

Simone de Beauvoir
1908-1986

Chronology

Born Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir on January 9, 1908, in Paris, France, daughter of Georges de Beauvoir, bourgeois lawyer, and Françoise Brasseur; 1910 learns to read; sister Hélène ("Poupette") born; 1913-1925 attends Cours Adeline Désir, an exclusive private girls' school, where she meets her friend Elisabeth ("Zaza Mabile") Le Coin; 1919 moves from Boulevard du Montparnasse to less affluent Rue de Rennes upon her father's declaring bankruptcy; 1922 rebels against her conservative bourgeois Catholic upbringing; reads controversial works of literature; questions, and finally breaks with all aspects of Roman Catholicism; 1924 completes first program of studies at Cours Adeline Désir; 1925 completes program of study in philosophy and mathematics from Cours Désir; attends classes at two Paris secondary schools; 1925-1927 studies philosophy at the Sorbonne and receives her *licence-ès-lettres* and her degree in philosophy; 1928-1929 studies at the École Normale Supérieure for teaching certification; meets Paul Nizan and Jean-Paul Sartre; begins her lifelong liaison with Sartre; 1931-1936 teaches philosophy at girls' schools in Marseille and Rouen; 1936-1943 teaches philosophy at various girls' schools in Paris; 1937-1943 writes five short stories (published in 1979 under the title *When Things of the Spirit Come First*); writes novels *She Came to Stay* and *The Blood of Others*; begins *All Men are Mortal*; 1941 father dies; 1943 publishes *She Came to Stay*, the story of her student Olga Kosakiewicz's sexual and emotional intrusion into her relationship with Sartre; dismissed from her teaching position after a student accuses her of condoning immoral behavior; works as a researcher for German-controlled Radio Paris; 1944 assists Sartre and friends at *Combat*, a magazine of the French Resistance against the Germans; with Sartre, founds *Les Temps Modernes*, a radical monthly journal; 1945 travels to Spain and Portugal; publishes *The Blood of Others*; 1946 publishes *All Men Are Mortal* and articles on Existentialism in *Les Temps Modernes*; lectures on Existentialism and contemporary French literature in Tunisia and Algeria; 1947 visits the United States twice, lecturing at universities and initiating a romance with Chicago novelist Nelson Algren; publishes *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, her analysis of Existentialism; 1947-1951 continues her affair with Algren through frequent letters and yearly meetings in the United States, Central America, France, Italy, and North Africa; 1949 publishes *The Second Sex*, a historical, sociological, and philosophical analysis of women that elicits both critical acclaim and hostility; 1950 travels through North and sub-Saharan Africa; 1951 completes a draft of *The Mandarins*; ends affair with Algren despite his proposal of marriage; 1952 undergoes surgery for a breast tumor; begins a seven-year relationship with Claude Lanzmann, a young member of *Les Temps Modernes*' advisory board; 1954 publishes *The Mandarins*, a novel about postwar French intellectuals that receives the prestigious Prix Goncourt; 1955 visits China for two months; 1956 publishes her experiences in China in *The Long March*; 1958-1960 publishes *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* and *The Prime of Life*, the first and second volumes of her autobiography; speaks out against France's policies in Algeria; meets Sylvie Le Bon, a young student, whom she later legally adopts; 1960-1968 with Algren, travels to Greece and Turkey; with Sartre, travels to Brazil, Cuba, the Soviet Union, Japan, Egypt, Israel, Denmark, Sweden, and Yugoslavia; 1963 publishes *Force of Circumstance*, the third volume of her autobiography; 1964 publishes *A Very Easy Death*, based on her

mother's death in 1963; 1966 publishes novel *Les Belles Images*; 1968 publishes a short-story collection, *The Woman Destroyed*; supports the Parisian student uprising in May; 1972 publishes *All Said and Done*, the fourth volume of her autobiography; 1975 receives the Jerusalem Prize in honor of her advocacy of human rights; 1980 collapses after Sartre's death in April and recovers slowly; 1981 publishes *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*; learns of Algren's death; 1982 refuses French Legion of Honor; 1983 receives the Sonning Prize for European Culture in honor of her lifetime achievements; visits the United States; edits a collection of Sartre's World War II letters; 1985 visits Hungary and Austria; 1986 dies in Paris of pulmonary edema on April 14; buried next to Sartre in Montparnasse Cemetery in Paris.

