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*The Image of Woman in the Works of
Simone de Beauvoir
and
Jean-Paul Sartre.*

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract.

The thesis examines first the situation of women in France today and their attitudes to the current questioning of women's rôles, which has arisen in part from the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's Le Deuxième sexe, concluding that women are divided in their views.

The early life and background of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre are considered, and their relationship and their attitudes to love, particularly in those respects which have influenced their writing.

This is followed by a brief account of aspects of existentialist philosophy as they have affected the lives of the two authors, and which are relevant in the study of their women characters, noting that it is Simone de Beauvoir who has explored the moral consequences of living in accordance with existentialist theories.

The main points of Simone de Beauvoir's Le Deuxième sexe are summarized, with some comments on criticisms of it, noting the sometimes hasty and not quite objective reactions of some critics and its sympathetic reception by some, but not all, women readers.

Women characters in the works of each author are examined, to see how far the image presented expresses the philosophical ideas of the authors, with comments on the differences in the attitudes of the two authors to the characters, and women are then considered as they appear in their relationships with men, conventional or unconventional.

The conclusion is that the image of woman presented is not one that may be considered an ideal representation of women living according to existentialist principles, but shows women of different degrees of existentialist authenticity, grappling with the problems of life.

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Introduction.

Today women in France, as elsewhere, are becoming increasingly vociferous in their claims to a right to have a certain status in society, to receive consideration as autonomous individuals. This is part of a world-wide reevaluation of the rôle of women in society. It is not a new movement, but the impetus it has gained in recent years is partly due to the work done by Simone de Beauvoir in the 1950's.

In France, there is a long tradition of respect for women. Henri Peyre writes:

No other history is probably as rich as that of France in remarkable women: saints, queens, court-esans, favourites, tyrannical mothers, warlike heroines. Down to the eighteenth century there flourished also more women writers of the first rank in France than in Italy, Spain or Britain. Marie de France has no equal in any other medi-
eval literature; nor have Madame de Sévigné and Madame de Lafayette or the prolific and passionate letter writers of the... "Age of Reason." George Sand and Madame de Staël were, in the Romantic era, the last great survivors of a long series of women writers who lived their novels while writing them. (1)

The courtly poets sang of love, placing the lady on a pedestal. Writers of fabliaux painted a more down-to-earth picture. Through the ages women have been portrayed in French literature against the background of their times. In addition, since the thirteenth century there have been outstanding women writers and patronesses of the arts, such as Aliénor d'Aquitaine and her daughter Marie, Marguerite d'Angoulême, queen of Navarre, Madame de Lafayette and the Marquise de Rambouillet. There have been some, from Madame de Staël and George Sand to Simone de Beauvoir, who have not accepted passively the woman's traditional rôle in society, and who have expressed their unconventional ideas in their literary works and put them into practice in their own lives.

It must not be suggested that all women, or all French-women, conform to a stereotype, and it is particularly important not to be taken in by the image presented by popular writing:

Il faut que nos amis de l'étranger ne se laissent pas séduire ou scandaliser par le portrait souvent injuste et généralement conventionnel que trop de gens ont tracé d'une Française à la tête légère uniquement préoccupée de mode et de galanterie. Comme partout dans le monde, on trouve en France nombre de femmes laborieuses, vaillantes devant les grandes épreuves de la vie; et les mères françaises

ne le cèdent point aux autres en dévouement silencieux à l'égard de leur foyer. (2)

Twentieth century society is changing with increasing rapidity. In times of crisis, of which many have been seen in the twentieth century, women have shown their mettle and taken their place alongside of men:

Il y a ces admirables résistantes qui hier, dans le maquis et sous le feu des pelotons d'exécution ont témoigné d'un courage au moins égal à celui des hommes. (3)

In 1961, Françoise Giraud expressed the opinion that young women no longer needed to fight for self-realisation and assurance, that they preferred the "old struggle to find a husband and to keep him", that they used their weapons of hair-styles, clothes and cosmetics to conquer him, but rejected any idea of domination: "Perhaps she knows what she would be losing-- the velvet glove which conceals the iron hand beneath." (4)

In 1974, a reviewer of Françoise Parturier's Lettre ouverte aux femmes notes that already at the beginning of the century Marcel Prévost in his Lettres à Françoise (1902 - 1928), had foreseen a feminist movement:

....Jamais l'esprit de la femme n'a fermenté comme à cette heure. La femme reprend par-devers soi le souci de son bonheur au lieu de le confier à l'homme. Qu'on goûte ou non cette évolution, il est rigaud de la nier. Quant au sens de cette évolution, point n'est besoin non plus d'être grand clerc pour l'apercevoir. La femme, au cours des prochaines années, tendra de plus en plus à rapprocher sa condition de celle de l'homme. Et les habitudes, les apparences mêmes des deux sexes inclineront de plus en plus à se confondre. (5)

Indeed, some women have gone even further and have demanded equality with men in many spheres. The reviewer comments:

Il ne faut pas écouter les faux prophètes qui disent aux femmes: "Attention! Le jour où vous avez les mêmes prérogatives que les hommes vous deviendrez la femme-à-barbe." Ceux-la ne savent pas que pour aimer vraiment une femme, l'aimer dans tous les sens du mot, il faut la respecter et la tenir pour égale à soi. (6)

Another article (1973) proclaims that:

Dans le monde entier les femmes bougent, les femmes parlent, et leurs voix parfois dissonantes disent qu'elles sont enchaînées, déchirées entre leurs maternités et la rentabilité, entre le travail "visible" (rémunéré) et le travail invisible (surajouté), entre le plaisir et le devoir, entre leur sexe biologique

et leur sexe social, entre l'homme et la société,
disent qu'elles veulent être libérées. (7)

The same article admits quite freely that not all women feel this way. Articles which take up extreme positions cannot present a true picture. Françoise Giraud's article represents one reaction to Simone de Beauvoir's views, the later articles a different reaction to similar views; it has to be admitted that the women's desire to be liberated is far from universal. Many women now wish to work outside their homes, but less in order to gain independence in a man's world than to add to the family budget. In a survey carried out by L'Express, the results of which are given in the article just quoted (7), 56% of the women interviewed wished to work for financial reasons, 27% to gain independence.

Investigators in this survey found that the forceful and articulate few, particularly intellectuals and city dwellers, may give the impression that Frenchwomen are in a state of feminist ferment, but that the ordinary provincial Frenchwoman is likely to tell an interviewer that she wishes only to be "heureuse avec son mari, avec suffisamment d'argent, des gosses raisonnables en bonne santé." or: "Je préfère être commandée par un homme, car pour moi, un homme est supérieur." (8).

Françoise Parturier, in an interview published in July, 1974, expresses the opinion that the current women's movement in France owes much to the influence of women's movements in America. Women seem largely concerned with such subjects as equal pay with men, abortion and divorce. She, too, feels that women's cause is far from won. The interview is headed: "En n'osant pas profiter de leurs droits, les femmes trahissent la cause des femmes." In the course of it, Françoise Parturier says:

Beaucoup d'hommes, en fait, continuent à ne pas accepter la femme ailleurs qu'au lit ou dans la cuisine.....Les femmes, trop souvent encore, élèvent leurs filles comme elles ont été élevées. De mère en fille se transmet ainsi l'héritage des lieux communs sur le destin de la femme.....Les femmes sont trop souvent complices de leur asservissement. (9)

Françoise Mallet-Joris, a contemporary novelist, expresses similar views on women's situation. She says:

En fait, je crois que la femme française de notre époque est encore assez conditionnée par l'image type qu'on faisait de la femme au début du siècle.
Il y a beaucoup de femmes qui se posent des problèmes

parce qu'elles travaillent, parce qu'elles ont une sorte de complexe de culpabilité, parce qu'elles trouvent qu'elles ne s'occupent pas suffisamment de leurs enfants, et qu'il y a.... un environnement social qui conditionne la femme et dont c'est impossible qu'elle ne soit pas marquée. (10)

While Simone de Beauvoir's long essay on women of the 1950's, Le Deuxième Sexe gained enthusiastic support from many women sympathetic to her ideas, it created a furor of outrage amongst the conventional members of bourgeois society, especially some of her male critics, who were quick to point to her unconventional relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre as proof of what they called her moral depravity. Nevertheless her book marked the beginning of a wave of feminism in France and elsewhere.

In Le Deuxième sexe she traced the origins of women's subordination and dependence back to a primitive era when the physical weakness of women when confronting danger and the physical demands of childbearing and motherhood were considerable and inescapable handicaps. Having once gained a position of domination over women, men remained there.

A woman's desire for liberty, equality and authenticity may lead her to eschew the restraints of traditional marriage, though she may still find happiness with an enlightened partner; it does not require her to deny her essential femininity, the fact that she is a woman. In fact, she may find true fulfilment in working with her partner, whether he be husband or lover, toward a common goal.

The existentialist philosophers' outlook is so important in considering the women characters in their novels and plays that it is necessary to examine it briefly, after a short account of the early lives of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre and their long association with one another.

Notes.

1. Henri Peyre, "Contemporary Feminine Literature in France", in Yale French Studies No. 27, 1961, p. 47
2. M. Bruézière et G. Mauger, Cours de langue et de civilisation françaises, Tome IV, p. 139
3. Ibid.
4. Françoise Giraud, "The Second Sex," in Yale French Studies op. cit., p. 25
5. James de Coquet, "Françoise parle aux Françaises", in Figaro hebdomadaire international, 13 avril, 1974, p. 6
6. Ibid.
7. Danièle Heymann, "Jusqu' où vont-elles aller, les femmes", in Et Maintenant, 5 mars, 1973, p.1
8. Ibid., p. 3
9. Interview de Françoise Parturier par Pierre Démeron, in Marie Claire, No. 263, juillet, 1974, p. 5
10. Françoise Mallet-Joris, Le Naturel est une longue étude, Disque No. 77, Collection Français de notre temps.

Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre.

A person's beliefs and attitudes are formed by the way he perceives and experiences the world he lives in, especially in his early years, and by his relationships with others, in particular his family and friends. Though they may be modified by education and the exercise of rational thought, an underlying emotional bias is likely to remain.

It is therefore to be expected that an examination of the early lives of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir will throw some light on the development of the attitudes expressed in their theoretical works and implied in their fiction.

It is proposed to consider briefly their early lives and their attitudes to love, shown both in their autobiographical works and their theoretical writings, referring also to their own relationship.

Though the differences one can find in the treatment of love and the couple in the works of the two authors may perhaps be traced to differences in background and upbringing, in education and temperament. (and, it seems relevant to add, of sex), they share certain ideas and both have been influenced by their middle-class family background, despite their effort to break away.

Both were born into bourgeois families where everyday life was governed by strict rules for proper behaviour. There were, however, differences in family situation and relationships.

Simone de Beauvoir was the cherished first daughter of a lawyer and a provincial woman, strictly brought up and convent-educated, who accepted without question the convenances of Paris society at the time. She says her mother

...est entrée dans la vie corsetée des principes les plus rigides: bienséances provinciales et morale de couventine. (1)

The marriage was a happy one at first, but her father's ardour cooled and he turned to other women, leaving Madame de Beauvoir frustrated and unsatisfied. Here perhaps is one of the reasons for her daughter's outspokenness on the subject of the conventional bourgeois marriage in Le Deuxième sexe.

True to her own upbringing, Madame de Beauvoir brought up her daughter strictly. Make-up was frowned upon and any refer-

ence to bodily functions was taboo. In spite of the extent of her reading, the young Simone "restait une oie blanche". (2) The vague desires stirred by physical contact with the boys at her dancing class meant little to her. She says in her memoirs:

...à dix-sept ans, théoriquement renseignée, je ne savais même pas reconnaître le trouble.

Je ne sais s'il entraînait de la mauvaise foi dans mon ingénuité; en tout cas la sexualité m'effrayait. (3)

As an adolescent she had lost her belief in God; yet the values and the conditioning resulting from her strict upbringing were not so easily cast off.

A little later she found herself shocked by the flirtations and free talk of her friends.

L'amour tel que je le concevais n'intéressait guère le corps; mais je refusais que le corps cherchât à s'assouvir en dehors de l'amour. (4)

Young Simone lived a normal family life. Her father, whom she admired, took an interest in her intellectual development. Within the limits of what was considered suitable for a young girl, she read widely, and her reading became a very important factor in her development. Yet she did not retreat exclusively into a world of books. She had an avid desire to know the world and to experience to the full "l'entreprise de vivre." (5)

She dreamed at first of making a normal marriage, her cousin Jacques being the subject of her romantic fantasies. Though he was fond of her, he does not seem to have regarded the relationship as anything more than friendship, and her own feelings seem to have been surrounded by a kind of romantic haze.

She had already showed in her attitude to sexual experience mentioned above, the desire for complete autonomy and mastery of herself, which were evident in all spheres of her thinking:

...le malaise éprouvé pendant les cours de danse m'irritait parce que je le subissais malgré moi. (6)

In Le Deuxième sexe Simone de Beauvoir sets out what she feels love ought to be:

Un amour authentique devrait assumer la contingence de l'autre, c'est-à-dire ses manques, ses limites, et sa gratuité originelle: il ne prétendait pas être un salut, mais une relation interhumaine. L'amour idolâtre confère à l'aimé une valeur absolue. (7)

and again:

L'amour authentique devrait être fondé sur la reconnaissance réciproque de deux libertés; chacun des amants s'éprouverait alors comme soi-même et comme l'autre; aucun n'abdiquerait sa transcendance, aucun ne se mutilerait; tous deux dévoileraient ensemble dans le monde des valeurs et des fins. Pour l'un et l'autre l'amour serait révélation de soi-même et enrichissement de l'univers. (8)

This is the type of love she has striven for in her relationship with Sartre.

Sartre's background was no less Puritanical than Simone de Beauvoir's. Where she had grown up with a believing mother and a non-believing father, Sartre was brought up by a mother and a grandmother both of whom professed catholicism, though it seemed to mean little to them, and a protestant grandfather to whom religion also meant little. Nevertheless, the bourgeois values of society still imposed the same taboos on believer and non-believer alike.

We have no such evidence of Sartre's adolescent development and attitudes towards women and love as Simone de Beauvoir has given of her early life and attitudes. His only autobiographical work, *Les Mots*, takes his life only to the age of ten. Yet we do get a clear picture of the atmosphere in which he spent his formative years, and if his mother "...ne reconnut pas son fils dans le petit garçon qu'il peignait" (9), perhaps she had not suspected the intensity of his inner life at that age.

He lived, not in a normal family situation, but as a fatherless child, lonely and isolated, finding it difficult to make friends with other children, developing in the company of two women who, though both married, seem rather spinsterish, and an old man.

His mother seems to have been so much dominated by her parents as to have been almost another child in the family. Her second marriage, which she thought she was making in the interest of her son, seems to have been as joyless as the first:

Cette union fut aussi sans joie: "J'ai été deux fois mariée et mère, et je suis toujours vierge", disait-elle dans ses vieux jours. (10)

Spoiled and verbally precocious, Sartre early discovered books, gaining from them a vicarious experience of life in the world and using manipulation of words to manipulate the adults

around him. He emerged into the real world when he went to school, but had probably already acquired his intellectual approach to life.

He mentions that, although he knew nothing about the body and its desires, when he saw a man passing in the street eyeing his mother with evident desire, he seemed to sense and to share his mother's loathing, though he did not understand it. Could this incident have a bearing on his own later attitudes to sexual love?

He makes an even sharper distinction than Simone de Beauvoir between love and physical desire. To him they seem mutually exclusive; the manifestations of the flesh that he deplures must be repudiated or dominated. Especially in his earlier works, he seems to find it well-nigh impossible to reconcile the two. Hélène Nahas sums up Sartre's somewhat abstract and pessimistic notion of love:

Dans L'Être et le néant nous lisons que l'amour est un double échec: d'abord en soi, ensuite en autrui: l'être cherche un être qu'il puisse à son gré laçonner, un regard étranger qui ne soit point hostile, une partialité favorable, un écho à ses propres affirmations; quand il l'a trouvé, il en est déçu, et bientôt le rejette, comprenant qu'un assentiment servile ne lui est d'aucun secours-- et que ce n'est jamais que d'une liberté égale à la sienne qu'il vaut d'être aimé et jugé. (11)

For Sartre, sexual desire, according to Suzanne Lilar, ...sera cette tentative ultime de posséder quelqu'un corporellement sans laisser échapper sa liberté. (12)

As Sartre himself expressed it in L'Être et le néant:

Il s'agit, puisque je ne puis saisir l'Autre que dans sa facticité objective, de faire engluier sa liberté dans cette facticité: il faut faire qu'elle y soit "prise" comme on dit d'une crème qu'elle est prise, de façon que le Pour-soi d'Autrui vienne affleurer à la surface de son corps, qu'il s'étende tout à travers de son corps et qu'en touchant ce corps, je touche enfin la libre subjectivité de l'autre. (13)

In order to possess the body of another, one has to submit to one's own desire:

Le désir me compromet; je suis complice de mon désir. Ou plutôt le désir est tout entier chute dans la complicité avec le corps....on sait que dans le désir sexuel la conscience est comme empâtée. Il semble qu'on se laisse envahir par la

facticité, qu'on cesse de la fuir, et qu'on glisse vers un consentement passif au désir. (14)

One cannot help feeling, with Suzanne Lilar, that Sartre's philosophical attitudes, far from being the result of abstract thought, in this case owe much to his own experience:

C'est parce qu'il est terrifié, hanté, obsédé, donc à demi vaincu par la chair que Sartre n'envisage jamais de pouvoir, dans l'amour ou le désir, la traverser, c'est-à-dire s'en purifier (d'ou la nausée) et qu'il est bien obligé de poser le corps, aimé ou désiré, comme objet-fond et la chair comme obstacle opaque, inerte, pléthorique, à la fois fascinant et repoussant, mais de toute façon infranchissable même pour la pensée, qui ne peut que s'y prendre, s'y enliser, s'y dégrader. (15)

G.J. Prince points out that instances of Sartre's repulsion can be found throughout his works:

Dans un univers romanesque où tout ce qui rappelle le corps prend l'allure d'une menace, l'acte sexuel lui-même est relégué au rang de fonction naturelle. Loin d'attirer les personnages, il leur répugne et nombreux sont ceux qui ne supportent même pas d'être touchés: Pierre dans La Chambre, Paul Hilbert, Ivich. (16)

Both Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre, then, when they entered adulthood were influenced by their early background and experiences. Sartre's first apprehension of physical desire, when he was too young to understand it, made him dissociate it from the notion of love.

Simone de Beauvoir's first experiences were not fully understood either; physical desire became something of which she was a little afraid, which she resented because it was not subject to her will. Though it scarcely seemed to belong to her idea of love, she could not justify its indulgence without love.

These, then, were the two young people who met in 1929, towards the end of their studies at the Sorbonne and formed a friendship based at first on their common intellectual interests and aspirations. Simone de Beauvoir was a little intimidated to begin with by Sartre and his friends, but soon entered into the spirit of the group. Discussions of social and political problems, about which she had previously thought little, soon rid her of her "idéalisme" and her "spiritualisme". (17)

Sartre understood her; he said he intended to take her in hand; for the first time in her life she had met someone who had an

even greater fervour than she had for a career as a writer.

She writes:

Je ne concevais pas de vivre sans écrire; il ne vivait que pour écrire. (18)

She had always wanted to find a partner who would be superior to her; for the first time in her life she felt intellectually dominated. She had reached a turning point in her life.

