Social Change and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*:
A Study of the Charismatic 'Author-Leader'

by J. D. Morgan

University of Sydney
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Abstract

In this thesis I explore the significance of the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) to the emergence of the second wave Women's Liberation Movement in the US in the late 1960s. To this end, I deploy key concepts provided through social movement theory (eg collective identity, collective action frames, social problem construction). I also incorporate Max Weber and Antonio Gramsci's insights on the indispensable role played by leaders who demonstrate a clear and effective political will.

Weber's three part model of pure charisma is used as a general template for understanding the impact of Friedan's text. I critique aspects of Weber's theory of charisma, in particular his failure to appreciate that the written word can mark the initial emergence phase of charisma rather than its routinisation. I augment Weber's insights on charismatic leadership by attending to Gramsci's emphasis on the necessity of winning the 'war of ideas' that must be waged at the level of civil society within advanced capitalist societies. I examine Gramsci's understanding of the power available to the organic intellectual who is aligned with the interests of subaltern groups and who succeeds in revealing the hegemonic commitments of accepted 'common sense'.

In the latter part of this thesis, I apply these many useful concepts to my case study analysis of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. I argue that Friedan's accessible, middlebrow text gave birth to a new discursive politics which was critically important not only for older women, but for a younger generation of more radicalised women. I emphasise how Friedan's text mounted a concerted attack on the discursive construction of femininity under patriarchal capitalism. I question Friedan's diagnostic claim that the problems American women faced were adequately captured by the terminology of the 'trapped housewife' syndrome.

I conclude by arguing that social movement researchers have to date failed to appreciate the leadership potential of the charismatic 'author-leader' who succeeds in addressing and offering a solution to a pressing social problem through the medium of a best-selling, middlebrow text.

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Introduction - The Charismatic 'Author-Leader'

On the Premature Death of the Author

The postmodern era has questioned a number of key theoretical positions associated with the humanist position and declared the end of ideology, 'grand theory' and metaphysics (Lyotard 1984). It has demonstrated the cultural relativity of language and progressed the deconstruction of binary opposition commenced by Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, thereby indirectly proving that language itself can provide no sure basis for human ethics or political orientation (Derrida 1978). Amongst its various incursions against modernist precepts, it has also announced the 'death of the author' in a revision of subjectively located agency.

While the history of the modern author extends over centuries, the contemporary disempowerment of the author within the academy can be plotted over a few decades. In their influential article "The Intentionality Fallacy", W.K. Wimsattt and Monroe Beardsley (1954) dismissed the author as a legitimate matter of concern or interest for literary analysis and criticism. They advised that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" and insisted that the responses of readers were too variable to make authorial intentions worthy of consideration (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954, p.3). French postmodern philosophers consolidated the erasure of the modern author as active, historic agent. Barthes (1977, p. 143) bore witness to the 'death of the author' insisting that the writer who had formerly guaranteed the singularity of meaning had given way to a theory and practice of textuality. This new conceptual framework of textuality, he explained, effectively substitutes "language itself for the person who until then had been supposed to be its owner." The modern text must now be read, he advised "in such a way that at all its levels the author is absent" as there was no longer a single or preferred way to decipher a text (Barthes 1977, p. 145). With the demise of the semantic uniformity guaranteed by the "Author-God" construct, meaning had been displaced into a multiplicity of sites created by the text/reader relationship. The demise of the author had in effect given birth to the reader. But here too we see no attempt to reinstate the humanist concern with subjectivity. For the

reader has also been subsumed by a process of textuality. They too it seems are "without history, biography, psychology" (Barthes 1977, p. 148).

Barthes' declaration on the post mortem condition of the author was countered by Foucault (1977) in his essay "What is an Author?" Foucault attempted to redefine the author as a function embedded within the structure of language. Rather than being the historic subject, or originator of new ideas, the author must now be understood, he explained, as simply holding the position of "author-function" within the structural field of language. The author no longer writes texts, but is instead constituted in and through their texts. While anxious to preserve a site for the author-function within discourse theory, Foucault did not attempt to breathe life back into the author construct in a manner which relied on the earlier humanist notions of authorial subjectivity, agency or intentionality.

While they had their points of difference, neither Barthes nor Foucault (unlike Wimsatt and Beardsley) saw a need to limit their theoretical perspectives on the status of the author to the field of literary aesthetics or fiction. Both extended their revised concepts of authorship to the ethical and political realms of philosophy and the sciences. Barthes (1977, p. 147) insisted that the fundamental undermining of meaning as a unitary construct created by the author has meant, in effect, that one can radically "refuse God and his hypostases - reason, science, law." In a similar leap Foucault was anxious to assure us that at its most powerful, the "author-function" was capable of describing the status of the authors like Freud and Marx. Although the epistemological and metaphysical foundations of their theories and knowledge claims were now suspect, such figures differed from other authors in that they could nonetheless be accorded, Foucault (1977, p. 131) confirmed, the exulted status of being the "initiators of discursive practices" in the postmodern world. What is immediately noteworthy is that the authors who Foucault singled out as 'initiators of discursive practices' should properly be located within the field of social sciences, and not literature. There is a glimmer of Foucauldian dis-ease here with respect to the appropriateness of the monolithic 'author-function' construct. This terminology too quickly collapses distinctions between the literary author and the author who is engaged in presenting social theories that can give rise to new knowledge and power

alignments and configurations. It may be appropriate for the politicised author to see themselves as directly involved in a struggle around ideology that can, in part, be won by gaining the allegiance of readers.

In recent decades the dominance of postmodernist thinking apropos authors has created scant regard amongst academic researchers for issues pertaining to the status of authors, authorial intentions, authorial subjectivity, or how moral and intellectual leadership might be expressed by an author through the medium of a text. While some commentators have protested at the exaggerated account of the death of the author (Miller 1989), to date few attempts have been made to revitalise and breath life back into the importance of the author, or what it means to fulfil the role of author. Outside of the study of rhetoric (which similarly neglects authorial subjectivity), authorship remains a matter that attracts little serious academic consideration and research. The pronounced end of ideology and the new anonymity of texts guaranteed by the 'death of the author' effectively denies that authors are capable of demonstrating distinctive political will through a written text that is engaged in the kind of 'war of ideas' entertained by Gramsci (1971).

In his recent reader on authorship, Sean Burke (1995, p. 216) identified Sartre's 1950 essay "Writing for One's Age" as representing "one of the last significant statements from an era in which it was felt that the social engagement of the author offered the potential for genuine political change." With few exceptions (Pease 1990), the wholesale subsuming of the politically motivated author who writes a realist orientated, non-fiction text by the new literary criticism that has ventured too far afield from its aesthetic origins, has gone virtually unremarked and uncontested. Even hermeneutical philosophers like Paul Ricoeur, who remain concerned to safeguard the ethico-political foundations of texts and their orientation toward political action have acquiesced to the contemporary demise of the author heralded by postmodernism. According to Ricoeur (1991, p. 107) "the book divides the act of writing and the act of reading into two sides, between which there is no communication. The reader is absent from the act of writing; the writer is absent from the act of reading."

Introducing the Charismatic Author and Text

In this thesis I attempt to question the adequacy of the absolutist claims made by postmodernism on the demise of the author in contemporary society. Contrary to the prevailing discourse, I argue that when certain criteria are met, authors can aspire to and hold the position of socio-political leaders. They can intentionally provide a unifying moral philosophy that works to consolidate a sense of collective identity and common purpose among their readers. I support the qualified return of the author's voice and intentions as they are displayed within the distinct category of the 'charismatic text'. By way of immediate introduction, I define the charismatic text as a text in which the author deliberately seeks, and to some extent at least succeeds, in constituting readers as politicised critics of the social order. Their readers become transformed into followers of the philosophies expressed by the 'author-leader', rather than individualised, passive consumers of popular culture. Such texts are characterised by an author who directly engages in the social problems of an age. S/he is prepared to make strong assertive normative claims that can be couched in a language of polarised good and evil, appeals to the true meaning of human freedom or the mutual obligations of the social contract.