Activities of Historical Significance

Simone de Beauvoir was the most prominent of women intellectuals and authors in twentieth-century France. Her writings embody philosophies of Existentialism and feminism that span a period of some five decades, but writing was by no means her sole method of commitment to what she defined as a "life of action." She was also a teacher of philosophy and an active sociologist, studying and lecturing on the "human condition," as she called it, especially those aspects concerning the roles of women as dictated by a male-dominated society. Throughout her life, she was often at the forefront of the social issues of the day: She was politically active as a reporter for the Resistance magazine *Combat*; participated in the anti-fascist movement; vocally favored Algerian independence from French control; sympathized with the May, 1968 student uprising in Paris; and continued to advocate human rights and feminist causes until the time of her death.

Long before de Beauvoir made the conscious decision to follow in the footsteps of Existentialists such as Georg Wilhelm Hegel, Søren Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, and Sartre, she had been acutely aware of the disparity that existed among social classes, of the often hypocritical teachings of the Catholic Church, and of her own propensity toward a life of intellectual rather than maternal and domestic activities. In an effort to deal with these concepts, quite in conflict with the strict teachings of her somewhat overzealous mother, de Beauvoir chose to reject all parental authority. She read controversial works of literature and she questioned and later broke off with the Catholic Church. Instead of marrying, she successfully completed university degrees, taught philosophy, and maintained a committed but unmarried relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre. She also became an esteemed author and leader of the feminist movement in France. In the details of her life, we see de Beauvoir's personal application of the philosophy of Existentialism, whereby she herself took control of and responsibility for her own life.

In the 1930s, during the early years of her association with Sartre, she was thought of merely as his "companion," and Sartre's followers believed that she had no true convictions of her own. It was this misconception of her role in society, especially in politics, that resulted in her undergoing an intense process of questioning the validity of her opinions and of reevaluating her place in society. To accomplish this, she immersed herself in the "act of living," separating herself philosophically and psychologically from Sartre. She recognized herself as an individual, free to realize her acts and decisions, forge her own destiny, and accept responsibility for her own life. This personal existentialist struggle for independence and autonomy in a world quick to stereotype people is the struggle de Beauvoir chronicles in virtually all of her published

works, from her earliest fiction of the 1930s to her political and philosophical treatises up until the 1970s.

De Beauvoir recognized as early as the 1930s the importance of individual political action to the securing of an environment in which individuals could freely pursue their personal quests for meaning. However, it was not until after the Second World War that de Beauvoir truly associated literary and political activity. For her, the goal of literature was not primarily aesthetic in nature but rather a means by which one could demonstrate commitment to a political cause and bring about widespread change. But the individual alone could not promulgate such radical change—this could only be accomplished through the solidarity of all humanity, striving toward a common cause. In novels such as *The Blood of Others* (1945) and *The Mandarins* (1954), de Beauvoir expounds not only the need for political “engagement” but also the need for people to join forces in combatting their common enemy.

It is these vital issues that underlie de Beauvoir's masterpiece, *The Second Sex* (1949), the work for which she is best known today. Having comprehended what a life committed to action entailed, she felt the need to examine the overall condition of women in society to determine the degree to which they did or did not participate actively in the creation of their own destiny. Topics covered in *The Second Sex* include the historical “enslavement” of women by men and the influence of society on roles available to women, primarily those centered on motherhood and care-taking. De Beauvoir's famous statement, “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman,” implies that indeed all women are directly responsible for the direction that their lives take. Feminists of the 1950s and 1960s took *The Second Sex* as their authority on feminism, but more contemporary feminist critics have quarreled with some of de Beauvoir's reductive and classist statements. Although many of the questions raised by de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* may seem outdated a half-century later, her underlying belief in the ideal of the self-created, self-determining, independent woman is as vital today as it was in 1949.

Simone de Beauvoir's dual role in twentieth-century Western culture—as the doyenne of Existentialism and the mother of modern feminism—demonstrates her intellectual versatility and assures her an enduring place in history. She should also be remembered as a tireless advocate for human rights, fighting against the forces of sexism, ageism, and other “isms” that in her view limited the individual's freedom to assert himself or herself as “subject” rather than “object” or “other.”

