The Feminine Mystique Study Guide

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan

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Introduction

When Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was first published in the United States in 1963, it exploded into American consciousness. Since its first publication, critics and popular readers have been sharply divided on their assessment of the work. However, one fact is certain: *The Feminine Mystique* sparked a national debate about women's roles and in time was recognized as one of the central works of the modern women's movement. Friedan began writing the work after she attended her fifteen-year college reunion at Smith, a women's college. At this reunion, she gave a questionnaire to two hundred of her fellow classmates, and the results confirmed what she had already suspected— many American women were unhappy and did not know why. After three women's magazines refused to publish Friedan's results, because they contradicted the conventional assumptions about femininity, Friedan spent five years researching and writing *The Feminine Mystique*.

In the book, Friedan defines women's unhappiness as "the problem that has no name," then she launches into a detailed exploration of what she believes causes this problem. Through her research— which includes many theories, statistics, and firstperson accounts—Friedan pins the blame on an idealized image of femininity that she calls the feminine mystique. According to Friedan, women have been encouraged to confine themselves to the narrow roles of housewife and mother, forsaking education and career aspirations in the process. Friedan attempts to prove that the feminine mystique denies women the opportunity to develop their own identities, which can ultimately lead to problems for women and their families. Friedan sees the feminine mystique as a failed social experiment that World War II and the Cold War helped to create and which in turn contributed to postwar phenomena like the baby boom and the growth of suburbs. Although Friedan has written several more controversial works, *The Feminine Mystique* is the book that made her a household name, and it is still her best-known work.

Author Biography

Betty Friedan was born in Peoria, Illinois, on February 4, 1921. Friedan showed early writing talent, which she developed throughout high school and college. After graduating from Smith College, where she earned a psychology degree, she completed her master's degree in psychology at Berkeley. Friedan moved to New York, where she married Carl Friedan in 1947. She continued to use her writing talent in freelance articles, but ultimately she adhered to society's expectations and became a housewife in 1949.

During a fifteen-year reunion at Smith College, Friedan surveyed two hundred alumni and discovered that most were housewives who were unhappy with their lives. Friedan pursued the issue as her first book, which ultimately was published as *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. The controversial book became an instant best-seller and inspired debates across the country. Following the success of the book, angry neighbors forced the Friedans to move out of their suburb and into the city. Friedan began writing and lecturing across the country on women's issues, then she realized that these separate acts were not enough to inspire change.

In 1966, she helped to found the National Organization for Women (NOW), where she served as president until 1970. That year, discouraged by the radical feminists who were beginning to gain influence in NOW, Friedan stepped down as president. However, she remained active in the women's movement. In fact, during her resignation speech, Friedan advocated a march on August 26, 1970, the fiftieth anniversary of women's suffrage. The resulting Women's Strike for Equality, which took place in several U.S. cities, was one of the largest demonstrations for women's rights in American history.

In the 1970s, Friedan helped to found other women's organizations, including the National Women's Political Caucus (1971), which encouraged women to run for political office. However, Friedan grew increasingly more disillusioned with the radical direction that the women's movement was taking. In 1976, she published *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement*, a collection of her writings from the 1960s and 1970s. The book, which included retrospective commentary, examined her personal experiences with the women's movement and portrayed radical feminists in a negative way. Likewise, in 1981's *The Second Stage*, Friedan argued that the radical direction of the women's movement had established a new stereotype of women and their abilities.

In 1993, Friedan shifted her focus with the publication of *The Fountain of Age*, which examined U.S. views and stereotypes of the elderly. Friedan's most recent works include a new examination of feminism, *Beyond Gender: The New Politics of Work and Family* (1997) and an autobiography, *Life So Far* (2000). She lives and works in New York.

Plot Summary

Chapter 1: The Problem That Has No Name

Friedan begins *The Feminine Mystique* with an introduction describing the problem that has no name—the widespread unhappiness of women. Using a practice that becomes common throughout the book, Friedan offers several case studies of unhappy women from around the United States, and she wonders whether this unhappiness is related to the female role of housewife.

Chapter 2: The Happy Housewife Heroine

Friedan examines women's magazines from before and after World War II. In 1930s magazines, stories feature confident and independent heroines, of whom many are involved in careers. However, in most women's magazines in the late 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, the Happy Housewife, whose only ambitions are marriage and motherhood, replaces the career-oriented New Woman. Friedan calls this homemaker ideal of femininity the feminine mystique.

Chapter 3: The Crisis in Woman's Identity

Friedan remembers her own decision to conform to society's expectations by giving up her promising career to raise children and finds that other young women still struggle with this decision. Many women drop out of school early to marry, afraid that if they wait too long or become too educated, they will not be able to attract a husband. Unfortunately, many women do not find fulfillment in the narrow roles of wife and mother and then fear something is wrong with them.

Chapter 4: The Passionate Journey

Friedan recalls the battles faced by nineteenthcentury feminists in the United States. As in her own time, Friedan notes, nineteenth-century society attempted to restrict women to the roles of wife and mother and slandered women who challenged this gentle image. However, despite harsh resistance, early feminists held their ground, and women were ultimately given many opportunities men enjoyed, including education, the right to pursue their own careers, and, most important, the right to vote. With this last major goal fulfilled, Friedan says, the early women's movement died.

Chapter 5: The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud

Friedan says that the feminine mystique derived much of its power from the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud, who attempted to rede- fine humanity in

completely sexual terms. Many of his complex theories included labels like penis envy, which she says were used by proponents of the feminine mystique to explain why women were not happy in their roles as housewife and mother. Women found it hard to deny the flood of Freudian information that came from established academic and media sources.

Chapter 6: The Functional Freeze, the Feminine Protest, and Margaret Mead

Friedan discusses functionalism—a sociological discipline. By assigning each group a defined function in the social hierarchy, the functionalists believed that society would run smoothly. In this system, women were confined to their sexual biological roles as housewives and mothers and told that doing otherwise would upset the social balance. She also discusses the life and career of Margaret Mead, an eminent functionalist who helped promote but did not live according to the ideals of the feminine mystique.

Chapter 7: The Sex-Directed Educators

Friedan discusses the profound shift in women's education from the 1940s to the early 1960s. Sexdirected educators accused higher education of stealing women's femininity and capacity for sexual fulfillment. Many women's schools shifted to a sexdirected curriculum—non-challenging classes that focused mostly on marriage, family, and other subjects deemed suitable for women. Friedan says that sex-directed education arrests girls in their emotional development at a young age, because they never have to face the painful identity crisis and subsequent maturation that comes from dealing with many adult challenges.

Chapter 8: The Mistaken Choice

Women fulfilled many vital working roles while men were fighting World War II, but they faced dismissal, discrimination, or hostility when the men returned. Sex-directed educators blamed overeducated, career-focused mothers for the maladjustment of soldiers in World War II. For this reason women were encouraged to stay home and devote their attention completely to their children. However, Friedan cites later studies that show these overbearing mothers often raise maladjusted children. Friedan says that women mistakenly chose to become dependent housewives instead of the more painful route to identity and independence.

Chapter 9: The Sexual Sell

Friedan explores the strong commercial motivation that has helped to enforce the feminine mystique. She meets a man whom manufacturers hire to study and exploit women's unfulfilled desires. Through manipulative advertising, companies try to elevate

the image of the housewife role. They encourage housewives to feel like worthy, intelligent, independent professionals who require many specialized products. However, as Friedan notes, it is a delicate balance, because these manufacturers do not want to inadvertently encourage housewives to be independent enough to become career women— who do not buy as many household products.

Chapter 10: Housewifery Expands to Fill the Time Available

Friedan interviews several full-time housewives and finds that they are not happy, but they are extremely busy with housework. Friedan realizes women unconsciously stretch their home duties to fill the time available, because the feminine mystique has taught women that this is their role, and if they ever complete their tasks they will become unneeded. Friedan says that the feminine mystique, which only works if women remain immature, prevents women from doing the work of which they are capable—a sign of maturity.

Chapter 11: The Sex-Seekers

While she is interviewing housewives for her book, Friedan notes that women often give explicitly sexual answers to nonsexual questions. Since American housewives have been unable to find fulfillment and identity in housework alone, she says they have tried to seek it through sex. However, Friedan says that this depersonalizes sex and turns it into a game of control. Wives get frustrated if their husbands cannot fulfill their sexual desires, husbands resent their wives for being so dependent on them, and both seek release in extramarital affairs. Friedan also thinks that homosexuality is an abnormality that is associated with the feminine mystique.

Chapter 12: Progressive Dehumanization: The Comfortable Concentration Camp

Friedan discusses the fact that many children have lost interest in life or emotional growth. She attributes the change to the mother's lack of self, a side effect of the feminine mystique. When the mother lacks a self, she is dehumanized and tries to regain her human self through her husband and children. In the process, the children lose their own identities and become dehumanized. Friedan compares housewives to the dehumanized occupants of Hitler's concentration camps during World War II.

Chapter 13: The Forfeited Self

Friedan says that the problem that has no name is caused by trying to force American women to adhere to the feminine mystique—an ideal that goes against their natural, human need to grow. She discusses the human hierarchy of needs and notes that

women have been trapped at the basic, physiological level, forced to find their identity through their sexual role alone. Friedan says that women need meaningful work just as men do to achieve self-actualization, the highest level on the hierarchy of needs.

Chapter 14: A New Life Plan for Women

Friedan discusses several case studies of women who have begun to go against the feminine mystique. She also advocates a new life plan for her women readers, including not viewing housework as a career; not trying to find total fulfillment through marriage and motherhood alone; and finding meaningful work that uses the woman's full mental capacity. She discusses the conflicts that many women will face in this journey to selfactualization, including their own fears and resistance from others. For each conflict, Friedan offers examples of women who have overcome it. Friedan promotes education as the ultimate method by which American women can avoid becoming trapped in the feminine mystique; calls for a drastic rethinking of what it means to be feminine; and offers several educational and occupational suggestions.

Chapter 1, The Problem That Has No Name

Chapter 1, The Problem That Has No Name Summary

Betty Friedan begins her book with a description of the problem. The problem, which has been buried for many years, is dissatisfaction and a longing in suburban housewives. Generally, the more education and ability a woman possessed, the more she suffered from the problem that has no name. The majority of women suffered in silence. Those seeking help with these feelings of inner longing were usually advised to seek fulfillment as a wife and mother. Many were labeled as neurotic.

Women during this time were taught to pity unfeminine career women. Feminine women did not want things like an education, career or independence. This changing view of women was reflected in college enrollment. Friedan offers statistics to back up this idea. In the year 1920 forty seven percent of college students were female, by 1958 this figure dropped to thirty five percent. In addition, by this time, sixty percent of women in college dropped out to get married.

The average age for marriage dropped to twenty. A large number of girls began getting married before graduating high school. Once married, many of these girls never left home other than for shopping or driving children. The kitchen became the center of life. Mothers did not work and those working only did so to put husbands through school or help with bills, never for a career or self-fulfillment. Shortages existed in teaching, nursing and social work.

Women were marrying younger and giving birth to more children than the previous generations. The image of the suburban housewife was the dream image of womanhood and said to be the envy of all others. Friedan states that in the fifteen years after World War II the mystique of feminine fulfillment became self-perpetuating among American women. Most women were living their lives in this image. Problems of society were not a concern because women only worried about their husbands, children and domestic duties.

The countless women suffering with the problem that has no name did not talk about it. Each woman thought she was the only woman with these feelings, leaving them isolated and ashamed of their feelings. At this time, Friedan was a magazine writer and began noticing the problem among the women she encountered. Stories began surfacing around 1960 on the "Trapped Housewife."

The problem began to be blamed on a variety of issues, mainly education. Ideas such as more home economics classes in high school and discussion groups in college were put forth. The idea behind these suggestions was to prepare women for domestic life. Some thought women should not be sent to college because education was needed

more for boys. The problem was often dismissed as women wanting to be men. All suggested fixes for the problem of the trapped housewife involved helping women adjust to domestic life and to help cheer them up.

Friedan contends the answer to the problem cannot be found in traditional science or psychology. She felt the right questions were not being asked. The problem exists most in those women spending their lives looking for feminine fulfillment. These women were not career women, but women whose only ambitions were to be a wife and mother. Problems began to be seen in the children of these mothers. The children were unable to endure any kind of pain or discipline. They seemed to have a lack of goals and self-reliance.

According to Friedan, the evidence of the problem was not reported publicly because it did not fit the mold of women. The problem is not a loss of femininity, too much education or the demands of domestic life. The voice in women is saying, "I want more than home and children."

Chapter 1, The Problem That Has No Name Analysis

Friedan introduces the problem that has no name in this chapter. She also spends time describing the ideal American woman in Post World War II America. Women were returning in droves to the domestic lives lived by their grandmothers. The main ambition became to be a wife and mother. Women's value was seen in care giving and domestic chores.

Femininity was valued in and by women. The image of the pretty, suburban housewife was the model for all women. Education and a career were seen as unfeminine and women wanting these things were said to be envious of men. Although women were thought to find fulfillment in their femininity as wives and mothers, thousands are suffering from the problem that has no name. This shows the unhappiness beneath the mystique.

Since women are obviously unhappy, there must be a problem. Everything from education to the demands of the housewife is blamed for the problem. No one seems to consider that these women may need more than husbands and children in their lives. No one suggests that they may need careers or intellectual fulfillment. The theme of social roles is seen here. The role of women in society was to care for the family and the home.

Chapter 2, The Happy Housewife Heroine

Chapter 2, The Happy Housewife Heroine Summary

The image created by magazines, television and advertising shapes women's lives. The image is of the happy housewife. Friedan gives examples from women's magazines in the 1960's, including a story in McCall's about a teenage girl who decides not to go to college and steals a man from a girl in college. Other material in the magazine includes patterns, weight loss articles and other fluff pieces. There is no mention of important world events such as Cuba, desegregation or scientific breakthroughs with telescopes in women's magazines. Friedan was told at a magazine conference that women are not interested in politics or anything other than home and family.

Friedan began reading women's magazines from the previous twenty years and found a change in the image of women in America. In magazines before World War II, magazines contained stories of independent career women with goals of their own. Most of these characters were not married. Throughout the 1940s, stories like these are found. In 1949, the stories change and the image of women becomes blurred.

After this time, stories consist of women finding fulfillment as wives and mothers. The feminine mystique began to spread throughout society. Femininity was considered the highest value of womanhood. All problems of women are thought to be the result of envying men and wanting to be like them. This transformation of the image of women can be seen in magazines of the late forties and fifties. This image becomes so widespread that by the end of the 1950s only one out of one hundred women had a job, other than housewife.

The only goals of women are getting married and having babies. Stories written for magazines showed women as victims and any woman with ambition was bound to lose her man. Friedan began writing for women's magazines in the 1950s. Editors told her that women were not interested in politics, arts, science or any ideas outside the subject of the home and family. It was thought that women could not understand issues not related to their lives as mothers. By 1960, this idea became self-fulfilling prophecy and women were no longer interested in these issues.

As the feminine mystique became ingrained in American society, the career woman was vilified. The career woman was shown as a masculine, man hating shrew, driving her husband to drink and destroying her family. This image was shown in contrast to the beautiful mother, devoted to her children and her own beauty. The happy housewife was praised in women's magazines. Any problems experienced by women were things that disturbed her adjustment to life as a housewife. Typical "problems" included careers, education, political interests and intelligence.

Women were advised that the problem of wanting something more could be solved with a new hair color or new baby. There would be no problem in the feminine mystique if women had no wishes. When the barriers to career and education had finally been removed, Friedan questions why women decided to go back home and resume the role of housewife. Women began to grow up in America thinking they did not have the capacity for anything more than domestic life. This belief in women is what gave the mystique its power.

Chapter 2, The Happy Housewife Heroine Analysis

In this chapter, a comparison is made between the American woman before and after World War II. Before the war, women were shown as heroines. College enrollment was at its highest level and women prepared for careers after college. Women in stories were shown as independent and strong. Magazines ran stories of political and social interest and women read and discussed them.

After the war, these stories gradually shifted to showing women as feminine. To be feminine, a woman should have no personal goals. Finding a husband and having children was thought to be the only acceptable occupation for a woman. To help the mystique become the standard model for women, those not fitting this mold were made out to be villains. Women with careers must want to be men and their men must be meek and abused. This alternate view was necessary to propagate the idea that women should be feminine caregivers concerned with their beauty and families. The result of this image is to make women feel they would be abandoning their families if they sought a career.

If this image of women was as perfect as it was made out to be, why were so many women afflicted with the problem that has no name? Since women were considered superficial creatures, their problems could be solved with superficial solutions, such as dyeing their hair or having more babies. The theme of reality vs. image is seen here. The image conflicts with what is actually occurring in the lives of the American housewife.

Chapter 3, The Crisis of Woman's Identity

Chapter 3, The Crisis of Woman's Identity Summary

Through the questionnaires and interviews with women, Friedan found that many women of her generation failed to see themselves past the age of twenty-one. She shares a personal experience of winning a fellowship to study as a psychologist. At that point in her life, she had trouble seeing her future or knowing what to do beyond college. The decision was terrifying. In 1942, no question was more important than love, so when a boy told her they had no future because he could not get a fellowship, she gave it up. Friedan cannot explain why she gave it up, settled into the feminine mystique, getting married, having babies and living in the expected way.

Fifteen years later, she finds the question still exists among women in college. The students she interviewed did not know what they wanted to do. The girls that were not engaged thought the engaged were lucky because they did not have to think about it. The engaged women seemed angry at wasting an education and knowing they would not do anything in the future. Women were just not taught to think beyond being a wife and a mother.

According to Friedan, the mystique encourages this thinking. The mystique answers questions of identity according to the role of mother or wife. Friedan theorizes that the mystique would not have the power it did if women did not fear facing what they saw as a blank future beyond the age of 21. These women looked at the image of women in magazines to make their decisions.

The only thing this generation knew is they did not want to be like their mothers, unhappy housewives. Their mothers had sent them to college in the hope of their daughters having a different life with choices. The girls mistakenly thought their mothers were unhappy because they had not appreciated the love of husbands and children. This generation thought they could succeed where their mothers had failed.

Friedan considers this thinking to be the result of the lack of a private image of women. The feminine mystique was the only accepted public image of women. Sociologists and psychologists consider the problem to be a role crisis and blamed education for making girls feel equal to boys. This makes them feel they can do anything, so they are not prepared for the role of housewife. If women were only educated as housewives, then there would be no problem.

Friedan offers a different theory, suggesting the terror of making a decision about the future is based on a fear of growing up, as women had never done before. She suggests women choosing the path of "feminine adjustment" are avoiding the questions of their individual identity. Her generation was the first to run into the new mystique of

feminine fulfillment. Those escaping the decision through marriage ran into their own terror at forty. The children are grown and their ideal marriages are not so ideal.

The core problem of women is feminine mystique stunting their growth. The culture did not allow women to reach their full potential. Friedan compares this to a youth serum, which when fed to caterpillars, keeps them from becoming butterflies. Women were fed expectations through magazines, which resulted in women failing to reach maturity. Society considers it necessary for a man to wrestle with identity and find his way, but does not realize this need in women. Women were not expected to struggle because their identity was determined by biology.

The awakening of the voice within women longing for something more is compared to women waking from a coma. The problem will not end until women create a new image. The crisis is the result of women growing up and becoming fully human.

Chapter 3, The Crisis of Woman's Identity Analysis

The author begins this chapter with her own story of giving up her education and living in the feminine mystique. Fear of the future is the cause of women abandoning their careers to get married and have babies. They settled into the image found in magazines and on television. The images have stunted their growth, much as the serum stopped the caterpillars from growing into butterflies.

These women did have one source of other information, their mothers. The mothers of this generation were unhappy housewives, who sent their daughters to school to give them more choices. The girls did not learn the lesson, but blamed their mothers for their own unhappiness. This shows the power of the feminine mystique over the lives of women of this generation.

The need for social change is shown in this chapter. Friedan states the problem will not go away without a new image of women. Women need to be supported and encouraged in finding their identity, beyond the social roles of wife and mother.

Chapter 4, The Passionate Journey

Chapter 4, The Passionate Journey Summary

Women had this need for a new identity a century before, which started them on their journey away from the home. In the years surrounding this book, it became popular to laugh at feminism. Women pitied the old feminists fighting for the right to an education and to vote. The older generation of feminists was accused of penis envy and of wanting to be men. However, the need to find new trails and prove women are human was real.

Those old time feminists were on a journey to prove women were human beings. They had to show that women were not decorative, but mindless animals. Women had minds and needed to grow, but women were treated as children by their husbands. She was completely dependent on men for every need and had no other role in society. Friedan states that it is hard for women of subsequent generations to understand the fight for full humanity that these women embodied.