In the immediate past, the 'author-leader' announced their presence in a variety of guises, using a number of different teleological reference points. They evoked the 'Common Good', utilitarian calculations of the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number', the rights of men and women, ideated social utopias or appeals to national/individual identity and difference. Throughout the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries the form of the charismatic text could range from short pamphlets, manifestos and declarations, to more extended treatises and books. Amongst this genre of writing we can locate Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1983 [1532]), Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1960 [1690]), Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1968 [1763]), Paine's *Common Sense* (1976 [1776]) and Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1978 [1792]).

Rising literacy rates in the last two centuries have seen this type of political writing take on a new shape. Political writings have become popularly accessible to a much wider audience of readers, reaching the working class and the aspiring middle class. It

is the emergence of this kind of text, combined with a general environment of improved education and literacy, that I argue helps to explain the ascendancy of the middle class as principal actor in the new social movements in the twentieth century. The enhanced position occupied by the middlebrow text and the 'author-leader' requires that sustained sociological consideration be directed to determining how texts and their authors can exhibit emergent, charismatic qualities. While texts that meet the criteria of being middlebrow and charismatic may be fairly small in actual numbers, this stands in marked contrast to their social influence and impact. For it is within this small, but distinct, class of texts that we can locate Marx and Engel's (1967[1848]) *The Communist Manifesto*, Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1971[1927]), Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1976) and most recently, Naomi Klein's *No Logo* (2001). Whatever their language, rhetoric or cause, authors of charismatic texts definitively announce their engagement in ideological work. This kind of ideological work seeks to instil within readers a resistance to prevailing hegemonic conditions, whether in the form of socio-political or economic institutions, gender ideologies, or other forms of social oppression. The authors of charismatic texts use skills of rhetoric that effectively require the reader to take a stance. Such texts do not allow for the endless multiplicity of reader responses suggested by postmodernism, which makes their effectiveness all the more interesting. In the contemporary era, the 'author-leader' is able to lodge epistemological claims that, while eschewing appeals to transcendentalism, can nonetheless still be grounded on scientific research, lived subjective experience, or a combination of both.

In her seminal book *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1980) Elizabeth Eisenstein noted the almost complete absence of coherent attempts by historians (up to that point in time) to assess the radical impact on human society of Johannes Gutenberg's invention of moving type in the 1450s. The invention of the printing press launched the mass production, distribution and consumption of books as well as announcing the birth of modern authorship. During the mid to late medieval period, knowledge was principally conveyed through oral traditions. Low levels of literacy and the arduous labour involved in book production ensured that books remained the property of a select audience of readers (monks, clerics, the aristocracy). Books were

the anonymous products of scribes who would sometimes add their own comments to a text. These commentaries frequently became merged into the original text in subsequent copies, rendering the authorial site both multiple and anonymous. This pre-modern elasticity around the meaning of authorship came to an abrupt end with the advent of the printing press. Spivak (1997, p. 214) explains that "with the printing press, authorship came to be conceived more in terms of individual ownership and originality... A particular text became an author's individual property." New copyright laws came into effect bringing with them issues related to the biography and intentions of the modern author.

Scholarly research into book history, production and consumption has rapidly expanded over the last two decades. So much so that whereas Eisenstein bemoaned the lack of attention to the transformative impact of the new world of books and mass literacy, researchers are now more inclined to comment on how the world of scholarly research into books has become crowded with a bewildering plethora of new journals, monographs and bibliographies (Darnton 1990). Despite the burgeoning scholarship, there remains an on-going validity to Eisenstein's complaint that the revolution in the communication industry brought by the printing press is rarely considered by scholars working in outside disciplines. The lack of attention to books, readers and authors is especially noteworthy within the field of social movement theory. Unlike the productive attention paid to books by, for example, social historians of the French Revolution (Darnton 1982; Darnton & Roche 1989; Chartier 1991), social movement researchers have yet to attend to issues pertaining to book distribution and readership and how texts might provide explanatory force to the emergence of collective action. While new concepts such as 'discursive politics' have emerged within social movement theory, it has not yet extended to case studies and more thorough investigations of the social impact of the best-selling text, or written materials that are known to have been especially influential. To date Sidney Tarrow's (1994) short chapter on how printed media promoted new, highly diffused forms of human consciousness which became key explanatory factors in the emergence of popularist movements from the eighteenth century onward, remains one of the few attempts to address this important issue in any systematic fashion.

In this thesis I hope to contribute to research dedicated to understanding the impact of the mass production of books on the success of social movements. To this end I am concerned with exploring how a charismatic vision might be imparted to an audience in the form of moral and intellectual direction provided by an author through the medium of a popularly accessible, best-selling text. To breathe life into the construct of 'author-leader', I investigate concepts of leadership that might help to identify this author, and the charismatic text they have produced, as 'active agents'. I use various lenses in the pursuit of this task, including concepts from social movement theory, Weber's three part model of charisma as well as Gramsci's appreciation of the power of the written word and the important role played by the elite organic intellectual who writes a new philosophy. I combine these theoretical insights in a case study approach to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). In doing so, I seek to illuminate this text's springboard function to the re-emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement in the US in the late 1960s, showing how it served as a linchpin to the organisation of women's collective identity.

There is a general concurrence among many social movement researchers that the paradigms available for explicating mass social mobilisation remain conceptually inadequate. I demonstrate how understanding the social effects of the 'author-leader' and the 'charismatic text' may be capable of illuminating the elusive terrain that precedes the eruption of collective behaviourism and social movement emergence. To insist on the partial return of the author in this equation does not necessitate a collapse into the naive position which holds that words can be divorced from their socio-cultural context. It does not mean that the 'charismatic text' can miraculously remain aloof from questions of intertextuality. All authors and texts are necessarily embedded in a complex web of cultural meanings. No work in this sense is the work of an isolated or purely self-determining author as authors are also readers who work to reconstruct, re-order and re-prioritise cultural meanings (Spivak 1997). To the contrary, I argue that Friedan's 'charismatic text' drew its peculiar strength from how deeply it was embedded within (and was prepared to contest) the prevailing discursive practices that first drew the author's critical attention.

The critical positioning of the author, who acts as a moral and intellectual leader, who produces a charismatic text which is intended to have a transformative impact on readers, requires a re-evaluation of the proclaimed 'death of the author'. Such authors and texts should be recognised as constituting a 'special' and rare kind of socio-cultural event: one in which issues pertaining to the subjectivity of the author, defying all postmodernist declarations to the contrary, can be seen to make a spectacular impact.

Outline of Thesis

I begin this investigation of the significance of the author and the charismatic text to social movement emergence by providing an overview of collective behaviourism and social movement theory. I discuss key models and conceptual tools currently utilised by social movement theorists, including resource mobilisation, political opportunity, collective identity formation, moral shocks, discursive politics and collective action frames. I highlight the relatively impoverished views on leadership now present within the scholarly literature which remain narrowly focussed on organisational based leadership. I discuss Weber's three part model of charismatic leadership, arguing in favour of an extension of his views on the conditions for the emergence of charisma. This extension allows us to embrace the relatively invisible work of the 'author-leader' who imparts a radical vision through the medium of the charismatic text, thereby transforming readers into followers.

In Chapter Two I expand my analysis of leadership by incorporating the philosophical insights of Antonio Gramsci (1971) on the exercise of moral and intellectual leadership under the hegemonic conditions of advanced capitalism. Unlike Weber, Gramsci paid a great deal of attention to the role played by authors and written documents. He believed that the written word was more powerful than the spoken word, though his reasons for thinking so remained relatively undeveloped. As he was a linguist by training, Gramsci was attentive to the rhetorical style and tactics of the author. He had an enduring interest in how cultural products like texts reflected and challenged dominant ideology, working to reveal the ideological commitment of accepted 'common sense'. His philosophical writings, combined with concepts from

social movement theory and Weber's insights on the defining characteristics of charisma, act as appropriate sociological lenses for understanding the influence and impact of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).

In Chapter Three a range of existing perspectives on the significance of texts are explored. I provide a brief overview of major contributions from the sociology of literature, and feminist literary criticism. I suggest reasons for the relative neglect of charismatic texts within social movement theory including the uneasy positioning of the intellectual, and the general failure to attend to the significance of the 'middlebrow' text. Further, this chapter explores outstanding gaps in reader response theory which often fail to take account of the authoritative deployment of the authorial voice. I argue that an assertive authorial voice might have an homogenising or polarising effect on readers rather than the multiple responses suggested by literary theorists. I call attention to the growing sociological interest in auto/biography as a way of elucidating social structure. Interestingly this tactic is used frequently by Betty Friedan herself. Social practices around reading (eg discussions, book clubs, friendship networks) are briefly discussed with a view to highlighting how the publication of a best selling, controversial text can give rise to widespread, new discursive practices. This has been especially important to the politicising of middle class women readers.