Une grande chance venait de m'être donnée: en face de l'avenir, brusquement, je n'étais plus seule... Sartre répondait exactement aux vœux de mes quinze ans: il était le double en qui je retrouvais, portées à l'incandescence, toutes mes manies. Avec lui je pourrais toujours tout partager. Quand je le quittai au début d'août, je savais que plus jamais il ne sortirait de ma vie. (19)

For more than forty years, Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre have shared their lives in a free partnership that, though it shocked many at first by its disregard of middle-class conventional morality, has proved to be nearer the ideal relationship described by Simone de Beauvoir than many conventional marriages.

It was Simone de Beauvoir who found it hard at first to accept the spirit of the pact they made, especially when they agreed to tell each other everything, for she had never been able to confide in members of her family. The intention of Sartre to go to Japan after two years left her so desolate that Sartre offered to marry her. Knowing that Sartre did not really want marriage, she refused. She knew, too, that without the responsibilities of a common household, they would both have more freedom to carry on their own pursuits.

She felt that she had made a positive decision. She writes:

Je sortais victorieuse de l'épreuve à laquelle j'avais été soumise: l'absence, la solitude n'avaient pas entamé mon bonheur. Il me semblait que je pouvais compter sur moi. (20)

She could rely on herself not to become emotionally dependent on someone else to justify her existence or to become the whole foundation of her happiness. The question was:

...d'ordre non pas social mais moral et presque religieux. Accepter de vivre en être secondaire, en être "relatif", c'eût été m'abaisser en tant que créature humaine; tout mon passé s'insurgeait contre cette dégradation. (21)

She notes that it was not as a woman, but as an individual, that she was trying to solve the problem. This attitude was fully in keeping with the existentialist principles which have guided her life.

The relationship was not, however, a merely intellectual one. She had:

...cessé avec enthousiasme d'être un pur esprit: quand le coeur, la tête et la chair sont à l'unisson, prendre corps est une grande fête. Je ne connus d'abord que la joie. (22)

But she discovered "un mal honteux": her desires were not subject to her will.

J'avais secoué mon éducation puritaine juste assez pour me réjouir de mon corps sans contrainte, pas assez pour consentir qu'il m'incommodât; affamé, mendiant, plaintif, il me répugnait. (23)

She was not immune to feelings of jealousy towards other women in whom Sartre was interested. When their young protégée Olga came from Rouen to Paris and their couple became a trio, she found the resulting disharmony very hard to bear; much of this experience is described in her portrayal of the "vie à trois" of Françoise, Pierre and Xavière in L'Invitée.

Still unable to accept the idea of a physical relationship without love, Simone de Beauvoir was shocked by the free behaviour of Sartre's former friend Camille. Yet she realised that her feelings were coloured by a certain jealousy caused by Camille's success in life, when she herself was just starting out on her career. What she writes about this is typical of the way in which she analyses her feelings and actions, trying to see them clearly and live her life as authentically as she can:

La facilité avec laquelle elle usait de son corps me choquait; mais fallait-il blâmer sa désinvolture, ou mon puritanisme? Spontanément, mon coeur, ma chair la condamnaient; ma raison cependant contestait ce verdict: peut-être devais-je l'interpréter comme un signe de ma propre infériorité. Ah! qu'il est donc désagréable de douter de sa bonne foi! (24)

The couple had agreed that their pact would not exclude the possibility of other affairs. Sartre liked to have women friends, but at first Simone de Beauvoir, who was, like Françoise, a "femme fidèle", felt no desire to find other partners. On the two occasions when she did so, when she

was over forty, the relationships brought her much joy, but she could bring to neither of them a total commitment which could make them last. The first affair was with the American novelist, Nelson Algren, the second with a much younger man, Claude Lanzmann. She comments:

Quant à moi, j'avais besoin de distance pour engager mon coeur, car il n'était pas question de doubler mon entente avec Sartre. Algren appartenait à un autre continent, Lanzmann à une autre génération. C'était aussi un dépaysement et qui équilibrerait nos rapports. Son âge me vouait à n'être qu'un moment de sa vie; elle m'excusait, à mes propres yeux, de ne pas lui donner aujourd'hui tout de la mienne. (25)

Sartre has written no such account of their relationship, but in an interview he commented on the fact that their shared interests and ideas often made them think alike; he agrees with what Simone de Beauvoir has written:

...je pense que tout ce qu'elle dit sur l'importance réciproque de nos rapports est tout à fait exact. Voilà maintenant, en effet, près de trente ans que jamais, comme elle le dit, nous ne nous sommes endormis un soir, désunis. Si, un soir, mais je crois que c'était pour une raison stupide.... Nous avons un matériel de souvenirs communs tel, que finalement nous réagissons devant une situation de la même façon, je veux dire avec les mêmes mots conditionnés par les mêmes expériences. Une vie en commun se constitue par des tas d'expériences et finalement on a une mémoire à deux. (26)

He has always thought her beautiful, and speaks of her in a way he admits is "un peu esclavagiste":

La merveille chez Simone de Beauvoir, c'est qu'elle a l'intelligence d'un homme....et la sensibilité d'une femme. C'est-à-dire que j'ai trouvé en elle exactement tout ce que je peux désirer. (27)

The two authors, then, have certain aspects of their background in common, as well as sharing the same philosophical ideas. As a couple, they have consciously tried, and with lasting success, to put their philosophy into practice. The measure of their success lies in the fact that their association has lasted so long, though they are bound by no other tie than their loyalty to one another.

Notes.

1. Une Mort très douce, p. 46
2. Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée, p. 161
3. Ibid., p. 163
4. Ibid., p. 165
5. Title of a book on Simone de Beauvoir by Francis Jeanson.
6. Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée, p. 166
7. Le Deuxième sexe, T. 11, p. 491
8. Ibid., p. 505
9. Tout compte fait, p. 107
10. Ibid., p. 104
11. Hélène Nahas, La Femme dans la Littérature existentielle, p. 55
12. Suzanne Lilar, A propos de Sartre et de l'amour, p. 142
13. L'Être et le néant, p. 463
14. Ibid., p. 457
15. Lilar, op. cit., p. 132-3
16. G.J. Prince, Métaphysique et technique dans l'oeuvre romanesque de Sartre, p. 128
17. Tout compte fait, p. 28
18. Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée, p. 340
19. Ibid., p. 344
20. La Force de l'âge, p. 118
21. Ibid., p. 67
22. Ibid., p. 67
23. Ibid., p. 68
24. Ibid., p. 76
25. La Force des choses, p. 306
26. Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre by Madeleine de Gobeil, in Serge Julien-Caffiè, Simone de Beauvoir, p. 139
27. Ibid.

Existentialism.

In the title of a work intended to explain in a briefer and more easily appreciated form the philosophy expounded in that monumental work, L'Être et le néant, Sartre asserted that "L'Existentialisme est un humanisme." It is indeed a philosophy which places man squarely at the centre of his own existence, makes him conscious of it, and aware of a need to justify it. Jacques Salvan has expressed some of its fundamental ideas in a single sentence:

At once I have realized my anguish, my non-being and my liberty, together with the contingency and absurdity of existence. (1)

If existentialism has been criticised for providing too personal and subjective an outlook, it nevertheless, according to existentialists, tries to

...define a human condition which is universal and of the utmost concern to everyone. When he [the existentialist] says "I", which he does a great deal, he implies "and you as well." (2)

We might add, "and women as well as men."

Philosophy had become a narrow academic discipline. In the twentieth century, the appeal which existentialism has had is a consequence of man's anguish in a world where values seemed to have suddenly turned upside down, religion to be declining and idealism out of fashion in the face of world crises; as Albères writes, ready-made doctrines had ceased to explain and direct human life. The consequence was a mise à nu of man. (3) Contemporary thought, whether Christian or atheist, had rejected the idea of a pre-established order in our lives, or pre-established formulas to guide living. Man is alone, and anguished before the implications of his responsibility towards his own life and towards others. Sartre denies the existence of God and of an after-life: man's anguish is deepened by the sense of his contingency, his gratuitous existence and the finality of death.

Existentialism, especially in France, became newsworthy and attracted the attention of many who were searching for meaning in life. It makes great demands on intellect and will, but popular interpretations of it, confusing liberty with licence, turned it into a fashionable cult in Paris, and led to many excesses of dress and behaviour among its young

followers and to much consequent misunderstanding.

Sartre's existentialism is not an invitation to licence, nor is it a collection of dry-as-dust formulas, but an attempt to apply philosophy to the life of the individual. As expressed by Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, it is not confined to theoretical works, but its appeal has been enhanced by the fact that, as well as living their own lives according to its tenets, they have incorporated existentialist ideas as expérience vécue in their novels and plays.

Sartre's literary works show the development of his thought on the problem of man's fundamental liberty and the use he should make of it. His relationships with, and his responsibility for others, are particularly important.

His philosophy is an atheistic one that denies that man is created according to some predetermined model that defines his being, as a craftsman creates an object according to the idea of it he has in his mind (its essence). There is no such thing as "human nature." Nor are there any pre-determined fixed values. Man, who exists, must create himself (his own essence) by his actions, and his actions and his moral values will be relative to his situation at any given moment. This is the burden of man's freedom-- he cannot escape it, nor can he avoid the responsibility for choosing his own actions.

This freedom entails for the individual a responsibility to others as well as to himself, for he is creating an image of what he thinks man should be:

En se choisissant il choisit tous les hommes.... Choisir d'être ceci ou cela, c'est affirmer en même temps la valeur de ce que nous choisissons. (4)

So the individual's responsibility is tremendous; it embraces the whole of mankind. Those who do not ask themselves what would happen if everyone did as they do are hiding their angoisse from themselves; they are guilty of a sort of mauvaise foi. If a person lies, he is attributing a universal value to the act of lying. It is the choice of an action that gives it its value.

If an individual must choose between two courses of action, he must choose that to which he is drawn most strongly. He must do his utmost to carry out his work, because, other men being free, he cannot be sure that anyone will continue it after

his death - there is no reality except in action, that is, man is nothing apart from his acts and his life. This denies any possibility of making excuses for oneself, or of blaming circumstances for what one has become.

Sartre denies that his philosophy is pessimistic. He calls it "une dureté optimiste" (5) A coward need not remain a coward, a hero may cease to be a hero; what counts is not a simple action, but l'engagement total. Man is free to choose what he will be.

"Bad faith" is obviously a lie, because

...elle dissimule la totale liberté de l'engagement.

The acts of men of bonne foi

...ont comme ultime signification la recherche de la liberté en tant que telle...et en voulant la liberté nous découvrons qu'elle dépend entièrement de la liberté des autres et que la liberté des autres dépend de la nôtre...Dès qu'il y a engagement je suis obligé de vouloir en même temps que ma liberté la liberté des autres, je ne puis prendre ma liberté pour but que si je prends également celle des autres pour but. (6)

Man is able to judge others who do not recognise this, and who are trying to hide from themselves their total gratuity, not by a value judgment, but by a logical one. Those who make excuses are lâches, those who ascribe to themselves a necessary existence are salauds.

With engagement libre one is free to choose anything, for if there is no God, there are no absolute values. If we must invent our own values, this means that in living our lives we give them meaning, and the meaning we choose is our system of values.

Sartre has never reached the point of writing a treatise on morality, though his thought implies a system of morality:

On n'existe pas bien ou mal: si on existe, on existe bien, sinon, l'on n'existe pas. (7)

The only condition for being "moral" is to be free, for: alors le sens véritable de la situation se dessine et l'action surgit avec le dévoilement du projet. Un sujet passif n'est pas libre, donc il ne peut faire sa morale, donc il la reçoit de l'extérieur. (8)

It is to Simone de Beauvoir that we must turn for the expression of an existentialist morality. It is not, she says, an abstract morality:

Ce qui définit tout humanisme c'est que le moral

n'est pas un monde donné, étranger à l'homme et auquel celui-ci devrait s'efforcer d'accéder du dehors... Ce n'est pas l'homme impersonnel, universel, qui est la source des valeurs, c'est la pluralité des hommes, concrets, singuliers. (9)

In her novels she examines the moral consequences of action in accordance with existentialist theories.

Existentialism is at variance with Freudian psychoanalytic theory; freedom of choice is not compatible with the idea of a life governed by complexes and unconscious impulses, neither can it admit the existence of a pre-determined set of characteristics which determine a person's actions and reactions. Human nature as an abstraction does not exist and, for Simone de Beauvoir, feminine nature does not exist either. Modern psychology, particularly in America, also stresses, like Sartre, man's ability and responsibility to choose his actions, to choose what he will be.

Man's consciousness of his liberty also involves his consciousness of his responsibility for others. The concept of the Other (Autrui) is an important one in Sartre's philosophy; man does not exist in isolation, but in relationship with others; these relationships are examined from a subjective point of view.

Man, who exists for himself as a free subject, sees the Other as object, sees him as object, thus robbing him of his liberty. Hence the element of conflict in human relationships: as Sartre puts it in L'Être et le néant:

Pendant que je tente de me libérer de l'emprise d'autrui, autrui tente de se libérer de la mienne: pendant que je cherche à asservir autrui, autrui cherche à m'asservir. (10)

These ideas are particularly important in considering women and the way they see themselves, and relationships between men and women. Hélène Nahas comments:

Pour être sujet, il faut dans la pensée existentielle se poser concrètement à travers des projets qui expriment la transcendance. La transcendance est une sorte de dépassement perpétuel de la liberté accomplie vers d'autres libertés. (11)

She quotes Simone de Beauvoir:

Il n'y a pas d'autre justification de l'existence présente que son expansion vers un avenir indéfiniment ouvert. Chaque fois que la transcendance retombe en immanence il y a dégradation de l'existence en "en-soi", de la liberté en facticité. (12)

A striking point about existentialist thought is that it makes no differentiation between the sexes in its principles. The woman is not placed in a role subordinate to that of the man, she is not regarded as a passive being dependent on her relationship with a man for her being, as Freud had seen her, but is treated as a being in her own right. In fact, except in Simone de Beauvoir's essay, Le Deuxième sexe, she is hardly mentioned separately.

In L'Être et le néant Sartre treats love in a generally abstract fashion, using general expressions such as l'aimant and l'aimé. The lover, man or woman, tries to dominate the loved one, to possess his liberty; at the same time, the loved one is Autrui, the Other whose existence is seen as a threat; the relationship with the Other is seen

dans la perspective du conflit. Le conflit est le sens originel de l'être-pour-autrui. (13)

It will be necessary to examine whether Sartre's treatment of his fictional characters shown the same lack of differentiation between men and women as does his abstract treatment of love.

However, Sartre, being a man, can hardly avoid seeing his own experience from a man's point of view when he incorporates it in his works of fiction. Woman, for him, is Autrui, and as William Barrett expresses it:

...the glance of the Other in Sartre is...always fearful and terrifying...Like Adler's, Sartre's is fundamentally a masculine psychology; it misunderstands or disparages the psychology of woman. The humanity of man consists in the For-itself, the masculine component by which we choose, make projects, and generally commit ourselves to the life of action. The element of masculine protest, to use Adler's term, is strong throughout Sartre's writings, whether it be the disgust of Mathieu (in Roads to Liberty) at his pregnant mistress, or the disgust of Roquentin in Nausea at the bloated roots of the chestnut tree; or Sartre's philosophical analysis (in Being and Nothingness) of the viscous, the thick, sticky substance that would entrap his liberty like the soft threat of the body of a woman. And the woman is a threat, for the woman is nature and Sartrean man exists in the liberty of his project, which, since it is ultimately unjustified and unjustifiable, in effect sunders him totally from nature. (14)

Barrett's idea of the psychology of what he calls "the ordinary woman" seems to be based on nature:

Her whole life, with whatever freedom it reveals

is rather the unfolding of nature through her. (15)

She is not, he says, the woman one meets in Sartre's novels or plays,

...nor that woman, his friend, who wrote a book of feminine protest, The Second Sex, which is in reality a protest against being feminine. (16)

These remarks are fairly typical of those of men who have criticised the work, which takes up the cause of women and examines their situation in the modern world and their conditioning by long-standing social forces to a subordinate role, and which claims the right of women to attain their own being, independently of their relationships with men.

It will be necessary to examine the book in the next chapter, and see how far it is, as Barrett contends, a "protest against being feminine."

Notes.

1. Jacques Salvan, To Be or not to Be, p. xii
2. Ibid., p. xiii
3. R.-M. Albères, Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 9
4. Sartre, L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme, p. 25
5. Ibid., p. 58
6. Ibid., p. 81-83
7. Hélène Nahas, La Femme dans la littérature existentielle, p. 134
8. Ibid., p. 134
9. Simone de Beauvoir, Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté, p. 25-6
10. Sartre, L'Être et le néant, p. 431
11. Nahas, op.cit., p. 21
12. Le Deuxième sexe, T. 1, p. 31
13. L'Être et le néant, p. 431
14. Wm. Barrett, Irrational Man, p. 232 and 230.
15. Ibid., p. 232
16. Ibid.

Simone de Beauvoir and Woman's Condition.

The publication of Le Deuxième sexe in 1949 drew a spate of hostile criticism, largely on the part of male critics not in sympathy with existentialist philosophy, many of whom called into question her actions in her private life (perfectly in accord with her theoretical position) to back up their vituperations. McMahon calls her:

...the endlessly abused prophet whose honor is most tarnished by the actions of her own sex. (1)

While affirming that she has tried to be objective, Simone de Beauvoir admits that this is not entirely possible, as naturally she has a personal point of view.

She has not, she says, suffered from her femininity--she does not write on woman's condition with a sense of personal grievance:

Je n'ai jamais eu à lutter. Non, tout a été facile. (2)

J'ai plutôt accumulé à partir de vingt ans les avantages des deux sexes: après L'Invitée mon entourage me traite à la fois comme un écrivain et comme une femme. (3)

Intending to write about herself, she wondered what being a woman had meant to her:

Ça n'a pour, ainsi dire pas compté. (4)

Sartre remarked that she had not had a boy's education--she should look into it.

Je regardai et j'eus une révélation: ce monde était un monde masculin: mon enfance avait été nourrie de mythes forgés par les hommes, et je n'y avais pas du tout réagi de la même manière que si j'avais été un garçon. J'étais si intéressée que j'abandonnais le projet d'une confession personnelle pour m'occuper de la condition féminine dans sa généralité. (5)

All of Simone de Beauvoir's work is influenced by her existentialist attitude. Her examination of woman's situation is made from the existentialist point of view, considering her first as a human being, then as a woman in the light of that philosophy.

She writes:

La querelle du féminisme est à peu près close. (6)

but there are so many questions left unanswered: what is a woman? What is femininity? These are sociological questions

requiring action rather than abstract consideration. Once the answers have been suggested,

...le problème c'est de savoir si cet état des choses doit se perpétuer. (7)

Woman, as a human being, is "une liberté autonome." She is subject, but she can freely choose to be object. Her situation in male-dominated society can make her prisoner, if she assumes the traits that others expect her to exhibit. Her situation is

...ce conflit entre la revendication fondamentale de tout sujet qui se pose comme l'essentiel et les exigences d'une situation qui la constitue comme inessentielle... Les hommes lui imposent de s'assumer comme l'Autre; on prétend la figer en objet et la vouer à l'immanence, puisque sa transcendance sera perpétuellement transcendée par une autre conscience essentielle et souveraine... Cette chute est une faute morale si elle est consentie par le sujet: si elle lui est infligée, elle prend la figure d'une frustration et d'une oppression; elle est dans les deux cas un mal absolu. (8)

In short, Simone de Beauvoir feels that, whatever rights women have won, their situation still needs to be examined in the light of their existence as human beings. This is what she discusses in Le Deuxième Sexe. She examines the ways in which a woman can find self-realisation in her situation and can overcome the restraints that limit her freedom.