Unlike the picture painted of the old feminists, most were married. The only image they had of a free human being was a man. Women did not even have the right to change society with their votes. The question is asked if they wanted these freedoms because they wanted to be men, or because they wanted to be human. The fight for these rights was necessary before women would be able to live as human beings, equal to men.

The struggle for women's rights gained momentum with the movement to abolish slavery. The women who started the feminist movement at Seneca Falls met behind a curtain in London at a meeting about the abolition of slavery. Women had to stay behind the curtain and it was at this meeting that Elizabeth Stanton and Lucretia Mott decided that slaves were not the only people in need of freedom.

The feminists fought against the perception that they were violating their God given nature by revolting against oppression. Clergymen reminded their parishioners that woman was not meant to be equal to man. The feminists were vilified as monsters and accused of man hating and being envious. While some women shunned everything feminine, most did not. Some evolved into complete human beings and enjoyed both love and freedom. Lucy Stone was made to sound like a manly beast, but was in reality a small woman. She did eventually marry, but kept her own name and made a pact with her husband denouncing the superiority of the man in marriage at their wedding.

Despite the abuse they endured from husbands, fathers and society, the feminists continued their crusade. They did not stop even when laughed at by the New York State Assembly and in many other places. The struggles of these women slowly changed the feminine image that had oppressed women for so long. For many years, the women's movement consisted of meetings and conventions, but without the right to vote women had a difficult time putting pressure on elected officials.

College educated women of the early twentieth century fought the final battle for women's suffrage. Far from the picture painted of man-hating feminists, these women had the full support of their husbands. The movement no longer consisted of a few women, but millions of women, men and children worked on the suffrage issue. Friedan wonders if women went home again as a reaction to feminism. The movement ended when they received the right to vote.

Feminism was ancient history to women born after 1920. The myth of the feminists remained and they became jokes for future generations. Friedan says the real joke was the Freudian thought twisting the memory of the feminists that destroyed the wish to be more than a wife and mother. The Feminine Mystique is the same image against which the feminists fought. The same image caused women to rebel in the first place.

Chapter 4, The Passionate Journey Analysis

The theme of the oppression of women is described in detail in this chapter. The old feminists fought long and hard against the stereotype of women as mindless dolls, existing only for the pleasure of man. Women had no rights to property, wages or voting. A small group of women grew into millions rebelling against the mistreatment of women.

The women's movement grew out of the abolition movement. The first feminists were also abolitionists. Fighting for the freedom of slaves caused them to recognize their own enslavement. These women were courageous and the need for freedom drove them to protest. The movement expanded into millions of women, along with their husbands and children, fighting together for the freedom of women.

There were elements in society wanting to keep women oppressed. They felt threatened by the feminists and felt the need to vilify them. The image of the man-hating feminist suffering from penis envy became the stereotype of feminists. This image continued into the 1940s and 1950s and was used successfully to keep women at home. Gradually, the image became associated with both the feminist movement and career women. No woman wanted to be associated with the image of a man-hating shrew.

It is ironic that the daughters of these women became trapped in a mystique that their mothers and grandmothers had fought so hard to break. The feminine mystique is the same image of women as empty headed, dependent, helpless creatures in need of a man for their every need. Freudian psychology, which states that women's nature is to be ruled by men and the concept of penis envy, was used successfully to keep women from exploring their new freedoms and return home to care for the men and children.

Chapter 5, The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud

Chapter 5, The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud Summary

The old prejudice against women was not easy for the feminists to dismiss. They resurfaced in the Freudian thought that gained popularity in 1940s America. The Freudian idea that it is women's nature to be controlled by men and her nature to resent him caused women of this generation to misinterpret the frustration they saw in their own mothers. They thought mom's frustration stemmed from her inability to appreciate the love of her family.

All this made the new mystique much more difficult for most women to question. The nature of Freudian thought was that only the most highly trained doctors could understand the theory. Women thought they were not knowledgeable enough to argue against these concepts, which were well established in social science and academic circles. While Friedan acknowledges the contributions made by Sigmund Freud, she questions the application of his theories to American women of the 1940s and 1950s.

Friedan argues against the way these ideas were made part of the American culture through media sources and feels this is a major factor in the problem that has no name. This Freudian thought paralyzed women and trapped them in an old image, which denied them their individual identities. This new definition of femininity caused women to move away from the New Woman image of the 1920s and 1930s and into the mystique.

The author addresses the subject of penis envy, which was often used to describe what was wrong with American women. She contends that those using the term had no knowledge of Freud's meaning. Freud, like all human beings, saw the world in terms of the culture in which he lived. The concept of cultural relativity was unknown in his time and most of what he saw in his practice can be explained through the culture of sexual repression in the Victorian era. Freud felt the need to explain everything in sexual terms, and in his time, it was common to link problems to the anatomy. The terms he used came from medicine or literature.

By the 1940s most people had begun to question Freud's theories, but not as they applied to femininity. Freud viewed women as mindless dolls needing the protection of men and this picture fits the view of women in the mystique. He believed the women's movement of this time would not have an effect because women's destiny was determined by nature. This expectation carried over to his marriage. His wife was devoted to his every need, but he often complained that she was not docile enough to be molded.

Freud gives the impression that he found the act of sex to be degrading. The degradation of women is a key component in Freud's idea of femininity. Freud believed women wished for a penis and their wish would be fulfilled by giving birth to a son. This entire theory was influenced by the Victorian idea that women were biologically inferior to men. Women who didn't fit this mold of femininity were said to have a castration complex and is said to be engaging in phallic activity, which is any activity usually enjoyed by men.

If these theories are the result of the culture in which Freud lived, one can see that women in the Victorian age had many reasons to resent men. The wish for a penis is symbolic of the wish for the choices and status enjoyed by men. Under the china doll surface, anger festered and kept women from feeling love freely. Woman's wish for equality was seen as neurotic.

The importance of the growth of self was not recognized by Freud. Society prevented women from growing through education and independence. Any inferiority that existed in women was the direct result of their lack of education. Freudian followers in 1940s America applied his theories on femininity and penis envy to American women and viewed women no differently than Victorian women. Feminism became equated with penis envy. Writings from the 1940s categorize feminism of the past as a sickness.

The prevailing wisdom as Friedan wrote the book was that normal femininity could only be achieved if women renounce their goals and fulfill themselves through the goals of their husbands and sons. Women who follow goals and experience success do so to the detriment of their own femininity. This was the psychology facing the women of this time and most found it impossible to argue with the "experts." These experts ran into trouble when applying this theory to women, one quoted in the book commented that penis envy in American women seems very difficult to eradicate. Another told Friedan that he had tried to make women fit the mold of Freudian psychology, but had concluded that penis envy did not exist.

Freudian psychology reached beyond the couch and into the homes of women through things they had heard, read or learned in college. In post war America, Freudian thought became an ideology and provided an escape from the cold war and other world problems. His theories became used like a bible.

Although psychoanalysis played a part, it was not responsible for the feminine mystique. Freudian theories were everywhere from the mass media to college classrooms. Departments such as Marriage and Family Life sprang up in campuses across the country. The old role of women became required course work in college. All these factors together prevented women from questioning the feminine mystique.

Chapter 5, The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud Analysis

The root of Freudian psychology and its application to American women is seen in this chapter. Because Freudian thought was so widely accepted, most women found it impossible to argue with the theories. They were being taught in colleges, by psychologists and through the media. These ideas became so prevalent that women accepted the feminine mystique as absolute truth, condemning themselves to the role of biology.

Freud had a very low opinion of women and thought of them as mindless decoration. He had a Victorian view of femininity, which should have been irrelevant to the culture of America in the 1940s. By this time, most of Freud's theories were being questioned. Ironically, the theories as they applied to women were not questioned. Social scientists failed to understand that his theories on women were based on Victorian culture and were not applicable to American women.

The use of these theories had the effect of keeping women at home and preventing them from enjoying the rights that the previous generation of feminists had won. Women became afraid of being accused of penis envy and the vast majority chose to live according to the mystique. What social scientists failed to understand, is that the treatment of Victorian women is what led them to rebel in the feminist movement and fight for their rights to an education and to vote. This scene would be replayed in women rebelling against the mystique during the equal rights movement of the 1970s.

Chapter 6, The Functional Freeze, the Feminine Protest, and Margaret Mead

Chapter 6, The Functional Freeze, the Feminine Protest, and Margaret Mead Summary

Rather than destroying old prejudices against women, social science bestowed new authority on them. In the twenty years before Friedan wrote this book, behavior science professionals met in seminars and began to work together to reinterpret Freudian concepts in light of cultural processes. However, rather than filtering out cultural bias from Freud's theories, they tried to fit their observations into a Freudian rubric. This effort combined with the concept of functionalism had a chilling effect on American women of this generation.

Functionalism attempted to make the social sciences more credible by studying the institutions of society as if they were parts of a social body, as in biology. Institutions were studied in terms of their function in society. The term woman's role was given the specific value of wife and mother. Women not fitting this were considered to have a "masculine protest," meaning any woman wanting what they had been denied was denying her womanhood and must want to be a man.

Friedan points out the fact that girls of this generation would laugh at a grandparent telling her she belonged at home, but the same girls readily accepted this information from college professors and social sciences. Books such as *Marriage for Moderns* emphasized the concepts of functionalism, and they were often used as college texts in classes formed to help women adjust to domestic life. Excerpts from this book show that women were told that choosing a career was equivalent to choosing a life of celibacy. They were told it would be impossible to combine a marriage and a career. Homemaker was the career of married women.

In functionalism, women's function was to provide a home and the function of man was as the breadwinner in the relationship. The housewife role emphasized domesticity, glamour and good companionship and the role of husband and wife were said to be complimentary. Friedan quotes Talcott Parsons, a well-known functionalist, who describes the problems associated with this sex role segregation. Parsons noted that the glamour component was linked to women of a young age. As women age, they may have trouble adapting from the glamour to good companion role in women. This "adjustment problem" could result in neurosis. He warned women that careers were incompatible with family life and would undermine "family solidarity."

The goal of functionalism was to maintain the status quo in the structure of American society. Equality for women was considered incompatible with the solidarity of the family. According to even the best women sociologists, like Mirra Komarovsky, adjustment to one's role in the function of society was considered necessary for social

order. She warned that the steps parents take to prepare their daughters to meet the responsibilities of family life might accidentally awaken aspirations and interests that are counterproductive to the definition of femininity. She stated that the best-adjusted girl is one who does well at school, but cannot get straight A's in her coursework. Theories such as this had the effect of infantilizing women in America and keeping them dependent. This dependency was useful in keeping women dependent on their husbands.

Friedan calls functionalism an easy out for social scientists, which did not have to probe for deeper truth that would result in controversial new questions. They did not look toward the future, but stayed locked in the rigid ideas of the present time. Friedan states that at a time of new opportunities for women, social scientists should have helped women to bridge the gap but instead focused on adjustment. No one acknowledged that women were being made to adjust to life that denied their full capacity.

Margaret Mead was a powerful influence and was studied in college classrooms in the 1940s and 1950s. Her original work focused on primitive societies in which both men and women contained qualities that were considered both feminine and masculine. She recognized the classifications of sex to be superficial and wrote that society might permit the individual to develop gifts attributed to both sexes. This vision is not what the mystique took from Mead's work. Her own works contradict as she applies Freudian concepts.

In her later writings, she uses Freudian theory to classify male creativity as a penis and female creativity receptive, as in a uterus. In the South Seas, civilizations Mead studied the concept of biology as destiny was the way of life and the ultimate achievement was the birth of a baby. Men believed women held the secret of life in their ability to bear children and women were envied by men for this ability. What the feminine mystique took from Mead's work was the idea that women will earn the same respect as men by virtue of their ability to bear children. Femininity became a value that must be protected by society.

Friedan believes the role of Mead would have been less devastating if women had taken their cue from her life, rather than her writings. In her own life, Mead showed capacity far greater than merely child bearing. She had a fully human self image and education equal to that bestowed on men. In Mead's writings in 1960, she began to question the return of women to a Stone Age image, with women having no knowledge of anything happening outside the home. She failed to see her own role in creating this image.

Chapter 6, The Functional Freeze, the Feminine Protest, and Margaret Mead Analysis

The role of social scientists in creating and maintaining the feminine mystique is discussed in this chapter. Using Freud as their guide, the social scientists of the time convinced a generation of women that their biology determined how they should live.

This theory of femininity confronted women in school and in material they read. Women that would laugh at parents and grandparents telling them to stay home and have babies found it much more difficult to argue with professors and social scientists.

The goal of functionalism was to maintain the status quo in male-female relationships. To accomplish this, women had to be taught to adjust to domestic life. To do this, any deviation from the status quo had to be vilified. Women who wanted a career were told they were condemning themselves to a lonely life of celibacy, and they were accused of wanting to be men. The idea of a happily married woman with both a career and children was considered unthinkable. According to the functionalist view, girls needed to be raised to fulfill their function in society, which included being kept dependent.

Even women social scientists contributed to the feminine mystique. This is ironic because their own lives contradicted the mystique. However, in their writings they perpetuated the myth that a woman's biology determined her role in society. Margaret Mead is a good example of this idea. She, her mother and her grandmother were all educated career women. However, she perpetuated the myth of the mystique in most of her writings. Many of her writings were contradictory, showing that women should have more choices, but then admonishing them to stay home and fulfill their role in society. In her later writings, Mead questions the Stone Age view of women, but does not see herself as partly responsible for creating these ideas.

Chapter 7, The Sex Directed Educators

Chapter 7, The Sex Directed Educators Summary

The change in education went unnoticed for many years by older educators. These educators had hopes for higher education for women that were reflected in the fact that more women than ever were enrolled in college. At the same time, fewer women were preparing for careers as women had in the past. Two out of three girls were dropping out to get married. The girls remaining showed no ambition other than becoming a suburban wife and mother. Professors found women to be incapable of any ambition other than a diamond ring.

Women's resistance to higher education began to show in statistics. Some women's colleges went out of business. Friedan saw this change when she returned to her college to stay in the dorms and interview the girls. She saw it as she interviewed girls from colleges across the country. Professors told her the girls are bright, but do not allow themselves to become interested in anything. Friedan asked girls about interest in art and science and was told by several students that girls do not get interested in things like that anymore. It is considered unfeminine, so the girls confine their conversations to the subject of men. Some girls mentioned that they used to spend hours in the library reading and studying, but soon find that studious girls are pitied and laughed at.

Friedan was shocked at the difference between the experiences of these girls and those of her own college experience. She reminisces about bull sessions and intellectual debates between herself and her fellow students. She comments that these girls see college as an interval before their real life, the life of wife and mother. Several girls told her of their past ambitions that had been abandoned in favor of the pursuit of marriage. Many felt that to be too educated would hurt their chances of finding a husband. The lesson these girls had learned was not to be interested in anything other than marriage.

A change had taken place in America's colleges. Due to the feminine mystique, educators became more concerned with "their students' future capacity for sexual orgasm than with their future use of trained intelligence." Education became a target of the mystique, and it was accused of causing the loss of femininity in women. Despite the protests of educators who still believed in cultivating the minds of women, the emphasis switched from development of the intellect to the adjustment of women to their biological role. Either educators fell in line or their authority was questioned. Unmarried female professors were not able to speak as women due to the mystique.

Changes were seen in the curricula as well. The idea that women should not be educated in the same way as men became prevalent in society. In some colleges, chemistry was replaced with advanced cooking for female students. Courses began to be described in terms of gender and a typical course of study for women included several home economics and marriage and family courses. This attitude began to

spread to high schools and girls were discouraged from applying to colleges for degrees in subjects thought to be masculine. Friedan gives the example of a young girl wanting to be an architect. She is discouraged from applying by her guidance counselor. When she is accepted to two schools, she is told there is no future for her and she should just go to a junior college where the work will be easier.

Even well respected colleges, such as Vassar began offering Marriage and Family courses in the sophomore year. Vassar later dropped the course when the number of women dropping out in favor of marriage increased dramatically. A professor at a nearby college told Friedan he did not understand the problem. He thought the people at Vassar were hanging onto the outdated notion that women should go to college to expand their minds. He told Friedan there was nothing wrong with early marriage. These courses consisted of role-playing situations, rather than the study of sociology. If a woman wanted to have a career and a family, the teacher would set up a role playing situation to help her see the effect on her children and help her understand that she should be a wife and mother. In these classes, public opinion became scientific fact.

Boys' primary identity issue centered on their future occupation. Boys spend their adolescence planning for a career that will fit their interests and abilities. For girls, there was no issue of choosing a career. Her only role was her sex role, and she spent her time fantasizing about being popular, getting married and love. College was thought of by many girls and educators as a substitute for preoccupation with marriage. Girls not attending college tended to get married very young, as young as fifteen or sixteen in some cases. For girls attending, college became a place to find a man.

Intellectual development was seen as damaging to femininity. Being made to choose between adjustment and individuality stunted the growth of women. Early marriage was seen as stunting a man's mental growth. It was thought that married male students would not have the opportunity to develop as individuals or achieve intellectual development. Nobody voiced these concerns for married female students. There was a consequence, however, as these women would suffer later from the problem that has no name. Friedan does not completely blame the educational system for the feminine mystique and notes that the choice to return to the home was made willingly by women.

Chapter 7, The Sex Directed Educators Analysis

This chapter discusses the role of education in perpetuating the mystique of feminine fulfillment. There was a change in college girls in the years after World War II. College ceased to be a place to improve the mind and became a way to fill the time between high school and marriage. Friedan saw this change when she went back to her school and in interviews with women in college. The mystique told women that intellectual development was damaging to their femininity. The rush to marriage led to high drop out rates among women and no real purpose for study.

There was a change in colleges and curriculum during this time. Sex directed education was sexist education and a form of prejudice. Education was a target of the mystique

and was blamed for dissatisfaction among housewives. Curriculum changes were seen for girls, with more emphasis on home economics and coursework related to marriage and family. These changes were only for girls, while boys still received a challenging education. The unequal education in colleges according to gender was similar to the inequalities in segregated education.

There was a profound difference in the attitude of the genders relating to education. Early marriage was considered bad for boys. It inhibited their intellectual development and boys marrying young were thought to be missing the college experience. This feeling did not extend to girls. No one worried that girls were missing out because education was not considered serious or essential for them. Their role was to be a mother and wife. This lack of intellectual development, not education, was ultimately responsible for the problem that has no name.

Chapter 8, The Mistaken Choice

Chapter 8, The Mistaken Choice Summary

In order for the mystique to have such power over women for fifteen years, it had to fill needs. The needs varied among women and those spreading the mystique. The needs were many at this time in American history. The war and the loneliness associated with the war, the threat of the bomb, and the Cold War all made both men and women yearn for the comforts of home. Men returning from war were too old to go home to Mom and marriage and children filled the need for family in these returning soldiers.

Women felt the loneliness resulting from the men being away and many joined the rush into marriage after the war. Women were told the price of a career was loneliness similar to that felt after the war. Fear of loneliness made these women vulnerable to the mystique. The resulting baby boom happened in every country, but only in America did this boom co-exist with the mystique of feminine fulfillment. European women continued to enjoy the freedoms of education and career.

When the GIs returned, they took the jobs and filled seats in colleges that had been occupied by women during the war years. There was some competition and prejudice against women resulted in women losing jobs and being passed over for promotion in favor of men. Many women were driven from their fields and these work-place-related difficulties sent many women running for the security of home and family.

Friedan describes how the American spirit fell into a strange sleep in the years following World War II. People went home and stopped growing up. Americans fell into a state of conformity. It was easier for social workers and counselors to deal with the personal problems of patients than with the larger suffering of society. Psychology became more fashionable and easier to discuss than politics, so writers shifted to these topics. Artists worked in Abstract expressionism.

American culture was simultaneously affected with a Freudian mania, which filled a need for an ideology. The lack of an ideology explains the preoccupation with Freud and the religious revival of this time. In Freudian psychology, the mother is often the target of blame. The attack on mothers coincided with the time of emancipation of American women. Every problem in men and children became the fault of working mothers.

The vast majority accepted these theories without looking at the mothers of the last generations. The mothers of these returning soldiers were not career women, but dependent housewives. Most were not college educated as they grew up before women had won their rights to education and the vote. Only 2.5% of these mothers worked outside the home. These women fit the image of the feminine mystique, and yet their children had problems.

Doctors for the military described problems with soldiers categorized as a lack of maturity and an inability to think for themselves or be independent. Dr. Strecker noticed that the mothers were immature and kept their children babies, so they would have a life. The problems of this generation of young men somehow became blamed on career mothers even though the vast majority of their mothers had been housewives without an education.