Overview of Biographical Sources

De Beauvoir's biographers have been both blessed and burdened by her several volumes of autobiography: blessed with the wealth of information and self-interpretation she provides, and burdened with the essential unreliability of a highly subjective text. De Beauvoir's anomalous position—as a prominent intellectual who happened to be a woman—has so far been the key issue for her biographers. No book-length studies were published in English until the 1980s, after the academic feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s was well established, and this academic feminism is amply represented in the biographies.

Two general tendencies are apparent in the contemporary biographies. The first is to take an adulatory and intensely personal view of her life. Some feminist biographers have identified strongly with de Beauvoir's commitment to personal freedom and her repudiation of stereotypical feminine roles. They have thus written defenses of her radical lifestyle and

philosophy while at the same time authenticating their own experiences as women intellectuals. These biographers tend to either accept de Beauvoir's autobiographical self-portrait relatively uncritically or revise her image in positive and sympathetic ways. Works by Carol Ascher (1981), Claude Francis and Fernande Gontier (1985), Judith Okely (1986), and Lisa Appignanesi (1988) fit into this category.

The second general tendency in recent de Beauvoir biography is likewise personal, but it is not uncritical. Analyses of a recently deceased subject are frequently less forgiving than those written during the subject's lifetime. Some feminist scholars have felt betrayed by the inconsistencies between de Beauvoir's public repudiation of stereotypical feminine roles and what now appears to have been, based upon new evidence from letters and from interviews with her surviving circle, her private ambivalence in her relationships with men, Jean-Paul Sartre and Nelson Algren in particular. Deirdre Bair's *Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography* (1990) carries traces of this tendency, and several reviewers of Bair's book echoed this feeling. Renee Winegarten's *Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical View* (Oxford: Berg, 1988) extends this disillusionment beyond biography into literary criticism as well.

Evaluation of Principal Biographical Sources

Appignanesi, Lisa. *Simone de Beauvoir*. London: Penguin, 1988. (G, Y) Brief, admiring study of de Beauvoir's life and work, tracing her life chronologically and thematically, stressing de Beauvoir's significance as an exemplary woman who freed herself from conventional social restraints. Readers new to de Beauvoir studies may wish to start with this book.

Ascher, Carol. *Simone de Beauvoir: A Life of Freedom*. Boston: Beacon, 1981. (G) Quirky "part biography, part literary criticism, part political and personal commentary" stressing de Beauvoir's implication in the central issues of twentieth-century life.

Bair, Deirdre. *Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography*. New York: Summit Books, 1990. (A, G) The definitive biography, undertaken with de Beauvoir's general cooperation. Thoroughly researched, exhaustively documented, monumental in size, readable, and interesting. Draws on extensive interviews with de Beauvoir and her circle as well as unpublished archival material. Includes illustrations, notes, and index.

Francis, Claude, and Fernande Gontier. *Simone de Beauvoir: A Life, A Love Story*. 1985. Translated by Lisa Nesselson. New York: St. Martin's, 1987. (G) Sometimes sensationalized biography stressing de Beauvoir's romantic relationships. Draws on newly accessible de Beauvoir letters to Nelson Algren. Some factual error; criticized by de Beauvoir in *Le Matin* 16 (December, 1985).

Okely, Judith. *Simone de Beauvoir*. New York: Pantheon, 1986. Virago/Pantheon Pioneers Series. (A, G) Thoughtful feminist analysis, with extensive application of ideas from *The Second Sex* to de Beauvoir's own life and other writings. Okely's analysis is conducted on several levels, citing her personal response to *The Second Sex* in the 1960s and the 1980s as well as de Beauvoir's revisionary comments in the decades since its publication.