In the first volume she examines the myths that have governed woman's situation throughout the ages. Woman's biological inheritance is inescapable, but it is not the whole of her existence.

La femme, comme l'homme est son corps, mais son corps est autre chose qu'elle (9)

It is not nature, but society, which has imposed limitations on her, has assigned to her a passive and subordinate role in relation to men. These limitations are not an unalterable destiny; they do not explain why man has made woman the Other:

Ce qui distingue ma thèse de la thèse traditionnelle, c'est que selon moi, la féminité n'est pas une essence ni une nature: c'est une situation créée par les civilisations à partir de certaines données physiologiques. (10)

Simone de Beauvoir takes issue with the psychoanalysts' view that woman's anatomy is her destiny, and with the view

that she is torn between an identification with the masculine and feminine roles represented by her father and mother:

Nous la concevons comme hésitant entre le rôle d'objet, d'Autre, qui lui est proposé, et la revendication de sa liberté. (11)

Woman is a human being

...en quête de valeurs au sein d'un monde de valeurs, monde dont il est indispensable de connaître la structure économique et sociale; nous l'étudierons dans une perspective existentielle à travers sa situation totale. (12)

In primitive times woman's activity was limited by her involvement in her rôle as mother, and also by her physical strength, which was inferior to that of man. Her necessary dependence gave the man a position of power, though in agricultural situations women could work in equality alongside of the men. However, it was partly the seemingly magical attributes of her reproductive cycle and their association with fertility in general and the success of the crops in religious rites, which led to her being considered as an object of reverence or taboo, demanding respect and worship tinged with fear.

Next, Simone de Beauvoir examines the importance of economic factors on woman's situation. In a male-dominated society where property became increasingly important, woman came to be regarded as just another possession, subject to her husband, relegated to the rôle of the Other. But however man tries to make an object of her, his attitude still retains some of the awe accorded to primitive magic, and he still tries to make of her both a companion and a servant.

Being regarded as a piece of property made a woman liable to be bought and sold (as a wife), and also required of her complete fidelity, so that a man might be sure of the legitimacy of the offspring who would inherit his possessions. Christianity, while idealising woman on the one hand, decreed that she should obey her father and her husband.

The brutality of social customs under feudalism was relieved by the advent of knightly love and the flowering of culture, but woman's subordination remained useful to society. For a long time her situation changed little in legal status or in the moral attitudes that were held concerning her, es-

pecially in the middle class, though some women in the privileged classes had enough freedom to enable them to live quite immoral lives. There was little a woman could do with freedom other than use it in the pursuit of pleasure.

The salons of the eighteenth century provided opportunities for intellectual development and social prestige, but women's relationships with men remained basically unchanged. Even the Revolution helped little. Although women of the poorer classes had a measure of independence, middle-class values prevailed, and Napoleon's ideas were definitely anti-feminist. The Industrial Revolution offered opportunities for the exploitation of female labour; political rights were not gained without a struggle.

With the spread of birth control methods, women had at last control over their own bodies and reproductive functions. They were no longer tied to their homes to the same extent by large families, and the growing number of economically independent women working outside the home gave an impetus to the feminist movement.

Summing up the situation, Simone de Beauvoir writes:

Toute l'histoire des femmes a été faite par les hommes... En vérité elles n'ont pas cherché à jouer en tant que sexe un rôle dans l'histoire. Les doctrines qui réclament l'avènement de la femme en tant qu'elle est chair, vie, immanence, qu'elle est l'Autre, sont des idéologies masculines. La majorité des femmes se résigne à leur sort. (13)

Old traditions die hard, and daughters are still brought up to consider marriage as their main aim in life, rather than personal development and a vocation. For many this is an easy way out, an evasion of responsibility for themselves. The main object of many women is still to please men.

The myths still remain today.

Il l'homme projette en elle ce qu'il désire et ce qu'il craint, ce qu'il aime et ce qu'il hait. Et s'il est si difficile de rien en dire, c'est parce que l'homme se cherche tout entier en elle et qu'elle est Tout. Seulement elle est Tout sur le mode de l'inessentiel: elle est tout l'Autre. (14)

Simone de Beauvoir examines the myth of woman in the works of several authors. In her opinion Montherlant has denounced the Eternal Feminine by portraying women as contemptible as well as inferior. D.H. Lawrence's attitude is one of phallic

pride and masculine arrogance; Claudel, exalting women on the one hand, still sees them as subordinate to men. From Breton's poetic point of view, a man seeks a unique ideal in a woman, but he sees the woman as the absolute Other. It is only in Stendhal's work that she has found feminist sympathy, alongside of his romanticism.

...il refuse la fausse poésie des mythes. La réalité humaine lui suffit. La femme selon lui est simplement un être humain. (15)

But for Stendhal, too, woman still has to realise her destiny through man.

Concluding her first volume, Simone de Beauvoir asks what importance the myth of woman has in everyday life. Because there are two categories of human individuals, the myth of the Eternal Feminine has been created. Women who do not conform are said to be unfeminine, a criticism which Simone de Beauvoir herself has not escaped. Hourdin, for instance, in his discussion of Le Deuxième sexe, calls it "ce livre si peu féminin." (16)

Simone de Beauvoir writes:

Poser la Femme, c'est poser l'Autre absolu, sans réciprocité, refusant contre l'expérience qu'elle soit un sujet, un semblable. (17)

The heritage of myth makes it difficult for women to accept at the same time their status as autonomous individuals and their destiny as women. If men can accept that the situation of women is changing,

...alors seulement la femme pourra la vivre sans déchirement...alors elle sera pleinement un être humain. (18)

In her second volume, L'Expérience vécue, Simone de Beauvoir examines the situation of women in our society from infancy to old age, as it was at the time she was writing:

Comment la femme fait-elle l'apprentissage de sa condition, comment l'éprouve-t-elle, dans quel univers se trouve-t-elle enfermée, quelles évasions lui sont permises? Alors seulement nous pourrions comprendre quels problèmes se posent aux femmes qui héritent d'un lourd passé. (19)

From childhood, she notes, little boys are encouraged to be independent and adventurous, whereas little girls, sheltered and protected, soon turn to passivity and narcissism. Treated like living dolls, they play the roles of their

future lives in make-believe. They come to accept the superiority of the male that is imposed on them from the beginning, and that the best and easiest career is to find a male protector.

La raison profonde de ce défaitisme c'est que l'adolescente ne se pense pas responsable de son avenir, elle juge inutile d'exiger beaucoup d'elle-même puisque ce n'est pas d'elle finalement que doit dépendre son sort. Bien loin qu'elle se voue à l'homme parce qu'elle se sait inférieure à lui, c'est parce qu'elle lui est vouée qu'acceptant l'idée de son infériorité elle la constitue. (20)

A woman will gain prestige in the eyes of men if she models herself on their dreams. She must be "feminine", docile, passive and await her Prince Charming.

Elle s'occupe, mais elle ne fait rien; parce qu'elle ne fait rien elle n'a rien, elle n'est rien: mais surtout, le mensonge auquel on condamne l'adolescente c'est qu'il lui faut feindre d'être objet. (21)

Woman's biological destiny has always been to provide a "service" to men--pleasure and an assured posterity. She has been "paid", usually with support and protection. This situation precludes any real reciprocity.

Some women may choose the alternative of a lesbian relationship, but this is a somewhat narcissistic solution. Marriage is still the traditional destiny society offers a woman, but as an institution it is changing with the growing economic independence of women and the spread of contraceptive knowledge. It is more likely to be

...une union librement consentie par deux individualités autonomes; les engagements des conjoints sont personnels et réciproques. (22)

Nevertheless, the attitudes of the past remain, and marriage has to be understood in the light of the past.

Traditional morality supports the idea that a woman should find justification for her existence in marriage, and a man find fulfilment in the world outside the family. Yet for many women, marriage does not bring sensual satisfaction, but merely offers a perpetual round of never-completed household tasks. Though some couples find satisfaction in the early years of marriage, it is unrealistic to expect indefinite fidelity; fidelity is only meaningful if spontaneous. A

wife may profess love for her husband insincerely, through a regard for morality, through pride or timidity. The husband as a male, takes a dominating role, and the wife is torn between a desire to keep her husband and a desire to rebel. Even if the wife has the privileged position of companion to her husband, she is not able to accomplish work that she can call her own. He alone is the free and responsible agent.

Complete equality is an illusion as long as the man retains the economic responsibility. The situation must be changed for the common welfare. Marriage must not be a career for women.

La femme pèse si lourdement sur l'homme parce qu'on lui interdit de se reposer sur soi: il se délivrera en la délivrant, c'est-à-dire en lui donnant quelque chose à faire dans ce monde. (23)

Maternity fulfils a woman's physiological destiny and confers on her a certain feeling of justification for her existence. This is, however, an illusion, for she does not create the child, it is created in her womb:

...il n'est encore qu'une prolifération gratuite... elle ne saurait donner à cet autre qui va être demain ses propres raisons d'être. (24)

She is still dependent on man, though her life is usually enriched by her child.

Though a woman's devotion to her child may be genuine, maternity may bring mixed feelings. Even though her life may be enriched to some extent by motherhood, a discontented woman may have an attitude toward her child combining a desire for self-fulfilment and altruism, resentment and devotion, day-dreaming and sincerity.

As a woman grows older she comes face to face with herself. Her children have gone and she no longer feels needed. If she can accept the fact of growing old, she may attain emotional independence and view the world through her own eyes.

Conditioned to living within closed horizons, most women can see no need for liberation. They live on a plane of utility as housekeepers, condemned to mediocrity.

Having been condemned to the rôle of parasite, a woman is also an exploiter. She has freely chosen to be the object that man wants her to be. It would require a collective effort

to change the situation, but the narcissistic devotion to herself which results from her position limits her ability to commit herself to anything. She would rather gain her importance in the world vicariously through her husband's values and his actions in the world. She cannot find self-realisation in her own acts, so she devotes herself body and soul to the one who to her is represented as the essential, the absolute.

Elle choisit de vouloir si ardemment son esclavage qu'il lui apparaîtra comme l'expression de sa liberté... L'amour devient pour elle une religion. (25)

whereas authentic love

deurait assumer la contingence de l'autre, c'est-à-dire ses manques, ses limites, et sa gratuité originelle: il ne prétendrait être un salut, mais une relation inter-humaine. (26)

If her husband does not please her, she will take him to task:

Elle juge son juge et pour qu'il mérite de demeurer son maître, elle lui dénie sa liberté. (27)

Thus her mauvaise foi raises barriers between her and the man she loves:

C'est là une des malédictions qui pèsent sur la femme passionnée: sa générosité se convertit aussitôt en exigence. S'étant aliénée en un autre elle veut aussi se récupérer; il lui faut annexer cet autre qui détient son être. Elle se donne tout entière à lui; mais il faut qu'il soit tout entier disponible pour recevoir dignement ce don. Elle lui dédie tous ses instants; il faut qu'à chaque instant il soit présent; elle ne veut vivre que par lui; mais elle veut vivre; il doit se consacrer à la faire vivre. (28)

She becomes possessive and jealous. This state of mind is not compatible with genuine love, which Simone de Beauvoir defines as follows:

L'amour authentique devrait être fondé sur la reconnaissance réciproque de deux libertés: chacun des amants s'éprouverait alors comme soi-même et comme l'autre: aucun n'abdiquerait sa transcendance, aucun ne se mutilerait: tous deux dévoileraient ensemble dans le monde des valeurs et des fins. Pour l'un et l'autre l'amour serait révélation de soi-même par le don de soi et enrichissement de l'univers. (29)

There are a fairly large number of privileged women today who have found autonomy and independence in exercising a profession. It is they who occasion feminist and anti-feminist

debate, but they are still only half-way towards their goal. Woman is still considered by society in a different light from men. Her world is different. From childhood man's destiny has been clear and unequivocal. The woman is required to accomplir sa féminité, se faire objet et proie, c'est-à-dire de renoncer à ses revendications de sujet souveraine. (30)

If woman is freed, she will not simply be confined to relationships with men, nor will those relationships be denied her. If she can exist independently, she will exist for him as well:

...se reconnaissant mutuellement comme sujet, chacun demeurera cependant pour l'autre un autre; la réciprocité de leurs relations ne supprimera pas les miracles qu'engendre la division des êtres humains en deux catégories séparées: le désir, la possession, l'amour, le rêve, l'aventure... C'est au contraire quand sera aboli l'esclavage d'une moitié de l'humanité et tout le système d'hypocrisie qu'il implique que la "section" de l'humanité révélera son authentique signification et que le couple humain trouvera sa vraie figure. (31)

The second volume of Le Deuxième sexe ends thus, with a statement of the ideal state she feels women could attain if they could be freed from the domination of men.

* * * * *

So many of the ideas put forward by Simone de Beauvoir in Le Deuxième sexe are commonplaces today, that one must remember that at the time her book was published many of these ideas shocked conventionally-minded readers. Reaction was violent and often hasty:

Sur la foi de jugements rapides on tient encore quelquefois cet essai pour un recueil de revendications égoïstes utilisées aux fins d'une philosophie corruptrice bien que nombre de ses thèses soient aujourd'hui du domaine public. Il est clair qu'appeler les choses par leur nom n'est vice que pour les pudeurs feintes. (32)

Simone de Beauvoir herself occupied a privileged position in the society she was describing; some of the restraints generally felt by women had not touched her, others she had chosen to ignore. Her liberal views on marriage seemed scandalous to most of the Catholic bourgeoisie who considered

the marriage bond sacred and indissoluble, demanding the complete fidelity of both partners.

It is hardly surprising, too, that since Simone de Beauvoir had attributed much of the blame for woman's unsatisfactory situation to the male domination of society, her eloquence and enthusiasm for her subject should arouse antagonism in her male readers. Many women, content with the lack of effort required from them in a passive and submissive role, shared this reaction.

The wording of some criticisms shows how firmly the dichotomy of male and female characteristics is engrained in many minds. True, not many women at that time were prepared to trespass on what were considered male preserves, or exhibit characteristics that were considered to be masculine, but Simone de Beauvoir did not attempt to cling to her femininity; however, she is accused of lacking femininity, as it has already been pointed out, in Hourdin's criticism; she has, he asserts admired such women as St. Theresa and St. Catherine because of their seeming virility, and their "esprit de décision". (33)

Some of her critics had mixed feelings about the work, as is indicated by Georges Hourdin's juxtaposition of adjectives:

Un livre important, énorme scandaleux...ce livre est magnifique, brutal, impudique, irritant, nécessaire. (34)

Although Hourdin disagrees with Simone de Beauvoir's atheism, but asserts that he agrees with much of what she says in other respects, he is inclined to support or refute her generalisations by using specific instances from his own experience. He agrees that women have a right to absolute equality, that they are in no way inferior to men-- after all, he says, his own relationships with women have been quite as satisfying as those he has had with his male friends! Similarly he refutes Simone de Beauvoir's suggestion that women are generally subordinate to their husbands by referring to examples of wives who he knows dominate their husbands. (35)

Critics have been apt to pounce upon statements about which Simone de Beauvoir has been ready to admit the possibility of another view. If she has said that maternity is not and

need not be every woman's vocation, she has not denied that, for some women, bringing up a child can be the engagement that will bring them fulfilment.

She feels strongly about the restraints imposed by the conventional marriage bond, but she concedes that there are couples who are able to live their marriages authentically. It is such concessions as these that are often passed over by a critic with an axe to grind.

Disapproval of her moral behaviour, (which, though unconventional is nevertheless based on high values) has led some critics to make references to her personal life which seem irrelevant and unwarranted if an appraisal of Le Deuxième sexe is to be objective. Radford suggests that her opinions are

...generalisations of her own inclinations,
and claims that his is proved by her

...interests and behaviour which are frequently
considered offensive,

and her

exhibitionism and excesses of personal behaviour. (36)

Simone de Beauvoir has been at pains to link her opinions with her existentialist philosophy and elsewhere to justify her "personal behaviour" (which surely should have nothing to do with an evaluation of her book) by its compatibility with and dependence on a rigorous intellectual discipline. Radford does not state whose opinions he is quoting-- and one might indeed consider his own suggestion that

... by her advocacy of extramarital relationships
and free love she is hoping to replace "la lutte
des sexes" by "le rut des sexes",

unwarranted and unjustifiably offensive. (37)

Although many women, after the publication of Le Deuxième sexe, wrote to Simone de Beauvoir as to a friend who would understand their problems, congratulating her on the outspokenness of her views, or telling her of their own troubles, there are women, too, who prefer the traditional rôle-- after all, it is the easier road, and traditional attitudes are difficult to overcome. Françoise Parturier, interviewed in 1974, finds this attitude still prevalent. Despite her feminist outlook, she finds traces of it even in her own attitude:

Il m'arrive à moi-même de me rendre coupable de deux ou trois faiblesses très féminines: je préférerais, par exemple, toujours aller chez un médecin homme que chez un médecin femme... Il y a chez les femmes une admiration presque inconditionnelle pour l'homme—et inconsciente. L'homme est, pour elles, presque toujours le meilleur. (38)

* * * * *

Francis Jeanson has summed up admirably Simone de Beauvoir's intention and achievement in writing Le Deuxième sexe:

Le Deuxième Sexe n'a si bien atteint les femmes que dans la mesure où son auteur disposait du recul nécessaire pour décrire une condition à laquelle il avait en partie échappé, mais dont il persistait pourtant à se sentir solidaire—parce qu'elle lui demeurait présente, tout à la fois, dans sa chair (en tant que sexualité assumée) et dans le monde (en tant qu'obstacle à toute entreprise réelle d'humanisation). Simone de Beauvoir ne souffrait pas d'être femme, mais de voir sa propre existence contestée jour après jour par la permanence d'un fossé entre la plupart des hommes et la plupart des femmes: tel est le sens profond d'une entreprise dont nous n'avons pas fini de mesurer les effets sur nos propres consciences (masculines ou féminines, soi-disant affranchies ou prétendument aliénées). (39)

It is not the "emancipation" of women that Simone de Beauvoir is demanding; she says:

La querelle du féminisme est à peu près close.

She is demanding the right of a woman to determine her person, to be regarded as a human being.

As Julien-Caffie says, summing up an objective appreciation of the book:

La vérité est que Simone de Beauvoir a convié les femmes à des tâches plus urgentes que leur propre cas, puisque c'est de leur réalisation que dépend leur just place au sein de la société. Tout autant qu'une invitation à l'individualité la plus large, il s'agit d'un appel au travail en commun de transformation de cette société d'où rien de moins que la charte future des relations inter-sexuelles d'une humanité enfin délivrée de sa préhistoire. (40)

Far from being a "protest against being feminine" (if being feminine means being a woman), Le Deuxième sexe is rather a protest against the way in which women are treated differently from men, and a demand ~~that~~ they be treated as human beings.

* * * * *

Le Deuxième sexe was written about the condition of women in Western society in general; Simone de Beauvoir had naturally more opportunity of observing French women in particular. However, she has also written observations on the situation of women as she found them during her visits to countries as widely separated as America and China.