Around this time, the early results of the Kinsey study on women were released. The initial report showed that sexual problems and the inability to achieve orgasm were related to the level of education. Women with more education had fewer orgasms than less educated housewives. Ironically, when the final report was released nearly ten years later, the results were completely different. The more education a woman had, the more likely she was to have sexual fulfillment. Women with advanced educations had the best rate with nearly one hundred percent reaching orgasm.

During this time period many studies were released touting the negative effects on children of mothers with careers. However, Friedan breaks down the studies and dispels the myths. The children participating in these studies were mainly abandoned children. The earliest studies were done in day care centers and the mothers were widowed, divorced or deserted by their husbands. The true results show that there is delinquency among children of broken homes, not children of married suburban women with careers.

There was no evidence that a college educated woman with a career and family was harming her children. However, the studies were presented to the public in such a way that women were made to feel guilty if they wanted a career. The influence of Freudian psychology made women believe if they made one mistake, then their children would suffer. This caused the insecurity in mothers that caused them to become obsessed with child rearing and consult Dr. Spock for every decision.

Problems of dependence in American children did not make headlines. Dr. Levy conducted a study that showed that mothers had damaged their children with infantilization, indulgence and overprotection. Levy found this occurred when the mother was blocked from other means of expression. Sociologist Arnold Green studied children of Polish immigrants being raised with old world methods that would be considered abusive. Greene found these children did not become neurotic; in fact just the opposite was true. Among these children, none had been rejected by the army for psychoneurosis.

This research never made it past the inner circles and into the public spotlight. Although people recognized the waste of American sons incapable of achievement, no one seemed to recognize the waste of several generations of women in America. This phenomenon was not considered worthy of study. Women feeling the helplessness did not understand, until it became the problem that has no name.

Both men and women fell for the mystique. For men, it offered the security of a mother and the home of their childhood. For women, the escape to the home relieved them of

the pressures of barriers society had in place for women. Women made the mistaken choice to live the lie of the mystique.

Chapter 8, The Mistaken Choice Analysis

This chapter discusses the various factors in American society that caused the rush back home. Just before the years of the feminine mystique, America had lived through a war and a depression. The loneliness of the war years was used against women in the feminine mystique. Fear of loneliness was used to keep women from seeking fulfillment in careers as they were told a career would result in spinsterhood and a life without children. Perpetuation of prejudice is usually based on fear.

During the war years, women filled a vital role by taking over for the missing men. Once the men returned, they wanted their jobs and seats in college. Women were no longer needed or wanted in the work place. Competition between the sexes led to discrimination against women. Women lost their jobs, or they could not be promoted. Going home was easier than fighting the discrimination on the job.

The effect of Freudian psychology kept women home as moms became blamed for every problem in society. Fear was again used against women, the fear that they would damage their children by living for themselves in any way. Contrary to popular opinion, overprotective and smothering moms had dependent children. Research was manipulated to perpetuate the myth of the mystique. There was no real support for the idea that children are harmed by mom's career. The opposite is true; infantilized mothers infantilize their children.

Chapter 9, The Sexual Sell

Chapter 9, The Sexual Sell Summary

Friedan began to put the pieces of the puzzle together, but felt she was missing a piece. There needed to be an element that powered the mystique. She realized the important role women serve as housewives, which is in buying things for the house. Women are the chief consumers in America, responsible for seventy five percent of all purchases. While Friedan does not accuse the advertising world of a vast conspiracy, they did capitalize on the move home and encourage women to stay there.

Friedan spoke to a man who earned nearly one million dollars in 1963 for manipulating the emotions of women for businesses. He allowed her to look at many studies conducted and the advertising that resulted from the findings. Women were divided into three categories, the true Housewife, The Career Woman and the Balanced Homemaker. Fifty one percent of women were true housewives, but this group was not considered the ideal consumer because they did not readily accept new devices. Career women were the worst group for purchasing appliances and it was noted that it was in their best interest not to allow this group to get any larger. The best consumer was the balanced housewife, because she would readily accept help that new appliances could offer.

Since this group had the greatest potential for marketing, it was in their best interest to advertise the desirability of belonging to this group. Through advertisements, women were told that the goal of every woman should be to enjoy home making. Manipulators found ways to exploit the guilt felt by suburban mothers by linking their products to these guilt feelings and making women feel they were not caring for their families properly without the products being offered.

By the mid 1950s, manipulators found that women found housework to be an expression of femininity and creativity. Advertisers began to sell products by exploiting these feelings in women. Devices were marketed as making housework fun, and many claimed to give mothers more time for their families. Advertising was sold to make women feel like experts in house cleaning. This method helped to make women feel that they had professional status and that they were using modern science in home making. The goal was to create an allusion of achievement in housewives.

During lunch with the man in charge of the motivational research, Friedan learned that developing the need for products was considered necessary. The problem the advertisers faced was in freeing women from the fear of what they would do with extra time. They showed women that they could be creative in the kitchen and while cleaning. Friedan gives these researchers credit for understanding housewives in a way the professionals in psychology and sociology had failed.

These men did not create the mystique, but were the strongest perpetuators of it. While they are not responsible for sending women home, they are responsible for keeping them there. Maybe the housewife is to blame for allowing herself to be manipulated, but often she was the unknowing victim.

Chapter 9, The Sexual Sell Analysis

The role of advertising and the manipulators is discussed in this chapter. America is primarily motivated by business and making money. Women are the major consumers and are responsible for the majority of purchases made for the home. More housewives resulted in a larger market for products.

Advertising was used against women to keep them home. Their fears and guilt feelings were manipulated in order to sell merchandise. The thought process of the manipulators demonstrates the lack of humanity ascribed to women during these years. They were not seen as intelligent consumers, but as childlike puppets that could be molded and manipulated by business. This is an example of the prejudice that surrounded women and treated them like second-class citizens.

While advertising is not responsible for the mystique of feminine fulfillment, it is responsible for perpetuating it. When they realized the balanced housewife was the best group of potential consumers, they used this information to attempt to create a larger number of these consumers. Even when their studies showed that this lifestyle was damaging to women and caused dissatisfaction, they continued to exploit it to make money.

Chapter 10, Housewifery Expands to Fill the Time Available

Chapter 10, Housewifery Expands to Fill the Time Available Summary

Betty Friedan went in search of the happy housewife, as she was portrayed in the media and in advertisements. She was looking for women "of ability and education who was fulfilled as a housewife." She went to suburban mental health centers and one doctor referred her to four women said to fit her description. She went to visit the four and found four women who had not retreated from the world into full time housewifery. Among them were a computer programmer, a professional psychoanalyst, a dancer and a woman committed to politics. Another woman whom she met had learned a second language while at home with the children, and she was certified to teach, which she did shortly after the interview.

Friedan interviewed many women living in the image of feminine fulfillment. She interviewed twenty-eight women in an upper income development. The husbands were successful men, but only one of the women worked. What she found was that sixteen were in therapy, eighteen were on tranquilizers, some had tried suicide and several others had been hospitalized for depression or psychotic states with a vague description. Twelve of the women were engaged in affairs. A similar pattern was seen in many developments and Friedan began to realize it was more than mere coincidence. All these women had been educated, but were not using their gifts in any way. She first saw the problem that has no name among these women.

She was not able to locate a truly happy housewife among the many she interviewed. She did find that these women were extraordinarily busy: shopping, taking kids everywhere, cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and caring for children. She began to notice the inordinate amount of time housewives spent cleaning. Friedan writes about two women, each married with three children, living in homes that were identical in size. One woman was a microbiologist and the other a full time housewife. The homes were just as clean and the children well adjusted, but the microbiologist's kids were more self-reliant. Mrs. W., the housewife, spent many more hours in cleaning her home and was more tired than her neighbor.

The same pattern was seen in several suburbs Friedan visited. She found working women completed housework in one hour that took housewives six hours to complete. Herein lies the paradox of the feminine mystique. Just when women had won the rights to career and education, the mystique pushed them back into the old role. C. Northcote Parkinson first came up with the principle that "Work Expands to Fill the Time Available" about the bureaucracy of World War II. Friedan applies his theory to housewives. This explains the fact that women spent more time on housework than their grandmothers

did, who had lived without the time saving appliances. Housework had to expand to fill women's time, which allowed her not to think of the emptiness in her life.

Yet, workingwomen were completing the same amount of housework in a fraction of the time. Friedan states that a workingwoman with a thirty-five hour workweek and housework only had a day that was an hour and a half longer than the housewife's day. The feeling of emptiness in housewives results in more effort expended on housework in an attempt to fill up the emptiness. She becomes more trapped in her domestic routine.

Friedan describes the decision to move to the suburbs as part of this trap. Young mothers in the city felt bored and moved to the suburbs, "for the children's sake. The house took longer to clean and becomes so time consuming it fills up the emptiness for a while. When there is nothing to look forward to, she redecorates or has another baby. The large movement to the suburbs started after World War II and continued. Living in the suburbs, women are confined to the role of housewife as they are far away from jobs for educated women, and domestic help or childcare is more difficult to find. Women become so wrapped up in routine; they feel they have no time for anything else.

Doctors across America were treating women for "housewife's fatigue" by giving them tranquilizers, vitamins, injections for anemia or low metabolism, put them on diets, but all the treatments were futile. Some doctors began to tell women the problem was in their heads. Doctors found most of these women got more sleep than they needed and began to suspect the problem was boredom. Women's magazines responded to the problem using the language of the feminine mystique. Articles suggested more praise and appreciation from husbands and told women to make the best of it.

Most of the women felt too little was being asked of them, rather than too much. Many filled the empty time with alcohol, over eating and compulsive spending. When men began to help at home during the togetherness area, the work did not expand to take up their entire day or weekend. Friedan thinks the reason for this is that housework was not a man's work, but a chore that should be finished as quickly as possible. Women allowed housework to expand as an excuse not to engage in more rewarding work.

Maturity is measured by the individual doing the work for which he has the capacity. The immaturity bred by the mystique kept women from doing this work for many years until they no longer had the courage to face the world. The feminine mystique becomes a process involving the devaluation of human progress. Despite a campaign to make the work of a housewife prestigious, more women began to see it as not challenging to their intellects. The frustration and need to live vicariously through their husbands and children made many women treat their husbands as servants and dominate their families.

Chapter 10, Housewifery Expands to Fill the Time Available Analysis

Friedan interviewed women from many different suburban communities in researching for this book. The phenomena she found existed in each community. Although she searched for a happy housewife, she was unable to find one. She did find fulfilled women, but they were not housewives. These women all had one thing in common: they were not full time housewives, but women who had made a commitment in their professional lives and continued to grow and thrive throughout motherhood. They had continued to grow and stretch their minds to reach their full potential as human beings.

Friedan found an increase in the time spent in housework from previous generations to this one. No generation before this had the gadgets and time saving appliances; this should have made housework less demanding. Yet, these women still spent hours cooking, cleaning and washing. They did this to keep their minds occupied and to try to fill the increasing void in their lives. Friedan found that housework did not take nearly as long for working women or for men. This illustrates the fact that the time spent was not necessary, but a way to fill time and avoid the empty feeling in the lives of women.

The large-scale move to suburbs occurred at the same time as the feminine mystique. Women in the city did not have much to do and suffered from the problem that has no name early on. Moving to the suburbs was seen as a solution to the empty feeling. The larger home took more time to clean and the errands took longer in the suburbs. This not only helped fill the day of the housewives, but also contributed to the trapped feeling among these women.

Housewife's fatigue that was seen among many doctors was a result of the boredom felt by the unfulfilled housewife. She was busy all the time, but there was no challenge to her intellect. Doctors recognized the boredom, but few considered that these women needed something in their lives other than their children. The mystique was so pervasive in society that no one considered that mom may need a career. The ridiculous advice offered by many doctors and women's magazines was not a solution. No amount of male praise would fill the void left by the failure to continue to grow and develop as a human being.

Chapter 11, The Sex Seekers

Chapter 11, The Sex Seekers Summary

Throughout her time interviewing suburban housewives, Friedan noticed many would give sexual answers to questions that were not sexual in nature. Often women seemed eager to speak about their sex lives. Many would say they only felt alive during sex, but many reported no longer being fulfilled sexually by their husbands. They had affairs, but remained unsatisfied. One woman left her husband and took all five children to Mexico to live with a man with whom she was having an affair. She was back in six months and resumed her marriage as before.

Friedan wondered why sex was so unfulfilling to these women, despite their sexual escapades. She began to wonder if they were seeking fulfillment in sex that the act could not provide. Sex had become boring in America. The boredom could be seen in the increase of sexually explicit material and the size of the breasts of actresses in Hollywood. All this preoccupation resulted in sex becoming depersonalized.

Throughout this time, women were the sex seekers. Men were busy or bored and could not be bothered. Maybe this could be explained by the fact that men spent their time in other pursuits, and had less need to fill time with sex. A marriage counselor told Friedan that wives put such heavy demands on love, but there was not excitement at all. Another psychiatrist told her that sexual desire dies because women try to make up with their failure to achieve goals with sexual achievement. The sexual relationship deteriorates to the point that the couples end up having sex very seldom.

The Kinsey report found that women reported having more sexual desire than their husbands could satisfy. One in four women had reported having an affair by age forty. During this period, doctors found more women complaining of problems with the reproductive system. Complaints usually not heard before menopause were being reported by women who were in their twenties. The ones who suffered the most with these symptoms were the housewives living under the feminine mystique. The group with the least suffering was women engaged in intellectual endeavors outside the home.

The lack of men in the suburbs during the day led women to turn their energies in a different direction, buying things. Manipulators attempted to sell products using the sex angle. Status seeking and acquiring material things had the same unreal and unsatisfying feeling that women found in their sexual escapades. Women are more aggressive in status seeking behavior. She is unable to acquire status through real work as her husband does, so the housewife must acquire status vicariously through her husband. She begins to dominate him because of her own lack of identity.

Friedan noticed rising resentment from the husbands of these women. Women's magazines at the time ran stories about the trapped feelings being experienced by young fathers in the suburbs. These fathers reported feeling less like a man, frustrated

and unhappy. They felt they had no authority over the matters of the home because the wives were the experts and would quote other experts when bossing their husbands around. A large number of these husbands reported committing adultery.

Sex seeking behavior in men was as devoid of feeling as that of the wife. The Kinsey report showed half the married men in America were engaging in extramarital affairs. Many men were seeking the warm relationship they once had with their wives. Male outrage against women increased dramatically under the feminine mystique. Images of predatory females and problems with sexual development began to appear in the popular literature.

Friedan wondered if there was a link between women and the increase in homosexuality during this time. The mystique says the masculinization of women, which is the result of careers, causes effeminate behavior in men. Friedan rebuts this by stating that there was no increase in homosexuality during the emancipation of women during the first women's movement. She gives as evidence Freud's theories on homosexuality being caused by a smothering mother and his belief that homosexual love masks the love of his mother and the hatred he feels resulting from her keeping him from developing into a man. Friedan notes that these men in the Kinsey study had mothers that lived the feminine mystique.

The boy smothered by his mother's love does not grow up. Friedan states that homosexuals lack the maturity to finish school and points out that Kinsey found that homosexuality was more common among high school graduates than college graduates. The lack of commitment in the lives of homosexuals is a feminine characteristic of the mystique. Homosexuals are not the only group engaging in early promiscuity. Friedan noticed the daughters of the suburbs were becoming sexually active much younger. These girls have sex with these partners without seeing the other person. This is the result of their lack of identity and inability to see their selves as whole people.

Early marriage is a characteristic of underdeveloped civilizations and rural areas. Kinsey found the age at which men and women married and became sexually active to be most strongly related to the level of education. The Kinsey survey also showed a link between the level of intellectual growth and sexual satisfaction. Girls marrying in the teen years had sexual intercourse up to six years earlier than girls attending college did. Psychologists explained the problem of promiscuity as being the result of low self-esteem. The psychologist Friedan spoke with did not see a problem with girls seeking this from love because they were not expected to seek it through work.

The mystique does not hide the fact that girls' dependence is not sexual, eliciting hostility from boys. A Radcliffe study showed boys were aware of the meaning of the advances, with several stating that girls use sex to get a hold on the boys. Friedan believed playing house when teenagers, as in early marriage, is a way to avoid growing up and experiencing the pain and uncertainty that is a normal part of growing up. This sex seeking behavior casts a shadow on men's image of women as well as the image women have of themselves.

Friedan ponders the future implications for the country because of the progressive softening of the youth of America. Children were acting out the fantasies of their mothers and the mothers were living vicariously through the behavior of their children. She sees this as a sign of progressive dehumanization that was taking place through the generations. Through this "the feminine mystique can finally be seen in all its sick and dangerous obsolescence.

Chapter 11, The Sex Seekers Analysis

Sex is not a replacement for personal identity. The women engaging in affairs and other sexual behaviors were trying to fill a need, but the need was not sexual. They do not find what they are looking for because they are looking in the wrong place. The need was the growth of the human intellect. Trying to fill the need for education and a purpose in life with sex acts was futile and often left these women feeling emptier than before. Only through finding a purpose and working toward goals would these women find the fulfillment they craved, and enjoy sex fully in the process.

Everyone was trapped, both men and women. Stories of trapped young fathers had the same issues of frustration and discontent as the stories of the trapped young mothers just a few years before. Friedan repeats the theme of the dangers of early marriage on both men and women. Living vicariously resulted in women dominating their husbands and making them feel useless. Many began to feel they did not exist, just as their wives. Trapped feelings led to affairs in both men and women. Perhaps nothing seemed real because the relationships were not real.

The feminine mystique encouraged dependence in women. The irony is that this dependence most often resulted in feelings of hostility toward women. Men were intellectually stimulated all day at work, only to come home to an overly dependent woman who was often dominating. The relationships encouraged under the feminine mystique were not satisfying to men or women.

Studies showed that boys were aware of the real purpose behind the sexual promiscuity of girls. In the frenzy to find fulfillment through marriage, girls became concerned with nothing above finding a husband. Once they found a suitable man, they hung on. The feminine mystique affected men as well as women. It colored the opinion men had of women. Rather than being seen as competent individuals or even as the perfect women of the mystique, women became viewed as parasites both by men and in modern literature.

Friedan links the rise in homosexuality to the feminine mystique. She uses Freudian theory in analyzing homosexual behavior. She is a product of the Freudian psychology of her time, as Freud was the product of his environment in Victorian Vienna. These ideas about homosexuals have long been proven false. There are two reasons homosexuals appeared not to be college educated in the Kinsey survey: they were either not welcome in school or lying about their sexual orientation. At this time, professional homosexuals were deep in the closet. They risked their jobs and

professional reputations by being openly homosexual. A gay man without an education risked less in exposing his sexual orientation. Friedan's theories of homosexuality make the book seem dated.

Chapter 12, Progressive Dehumanization: The Comfortable Concentration Camp

Chapter 12, Progressive Dehumanization: The Comfortable Concentration Camp Summary

The voices of professionals beginning to recognize the retreat home showed the pendulum swinging the other way. Signs could be seen that the daughters of the women living the feminine mystique were having a more difficult time moving in the world. Educators and social scientists saw the passive and bored behavior in American children. They appeared to be incapable of overcoming pain and frustration.

Friedan describes these young people as having a sleepwalking quality. One boy explained that he dropped out of college because it was a waste of time. Other kids were failing or just barely passing, although they had sufficient intelligence. Educators reported that kids were just not interested in anything anymore: in or out of school. Sociologists explained the change as being a change in the character of Americans.

The change was noticed in colleges, such as Sarah Lawrence. Students at this college had long been responsible for their own education and social affairs. The new students were unable to plan anything or even entertain themselves. Initially, this was blamed on the uncertainty of the McCarthy era, but educators saw children entering school with this passivity in place. The change showed deterioration in the character of human beings. The change was seen in prisoners of war in Korea by an Army doctor who was with these prisoners. More prisoners died than in any previous war and the living would revert into a shell and avoid the reality of the situation. Army officials saw this softness in the new generation of soldiers.

The shock and study of the passivity in American youth was only noticed when it began to happen to boys. The change in the behavior of the boys is similar to the feminine personality encouraged by the feminine mystique. The infantile behavior was seen most in children of women living the image of the mystique. These women were extremely preoccupied with their children because they had no other interests. One woman told Friedan she could not make them do what they did not want to do or make them unhappy in any way. Mothers described doing homework for their children.

Friedan thinks this increase in passivity and the feminine mystique occurred simultaneously is not a coincidence. In symbiosis, two organisms live as one. Pregnancy is an example of symbiosis, although the symbiotic relationship ends with the cutting of the umbilical cord. Child psychologists explain the next step. The newborn infant and mother live in a psychological symbiosis that feeds the child's psyche during infancy. The symbiotic relationship was seen in the files of disturbed children. These

children were acting out the mother's unconscious wishes. Parents have long acted out their dreams through their children, but it was never seen as pathological. The difference at this time was the dreams of the mothers were becoming more infantile.