In Chapter Four I outline the key socio-economic and popular cultural factors affecting women during the postwar years in America leading up to the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement in the late 1960s. I argue that socio-cultural and economic conditions were breeding a widespread crisis for older and younger women alike which centred around their identity and social status in society. This served to fulfil Weber's key sociological prerequisite for the emergence of charisma, namely a period of crisis. I begin my preliminary investigations of Friedan's text in this chapter, drawing on anecdotal evidence that suggests *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) made a significant impact on both older and younger women readers. This chapter provides a summary of the (often too critical) scholarly analysis of Friedan's book and the reasons that have been suggested to date for its efficacy.

In Chapter Five I directly apply Weber's and Gramsci's insights on leadership expression and the role of the intellectual, texts, and the reader relationship to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. I attend to various rhetorical strategies (assertives, directives etc) used by Friedan. It is argued that Friedan critically revealed the oppressive conditions of women's daily lives under the hegemonic conditions of patriarchal capitalism. She did this by contending that women had been coopted by false ideologies of the 1950s (eg the 'happy housewife heroine') that denied the onerous and tedious burdens placed on women within the domestic sphere. At the same time she framed her discussion within a normative ideology based on a scientific discussion of the authentic self which legitimated a desire for individual and social change expressed at the level of collectivity. This salvation script imbued the text with a charismatic quality, conveying a vision for social change. I conclude this chapter with a critical evaluation of the adequacy of Friedan's own argument that the problem women faced was a lack of identity - a problem created by the facade of the feminine mystique which relegated women to the domestic sphere as 'trapped housewives'. I argue that Friedan, while accurately identifying multiple points of stress and tension in US popular culture, actually misdiagnosed the range of the problems faced by American women and girls. I maintain that *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), despite being subsequently ignored or even repudiated by a younger generation of feminist women and scholars, demonstrates clear lines of continuity with their own, much more radical critique of American culture. Both Friedan, and the radicalised young women whom she explicitly disowned, shared common ground in the attention they brought to the prescriptive regulation of women's bodies by the sexualised fashion, beauty and entertainment industries.

I conclude this thesis by arguing that the publication of a charismatic text, which coincides with the emergence of the 'author-leader' and a period of crisis should be viewed as a singularly important event within the cultural landscape of social movement theory. Such texts and authors create alternative (and potentially highly volatile) avenues for charismatic leadership expression that have not yet been fully appreciated or evaluated.

Introduction

Within democratic systems of government social movements are viewed as being a distinctive class of political actor. They differ from other types of collective agents including crowds, political parties, institutions, and pressure groups, as they involve sustained mobilisations of aggrieved members of the community who do not, under normal circumstances, engage in direct political action. Those involved in social movements are understood to be bound by a sense of collective identity based on a commonly held ideology that includes shared beliefs, norms, emotions, and knowledge. Social movement activity is situated outside of the normal channels open to individuals for political participation in representative democracies. These range from voting, letter writing, petition signing, to contact with local members of government and contributing to the public domain by entering debates. Social movements enable community members to voice concerns about public issues in a manner that is extraneous to the policy making prerogatives vested in constitutions, mandated parties and officials, and the mechanisms of the bureaucracy and the state. As such they represent unique opportunities for expressing collective will and demonstrating the power of human agency.

Within the social movement research literature various attempts have been made to distil the essence of social movements. Among the many useful definitions are the following:

Social movements are the "collective action of actors at the highest level - the class actors - fighting for the social control of historicity, i.e. control of the great cultural orientations by which a society's environmental relationships are normatively organized" (Touraine 1981, p. 26).

"A social movement is a sustained and self-conscious challenge to authorities or cultural codes by a field of actors (organizations and advocacy networks), some of

whom employ extrainstitutional means of influence" (Gamson & Meyer 1988, p. 283).

"Contemporary movements operate as signs, in the sense that they translate their actions into symbolic challenges to the dominant codes" (Melucci 1989, p. 12).

"Social movements express shifts in the consciousness of actors as they are articulated in the interactions between activists and their opposition(s) in historically situated political and cultural contexts" (Eyerman & Jamison 1991, p. 4).

Social movements are "*collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities*" (Tarrow 1994 pp. 3-4 original emphasis).

Over the last decade in particular the investigative sites for social movement researchers have been rapidly expanding. From its overly narrow focus on structural and organisational issues in the 1970s and '80s, researchers have now begun attending to matters relating to the micro dimensions of social movements. Productive contributions have now been made delving into social psychology, narratives and scripts, discursive meaning production and popular culture. This thesis maintains this new focus, but concentrates on what still remains a surprisingly under-excavated terrain, namely the author and reader relationship and the catalytic role that can be played by the written text to collective identity formation and social mobilisation. My principle site of investigation for this thesis is the US based second wave Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). I hope to demonstrate that the currently limited paradigms of leadership discussed within the social movement literature can be usefully expanded to include the leadership potential of the author who seeks to share her or his moral vision through the medium of a text.

In part, my task involves developing an appreciation for how gender based consciousness was first stirred up and diffused within its target population of American women through the medium of popular texts (books, women's magazines)

during the critical period of the early 1960s, and in particular, by Betty Friedan's text, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Within the social movement literature, the publication of Friedan's book is widely recognised as being a crucial milestone to the production of a politicised consciousness around gender which underpinned the emergence and mobilisation of American women in the late 1960s. Her identification of the 'problem with no name' that attempted to address women's identity is commonly cited as a key springboard to the mobilisation across America of women as women. This thesis undertakes a case study of this text in an attempt to extrapolate and clarify how it may have worked to bring about coalescing outcomes amongst its audience of readers.

Changes in consciousness are widely considered by social movement theorists to be crucial to both collective identity formation and the establishment of a social movement. The second wave Women's Liberation Movement engaged in purposive attempts at 'consciousness raising', which involved individual women meeting in small groups to discuss their lives and personal troubles during the late '60s and '70s (Koedt et al. 1973; Klein 1984). However while shifts in consciousness are recognised as being absolutely germane to social movement emergence, surprisingly little attention has been directed to a detailed analysis of the significance of key texts and how they might 'work' to effect the politicisation of consciousness. The questions I address in this thesis include, if such texts can work to reframe and re-conceptualise personal experience, how do they achieve these outcomes? How do texts provide a vehicle for leadership expression? To what extent can texts manifest charismatic qualities that offer alternative social visions? Are texts implicated in the critical task of social problem construction, including diagnosis and prognosis? Can texts impact on emotion cultures, validating specific emotions, such as fear or righteous anger? What evidence is there that reading a text can motivate a person directly into activism? Can texts act to prepare a socially oppressed group for political protest? Can the reader effects associated with a text be implicated in the opening up of new windows of political opportunity within democratic systems? Do texts encourage individuals to feel lines of affiliation, mutual concern and group membership that they might not otherwise feel? Can they forge 'invisible collective populations' that are then receptive to the active recruitment strategies of both dormant and newly emergent social movement organisations? If social movements are outcomes of

collective identity formation, how might the socio-cultural event of a book be critical to the development of collective identity? Can the publication of a text have an equivalent value to the type of moral shock that is currently recognised within the social movement literature as a lynch pin to mass mobilisation? In effect, what sort of reader effects can and do texts[1] have that express collective mission statements?

Collective Behaviour and Social Movement Theory

Mass social agitation and protest were initially analysed within the conceptual framework provided by collective behaviourism. While not a phrase coined by him, the tradition of 'collective behaviourism' owes its origins to LeBon's classic study *The Crowd* (1896). Influenced by the breakdown in law and order that accompanied the French Revolution, LeBon characterised the crowd as being a mobile, immoral force driven by both irrational mass sentiments and a collective mind which threatened the older civilised social order and sovereign power. Individuals in crowds became primitive beings driven by blind, "fanatical sentiments" which had religious, ritualistic and cultist aspects (LeBon 1896, p. 83). Being in a crowd could transform what might be a feeling of mere antipathy within an individual into a "furious hatred in the case of an individual in a crowd." The emotive nature of crowds was reflected in their leaders who relied on personal prestige, involving accentuated feelings of admiration or fear. The leaders of crowds appealed to excessive sentiments of honour, glory and patriotism, and used rhetorical devices such as violent affirmations and repetition, rather than reason, to sway opinion. LeBon mobilised medical metaphors in his conceptualisation of crowd behaviour, linking it to ideas of infection and madness. "In the case of men collected in a crowd all emotions are very rapidly contagious,' he explained 'which explains the suddenness of panics" (LeBon 1896, p. 143). For LeBon the contagious nature of crowd madness even had a parallel in the high incidence of madness to be found amongst doctors tending the mentally ill.