She wrote in L'Amérique au jour le jour (1948) that she found the women, despite their vaunted independence and their aggressive attitudes, were far from being on an equal footing with the men. She had thought: "Femme américaine, femme libre", (41) but was astonished at the blatant way women dressed to attract men, by the number of magazine articles ...sur l'art de la pêche, de la chasse au mari, sur l'art de prendre un homme au piège. (42)

The college girls she met were not interested for the most part in learning or in training for a career; finding a husband seemed to be their main preoccupation, and dating the subject of most student conversations. Relations between the sexes were "une véritable lutte", (43) and she sensed a profound hostility. Women who lived on a plane of friendship and companionship with their husbands were rare:

Hommes et femmes ne s'aiment pas. (44)

Betty Friedan, in The Feminine Mystique, (1963) also notes that the American college girls she interviewed in 1959 saw finding a husband as one of their main goals in life, and one of their major reasons for going to college. (45)

It is of interest, too, to note that Betty Friedan saw France as a relatively advanced country at that time in respect of women's situation:

The growth of women in France has...closely paralleled the growth of the society, since the proportion of French women in the professions has doubled in fifty years. It is interesting to note that the feminine mystique does not prevail in France to the extent that it does here America; there is a legitimate image in France of a feminine career woman and feminine intellectual. (46)

Simone de Beauvoir also noted in La Longue marche, (1957) in which she describes her visit to China, the rapid changes in the status of women resulting from new laws which have done much to establish equality between husband and wife. She mentions, too, the resistance to these laws that is found amongst the peasants who have lived according to feudal tradition

for thousands of years; many women, even, still regard marriage as a business transaction.

From her observations she concluded that many Chinese and American women had still some distance to go before they were truly liberated.

* * * * *

One must conclude that, however much some women desire to change the image of womanhood they have inherited from the past, it will take a long time to overthrow traditional attitudes. Simone de Beauvoir may well be considered one of the pioneers of the present women's movement. If the proliferation of books that have been published and women's organisations that have been formed since the publication of Le Deuxième sexe is any indication, women's cause does not lack supporters to carry on the struggle.

Notes.

1. Joseph H. McMahon, "What Rest for the Weary?" in Yale French Studies No. 27, 1961.
2. Dialogue avec Madeleine Chapsal, quoted by Serge Julienne-Caffié, Simone de Beauvoir, p.209
3. Simone de Beauvoir, La Force des Choses, p. 207
4. Ibid., p. 109
5. Ibid.
6. Simone de Beauvoir, Le Deuxième sexe, Vol. 1, p.11
7. Ibid., p. 25
8. Ibid., p. 31
9. Ibid., p. 66
10. Simone de Beauvoir, La Force de l'âge, p. 422
11. Le Deuxième Sexe, Vol. 1, p. 93
12. Ibid., p. 94
13. Ibid., p. 216-7
14. Ibid., p. 310
15. Ibid., p. 377
16. G. Hourdin, Simone de Beauvoir et la liberté, p. 118
17. Le Deuxième sexe, Vol. 1, p. 384
18. Ibid., p. 395
19. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 9
20. Ibid., p. 88
21. Ibid., p.114
22. Ibid., p. 195
23. Ibid., p. 289
24. Ibid., p. 308
25. Ibid., p. 478
26. Ibid., p. 491
27. Ibid., p. 492
28. Ibid.,
29. Ibid., p. 505
30. Ibid., p. 524
31. Ibid., p. 576
32. Serge Julienne-Caffié, Simone de Beauvoir, p. 81
33. G. Hourdin, op. cit., p. 127
34. Ibid., p. 116-7
35. Ibid., p. 117
36. C.B. Radford, "The Authenticity of Simone de Beauvoir", in Nottingham French Studies, Oct. 1965, p. 103

37. C.B. Radford, "Simone de Beauvoir: Feminism's Friend or Foe?" Part 2, in Nottingham French Studies, Vol. 7 No. 1, May 1968, p. 53
38. Interview de Françoise Parturier par Pierre Démeron, in Marie Claire, No. 263, juillet 1974, p. 8
39. Francis Jeanson, Simone de Beauvoir, ou l'entreprise de vivre, p. 215
40. Serge Julienne-Caffié, op cit., p. 101
41. Simone de Beauvoir, L'Amérique au jour le jour, p. 378
42. Ibid., p. 318
43. Ibid., p. 321
44. Ibid.
45. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, p. 143. Simone de Beauvoir mentions this book ("un excellent livre") in Tout compte fait, p. 502.
46. Ibid., p. 354, note to Chapter 13.

Women Characters in the Works of Simone
de Beauvoir.

Le Deuxième Sexe came to be written as an expression of concern for the situation of women, but the different women described did not provide blueprints as it were, from which to draw the characters of Simone de Beauvoir's novels. In fact, she had already, before it appeared, published three novels and a play, as well as essays of a philosophical nature. Her long association with Sartre and their common devotion to existentialist thought had influenced, indeed provided a basis for, the attitudes displayed in these earlier works as well as in the long essay; they continued to influence her subsequent writing.

She does not portray flat characters, mere types set in ideal situations, but living people set in situations that are lifelike, for they are seldom clear-cut, and inevitably fall short of any abstract ideal. Her books are indeed portrayals of "Humans Being." (1)

Characters who illustrate the workings of a philosophy might be expected to lack life. Simone de Beauvoir has left to Sartre the expounding of philosophy and the exploration in depth of the resulting anguish in the minds of his characters. She is more concerned with the moral implications of that philosophy in personal relationships and in attitudes towards mankind.

Like Sartre, she avoids the appearance of omniscience and omnipotence on the part of the author, and her thinking is revealed through the thoughts and words as well as the actions of her principal characters, who are as frequently women as men. In fact, the reader can sense her natural sympathy with the more lucid of her characters, even if he is unaware of the autobiographical elements in her novels.

Most of the women characters are in love with, or at least having a relationship in some way, with a man. They are not the traditional heroines of romantic fiction, caught up in, or failing to conform to, the myth of womanhood. Most of them do not recognise its existence, and some are lucid enough and serious enough to ponder on the basis of their existence, and the inevitability of death.

One may wonder if these lucid characters are too introspective and self-analytical. Few of us would allow ourselves, as Françoise in L'Invitée does, when despondency brings back the memory of similarly despondent feelings experienced as a child, (2) to wander into a metaphysical train of thought which when transcribed would fill two pages of a book-- but then it is Simone de Beauvoir's thoughts her characters express, and she is a remarkable woman! Without intervening as author, she has no other way of integrating those thoughts into character and story. This technique helps us to see the reality of the situations through the eyes of the characters. Are they warm and emotional beings? Though Simone de Beauvoir distrusts excesses of passion, one could cite the case of Elisabeth (L'Invitée), who is lucid, but certainly not lacking in passion, or Anne (Les Mandarins), whose lucidity enables her to transcend her passion.

Except in Simone de Beauvoir's historical works, the women characters are for the most part limited to portrayals of the women of her own milieu and situation-- women of the petite bourgeoisie, artists and intellectuals, living in a world of hotels and apartments, cafés and night clubs in Paris. They are women of her own time, living under the impact of world events as they affected Parisian society during and after the Second World War.

The women characters are at various stages along the way to existentialist authenticity. A few can be said not to have set out-- the grandes amoureuses who have sought to justify their existence by devoting themselves entirely to their love for a man. Completely dependent on that man for their happiness, they become more and more demanding.

Two characters who belong to this category are Paule Mareuil (Les Mandarins) and Elisabeth Sabrouse (L'Invitée).

Sartre has written:

Chacun peut être l'objet pour qui la liberté de l'autre s'aliène. (3)

a remark which could easily be applied to these women. Julienne-Caffie comments:

Aimer, dans le cas de Paule ou d'Elisabeth, c'est prendre puissance sur l'homme, simple prétexte

destiné à combler le vide d'une existence qui fait eau de toutes parts; leurs renoncements ne sont jamais que d'ultimes ruses, et la constance de leur don, le masque de leur néant intérieur. (4)

Elisabeth (L'Invitée) has a moderately successful career as an artist, but much of her emotional energy is absorbed by her affair with Claude, a married man who is unwilling to leave his wife and devote himself to her. Mingled with her desire to play the grande amoureuse is jealousy of her brother Pierre and his friend Françoise, who both have successful and satisfying careers and a fulfilling love relationship; this jealousy will lead her, like Régine (Tous les hommes sont mortels), to try to destroy the happiness and fulfilment of others. Françoise might question the authenticity of Elisabeth's love, but she cannot deny her suffering:

Aimait-elle Claude? Elle ne s'était jetée à sa tête que pour avoir elle aussi un grand amour; l'admiration qu'elle lui vouait, c'était une manière encore de se défendre contre Pierre. Pourtant elle éprouvait à cause de lui des souffrances sur lesquelles ni Françoise ni Pierre ne pouvaient rien... Les sentiments d'Elisabeth pouvaient bien être faux, et sa vocation fautive, et faux l'ensemble de sa vie: sa souffrance présente était violente et vraie. (5)

Elisabeth has deluded herself into believing that a great passion requires a total devotion to her lover, and demands as much from him. She gradually becomes aware that all her other activities are empty role-playing; everything else in her life is insignificant:

Elle [Françoise] avait de la chance de pouvoir s'absorber ainsi dans l'instant présent, tous ces gens avaient de la chance. Elisabeth se sentit perdue au milieu de ce public docile qui se laissait remplir d'images et de mots; en elle, rien ne pénétrait, le spectacle n'existait pas... La journée s'était passée dans l'attente de ces heures et ces heures s'écoulaient à vide, elles n'étaient plus à leur tour qu'une attente. Quand Claude serait en face d'elle, Elisabeth savait qu'elle attendrait encore, elle attendrait la promesse, la menace qui nuancerait d'espoir ou d'horreur l'attente de demain... tant que Suzanne resterait la femme de Claude, le présent serait inacceptable. (6)

Even her painting cannot provide her with fulfilment:

Ses tableaux: des couleurs étalées sur des toiles de manière à ressembler à des tableaux: elle passait ses journées à peindre pour se faire croire qu'elle était un peintre, mais ce n'était encore qu'un jeu lugubre. (7)

Even as a hostess she is playing a role:

Elle continuait à se sentir en marge de la vie;
ce souper, ce n'était qu'une imitation de souper,
dans une imitation de studio chic. (8)

The realisation that she has nothing to hope for from Claude leads her to despair.

If eventual realisation of the truth brings despair to Elisabeth, Paule (Les Mandarins) is driven beyond the bounds of sanity by her inescapable conviction that, despite her playing the rôle of grande amoureuse, Henri no longer loves her. Beautiful, sought after, a promising career ahead of her, she has sacrificed everything in order to devote all her time, her thoughts and emotions to her lover, Henri, even when he is not there. She tries to believe that her sacrifices can give her power over him and make him love her, that nothing can change, and that if she has to allow him more liberty to keep him happy, this can only bind him more firmly to her. She tries to enslave him by making herself completely subservient to him (the femme esclave of le Deuxième sexe). She, too, eventually realises her inauthenticity:

Oui, c'est une comédie...maintenant je me singe
moi-même. (9)

Like Elisabeth, she has become aware that she is only playing a rôle. Even when "cured" of her folly, she is still not able to live authentically. Like Denise in Le Sang des Autres, she tries to find reality in writing, but in vain, for she regards being a writer as a rôle rather than a vocation.

Equally inauthentic is the narcissistic tendency of some women to find an outlet in a career on the stage, in legitimate rôle-playing, as in the case of Régine (Tous les hommes sont mortels):

Rosalinde serait un succès et après Rosalinde bien
des espoirs étaient permis

-- Je touche au but, pensait-elle. Elle sourit.
Si souvent, couchée devant le feu dans la maison de
Rosay, elle s'était juré:

-- Je serai aimée, je serai célèbre; elle aurait
voulu prendre par la main cette petite fille ardente,
l'amener dans cette chambre, et lui dire:

-- Je tiens tes promesses. Voilà qui tu es devenue. (10)

This attitude can only give way to despair before the thought of death:

Elle regarda les abat-jour de parchemin, les masques

japonais, tous ces bibelots qu'elle avait choisis un à un et qui lui rappelaient de précieuses minutes; ils se taisaient, les minutes, s'étaient fanées; celle-ci allait se faner comme les autres. La petite fille ardente était morte, la jeune femme avide allait mourir, et cette grande actrice qu'elle souhaitait si passionnément devenir mourrait aussi. Peut-être les hommes se rappelleraient-ils quelque temps son nom. Mais ce goût singulier de sa vie sur ses lèvres, cette passion qui brûlait son cœur, la beauté des flammes rouges et leurs secrètes fantasmagories, personne ne pourrait s'en souvenir. (11)

Régine is even more jealous than Elisabeth of the happiness of others, even to the extent of betraying their secrets, thereby upsetting her lover and inspiring contempt in her friends:

Au fond de leurs yeux elle apercevrait son image: envieuse, perfide, mesquine. (12)

However, she will not become resigned:

Blâmée, honnie, réprouvée, qu'importe si moi je me suis fidèle? Je me serai fidèle; je ne me ferai pas défaut. Je les obligerai à m'admirer si passionnément que chacun de mes gestes leur deviendra sacrée... Elle avait vaincu la honte, elle pensait,
-- Je suis seule, je suis forte, j'ai fait ce que je voulais faire. J'ai prouvé que leur amour n'était qu'un mensonge, j'ai prouvé à Florence que j'existais. Qu'ils me détestent, qu'ils me méprisent: j'ai gagné. (13)

Fosca sees only too clearly that her acting is only an attempt to make herself believe that she exists, but she does not want to be convinced. Fosca says to her:

-- Quand vous jouez vous croyez à votre existence avec une foi si passionnée!... Pour vous, les autres aussi existent et quelquefois vous avez réussi à me faire exister moi-même.

-- Quoi? dit Régine. C'est tout ce que vous avez vu dans Rosalinde, dans Bérénice? C'est là tout le talent que vous me reconnaissez?...

-- Ce n'est pas si mal, dit Fosca. Tout le monde ne réussit pas à feindre d'exister.

-- Mais ce n'est pas une feinte, dit-elle avec désespoir. C'est vrai, j'existe... J'en suis sûre! dit-elle avec fureur. J'existe, et j'ai du talent, et je serai grande actrice. Vous êtes un aveugle! (14)

Régine comes to realise, like Elisabeth and Paule, that in her whole life she is playing a rôle:

C'était vrai, elle essayait: le jeu de la maîtresse de maison, le jeu de la gloire, le jeu de la séduction, tout cela n'était qu'un seul jeu: le jeu de l'existence. (15)

Desperate to find even momentarily a sense of real exist-

ence, she announces her retirement from the theatre, and feels for a moment a burning sense of her existence, but Fosca's look tells her nothing has changed. She has a sudden flash of intuition:

Elle resta immobile au milieu de la chambre, et puis elle tourna sur elle-même avec égarement; elle regarda les masques nègres sur les murs, les statuettes sur le guéridon, et les vieilles marionnettes dans leur minuscule théâtre; tout mon passé et ce long amour de moi-même dans ces précieux bibelots. Et ce ne sont rien que des objets de bazar! Elle jeta les masques sur le sol... Elle les piétinait; elle écrasait tous les mensonges...

-- Je suis un mensonge, dit-elle. (16)

Régine is terrified when Fosca decides to go-- only he can give her a sense of identity. In an attempt to make her realise that for him she will be just another of a series of continuing episodes, he tells her his story. Régine had wanted to be unique in his experience. Now she begins to understand,

...elle s'était trompée comme les autres. (17)

She has nothing to look forward to but death.

These three women, living in self-delusion and inauthenticity, are examples of the type of woman Simone de Beauvoir has described in Le Deuxième sexe, who begins to make of her "slavery" a kind of religion. (18) Their devotion has brought them only despair.

* * * * *

Most of the younger women of Simone de Beauvoir's novels are under no such illusion about their lives: they have taken at least the first step on the road to liberty. They are, as Hélène Nahas points out, like Sartre's jeunes filles,

... des révoltées. Elles sont en révolte contre la morale traditionnelle qui régit la conduite de la jeune fille de la classe moyenne... certaines ont coupé les ponts avec leur famille... certaines ont pris un amant... mai toutes... détestent ou méprisent leurs parents. (19)

They have not all, however, advanced very far along the road to authenticity. Let us examine them in order of growing authenticity.

Xavière (L'Invitée) has come to Paris to live as the protégée of Françoise and Pierre, forming what they hope will

be un trio bien harmonieux. (20) Despite their long-suffering attempts to help her, Xavière is quite incapable of finding sufficient confidence or interest to take up a vocation that will give her independence and a goal; nor can she comprehend or share the freedom and mutual trust existing between Françoise and Pierre. She is

...l'étrangère dont la présence insidieuse et tyrannique vient transformer lentement et totalement le couple formé par Françoise et Pierre. C'est le scandale de l'Autre, l'impossibilité de la coexistence, l'opacité d'une conscience toute fermée sur elle-même. (21)

Xavière's egocentricity excludes any Other:

La présence de Xavière est ressentie par Françoise comme un meurtre dans la mesure où toute relation authentique suppose et nécessite un renoncement à soi et un sacrifice auxquels Xavière se refuse. (22)

Her claim to freedom has not taken into consideration the claims of others.

Françoise is attracted to her, and at the same time not loath to assume a relationship in which she can dominate and control. She sees this at last in the face of Xavière's caprices, selfishness, jealousy and mauvaise foi, and Pierre's growing attraction towards her. At first Xavière is:

...une fraîche richesse...un petit compagnon tout neuf avec ses exigences, ses sourires réticents et ses réactions imprévues. (23)

She is intolerant of anyone else's claims to Françoise's attention-- but at times she can make herself as attractive as a loving and dependent child:

...fondante, abandonnée, elle lui était entièrement livrée. C'était Françoise désormais qui l'emporterait à travers la vie. (24)

Bored, she finds fault with any suggestions for activity that do not involve Pierre's presence. Jealous of the time Françoise and Pierre spend on their professions, or with their friends:

Vous leur donnez des droits sur vous, (25)

she wants to have Françoise and Pierre to herself, and eventually, Pierre alone. Pierre, attracted to her, finally becomes aware of what she is trying to do, and breaks with her. Xavière persists in believing that Pierre loves her. Françoise, angered by her insolent pride, disabuses her, and Xavière, furious, steals and reads Françoise's letters. She interprets

them as indicating that Françoise, already secure in Pierre's love has taken Gerbert from her too. It is the scorn and hate Françoise reads in her eyes that prompt Françoise's crime. Xavière is indeed the Other.

Nadine (Les Mandarins) is a very different person from the intensely selfish and narcissistic Xavière. She is seen through her mother's eyes, in her family situation; she has been brought up by two intellectual parents,

...sans hypocrisie et sans autre foi qu'en l'homme. (26)

Her revolt and uncertainty spring not from this background, but from a disorientation caused mainly by the murder of her Jewish fiancé by the Nazis. She finds no solution to her problems in a long succession of joyless sexual encounters, nor in a longer attachment to Lambert. She finds no vocation, but eventually decides that:

Je suppose qu'au fond je suis faite pour avoir un mari et des enfants comme tout le monde. Je récurerai mes casseroles et je pondrai un chiard par an. (27)

Henri, who was formerly Paule's lover, marries her eventually for the sake of the child she will bear him-- a subterfuge on her part which appears to turn out happily for them both. No longer a révoltée, she is conforming to the conventional rôle of the respectably married woman.

The experiences of war have a different effect on Hélène (Le Sang des autres). At first she is concerned only with its effect on her personal happiness; later she finds a way to authenticity; Gagnebin comments:

Hélène, elle, après avoir vécu dans une totale indifférence, s'ouvre finalement à la générosité de l'action et de la camaraderie. (28)

Hélène is bored with life and with her fiancé Paul. She cannot feel for him a love which will provide a justification for her existence. However, she does not hesitate to exploit his affection when she wants to be distracted or entertained. To relieve her boredom she steals a bicycle, making an accomplice of Paul's friend, Jean Blomart, with whom she falls in love; he cannot reciprocate her love-- he does not believe himself capable of authentic love-- but he is finally persuaded to become her lover.