Symbiosis is part of the feminine mystique and becomes increasingly damaging with each generation. The feminine mystique stunts the development of young girls at an infantile level by allowing her to evade growing up. The weaker her identity, the more likely she will be to live vicariously through her family. Because she has stifled her growth, she will show signs of pathology. When the mother is infantile, the children do not develop a sense of self. This results in a retreat into fantasy, which is more apparent in girls. The process results in the progressive dehumanization of American children.

Vicarious living is another method of evading growth. Living vicariously through another person causes the repression of the personality. Dependence that is mistaken for love is a characteristic of vicarious living. These relationships lack the characteristics of real love and often deprive the partner of an autonomous life. Psychiatrist Andras Angyal describes this as a conflict between the impulse to grow and the fear of the growth process. Living vicariously is part of the definition of femininity.

Human beings have an innate need to grow and if the growth is stunted, the human mind will rebel. The symptoms of the problem that has no name are a warning sign that women cannot deny their existence as individuals. The minds and bodies of women were rebelling in a state that did not allow for this growth. Friedan describes women in severe depression and committing or attempting suicide. Throughout the 1950s, housewife syndrome became steadily more pathological. The vague malaise became a psychotic breakdown. During this decade, the number of women diagnosed with psychoses increased dramatically. In Bergen County in New Jersey, one in three new mothers suffered from psychosis associated with childbirth. The number of emotionally disturbed wives was three times that of any other group. The vast majority of these women had given up their education for marriage and children.

Dr. Gordon describes these women as not being capable women. Many were unable to take pain or stress of any kind. Another psychologist described the problem as resulting from the women having no goals of their own. Friedan gives several accounts of women fulfilling themselves through their children's achievements.

The pattern of progressive dehumanization was seen in schizophrenic children. Friedan visited a clinic studying these children. The children were arrested at a primitive stage of development and more of these children were being seen. The children did not have a sense of self. One psychologist told Friedan doctors had always known that mothers with fragile egos have children with fragile egos. The over-dependence on their mothers was seen in these children. Therapy could not help these children if the mother continued to live vicariously through them.

There were increased incidents of violence between parents and children locked in these passive dependent relationships. A psychologist reported hostility in men caused more dependent behavior in women, which caused more rage from the husbands.

Incidences of battered child syndrome were becoming increasingly common, not from the inner city slums but the perfect homes of the suburbs. Friedan predicts these patterns will not end until society breaks it by waking up all the Sleeping Beauties and allowing them to grow up. Disturbed children showed the most improvement when their mothers found interests of her own and stopped smothering them. Strength in women, rather than passivity, was the cure to this illness. Only when the mystique is shattered will the cycle be broken.

Friedan talks about the behavior of the victims of the concentration camps in World War II. Prisoners were cut off from their interests and forced to adopt childlike behavior. They were dehumanized to the point that their only reality existed inside the camp; they lost their link to the outside world. In this state, the prisoners were unable to form friendships that could have helped them survive. Those who survived had been able to hold on to a sense of their inner selves while in the camps. The prisoners outnumbered the SS, but the dehumanization process resulted in them trapping themselves. Friedan relates this experience to the experience of the American housewife. Women living the image of the feminine mystique experienced a similar loss of identity and ultimately trapped themselves in their own homes.

Chapter 12, Progressive Dehumanization: The Comfortable Concentration Camp Analysis

The effect of the mystique on children is seen in this chapter. Mom is parent seen most, so the children begin to act like her. If the mother is well adjusted and happy, the children will be well adjusted and confident. If the mother is immature and infantile, the children will develop these characteristics. This process was seen in the sleepwalking quality of the teens of the mothers in the feminine mystique.

An increased level of passivity in children and soldiers was seen by doctors and Army officials. Throughout the book, Friedan describes a softening of character in the next generation of children. Children of the mothers living the image of femininity dictated by the mystique were the least self reliant and motivated children. As mom became more involved in the lives of their children, the kids began to lose their own sense of identity. Evidence of this softness is shown in this chapter in the disturbed children and prisoners of war.

The horrible result of the feminine mystique on marriages is shown again in this chapter. According to the mystique, feminine fulfillment could be found if women lived in passive dependence with their husbands. However, husbands do not want doll wives with no identity of their own. The increased anger and frustration men felt toward their wives illustrate this fact. Mothers passed this rage along in the form of abusive behavior toward the very children they had given up their own lives for.

Discrimination is a dehumanizing state for any human being to live in. The prisoners of the concentration camps were dehumanized and stripped of their individual identities. Friedan links this experience to the housewife. Housewives experienced a similar loss

of identity in the feminine mystique. They slowly lost a sense of who they were as individuals, resulting in disastrous consequences for not only themselves, but their husbands and children as well.

Chapter 13, The Forfeited Self

Chapter 13, The Forfeited Self Summary

Scientists were becoming interested in studying the basic need for growth in humans. Scientists agreed that something innate drives humans to reach a state of self-realization. Psychologists considered a normal human being to be one that reaches the highest excellence of which the individual is capable. Love, acceptance and adjustment to the culture are not enough for happiness. The person needs to make a commitment to life and the future. This type of lifelong commitment was not permitted for women under the feminine mystique.

The effects of the failure of women to not reach their full potential had not been studied. Living for the future is what separates humans from animals. The ability to plan and shape the future is uniquely human. Housewives living the image of the feminine mystique did not have a purpose stretching into the future. This causes women to lose their sense of self and keeps them from realizing their potential as human beings. Psychological theories generally applied only to men said that without realizing their true nature, humans would get sick.

Abraham Maslow and his concept of the hierarchy of needs in a human being were just beginning to be understood at this time. The lower level needs are instinctual needs that are shared between animals and humans, the need for food and safety. The higher level needs, for education and self-growth are unique to humans and denied to women under the feminine mystique. The development of women in America had been blocked at the level of love and sexual satisfaction. This results in feelings of inferiority in women. "Occupation: housewife" does not allow women to realize their abilities and build self-esteem.

Maslow studied dominance in women and sexual satisfaction. He found higher levels of sexual satisfaction in women showing high dominance. The reason for this is increased self-confidence and feelings of being capable. High dominance women were autonomous and independent. High dominance women were not considered feminine and most housewives did not fit in this category, they were low dominance. Low dominance women do not break the rules. They are worried about their inferiorities and have low self-confidence. Maslow suggested dropping the terms masculine and feminine because they were too misleading.

Maslow was only able to find two self-actualized women: Eleanor Roosevelt and Jane Adams. He studied love and sex in self actualized people and found the orgasm had both less and greater importance. Sex was not considered as important in the lives of self-actualized individuals, but it is enjoyed at a higher level of satisfaction than is possible in most people. These new theories of self-actualization were studied for men and the importance of this was not seen in terms of women.

Before the feminine mystique, Kinsey's study showed higher levels of sexual fulfillment during the years of emancipation. Women educated to their intellectual capacity had more complete sexual fulfillment. Similarly, women's income at the time of marriage had an influence on the success of the marriage. When the woman was educated beyond college, only five percent reported a low level of marital satisfaction. Despite what women were told in the feminine mystique, women can't experience sexual fulfillment without their needs being met in terms of intellectual development.

Philosophers of the past said people achieve identity through the work they perform in the world. The identity crisis of women began with the ending of the pioneer days. Pioneer and immigrant women worked alongside their husbands to build a life in a new world. When the frontiers had all been conquered, women who were confined to the home began to suffer the problem that has no name. The lack of work caused the problem and began the first feminist movement as women realized their need for growth and a purpose.

The women living the image of the feminine mystique made the choice to forfeit the rights won by the feminists of the past. Friedan calls this a mistaken choice. Women cannot find their identities in their husbands and children. In doing so, they forfeit their humanity. The feminine mystique buried generations of women alive. Women need a commitment to the future to break free of the mystique and forge identities of their own.

Chapter 13, The Forfeited Self Analysis

The idea, that women were not seen as equal to men, is seen in the psychological studies discussed in this chapter. Self-actualization and the importance of work were seen as something men needed. Again, no one seems to recognize these same needs in the women in society. Women were so conditioned by this; many of them did not recognize these needs in themselves. When they began to suffer the problem that has no name, they did not immediately see a link between needing to grow as a person and develop a purpose in life.

The identities of women being formed through their husbands and children are again discussed in this chapter. The mystique told women they would be fulfilled in motherhood and marriage. This lie led women to give up their own personal goals and aspirations for the future. Without these, their growth was stunted and psychological problems sprang up in response to the loss of self.

Maslow, like Kinsey, saw a link between education and sexual fulfillment. Education and reaching one's capacity in life leads to self-actualization. High dominance women were closer to the level of self-actualization, which explains their higher level of sexual satisfaction than the low dominance housewives. In this time, high dominance was seen as masculine and was not considered appropriate for women. However, the happiest women were the ones ignoring the mystique and living full, autonomous lives.

Chapter 14, A New Life Plan for Women

Chapter 14, A New Life Plan for Women Summary

In this chapter, Friedan attempts to help women build a new life plan that will allow them to break through the feminine mystique and live fuller lives. Just facing a problem is not a solution to the problem. Women find their own answers after facing the problem and realizing they need a change in plan for the remainder of their lives. Friedan gives examples of women beginning the journey to find their own identity. The journey will be different for each woman. Women taking the journey began to enjoy being a woman for the first time in their lives.

The first step in the plan is for women to begin to understand housework for what it is and not a career choice. Women need to learn to complete it as quickly as possible and use the new gadgets for what they were intended, to make the jobs be finished faster. Next, they need to see marriage for what it really is and stop glorifying it as something that would give them a complete identity. Once women begin to find a purpose in life, most find they enjoy their families more. A choice does not have to be made between a career and family.

Creative work is the only way a woman can know herself as a person. The work must be real and challenging, not just a job. Taking the jump from amateur to professional is often the most difficult part of the new life plan for many women. Studies of some suburbs showed that fifty percent of the women questioned wanted to go back to work at some point, but were worried they were not prepared. Friedan found that the fears were often worse than the reality. She writes about a former newspaper reporter thinking she would not be able to get a job after being away so long. She found a job in just two trips to the city. This type of lifelong career is what Friedan feels women need. The lifetime commitment needed was forbidden by the feminine mystique, but this is what women need in their lives. A lifetime commitment is not tied to one job or location.

Many institutions in society have an interest in "Occupation: housewife." Religious institutions, such as Judaism and the Catholic Church held up the image of the housewife in the feminine mystique. These women have a more difficult fight in forming a life plan. The myth of male rejection when a woman makes a commitment to a life plan is disproved in Friedan's research. The majority of women, who formed a plan and grew as individuals, received positive feedback from their husbands.

Women attempting to escape the bonds of the feminine mystique would sometimes encounter hostility in other housewives. Ambition and career are dirty words in the feminine mystique. Often the hostility of other women masks the envy they feel toward women finding fulfillment outside marriage and family. Others feel neglected by their old friends. Most women find they gained more than they lost and felt little regret for any lost friendships.

Education is the key to breaking the housewife trap. Purveyors of the mystique told women education was dangerous and frustrating. However, this is only true of unused education. The biggest regret Friedan found regarding education was the regret felt over not using the education. Among the women answering Friedan's questionnaire at Smith College, the most successful and fulfilled had used their education and found a way to combine this commitment with the commitment made to their families.

The education needed could only be found in colleges or universities. Educator encouraging women to postpone educational goals until after children did women a disservice. The longer a woman waits, the less likely she is to realize her goals. Girls with a lifetime commitment are less likely to rush into an early marriage and more likely to have a successful marriage than girls marrying to escape the future are. For this reason, the image of the celibate career girl must be shattered. Education can help give women a new image of femininity.

Friedan suggests a national education program for women, similar to the GI Bill to help women wanting to resume their education after motherhood. She suggests changes need to be made to accommodate the part time status of most married students. Some colleges would not allow graduate work to be done on a part time basis; therefore, most mothers could not enroll in the programs. She suggests this needs to be changed and more opportunities for distance learning, independent study and courses on television need to be instituted to allow women to further their education and care for their families.

Friedan found women were willing to participate in education if they could fit it in and still care for their children. A news story in the New York Times announced a program being offered by Sarah Lawrence to help mature women continue their college education. The program offered part time coursework that could be completed by housewives. So many women responded that the switchboard was overloaded by the volume of calls. This shows the desire women have to return to school for the education they forfeited for marriage and children.

Bowling alleys and supermarkets advertise childcare for mothers wanting to shop or enjoy a game of bowling. This idea needs to be expanded to include childcare for mothers wanting to return to school. According to Friedan, every woman overcoming the obstacles to finish college or graduate school was paving the way for other women. There were women doing this and they had obstacles, but were able to solve them and move forward with their goals. More women were beginning to follow this path and were reaping the benefits of the hard work. The voices of the feminine mystique were unable to drown out the voices of women longing to feel complete.

Chapter 14, A New Life Plan for Women Analysis

Educators and social scientists now understand that education is freedom. The lack of education experienced by the women living the feminine mystique was encouraged, or at least not discouraged by educators. No one thought about the years of a woman's life

after the child bearing years. The image of woman was frozen in time as young mothers in the feminine mystique. As the babies grew, the problem grew. The women were not growing, trapped in an infantile state. Education helps women develop beyond the lower level needs and toward self-actualization.

The hostility from other women had several sources, but envy was a main source. Housewives seeing a woman growing as a person and still caring for her family called their own beliefs into question. They had swallowed the line of the feminine mystique and sacrificed their personal growth for their families. They believed they would harm their children if they followed their own goals. When they saw the evidence that education and career can co exist with marriage and family, they start to question their own choices. This causes anger and envy to surface and this is expressed in hostility toward working mothers. This has changed since this book was written, but the debate between working and staying home with children continues today.

Programs such as the Credit for Life Experience Program (CLEP) and the telecourses offered by many colleges and universities have given both men and women opportunity and choices in education. There is an even more important source of educational opportunities available today that Friedan would never have dreamed possible, the Internet. This technology opened new doors to students who could not commit to attending classes regularly. Day care offered in bowling alleys and supermarkets did expand to universities. Women now have the opportunity at most colleges and universities to put small children in the day care at the school while they attend classes.

Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

When Friedan had finished the book and her children were all in school, she decided to go back to school and get her Ph.D. She experienced resistance from the head of the sociology department at Columbia University. She found other women experiencing similar problems. She realized society had to change. Friedan also experienced hostility from other housewives in her suburb. She and her husband were not invited to parties anymore and ended up moving back to the city. She recognized this hostility as fear.

Friedan was also experiencing fear. She had always been afraid of being alone and had held onto a marriage that was no longer based on love. She found it easier to start the women's movement than to start a new life of her own. Ultimately she and her husband divorced in 1969.

In 1965, The President's Commission on the Status of Women was released, detailing the discrimination in women's wages, which were about fifty cents to the male dollar. The recommendations included counseling women to use their abilities and offering services such as childcare for workingwomen. Margaret Mead and others questioned who would be left to raise the children. The president's report was buried and nothing became of the suggestions offered.

Friedan wanted to write a second book, but she was unable to find new patterns in society; all she found were new problems. She recognized the need for a political movement, such as black people working for civil rights. She was told by a woman lawyer in Washington that she needed to start an organization like the NAACP, only for women. She did not see herself as an organization type person. She met with a group of high-powered women in Washington for a commission meeting on the status of women.

At that luncheon, she wrote NOW, the National Organization for Women on a cocktail napkin along with the first sentence of the NOW statement of purpose, "take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof, in truly equal partnership with men." She felt men needed to be involved with women in the movement.

For women to have identity and freedom, they needed to be economically independent. Equality would never be possible without the ability to earn. Women needed to break through the barriers that existed in many professions. The inequality in pay for professionals according to gender also needed to be addressed.

The movement needed to confront the sexual nature of women. Women needed more choice in the responsibility of parenthood and to be able to participate fully in society throughout her childbearing years. This included rights for birth control, abortion,

maternity leave and access to childcare. Their ideas were large, but they were small. Many women had trouble getting their husbands to pay for plane tickets for NOW conventions.

She was subpoenaed to testify in court because the airlines were upset at statements about the policies regarding the age of stewardesses and firing them for becoming pregnant, which NOW called sex discrimination. She wondered why they were going to such lengths and then she thought of it in terms of money saved. Airlines saved a lot in salary and benefits by firing stewardesses at age thirty. She shares her joy at seeing these policies changed.

Friedan began to feel a sense of historical urgency with regard to the Equal Rights Amendment. She describes protests and other action taken in the early days of the women's movement. In the beginning, her apartment was the only office they had. She admired the young radicals, but the media began to publicize the radicals as the face of the women's movement, leaving out many women. In 1970, the women's movement was here to stay and Friedan was preparing to bow out as president of NOW.

She realized what needed to be done. A call to action with a strike of women was needed to call attention to the problem of unequal pay. She writes that Mayor Lindsey would not close fifth avenue and thousands of women showed up for the march. They were supposed to stay on the sidewalks, but there were too many women and they walked, arms locked, across the street. She shares stories of similar victories along the way.

Epilogue Analysis

The epilogue is an account of the years after the publication of *The Feminine Mystique.* Forging a new road for women and breaking out of the bonds of prejudice is not an easy road. Change is never easy and society as a whole is resistant to change, even when the change is beneficial. Friedan shares many examples of the obstacles that needed to be overcome in the early days of the women's movement.

She found facing this change to be easier than facing the change needed in her own life. Her experiences while writing the book and in the following years made her realize the destructive elements in her own marriage. People often find the problems of the larger society easier to solve than the problems at home. It is much more difficult to be objective in recognizing and changing an individuals own life. Uncertainty bred fear in the feminine mystique and in Friedan's own life. Overcoming that fear and forging a new life was difficult, but necessary.

Major changes in society were needed to change the prejudice inherit in the image of the feminine mystique. The image of the mystique was pervasive in society. The beliefs about the qualities of femininity existed in all society's institutions: family, church, education, the workplace and the media. Barriers needed to be broken down in all these areas. The desire to grow Friedan recognized in the women she met while writing *The*

Feminine Mystique continued to grow and grew into a national movement. Once women were allowed to grow a little: they grew a lot!

Friedan compares women's need for a movement to the experience of black people needing rights. The discrimination women suffered was similar in many respects to the discrimination felt by black people. Women were denied the right to education and decent jobs, and they needed to be united to fight the oppression they experienced. Like the first feminist movement, these women were vilified. The small group of man hating radicals became the face of the movement on television. Rarely did the media show the married couples working side by side for the rights of women in America.

Characters

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian psychologist who tried to define life in completely sexual terms. Friedan says that the basic ideas expressed in Freudian psychology—which emphasized freedom from a repressive morality—support women's attempts at emancipation. However, Friedan says that Freud's specific theories about women, which were equal parts chivalry and condescension, and which were largely a product of his observations of the repressed Victorian era in which he lived, helped to reinforce the repression of modern women. Freud called women's yearning for equality penis envy, a term that was seized upon by promoters of the feminine mystique. Friedan notes that the type of concrete scientific thinking that provided the basis for Freud's theories has since been replaced by a more complex system of scientific thought. Nevertheless, while many of Freud's theories were reinterpreted in this new light, Friedan says that the promoters of the feminine mystique did not reinterpret Freud's Victorian theory of femininity. Friedan believes that Freudian psychology was embraced so completely that it became almost like a religion.

A. C. Kinsey

Kinsey, a noted researcher, conducted many sex surveys. The early results from one of his major reports indicate that educated women have lessfulfilling sex lives. Various societal forces use these partial results as justification for encouraging women to become full-time housewives. When Kinsey's complete results were released nearly a decade later, they contradicted the early results, and now indicated that women who marry early and become fulltime housewives were less likely to achieve complete sexual fulfillment. Unfortunately, Friedan notes, the ranks of sexually frustrated housewives who followed Kinsey's advice find that it is difficult to break the pattern of the feminine mystique once they have subscribed to it. Through his surveys, Kinsey also studies the insatiable sexual desire of American wives, the increasing depersonalization of sex, extramarital affairs, and homosexuality. Friedan incorporates all of these studies in her argument against the feminine mystique.

The Manipulator

Manufacturers hire the man that Friedan refers to as the manipulator to show them how to exploit women's unfulfilled desires—to get them to buy more products.

A. H. Maslow

Maslow is a scientist who defined the human hierarchy of needs. Maslow noted that all humans strive to fulfill their basic, physiological needs first, but after that they desire to

fulfill higher, mental functions. He stated that it is necessary for human beings to use their capacities and that if they do not they might weaken these capacities or develop problems. Maslow also studied the relationship between sexual fulfillment and self-esteem or dominance and found that women who have achieved dominance over their own identities have more fulfilling sex lives. Finally, Maslow noted that humans who have achieved self-actualization, the highest level of the hierarchy of needs, enjoy all of life more, even mundane daily tasks like housework. Friedan uses Maslow's findings to demonstrate that it is unhealthy to confine women to the basic, physiological level of the hierarchy, denying them the right to achieve their full human capacity.