In his investigation of the sacred and the profane in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1976 [1912]), Emile Durkheim explored the meaning of beliefs, the

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[1] I use the word 'text' throughout to designate written word based documents only. In this way, I wish to highlight the frequently hidden power of the written or printed word as distinct from the spoken word or artistic symbol.

rules of conduct (rites) and of totems within diverse spiritual practices. He argued that what distinguished and transformed a religious belief was that it was held in common by the group. Such beliefs worked to bind individuals together within a community. The sacred was constituted and distinguished by the very fact that it was imbued with a collective, rather than individual quality and thus reflected a social rather than individualised form of consciousness. Durkheim denied that this quality arose from the existence of a higher Spiritual being (such as God). Instead he insisted it was a force that was immanent in the nature of collective consciousness itself. Collective consciousness is a force that "must also penetrate us and organize itself within us" (Durkheim 1976, p. 209). Commonly held convictions and beliefs acquire an extra vigour or force which private, individualised states of consciousness of mind or emotions cannot obtain. Hence "in the midst of an assembly animated by common passion, we become susceptible of acts and sentiments of which we are incapable when reduced to our own forces" (Durkheim 1976, pp. 209-210).

History demonstrated, Durkheim observed, that there were critical periods of time when people could be faced with a "great collective shock" which triggered greater and more frequent social interactions. Such moral shocks could act as a catalyst causing people to assemble together, creating the conditions for "collective effervescence" that characterised revolutionary and/or creative epochs (Durkheim 1976, p. 226). Such events could move the passions to a level of intensity capable of laying the seeds for either violence or heroism. Distinctive aspects of collective effervescence included the collective movements of bodies, or 'movements in unison' such as song and dance or protest marching (Durkheim 1976, p. 216). Durkheim validated the special nature of collective emotions, including feelings of euphoria or mass hate and recognised how these sentiments urged embodied forms of expression through regular, rhythmic tempos, sounds and tempos including drumming, marching and singing. However he also tended to align these emotions and movements with less 'civilised' human states. Like his predecessor LeBon, Durkheim had a tendency to emphasise the disruptive, rather than progressive effects of revolutionary fervour. The disruptive qualities of collective behaviour became the primary focus of subsequent researchers (Cantril, 1941; Heberle, 1951). These theorists have tended to characterise collective behaviour as representing a threat to ordered, democratic

societies. They have essentially defined social movements as irrational, spontaneous reactions by disaffected social groups within destabilised systems that have been subjected to structural strain.

Within the school of collective behaviourism, Turner and Killian (1987[1957]) were amongst the first to make a decisive break from the overly negative legacy of LeBon's account. They insisted that social movements could be creative and progressive and not simply destructive forces within society. They explained that collective behaviourism is "normal, not pathological or irrational" and was associated with the emergence of new norms that were capable of transforming existent cognitions, values, beliefs and emotions (Turner and Killian 1987, p. 7). The association between collective behaviourism and the emergence of new norms and interpretative schema has since been supported by other collective behaviourists (Smelser 1962; Weller & Quarantelli 1974). The focus on new norms within the collective behaviourist tradition interestingly complements Weber's (1968) insights into the workings of charisma. Weber associated charismatic leadership with the articulation of a radically different moral vision or mission.

The early tradition of collective behaviourism with its focus on the disruptive, spontaneous and dangerous behaviours of crowds and theories of social strain was definitively rejected by the new breed of US based social movement researchers who emerged during the 1970s. Many of these researchers had backgrounds in the Civil rights and/or Women's Liberation Movements and wanted to emphasise the positive, rational and beneficial social outcomes associated with social protest. With some exceptions (Oberschall 1973), these social movement theorists have tended explicitly to disown the tradition of collective behaviourism due to its focus on the irrational elements of group dynamics (McCarthy & Zald 1973; Morris 1981; Coleman 1990). Coleman succinctly articulates the rejection by many sociologists of the collective behaviourist tradition in his book *Foundations of Social Theory* (1990). There he denounced collective behaviourism on the basis that it presented persons   as " 'excitable', 'emotional', or 'suggestive'; their behavior exhibits 'contagion'; they are subject to 'hypnotic effects of the crowd' " (Coleman 1990, p. 197). That is, they are irrational, disorderly, unpredictable, and spontaneous. He found the individual

provided through the collective behaviourist tradition was "a kernel of emotion, with no hint of rationality" (Coleman 1990, p. 198).

The consistency of this attack by some social movement theorists has resulted in a defensive retreat on the part of collective behaviourists. Killian (1994, p. 273) has complained of how the collective behaviourist approach has been unfairly caricatured and been warned "to keep their hot, emotional hands off the serious topic of social movements." He asserted that collective behaviourism has "never treated collective behavior as purely or primarily irrational; it has insisted instead that it is purposive, resting on a cognitive and not an affective base" (Killian 1994, p. 278). Aguirre (1994) has similarly insisted that LeBonian irrationality has remained a small variable in contemporary collective behaviour scholarship. Nevertheless the effectiveness of the stigmatic charge of 'irrationality' has resulted in collective behaviourists becoming so thin on the ground that they are "like members of an endangered species" (Aguirre 1994, p. 260). The tendency to disown its so-called irrational foundations has led Quarantelli to confess that there is now so much emphasis placed on cognition within the collective behaviourist school that it appears to be "in danger of forgetting that people do get scared" (Quarantelli in Killian 1994, p. 278).

While there are exceptions (Oberschall 1973; Klandermans 1992, 1997), social movement researchers have generally remained estranged from the insight provided through collective behaviourists into the significance of newly emergent norms. There are reasons to support Aguirre's (1994) claim that both collective behaviourism and social movement theory should and could complement each other. The tradition of collective behaviourism is capable of providing important insights into how and why individuals become motivated in the first instance to engage in group based political activism through the coalescing force of shared strong emotions and feelings. The collective behaviourist tradition provides a basis for exploring how broad ranging changes in emotional cultures might be mitigated by key text(s) that can act as a vehicle for the social validation of strong emotions and feelings, such as righteous anger, fear or hope.

Resource Mobilisation Theory

Various conceptual tools and paradigms have been elaborated over the last several decades by researchers in the US in an attempt to understand and define social movements. The term 'collective action' was introduced by Olson in 1965. Trained as an economist, Olson believed that all human action was ultimately rational, measurable and calculable. He argued that individuals weighed up the costs and benefits of collective action which involved them making a rational choice. Olson's theories heralded a new emphasis on the rationality and instrumental nature of social movements. In the 1970s the American sociologists McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977) introduced the concept of "resource mobilisation" which then became a widely accepted and utilised principle of social movement research in the US (Oberschall 1973; Gamson 1975; Jenkins & Perrow 1977; Morris 1981). Resource mobilisation theory challenged the collectivist behaviourist tradition of the 1940-60s which had characterised social movements and mass protest as symptoms of social breakdown, strain, relative deprivation and structural instability. It moved to redefine and re-evaluate social movements as essentially reformist strategies situated within democratic systems. The healthiness of democratic systems was reflected in their ability to accommodate change in the face of broad-based collective support. Instead of mass psychosis and egoistic and fanatical leadership, there emerged a framework which emphasised their inherent rationality quantified in terms of formal organisational structure, leadership and communication networks. McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977), in particular, disputed the significance of popular sentiment, commonly held grievances and emotions to the emergence of social movements. Feelings of anger, discontent and unhappiness, they argued, are to be found commonly amongst any given population and their existence was not predictive of grass roots social movement emergence. They maintained that explanations for movement emergence lay in how "grievances and discontent may be defined, created, and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs and organizations" (McCarthy & Zald 1977, p. 1215).