Hélène is another character who seeks at first to

justify her life in a grand amour. She seeks to dominate Jean through her devotion and passion; she tells him:

Si tu m'aimais, tu ne serais pas si pressé d'aller te faire casser la figure. (29)

This is an entirely selfish sentiment, as Jean himself realises:

Je savais bien. Elle n'avait plus envie de voyage, ni de bicyclette, ni de rien d'autre que moi. Pendant deux ans, avec ma complicité, elle avait tissé ces liens qui la rivaient à moi; comment eût-elle pu en un instant décider de les rompre? (30)

Jean is furious and breaks with her when she succeeds in having him removed from the front. Her life now empty, she contemplates going to Berlin to work for the Germans. However, several incidents bring her to an awareness of reality-- the anguish of a young mother fleeing with her child, the distress of a Jewish mother separated from her child. When her Jewish friend Yvonne is sought by the Nazis she swallows her pride and goes to ask help of Jean, now a Resistance worker. He had been right, she realises, when he told her that others existed. Now, under the impact of her experiences, she finds herself changing, growing in understanding:

C'était indifférent, c'était naturel. Elle n'avait pas peur, elle n'attendait rien de lui.

-- Ruth! ma petite Ruth!

Il ne pourrait pas effacer ce cri, ce cri que plus jamais elle ne cesserait d'entendre. Et rien d'autre n'avait d'importance...

-- Mon histoire: et elle se vit sans moi. Je dors, et parfois, je regarde: et tout arrive sans moi. (31)

Without coming to a conscious decision, she finds herself offering her help too. She has realised that others exist, and that taking responsibility for their welfare can be a goal in life. She wants to work with the Resistance, even though she realises it is dangerous:

Je ne vis plus; je suis comme une morte. Tu te rappelles: tu m'as dit une fois qu'on pouvait accepter de risquer la mort pour que la vie garde un sens. Je pense que tu avais raison. (32)

She realises, too, that her love was not genuine before:

Il est inquiet; il est seul...je n'ai pas su l'aimer... Il n'est pas trop tard. Je l'aimerai toujours. (33)

Fatally wounded when on a mission, she finds her life fulfilled; she has no fear of death:

...qu'y a-t-il à regretter? Est-ce que j'avais

tant besoin de vieillir? (34)

It has been by her own choice:

*Où est la faute?... C'est moi qui ai voulu aller...
Tu n'avais pas le droit de décider pour moi. (35)*

Hélène has realised that in devoting herself to the selfless task of helping others she has found a kinship with them:

Maintenant, elle n'était plus jamais seule, plus jamais inutile et perdue sous le ciel vide. Elle existait avec lui, avec Marcel, avec Madeleine, Laurent, Yvonne, avec tous les inconnus qui dormaient dans les baraques de bois et qui n'avaient jamais entendu son nom, avec tous ceux qui ne souhaitaient un autre lendemain, avec ceux mêmes qui ne savaient rien souhaiter. La coquille s'était brisée: elle existait pour quelque chose, pour quelqu'un. La terre entière était une présence fraternelle. (36)

Clarice (Les Bouches inutiles) is a young woman who has assumed her liberty to a much greater extent than any of the foregoing. It is in her solitude at the beginning of the play that lies the basis of her independent pride in her freedom.

Hélène Rahas comments:

Clarice...qui va avoir un enfant illégitime est, dans un sens "pure", car elle s'est gardée fidèle à elle-même: "J'aurai vécu seule et libre." (37) Et son amant la voit ainsi: "Tu es vraie, pure et solitaire." (38) et connaît sa plus grande parure: "Il lui suffit d'être elle-même." (39) Cette intégrité totale qui se reflète dans "ce visage muet et nu qui m' [Jean-Pierre] est si cher" (40) est infiniment plus précieuse que l'intégrité physique: la virginité. (41)

Like Jean-Pierre, her lover, she has not yet found any goal for her freedom, but though she has had no part in the decision to offer her life as a sacrifice with the rest of the bouches inutiles, that is the rest of the women, children and old people, she demands the right to offer herself of her own free will, and angrily rejects Jacques' offer of escape:

Je peux choisir ma mort. (42)

When the decision is reversed and all the people of the town are free to struggle together for liberty, Clarice can take the final step of responsibility for others. Like Hélène, she is no longer alone, and,

Maintenant, je n'ai plus peur, ni de la mort, ni de la vie. (43)

It has been shown that all of these young women are alike,

in that they are free from conventional restraints on their behaviour. Xavière and Nadine do not use their freedom to any real purpose. Xavière's character does not develop significantly in the course of the novel, though it is progressively revealed to us by her actions. The end of Les Mandarins finds Nadine settled into a conventional bourgeois marriage.

Clarice, when she first appears, has assumed her liberty as a principle of living, but as one which isolates her from others. It is not until the end of the play that she is able to realise how she can use her liberty in a common effort with others.

The character of Hélène is one which shows a complete transformation in the course of the novel. She comes to realise that the love by which she tries to justify her existence is inauthentic and far from satisfying compared with the kind which expresses itself in working with others for a common goal, even to the willing sacrifice of her life.

* * * * *

Two more mature characters who have reached a high degree of authenticity, and into whom Simone de Beauvoir has put much of herself and her thinking, are Françoise Miquel (L'Invitée) and Anne Dubreuilh (Les Mandarins). Each has a profession which provides her with a purpose in life-- Françoise is a writer and Anne a psychiatrist. Each has a satisfying relationship, Françoise with her lover Pierre, Anne with her husband Robert. Each of these relationships is one in which both parties enjoy complete freedom and trust and in which the bond is such that incidental infidelities cannot break it.

Françoise is not disturbed by Pierre's occasional infidelities; they are unable to shake her fundamental security in his love. She herself is not tempted:

Ca ne m'intéresserait pas une aventure sans lendemain--
Je suis une femme fidèle. (44)

The advent of the invitée, Xavière, is what does threaten the security of Françoise's existence, not because she is jealous of Pierre's interest in her, but because she is forced to examine the basis of her own existence and relationships.

She comes to realise in observing Pierre's growing affection for Xavière, that she and Pierre are not as transparent to each other, not as truly one, as she had thought.

She is reassured of Pierre's love for her by his concern when she falls ill, but Pierre and Xavière have decided they love each other. Françoise is capable of jealousy, but she is jealous not because Pierre is interested in another woman, but because he has chosen to love her protégée, Xavière.

Her affection for Xavière is not entirely disinterested. In taking Xavière under her wing, she sees herself in a dominating rôle, moulding that young life. In other words, she sees Xavière as the Other, upon whose life, as Subject, she desires to act. It is disconcerting to her to find that Xavière's concept of herself is different:

C'était irritant de sentir à côté de soi cette petite pensée hostile et obstinée... Brusquement tout était devenu réel: la résistance de Xavière était réelle et Françoise voulait la vaincre. C'était scandaleux: elle avait tellement l'impression de dominer Xavière, de la posséder jusque dans son passé et dans les détours encore imprévus de son avenir! et cependant il y avait cette volonté butée contre laquelle sa propre volonté se brisait. (45)

She had thought of Xavière only as a protégée, not as a self-determined Subject who might have an impact on her own situation.

Françoise becomes aware that she has staked too much on the future of her relationship with Pierre:

Tout son bonheur reposait sur la libre volonté de Pierre et c'était précisément sur quoi elle n'avait aucune prise. (46)

She feels alone and abandoned:

...n'importe quelle souffrance valait mieux que cet abandon sans espoir au sein du vide et du chaos. (47)

The situation is complicated by the fact that Xavière wants Pierre to herself, and is violently jealous of Françoise. This very jealousy is what causes Pierre finally to break with Xavière. Françoise is jubilant. She exults:

J'ai gagné. (48)

The cause of Françoise's final confrontation with herself is Xavière's stealing and reading her letters from Pierre and from her young friend Gerbert, with whom she has had a light-hearted but tender affair-- Xavière had thought Gerbert loved

her. The full impact of Xavière's position in her life as the Other, whose gaze she cannot escape dawns on Françoise. Xavière sees her as a woman who, not content with having Pierre entirely to herself, has taken Gerbert from her too. This is intolerable to Françoise, and she realises that both she and Xavière cannot go on living. She must make a choice; she chooses to kill Xavière:

Il n'y avait plus personne. Françoise était seule. Seule. Elle avait agi seule. Aussi seule que dans la mort. Un jour Pierre saurait. Mais même lui ne connaîtrait de cet acte que des dehors. Personne ne pourrait la condamner ni l'absoudre. Son acte n'appartenait qu'à elle.

-- C'est moi qui le veux.

C'était sa volonté qui était en train de s'accomplir, plus rien ne la séparait d'elle-même. Elle avait enfin choisi. Elle s'était choisie. (49)

Anne's story is a less complicated one. She eventually reaches a state of awareness of herself and her responsibilities to others that Françoise has not been able to attain, though her situation in many ways resembles Françoise's; both seem to owe much to Simone de Beauvoir's own relationship with Sartre (50)

More passive and less dominating than Françoise, more aware of the realities of her own situation, Anne has been married to Robert for twenty years; although passion has faded, they are still devoted to one another. Anne's only regret is the passing of youth and passion.

Yet she does not seem deeply involved in life; she is not really committed to Robert's political interests, sympathetic as she is to them. She reproaches herself guiltily that she does not love her daughter Nadine enough, for she had not wanted a child.

Anne, too, is a femme fidèle. For her, a relationship with a man must involve love as well as desire. When Nadine accuses her rather scornfully of going through life

...avec des gants de chevreau glacé; jamais tu ne les enlèves, tes gants, (51)

the disastrous night she spends in a hotel with Scriassine proves the point only too well.

Anne has reached a point in her life when she needs new horizons; for this reason she accepts an invitation to attend

a conference in America. Her meeting with novelist Lewis Brogan and their subsequent affair show her that she is still capable of love and passion. It is not a merely passionate relationship--there is community of interests and outlook as well.

Anne's devotion to Robert and her involvement in her life in Paris are in no way diminished, but Lewis finds unsatisfactory the sort of relationship where he can be with her for only part of the year. Not satisfied with only half of her life, he wills himself to stop loving her. Anne, for her part, cannot continue the relationship when she finds her love is no longer reciprocated.

She is now face to face with her own existence. Sadly she returns to Paris to face a dreary future; she contemplates suicide:

J'ai assez renié, assez oublié, assez fui, assez menti; une fois, une seule fois et à jamais, je veux faire triompher la vérité. La mort a vaincu: à présent c'est elle qui est vraie. Il suffit d'un geste, et cette vérité deviendra éternelle. (52)

She feels she is no longer needed by anyone.

Then she hears the voices of her family coming from the garden and she, too, takes the final step towards finding herself. She imagines them finding her body:

Ils entreront dans la chambre; je ne verrai rien, mais ils me verront. Comment n'y ai-je pas pensé? Je ne peux pas leur infliger mon cadavre et tout ce qui s'ensuivra dans leurs cœurs à eux: Robert penché sur ce lit, Lewis dans la maison de Parker avec des mots qui dansent devant ses yeux, les sanglots furieux de Nadine. Je ne peux pas. Je me suis levée, j'ai fait quelques pas, je suis tombée assise devant ma coiffeuse. C'est étrange. Je mourrai seule; pourtant ma mort ce sont les autres qui la vivront. (53)

She cannot inflict on them the pain and remorse that would follow. They have prevented her from dying; perhaps they can help her to live:

Puisque mon cœur continue à battre, il faudra bien qu'il batte pour quelque chose, pour quelqu'un. Puisque je ne suis pas sourde, je m'entendrai de nouveau appeler. Qui sait? peut-être un jour serai-je de nouveau heureuse. Qui sait? (54)

It is a stoical attitude, but one which sets her concern for others above her own immediate happiness.

Although Anne and Françoise are mature characters, making use of their freedom, they fall short of Simone de Beauvoir's ideal, independent woman, for they find they are unable to free themselves from emotional dependence on lover or husband.

* * * * *

Twelve years after Les Mandarins, Simone de Beauvoir published Les Belles Images. (1966), which is a comment on the roles women play in modern life, with its glossy artificiality. Though rapid changes in society have brought about a superficial acceptance of many changes in woman's situation, when one looks a little more closely, as we do in this novel, the situation seems not to have changed as much as would appear.

Laurence is a young woman married to Jean-Charles Pasquier, an architect. She herself has a successful career in advertising, giving her the financial independence Simone de Beauvoir deems necessary for a woman's self-realisation. Unknown to Jean-Charles, Laurence has a lover, Lucien, one of her business colleagues, but she is considering bringing this affair to an end.

However, despite her favourable situation, which one might expect to make possible her full self-realisation, Laurence is restless and dissatisfied, unable to find fulfilment in her marriage, her children, her affair or her career, unable to make decisions that will help her direct her own life and her children's.

Confronted with the perplexities of her young daughter Catherine:

-- Maman, pourquoi existe-t-on?

she tries to push them aside:

-- Ce n'est pas mon problème. On existe. Il s'agit de ne pas s'en apercevoir, de prendre son élan, de filer d'un trait jusqu'à la mort. (55)

It is gradually borne in on her that the life she and those around her live, glossy and artificial like the belles images of the advertising media she works with, is empty and unsatisfying:

--Vie trop remplie? Trop vide? Remplie de choses vides, quelle confusion! (56)

Even her marriage has ceased to be exciting:

Après dix ans de mariage, entente physique parfaite.
Oui, mais qui ne change pas la couleur de la vie.
L'amour aussi est lisse, hygiénique, routinier. (57)

Her lover Lucien is no longer exciting either, and she is tired of deception.

It is Catherine's concern for the welfare of others in the world who may be neglected or starving that has made Laurence feel uncertain. The situation is not improved by the discovery of Jean-Charles' attitude when she has a motor accident while trying to avoid a cyclist-- he seems much more concerned about the damage to the car than about the safety of the cyclist or Laurence's involvement:

-- J'aurais très bien pu le tuer.
-- Eh bien, il ne l'avait pas volé. Tout le monde aurait témoigné en ta faveur. (58)

Laurence gradually becomes disillusioned with the life she is living and the people by whom she is surrounded, without being very clear in her mind why this is so. Simone de Beauvoir explains:

Je n'ai pas prêté à Laurence la répugnance qu'ils m'inspirent mais tels qu'ils se peignent par leurs paroles et leurs actes, on ne peut que les détester. (59)

Laurence does not detest them, but neither can she continue living as she has been doing. People will not conform to the idealistic picture, the belle image she has of them, (not even her father, who is going to remarry her mother). She feels she is being forced by the united efforts of her family to manipulate her daughter by sending her to a psychiatrist. She takes refuge in illness.

La désillusion de Laurence n'est pas articulée en mots, mais elle s'inscrit dans son corps: elle déclenche chez elle une crise d'anorexie. (60)

She feels quite alone and hopeless; everyone is against her:

Elle seule est différente, rejetée, incapable de vivre, incapable d'aimer. (61)

Then she makes her decision: she will decide for herself how her daughter will be brought up; the visits to the psychiatrist will cease:

J'ai pris mes décisions et je ne céderai pas.
Pour moi les jeux sont faits. Mais les enfants auront leur chance. Quelle chance? Elle ne sait même pas. (62)

Laurence's future is left open, but as Simone de Beauvoir comments:

...en choisissant désespérément de se mentir Laurence s'interdit toute communication avec autrui; peut-être...aura-t-elle un jour le courage d'affronter la réalité et renouera-t-elle des rapports avec ses semblables. (63)

Laurence's mother Dominique, though belonging to an older generation, is in many ways very up-to-date in her outlook. She sometimes gives the impression of straining after youth and modernity:

Très mince dans son pantalon noir et son chemisier éclatant, les cheveux pâles mi-blonds, mi-blancs, de dos on lui donnerait trente ans. (64)

Dominique, too, has a successful career; she is separated from Laurence's father, who is a passéiste. (65) Her independent career has not helped her to self-realisation, either, for she has taken a lover upon whom she has become completely emotionally dependent. When he deserts her for a younger woman her world is completely shattered and she contemplates suicide.

Laurence finds it hard to accept her mother's eventual decision to return to her father as a satisfactory solution to her problem of solitude. There seems to be as much mauvaise foi in this proposal as in Dominique's devotion to her lover.

The other main woman character in Les Belles Images is Laurence's sister Marthe. Simone de Beauvoir has depicted a woman whose whole outlook on life is coloured by her religion, which, to judge by the rather unsympathetic description, is based on mauvaise foi. Marthe's religion has given her a kind of pride:

Laurence lui a demandé dix fois de ne pas venir à l'improviste. Mais elle obéit à des impulsions surnaturelles; elle est devenue très impérieuse depuis que le ciel l'inspire. (66)

Marthe feels that Catherine's worries are due to a lack of religious belief to guide her, but she cannot recall the remarks Catherine has made that have given her this idea:

--C'est plutôt une sorte d'intuition que j'ai eue, par-delà des mots, dit Marthe d'un air recueilli. (67)

Marthe's well-meaning efforts seem only to annoy Laurence.

Although in this more recent book Simone de Beauvoir is still examining different kinds and degrees of inauthentic response to life, she uses her material differently. She had previously told Francis Jeanson in an interview that she intended to write a novel from a different point of view:

L'idée serait, alors, de ne plus me projeter moi-même dans mes personnages... Si j'écris un autre roman... il s'agira de gens qui ne seront pas du tout placés dans les mêmes situations que moi. (68)

This objective point of view has permitted her to make a telling comment on the aspects of modern society she abhors:

J'ai repris un autre projet: évoquer cette société technocratique dont je me tiens le plus possible à distance, mais dans laquelle néanmoins je vis; à travers les journaux, les magazines, la publicité, la radio elle m'investit... Personne dans cet univers auquel je suis hostile, ne pouvait parler en mon nom. (69)

Simone de Beauvoir has shown us in her portrayal of the women characters of Les Belles images that, although society has changed since she wrote Le Deuxième sexe, giving women more possibility of living authentically, economic and sexual liberty alone are not enough to give them the identity and authenticity they seek. Many are not able to assume responsibility for their lives. They are still, as Radford points out in his study, seeking an "image" of themselves; evidence of this is seen in their narcissistic concern with mirrors and their reflection. (70)

Laurence has made a choice; her engagement will be the upbringing of her daughter, and we feel that she will respect Catherine's liberty as Dominique did not respect hers. She has taken her first uncertain step towards responsibility for others. However, she still refuses to take responsibility for her own life. She feels that:

Pour moi les jeux sont faits. (71)

Perhaps in the future she will be able to progress towards authenticity, but Simone de Beauvoir does not indicate that the other women of Les Belles images have a chance of doing so.

* * * * *

The short tales published under the title of La Femme rompue

are likewise told from a detached point of view. Simone de Beauvoir had received many letters from women whose husbands had left them for another woman. Struck by the similarities in their stories, and by their obvious inability to comprehend the reasons for their situation, though their letters occasionally betrayed their self-delusion and hypocrisy, she wrote these stories. The longest one, La Femme rompue, the profoundest study of the three of one of these women, is written in the form of a diary, setting out the day-by-day discovery by Monique of her husband's infidelity. Monique deludes herself that she has given up her career for her husband, yet she unconsciously reveals that she is too selfish to consider his real interests. Little by little, as she learns of her husband's infidelity, the extent of her mauvaise foi becomes clear to the reader.