Margaret Mead

Mead was an eminent sociologist who Friedan says subscribed to the functionalist discipline. Friedan calls Mead the most powerful negative influence on modern women. Mead promoted the necessity for confining women to their sexual biological roles as housewife and mother but did not live up to this ideal herself. Mead was an accomplished academic who published countless books and articles glorifying the feminine image and cautioning against trying to achieve masculine goals like higher education. Friedan cites Mead's *Male and Female* as the book that became the cornerstone of the feminine mystique. Friedan says that Mead betrayed Freudian tendencies in many of her writings. She also notes that Mead highlighted sociological examples of motherhood from primitive cultures as the ideal to be achieved in modern, civilized society. Friedan acknowledges Mead's feminist accomplishments— such as serving as an example of a respected, professional woman and humanizing sex—but criticizes Mead's role in helping to support the feminine mystique.

Themes

Social Roles

Before World War II, many women had the choice of becoming housewives or having careers, and many sources supported either choice. Friedan measures this public opinion of women by examining the images of women in women's magazines from before and after World War II. As she notes of the magazines before World War II: "The majority of heroines in the four major women's magazines . . . were career women—happily, proudly, adventurously, attractively career women—who loved and were loved by men." However, after World War II, Friedan notes that women were increasingly encouraged to become housewives and mothers alone, and to avoid becoming a "careerwoman- devil." Many sources provided this encouragement, including psychologists who followed the teachings of Sigmund Freud. As Friedan notes, Freud believed that "It was woman's nature to be ruled by man, and her sickness to envy him." Freud called this concept, "penis envy," and Friedan says that the concept "was seized in this country in the 1940s as the literal explanation of all that was wrong with American women." Women's desire for equality was looked at as an abnormality, and women were encouraged to accept their roles as housewife and mother and leave the careers to men.

The functionalists took this idea one step further, saying that women should not compete with men in careers because it would upset the social order. As Friedan notes, the functionalist believed that "the status quo can be maintained only if the wife and mother is exclusively a homemaker or, at most, has a 'job' rather than a 'career.'" These and many other sources thought that confining women to their roles as housewife and mother would benefit children. However, as Friedan notes, mothers who devoted their lives entirely to their children ended up doing more harm than good. Says Friedan: "More and more of the new child pathologies seem to stem from that very symbiotic relationship with the mother, which has somehow kept children from becoming separate selves."

Identity

When society encouraged women to be fulltime housewives and mothers, Friedan says that many women were not happy in these limited roles because the roles did not provide enough substance to form an identity. Friedan systematically examines the various outlets open to housewives, starting with housework. As her research indicates, many women who tried to base their identity on housework unconsciously took longer to do their housework than they needed to, because that was all that they had to do. Says Friedan, "no matter how much housework is expanded to fill the time available, it still presents little challenge to the adult mind." Women also tried to find their identities through sex. However, this did not work, either. Says Friedan, when a woman attempts to base her entire identity on sex, "she puts impossible demands on her own body, her

'femaleness,' as well as on her husband and his 'maleness.'" Ultimately, Friedan discovers that modern women, like men, are incapable of basing their identities on housework, sex, or family. She cites Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which illustrates the human need to grow. Women who subscribed to the feminine mystique were encouraged to restrict themselves to the basic, physiological level. However, as Friedan demonstrates, by doing this, these women were "not encouraged, or expected, to use their full capacities. In the name of femininity, they are encouraged to evade human growth."

Education

Friedan discusses education in many ways in *The Feminine Mystique*. As she notes at the beginning, the first wave of feminism had won women many rights, including the right to earn a higher education, just like men. However, as the feminine mystique was slowly formed, various academic and media sources seized on education as the culprit for women's widespread unhappiness, which they equated with lack of sexual fulfillment. Says Friedan, they accused educators "of defeminizing American women, of dooming them to frustration as housewives and mothers, or to celibate careers, to life without orgasm." Once this idea gained acceptance, many educational institutions, particularly women's colleges, felt the pressure to change to a sex-directed curriculum, one that focused on home and family, not on the outside world. As Friedan notes, studies eventually proved that women who pursued education and careers have a greater capacity for sexual fulfillment than those who restrict their educational and occupational opportunities. "Contrary to the feminine mystique, the Kinsey figures showed that the more educated the woman, the more likely she was to enjoy full sexual orgasm more often, and the less likely to be frigid." In fact, for Friedan, education is the solution to the feminine mystique. "I think that education, and only education, has saved, and can continue to save, American women from the greater dangers of the feminine mystique."

Style

Manifesto

A manifesto is a written declaration, which defines the author's beliefs. In the beginning of *The Feminine Mystique* Friedan declares her belief that "the problem that has no name"—the widespread unhappiness of women—has a very definite cause. Says Friedan, "It is my thesis that the core of the problem for women today is not sexual but a problem of identity—a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystique." Manifestos are often political in nature, and Friedan's manifesto is no different. As she demonstrates in her book, powerful forces in education, media, and the corporate world benefited from restricting women to the narrow roles of housewife and mother. Says Friedan: "A great many people have, or think they have, a vested interest in 'Occupation: housewife.'" As a result, she notes that, if women follow her advice, they will need to deal with "the prejudices, mistaken fears, and unnecessary dilemmas" that will be offered as resistance to women's emancipation.

Point of View

Friedan narrates her book mainly from a firstperson, or personal, point of view. Some of the time, this point of view is her own. Says Friedan, "Gradually I came to realize that the problem that has no name was shared by countless women in America." In other cases, Friedan includes first-person quotes from some of these countless women. Says one woman, "I ask myself why I'm so dissatisfied. I've got my health, fine children, a lovely new home, enough money." Friedan also includes first-person accounts from academics, professionals, and others to support her ideas. Even in the parts of the narration that do not use the characteristic "I" or "my" words, Friedan is narrating from a firstperson point of view, because she is stating opinions that are based on her own experiences and observations. Says Friedan, "Judging from the women's magazines today, it would seem that the concrete details of women's lives are more interesting than their thoughts, their ideas, their dreams."

Tone

Friedan's tone, or attitude toward her subject matter, is assertive in *The Feminine Mystique*. Although she relies on an overwhelming variety of sources to back up her assertions, her word choice clearly conveys her anger at the various agents of the feminine mystique that have helped to oppress women. For example, when she is discussing the uninformed content of one of the women's magazines in the early 1960s, she notes that the "big, pretty magazine" is "fluffy and feminine," even though it is aimed at many college-educated women. Friedan also employs several sarcastic phrases. For example, she accuses Margaret Mead, an eminent sociologist, of being a hypocrite by promoting a lifestyle that Mead does not live herself. Says Friedan: Mead's role "as the

professional spokesman of femininity would have been less important if American women had taken the example of her own life, instead of listening to what she said in her books." Friedan also expresses her anger by placing emphasis on certain words. For example, at one point she discusses the sex-directed educators, who helped to reinforce the image that intellectual women had bad sex lives. As Friedan notes, with these kinds of messages, she can see why several generations of American girls "fled college and career to marry and have babies before they became so 'intellectual' that, heaven forbid, they wouldn't be able to enjoy sex 'in a feminine way.'"

Historical Context

World War II

World War II was such a monumental event that it is commonly used as a cultural divider for the twentieth century. Friedan also cites World War II as the main impetus for the development of the feminine mystique. Throughout the book, Friedan compares many prewar and postwar statistics and examples to support her points. For example, Friedan notes: "Fewer women in recent college graduating classes have gone on to distinguish themselves in a career or profession than those in the classes graduated before World War II, the Great Divide." World War II was a traumatic event for many Americans. Soldiers witnessed unspeakable horrors on the battlefields and in German concentration camps, which carried out the dehumanization and extermination of millions of Jews and others. For the wives and families of soldiers, the war was a time of loneliness and fear, as many wondered whether their loved ones would return home safely. At the end of the war, both soldiers and civilians were shocked by the U.S. decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan.

The Cold War

Several countries—including the communist Soviet Union—quickly followed suit by developing and testing their own atomic bombs. The 1947 Truman Doctrine, a policy that advocated having the United States back free countries against communist forces, ultimately helped increase the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States—and between communist states and democratic ones in general. This tension, which American citizens felt as the threat of nuclear war, was called the Cold War. This feeling increased as Congress approved the first peacetime draft in 1948, and as the United States fought in an undeclared war in Korea in the early 1950s.

The Postwar Baby Boom

The devastating experience of World War II and the fear of the Cold War caused many Americans to seek comfort by focusing on their homes and families. This is one of the many factors that attributed to a large baby boom—or large increase in birth rates—following the war. In fact, the United States was one of many industrialized countries that experienced a baby boom following World War II. Four countries in particular—the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—experienced birth rates that far surpassed pre-war levels. In the 1950s, fertility rates in the United States reached their highest levels in decades. Says Friedan: "By the end of the fifties, the United States birthrate was overtaking India's."

The Growth of Suburbs

The huge postwar economic boom also helped the American baby boom. For World War II veterans, this economic boom often paid off in cheap home loans from the government. Seeking a better life and an escape from the Cold War, many ex- G.I.s chose to use these loans to move their families into suburban housing developments, commonly known as suburbs. Although the introduction of the automobile in the early twentieth century had helped to increase the number of suburbs in the United States, the growth of suburbs exploded in the 1950s when the federal government expanded the interstate highway system. Suburbs, at least in theory, provided a comfortable conformity where American families could pursue a stable life and attempt to escape the many horrors of recent years, including the Depression, World War II, and the Cold War.

Critical Overview

When *The Feminine Mystique* was first published in 1963, it exploded into American consciousness. Most critics were polarized in their views of the book. In the 1963 review for the *Times Literary Supplement*, the reviewer notes: "If, then, there is still a feminist fight to be fought it is for the right to work. And if they are to win it women must have all the ammunition they can of the calibre of this book." Likewise, in her 1963 review of the book for the *American Sociological Review*, Sylvia Fleis Fava applauds Friedan's solution to the problem that has no name. Says Fava: "Her answer, that we should take women seriously as individuals, not as women, resounds throughout the book; I heartily agree with it." However, some positive critics, including Fava, had reservations about the book. Says Fava: "Friedan tends to set up a countermystique; that all women must have creative interests outside the home to realize themselves. This can be just as confining and tension-producing as any other mold." Others gave mainly negative reviews, such as the 1963 reviewer for the *Yale Review*, who says of Friedan's ideas that "we have heard it before. But it is a long time since we have heard it in such strident and angry tones."

By the time the tenth anniversary edition of *The Feminine Mystique* was published, the modern women's movement was underway. In fact, many reviewers, such as Jane Howard in her 1974 review of the tenth-anniversary edition for the *New Republic*, noted the book's influence. Says Howard, Friedan's book, "more than any of the torrent of feminist documents that followed, set the women's movement in motion." Howard also notes that the book was written "with more passion than style, but her effect was and still is persuasive." Over the next decade, *The Feminine Mystique* also received critical attention upon the publication of Friedan's next two books: *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (1976) and *The Second Stage* (1981). Critics still had mixed views about Friedan's original book. In the *Saturday Review*, Sara Sanborn notes: "Every woman in America, whether she knows it or not, owes Betty Friedan a debt of gratitude." In regards to the modern women's movement, Sanborn says that "Friedan sounded the kickoff signal in 1963."

Others found fault with Friedan's research. In the *New York Times Book Review*, Herma Hill Kay says that the "suburban housewives" depicted in the book did not represent "large numbers of American women." Still others criticized the style. In her *Commonweal* article, Margaret O'Brien Steinfels says that the book had "endless yardage of popular prose laced with pseudo-psychology and sociology, chapter after chapter badly patched from old magazine articles." One of the most scathing reviews of *The Feminine Mystique*, and of Friedan herself, came from R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., who notes in the *American Spectator* that Friedan is an "invincibly stupid," "egregious pest," who has "spoken to an entire generation of young women and left them miserable, filling housewives with doubt and embarrassment while sending the professional gals out to scrimmage for their daily grub."

Today, critics are still largely divided in their views of *The Feminine Mystique*, which is still Friedan's best-known work. Some still consider Friedan's book as the main impetus

for the modern women's movement, while others think that Friedan did more damage than good with her book. For example, in her 1995 *Commentary* article, Carol Iannone criticizes Friedan for introducing many negative aspects into feminism. These include making "the condition of the postwar American woman seem one of soul-strangling asphyxiation and spiritual death"; helping "initiate the now ever-expanding tendency to blame the most personal and complex of the ills of life on social or political conditions"; and helping "define that useful paradox so beloved by activist leaders, whereby unhappiness, anger, frustration can be seen as signs of health."

Regardless of whether a critic likes Friedan, few can deny the influence she has had on feminism. Says Mary Brewer in her 2001 entry on Friedan for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography:*"Despite its inconsistencies and drawbacks . . . Friedan's theory of feminine identity as it is constructed by a maledominated society has become seminal to feminist thought."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4

Critical Essay #1

Poquette has a bachelor's degree in English and specializes in writing about literature. In the following essay, Poquette discusses the types of research that Friedan used in The Feminine Mystique *to support her argument that women have been repressed to the point of losing their identities and capacity for sexual fulfillment.*

In 1963, Betty Friedan made history when she published *The Feminine Mystique*. She knew that what she was writing was revolutionary, since the genesis of the book, the results from a questionnaire to her fellow alumni, had produced such a negative reaction from various women's magazines when she tried to sell the results as an article in 1957. As Friedan notes in her introduction to the tenth anniversary edition of *The Feminine Mystique*, "the then male publisher of *McCall's* . . . turned the piece down in horror, despite underground efforts of female editors. The male *McCall's* editors said it couldn't be true." It was easy for these editors to turn down the results of one survey that did not uphold the conventional image of femininity. As Friedan notes in the same introduction, she told her agent: "I'll have to write a book to get this into print." However, as the resulting book indicates, Friedan learned something from her experience with the magazine editors. She realized that, in order to prove her point that women have been repressed by an idealized image, she would have to provide a wealth of research support, not just her own opinion.

When it comes to Friedan's research methods, the critics are as divided in their criticism as with all the other aspects of the work. Some critics believe that *The Feminine Mystique* is thoroughly researched and contains valid information. In her review of the book for the *American Sociological Review*, Sylvia Fleis Fava notes: "Friedan, by training a psychologist and by occupation a journalist, supports her thesis mainly with data from these fields." In her 1976 review of *It Changed My Life* for *Washington Post Book World*, Anne Bernays states: "A thoroughly researched analysis of what is wrong with us, Friedan's first book named and probed the 'nameless problem' that plagues women."

However, not all critics think that Friedan's research was accurate or representative. In her review of *The Second Stage* for *Commonweal*, Margaret O'Brien Steinfels notes that *The Feminine Mystique* featured "endless yardage of popular prose laced with pseudo-psychology and sociology, chapter after chapter badly patched from old magazine articles." Likewise, in another review of *The Second Stage* for the *New York Times Book Review*, Herma Hill Kay notes: "Neither the suburban housewives described in *The Feminine Mystique* nor the radical feminists who, as portrayed in *The Second Stage*, perceived man as 'the enemy' represented large numbers of American women."

Friedan relied on three main types of examples to support her assertions—excerpts and paraphrases of academic theories, statistics, and first-person accounts. Friedan chose her academic theories very carefully, using them to serve one of two purposes. They either directly supported or contradicted her ideas. An example of the first is Maslow's

hierarchy of needs. Friedan cites several selections from Maslow's work and ultimately uses it to support her assertion: "The transcendence of self, in sexual orgasm, as in creative experience, can only be attained by one who is himself, or herself, complete, by one who has realized his or her own identity." An example of the latter category is Friedan's discussion of Sigmund Freud, who is generally recognized as a brilliant Victorian psychologist whose ideas are somewhat dated. Friedan cites several selections from Freud that support the ideal of the feminine mystique, then notes that most of Freud's concepts were already being reinterpreted in the 1940s so that they better fit in with modern scientific theory and practice. However, Friedan points out that Freud's theory of femininity was not updated; it was applied literally to American women after World War II, so that "women today were considered no different than Victorian women."

Friedan also incorporates a number of statistics, numbers that are derived from a data sample. Statistics lend third-party credibility to arguments like Friedan's, because they are based on facts, not opinion. Friedan includes statistics on several topics, including marriage age, "By the end of the nineteen-fifties, the average marriage age of women in America dropped to 20, and was still dropping, into the teens"; higher education, "By the mid- fifties, 60 per cent dropped out of college to marry, or because they were afraid too much education would be a marriage bar"; and sex, "In American media there were more than 2 1/2 times as many references to sex in 1960 as in 1950, an increase from 509 to 1,341 'permissive' sex references in the 200 media studied."

Although academic theories and statistics help support an argument, they can also generalize the discussion and keep it at a distance from readers; it is hard for some readers to relate to a theory or number. As a result, Friedan also includes countless first-person accounts, which offer intimate examples from individual human lives—and thus tend to have a greater impact on readers. First-person accounts are credible because individuals speak for themselves. In fact, for some reviewers, this was the most important part of *The Feminine Mystique*. In her entry on Friedan for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Mary F. Brewer notes that Friedan bases her arguments on "real American women's lives; she quotes profusely from the letters, interviews, and questionnaires she compiled from educated middle-class housewives and mothers who were struggling to find some meaning in their domestically bound lives."

As with the academic theories, Friedan employs two types of first-person accounts. In most of the cases, the personal quotes directly support Friedan's argument that women are unhappy in their role as housewives. For example, in the beginning of the book, Friedan includes several excerpts of interviews with depressed housewives. Says one desperate woman, "I begin to feel I have no personality. I'm a server of food and a putter-on of pants and a bedmaker, somebody who can be called on when you want something." Another woman notes: "The problem is always being the children's mommy, or the minister's wife and never being myself."

Friedan also quotes women who try to convince their readers that women should live up to the ideal image of femininity. For example, when Friedan is discussing the power that

sex-directed educators had over society, she notes that many young women were led to believe that their emotional problems resulted from their traditional, career-focused, masculine education. Says one young woman: "I have come to realize that I was educated to be a successful man and must now learn by myself to be a successful woman." However, after offering these first-person accounts, Friedan steadily dismantles them, using her various other kinds of research to try to prove that the women speaking these quotes were duped by the feminine mystique. As a response to the above quotation, for example, Friedan offers a study of college women that indicates "those seniors who showed the greatest signs of growth were more 'masculine' in the sense of being less passive and conventional; but they were more 'feminine' in inner emotional life."

Collectively, Friedan's academic theories, statistics, and first-person accounts provided various support for her argument that received a mixed reception from critics. No matter what any individual critic thought of Friedan's research, however, Friedan did achieve her "call to awareness," as Cynthia Fuchs Epstein notes in her *Dissent* article. Says Epstein:

The facts of history are lost to some critics. *The Feminine Mystique*, the work of a journalist with high exposure to the social sciences, laid out the problems women faced in post-World War II suburban ghettos or in the symbolic ghettos of sex-labeled jobs and subordinate roles in public life and in the family.

In the end, whether or not one thinks that Friedan succeeded in making her case, Friedan was right to assume that she had to provide overwhelming support for her controversial ideas. As she herself notes at one point about sex-directed education: "It takes a very daring educator today to attack the sex-directed line, for he must challenge, in essence, the conventional image of femininity." Yet, this is exactly what Friedan was trying to do herself. She launched a daring attack against sexdirected educators, psychologists, sociologists, the media, the corporate world, and others whom she identified as agents of the feminine mystique. Says Sara Sanborn in the *Saturday Review*, "she performed the writer's unique service by saying out loud what the rest of us had only nervously thought."

Source: Ryan D. Poquette, Critical Essay on *The Feminine Mystique*, in *Nonfiction Classics for Students*, Gale, 2003.

Critical Essay #2

Hart, with degrees in English literature and creative writing, focuses her published works on literary themes. In this essay, Hart intertwines a discussion of Friedan's work with the narrators and characters found in the short stories of Grace Paley.

Although there has been recent criticism of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*, there is no doubt, even in the minds of her harshest critics, that her book had such a profound impact on the female population during the 1960s that it has been credited with initiating the second wave of feminism in the United States. In order to better comprehend how *The Feminine Mystique* had such a profound impact on women of that era, it is important to understand who the mid-twentieth-century American woman was. Although it is impossible to gather information on every female and ask each of them to recall what it was like to be a woman in that turbulent era, it is feasible to look to one of the leading literary voices of that time to discern what her female characters were doing and thinking about.