The resource mobilisation perspective essentially privileged a 'top down' approach which drew attention to leadership issues, organisational-based strength and resources (eg money, time, space, membership numbers etc) rather than to the specific nature or strength of grass roots discontent. By providing a conduit for grievance articulation,

movement leaders and their organisations actually create and enable the expression of already existing feelings of dissatisfaction and discontent within a populace. Under this model, collective energy and discontent becomes a resource that is simply gathered, mobilised and funnelled through organisational structures and organisational-based leadership.

Political Opportunity/ Political Process Model

Another angle on understanding social movements is presented by those researchers who have been sensitive to issues relating to political process and political opportunities within democratic systems (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982; Gamson & Meyer 1988; Costain 1992; Tarrow 1994; Kriesi 1995). This approach attends to the dynamic interaction of social movements with various characteristics of the modern state. These include differences between centralist and federalist state systems, government's tendency to receive or repress the reformist strategies of protesters, overall strength and the level of internal state cohesion and the distribution of power within the political system. Research on political process and opportunity has highlighted how democratic systems can become vulnerable to social justice claims. Moral shocks, in particular, can galvanise collective action creating "windows of opportunity" that can demand public policy responses. Specific events that are considered to have performed catalytic functions to social mobilisation include the nuclear accidents at Chernobyl, the US Supreme Court decision *Roe v Wade*, the murder of the 14 year old black boy, Emmett Till, in the South, and Rosa Parks refusal to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Within the Australian context, the massacre of civilians at Port Arthur delivered a moral shock that triggered a dramatic push for national gun law reform. Moral shocks vary in character. Nonetheless they are commonly defined within the social movement literature as belonging to a specific space and time (Jasper 1997) and they herald the opening of 'windows of opportunity' that can last for varied lengths of time.

The language of political process and opportunity carries with it a greater appreciation of the importance of broad-based shifts in consciousness to social protest emergence than that provided through the resource mobilisation model. McAdam

(1982), for example, has emphasised how widespread 'cognitive liberation', as experienced by black Americans, led them to challenge their social status in America during the civil rights campaign. The political process and opportunity model also recognises the necessity of feelings of agency in sustaining social movement activism. Social movements frequently require some measure of tangible success if they are to 'maintain the rage'. As Tarrow (1994, p. 85) explains political opportunities "provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations of success and failure." This model is attentive to the links between success and on-going political activism and conversely failure and social movement dissipation. In their research, Kriesi et al. (1995) concluded that the Dutch anti-nuclear movement effectively demobilised following the failure of its campaign to close down its nation's nuclear plants. Amongst social movement theorists studying the second wave women's movement in the US, Costain (1992) has supported the political opportunity model as an explanatory factor in the resurgence of collective protest. In contrast, Staggenborg (1998) has recently questioned the extent to which perceptions of calculated political opportunity influenced women's collective behaviour. Based on a case study of a local women's movement, she has argued that collective action arose due to cross fertilisation between activists involved in the 1960s protest cycle, and the establishment of movement communities, organisation and informal networks which became motivated by a sense of solidarity, an infectious enthusiasm and commitment to their objectives.

The political opportunity model has occasionally provided a springboard to question the adequacy of resource mobilisation theorists who claim that organisational strength, established leadership, alliances and communication networks are crucial factors in determining social movement success. Costain (1992) maintained that the resource mobilisation model cannot explain the political opportunities that opened up in the late 1960s with respect to the legislative reform program of the Women's Liberation Movement. Her investigation found that, especially in the early years, the lobbying strategies of the WLM were noteworthy for being highly disorganised, fractured and poorly resourced. Despite their apparent lack of lobbying expertise, she found that demands by the National Organisation for Women (NOW), as well as other representative women's organisations, were met by an immediate responsiveness on

the part of Federal and State US politicians. Costain argued that political opportunities for major reform regarding women's status in the US, in effect, flowed not from organisational-based strength, but from perceptions of real anger amongst women at a grass roots level. These had combined with the weakened political position of the Federal government in the wake of the success of the black civil rights campaign and anti-Vietnam war protests. This kind of criticism of the resource mobilisation model remains more the exception than the rule within the literature. In the main, the political opportunity and process model has readily complemented the conceptual tools provided by resource mobilisation through its attentiveness to organisational strength, the efficacy of communication network, membership numbers, the success or failure of lobbying tactics and the strength of ties with government representatives and officials.

Collective Action Frames

Further layers of sophistication have been added to the prevailing paradigms within social movement theory through the language of framing. Framing examines the micro-mobilisation aspects of political activism, attempting to draw bridges between its organisational, structural and socio-psychological dimensions. It draws upon Erving Goffman's (1974, p. 21) understanding of how frames act as "schemata of interpretation" through which people conceptually comprehend their world and life experiences. To date a variety of framing concepts have been discussed and developed within the literature including injustice frames, collective action frames, frame alignment, frame bridging, master frames and domain expansion (Gamson et al. 1982; Snow et al. 1986; Gamson & Meyer 1988; Snow & Bedford 1992; Hunt et al. 1994; Jenness 1995).

Snow and Bedford (1992) have paid particular attention to collective action frames, noting how they are engaged in the critical work of social problem construction which involves both diagnostic and prognostic functions. Collective action frames work to "punctuate or single out some existing social condition or aspect of life and define it as unjust, intolerable, and deserving of corrective action" (Snow & Bedford 1992, p. 137). Other researchers have since reinforced this message holding that "SMO [social

movement organisation] actors engage in diagnostic framing, attempting to find the 'best' ways, from their point of view, to convey to themselves and others their interpretations of what is wrong with extant conditions" (Hunt et al. 1994, p. 193).

Collective action frames are deemed to differ from more comprehensive ideologies as they are articulated by social movement organisations and their leaders, rather than intellectuals and philosophers. Carol Mueller (1992, p. 14) has clarified that "unlike formal ideologies, collective action frames share the emergent qualities of the social movement organizations that create them." Familiar slogans like 'black is beautiful', 'the personal is political', 'abortion - a woman's right to choose', and the call for a 'nuclear freeze' are all examples of successful collective action frames that have been variously developed, adopted and mobilised through organisational structures and movement leaders.

Collective action frames are recognised as providing important motivations to participate in social movement as their strategic functions of diagnosis and prognosis invoke feelings of human agency. Feelings of efficacy and the belief that one can make a difference have been recognised as being essential ingredients to collective activism (Piven & Cloward 1977; Gamson & Meyer 1988). Such feelings work to "deny the immutability of some undesirable situation" (Gamson & Meyer 1988, p. 285). Collective action frames have also been argued to act as rallying points, thereby facilitating shared meaning and values centred around a group's sense of its own common identity and purpose (Hunt et al. 1994). The success or failure of a collective action frame is seen to hinge on the success of its alignment with underlying feelings of social discontent - on the resonance it achieves within a community.

The empiricist, instrumental approaches championed by resource mobilisation and political opportunity and process models, complemented by the language of collective action frames, has now generated a vast amount of research on social movements and their organisations, especially within the US. Attention is routinely paid to recruitment strategies, monetary and membership resources, the professionalisation of social movement activists, elite divisions, the leadership of organisations, communication networks, cooperation and dissension between organisations, efficacy

of lobbying tactics, the significance of alliances with Congress, windows of political opportunity, protest cycles, and master frames and perceptions of frame alignment. While a highly useful conceptual tool, the language of framing and collective action frames itself has acted to reinforce the structural and organisational orientation already provided by resource mobilisation and political opportunity theories. All three complement each other by privileging the pivotal role played by social movement organisations and their leaders. The adequacy of this interpretative stance is being reassessed as it is becoming increasingly clear that "often the best efforts of the most skillful [sic] and committed organizers are not enough to mobilize a movement" (Gamson & Meyer 1988, p. 277). Little investigation has been made of how the independent author and the published, best-selling text might also be involved in the critical work of social problem construction, diagnosis and prognosis. Books have yet to be considered as alternative sites for the articulation of collective action frames. Authorship has been neglected as an avenue for leadership expression as it occurs extraneously to organisational structures, hence the value of the perspective of this thesis, on the 'incendiary text'.

