

Theories of Women's Liberation

Branka Mugac

This is a rather comprehensive summation of WL theories in the form of a review of 14 books--The Female Eunuch, by Germain Greer, Patriarchal Attitudes, by Eva Figes, and Sexual Politics by Kate Millet, and Bi-directional Sex by Shulamith Firestone (dedicated to Beauvoir).

The difference in the title of the article as it appears on the cover (above) and what appears inside--Sex Politics: Class Politics--tells a story in itself, since it is clear that the woman, Margas, still suffers from doing something which may not be "correct class politics", though she herself certainly diverts, as a good NLR editor, to the horrible structuralism of Althusser and his "love", Freud.

You nevertheless can trace the development of WL from as far back as 1790 when Mary Wollstonecraft defended the French Revolution against Burke and in 1792 wrote "A Vindication of the Rights of Women". She also quotes from August Bebel's work on Women and Socialism who had an absolutely beautiful quotation from Olympe de Gouges who in 1791 in her manifesto of the Rights of Women, said: "If women have the right to mount the scaffold, they have the right to mount the tribune."

On the other hand, she does not understand women as reason, specifically Black women, specifically in the Abolitionist movement. Even though I was glad to see her expose of racism in some of the white middle class women in that movement, she sure doesn't know what conclusions, other than class--that is to say, to show that the Black women certainly had not only a correct but an actually "higher status" than any of the white women or men who headed the movement. She does quote people like Lucy Stone, wife of Henry D. Blackwell and another spokesman, Frances Power Cobb, who dared declare in arguing for certain type only of women's suffrage: "The difference, nay, rather the contrast should be insisted on between proposals to admit part of population to franchise, and those to admit mothers, daughters and sisters of those who already exercise it."

at NLR: On the Subject of Women 1866
Bella Fuchs: The Female Mystique 1863
W. N. A. C. (C. P. M.)
Korean Feminism
Ed. Stacey

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The centerpoint of the article, however, is the modern development and in there she sees only the failure to link sexual with class politics. And the truth of the matter is that Simone de Beauvoir in also with her second sex had a sort of class analysis and to the day someone called "revolutionary" as the same de Beauvoir and yet that is the most un-~~likely~~ least of any if the W.I. books except great works of Marxist The New Humanity by John Stuart Mill. But the truth is that her book, for all its "realism" and her individualism is women and the openly confronter especially, ended by saying it was un-~~likely~~ least. And here it is the work of the men who took power in their own hands, she couldn't not only forgive Beauvoir who openly admits "that one sentence" she was wrong and don't even bother to correct that sentence.

There is altogether too much in the analysis which, instead of relating the particular book to the historical period of the book is even more important in this case, relating the development of the ideas on W.I. to simply talk on the basis of the actual books of others. For example, a great deal of time is taken up between contrasting two works of Rousseau--"Emile" and "Social Contract"--by showing how a feminine author would counterpose the one to the other and yet fail to say his own man. The truth of the matter is that the French Revolution ended in which on even a lower level than had been achieved by the men not only in derriding the political ideas but actually closing salons and women's clubs (p.76).

The whole point is that despite all her talk about history and method she sees their lack only in other writing but not in her own.

her own is limited by Althusser which means ~~she is~~

She defends Freud against women's attacks on him as totally sexist, not so much by pointing out what revolution Freud had wrought but simply by attacking Althusser's analysis of Freud. (p.70) She is good however in contrasting how Marx exposed John Stuart Mill which the women who are now overplaying Mill's concept are not at all realizing that all his being "for women," it was the single class women he had in mind.

- 1) "Woman as Noble Savage" (pp. 70-72)
- 2) "Rebellion and Revolution" (pp 73-14) (This analysis extends 6 more pages on Rousseau and only 1 page on the period)
- 3) "The Suffragette Movement and Its Heritage" (pp 75-90) with a 1-page conclusion ending simply on the fact that the W.I. poses difficult theoretical and practical problems for Marxists whereas the two comments that follow by men--Robin Blackburn and Lucien Key--take over "the answer".

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