With this objective in mind, the first author who comes to mind is Grace Paley, a contemporary of Friedan's, who made a point of writing strictly from a woman's perspective, discussing issues that were pertinent to the American female. She was one of the first American women writers to do so. She wrote during at time when female issues were considered worthy only of a kitchen-table discussion over coffee. She lived in a world that was completely dominated by men, in the home, in the workplace, and in the field of publishing. Yet, she had the confidence to compose her work with the highest literary skill that she was capable of and to write about what she knew best—women's daily lives and routines of the 1950s, the same topic that Friedan addresses.

Friedan interviewed many women in the course of her research for *The Feminine Mystique*, why add yet another voice to the mix? The answer is simple. It's one of interest. Friedan's examples support her thesis, but Paley's characters offer background color. Friedan's women respond to specific questions, while Paley's go about their business, offering readers brief glimpses into their lives. Friedan's writing dramatically changed the course of many women's lives, and it is the women as depicted in Paley's short stories that she most affected. Paley's characters, in her collection of short stories called *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute* (1960), were conceived before the publication of Friedan's 1963 classic. They consist of both formally educated women and those who are not formally educated. They are housewives and mothers who, at most, struggle with part time jobs. There is little mention of professional businesswomen. Paley's female characters therefore represent the epitome of Friedan's targeted audience. To listen to them is to hear the voices of the women who most often found themselves concealed under the veil of what Friedan refers to as the feminine mystique.

To begin with, readers should first understand what Friedan means when she writes about feminine mystique. For her it is the belief that was popular in the early part of the twentieth century that stated that the major source of women's frustrations was their

own forgetfulness of what constituted femininity. Women, especially according to Sigmund Freud's basic tenet, were often found to be envious of men, so they tried to be like men. In attempting to do so, women denied their own natural instincts, which were "sexual passivity," submission to men, and their need to nurture. These traits, according to social propaganda at that time, were best developed in the role of wife and mother. Women should not worry about obtaining a college degree nor about the subsequent challenge of finding and advancing a professional career. Further education and involvement in the broader concept of society encompassed a man's world. For women to want to be involved outside of the home was testimony to their jealousy of men. "The new mystique makes the housewifemothers, who never had a chance to be anything else, the model for all women," Friedan writes. This model confined women "to cooking, cleaning, washing, bearing children—into a religion, a pattern by which all women must now live or deny their femininity."

In the first short story of Paley's collection, her female protagonist is sitting on the front steps of her local library when her ex-husband happens to stroll by. She says, "Hello, my life, I said. We had once been married for twenty-seven years, so I felt justi- fied." With this simple statement, Paley acknowledges the feelings that women of her generation held in terms of defining themselves. They became so consumed with playing out their roles as wives that they were left with no concept of themselves. These were the women who bought the "new mystique," who modeled themselves on the 1950s definition of femininity. By turning their backs on their education and further exploration of self, their husband became their lives. They lived through their husbands' promotions, defeats, and challenges in the world outside their homes. In the same short story, the woman continues her brief dialogue with her ex-husband, who tells her that he is finally going to buy that sailboat he has always wanted. He still has dreams, he tells her. "But as for you, it's too late. You'll always want nothing," he says. This represents the problems and frustrations that the pre-Friedan women were suffering. They were caught in the middle of a paradox. They were being told that they needed nothing more than to take care of their husbands; but in doing so, their husbands often concluded that, since the women lived through them, they needed nothing for themselves. "But I do want *something*," Paley's character says. "I want, for instance, to be a different person." Paley's female might want to change; however, Paley concludes this story with the woman lamenting that although she is capable of taking action, especially when someone comes along and points out possible deficiencies, she is better known for her "hospitable remarks." In other words, she acquiesces. She does not want to upset the boat. She is, after all, the one who maintains the home, who keeps the balance. She seeks the perfect definition of femininity and remains lost in the feminine mystique.

The baby boom that occurred at the end of World War II was based on a number of factors, but Friedan believes that one of the major reasons was that "women who had once wanted careers were now making careers out of having babies." Motherhood was glorified by the feminine mystique, and therefore the more children a woman bore the more closely she matched the archetype of femininity. The feminine mystique promised self-fulfillment with each new baby, a promise that was seldom realized. As young wives, women sought recognition through their husbands. As mothers, women promoted themselves through their children. Their offspring's accomplishments were

their own. It was one more excuse, Friedan states, for women to forego defining themselves.

Paley writes in her short story "Faith in the Afternoon," that her protagonist gave birth to two sons "to honor" her husband and "his way of loving." However, in a later story, "Faith in a Tree," when Faith's babies have matured to school age and she has realized several years of substituting her life for theirs, she states: "Just when I most needed important conversation, a sniff of the manwide world, that is, at least one brainy companion who could translate my friendly language into his tongue of undying carnal love, I was forced to lounge in our neighborhood park, surrounded by children." With this characterization, Faith is beginning to discover the holes in the feminine mystique. Living through one's husband or one's children is not as gratifying as the women's magazine articles have portrayed. Faith is beginning to hunger for, as Friedan describes it, some undefined "something more." This thing that is missing in her life is not only difficult to define, it is almost impossible to think about. It goes against the essence of what a woman, what femininity, is. So Faith feels guilty for these thoughts. "I own two small boys," she reminds herself, "whose dependence on me takes up my lumpen time and my bourgeois feelings." She then goes on to state how much she loves them, how much she pampers them, how much her time and life is consumed by them. "I kiss those kids forty times a day." Although Faith may be craving intellectual stimulation, she wants to make sure that everyone knows that she is a good mother. The sacrifice of self is warranted. To be a wife and mother is all a woman needed, according to the feminine mystique. It is the educated career women who are really suffering.

Friedan states that when women, such as Paley's character Faith, felt most frustrated, they often turned to consumerism. They bought new things for the home. Manufacturers took note of this inclination and persuaded women into believing that they needed all the latest gadgets to keep their homes spotlessly clean. Paley's narrator in her story "Distance," misses her youth when she was free to define herself as only her own intuition demanded. However, her present situation is not so bad, she claims. She and her husband purchase new cars, and bought a television set "the minute it first came out," and have "everything grand for the kitchen." She says she has no complaints, but then goes on to state that reminiscing about her youth "is like a long hopeless homesickness." She lives with all the great conveniences, she says, but it is like living "in a foreign town." In spite of the joys of consumerism that are supposed to make her a better housewife, she does not feel at home in her dictated role. As a matter of fact, as Friedan has pointed out, Paley's female characters, like many of the frustrated housewives of the 1950s lost in the feminine mystique, are miserable. Things are falling apart. Life is not proving to be what the women thought it would be. Once, everything was "spotless, the kitchen was all inlay like broken-up bathroom tiles . . . . Formica on all surfaces, everything bright. The shine of the pots and pans was turned to stun the eyes of company," Paley writes in her story "Distance." Now, however, the female protagonist is lost in misery, and "she's always dirty. Crying crying crying." Some of Paley's women are lost in misery because their husbands have left them. Others have lost their husbands because they are depressed. Whatever the case, Paley's character Faith is confronted by her mother, who consoles her with the wisdom to better her life by cleaning up the house and cooking a special dinner. "Tell the children to be a little

quiet. . . . He'll be home before you know it. . . . Do up your hair something special." It is the woman's fault that her marriage has fallen apart. She is unhappy because she has not been a good wife or a good mother.

"Life isn't that great," Paley's protagonist states in the short story "Living." "We've had nothing but crummy days and crummy guys and no money and broke all the time and cockroaches and nothing to do on Sunday but take the kids to Central Park and row on that lousy lake." It is an epiphany of sorts, albeit a depressing one. This is the life that many women played out based on the concept of feminine mystique, which, as Friedan points out, glorifies being a housewife as an end-all career. It is ironic, says Friedan, that at a time when doors were finally opened to women, thanks to the work and passion of the women involved in the first wave of feminism in the United States, when women could gain a college degree and find fulfilling professional careers, that the feminine mystique was born and promoted. Friedan states that this concept flourished under the psychological theories as well as the well-read women's magazine articles, both of which were male-dominated, that appeared to want to keep women from self-actualizing, keep them uneducated and housebound. It is a process of what Friedan refers to as the progressive dehumanization of women. As women on the cusp of the 1960s were beginning to realize, the life, as defined by the feminine mystique, was not that great. In fact, it was quite empty. They might not have been able to put their finger on their misery, and they might have felt guilty about thinking about it, but women collectively knew that trying to define themselves through the feminine mystique was a life filled with "crummy days." So when Friedan's book came out a few years later, they gobbled it up. Here was something that made sense of their lives. Here was someone who could see into their misery and name it. Here was a book that helped them understand why the feminine mystique was not working for them.

Source: Joyce Hart, Critical Essay on *The Feminine Mystique*, in *Nonfiction Classics for Students*, Gale, 2003.

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay excerpt, Horowitz explores how events in Friedan's personal life and career in the 1950s and early 1960s influenced her completion of The Feminine Mystique.

It has become commonplace to see the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 as a major turning point in the history of modern American feminism and, more generally, in the history of the postwar period. And with good reason, for her book was a key factor in the revival of the women's movement and in the transformation of the nation's awareness of the challenges middleclass suburban women faced. *The Feminine Mystique* helped millions of women comprehend, and then change, the conditions of their lives. The book took already familiar ideas, made them easily accessible, and gave them a forceful immediacy. It explored issues that others had articulated but failed to connect with women's experiences—the meaning of American history, the nature of alienated labor, the existence of the identity crisis, the threat of atomic warfare, the implications of Nazi anti- Semitism, the use of psychology as cultural criticism, and the dynamics of sexuality. By extending to women many of the ideas about the implications of affluence that widely read male authors had developed for white, middle-class men, Friedan's book not only stood as an important endpoint in the development of 1950s social criticism but also translated that tradition into feminist terms. In addition, the book raises questions about the trajectory of Friedan's ideology, specifically about the relationship between her labor radicalism of the 1940s and early 1950s and her feminism in the 1960s.

To connect a book to a life is no easy matter. Although Friedan herself has emphasized the importance of the questionnaires her Smith classmates filled out during the spring of 1957, when she was thirty-six years old, she also acknowledged in 1976 that in writing *The Feminine Mystique* "all the pieces of my own life came together for the first time." Here she was on the mark. It is impossible for someone to have come out of nowhere, and in so short a time, to the deep understanding of women's lives that Friedan offered in 1963. Experiences from her childhood in Peoria, her analysis of the Smith questionnaire, and all points in between, helped shape the 1963 book.

In Peoria Friedan began the journey so critical to the history of American feminism. There she first pondered the question of what hindered and fostered the aspirations of women. In addition, in that Illinois city anti-Semitism and labor's struggles first provided her with the material that would ignite her sense of social justice. At Smith College young Bettye Goldstein encountered social democratic and radical ideologies, as well as psychological perspectives, as she shifted the focus of her passion for progressive social change from anti-Semitism to anti-fascism, and then to the labor movement. From the defense of the maids in 1940 it was only a short step to her articulation in 1943 of a belief that working-class women were "fighters—that they refuse any longer to be paid or treated as some inferior species" by men. Labor union activity and participation in Popular Front feminism in the 1940s and early 1950s provided the bridge over which she moved from the working class to women as the repository of her

hopes, as well as some of the material from which she would fashion her feminism in *The Feminine Mystique*.

Popular Front feminism—represented by the unionism of the CIO and the probing discussions around the Congress of American Women— deepened and broadened Friedan's commitments. Reading people like Elizabeth Hawes and writing for Federated Press and UE News gave Friedan sustained familiarity with issues such as protests over the impact of rising prices on households, the discontent of housewives with domestic work, the history of women in America, the dynamics of sex discrimination, the negative force of male chauvinism, and the possibility that the cultural apparatus of a capitalist society might suppress women's aspirations for better lives.

The discussions of women's issues in Old Left circles beginning in the 1940s and Friedan's 1963 book had a good deal in common. They both offered wide-ranging treatments of the forces arrayed against women—the media, education, and professional expertise. Progressive women in the 1940s and Friedan in 1963 explored the alienating nature of housework. They showed an awareness of male chauvinism but ultimately lay the blame at the door of capitalism. They saw *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* as the text that helped launch the anti-feminist attack. They fought the fascist emphasis on Küche, Kinder, and Kirche.

Yet despite these similarities, the differences between Popular Front feminism and *The Feminine Mystique* were considerable. In articulating a middle- class, suburban feminism, Friedan both drew on and repudiated her Popular Front feminism. What happened in Friedan's life between 1953, when she last published an article on working women in the labor press, and 1963, when her book on suburban women appeared, fundamentally shaped *The Feminine Mystique*. Over time, a series of events undermined Friedan's hopes that male-led radical social movements would fight for women with the consistency and dedication she felt necessary. Disillusioned and chastened by the male chauvinism in unions but also by the Bomb, the Holocaust, the Cold War, and McCarthyism, she turned elsewhere. Her therapy in the mid-1950s enabled her to rethink her past and envision her future.

Always a writer who worked with the situations and material close at hand, in the early 1950s Friedan began to apply what she learned about working-class women in progressive feminist discussions of the 1940s to the situation that middleclass women faced in suburbs. Living in Parkway Village and Rockland County at the same time she was writing for the *Parkway Villager* and masscirculation magazines, Friedan had begun to describe how middle-class and wealthy women worked against great odds to achieve and grow. What she wrote about democratic households and cooperative communities, as well as her long-held dream of the satisfactions that romance and marriage would provide, reflected her high hopes for what life in the suburbs might bring. Although she felt that in the mid-1950s she successfully broke through the strictures of the feminine mystique she would describe in her 1963 book, the problems with her marriage and suburban life fostered in her a disillusionment different from but in many ways more profound than what she had experienced with the sexual politics of the Popular Front.

If all these experiences provided a general background out of which her 1963 book emerged, the more proximate origins of *The Feminine Mystique* lay in what she focused on during her career as a free-lance writer. She well understood the connection between the magazine articles she began to publish in the mid-1950s and her 1963 book. In addition, a critical impetus to her book was her response to McCarthyism. When she drew on her 1952 survey of her classmates to write "Was Their Education UnAmerican?" she first gave evidence of pondering the relationship between her Smith education, the struggle for civil liberties, and what it meant for women to thrive as thinkers and public figures in the suburbs. Then in her work on Intellectual Resources Pool, which began about the same time that she looked over those fateful questionnaires, Friedan paid sustained attention to the question of what it meant for middle-class women to develop an identity in American suburbs, including an identity as intellectuals. She asked these questions at a time when the whole culture, but especially anti-communists, seemed to be conspiring to suppress not only the vitality of intellectual life for which free speech was so important but also the aspirations of educated women to achieve a full sense of themselves. With her book, she reassured her own generation that their education mattered at the same time that she warned contemporary college students to take themselves more seriously.

The Feminine Mystique took Friedan an unexpected five plus years to complete. She was writing under conditions that were difficult at best and neither Carl nor her editor at W. W. Norton thought she would ever finish. The material was painful, and through her engagement with it, Friedan was rethinking her position on a range of issues. She was a wife with a commuting husband and a mother of three. By the end of 1957, Daniel was nine, Jonathan was five, and Emily was one. Her ten-year-old marriage to Carl was less than ideal, and in 1962 it took a turn for the worse. Carl complained to friends that when he came home at the end of the day, "that bitch" was busily writing her book on the diningroom table instead of preparing the meal in the kitchen. Carl often did not come home at night. Though his own career may not have been going well, he felt Betty was wasting her time. Her friends whispered that instead of ending the marriage she was writing about it. In addition, during almost the entire time she was working on the book she was also running the pool, and trying to publish articles in magazines. She had to travel for material— within the greater New York area for interviews, and to the New York Public Library where she took extensive notes on what she read. Without a secretary to type early drafts, let alone a photocopy machine or word processor, writing as many as a dozen drafts was laborious, tiring, and time consuming. In early 1961, having turned in half the manuscript to her publisher, she expected the book to be published before the year's end. But her agent, Marie Rodell, wrote back to an impatient Friedan that the manuscript was so long it would not have the impact Friedan desired. Not surprisingly, she was optimistic at some moments, discouraged at others.

To support her arguments, Friedan carried out wide-ranging research in women's magazines and the writings of social and behavioral scientists. She interviewed experts, professional women, and suburban housewives. She examined the short stories and human interest features in widely read women's magazines. Though Friedan made clear her reliance on such sources, there were some books that she read but acknowledged minimally or not at all. For example, she examined works by

existentialists, and though their ideas influenced her writing, especially on the issue of how people could shape their identities, she did not fully make clear her indebtedness. Friedan also returned to Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), which she had read at Smith, now absorbing his iconoclastic social criticism, which demystified the dynamics of women's subjugation, especially the ways domestic ideology kept middle-class women from working outside the home.

She also carefully followed the arguments in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1953), but mentioned only its "insights into French women." Beauvoir had explored how class and patriarchy shaped women's lives. She provided what was, for the time, a sympathetic account of the situation lesbians faced. She fully recognized women's participation in the work force and the frustrations of domestic life. She offered a telling analysis of the power dynamics in marriage. Linking the personal and political, she discussed a "liberation" of women that would be "collective." Friedan's reading notes of Beauvoir's book reveal her great interest in Beauvoir's existentialism, including her linking of productivity and transcendence. In addition, she derived from Beauvoir a keen sense of how language, power, economic conditions, and sexuality divided men and women.

What she read in Beauvoir and Veblen, as well as what she understood from her own situation and her reading of American women's history, also found confirmation in Friedrich Engels's essay of 1884, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State." Around 1959, she copied the following passage from a collection of the writings of Engels and Karl Marx:

we see already that the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework, which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree.

Here Friedan relied on Engels for support of the central thesis of her book, that women would achieve emancipation only when they entered the paid work force. Like feminists who preceded and followed her, she agreed with Engels's classic statement of women's condition. Her reliance on Engels strongly suggests that even in the late 1950s Marxism continued to inform her outlook. There is, however, one difference between what she read and what she wrote down. After Engels's words "when women are enabled to take part," Friedan added, in parentheses, her own words: "along with men." This was a significant addition, expressing both her experience as a Popular Front feminist and her hope for the cooperation of men in women's liberation.

The fact that she read Engels makes clear that Friedan and her editor had to make difficult decisions on what to leave out and include, a process that involved the questions of how much of her radical past to reveal, and how political and feminist the book would be. She also had to decide how to give it shock value and personal immediacy that would intensify its impact.

The magazine editors who in 1962 looked at articles derived from Friedan's book chapters raised questions about the scope, tone, and originality of her work. Some of their comments prefigured the anti-feminist diatribes that came with the book's publication in 1963. The editors at *Reporter* found Friedan's chapters "too shrill and humorless." A male editor from *Redbook* turned down one excerpt from the book, saying it was "heavy going," and another for expressing "a rather strident" perspective. "Put us down as a group of smug or evil males," remarked an editor of *Antioch Review*, who found that Friedan's chapter "The Sexual Sell" "contributes little to understanding or solution of the problems it raises." Friedan's article, he concluded, was "dubious sociology which attempts to answer too much with too little." Others questioned Friedan's originality. An editor at *American Scholar* found nothing especially new in what she had to say about Freud. A male editor of the journal of the National Education Association remarked that though an excerpt from the book pretended to present new material, in fact it had "the ring of past history." He illustrated his point by correctly noting that educators concerned about higher education for women had "already gone far beyond" what Friedan discussed. These responses gave Friedan a sense of the tough choices she had to make with the book, even as they intensified her sense of the importance of her message.

Friedan faced the problem of positioning her book in what she and her editors saw as an increasingly crowded field of writings on middle-class women. Although we tend to see *The Feminine Mystique* as a book that stands by itself, Friedan and her publisher were aware that others had already articulated many of the book's concerns. When a vice president of W. W. Norton wrote Pearl S. Buck to solicit a jacket blurb, he remarked that "one of our problems is that much is being written these days about the plight (or whatever it is) of the educated American woman; therefore, this one will have to fight its way out of a thicket." He may have been thinking of F. Ivan Nye and Lois W. Hoffman's *The Employed Mother in America* (1963), of Morton M. Hunt's *Her Infinite Variety: The American Woman as Lover, Mate or Rival* (1962), of Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962), or of the abundant discussion by educators and social critics regarding the frustrations of suburban women to which Friedan herself was responding. Friedan also had to decide whether to emphasize the deliberations of the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, whose work, underway in 1961, would result in a report that, like Friedan's book, appeared in 1963.

There were additional indications that Friedan was racing against the clock. While the book gave some the impression of a powerful and unshakable feminine mystique, Friedan herself acknowledged in the book that around 1960 the media began to pay attention to the discontents of middle-class American women. There is plenty of evidence that Friedan's readers, from professional women to housewives, found what she had to say either familiar or less than shocking. Some of those who reviewed the book found nothing particularly new or dramatic in it. Similarly, although some women who wrote Friedan indicated that they found an intense revelatory power in her words, others said they were tired of negative writings that, they believed, belabored the women's situation.