Overview of Primary Sources

The most obvious primary sources are de Beauvoir's autobiographical works. The first volume, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, translated by James Kirkup (1958. Reprint. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984; **A, G, Y**), covers her childhood from 1908 to 1929. The second, *The Prime of Life*, translated by Peter Green (1960. Reprint. New York: Paragon House, 1992; **A, G, Y**), deals with her young womanhood and the war years, 1929 to 1944. The third, *Force of Circumstance*, translated by Richard Howard (1963. Reprint. New York: Harper and Row, 1977; **A, G, Y**), discusses her years of growing fame, 1944 to 1962. The fourth, *All Said and Done*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (1972. Reprint. New York: Paragon House, 1993; **A, G, Y**), covers her life of political and social action, 1962 to 1972. The fifth, *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (1981. Reprint. New York: Pantheon, 1984; **A, G, Y**), discusses Sartre's decline and death, and her own old age from 1972 to 1981.

Throughout the works, de Beauvoir presents herself as a rational, sensible, intellectual who made her life choices freely and deliberately and who was consistently self-possessed and self-reflective. This personal account of her life and the evolution of her philosophy is an invaluable resource. Nevertheless, because of her wish to exhibit a particular, coherent, and consistent portrait of herself and her suppression of some information to protect friends' privacy, her autobiography is selective, skewed, and faulty in dates and details. This unreliability is, of course, one of the autobiography's primary attractions, as it has provoked and will continue to provoke extensive commentary and revision by scholars.

After abandoning her teaching career in her mid-thirties, de Beauvoir became a full-time writer, and she produced an impressive body of material that varied in both genre and subject matter. She is best known as a novelist, an autobiographer, and a sociologist, but she also wrote a play, three philosophical monographs, and documentary studies on such diverse topics as her American and Chinese travels, old age, and her mother's death. She also spent forty years editing, writing, and reviewing books for the radical journal *Les Temps Modernes*, which she, Sartre, and their circle founded in 1945. Taken as a whole, her writings span the central issues of mid-century thought and life—Existentialism, political engagement, roles for women and men, and the condition of the individual in society from childhood to old age. Few twentieth-century writers can demonstrate such a broad sweep and great impact.

There is, to date, no standard English-language collection of de Beauvoir's works. All of her books, though not all of her essays, have been translated into English and are generally easily available; most are still in print. Because there are several editions and reprints of her works by various French, British, and American publishers, bibliographic information in this section is limited to the date of first French publication and the most recent English-language edition.

De Beauvoir is best known for her pioneering socio-historical treatise on the condition of women in Western society, *The Second Sex*, translated by H. M. Parshley (1949. Reprint. London: David Campbell, 1993; **A, G**). In it, de Beauvoir attempts to explain why women have been relegated to the margins of Western culture. Her basic premise is that, for various reasons, men have historically viewed women as "other," and that this "otherness" came to be seen as inferiority. The result: Women essentially have been deleted from the historical record kept by men. De Beauvoir asserts that this presumed inferiority stems not from physiological difference but from cultural conditioning. According to the existentialist concept that all individuals possess the freedom to choose their actions and thus may remake themselves and the world, women and

men need not persist in this unequal relationship; society can learn to accept equality of the sexes, despite their differences.

De Beauvoir's five long works of fiction are all thesis novels; each illuminates an aspect of her Existentialist and feminist concerns. The first, *She Came to Stay*, translated by Yvonne Moyses and Roger Senhouse (1943. Reprint. New York: Norton, 1990; **A, G, Y**), is a semi-autobiographical story of a couple dedicated to existential freedom whose invitation to a younger woman to join their relationship has disastrous effects as shifting alliances within the trio consistently alienate one or another member. *The Blood of Others*, translated by Yvonne Moyses and Roger Senhouse (1945. Reprint. New York: Pantheon, 1983; **A, G, Y**) is a novel of commitment, presenting characters who forswear their political detachment and class allegiances in order to dedicate themselves to the Resistance against the German occupation of France. *All Men Are Mortal*, translated by Leonard Friedman (1946. Reprint. New York: Norton, 1992; **A, G, Y**), according to de Beauvoir scholar Catherine Savage Brosman, examines the "dominant existentialist themes" of "action, happiness, freedom" in a story about an immortal man and a mortal woman, the futility of their choices, and their ultimate powerlessness against the course of history.