European Approaches to Social Movements

During the 1980s the Italian social movement theorist Alberto Melucci (1980) drew attention to the changing nature of the collective identities of social movements that had emerged during the twentieth century. Class based politics were understood to have been replaced by a politics of identity (eg race, gender, sexual preference) and specific issues (peace, the environment, animal rights, anti-globalisation). Melucci coined the phrase 'new social movements' (NSM) to describe this phenomenon and it has since become common parlance within the sociology literature[2].

Philosophical groundings in Hegelian theories of identity find a reflection in the preoccupation of European social movement theorists with elaborating the preconditions for collective identity formation (Pizzorno 1978; Touraine 1981;

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[2] The term 'new social movements' is recognised as a misnomer given that social movements have agitated in earlier periods of history around issues of race and gender. However the coining of the term 'new social movement' attempts to acknowledge the enhanced reflexive attention to identity itself as a

Melucci 1985, 1989). Rather than the 'top down' perspective provided by much of US based research, the focus on collective identity provided by European theorists brings a much welcome 'bottom up' perspective: one which interrogates the conditions under which a relatively stable 'we' emerges. Within their research, collective identity is understood primarily as being built at the micro-social level. It is constructed through a variety of interpersonal networks within which "individuals interact, influence each other, negotiate and hence establish conceptual and motivational frameworks for action" (Melucci 1989, p. 31). The preconditions recognised by these theorists for collective identity formation include feelings of solidarity, social bonding, shared norms, ideologies and emotions and a sense of engaging in a common struggle.

The new social movements of the twentieth century are recognised as having replaced a critique of economic relations under capitalist systems with a critique of culture. Melucci (1995, p. 41) explains that "in the past twenty years emerging social conflicts in advanced societies have not expressed themselves through political action, but rather have raised cultural challenges to the dominant language, to the codes that organize information and shape social practices." This has brought a focus to the oppressive ideologies and narratives that operate through a range of cultural media including films, television, advertising, fashion, style and language itself. Codes, signs and cultural symbols themselves are properly recognised as sites of power and social regulation, and consequently act as rallying points for resistance. NSM activists frequently engage in a battle around language, raising challenges to its sexism, racism and homophobia, as well as struggling over the politics of visual representation. Within this struggle, the dynamic interaction of the cultural and socio-psycho dimensions of human life (the self, biography) are recognised as providing productive grounds for social movement investigation and research.

The kind of analysis undertaken by European social movement theorists considerably expanded the arena of political activism. Where their American colleagues had tended to analyse how activists engaged in opposition and negotiation with the state,

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social construction and how devalued and stigmatised identity can provide a basis for dissent and collective protest.

European theorists have emphasised that political resistance has become focussed in a more diffuse struggle of ideology. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) have argued that new social movements are engaged in 'struggles for hegemony' over the various forms of dominant discourses which seek to control our lives arising from various cultural sectors, especially the market.

Symbolic Struggle and the New Middle Class

The failed emergence of the proletariat revolution, combined with capitalism's unanticipated ability to adapt to pressure from workers (eg by guaranteeing minimum wages and introducing the safety net of the welfare state) are understood to have undermined the revolutionary potential of the category of class (Fisher and Kling 1994). The globalisation of the world's economy, the clustering of wealth around new information technologies and networks, the ethereal nature of cyber space and telecommunications (rather than ownership of factory-style industrial production), and the rise of individualised, disaggregated labour have all accelerated the problematic status of socio-economic class as a site for organising resistance (Castells 1996). European theorists are attentive to the increasingly complex nature of contemporary society itself which is characterised by new communication systems and the rising significance of symbolic capital. The information explosion is seen to be creating new forms of data which can be either alienating (Touraine 1981) or expansive of individual and social opportunities for self-reflection (Melucci 1989). Some social movement theorists now refute the significance of class as an agential category. Paluski (1993, 1995), for instance, argues that categories such as generation, situs, mobility and shared values better illuminate the dynamics of new social movements than does class position.

Despite the failure of a proletariat led revolt, there remains a reluctance amongst many neo-Marxist theorists to relinquish the category of class as an organised, historically relevant site of resistance. Pakulski (1995) has argued this owes a debt to the intellectual and career investments of academics in Marxist theory. However the reluctance to relinquish 'class' also demonstrates a lack of faith by neo-Marxists in the thoroughly radicalising potential of other forms of organising resistance such as

identity (gender, race etc) or specific issues (world peace, the environment etc). While disputing the relegation of the category of "class" to the realm of the obsolete, neo-Marxian theorists tend to agree that there is a need to reconceptualise its meaning and significance (Philion 1998). This stance was supported by Offe (1985, p. 833) who coined the term "new middle class" to recognise how people from middle class backgrounds, who may or may not be in the workforce (eg housewives, students, retirees), now engage in "a politics *of* a class but not *on behalf of* a class" (original emphasis). Over the last several decades we find complementary research by Rootes (1995) and Eder (1995) stressing the significance of middle class status to the biography of political activists. The middle class is now being viewed by some theorists as a radicalised social agent in its own right, one that is capable of organising around philosophies of liberation that present a critique of culture rather than economic relations.

While it has escaped its proletariat trappings, the contemporary switch to collective struggle directed at the level of ideology and culture remains entirely consistent with Gramsci's (1971) observations in the 1920-30s that under conditions of advanced capitalism social resistance and protest would advance from a war of manoeuvre, involving armed conflict and military style tactics, to a struggle to control and define ascendant hegemonic ideology. This struggle is increasingly recognised as having both an external and internal face, given how shared norms and ideas become embedded within the life and belief systems of the individual. Gramsci appreciated how dominant ideology lived in the hegemonic forms of ordinary notions and ideas of "common sense" . He understood that common sense needed to be interrogated and lifted to new forms of awareness by organic intellectuals under the "war of ideas" heralded by advanced capitalism[3].

In an influential article, Jean Cohen (1985) first proposed that social movement theory could benefit from a synthesis of American and European theoretical approaches to understanding social movements. While taking issue with Cohen's suggestion that this merger be advanced under the rubric of Habermas' (1984) normative theory of communicative action, many social movement theorists have

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[3] These ideas are examined more closely in the next chapter.

welcomed the suggestion (Klandermans & Tarrow 1988; McAdam et al. 1988; Gamson 1992; Larana et al. 1994; Johnston & Klandermans 1995). This has seen a gathering momentum in cooperative ventures which blend the American emphasis on the instrumentality and mechanistic aspects of movement strategy with the European attention to the conditions of collective identity formation, maintenance and fragmentation, and the struggle against hegemonic practices signified by the critique of societal codes.

Key Concepts in Social Movement Theory

In addition to benefiting from a synthesis of American and European analytical frameworks, social movement research has been greatly enriched over the last several decades by the generation of new conceptual tools. These new tools have served useful purposes as refracting lenses, assisting researchers to explain, distil and differentiate the phenomena they are investigating. Amongst the most frequently discussed concepts currently in use, or subject to contestation, we find: 1) social problem construction; 2) differentiating social problems from social movements; 3) collective identity formation and mobilisation; 4) the new discursive politics; 5) the normative foundations of social movements; 6) strong emotions as motivators to collective mobilisation; and 7) the links between culture and auto/biography. In this next section I provide an overview of the debates surrounding these key concepts. In doing so, I lay the foundations for exploring, later on, how charismatic 'author-leaders' can engage in the kind of activities (eg claims-making, promoting collective identity formation, galvanising strong emotions etc) that play central roles in the emergence of social movements.

Social Problem Construction

Over the last several decades sociologists have paid an increasing amount of attention to the issue of how social problems first come to be recognised as problems by the wider community (Schneider 1985; Kitsuse & Spector 1987; Best 1989; Miller & Holstein 1993; Jamrozik & Nocella 1998). This field emerged from the earlier research in the 1940-60s by symbolic interactionists, especially Blumer, who

emphasised that social problems are "products of a process of collective definition" (Blumer in Schneider 1985, p. 210). Social problem theory brings attention to the mechanisms and conditions under which certain phenomena in society come to be defined as problematic in the public arena. It explores how claims are actually registered. Kitsuse and Spector (1987, p. 73) have explained that "the notion that social problems are a kind of *condition* must be abandoned in favor of a conception of them as a kind of *activity*." We call this *claims-making activity*" (original emphasis). 'Claims making activities' routinely mentioned in the literature include petitions, class action law suits, letter writing campaigns, picketing, advertising, coverage by the mass media, public opinion polls and the strategic deployment of social statistics. Social problem theory recognises that personal grievances frequently provide the energising momentum for 'claims-making activities'. The high emotion that motivates some articulators of personal grievances (eg mothers of children killed by drunk drivers or pedophiles) reinforces the significance of biography to 'claims making activities'.