Simone de Beauvoir has made some illuminating comments both on the character of Monique and on her method of portraying it:

Il ne s'agissait pour moi de raconter en clair cette banale histoire mais de montrer, à travers son journal intime, comment la victime essayait d'en fuir la vérité. La difficulté était encore plus grande que dans Les Bettes images car Laurence cherche timidement la lumière tandis que tout effort de Monique tend à l'oblitérer, par des mensonges à soi, des oublis des erreurs; de page en page le journal se conteste: mais à travers de nouvelles fabulations, de nouvelles omissions. Elle tisse elle-même les ténèbres dans lesquelles elle sombre au point de perdre sa propre image. J'aurais voulu que le lecteur lût ce récit comme un roman policier; j'ai semé de-ci de-là des indices qui permettent de trouver la clé du mystère... La vérité n'est jamais avouée: elle se trahit si on y regarde d'assez près. (72)

* * * * *

If critics of Le Deuxième sexe have accused Simone de Beauvoir of being "masculine", there is little that is masculine about the insight that she displays in portraying her women characters. None of them can be said to be as independent intellectually and emotionally as she has shown herself to be, not even Françoise or Anne, to whom she has given many of her ideas and attitudes, and whom she has placed in situations somewhat resembling those she has herself experienced.

In the portraits of women whose passion is merely mauvaise foi, as in the account of these women given in Le Deuxième sexe, we can sense her compassion. Of those women who come nearest to her ideal, Clarice is the least real, the least successfully portrayed; her future remains open. It is Hélène who finds justification for her life, but in dying for others.

Simone de Beauvoir's works may seem at times pessimistic about the ability of women to live authentically. This may be a reflection of her own view of the world: she is not depicting idealised characters, modelled on her theories of how life should be lived, but real ones, living in real situations in the world.

Notes.

1. Title of book on Sartre by J.H. McMahon, Chicago, 1971.
2. Simone de Beauvoir, L'Invitée, p. 144
3. Sartre, L'Être et le néant, p. 444
4. Serge Julien-Caffié, Simone de Beauvoir, p. 61.
5. L'Invitée, p. 33
6. Ibid., 89-90
7. Ibid., p. 970
8. Ibid., p. 967
9. Simone de Beauvoir, Les Mandarins, p. 419
10. Simone de Beauvoir, Tous les hommes sont mortels, p. 30
11. Ibid., p. 31
12. Ibid., p. 18
13. Ibid., p. 19
14. Ibid., p. 71
15. Ibid., p. 74
16. Ibid., p. 75
17. Ibid., p. 68
18. See p. 29, note 25.
19. Hélène Nahas, La Femme dans la littérature existentielle, p. 47-48
20. L'Invitée, p. 287
21. Laurent Gagnebin, Simone de Beauvoir ou le refus de l'indifférence, p. 92
22. Ibid., p. 93-94
23. L'Invitée, p. 35
24. Ibid., p. 42
25. Ibid., p. 124
26. Georges Hourdin, Simone de Beauvoir et la liberté, p. 145
27. Les Mandarins, p. 201
28. Gagnebin, op. cit., p. 93
29. Simone de Beauvoir, Le Sang des autres, p. 150
30. Ibid., p. 123
31. Ibid., p. 218
32. Ibid., p. 219
33. Ibid., p. 220
34. Ibid., p. 224
35. Ibid., p. 223
36. Ibid., p. 222
37. Simone de Beauvoir, Les Bouches inutiles, p. 28

38. Ibid., p. 57
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 64
41. Hélène Nahas, op. cit., p. 51
42. Les Bouches inutiles, p. 83
43. Ibid., p. 110
44. L'Invitée, p. 26
45. Ibid., p. 37
46. Ibid., p. 212
47. Ibid., p. 214
48. Ibid., p. 467
49. Ibid., p. 504
50. Simone de Beauvoir has always maintained that her novels are not romans à clé. She is reticent, even in her memoirs, about the emotional intimacy of her relationship with Sartre; that is, after her description of its first impact on her; she tends to confine herself to mention of its more intellectual aspects.

Though Anne's affair with Lewis Brogan in Les Mandarins obviously owes its inspiration to Simone de Beauvoir's with Nelson Algren, the author has used Algren "pour inventer un personnage qui doit exister sans référence au monde des vivants."

As for the character of Anne, Simone de Beauvoir admits, "Je l'ai tirée de moi. This is because, "Un grand nombre des choses que je voulais dire étaient liées à ma condition féminine." However, in order to make it look less like a study of a special case, she has expressed many of her ideas through Henri, who is also a writer.

She has given Anne, "des goûts, des sentiments, des réactions qui étaient miens. Souvent je parle par sa bouche. Cependant elle n'a ni mes appétits, ni mes entêtements, ni surtout l'autonomie que me donne un métier qui me tient au coeur. (La Force des Choses, pp. 283-288.)

51. Les Mandarins, p. 61
52. Ibid., p. 577-8
53. Ibid., p. 578
54. Ibid., p. 579
55. Simone de Beauvoir, Les Belles images, p. 59
56. Ibid., p. 205
57. Ibid., p. 34 Radford writes that "Birth control has brought no sexual happiness." Does he perhaps mean "emotional happiness?" This seems to be the sort of conjugal relationship which Radford says Simone de Beauvoir describes as "masturbation en commun". He gives no reference for this. (See C.B. Radford, "Simone de

- Beauvoir, *Feminism's Friend or Foe*," Part 2, in Nottingham French Studies, Vol. U11, No. 1, May, 1968, p.47)
58. Les Belles images, p. 144
 59. Simone de Beauvoir, Tout compte fait, p. 140
 60. Ibid., p. 141
 61. Les Belles Images, p. 247
 62. Ibid., p. 256,8
 63. Tout compte fait, p. 143
 64. Les Belles images, p. 6
 65. Tout compte fait, p. 139
 66. Les Belles images, p. 103
 67. Ibid., p. 107
 68. Ibid., p. 54
 69. Ibid., p. 55
 70. C.B. Radford, "Simone de Beauvoir, *Feminism's Friend or Foe*", Part 1, in Nottingham French Studies, Vol.U1, No.1, May, 1967, p. 95-96
 71. Les Belles images, p. 258
 - 72.. Tout compte fait, p. 142

Women Characters in the Works of Jean-Paul Sartre.

When we come to examine the fictional women characters of Sartre, we find types as many and varied as those of Simone de Beauvoir's works, and seen for the most part, naturally perhaps, from the male point of view. There are few who have managed to reach, or even approach, the stage of living authentically and responsibly.

It will be shown that Sartre has two fundamentally different approaches to his women characters. Some are seen as carnal beings, through the eyes of either a lover or the narrator. Others are shown as women of action in the world, grappling with the problems of existential living.

In the novels, women are most often represented as obstacles to a man's finding himself, as temptations imposing on man the necessity for recognising the demands of his fleshly nature, while at the same time they inspire in him fear or disgust, or both.

Any writer will betray his feelings and attitudes in the sympathy or antipathy with which he delineates his characters, and just as we feel that through the pages of Simone de Beauvoir's novels we can appreciate some of her innermost feelings, some of her own attitudes and enthusiasms in her entreprise de vivre, so Sartre's obsessions and feelings of repulsion are thrust somewhat forcibly upon the reader, and seem at times to be carried to extremes in his attempts to express his philosophical insights in a concrete form.

Roquentin, the protagonist of Sartre's first novel, La Nausée, was stricken with nausea on discovering the gratuitousness of existence, of the existence of things and their obscene proliferation. The world was

...une larve coulante...Quelle saleté! (1)

Even people disgusted him:

...et puis deux visages:...gras, chauds, sensuels, absurdes, avec les oreilles rouges. (2)

Much of this reaction has carried over into Sartre's view of women as carnal beings. These tendencies are particularly evident in Sartre's earlier works, and are never entirely absent, although at the same time Sartre portrays a kind of

woman who inspires him with purer feelings. It is not until his later works that he is able to some extent to combine the two images in one feminine character.

When Mathieu (L'Age de raison) no longer loves Marcelle, he thinks of her in terms which express his loathing, a loathing involving his senses of sight, touch and smell. As he approaches her room he is met by

...une buée rose qui sentait l'iris. (3)

We can sense his disgust at the sight of

...ses cuisses grasses...sa lourde poitrine, (4)

a feeling that penetrates even through his desire, expressed in Sartre's choice of adjectives:

Il aimait cette chair beurreuse (5)...cette chair onctueuse et déjà un peu usée. (6)

Her mouth is

...une bouche vernie avec des reflets mauve, un insecte écarlate occupé à dévorer ce visage creux. (7)

Mathieu cannot escape this feeling:

Il aurait voulu s'oublier et l'oublier. Mais il y avait beau longtemps qu'il ne s'oubliait plus quand il faisait l'amour avec elle. (8)

The obscenity of nature's proliferation is intensified by the child she is carrying:

Dans son ventre il y avait une petite marée vitreuse qui gonflait doucement...ça s'épanouit au milieu des cochonneries qu'elle a dans le ventre, c'est vivant. (9)

On the other hand, this is something that Marcelle herself accepts as right and natural; she lives in a state of beatitude, and when the child stirs she feels

...innombrable et fourmillante, une voie lactée. (10)

Another woman depicted in terms of the flesh and with disgust is Lola, (like Mathieu and Marcelle a character in the trilogy, Les Chemins de la liberté) who is seen through the eyes of her young lover Boris. She is a woman with a devouring passion, who lives for and through her love for Boris. Her anguish is intensified by the fact that she is aging, and she knows in her heart that Boris, who is only half her age, does not really love her; in fact he is, like Mathieu, repelled by his need to yield to physical love; he makes love to Lola with a sentiment akin to hate.

His sister Ivich, too, feels loathing towards Lola, because of the relationship she has with her brother:

Elle se serre contre lui...c'est risible. Elle a l'air d'une ogresse. (11)

Ce que ça peut être émouvante, cette tête ravagée sur cette corps épanouie...Sympathique? Ah non... c'est une sale bonne femme, une femelle. (12)

Lola is a complex person. There is something strong and almost virile about her. When she reaches a crisis in her life, discovering that she has a tumour that threatens her health, perhaps even her life, it is she who feels disgust with her body:

C'est une escroquerie, il est pourri. (13)

Here is another proliferation, a

...bête immonde qui prolifèrerait dans la nuit de sa chair. (14)

She will not call on Boris' pity-- or perhaps she will not risk his repulsion. In any case she rejects his proposal that she marry him, and when he reveals that he could escape to England to fight with the Free French forces, understanding his wishes, she sacrifices her own feelings and urges him to go.

In these two women we see Sartre's concentration on the less pleasant aspects of life and physical love, through the eyes of Mathieu and Boris.

In the character of Ivich, to whom Mathieu is also attracted, Sartre shows us a type of woman of whom he can more wholeheartedly approve. Obviously drawn from the same model as Xavière, Ivich is quite the opposite in looks and temperament to Marcelle. As he looks at her Mathieu feels she is unattainable:

Ivich, il la voyait...mais elle était hors d'atteinte avec sa taille frêle et sa belle gorge dure; elle semblait peinte et vernie...inutilisable. (15)

She expresses a horror of being looked at:

Quant à ce qui est de regarder les gens en face, je ne peux pas; les yeux me picotent tout de suite. (16)

Like Xavière, Ivich has broken away from her parents and her provincial home; she feels free and is in revolt against their values. Of a woman who is looking at her disapprovingly, she says:

Cette femme me méprise parce qu'elle me déteste... je ne suis pas décente...je ne suis pas décente, moi,

je m'amuse, je me saoule, je vais me coller au
P.C.B....je hais la décence. (17)

It is her purity, her unattainability, that Mathieu admires in Ivich, and also in her brother Boris:

Ivich et Boris dansaient, aussi purs qu'un air de
musique, à peine moins impitoyables. (18)

Mathieu realises that if Ivich were to return his admiration, she would lose this quality of unattainability and remoteness, the very opposite to the qualities that have begun to disgust him in Marcelle since he has ceased to love her.

Ivich's character has been aptly summed up by Suzanne Lilar:

Personnage ambigu, double, peu sexualisé, Ivich se dissocie complètement de ce Féminin dont Marcelle participe au point d'en devenir une sorte de symbole. Rien de moins femelle que cette austerité, cette absence de complaisance, de bonté, de pitié, ce refus ou cette ostentation de refus opposé à la vie, ce dédain de l'amour et du sexe. (19)

From the time that Ivich allows herself to lose some of this unattainability, to be seduced, she is no longer presented in attractive terms. She has aged since her miscarriage, she wears unattractive clothes which conceal her body, so that one feels she is ashamed of it.

Mathieu is able to feel something of the same kind of sentiment towards a quite different type of woman, with whom he spends a casual evening-- Irène-- not because she is unattainable; she is not, for he sleeps with her, but because she is able to preserve a certain remoteness. She admits that she is a femme facile, but she has already refused this evening to give herself to an admirer, because she feels that he desires her too much. She says:

Quand on a trop envie de moi, ça me scandalise, (20)

Yet she offers herself to Mathieu, who would nevertheless rather be alone. She assures him:

Vous verrez, avec moi ce sera comme si vous étiez
seul. (21)

Mathieu makes love to her because,

...elle avait l'air si désolé. (22)

and finds indeed that he might as well be alone, for she is quiet and passive: an

...immobilité palpitante...il promenait ses doigts
sur un chair aveugle. N'importe qui. (23)

Even her eyes are cool and detached. He has, however, found a kind of happiness with her.

Anny, Roquentin's mistress in Sartre's first novel, La Nausée, is a relatively minor character, who does not appear as either a carnal woman or a woman of action, but as one who finds it as difficult as Roquentin does to find any justification for her life. She has tried to attain a satisfying love, without success. She had evolved the theory that perfect love can be experienced only momentarily, and only by a few, because for most people,

...la vie est...une longue succession informe
et pâteuse d'états. (24)

She calls these experiences moments parfaits; but she has come to the conclusion that her moments parfaits and her situations privilégiées do not exist.

Anny imagines that she has created in her room a world of her own, a décor for her life with Roquentin, and has arranged each of their rôles-- but the moments parfaits have not eventuated and she has ceased to believe in them. When Roquentin visits her again, she strips the room of its décor. She ceases to seek for justification in the "privileged moment" and to play a part, and offers herself to him just as she is. He is not able to respond to her. Henceforth she will again fall into the habit of pretence; she relives their story:

Je lui donne quelques coups de pouce et ça fait une suite de moments parfaits. Alors je ferme les yeux et j'essaie de m'imaginer que je vis encore dedans. (25)

Anny, like Roquentin, has failed to find a way to use her liberty in justification of her existence.

* * * * *

The women so far considered are seen from the point of view of their lovers. Except for Anny, they are portrayed either as femelles who represent a temptation to indulge physical desires of which the men are ashamed and which they would rather ignore, or as somewhat remote beings who reject their physical natures, with whom the men try to establish relationships that disregard the baser feelings.

Odette (Les Chemins de la Liberté) is another character who does not fit into either of these two categories. She is one of the few women characters in the novels who reveal their

own feelings and character to any great extent, though we are also shown Mathieu's point of view. She is married to Mathieu's brother Jacques, whose actions frequently betray his bourgeois mauvaise foi.

Odette is attracted to Mathieu, but she, too, displays mauvaise foi; she loses herself in romantic daydreams, and cannot bring herself to admit her feelings to Mathieu, for she feels that:

... alors il lui aurait glissé entre les doigts et il serait reparti dans ses rêves. (26)

She is aware to a certain extent that she does not live authentically; she admits,

J'ai toujours peur. (27)

Mathieu, too, is attracted to her, but he cannot make up his mind to initiate an affair with her. To him:

Elle avait la grâce et la tranquillité d'une bête familière: elle s'asseyait, repartait, revenait s'asseoir, sûre de passer inaperçue. (28)

When Odette and Jacques flee from Paris at the approach of the Germans, he displays his mauvaise foi by trying to get her to say that she wanted to leave, so that he can justify their departure rather than admit his fear. She resists at first:

--Je ne veux pas. Je ne veux pas lui dire ce qu'il veut me faire dire...elle se sentait coupable... Peut-être a-t-il cru que j'avais envie de partir... elle dit en baissant la tête:

-- Je n'aurais pas aimé rester à Paris.

-- Tu avais peur? demanda-t-il avec bonté.

-- Oui, dit-elle. J'avais peur. (29)

Odette has finally given in to her mauvaise foi.

* * * * *

There are two women characters who are described from the point of view of the narrator, rather than that of a character in the story. Although Lulu's feelings are shown mainly through a long interior monologue, the repulsion and loathing she feels for her physical nature make us feel that she is expressing Sartre's own sentiments.

Lulu's narcissism and her attitude towards physical love have precluded any kind of intimacy in her relationships with either her husband or her lover. In fact she has married a

man who is impotent, who cannot make demands on her; her lover wants her to leave Henri, but she cannot face the demands Pierre will make; although she no longer loves Henri, she returns to him on the pretext that he needs her.

She cannot escape from or deny her physical desires, yet she persists in refusing to admit that she has any pleasure in the act of love. Like Mathieu, she feels:

Je voudrais qu'on s'oublie,

but she finds that:

...il n'arrête pas de dire des cochonneries...

Lulu...frissonna parce qu'elle se rappelait qu'elle avait gémi.

-- C'est pas vrai, je n'ai pas gémi...d'abord je ne peux pas prendre de plaisir...à moins que je me le donne moi-même...c'est médical. (30)

Lulu has a horror of all the physical manifestations of love:

Pourquoi faut-il que nous ayons des corps? (31)

Even when she has decided, urged by her friend Rirette and her lover Pierre, to break free from Henri, she is not able to sustain her resolution. She thinks of Henri and characteristically blames her defection on others:

Il ne peuvent pas tout de même me forcer à le quitter comme un chien. (32)

She returns to Henri, saying she wants to see him again before she goes away, and they weep together. She says:

Tu es pur, toi, tu es pur. Si on pouvait rester comme ça toujours: purs et tristes comme deux orphelins. (33)

Lulu still deludes herself into thinking that she is leaving, but persists in disclaiming responsibility for her own acts:

On ne fait jamais ce qu'on veut, on est emporté. (34)

Disgusted as she is by all the physical manifestations of the body:

Un ventre qui chante, ça m'agace...je n'aime pas y penser, ça me donne mal au ventre, (35)

Lulu has a flash of insight:

Il m'aime, il n'aime pas mes boyaux...on devrait pouvoir aimer tout d'une personne, l'oesophage et le foie et les intestins. (36).

Sartre writes in a detached manner about Eve in La Chambre, about whom there is a touch of the theatrical. Pierre,

her husband, has retreated into madness and shut himself up in his room away from a world with which he cannot come to terms. Eve herself has broken away from the oppressive normality of the bourgeois standards of her parents, but her freedom has led her only to the artificial world of Pierre's madness. She even, her father notices, has taken to making up heavily, and he thinks she has

...l'air d'une tragédienne. (37)

Even though she has chosen to play the rôle of the martyr after whom Pierre names her (Agathe), the freedom she has chosen has no goal, and she is living it in mauvaise foi. She cannot share Pierre's madness, but can only reflect in anguish on the future, in which he can only become worse.

* * * * *

In part, the distinction between the two types of women portrayed by Sartre is due to the different conventions that need to be observed in writing novels or in writing for the theatre. The playwright cannot allow his characters to dwell at length on their innermost thoughts and feelings as the novelist may. In order to hold his audience, he must reveal character largely by action, and as the spoken word is apt to have a greater impact than the written, he must avoid being too outspoken for fear of shocking the conventionally minded.

