ... but some of these groups are privileged, strict adherence to a principle of equal treatment tends to perpetuate oppression’ (251)

‘These republican exclusions ... were a direct consequence of a dichotomy in which all particularities are left behind, and defined the private as the particular, the realm of affectivity, affiliation, need, and the body. As long as that ... is in place, the inclusion of the formerly excluded in the definition of citizenship ... imposes a homogeneity that suppresses group differences in the public’ (255)

‘insisting that as citizens persons should leave behind their particular affiliations ... to adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce that privilege; for the perspectives and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public (257)

Polity and Group Difference

- Whereas universal citizenship silences underrepresented minorities
- Young calls for a *group differentiated citizenship* and *heterogeneous public*, where...
- ‘differences are publicly recognized and acknowledged as irreducible’ et ‘commitment to the need and desire to decide together the society’s policies fosters communication across those differences’ (258)
- But do we need social and economic equality beforehand?
- Possibly, but that cannot be achieved without first recognising how real political equality is to be achieved

HISTORY • FEMINISM

What's Intersectionality? Let These Scholars Explain the Theory and Its History

ONALITY

ER

ETHNICITY

E

HISTORY

HERITAGE

related systems
nation."



Intersectionality

- ‘Every group has group differences cutting across it.’ (260)
- Young: a democratic public should provide effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices of oppressed/disadvantaged groups...
- 1) self-organisation of group members (institutionally); 2) voicing a group’s analysis of how social policy might affect them, and generating their own policies – and being institutionally heard; 3) veto power on said policies (261-2)
- A ‘rainbow coalition’ that affirms the specific differences of groups represented by it, and whose interests are ‘compatible with social justice’
- There are ‘no “neutral” norms of behaviour’
- Against assimilation, for affirmative action and ‘denormalising’ institutions

FRONT PAGE POLITICS U.S.

IDENTITY POLITICS IS DESTROYING US

How diversity mania is poisoning politics, culture, education and science

By WND Staff

Published October 1, 2018 at 8:23pm

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"Identity Politics" – a sacred cause for today's Democratic Party – is reshaping American life, law, politics, culture and virtually every major institution. Yet most people have little or no idea what it really is – or how dangerous.

ed we stand. Identity politics and the threat to democracy

As the far right rises across Europe, how can liberal democracies confront populist nationalism? New books by Francis Fukuyama and Kwame Anthony Appiah examine the ills of identity politics – but their solutions do not go far enough.

Is identity politics ruining c

Michael Ignatieff on why we have to look beyond ar

<https://www.economist.com/open-future/2018/09/30/can-l>

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Open Future

Can liberal democracies su identity politics?

A book excerpt and interview with Francis Fukuyama, author of "Identity"



'I wish that every human life might
be pure transparent freedom.'



- Emancipation required universal childcare, equal education, contraception, and legal abortion for women, but above all...
- Economic freedom and independence from men
- In this way both women and men will be freed from their repressed roles, and begin to recognise each other as free and other, and through this, realise their freedom together
- 'On the contrary, when we abolish the slavery of half of humanity, together with the whole system of hypocrisy that it implies, then the division of humanity will reveal its genuine significance and the human couple will find its true form.'
- '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 towards other liberties. There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future.'

“Identity politics”

- In the UK, on the average day there are 25 hate crimes committed against gay and transgender people
- Hate crimes against gay and lesbian people have doubled since 2014, and trebled against trans people
- Each year in England and Wales, roughly 1,400 sexual assaults on women
- 54k women a year lose their jobs because of having a baby, while over half have experienced sexual harassment at work
- Over 500k women are sexually assaulted each year, while rape prosecutions have collapsed
- A quarter of the House of Lords is female, while among FTSE 100 CEOs there are more Steves than women (6)



To think over

How far have we still to go in achieving genuine equality in the 21st century?

What would such an equality based on difference look like?

How would it thrive politically?

Next week: Automation and the future of work

Two readings:

- Bertrand Russell, “In Praise of Idleness” (1932)
- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, excerpts (1958)

Automation and the industrialisation of manual work have transformed first the West, then the world, over the last two centuries

With further automation and increasingly advanced AI on the horizon, old hopes and fears have returned...

A world without work, no more than ten hours per week (e.g. Keynes)...

Or the mass immiseration of the many under international monopoly capitalism. How should we orient ourselves to this problem not just of work, but the distribution of what is produced? Should we let go of seeking endless economic growth and career success, and embrace ‘idleness’?