If what Friedan wrote was hardly new to so many, then why did the book have such an impact? We can begin to answer that question by examining the ways she reworked familiar themes to give them a special urgency, especially for middle-class white women. Nowhere was this clearer than on the issue of women's work. Especially striking is the contrast between her animus against the toil of housewives and volunteers and her strong preference for women entering the paid work force, a dichotomy a friend warned her not to fall back on. Here Friedan was advocating what she had learned from labor radicals who urged women to get paying jobs and to work cooperatively with men. Friedan recast the terms of a long-standing debate between men and women so that it would appeal to middle-class readers. In her discussion of housework, for example, she offered only scattered hints about the reluctance of husbands to help with household chores. At one moment, she mentioned "the active resentment of husbands" of career women, while elsewhere she praised cooperative husbands. Neither perspective enabled her to discuss openly or fully what she felt about her marriage, the sexual politics of marriage, and the attempts by women, herself included, to set things right. As a labor journalist she had talked of oppressive factory work for working-class women; in *The Feminine Mystique*, alienated labor involved the unrecompensed efforts by white, middle-class women to keep their suburban homes spotless. One reader picked up on what it might mean, in both trivial and profound ways, to apply a Marxist analysis to suburban women. In 1963, the woman wrote to Friedan that the book made her wish to rush into streets and cry "To arms, sisters! You have nothing to lose but your vacuum cleaners."

Friedan also cast her discussion of sexuality in terms that would appeal to conventional, middleclass, heterosexual suburban women. She promised that emancipation from the tensions of the feminine mystique would insure that women intensified their enjoyment of sex. Her statement that the "dirty word *career* has too many celibate connotations" underscored her preference for marriage. She hinted at the dangers of lesbianism when she discussed the sexual role models she had known in Peoria and at Smith. She contrasted "old-maid" teachers and women who cut their "hair like a man" with "the warm center of life" she claimed she experienced in her parents' home. She was concerned that some mothers' misdirected sexual energies turned boys into homosexuals. She warned that for an increasing number of sons, the consequence of the feminine mystique was that "parasitical" mothers would cause homosexuality to spread "like a murky smog over the American scene." Friedan's homophobia was standard for the period and reflects the antipathy to homosexuality widely shared in Popular Front circles. Her emphasis on feminized men and masculinized women echoed stereotypes widely held in the 1950s. What makes her perspective especially troubling is that it came at a time when reactionaries were hounding gays and lesbians out of government jobs on the assumption that "sexual perversion" had weakened their moral character, making them more likely to breach national security due to blackmail.

Friedan also made the history of women palatable to her audience. Although most scholars believe that 1960s feminism began without a sense of connection to the past, Friedan had long been aware of women's historic struggles, as many of her earlier writings make clear. Friedan not only talked of passion and "revolution" but connected women's struggles with those of African Americans and union members. Yet her version

of the past highlighted women who were educated, physically attractive, and socially respectable. Friedan went to considerable lengths to connect historic feminism not with the stereotypical man-haters or "neurotic victims of penis envy who wanted to be men" but with married women who, she noted repeatedly, were "dainty," "pretty," and "lovely." Unlike her writings for Federated Press and the *UE News*, which pointed out how millions of American women had to work hard in order to support a family economy under adverse situations, *The Feminine Mystique* described women's search for identity and personal growth, not the fight against discrimination or exploitation. While immigrant, African American, and union women were the subject of her 1953 *Women Fight For a Better Life! UE Picture Story of Women's Role in American History*, in *The Feminine Mystique* she remarked that female factory workers "could not take the lead" and that "most of the leading feminists" were from the middle class. In contrast, Eleanor Flexner's *Century of Struggle* (1959), on which Friedan relied in writing *The Feminine Mystique*, included extensive discussions of the social movements of African Americans, radicals, and union women.

Friedan also connected the conditions women faced with two of the great events that haunted her, as they did many members of her generation. At several points, she used the horrors of the Bomb to drive home her point. She contrasted domesticity with a world trembling "on the brink of technological holocaust." She also chided women in the antinuclear Women's Strike for Peace who claimed that once the testing of atomic weapons ended, they would be glad to stay home and take care of their children. Yet for someone who exaggerated her own role as a housewife, it is ironic that Friedan criticized the professional artist who headed that movement for saying she was "just a housewife."

More problematic was Friedan's exploration of the parallels between the Nazi death camps and suburban homes as "comfortable concentration camps," an analogy that exaggerated what suburban women faced and belittled the fate of victims of Naziism. This was the first time since 1946 that she had mentioned the Holocaust in print. Although in the end she acknowledged that such an analogy broke down, Friedan nonetheless spent several pages exploring the similarities. Just before her book appeared, two other Jewish writers, Stanley Elkins and Erving Goffman, had applied the Holocaust comparison to two institutions where a more compelling case could be made: slavery and a mental hospital. Similarly problematic was Friedan's omission of the anti-Semitism that drove the Nazis to murder millions of Jews. Like many Jews of her generation, Friedan hoped for a society in which anti-Semitism and race prejudice more generally would be wiped out. Therefore, in her book she strove for a race-neutral picture, in the process both trivializing and universalizing the experience of Jews.

While the concentration camp analogy grew out of her youthful antifascism, she gave no hint of how her early experiences with anti-Semitism had started her on the road to a passionate progressivism. There is a final reason that may explain why Friedan did not want to make explicit any connection between the situation Jews and women faced. Historically and in her own experience, there was a close connection between anti-Semitism and antiradicalism. Yet despite the fact that feminist groups such as the Congress of American Women had a disproportionate share of Jews among their

members and leaders, in public discussions anti-Semitism and anti-feminism had run along largely separate paths. On some level Friedan may have realized that it was best to use the discussion of the concentration camps to raise the consciousness of a wide range of readers without linking Naziism with anti-Semitism or feminism with Jews. Though the concentration camp analogy was careless and exaggerated, it nonetheless dramatically conveyed to Friedan's readers the horrible and dehumanized feeling of women who were trapped in their homes.

Another distinctive aspect of *The Feminine Mystique* was Friedan's use, and gendering, of contemporary psychology. She took what humanistic and ego psychologists had written about men, and occasionally about women, and turned it to feminist purposes. Drawing on studies by A. H. Maslow in the late 1930s, Friedan noted that the greater a woman's sense of dominance and selfesteem, the fuller her sexual satisfaction and "the more her concern was directed outward to other people and to problems of the world." Despite this earlier research, by the 1950s the feminine mystique had influenced even Maslow, Friedan noted, encouraging him to believe women would achieve self-actualization primarily as wives and mothers. Maslow and others held such notions despite evidence from the Kinsey report that persuaded Friedan of a link between women's emancipation and their greater capacity for sexual fulfillment. However, Friedan hardly wished to rest her case for women's enhanced self-esteem on the likelihood of more and better orgasms. She rejected a narcissistic version of self-fulfillment. Drawing on the writings of David Riesman, Erik Erikson, and Olive Schreiner, and on the experience of frontier women, Friedan argued that people developed a healthy identity not through housekeeping, but through commitment to purposeful and sustained effort "which reaches beyond biology, beyond the narrow walls of home, to help shape the future."

Along with others, Friedan was exploring how to ground a cultural and social critique by rethinking the contributions of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx, an enterprise that first captivated her in the early 1940s as an undergraduate. What Herbert Marcuse achieved in *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955), Friedan did almost a decade later, responding to the Cold War by minimizing her debt to Marx even as she relied on him. Central to her solutions to women's problems was her emphasis on personal growth, self-determination, and human potential. Here Friedan was participating in one of the major postwar cultural and intellectual movements, the application of psychological and therapeutic approaches to public policy and social issues. In the process, she recovered the lessons of her undergraduate and graduate studies, joining others such as Paul Goodman, Riesman, Margaret Mead, Erikson, Rollo May, Maslow, and Erich Fromm in using humanistic psychology and neo-Freudianism as the basis for a powerful cultural critique at a time when other formulations were politically discredited.

Like others, Friedan offered what the historian Ellen Herman has called a "postmaterial agenda" which employed psychological concepts to undergird feminism. Here Friedan was responding to the way writers—including Philip Wylie, Edward Strecker, Ferdinand Lundberg, and Marynia Farnham—used psychology to suggest that only the acceptance of domesticity would cure female frustrations. Friedan's contribution was to

turn the argument around, asserting that women's misery came from the attempt to keep them in place. Psychology, rather than convincing women to adjust and conform, could be used to foster their personal growth and fuller embrace of non-domestic roles. Other observers suggested the troublesome nature of male identity in the 1950s; Friedan gave this theme a twist. She both recognized the problems posed by feminized men and masculinized women and went on to promise that the liberation of women would strengthen male and female identity alike. Friedan took from other writers an analysis that blamed the problems of diminished masculine identity on life in the suburbs, jobs in large organizations, and consumer culture; she then turned this explanation into an argument for women's liberation.

Source: Daniel Horowitz, "The Development of *The Feminine Mystique*, 1957-63," in *Betty Friedan and the Making of "The Feminine Mystique": The American Left, The Cold War, and Modern Feminism*, University of Massachusetts Press, 1998, pp. 197-223.

Critical Essay #4

In the following essay excerpt, Bowlby explores the link between femininity and consumerism that she finds in Friedan's The Feminine Mystique.

Published in 1963, *The Feminine Mystique* is commonly regarded both as a feminist classic and as a book which acted as a catalyst to the western feminist movement which began in the mid to late sixties. In the canon of post-war feminist works it sits somewhat isolated, and somewhat incongruously, midway between *The Second Sex* and the outpouring of texts and tracts later on. But the striking gap between 1948—the date of de Beauvoir's book— and 1963 in fact fits well with one of Friedan's principal contentions. The arguments of almost all feminist social critics, before and after Friedan, involve the presupposition or demonstration that women's freedom either never existed or existed only in the remote past. Friedan, however, argues that women had freedom and lost it. And this peculiarity is perhaps a starting point for thinking about some of the echoes and overtones of the unidentified 'problem'. I want to explore some of the twists and turns of this unexpected structure of feminist narrative, and how it is related to Friedan's conceptions of subjectivity, femininity and the American nation. In particular, I am interested in the links that are made between femininity, in Friedan's sense, and the impact of consumerism, and in how these links impinge upon the form of Friedan's argument.

The genealogy of Friedan's particular 'problem' goes something like this. Not long ago, in the time of our grandmothers, strong 'pioneer' women got together to claim their rights to citizenship and equality on a par with men. They won access to higher education and the professions and all seemed set, thanks to their incomparable efforts, for a fair and sunny future for the now fully human second sex. But unfortunately there came World War Two, which brought young and old men flocking home to America with a craving for Mom and apple pie in the form of a wife and lots of children. To serve, or to reinforce, this need, the men of Madison Avenue stepped in. Lest there should be any women unwilling to comply with the scenario, advertising, magazines and the proliferation of domestic consumer goods saw to it that the 'image' of feminine fulfilment in the form of husband, babies and suburbia would be promoted to the exclusion of anything else. Other cultural forces came into play too. The evil prescriptions of a Freud who thought women's destiny was domestic and infantile entered and influenced every American mind. Higher education for women was dominated by a spurious use of sociology and anthropology to ensure girls got the message that their 'sex-role' as wives and mothers, and not their 'human' capacity to create and achieve in the working world, was the natural one. In any case, thanks to the bombardment of all these types of influence and suggestion, most of them left college halfway through to get married and reproduce. All the promise of a new generation of potentially free women, the daughters of the 'pioneers', has thus been knocked out of them, and it is now a matter of some urgency to expose the general fraud for what it is: to allow 'the problem with no name' to be spoken.

The dissatisfactions of suburbia centre, for Friedan, around an opposition between 'selfhood' and 'sex-role'—also glossed as 'humanity' and 'femininity'. The long-term planning arid 'creativity' involved in a worthy career are valorized by Friedan against the 'stunted' qualities of the woman who remains in a state of little-girl conformity, confined to her reproductive role and to fulfilment in the form of sex, by which Friedan means both reproduction and sexual pleasure. Motherhood, like that suburban wasteland, is a trap: Friedan has vivid metaphors of confinement to express this, including a chapter title of what now seems to be dubious taste—'Progressive Dehumanization: The Comfortable Concentration Camp'. A frequently repeated image of the apparently happy housewife with 'a stationwagon full of children' is itself used to epitomize 'this new image which insists she is not a person but a "woman."' Whereas the Victorians' problem was the repression of sexuality, that of the present is 'a stunting or evasion of growth.'

The account of socially induced 'femininity' as inhibited growth and as something which necessarily detracts from the achievement of full humanity can be placed in a tradition of feminist humanism which goes back to Mary Wollstonecraft. Friedan's narrative difficulty, however, is that she believes that the battles of Wollstonecraft and her successors, the 'pioneer' feminists, were fought and won, and she tries to explain what she now identifies as a relapse into a situation just as unsatisfactory as the one from which women freed themselves before.

Several culprits, of disparate provenance, are identified; I mentioned some of them at the beginning. One is the spread of psychoanalysis, taken as having reinforced conceptions of women as naturally inferior and naturally destined for merely domestic functions. An *ad hominem* attack on Freud himself, via his letters to his fiancée, is used as the basis for a reading of his account of femininity, and especially of penis envy, as both prescriptive and misogynistic. Freud is effectively likened to a salesman, purveying a false representation of women's nature: 'The fact is that to Freud, even more than to the magazine editor on Madison Avenue today, women were a strange, inferior, less-than-human species.'

Another set of culprits are 'the sex-directed educators', who have betrayed the high ideals of educational pioneers and who now offer courses which are intellectually unchallenging and whose explicit message, in courses with names like 'Adjustment to Marriage' and 'Education for Family Living', is that of the feminine mystique—Mothers' Studies, perhaps. Such education is in reality 'an indoctrination of opinions and values through manipulation of the students' emotions; and in this manipulative disguise, it is no longer subject to the critical thinking demanded in other academic disciplines.' The identification of a conspiracy here does not, however, stop with the professors themselves: they too have been deceived, and Friedan goes on to describe 'the degree to which the feminine mystique has brainwashed American educators.'

Even the brainwashers are brainwashed, then: the plot continues to thicken. Closer to home, we find a rather familiar target for blame: the mother. Not, in this case, the current generation of mystified, over-young mothers, but *their* mothers. The nineteenth-century struggle for women's rights was not incomplete. Friedan states clearly: 'The ones who fought that battle won more than empty paper rights. They cast off the

shadow of contempt and selfcontempt that had degraded women for centuries.' But then something went wrong, and it is this which she is at a loss to explain:

Why, with the removal of all the legal, political, economic and educational barriers that once kept woman from being man's equal, a person in her own right, an individual free to develop her own potential, should she accept this new image which insists she is not a person but a 'woman,' by definition barred from human existence and a voice in human destiny?

The next generation did not follow up the victory, but returned to the same domesticated forms of femininity from which their mothers had sought to free them. 'Did women really go home again as a reaction to feminism?' Friedan asks, with no little bewilderment. 'The fact is, that to women born after 1920, feminism was dead history.' This is like saying that emancipated slaves go back to their masters when the battle is forgotten, so Friedan adds more. Feminism was not only dead history, or not *dead* history at all, but 'a dirty word', evoking for 'mothers still trapped' and still raising daughters, 'the fiery, man-eating feminist, the career woman— loveless, alone.' And thin was what they passed on to *their* daughters: 'These mothers were probably the real model for the man-eating myth.' After 'the passionate journey their grandmothers had begun' as pioneers of feminism, the subsequent generations were left with no positive image with which to identify. 'They had truly outgrown the old image; they were finally free to be what they chose to be. But what choice were they offered?'

The model of free choice brings us to the most often emphasized source of the feminine mystique: the media. Advertising, magazines and (to a lesser extent) popular novels and 'how-to' books from Spook to sausage rolls are treated as absolutely central to the propagation of the mystique. Friedan enters into the confessional mode in describing how she herself used to make her living writing articles to order on aspects of housewifery or mothering for magazines like *Good Housekeeping* or *Mademoiselle*. At this stage, significantly, it is tracked down as being primarily a male conspiracy; and in the height of her crime thriller mode, Friedan devotes a whole chapter to the results of her being given permission to delve into the secrets of an advertising agency's market research files. It is with all the force of a revelation that she points out the importance of advertising and consumption to the social control or the sociological description of American women:

Properly manipulated . . . American housewives can be given the sense of identity, purpose, creativity, the self-realization, even the sexual joy they lack—by the buying of things. I suddenly realized the significance of the boast that women wield seventy-five per cent of the purchasing power in America. I suddenly saw American women as *victims* of that ghastly gift, that power at the point of purchase. The insights he shared with me so liberally revealed many things . . .

The image of femininity perpetrated by magazines is itself the first example brought forward by Friedan after her opening chapter on the barely articulated 'problem with no name'. She runs through typical articles and stories, showing how they share a common message and injunction to women, that they should seek their fulfilment in the form of

marriage and homemaking. But, as with the history of the feminist movement, this present, univocal image is contrasted sharply with a previous phase in magazine publishing when political stories could be part of the contents list, when there were more women writers than now, and when the housewife's role was not the be-all and end-all of the reader's presumed horizons. This earlier 'passionate search for truth and identity' is highlighted by a short story about a girl who secretly learns to fly. This, for Friedan, represents the heights of past achievement and serves as a measure of how far things have subsequently declined: 'It is like remembering a long forgotten dream, to recapture the memory of what a career meant to women before "career woman" became a dirty word in America.'

Given the recurrent rhetoric of manipulation and brainwashing, it is not surprising that the marketing case, around magazines and advertising, should be so crucial for Friedan. The fifties model of 'hidden persuaders' (the title of Vance Packard's 1957 book on the advertising industry)—of a barely discernible but thus all the more effective conspiracy—contributes to the mystery overtones of the diagnosis of the mystique and its origins. A distortion or 'blurring' of the image has occurred since the more open days of the flying story, so that false and fatuous models are being perpetrated throughout the land in every sphere of daily life. From education to therapy, to childcare, to journalism and advertising, women are being sold back down the river by the withholding of what ought to have been the fruits of their social emancipation. And crucially, whatever the relative priorities accorded to each of these agencies in perpetrating the mystique, it is the 'sell-out' metaphor of marketing which subsumes them all. The model of the marketing brainwash, of the insidious manipulation of advertising, is itself taken up as the model for a generalized social persuasion.

The harmful effects of the mystique are summed up by the repeated reference to 'waste'. Waste is what happens when the mystique takes over. The avoidance of waste represents the kind of emotional parsimony and efficient use of available human resources that fits with the paradigm of goal-setting and deferred gratification. The 'waste' is first of female 'human' potential that is going unused or untapped, owing to its deflection on to feminine channels falsely and misleadingly imaged as leading to authentic fulfilment. Friedan is in no doubt as to the relative valuation to be ascribed to domestic and other forms of work: the former can be summed up as 'trivia', to be kept to a functional—wastefree—minimum; the second is characterized by such heady pursuits as 'splitting atoms, penetrating outer space, creating art that illuminates human destiny, pioneering on the frontiers of society.'

This unquestioned valorization of high-flying, maximum-penetration activities over their 'feminine' alternatives is worth contrasting with its reversed form in a later feminist writer like Elaine Showalter. Writing in the late 1970s, Showalter blames what she identifies as the theoreticist excesses of literary criticism over the previous twenty years on a kind of masculinist emulation by male critics of their scientific rivals in the era of Sputnik. Friedan has human playing feminine as genuine plays trivial, artificial; Showalter makes the 'human achievement' pole explicitly masculine and the alternative an authentic femaleness.

Parallel to the idea of personal waste is that of national waste. Here Friedan introduces a full-scale narrative of imminent cultural decline precipitated by the menace of the marauding 'mystique'. This argument acquires an urgency distinct from the argument about women's individual waste. Friedan refers not only to 'the desperate need of this nation for the untapped reserves of women's intelligence', but also to a generalized domestication of all American people, men and women. After the war, she says, 'the whole nation stopped growing up' and it suffers now from 'a vacuum of larger purpose', from 'the lack of an ideology or national purpose.' So now the infantile and non-goal-oriented attributes of image-dominated women have been transferred to Americans in general. And here, instead of women being the victims, they are identified as the source. Friedan provides a whole gallery of monstrous females, chiefly in the form of the overdominant mother who won't let her sons grow up and separate from her. An ideology of domestic 'togetherness' in marriage has made men so passive that even though their wives are at home all day with nothing better to do than get on with the chores, they still get drawn into the trivia of washing up, vacuuming and the rest in a way that their fathers did not.