It may be to some extent an indication that Sartre has progressed beyond the need to express his feelings about man's physical nature, and has felt a greater necessity to explore the possibility of finding self-justification in action, that since completing the third volume of Les Chemins de la Liberté, he has turned to the theatre as a medium of literary expression.

In Le Diable et le bon Dieu shows a different kind of love from that we have considered above. Concerning Sartre and his ideas of love, Suzanne Lilar writes:

Tel est l'amour dont Sartre n'a cessé de rêver.
Un amour pur, un amour absolu. (38)

It is an "absolute" love that Hilda has in mind when she says:

On n'aime rien si l'on n'aime tout. (39)

This is the conclusion to which the play points us.

From her first appearance in the play, Hilda is shown to be

someone who can go beyond Sartre's earlier conception of love as conflict, as a desire for possession and domination of the loved one. She has left her well-to-do family to live with and work for the needs of the peasants:

Elle vit comme une bonne sœur; elle se prive de tout, elle aide tout le monde. (40)

This idea of love is new to Goetz, who asks:

C'est vrai qu'ils t'aiment?... Pourquoi?... C'est parce qu'ils ont besoin de toi?

Hilda: C'est plutôt parce que moi j'ai besoin d'eux. (41)

Later in the play, Goetz tries to punish himself for having fleshly desires; he feels that:

Le corps est une chiennerie.

Hilda: La chiennerie est ton âme. (42)... Comme tu souffres d'être un homme. (43)

When Goetz asks Hilda:

Comment peut-on aimer sans honte?

she replies:

Il y a plus d'ordures dans ton âme que dans mon corps. C'est dans ton âme qu'est la laideur et la saleté de la chair. Moi, je n'ai pas besoin d'un regard de lynx: je t'ai soigné, lavé, j'ai connu l'odeur de ta fièvre. Ai-je cessé de t'aimer? Chaque jour tu ressembles un peu plus au cadavre que tu seras et je t'aime toujours. Si tu meurs, je me coucherai contre toi et je resterai là jusqu'à la fin, sans manger ni boire, tu pourras entre mes bras et je t'aimerai charogne: car l'on n'aime rien si l'on n'aime pas tout. (44)

When Goetz has decided that there is no God, when he is released from La comédie du Bien by the murder of Heinrich, he can now love Hilda without shame:

Toi, c'est moi. Nous serons seuls ensemble. (45)

In the plays the characters are in general the characters are less preoccupied than those of the novels with physical obsessions. Not all of the women characters, as we have seen from the example of Hilda, refuse to accept responsibility for their lives, or take refuge in mauvaise foi.

Electre in Les Mouches displays in a high degree Sartrean mauvaise foi. At the beginning of the play she acts in freedom; she has refused to identify herself with the guilt and remorse of Egisthe, who has murdered her father in order to marry her mother Clytemnestre and become king, a guilt and

remorse they have imposed upon the whole town of Argos. She refuses to accept the power and authority of the god Jupiter, and dreams of the day when her brother Oreste will come to avenge this great crime. As long as she has this dream, she can remain free, defy Egisthe and refuse to accept the elaborate myths and ceremonies he has created in order to perpetuate guilt. Once Oreste has acted and has killed Egisthe, and has assumed his own liberty and responsibility, Electre cannot accept reality, cannot assume her own liberty, and retreats into guilt and remorse on her own account. She calls on Jupiter for aid, and promises to submit to him; Jupiter can help men only if they do not realise they are free. When Oreste urges her to leave with him, Electre cries:

Je ne veux plus t'entendre. Tu n'offres que le malheur et le dégoût... Au secours! Jupiter, roi des Dieux et des hommes, mon roi, prends-moi dans tes bras, emporte-moi, protège-moi. Je suivrai ta loi, je serai ton esclave et ta chose, j'embrasserai tes pieds et tes genoux. Défends-moi contre les mouches, contre mon frère, contre moi-même, ne me laisse pas seule, je consacrerai ma vie entière à l'expiation. Je me repens, Jupiter, je me repens. (46)

Electre has relinquished her freedom and submitted to Jupiter's domination. When there is a possibility that her dream might become a reality, she has been unable to make a positive decision and commit herself to it.

Johanna in Les Séquestrés d'Altona is a young woman who when the play begins has by marrying Werner von Gerlach freed herself from the world of illusion in which she had lived as a film star, finding justification for her life in her beauty. She understands the sequestré, Frantz and his "devotion to absolute greatness, (47) and feels a kind of love for him. This gives Frantz hope:

Frantz: On peut encore m'aimer?

Johanna: Malheureusement.

Frantz: Je ne serai plus jamais seul... Je vous demande pardon, Johanna, il est un petit peu tôt pour corrompre le juge que je me suis donné.

Johanna: Je ne suis pas votre juge. Ceux qu'on aime, on ne les juge pas. (48)

Frantz is not convinced that Johanna really means this:

Frantz: Un jour viendra, je parlerai de moi, et tout d'un coup, l'amour s'écroulera. Vous me regarderez avec horreur. (49)

Events prove that Frantz is right; when Johanna learns that he

has been capable of torture, she looks at him with

...une sorte de haine. (50)

Les Mains sales has two women characters who are unlike any in the other works. Olga is a dedicated worker for the Communist Party, who has subordinated her whole life to her political engagement. This is not to say that she is incapable of sentiment: it is her affection for Hugo (he has previously been her lover), and her faith in him that have led her to persuade the Chief to give him the opportunity for action. It is her influence which saves him from being summarily murdered on his release from prison, while she finds out if he is récupérable. She is clear-headed--Sartre himself might call her masculine-- and strong-willed, yet she will not let sentiment prevail over her duty to the party. She says:

M'as-tu jamais vu céder aux sentiments? Je ne te demande pas de lui [Hugo] laisser la vie sans conditions. Je me moque de sa vie. Je dis seulement qu'avant de le supprimer on doit examiner si le Parti peut le reprendre. (51)

She wants to be fair:

Il faut lui laisser sa chance. (52)

She has sufficient strength and standing to persuade Louis to let her have her way.

Jessica, Hugo's wife, acts as a foil to Olga in the play. Very young, frivolous, light-hearted, she is a rare type in Sartre's work, although in her irresponsibility she is somewhat akin to Estelle in Huis Clos.

She has led a sheltered life and has had no interest in or understanding of politics. Her romantic playfulness appeals to one side of Hugo's character, but it is not until she meets Hoederer that she grows up enough to realise that she is a woman. She says:

A présent je suis là devant vous, il me semble que je viens de réveiller et que c'est le matin. Vous êtes vrai. Un vrai homme de chair et d'os, j'ai vraiment peur de vous et je crois que je vous aime de vrai. (53)

One of the characters in Sartre's plays to whom one feels most sympathetic is Lucie in Morts sans sépulture. She is another character engagée; she has found a goal to work for that transcends her personal feelings.

In some ways her lucidity and strength recall Olga, though she is less detached in her emotional relationships.

Lucie is in love with Jean, leader of a Resistance group to which she belongs. Her young brother François is one of those imprisoned with her by the Vichy police. We can feel the warmth of her love and concern and pity; in this she is truly "feminine". Yet she is strong enough to consent to the murder of her brother to prevent him from betraying the whereabouts of Jean and thus endangering the lives of other Resistance workers. When there is a possibility of gaining a reprieve by giving the enemy false information, Lucie does not want to take it. She says scornfully to Henri who is trying to persuade her:

Et toi, qui fais des manières parce que tu as étranglé un môme, te rappelles-tu que ce môme était mon frère et qu je n'ai rien dit? J'ai pris tout le mal sur moi; il faut qu on me supprime et tout le mal avec. (54)

Death is the only solution she can see to the problem of the shame she would later feel if she lived.

The foregoing characters in the plays are all portrayed within a conventionally acceptable moral situation. There are other women characters in the plays who are less morally respectable, and who are also presented in existentialist terms.

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Both of the women characters in Huis Clos are glaring examples of mauvaise foi. Estelle has killed her child, but persists in trying to find justification for her acts in taking a lover and in killing the child, by pointing out that she has acted generously in marrying an old man out of pity. After all, she has refused to go away with her lover, and has sacrificed her youth to an old man.

Inès, a lesbian who has caused the death of her friend's lover, is a stronger character. She is able to take responsibility for her own actions. She sees clearly that now she and her two companions are dead and in Hell, they can do nothing to justify their past actions. She tells them:

Je vais brûler, je brûle et je sais qu'il n'y a pas

de fin... je vous dis que je sais tout et je ne
peux même pas avoir pitié de moi. (55)

Lizzie, the Putain respectueuse is another example of bad faith; she too is outside the bounds of the conventional norm of moral behaviour. As a northerner and as a social outcast, she has no sympathy with the values of the white Southern society, the rich and powerful who can see no harm in injustice to a negro, provided it saves the face of a white man. Under pressure from the whites, Lizzie is persuaded to give up her support of the wronged negro on the instance of one who can say:

Moi, j'ai le droit de vivre: il y a beaucoup de
choses à entreprendre et on m'attend. (56)

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These, then, are the two types of women characters in Sartre's works: those like Marcelle, Lola and Lulu who betray the repulsion he feels towards women's carnal nature: Ivich and Irène, shown from the same point of view, but as ideals of remoteness, and in Ivich's case, purity. In the plays the women are presented more from the existentialist point of view as women of action, or as women trying to justify their lives by finding a meaning for their existence. Though she is not a character in a play, but in Sartre's first novel, Anny is more akin to this type of character.

When he is writing under the influence of his disgust and his obsession with the physical, the woman is displayed, in Sartrean terms as object. Where she has been able to assume full responsibility for her actions and her life, she is subject in full liberty, and is presented from a more abstract philosophical position. As in real life, there are many intermediate stages on the road to liberty, with comparatively few attaining that goal. The only woman character who even approaches Sartre's ideal is Hilda.

Notes:

1. Sartre, La Nausée, p. 190
2. Ibid., p. 189
3. Sartre, L'Age de raison, p. 11
4. Ibid., p. 12
5. Ibid., p. 16
6. Ibid., p. 20
7. Ibid., p. 22
8. Ibid., p. 25
9. Ibid., p. 27
10. Sartre, Le Sursis, p. 54
11. L'Age de raison, p. 223
12. Ibid., p. 231
13. Sartre, La Mort dans L'âme, p. 254
14. Ibid., p. 256
15. L'Age de raison, p. 69
16. Ibid., p. 70
17. Ibid., p. 243
18. Ibid., p. 237
19. Suzanne Lilar, À Propos de Sartre et de L'amour, p. 193
20. Le Sursis, p. 409
21. Ibid., p. 434
22. Ibid., p. 439
23. Ibid., p. 441
24. Hélène Nahas, La Femme dans la littérature existentielle, p. 56
25. Sartre, La Nausée, p. 214
26. Le Sursis, p. 34
27. Ibid., p. 36
28. Ibid., p. 126
29. La Mort dans L'âme, p. 235
30. Sartre, Le Mur, p. 134
31. Ibid., p. 109
32. Ibid., p. 136
33. Ibid., p. 137
34. Ibid., p. 139
35. Ibid., p. 103
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., p. 52
38. Le Sursis, p. 222

39. Sartre, Le Diable et le bon Dieu, p. 216
40. Ibid., p. 154
41. Ibid., p. 186
42. Ibid., p. 213
43. Ibid., p. 214
44. Ibid., p. 216
45. Ibid., p. 237
46. Sartre, Théâtre, p. 116
47. Oreste F. Pucciani, "Les Séquestrés d'Altona" in Edith Kern, ed., Sartre, p. 97
48. Sartre, Les Séquestrés d'Altona, p. 169-70
49. Ibid., p. 170
50. Ibid., p. 196
51. Sartre, Les Mains sales, p. 38
52. Ibid., p. 39
53. Ibid., p. 145
54. Theatre, p. 264
55. Sartre, Huis clos, p. 31
56. Théâtre, p. 315

Women, Men and Intimacy.

One final aspect remains to be studied: the way women characters appear in their relationships with men and the extent to which these relationships are based on authentic Love. It is pertinent first of all to recall Simone de Beauvoir's definition of authentic Love:

L'amour authentique devrait être fondé sur la reconnaissance réciproque de deux libertés; chacun des amants s'éprouverait alors comme soi-même et comme l'autre... tous deux dévoileraient dans le monde des valeurs et des fins. (1)

The most important point here is her insistence on reciprocity, for it is in the feeling of unity, identity even, that lies the success of the true couple. Successful lovers will be united in their engagement in the world.

Sartre's position, summed up by Hélène Nahas, also stresses the importance of liberty:

Dans L'Être et le néant nous lisons que l'amour est un double échec: d'abord en soi, ensuite en autrui: l'Être cherche un être qu'il puisse à son gré façonner, un regard étranger qui ne soit point hostile, une partialité favorable, un écho à ses propres affirmations; quand il l'a trouvé, il en est déçu, et bientôt, le rejette, comprenant qu'un assentiment servile ne lui est d'aucun secours-- et que ce n'est jamais que d'une liberté égale à la sienne qu'il vaut d'être aimé et jugé. (2)

This seems a pessimistic view, in which it is difficult to see the possibility of a successful love relationship, for it seems to point to a continual conflict and a struggle for domination over the loved one. However, if each partner can attain the existentialist goal of authentic living, involving full responsibility for others, the same unity of purpose can be attained as Simone de Beauvoir envisages.

How far do the most important couples in the works we have considered illustrate these existentialist ideals?

In all the works examined, the couple most nearly approaching the ideal is Hilda and Goetz in Sartre's play, Le Diable et le bon Dieu. It is significant that Hilda has already, before meeting Goetz, attained a high level of authenticity in her life. Although of middle class origin, she has devoted herself to working for the welfare of the peasants as an expression of her love for mankind. She shows Goetz that he

must dominate what he has considered the baser side of love and his horror of all aspects of his body. Living out the truth of Lulu's intuition:

On devrait aimer tout d'une personne, (3)

they attain a truly spiritual sense of unity, so that Goetz can say,

Toi, c'est moi, nous sommes seuls ensemble. (4)

This recalls the almost mystical relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights, expressed in Catherine's cry,

I am Heathcliff. (5)

Unity, or sometimes even this sense of spiritual identity, will be a characteristic of a successful relationship. We shall therefore examine the more important couples in the novels and plays to see how far unity is present. We shall also consider ways in which a relationship may be tested, the importance of sexual desire and fidelity and the importance of marriage.

* * * * *

Let us first consider the couples depicted by Simone de Beauvoir.

The degree of unity of even an apparently successful couple may not be as great as has appeared. Françoise and Pierre have certainly achieved considerable success. Their feeling of unity had grown and developed to the point where Françoise could feel that:

Tant qu'elle ne l'avait raconté à Pierre, aucun événement n'était tout à fait vrai...Autrefois, quand Pierre l'intimidait il y avait pas mal de choses qu'elle laissait comme ça de côté...et puis, peu à peu, elle avait tout livré. Elle ne connaissait plus la solitude. (6)

This is a similar state of mind to Simone de Beauvoir's when she had grown accustomed to telling Sartre everything:

Sartre m'était aussi transparent que moi-même:
Quelle tranquillité! (7)

However, even if it could be said of this couple:

On ne fait qu'un, (8)

Françoise has not realised until the advent of Xavière, the

invitée, the outsider, (obviously drawn from her real-life counterpart, Olga), how much she has taken for granted, how little she knows about Pierre's real thoughts and feelings. Her decision finally to murder Xavière means that she has put her own interests first, she has chosen to be a free subject. However, she has no engagement, no real commitment to others. Her action has not really improved the situation. Though her act has eliminated the intruder, it has not removed the fundamental lack of unity between Pierre and herself. It is an act performed in Pierre's absence and when she is alone, and she now feels isolated:

Il n'y avait plus personne. Françoise était seule.
Elle avait agi seule. Aussi seule que dans la
mort. (9)

Françoise will now have to re-establish her former relationship of mutual understanding with Pierre, and we wonder whether this will be possible when she says:

Un jour Pierre saurait. Mais même lui ne
connaîtrait de cet acte que des dehors. (10)

The awareness of their unity which successful couples have banishes solitude. When Hélène's feeling for Jean (Le Sang des autres) has matured into authentic love, and a commitment not only to him, but with him to others, she too feels that solidarity:

Elle n'était plus jamais seule, plus jamais inutile
et perdue, sous le ciel vide. Elle existait avec
lui, avec Marcel, avec Madeleine...avec tous les
inconnus. (11)

Even the isolation of those who become conscious of their existence and their anguish in an unfriendly world is overcome if they can find love, as Goetz's remark above indicates:

("Nous sommes seuls ensemble"). They can face the world together. Accordingly, when Clarice (Les Bouches inutiles) asks how one loves in this world, Jean-Pierre replies:

On lutte ensemble. (12)

Any relationship may encounter a situation which tests its strength, and it is only when such a situation arises that Françoise, for example, realises that her relationship with Pierre has not remained static, and that continual vigilance is needed to keep it alive. It is only then that its stability is tested and she begins to doubt the genuineness

and strength of their understanding and friendship.

The marriage of Catherine and Louis d'Avesnes (Les Bouches inutiles) may be considered a most successful one.

Indeed, Catherine's words sum up Simone de Beauvoir's ideal:

Si un homme et une femme se sont jetés d'un même élan vers un même avenir, dans l'oeuvre qu'ils ont construite ensemble, dans les enfants qu'ils ont engendrés, dans ce monde tout entier qu'a modelé leur volonté commune, ils se retrouvent confondus d'une manière indissoluble. (13)

However, human beings do not always conform to ideals, and when Louis seems to betray their love, by deciding, without consulting her, to sacrifice her along with all the other bouches inutiles, the women, the old people and the children of Avesnes, Catherine finds she is still under the domination of her husband and of other men. She feels she is:

...pas ta femme; un instrument qu'on brise et qu'on jette au rebut lorsqu'on s'en est servi. (14)

It is not until Louis has reversed his decision and they again face the future together that the bond between them is re-established, and also the bond between them and their people, so that one feels that Louis is including himself and his wife when he says:

Que cette nuit, uni dans une seule volonté, un peuple libre affronte son destin. (15)

In Les Mandarins, the marriage of Anne and Robert also undergoes a time of testing. In this case it is again the woman who is forced to take stock of the situation. Married to a man twenty years her senior, with whom she still lives on terms of authentic love and understanding, Anne has long since ceased to expect any sexual satisfaction from her marriage. It is the sudden and unexpected awakening of desire and the enjoyment of pleasure with a much younger man which pose a threat to the stability of her marriage. However, her commitment to it is strong enough to make her feel that she is compelled to remain Robert's wife. She suffers such anguish at parting from her lover that she contemplates suicide, but even her death would be a betrayal of those who love her and would suffer distress.

It is not Anne's physical infidelity that has been the real test here, but the much deeper question of the commitment of her whole person to her life with Robert.

Françoise's affair with Pierre does not seem any more than Anne's marriage to depend on intensity of desire, although we understand in both cases that this has been important in the past. Both relationships are able to survive the woman's having an affair-- in Françoise's case it is tender and light-hearted, but Anne is more deeply involved emotionally, although her underlying fidelity to Robert will not let her commit herself fully to Lewis Brogan.

To judge by these examples, then, for Simone de Beauvoir physical fidelity seems less important than a deep emotional commitment to one's partner. If this commitment is lacking, physical unfaithfulness seems more reprehensible, for it betrays the only bond that exists between the partners. This is the case with Laurence's unfaithfulness to Jean-Charles in Les Belles images, for Laurence has no real commitment to anyone.