A considerable amount of debate has occurred in social problem theory over whether it is possible to attach a 'real' or at least quasi objective status to social problems, or whether social problems can only be understood as socially constructed phenomenon. Strict social constructionists like Kitsuse and Spector (1987) maintain that social conditions either cannot be known in an objective sense or are irrelevant. Other researchers like Best (1989) have argued in favour of a contextual approach which recognises the significance of 'claims making activities' set against a background of shared perceptions and research results provided through opinion polls and criminal justice statistics. The contextual approach maintains that we can know "with reasonable confidence - about social conditions" and that the validity of claims can be evaluated according to accepted criteria (Best 1989, p. 247). Whether strict or contextual definitions are adopted, the social constructionist approach shares an emphasis on the discursive foundations of social problems. Regardless of their differences, researchers agree that social problems are constructed through a variety of discursive, rhetorical and political strategies. Due to its focus on 'the how' of social problem construction, social problem theory has been criticised for neglecting the

values and beliefs that underpin claims-making activities and for falling into a form of moral relativism that cannot distinguish the merits of competing claims (Mauss 1989).

Gusfield (1981) usefully drew attention to how the successful construction of the social problem of drink-driving relied heavily on the use of scientific research marshalled into public education campaigns that linked blood alcohol levels to poor driving skills and car accidents. Prior assumptions about the value-free or impartial status of science have increasingly come under attack. As Gould observed in the early 1970s, it was not simply that the information yielded by research methods could be used " *by* systems of social control" it was also that they "themselves *are* systems of social control" (Gould in Jamrozik & Nocella 1998, p. 68 - original emphasis). The ideological deployment of science has now been demonstrated by a range of public issues including the contrary results of the health consequences of smoking and passive smoking. Industry groups, conservative think tanks and environmental activists alike have recruited sympathetic scientific experts in order to establish the illegitimacy and legitimacy of the language of global warming. With respect to our current case study, Meyer (1991) has usefully identified that in part the success of Betty Friedan's text lay in how she organised and used Maslow's academically validated theory on self-actualisation, wielding it as a tool against Freud, Mead and conservative sociologists like Talcott Parsons.

Social actors that are commonly identified as playing key roles in 'claims-making activities' and the creating of public discourses include moral entrepreneurs, academics and social researchers across the arts and sciences, experts and professionals using authoritative knowledge, political actors, religious figures, and agents of the media such as journalists and TV reporters. Most of these actors, it has been observed, "belong to the (new) middle class, by education, training, and by and large their social origins" (Jamrozik & Nocella 1998, p. 76). The methods commonly adopted for the purposes of staking claims (newspapers articles, documentary films, TV, the Internet, journal articles, petitions, letter writing campaigns, public demonstrations) all privilege the value of literacy and education. While the author of the middle-brow book clearly belongs to this class of social actor, very little attention has been paid by social problem theorists to the power that might be exercised by the

independent author who succeeds in both constructing and launching a social problem onto the public arena through the publication of a best-selling text.

Differentiating Social Problems from Social Movements

There are clear overlaps between social problem construction and social movement theory given the commonality of 'claims-making activities' to both phenomena. The social movement theorist Armand Mauss (1975, 1989) argued that there is effectively no difference between social movement and social problem theory. Schneider (1985) compromised by suggesting that social movements should be understood as a particular kind of social problem. Strong relationships exist between social problem construction, and the emergence of social movements and social movement organisations. Examples of this interdependency include the problematising of the 'feminine mystique', of rape, wife beating, incest and child sexual assault by the feminist movement, the campaign against drink drivers by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), and the dynamic relationship between hate crime legislation in the US and identity based politics (Friedan 1963; Brownmiller 1976; Rose 1977; Armstrong 1978; Rush 1980; Tierney 1982; Reinarman 1988; Walker 1990; Jacobs & Potter 1998; Morgan 2002).

The productive contribution that social problem theory and social movement theory can make to each other is illustrated by the work on framing. Snow and Bedford (1992) have explored how 'collective action frames' formulated by social movement organisations work to capture and diagnose a social problem, as well as suggesting how remedial (prognostic) action can be taken. Social movement researchers Jenson (1987) and Klandermans (1991) have both emphasised the public claims making links between social problems and social movements, maintaining that an issue can only spark social protest if it is able to gain access to the public arena.

While less analysed than oral speech, written materials are understood by many researchers to be especially formative to social problem construction. Taylor and Whittier (1992, p. 114), for example, have observed that a subordinate group's consciousness of itself "is imparted through a formal body of writings, speeches and

documents." Along with other forms of discursive politics, written documents are seen to provide vital clues to micro-mobilisation issues, group consciousness and the social psychology of movements. In the main however the attention paid to texts by social movement researchers has been rather cursory. The inattentiveness to texts is shared across the field of sociology. Dorothy Smith (1990, p. 120) observed that "textual materials have generally presented themselves to the sociologist as sources of information about something else, rather than as phenomenon in their own right." Smith (1990, p. 120) further argued that there is a misplaced assumption about "the inertia of the text" which fails to acknowledge how texts themselves are actively involved as discursive agents in the battle for ideological dominance. [4]

In her analysis of the discursive politics around domestic violence Walker (1990) has scrutinised two major reports issued by the Canadian government in 1976 and 1982. She demonstrates how the textural language and labels produced by these reports abandoned the language of male violence and wife battering used by feminist groups, refuge workers and victims, transforming it into a depoliticised language of 'family violence'. This conceptual shift erased the reality of adult men as the major perpetrators of domestic violence. Walker found that the ideological switch to a language of 'family violence', begun by the 1976 report, became determinative of the incorporation of domestic abuse as a policy and practice issue to be handled by social work and welfare orientated bureaucracies and professionals. It effectively sidelined the reality of the violence itself and the need to address the problem within the parameters of the criminal justice system. As a result of her investigations of the efficacy of these government reports, Walker (1990, p. 62) maintains that document

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[4] While not addressed as an issue in its own right, some useful observations have nonetheless been made on the significance of key texts as agents of social change by historians, as well as by social problem and social movement theorists. In her analysis of how women activists managed to elude the gate-keeping functions hitherto performed by the rhetoric of 'family policies' in France, Jenson (1987) documents how the 1971 publication of the *Manifest des 343* in major newspapers became a critical milestone in the overturning of the Law of 1920 that outlawed abortion in France. The *Manifest des 343* provided the names of prominent French women artists, intellectuals, politicians and business professionals - including Simone de Beauvoir - all of whom admitted to having procured an illegal abortion. Shortly after a public letter signed by doctors, who acknowledged having performed abortion services, was published by the French press. These public documents effectively worked to undermine the state's ability "to maintain social control by enforcing the law" (Jenson 1987, p. 83). Jenson's analysis demonstrates how the state effectively lost control over the very language structuring the debate around abortion, moving it from a language that gave priority to the family to one that privileged the reproductive rights of individual women.

related research provides an important avenue "for exploring in greater detail the actual workings and consequences of the process of making ideology."

Also attesting to the discursive strength of the written word is Nicole Rafter's (1992) socio-historical analysis of the eugenics movement in the US. She examined how both Richard Dugdale's book *The Jukes* (1877) and a study by Charles Hoyt entitled "The Causes of Pauperism"(1877) were used as important reference sources by the moral crusader Josephine Lowell who was appointed to the position of commissioner of the New York State Board of Charities. Dugdale's study focussed on how a single New York clan had produced "1,200 bastards, beggars , murderers , prostitutes, thieves and syphilitics" over the course of seven generations (Rafter 1992, p. 21). These written documents had a particularly alarming impact on Lowell. Although many of the conclusions she had drawn were contested by her peers, Lowell successfully used these texts as ammunition in her campaign to have feeble-minded women locked up in institutions on the basis that they endangered the genetic calibre of future generations.