There are indications in these sections of a nostalgia for a more authoritarian community and family structure, with mother and father each in his and her proper, traditional place and with the domestic sphere relegated to its rightful secondariness in relation to the public world of national achievement. It is interesting to note the difference here from arguments in the seventies about the desirability or imminent emergence of 'the sensitive man' formed from a happy blend of 'feminine' and 'masculine' qualities—first, because clearly he figured a lot earlier, and secondly because at this stage in feminist argument he's represented as thoroughly feeble. It's not that Friedan wants to keep women in the home; rather, she thinks the home and its tasks should be reduced to a minimum so that both sexes can fulfil a genuinely 'human' function in the outside world.

More dramatically, Friedan sees 'frightening implications for the future of our nation in the parasitical softening that is being passed on to the new generation of children'. Specifically, she identifies 'a recent increase in the overt manifestations of male homosexuality', and comments:

I do not think this is unrelated to the national embrace of the feminine mystique. For the feminine mystique has glorified and perpetuated the name of femininity and passive, childlike immaturity which is passed on from mother to son, as well as to daughters.

A little further on, this becomes 'the homosexuality that is spreading like a murky smog over the American scene'. What is striking here is not only the imagery of infection—the murky disease and the clean, almost Jamesian 'American scene'— but its manifest link to a process of cultural feminization. Male homosexuality as the end-point of the feminine mystique is not just artificial, a regrettable but accidental distortion of the reality it overlays: it is a sinister source of cultural contamination. This 'murky smog' is the final smut, the last 'dirty word' in the story of the mystique: that clean, feminine exterior is now found to hide a particularly nasty can of worms. Marketing and the mystique are

together leading to 'bearded undisciplined beatnickery' and a 'deterioration of the human character.'

Male homosexual activity is further identified as 'hauntingly "feminine"' in its 'lack of lasting human satisfaction.' Friedan establishes a clear category of what she calls 'pseudo-sex', as engaged in by bored housewives, teenagers and male homosexuals. Again, it is interesting to note parallels with recent arguments seen as a backlash to the liberalization of sexual mores in the wake of the 1960s: here is Friedan making a case in 1963 for the return of real sex between real, whole people (of different sex) against a hypothetical backcloth of generalized promiscuity and a lowering of moral standards: 'For men, too, sex itself is taking on the unreal character of phantasy—depersonalized, dissatisfying, and finally inhuman.' The censure of 'the stunted world of sexual fantasy' is exactly parallel to the criticism of the stunted image of the feminine mystique. At the same time, the obsession with sex—or with pseudo-sex—is regarded as the focal point for the diversion of women from their true selfhood. Like a Victorian moralist, or a 1980s Victoria Gillick, Friedan asks: 'Why is it so difficult for these youngsters to postpone present pleasure for future long-term goals?'

And yet the argument about sexuality is not as straightforward as it appears. Friedan devotes some pages to the Kinsey reports on sexual behaviour which came out in the 1950s, and which in their revised form suggested a correlation between educational level and sexual fulfilment. She argues against pseudo-sex not on the grounds that it is immoral—though there is a didactic tone to the prose—but on the grounds that it isn't as good as it could be: 'Sex, for them [young girls] is not really sex at all. They have not even begun to experience a sexual response, much less "fulfilment."'

The further development of this occurs when Friedan suggests that real sexual fulfilment requires the other sort—'human' fulfilment—as a condition of possibility and therefore, implicitly, that if you want good sex you should see to your achievement in other areas first. Quoting the findings of 'Professor Maslow', Friedan concludes: 'It seemed as if fulfilment of personal capacity in this larger world opened new vistas of sexual ecstasy.' Friedan has not herself shifted the terms from those of the mystique itself. While she accuses it of diverting women, and perhaps men too, from full human achievement to merely sexual preoccupations, her own argument is effectively to say: 'That is pseudosex. Free yourself from the mystique and you can have the real thing.' So sex remains at the centre; it is not so much displaced as the excesses of a passion that detracts from rationality, but rather reinscribed as an even more fulfilling by-product of personal growth.

This brings us to another equivocation in Friedan's text. She describes, as we have seen, the various institutions and agencies which might be identified as responsible for the propagation or infliction of the mystique, whatever their motives or interests. She does not really explain why the mystique appeals, why it sticks, given the prior history of tough feminist values developed and put into action in the past. The only reason, ultimately, is a negative one: women obeyed, or adopted the mystique, because nothing better was on offer. Feminism was 'dead history' or even 'a dirty word', and a female member of the next generation was stuck 'for lack of an image that would help her to

grow up as a woman true to herself.' Or in the passage quoted earlier: 'They had truly outgrown the old image. They were finally free to be what they chose to be. But what choice were they offered?'

Always there is the same humanist appeal to a pre-existing individual self, embryonically there from the start and available for a development which can be straight and true or may, by extraneous social influence, deviate from its natural course. A girl either grows—grows up, tall and strong—or else she is warped and stunted and remains in a state of immaturity or corruption. Friedan claims on the one hand that the 'lack of an image' of what she might be caused the fall-back into the error of false femininity: without the good model, there is no way for the girl to grow. On the other hand, because she conceives of the person as there all the time, she also appeals repeatedly to a 'basic' or 'hard core of self' which is called upon to resist its own feminization:

By choosing femininity over the painful growth to full identity, by never achieving the hard core of self that comes not from fantasy but from mastering reality, these girls are doomed to suffer ultimately that bored, diffuse feeling of purposelessness, non-existence, noninvolvement with the world that can be called *anomie*, or lack of identity, or merely felt as the problem that has no name.

Here, it is the girl's own active 'choosing' of the femininity which then makes her passively 'doomed to suffer'. She begins as a fully rational subject and condemns herself to the utter passivity of 'non-existence'. There is a hesitation as to victimization or agency in relation to which, in other cases, Friedan sometimes privileges one side and sometimes the other. To take another instance:

In the last analysis, millions of able women in this free land chose, themselves, not to use the door education could have opened for them. The choice—and the responsibility—for the race back home was finally their own.

In this example, free choice is real: in 'this free land', women are ultimately free to choose 'themselves', and responsible for the mistakes they make. Home is the prison they preferred to the open, outside world of education and opportunity. In the earlier example—finally free, but what choice were they offered?'—choice is seen as limited by what is offered. No image available, therefore no possible identification with a self to match up to the free, or freed, 'New Woman'.

This oscillation recurs throughout the book. There is the 'inner voice' within that is the germ of an authentic protest; at the same time, there is the clear statement that the image conforms in a sense to what women want: 'This image . . . shapes women's lives today and mirrors their dreams.' In other words, the 'image' imprints itself in such a way as to be indistinguishable from those other dreams characterized as more primary and more true to the inner, human self. Friedan is constantly caught in this contradiction, which can be smoothed over only by accepting the arbitrary distinction between true and false dreams—between those that are from within and correspond to 'human'

potential, and those that are from without and are imposed by the manipulators of the 'feminine' mystique.

Much of the difficulty stems from the fact that the language for each alternative is identical, having to do with wanting (or 'yearning'), choice and fulfilment. Friedan tells the story of the first feminist movement, whose emergence was prompted by a situation of confinement to the home and to a state of infantile underdevelopment similar to the one she identifies in the present. The problem for a woman then was that 'she could never grow up to ask the simply human question, "Who am I? What do I want?"' But what is wrong now is articulated in terms which seem to correspond to this acknowledgement of wanting, to a search for identity and fulfilment: 'Women who suffer this problem, in whom this voice is stirring, have lived their whole lives in the pursuit of feminine fulfilment.'

This double premise—first, that there is a basic 'core of self' which ought to develop according to its nature and to resist extraneous influence, and second, that without an external image there is no possibility of achieving a full identity—accounts, I think, for a final twist in the form of Friedan's argument. For it is as if the entire book is there to lay out the missing image of human selfhood excluded by the mystique, but that this can only be done by repeating exactly those forms of persuasion from outside which are identified as the insidious techniques of the mystique which is thereby displaced and excluded in its turn. Be a whole person, achieve your human potential, and you can have even more than is presently on offer.

This is not to dismiss the book of *The Feminine Mystique* as an advertisers' con on a par with that of the feminine mystique it takes as its object. It is rather to suggest that the denunciation of 'brainwashing' and 'manipulation' in the name of a suppressed authenticity may mean that the authenticity claimed instead is rhetorically just as suspect. Friedan counters the mystique's representation of the natural woman with her own, and lays her argument open to the same critique in the name of another feminine —or human—nature. (And this, as we shall see, is precisely what happens when she revises her own argument eighteen years later.) In the second chapter she cites as an example of the spuriousness of contemporary women's magazine journalism an editor who was heard to demand: 'Can't you dream up a new crisis for women?' Friedan's next chapter is entitled 'The Crisis in Women's Identity'.

In rereading—or reading—Friedan twenty or more years on, it is relatively easy to point out aspects which now seem anachronistic, either because they refer to demands which no longer seem pertinent or because they appear unacceptably narrow or biased. In the first category—demands no longer relevant—would appear, for example, the fact that western nations are not much worried by high birthrates any more, or the fact that in a time of high unemployment it is no longer feasible to marshal an argument that women are a wasted asset for the state.

In the second category—demands that now appear prejudiced—would be placed the heterosexist assumptions, not only in the representation of male homosexuality as a cultural symptom but also in the premise that the normal woman is heterosexual:

Friedan refers, for example, to the 'perversion' of history by which nineteenth-century feminists are represented as 'man-hating, embittered, sex-starved spinsters' and proceeds to show, on the one hand, that many famous feminists 'loved, were loved, and married', and on the other that the cause was great enough to lead to a temporary abandonment of womanliness:

Is it so hard to understand that emancipation, the right to full humanity, was important enough to generations of women, still alive or only recently dead, that some fought with their fists, and went to jail and even died for it? And for the right to human growth, some women denied their own sex, the desire to love and be loved by a man, and to bear children.

Here there is, clearly, a conception of natural sexual difference operating alongside the claim for recognition of women's humanity; and that difference consists in a heterosexual, childbearing destiny which would radically separate Friedan from many of her feminist successors. Her argument is that marriage and motherhood should be kept in their secondary, 'sexual' place, not that they are to be questioned in themselves as part of what she calls the 'life-plan' for women.

Also featuring in this category of now unacceptable assumptions would be the middle-class, professional focus which is implicit throughout and which occasionally shows another negative side. It is in the following terms that Friedan denounces the distorted evidence used to build statistical proof that working mothers are bad for children's development:

How many women realize, even now, that the babies in these publicized cases, who withered away from lack of maternal affection, were not the children of educated, middle-class mothers who left them in others' care certain hours of the day to practice a profession or write a poem, or fight a political battle— but truly abandoned children: foundlings often deserted at birth by unwed mothers and drunken fathers, children who never had a home or tender loving care.

The asymmetry here between 'unwed' and 'drunken' is perhaps even more interesting than the vignette itself, with the two culpable parents stumbling around in their different states of post-natal incapacitation to throw out the baby 'at birth'. And interestingly, the 'home and tender loving care' which measure the extent of the foundling's deprivation figure here not as the false image of domestic happiness perpetrated by the feminine mystique, but as just what a baby deserves.

In academic circles, Friedan's humanist premises and triumphalist rhetoric of emancipation do now seem rather old-fashioned. The current emphasis on sexual difference as the starting point for questions, rather than as an ideological confusion masking women's full humanity, has the effect of relegating a perspective such as Friedan's to the status of being theoretically unsophisticated as well as historically outdated. But to fail to consider her on these grounds is to accept precisely those assumptions about concepts of progressive liberation and enlightenment, collective and individual, which the later models have put into question. The point is not to reject

Friedan from some point of advanced knowledge either as simply 'of her time'—an argument for the early sixties of no interest now, or as benightedly prejudiced—good liberal as she was, we've come a long way since then. Rather, the very twists of her argument, with all the oddity of its details and contradictions, as seen from more than two decades later, may themselves suggest a different perspective on current feminist preoccupations and assumptions and current versions of feminist history and feminism's destination.

Friedan's basic theory of historical, as of individual, development is one of evolutionary maturation— from 'primitive' to civilized cultures, via the agency of pioneers, in the feminist movement as in American history. In this scheme, the present form of femininity is but a moderate deviation, to be ironed out—if the image is not too domestic—by a final mobilization of latent energy:

In the light of women's long battle for emancipation, the recent sexual counterrevolution in America has been perhaps a final crisis, a strange breath-holding interval before the larva breaks out of the shell into maturity.

But elsewhere, Friedan half hints—and half despairingly—that there may be a structure more cyclical than progressive in the history of feminist argument. For instance:

Encouraged by the mystique to evade their identity crisis, permitted to escape identity altogether in the name of sexual fulfilment, women once again are living with their feet bound in the old image of glorified femininity. And it is the same old image, despite its shiny new clothes, that trapped women for centuries and made the feminists rebel.

From femininity to feminism, to the forgetting of feminism to a return to femininity, to feminism again—and so on. Such would seem to be the sequence identified by this description, leaving no suggestion of a possible outcome of full feminist, or human, identity for women, since the story never ends.

This difficulty is highlighted by Friedan's own explicit shift of position since 1963. *The Second Stage* (1981) reads uncannily like a reversal of the terms of *The Feminine Mystique*. In place of the silently suffering, affluent housewife, we are here introduced to the secretly unfulfilled female executive who has taken on wholesale the offer of success in a man's world but is now experiencing the effects of the 'denial' of what turn out to have been valid feminine feelings. Where 'femininity' was the false image in the first book, its negative effects to be cured by feminist consciousness, 'feminist rhetoric' has now become the stale and stultifying demand, to be cured by the recovery of a measure of femininity. Rather than the feminine mystique, it is 'the *feminist* mystique' which is 'the problem'. Two halves assuredly make a whole, and balance will only be attained by acknowledging the importance of those traditionally female nurturing qualities and 'needs' which the first stage of feminism forced them to repudiate.

The role of the false, distorting image played by femininity in the earlier book is thus taken over in *The Second Stage* by the 'stunting' excesses of a feminism 'blind' to the caring, family values it had to reject in order to make its initial point. In arguing that the

time has now come to 'transcend' the polarization of men and women, Friedan relies on the same types of double premises as in *The Feminine Mystique*. From one perspective, the new problems are generated by economic and national necessities (because of inflation and dwindling growth, women have to go out to work to balance the domestic budget; by the same token, macho masculinity *a la* John Wayne is no longer viable in post- Vietnam America). But at the same time, the solutions appeal to first principles: men are now able to put off what turn out to have been their own 'masks' of hyper-masculinity, to discover their underlying feelings; women, meanwhile, have got past the point of needing to assert themselves according to values now seen not as the 'human' norm but as excessively masculine. Femininity is now valorized as a buried potential, where previously it was regarded as a fabrication.

All this leaves open the whole question of what actually constitutes the difference between the sexes. Too much of either masculinity or femininity is bad for men and women, which suggests that they are not qualities tied to either sex: women must not get too much like men, any more than men should repress their feminine side. And yet, the whole aim of 'the transcendence of polarization' is that, in the words of the book's final sentence, we will all be 'spelling out own names, at last, as women and men'. The goal of feminism, having passed through all its 'evolutionary' stages, then, would be to make true men and women of us, while at the same time the attainment of such identities is predicated on a fusion of masculine and feminine qualities. Transcendence might be another impasse after all.

Source: Rachel Bowlby, "'The Problem with No Name': Rereading Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*," in *Feminist Review*, No. 27, Autumn 1987, pp. 61-75.

Topics for Further Study

Research recent female fertility studies and discuss how the findings may affect women who wish to have both a career and a family.

Research the statistics regarding househusbands— fathers who choose to forgo a career to stay at home and take care of children. Compare the mental and physical effects on these fathers to the effects on mothers as noted in Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and discuss potential reasons for any similarities or differences that you find.

In one column of a table, plot the major changes that Friedan advocated for women in the 1960s, as expressed by her in "A New Life Plan for Women," the final chapter of *The Feminine Mystique*. In the other column, fill in the current laws or other social changes that have fulfilled Friedan's wishes. Discuss any of Friedan's suggested changes that have not happened yet, including any historical, economical, or social reasons that explain why.

During the modern women's movement, the United States was also undergoing a Civil Rights movement. Research these two movements in the 1960s and discuss how they affected each other.

Research the long history of women's struggle for equality in the United States. Create a timeline of major events in this struggle. Choose one major feminist from any point in this history, other than Friedan, and write a biography about her.

Compare and Contrast

Mid 1940s-Early 1960s: During the Cold War, Americans live in fear of nuclear war. Government sources do not give American citizens accurate or complete information about the potential effects of nuclear war and instead use propaganda to ease the minds of Americans.

Today: Many Americans live in fear of terrorist attacks, especially biological and chemical warfare. President George W. Bush and other government representatives make frequent addresses to U.S. citizens, apprising them of the potential dangers of weapons of mass destruction.

Mid 1940s-Early 1960s: Married women's happiness in the United States is equated mainly with sexual satisfaction, and many media sources print graphic and detailed descriptions of sex techniques and acts. However, premarital and extramarital sex is still viewed as taboo. In 1940, less than 4 percent of all births are to unmarried women.

Today: Most research supports a balanced, healthy life—including work, nutrition, exercise, and sex—as the key to happiness for both men and women in the United States. Premarital and extramarital sex is common and does not register much shock except in conservative groups. In 1999, approximately one third of all births are to unmarried women.

Mid 1940s-Early 1960s: Women are usually encouraged not to work in the same fields as men. Even when they do, they generally earn much less.

Today: As the result of legislation from the last half of the twentieth century, many inequalities between men and women in the workforce have been eliminated, although in some areas, women still do not receive equal pay.

What Do I Read Next?

In her controversial book *The Second Stage* (1981), Friedan defines a new mystique, the feminist mystique, which she says is supported by the superwoman stereotype—the woman who can do everything. Friedan advocates making the family the central focus in women's life and instituting separate standards for women and men, since women cannot be expected to perform at their highest levels at both work and home.

In *The Masculine Mystique: The Politics of Masculinity* (1995), Andrew Kimbrell argues that American men are in crisis. As in Friedan's book, Kimbrell's manifesto examines men's history, discusses sociological factors that affect men, and offers a plan of action to combat the masculine mystique.

In *The Difference: Growing Up Female in America* (1994), *Washington Post* columnist Judy Mann explores the difficulties of growing up as a female in the United States in the 1990s. Drawing on her own experiences, interviews with teenage girls, and a wealth of historical and cultural research, Mann discusses the various sociological forces that affect girls today and offers suggestions for new ways to raise boys and girls.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's novella *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899), which is based on events in her own life, is one of the most powerful works by early feminists. In the story, a protagonist is locked into a third-floor room of a house by her husband and physician, who assumes that the woman's unhappiness can be cured by seclusion and lack of stimulation or movement. However, as the story progresses, the woman loses touch with reality, increasingly relating to a woman whom she envisions as living inside the room's yellow wallpaper.

In the essay, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf argued that, in order for women to achieve the same greatness that male writers have, women need an income and privacy. In addition, Woolf discusses the fact that the idealistic and powerful portrayals of women in fiction have historically differed from the slave-like situations that many women faced in real life.

Further Study

Crittenden, Ann, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued*, Owl Books, 2002.

Crittenden, a noted economics journalist, asserts that mothers are penalized for their childbearing role. Crittenden uses studies and financial facts to show that all mothers, regardless of occupational or marital status, are at an economic disadvantage to others in society. Crittenden offers solutions to this problem based on working models found in such diverse areas as Sweden and the United States military.

Freedman, Estelle B., *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, Ballantine Books, 2002.

In this engaging, narrative history of feminism, Freedman explores a wide range of issues, including race, politics, economics, and health, while providing her own critical interpretations of these topics.

Horowitz, Daniel, *Betty Friedan and the Making of "The Feminine Mystique": The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism*, University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.

In this noted biography of Friedan, Horowitz chronicles the development of Friedan's political and feminist ideas and challenges the popular assumption that Friedan was merely a suburban housewife when she wrote *The Feminine Mystique*. Horowitz examines the aspects of Friedan's life—such as her labor activism—that Friedan did not mention in her book, and explores the cultural and political climate that encouraged her to bury these facts about her life.

Schneir, Miriam, ed., *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present*, Vintage Books, 1994.

Schneir's impressive anthology collects many contemporary feminist writings from the second half of the twentieth century, including several excerpts from longer works. Schneir also provides commentary on the writings.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Nonfiction Classics for Students (NCfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NCfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on

□classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NCfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NCfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NCfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NCfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NCfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Nonfiction Classics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NCfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NCfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Nonfiction Classics for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Nonfiction Classics for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NCfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Nonfiction Classics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NCfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Nonfiction Classics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NCfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Nonfiction Classics for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NCfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Nonfiction Classics for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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