De Beauvoir's great critical and popular success came in 1954 when she received the Prix Goncourt, France's premier literary prize, for *The Mandarins*, translated by Leonard Friedman (1956. Reprint. New York: Norton, 1991; **A, G, Y**). The "Mandarins" of the title are a group of postwar French intellectuals, much like de Beauvoir's own circle, who are deeply committed to politics and writing and profoundly perplexed by the challenges of maintaining love and friendship in the face of the alienation of the human condition and the degradations of women. De Beauvoir's last novel, *Les Belles Images* (title same in French and English), translated by Patrick O'Brian (1966. Reprint. New York: Putnam, 1968; **A, G, Y**), continues her analysis of the peculiar problems women face in a society that limits their freedom by bombarding them with images of how they should look, act, and ultimately be.

De Beauvoir also published two collections of short stories with feminist and existentialist themes: *The Woman Destroyed*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (1967. Reprint. New York: Pantheon, 1987; **A, G, Y**), and *When Things of the Spirit Come First*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (1979. Reprint. New York: Pantheon, 1984; **A, G, Y**). Her play, *Who Shall Die?*, translated by Claude Francis and Fernande Gontier (1945. Reprint. Florissant, MO: River, 1983; **A, G**), is a kind of dramatized philosophical essay posing ethical questions about the value of the individual life.

De Beauvoir's important monograph, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, translated by Bernard Frechtman (1947. Reprint. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1980; **A**), explores the problem of the individual creating an ethical system in an ambiguous, absurd, and chaotic world.

Besides *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir's other book-length, nonfiction documentary studies are: *America Day by Day*, translated by Patrick Dudley (1948. Reprint. New York: Grove, 1953; **A, G**), a pseudo-diary of her 1947 American lecture tour; *The Long March*, translated by Austryn Wainhouse (1957. Reprint. Cleveland: World, 1958; **A, G**), a commentary on the Socialist transformation of mainland China based on de Beauvoir's official 1955 tour; *A Very Easy Death*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (1964. Reprint. New York: Pantheon, 1985; **A, G, Y**), a chronicle of her mother's illness and death from cancer; and *The Coming of Age*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (1970. Reprint. New York: Putnam, 1974; **A, G**), an analysis of the deplorable condition of elderly people in Western society.

One volume of the journal de Beauvoir kept sporadically throughout her lifetime has

been published: *Journal de Guerre: Septembre 1939-Janvier 1941*, edited by Silvie Le Bon de Beauvoir (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), not yet translated.

De Beauvoir's correspondence is in the process of being published. Her adopted daughter Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir issued two volumes of de Beauvoir's *Letters to Sartre*, covering the years 1930 to 1963, translated, edited, and abridged by Quintin Hoare (1990. Reprint. New York: Arcade, 1992; **A**). Summaries of de Beauvoir's letters in English to American novelist Nelson Algren comprise Lauren Helen Pringle's *An Annotated and Indexed Calendar and Abstract of the Ohio State University Collection of Simone de Beauvoir's Letters to Nelson Algren, 1947-1964* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985; #86-03042; **A**). Other correspondence of interest to de Beauvoir students is the collection of letters Sartre wrote to her during their intermittent separations between 1926 and 1939: *Witness to My Life: The Letters of Jean-Paul Sartre to Simone de Beauvoir, 1926-1939* (New York: Scribner's, 1992; **A, G**), edited by Simone de Beauvoir in 1983 and translated by Lee Fahnestock and Norman MacAfee.

German feminist and critic Alice Schwarzer has published a transcription of six interviews she conducted with de Beauvoir from 1972 to 1982. The work, *After the Second Sex: Conversations with Simone de Beauvoir*, translated by Marianne Howarth (1983. Reprint. New York: Pantheon, 1984; **A, G, Y**), chronicles de Beauvoir's mature attitudes toward feminism and the female condition in the decades following the publication of *The Second Sex* in 1949.