* * * * *

In Sartre's prose works, as we have seen, the problem of fidelity does not arise in so far as his successful couples are concerned, and his characters overcome the problems of the flesh by suppressing their repugnance to its demands. It is not until Goetz has rid himself of such an attitude towards his body that, with Hilda's help, he is able to understand the quality of real love. Hilda tells him:

Le corps est bon. La chiennerie c'est ton âme...
Comme tu souffres d'être un homme! (16)

However Goetz tries to make her feel disgust, she steadfastly refuses to judge him. When he demands,

Je te dégoûte, hein?,

she merely answers,

Non, puisque je t'aime. (17)

We are reminded of Johanna's remark, (Les Séquestrés d'Altona)

Ceux qu'on aime, on ne les juge pas. (18)

In the strange association of the two invalids Charles and Catherine, the évacués de Berck, in Le Sursis, there is a similar necessity for the man to overcome shame and repugnance associated with his body. Charles' awareness of his love for

Catherine follows his success in dominating the natural needs of his body, and at the same time removing the sense of guilt and shame about the pleasures associated with them in his mind. How Catherine feels we do not really know, except that she seems to return Charles' love. Sartre seems to mean us to think of this couple as potentially successful; however, the future they might have had is impossible to know, for they are separated almost immediately without ever learning one another's surnames.

Sartre's unsuccessful couples have often found the demands of the flesh a stumbling-block they have not been able to overcome. Whatever true reciprocity Mathieu and Marcelle once had, this has ceased to matter at the point where Les Chemins de la Liberté begins, and their relationship has become largely a physical one, which, for Mathieu in any case, is becoming increasingly irksome. When Marcelle reveals that she is pregnant, it becomes all too apparent that there is no longer any semblance of honest and straightforward communication between them, and this causes the final breakdown of their affair. It is perhaps slightly ironical that physical love, which provided an essential part of their relationship, eventually puts an end to it.

Marcelle appears contented with her marriage to the homosexual Daniel, but Daniel's thoughts, concealed beneath an apparent solicitude for her welfare, betray that there can never be true unity between them.

Sexual desire on its own impels lovers to try to dominate each other, thus proving an obstacle to a truly reciprocal relationship. A desire to dominate another, sexually or in any other way, may lead to excessive demands being made on the other, but as Frantz (Les Séquestrés d'Altona) says:

Ceux qui veulent tout ... ne peuvent pas aimer. (19)

* * * * *

To demand everything of one's partner implies a self-seeking attitude which leaves no possibility of reciprocity or of the sense of identity found in the successful relationship, lived in good faith. This is the attitude of certain

characters who pride themselves on the depth of their love. The grandes amoureuses-- they seem invariably to be women-- in trying to justify their existence, attempt to make a virtue of passion, which is really selfishness, and turns the relationship inwards on to itself, rather than outwards towards the world. These women are unable to join with the man they love in some commitment outside their association.

This type of attitude in love may well be the result of traditional conceptions of a woman's rôle, encouraged by men, passively accepted by women and passed on by mothers to their daughters. In the setting in which Simone de Beauvoir places women of this type, such an idea of love can only jeopardise a relationship, however promising it may seem initially. These "grand passions" seem to be the infatuations of women who have never allowed themselves to mature; we do not find here the obsession with sexual desire that is more evident in Sartre's less successful couples.

Paule's intense emotional demands on Henri (Les Mandarins), far from convincing him of the worth of her love, merely increase his desire for freedom, and his feeling of guilt, which prevents him from acting decisively. Paule prides herself on having given up her career as a singer for Henri, a sacrifice which he had neither asked for, nor appreciated. He cannot persuade her to create an independent life for herself by re-suring her career.

Elisabeth's affair with Claude (L'Invitée) also shows a frantic attempt to justify herself as a woman. Elisabeth has a career, but this in itself has not proved justification for her existence. Claude's involvement in the affair is no more genuine than hers-- he seems to be merely using her to provide a little excitement in his life, without wanting to relinquish the security of his marriage, and cannot, or will not, satisfy her demands or agree to leave his wife. His attitude does nothing to remedy Elisabeth's fundamental sense of insecurity, which arises partly from jealousy of her brother's success in his work and in his love for Françoise.

Sartre has not shown us a woman of this sort. Lola (Les Chemins de la Liberté) is perhaps the nearest. She, too, has an obsessive need for the love of young Boris. Her love is centred, in the same sort of way as that of Paule or Elisabeth,

on herself and on her own need for self-justification. In particular, it is her dread of growing old that drives her on. Perhaps this is why she has chosen so young a lover, and why the sexual element in their relationship seems more important to her than to the other women characters we have studied. She is a much more dominating woman than they are, and tries to control Boris' life entirely.

It is evident then, that whatever the lover may think, intense passion is not necessarily, or even likely to be, genuine love.

* * * * *

What part does marriage play in the establishment of a successful relationship?

Simone de Beauvoir does not deny that it is possible for a couple to make a success of marriage, but she thinks that the marriage bond is likely in most cases to be too restrictive to allow the partners complete freedom. Certainly Sartre and she have agreed that they did not want that tie; after forty years of fidelity, their decision not to marry still expresses their rejection of certain social conventions and values. However, their freedom and their common interests and goals have been the outstanding feature of their relationship.

Their fidelity, like that of Simone de Beauvoir's characters Françoise and Anne, has certainly not excluded passing affairs with others, but these have not altered their own feeling for one another.

Too great a concern for individual freedom, may however, prevent the attainment of unity with another or of true concern for others. Jean-Pierre in Les Bouches inutiles thinks at first that:

Tout serment est une prison... je ne veux ni mentir
à Clarice ni me mentir à moi-même. Chacun vit
seul et meurt seul. (20)

This is why he rejects the idea of marrying Clarice. Catherine, Clarice's mother, is clear-sighted enough to realise that he is at that point incapable of loving. It is only later, when he has become capable of loving Clarice, that he can say:

On litte ensemble. (21)

Some of Simone de Beauvoir's couples that we have considered successful are married, (Anne and Robert, Catherine and Louis), others are not (Françoise and Pierre, Hélène and Jean, Jean-Pierre and Clarice). It is the nature of their commitment to each other that is important, the ability to respect each other's freedom and to work together towards a common goal.

One marriage that has not yet been mentioned is that of Nadine and Henri in Les Mandarins. This couple does not appear to be brought together initially by any strong commitment in love, yet we have the impression that they are contented and will continue to be so. Perhaps this marriage is an admission by Simone de Beauvoir that there are women who can find happiness in woman's traditional rôle in marriage, looking after their homes and families.

Of the married couples portrayed in Sartre's works, none of those he depicts in any detail shows any true unity or authenticity. Gomez (Les Chemins de la Liberté), who is absorbed in his role as an officer in the Spanish Civil War and his brief affairs with other women, virtually ignores Sarah and his child. Jacques and Odette in the same novels have little in common and no real communication exists between them; neither can admit to the other that their flight from Paris during the war is prompted by Jacques' cowardice rather than by concern for Odette's feelings and safety. Hugo and Jessica (Les Mains sales) have made a conventional marriage when very young; Hugo is deeply and idealistically committed to his political beliefs, but Jessica is frivolous and does not understand. It is Hoederer, strong and rather ruthless, who first gives her an inkling of what real love is like.

Few of Sartre's unmarried couples have been more successful in achieving unity than the married ones; perhaps the warmest relationship is that between Jean and Lucie, a young couple who intend to marry after the war, in Morts sans sépulture. However, as we have seen, Lucie's treatment at the hands of the Vichy torturers, who violate her without breaking her will, changes her feeling for Jean. She says:

Je ne sais pas. Je t'en prie, ne me touche pas.
Je pense que je dois t'aimer encore, mais je ne
sens plus mon amour. Je ne sens plus rien du tout. (22).

She and Jean are both wholly involved in their work for the Resistance Movement, but nevertheless a difference of attitude comes between them. Lucie seems the stronger of the two.

Lucie has agreed to the murder of her young brother François, to prevent his betraying Jean and their comrades through fear of torture and death. Jean cannot agree that this is necessary, and Lucie's agreeing to it creates a barrier between them; he can no longer recognise the Lucie he loves:

Est-ce bien toi? Tu me fais peur. (23)

Although he does not cease to love her, Lucie feels that their relationship can never be the same again. Jean wants to share her suffering:

Lucie, tu as beau faire; nous sommes rivés ensemble. Tout ce qu'ils t'ont fait, c'est à nous deux qu'ils l'ont fait...si tu viens dans mes bras, elle deviendra notre souffrance. (24)

However, she is not able to change her attitude; the only solution Lucie can see to the problem is death:

J'ai pris tout le mal sur moi; il faut qu'on me supprime et tout le mal avec...Tout est empoisonné. (25)

This situation is an illustration of the point that no relationship can remain stable by itself. It requires constant effort by both partners to maintain its unity.

* * * * *

It is evident from an examination of these couples that Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir do not consider the perfect relationship easy to attain.

None of the other characters in Sartre's works have attained such a high degree of unity as have Hilda and Goetz.

The sexual side of the relationship does not seem to Simone de Beauvoir to be of great importance in maintaining the stability of the couple, though nowhere does she minimise the importance of its presence in the formation of a relationship. True fidelity depends, however, on more than physical satisfaction and fidelity.

For Sartre, sexual desire is in some cases a hindrance to the formation of a true couple. His most successful couples

are those who have managed by an effort to overcome the repugnance the flesh inspires in them, and to commit themselves completely to a life lived in common devotion to others. When their attitude to love changes in this way, the notion of attempting to possess the loved one and his liberty, the idea of one partner dominating the other, has gone.

It is difficult to form a successful couple, but it is not impossible, it seems, for those who are capable of authentic love, and who have found a partner equally capable of loving.

Notes.

1. Simone de Beauvoir, Le Deuxième sexe, Vol. 11, p. 505
2. Hélène Nahas, La Femme dans la Littérature existentielle, p. 55
3. Sartre, Le Mur, p. 103
4. Sartre, Le Diable et le bon Dieu, p. 237
5. Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, p. 703
6. Simone de Beauvoir, L'Invitée, p. 26
7. Simone de Beauvoir, La Force de l'âge, p. 28
8. L'Invitée, p. 26
9. Ibid., p. 504
10. Ibid.
11. Simone de Beauvoir, Le Sang des autres, p. 222
12. Simone de Beauvoir, Les Bouches inutiles, p. 107
13. Ibid., p. 56
14. Ibid., p. 112
15. Ibid., p. 132
16. Sartre, Le Diable et le bon Dieu, p. 213-4
17. Ibid., p. 214
18. Sartre, Les Séquestrés d'Altona, p. 170
19. Ibid., p. 205
20. Les Bouches inutiles, p. 56
21. Ibid., p. 100
22. Sartre, Morts sans sépulture, p. 236
23. Ibid., p. 240
24. Ibid., p. 247
25. Ibid., p. 264-5

Conclusion.

Both Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre decided early in their lives that they would be writers. However, it was difficult for a new, little-known writer to make a living entirely by his pen. Sartre became first a teacher of philosophy and a philosopher, and Simone de Beauvoir also taught philosophy; by the time she began to do so, she already knew Sartre and was conversant with his ideas.

When they began to write, the world they depicted, the characters who moved in it and the point of view they adopted were inevitably coloured by the philosophical views they held so passionately, by the existentialist ideas which stress the liberty of the individual and his personal responsibility for his actions.

This is the viewpoint from which women are regarded in the novels and plays. Consideration of the implications for women of the existentialist philosophy is made much easier by an examination of Simone de Beauvoir's massive work on women, Le Deuxième sexe: for, as well as tracing the historical processes by which the unsatisfactory state in which many women find themselves has arisen, and spelling out what a woman's life can be if she lives authentically, this work describes for us the different ways in which women are likely to avoid taking responsibility for themselves and to try to justify their existence by living in different kinds of mauvaise foi.

The different types of women Simone de Beauvoir describes can be found in the novels and plays of both authors: there are the young women who rebel against the values of the older generation, like Xavière, Ivich and Nadine, and who try to grasp their liberty, but do not know how to use it. Some are able to find their way to authenticity, as Hélène and Clarice do; Electre is not strong enough to attain the goal that she has glimpsed; Lucie has attained hers, but is overwhelmed by self-doubt as a result of her terrible experiences during the war. Sometimes the difference between two attitudes is brought out sharply, as when Olga with her commitment to a political cause is contrasted with the frivolous Jessica.

The older women are just as varied in character and in their degree of authenticity as the young ones; there are those, like Paule and Elisabeth and Lola who turn inwards and try to find self-justification in their emotions, and thereby enslave the men to whom they imagine themselves to be totally devoted. These women, and particularly Régine, try to attain the feeling that they really exist by playing a rôle.

Some, like Françoise and Anne, have tried, however imperfectly, to live authentically; Catherine d'Avesnes, like Françoise, has found that success is not something to be taken for granted: it depends on one's relationships with others, as well as on one's own attitude, and must be continually pursued. Hilda is the only character who approaches the ideal, and the most perfect in existentialist development.

Old age is not closely examined in the works of these authors; the old women tend to be rather pathetic, like Yvonne's bedridden mother with her childish dependence and demands on her daughter in Le Sang des Autres and like Marcelle's mother in L'Age de raison. In Les Belles images Laurence's mother, Dominique, who tries desperately to retain an image of youth, can be classed with the other grandes amoureuses.

Most of the women in these works are not obsessed with their sexuality, although in Marcelle's case her mauvaise foi appears to arise from the sexual nature of her association with Mathieu; for Lulu, the flesh and its unacceptable demands for intimacy are the cause of her refusal to live authentically. Laurence finds that sexual harmony does not guarantee a successful emotional relationship.

Madeleine Chapsal, interviewing Simone de Beauvoir, remarked that all of her feminine characters were women in love. Simone de Beauvoir replied:

L'amour c'est un grand privilège. De vraies amours-- et l'on en rencontre peu souvent-- ça apporte tant aux hommes et aux femmes qui les vivent.

Question: Pourquoi l'amour apporte-t-il plus aux femmes qu'aux hommes?

Simone de Beauvoir: Parce que, malgré tout, dans l'amour ce sont les femmes qui donnent le plus d'elles-mêmes parce qu'elles n'ont pas tellement autre chose, la

plupart d'entre elles. Elles sont peut-être plus capables aussi de la sympathie profonde qui est à la base de l'amour. C'est peut-être aussi que je me projette plus facilement dans des femmes que dans des hommes. Mes personnages féminins sont plus riches que mes personnages masculins.

Question: Vous n'avez jamais créé un personnage féminin indépendant et profondément libre qui illustre en quelque sorte votre thèse du Deuxième sexe... Pourquoi?

Simone de Beauvoir: J'ai montré les femmes comme elles sont, divisées, et non pas comme elles devraient être. (1)

Being a woman, Simone de Beauvoir has, despite what some of her detractors have said, an approach that betrays her feminine point of view. Most of the relationships she describes are seen from the woman's point of view. This treatment is particularly evident in the technique used in Les Mandarins, where the action is partly revealed by Anne's day-by-day comments, in the first person, and in La Femme rompue, which is in the form of Monique's diary.

Her women characters are, even if they are lucid, often influenced by their emotions, especially when they are trying to see and evaluate their relationships with men as a part of their total life situation; a sharp distinction is made between those who are enslaved by their emotions and those who are ultimately ruled by reason; the latter reveal in their conversations with other characters their awareness of the ideas on solving the problems of living expressed by Simone de Beauvoir.

In Sartre's works the action is seen from the man's point of view, and the focus is usually on a man character: Mathieu in Les Chemins de la Liberté, Oreste in Les Mouches, Frantz in Les Séquestrés d'Altona, etc. The men's outlook is conventional in the sense that the woman does not take the central place in their existence.

Again we have varying types of women portrayed: the carnal woman who tempts a man to indulge his baser instincts; the cool, remote woman who is pure because she holds herself aloof; and the woman who can live authentically enough ^{to} put her responsibility to others before her personal feelings. Whatever the type, the women are seen much more from the outside than Simone de Beauvoir's women characters are.

The difference in temperament that is evident in the attitudes to life of Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre may partly account for the difference in their treatment of their women characters.

Simone de Beauvoir has always wanted to experience life fully; her writing is only a part of this, one of the things she has felt she must do. She displays an enthusiasm for living that not only embraces all experiences, including the experience of passion, but is a kind of passion in itself.

Sartre's early circumscribed and bookish life seems to have made his approach to living more intellectual than emotional. His early characters, at least, seem to be, in their search for liberty, also seeking a satisfying relationship with the Other. As well as minds, Sartre's characters have bodies, of which they are continually conscious, and which remind them of their contingency.

Simone de Beauvoir says that the fact that she is a woman has not been an impediment to her advancement. She freed herself early from restraints and became detached enough to write about the situation of women. She has a strong will that enabled her to determine what she wanted and to strive hard to get it. At the same time she accepted the fact that she was a woman and dreamed of meeting some day her ideal partner, whom she finally found in Jean-Paul Sartre. This meeting has had a profound effect on both her life and her writing, especially on her portrayal of women.

The women these authors have portrayed in successful relationships have not suffered from being women. In so far as they have assumed their autonomy as human beings in good faith, their relationships with men are satisfying. Those who, like Paule, have suffered disillusion and despair have done so, not because they are women, but because they have accepted the conventional image of women.

We find little in the works we have examined which is drawn from outside the authors' experience and background. The free and unconventional union such as that between Françoise and Pierre, is almost the norm; there are only two successful marriages, that of Anne and Robert and that of Catherine and Louis d'Avesnes. Apart from Les Belles images, there is scarcely any instance of an ordinary family with children, leading a normal

family life. Anne, the woman character into whom Simone de Beauvoir has put the most of herself, accepts motherhood unwillingly and has no close relationship with her child. However, her daughter Nadine settles down into an apparently happy conventional marriage with her child.

War, and the threat of war, can bring out what is best in a woman's character, as can be seen in the depiction of Hélène, who matures and awakens gradually to the reality of others' suffering through her own experiences.

In the novels and plays, which deal almost exclusively with contemporary life and problems, there is a difference in the handling of relationships between men and women, compared with the traditional approach, a new dimension. Just as in their own lives Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir have placed before everything their desire to live authentically and shape their own destiny, so in their books, their concern is first and foremost to situate their characters existentially. Relationships between men and women are an aspect of the wider problem of their relationship with the Other, and may be influenced by what society expects of them. The choices men and women make as to how they will act towards one another will have a fundamental importance in their lives, for they help to determine the whole of their existence.

In Jean-Paul Sartre's works, men struggle to determine themselves and make the best use they can of their liberty. Women are part of the material world which oppresses them and fills them with anguish when they think of their contingency: women are the Other who threatens them. It is only in coming to accept the freedom of the Other, be it a man or a woman, as an autonomous subject, that an individual can achieve authenticity and can be free to create his destiny by his involvement in the world.

For Simone de Beauvoir, too, this is the fundamental problem of the couple. Men and women are human beings who must shape their future. Society's attitudes have made this an especially difficult task for a woman.

Of the two authors, Simone de Beauvoir has portrayed women with greater insight. She is a woman; she is also an extremely lucid human being. From her feminine point of view, she uses

her lucidity with compassion, to depict, from an existentialist point of view, contemporary women struggling to find a way to fulfilment in a male-dominated world; she tries to suggest solutions to their problems.

We are left with the conviction that existential living is not for the faint-hearted. Few can succeed fully, but if a man and a woman can achieve authenticity together, turning their faces toward a common goal, the rewards are great indeed.

Notes:

1. "Dialogue avec Madeleine Chapsal", Serge Julienne-Caffie,
Simone de Beauvoir, p. 213

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