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Der Begriff des Feminismus ist dadurch nicht obsolet. Aber er reicht alleine nicht (mehr) aus. In Zukunft ist jede Analyse, jede Kritik und jede Politik unterkomplex, die konzeptionell hinter diese Einsicht in den gemeinsamen gesellschaftlichen Reproduktionszusammenhang von Rassismus, Faschismus, Imperialismus, Patriarchat und Kapitalismus zurückfällt. Nur gemeinsam und in gemeinsamer Anstrengung können sie langfristig überwundern werden. Es bedarf daher Woolf zufolge einer produktiven Überschreitung des Begriffs des Feminismus in einer gemeinsamen *Weiterentwicklung* sowohl der theoretischen, der normativen als auch der politischen Begrifflichkeiten und nicht zuletzt der Bündnispolitiken oder, wie Woolf am Ende ihres Essays schreibt, es gilt, grundlegend „neue Worte zu finden und neue Methoden zu schaffen" (Woolf 2001, 297). Eine Herausforderung, vor der derzeit – angesichts der gegenwärtigen neoliberalen gesellschaftlichen Transformationsprozesse – nicht allein feministische, sondern überhaupt kritische emanzipatorische Theorie und Politik verschärft steht.

Anmerkung

1 Mit „Sie" sind fiktive Adressat*innen gemeint; wie gesagt, Drei Guineen ist als Brief konzipiert.

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Which text influenced you substantially as a feminist and/or feminist researcher?

JOYCE MARIE MUSHABEN

I cannot say with certainty that Mary McCarthy's classic work, *The Group* (1963), was the first text that inspired me to become a feminist, but it stuck with me for decades. As co-editor of my high school newspaper in 1969, I was already writing editorials opposing the Vietnam War, supporting the migrant workers' grape boycott

and calling for equal rights for women – in a Catholic school. McCarthy explores the fates of nine upper-class, white women who graduated from Vassar at the outset of the Great Depression. They viewed their highly privileged status as a natural state of affairs, even after a few lost family fortunes requiring them to get jobs as glorified service workers in schools, hospitals, with publishers or "at Macy's."[1] Neither their detailed knowledge of Greek philosophers, American playwrights, British poets and Italian sculptors, nor their ability to converse about ancient history, modern art, fine wines and silver place-settings could save them from the breath-defying corset of traditional gender roles. Aching to become something "more" than wives and mothers, most fell prey to shattered dreams, encumbered by domineering, cheating or impotent husbands, except for Lacey, who outs herself a lesbian shortly before the ultimate anti-heroine, Kay, dies under suspicious circumstances at age 29.

I envied Group members at first, or at least their privileged status and their base in New York City: their ability to attend that expensive, private college, an Ivy-League equivalent for females denied admission to Harvard, Yale and Princeton, and to travel around Europe expanding their intellectual horizons – these options were indeed the stuff of novels and films for middle class, mid-western daughters like me. My father made it very clear that despite my standing as a "straight A" student, he would not pay for me or my younger sisters to go to college; my brother, eight years my junior, needed that benefit because he "would have to support a family someday." Our college-prep counselor, Father Vonderhaar, had already shattered my dream of becoming a medical researcher with the words, "girls' don't become doctors."

I re-set my internal navigational system, opting for a career in diplomatic service, based on my Best Delegation experiences at city-wide Midwest Model UN simulations and as a founding member of our school World Affairs Club. As Class Salutatorian (ranked 2nd out of 224), I had more years of Latin, more math courses, better grades, better SAT test scores, better everything (beyond my sex) than Eric Myers, who graduated 64th in our class. He was admitted to Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1970. I was not. I didn't "find a man" willing to marry me until I turned 39, and my brother quit college after his first semester. I was, and remain, self-supporting.

Thinking of themselves as "best friends forever," the women of the Group were anti-(s)heroes, at best, viciously gossiping about each other, naïve concerning birth control and sexuality, having affairs but always obsessed with keeping up appearances. They rarely revealed the depths of their unhappiness to each other. Their inability to escape, to become something "more" was pre-ordained, but they lived in the 1930s; I was a child of the late 1960s, surrounded by many women who thought that change was not only possible but also terribly necessary. McCarthy's book came back to haunt me, when I finally got around to Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique* (1963) as a grad student in a feminist reading group. Same era, same type of protagonist: this non-fiction work addressed privileged women who had attended universities but discovered that their lives were "over" once their children left home; still in their

"prime", their husbands kept on ascending the corporate ladder, sometimes dumping them for younger secretaries. Friedan taught me the importance of the kitchen table as a site of consciousness-raising and revolutionary reflection. It didn't hurt to have a cheap bottle of wine to go along with it. Though very self-absorbed in terms of class, race and heterosexual norms, her real-life analogue to McCarthy's novel helped me to link "the personal" with "the political". I found comic relief in essays by Erma Bombeck and Nora Ephron, satirizing the myth of perfect children, mothers and marriages.

Reading *The Group* made me angry: a product of that world, Friedan grew increasingly bitter towards younger feminists like Kate Millett, not afraid to face diversity. Gloria Steinem's sense of humor and Shulamith Firestone's assault on the structures gave me hope: they were part of my world, my times. I stopped believing that simply eliminating formal legal barriers (liberal feminism) was going to change the world. *Emancipation* (opting not to become "merely" a wife/mother) was something I could aspire to individually, but sexual *inequality* was a collective, institutionally embedded condition. Today it seems so *selbstverständlich* that treating two people whose qualifications are *the same* "differently" produces inequality and that treating persons with *different needs* as "the same" likewise produces inequality. *The Group* was a how-*not*-to-achieve-equality handbook. The rest of my life as a feminist scholar has been an exercise in "learning by doing", none of which would have been possible without real *BFF*s, equally committed to breaking all of the old rules.

Note

1 Founded in 1858, Macy's was one of New York's first department stores; it soon became a hallmark of mass, albeit genteel consumption, offering extensive new employment opportunities for women in "retail."

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