Students seeking a bibliography of de Beauvoir's publications, including translations, should consult Claude Francis and Fernande Gontier's excellent though necessarily, by its date, incomplete *Les Ecrits de Simone de Beauvoir: la vie, l'écriture, avec en appendice textes inédits ou retrouvés* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979; **A**), not yet translated into English. Joan Nordquist's *Simone de Beauvoir: A Bibliography* (Santa Cruz, CA: Reference and Research Services, 1991; **A, G**) lists books, essays, and interviews by de Beauvoir as well as books, book reviews, articles, and dissertations about her work. Nordquist's bibliography is limited to works in English and is not annotated. Anne-Marie Lasocki has compiled a listing of contemporary book reviews of de Beauvoir's volumes of autobiography: "Simone de Beauvoir" in *A Critical Bibliography of French Literature* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1980, Vol. 6, Part 3: 1682-1683; **A**), edited by Douglas W. Alden and Richard A. Brooks. The essential bibliography of critical books and articles is by Joy Bennett and Gabriella Hochmann, *Simone de Beauvoir: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1988; **A, G, Y**), which lists and summarizes books, articles, interviews, theses, and book reviews of books by and about de Beauvoir for the years 1940 to 1986. Works in five languages are included—French, English, German, Italian, and Spanish.

Fiction and Adaptations

Three film documentaries have been made of de Beauvoir's life and work. The first, *Simone de Beauvoir* (directed by Josée Dayan and Malka Ribowska, 1978; in French), is a series of conversations among de Beauvoir, Sartre, Claude Lanzmann, and Alice Schwarzer; the filmscript has been published as *Simone de Beauvoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978; not translated). Josée Dayan also directed a four-hour documentary for French television on de Beauvoir's role in modern feminism: *The Second Sex* (1985). Most recently, Penny Forster produced and Imogen Sutton directed a one-hour documentary for the British Broadcasting Corporation,

Daughters of de Beauvoir (New York: Filmmakers Library, 1989), a series of interviews with women from many countries (including Kate Millett, Marge Piercy, Eva Figs, and Sylvie le Bon de Beauvoir) who are continuing de Beauvoir's feminist and humanitarian work. The filmscript for this documentary has been expanded and published as *Daughters of de Beauvoir*, edited by Penny Forster and Imogen Sutton (London: Women's Press, 1989).

Museums, Societies, and Historical Landmarks

Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir (Paris). Cinematographic archives on women, founded in 1982 by Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig and Ioana Wieder, open to the public.

Plaque (Hôtel Mistral, Paris). December 10, 1991: inauguration of a plaque dedicated to Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, commemorating their residence at the Hôtel (24 rue Cels, Paris 14e) before and during the Second World War. The plaque is attached to the hotel's facade for public viewing.

Simone de Beauvoir Institute (Montreal). Located at Concordia University, the Institute, founded in 1978, houses an extensive library of books and periodicals relating to de Beauvoir and to women's studies in general.

Simone de Beauvoir Society (Hayward, California). The Society has an international membership of students and scholars, publishes a quarterly newsletter and an annual journal of scholarship on de Beauvoir, and sponsors a biennial conference.

Other Sources

Bennett, Joy, and Gabriella Hochmann. *Simone de Beauvoir: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland, 1988.

Bieber, Konrad. *Simone de Beauvoir*. Boston: Twayne, 1979. Good summary of de Beauvoir's autobiographies. Elementary discussion of the literary and philosophical works.

Brosman, Catharine Savage. *Simone de Beauvoir Revisited*. Boston: Twayne, 1991. Clear and cogent exposition of "Beauvoir's literary, philosophical, and other works . . . against the background of her life and career." (Introduction). Recommended for readers wishing an introduction to or a review of de Beauvoir's work. Excellent annotated bibliography.

Cottrell, Robert D. *Simone de Beauvoir*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1975. Modern Literature Monographs. Concise analysis of de Beauvoir's use of existentialist ideas in her fiction.

Evans, Mary. *Simone de Beauvoir: A Feminist Mandarin*. London: Tavistock, 1985. Excellent philosophically oriented study focusing on de Beauvoir's evolving Existentialism and

feminism.

Fallaize, Elizabeth. *The Novels of Simone de Beauvoir*. London: Routledge, 1988. Discusses issues of historicity, political commitment, and gender roles in de Beauvoir's five novels and two short-story collections. Asserts that women's narrative authority decreases markedly in de Beauvoir's fiction, from the powerful female monologues in the 1930s to the muffled intermittent narration by the female protagonist in the 1966 *Les Belles Images*.

Heath, Jane. *Simone de Beauvoir*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989. Key Women Writers Series. Feminist analysis of the autobiographies, *She Came to Stay*, *The Mandarins*, and *Les Belles Images*. Heath's premise is that de Beauvoir's writing stance was neither feminist nor consciously feminine and that she consistently identified with masculine values.

Keefe, Terry. *French Existentialist Fiction: Changing Moral Perspectives*. London: Croom Helm, 1986. A consideration of popular notions of Existentialism as communicated through the fiction, not the theoretical writings, of de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Keefe demonstrates that de Beauvoir's and Camus' works are remarkably similar in their ambivalence about the individual's situation in society.

———. *Simone de Beauvoir: A Study of Her Writings*. London: Harrap, 1983. Emphasizes de Beauvoir's seriousness as a writer and her engagement with moral questions in every work, regardless of genre. Balances analysis of the novels with analyses of her sociopolitical and philosophical essays and her autobiographies.

Leighton, Jean. *Simone de Beauvoir on Woman*. Foreword by Henri Peyre. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975. Early feminist analysis of "the woman question" as a base for de Beauvoir's writings. Leighton argues that de Beauvoir is often anti-feminist; for instance, the confident assertion in *The Second Sex*—that women can reject their inferior "other" status and can choose autonomy and freedom—is never manifested in de Beauvoir's fictional women characters.

Madsen, Axel. *Hearts and Minds. The Common Journey of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre*. New York: William Morrow, 1977. A dual biography that explores the long, intertwined relationship of de Beauvoir and Sartre. Includes correspondence, translated by the author. Minimal documentation; dated and contradicted by recent accessible primary materials.

Marks, Elaine. *Simone de Beauvoir: Encounters with Death*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973. Clear and convincing analysis of de Beauvoir's existential fear of emptiness, meaninglessness, and the annihilation of the self in death. Marks notes that de Beauvoir is preoccupied with this theme in all her writings and that in every genre de Beauvoir depicts mature women in anguish over the prospect of death.

———. *Critical Essays on Simone de Beauvoir*. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987. Includes twenty-seven essays by noted scholars and critics utilizing a variety of approaches. Useful as a gauge of critical opinion of de Beauvoir at the time of her death.

Moi, Toril. *Feminist Theory and Simone de Beauvoir*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell,

1990. Bucknell Lectures in Literary Theory Series. Two lectures given by Moi in 1989: "Politics and the Intellectual Woman," an analysis of French and Anglo-American feminists' differing receptions of de Beauvoir's work, plus a commentary on Western culture's ambivalence about women as intellectuals; and "Intentions and Effects: Rhetoric and Identification in *The Woman Destroyed*." Helpful introductory essay by Michael Payne.

Patterson, Yolanda Astarita. *Simone de Beauvoir and the Demystification of Motherhood*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1989. Important contribution to the history of ideas in its depiction of de Beauvoir's attitudes toward women's family roles set against the backdrop of shifting Western attitudes about motherhood in the past century. Interviews with Simone de Beauvoir and her sister H  l  ne are appended. Patterson, a professor at California State University, Hayward, also edits the annual *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* and the quarterly *Simone de Beauvoir Society Newsletter*.

Peters, H  l  ne. *The Existential Woman*. Foreword by Germaine Br  e. New York: Peter Lang, 1991. American University Feminist Studies. A study of Sartre's and de Beauvoir's literary representations of women within the existentialist context of freedom, choice, and responsibility. Counters Leighton by asserting that providing role models of successful women was never de Beauvoir's intent.

Wenzel, H  l  ne Vivienne, ed. *Simone de Beauvoir: Witness to a Century*. Special edition of *Yale French Studies* 72 (1986). Collection of ten essays on various aspects of de Beauvoir's work, plus a transcription of a 1984 interview.

Whitmarsh, Anne. *Simone de Beauvoir and the Limits of Commitment*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1981. Emphasizes de Beauvoir's metamorphosis from apoliticism to political engagement, with extensive reference to Existentialism. Good summaries of the novels.

Winegarten, Renee. *Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical View*. Oxford: Berg, 1988. A very critical view, highlighting the disparities between de Beauvoir's professed ideals and her life as actually lived. Winegarten undercuts the popular heroic images of de Beauvoir and presents instead a view of an egocentric and inconsistent rationalist.

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