Collective Identity Formation and Mobilisation

European social movement theorists like Melucci and Touraine have, in recent years, drawn attention to the significance of collective identity formation to social movement emergence. Collective identity has been usefully defined by Taylor and Whittier (1992, p. 105) as "the shared definition of a group that derives from the members' common interests, experiences and solidarity." A sense of group affiliation, based on a shared politicised consciousness is now widely appreciated by researchers to be a precursor to the emergence of a collective identity that actively engages with and attempts to transform the dominant socio-economic and cultural order.

A number of attempts have been made by social movement researchers to isolate the key dynamics and conditions of initial collective identity formation. In his influential book *Nomads of the Present* (1989) Alberto Melucci has argued that collective identity formation involves three fundamental dimensions, namely: 1) the formulation of cognitive frameworks concerning goals and means; 2) activating relationships

among the actors who then establish communication and decision making networks; and 3) emotional bonding which creates personal investment in the process and outcome. He contends that the initial stages of social action or mobilisation occurs amongst "those social groups most directly affected by the systemic influences on the formation of meaning" (Melucci 1989, p. 55). Based on their research on the Women's Liberation Movement, Taylor and Whittier (1992) have identified slightly different variables, namely: 1) the establishment of boundaries that differentiate a subordinate group from the mainstream; 2) a shared interpretive frame or consciousness based on a sense of common struggle; and 3) the development of symbols that resist the hegemony of the dominant order. Dissatisfaction with the explanatory efficacy of resource mobilisation theory (which effectively sidelined the relevance of grass roots shared grievances) has seen some social movement theorists attribute quasi real status to collective grievances. They are increasingly being recognised as critical explanatory factors to collective identity formation and political action. The act of voicing a grievance in and of itself can be seen to establish "the boundaries of the group ...[it] serves as a primary source of legitimacy for coordination and action" (Johnston 1995, p. 243).

In his writings William Gamson (1975, 1992, 1995) has emphasised the significance of constructing a strong sense of injustice by identifying a moral problem, a sense of group agency, and a belief in the efficacy of taking political action to actual collective identity formation and mobilisation. Tarrow (1994, p. 7) has used the term "early risers" to identify those individuals and groups who perform catalytic roles in the mobilisation of a new protest cycle. Much of Klandermans' (1988, 1991, 1992, 1997) body of work has made important contributions to understanding the transformation of collective beliefs to collective identity formation and movement emergence. He has argued that the emphasis on formal structure provided by resource mobilisation and political opportunity models alike has led to a neglect of the micro-social psychological processes involved in collective belief formation and transformation.

Klandermans (1992, p. 86) has highlighted the special role played by the "persuasive communication conducted by movement organizations." He has stressed how

convincing information stimulates self-reflection, thoughtfulness and the acquisition of new knowledge. These are especially significant to the formation of enduring new collective beliefs and identity which he suggests coalesce through a variety of informal social exchanges. He lists by way of example conversations held in pubs, parties, meeting rooms, over the telephone, fax machine and through email, but fails to mention books or book-based discussion. As a consequence of this oversight Klandermans (1992, p. 80) has defined the consensus formation that precedes critical social mobilisation in terms of "the *unplanned* convergence of meaning in social networks and subcultures" (emphasis added). More recently, Klandermans (1997, p. 43) has identified a range of structural mechanisms capable of changing beliefs, values, and cognitive understanding including "mass media, opinion leaders, common sense, public opinion, sermons, speeches and conversations." All of these function, he argues, as sources of collective beliefs. While instructive, Klandermans' formulation fails to recognise the planned deliberateness of the work of the charismatic 'author-leader'. It fails to grapple with how a text may be capable of exerting an organisational and politicising force on identity. It does not fully appreciate how new, counter-hegemonic social meanings might be generated in a thoroughly systemic manner through the scheduled, but informal, discussions of book club members.

The New Discursive Politics

In his research, Melucci (1989, p. 60) has stressed the significant role played by already existing "submerged networks" and subcultures which function as "cultural laboratories" capable of creating new cultural codes that present symbolic challenges to the dominant order. He emphasises how these submerged recruitment networks can act and motivate individuals, uniting them in a common purpose. Similar micro-mobilisation concepts advanced by other researchers include informal networks, interpersonal life circles, leisure clubs, friendship circles and church groups (McAdam et al. 1988; Morris & Mueller 1992). Scholars of the WLM and the women's peace protests at Greenham Common commonly pay tribute to the significance of 1970's style consciousness-raising groups (Koedt et al. 1973; Klein 1984; Roseneil 1997). The value of group based discussion has been re-emphasised by theorists interested in the production of social meaning through new forms of

discursive politics. A growing body of research is now investigating how cultural and biographical elements work to shape social learning and shared meaning through the production of diffuse, discursive narratives and scripts (Johnston & Klandermans 1995; Fine 1995; Katzenstein 1995; Mansbridge 1995; Masson 1996; Kane 1997; Polletta 1998; Schmitt & Martin 1999). Social movements are increasingly being regarded as larger scale outcomes of the coalescing of energies that are first produced within smaller sized groups.

Discursive practices (group discussions, street talk, friendship networks) are recognised as a primary source of the kind of narratives and scripts which are engaged in new meaning production and the struggle to assert new norms capable of challenging hegemonic cultural codes. As Klandermans (1991, p. 9) has judiciously observed "people tend to validate information by comparing and discussing their interpretations with significant others, especially when complex social information is involved." Social discourses are conceived as "bundles of narratives" that can be articulated in quasi-public forums by members of groups like VOCAL (Victims of Child Abuse Laws) (Fine 1995). Narratives are perceived to provide explanatory force to collective action that occurs in the absence of visible leadership. In her article on the rapid expansion of black student 'sit-ins' in segregated coffee shops and restaurants during the early 1960s, Polletta (1998) argued that narratives provided a catalysing effect on students which occurred in the absence of greater organisational-based planning or leadership. The greater spontaneity often associated with the sit-ins is captured by her description of how the collective action they engaged in was governed by "moral imperative rather than bureaucratic planning" (Polletta 1998, p. 138).

Within the research literature written materials are frequently cited as being a key factor in the transformation of a group's consciousness of itself in that they spark the kind of information sharing and 'talk' that creates new narratives and social discourses (Klandermans 1997; Kane 1997; Johnston 1995; Katzenstein 1995; Fine 1995; Taylor & Whittier 1992, 1997; Gamson 1992). While some attention has been paid to specific written texts, this has tended to focus on newspapers, journal articles and academic texts. To date there has been little sustained analysis of how a best-

selling text can serve as a conduit or flash point that ignites a simultaneous and widespread discursive politics. Yet evidence exists that this is a defining feature of the best-selling charismatic text. Historian Zuoyue Wang (1997, p. 144) has observed that the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) "triggered a national debate" on the use of pesticides, especially DDT, on American soil. Over half a million copies of *Silent Spring* were sold in the US within two months of its release. Within a short period of time, Carson's book had been translated into 22 languages and was destined to become a critical ingredient in the emergence of the global environmental movement. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) similarly succeeded in triggering widespread debate within America. In chapter four, I explore how her text even elicited feelings of 'moral shock' amongst many of her readers. Jasper (1997, p. 23) has confirmed that moral shocks "can be important for crystallizing new cultural meanings", not least because they attract media attention. The salience of 'moral shocks' dovetails with the insights of social movement researchers who have attended to the role by journalists and other cultural entrepreneurs in shaping meaning and formulating public opinion (Gitlin 1980; Gamson & Modigliani 1989; Gamson 1992, 1995).

Despite the growing attention to the submerged networks and micro-social aspects of collective identity formation, influential accounts of collective identity formation within US scholarship continue to privilege the organisational-based origins of collective identity formation. Established social movement researchers like Friedman and McAdam (1992, p. 162) contended that "in the first stage, the emerging movement grows out of but remains dependent upon preexisting institutions and organizations." Hunt et al. (1994) have similarly argued that collective identity formation is contingent on the framing strategies adopted by social movement organisations and their leaders. The comprehensive literature on cycles of protests emphasises the re-activation of long standing activist subcultures and organisations following periods of dormancy, but fails to explain how and why such re-activation actually occurs (Tarrow 1983; Staggenborg 1988; Taylor 1989; Snow & Bedford 1992).

As we shall see in Chapter Four, social movement literature on the women's movement routinely presents the second wave as emerging out of already established organisational-based communication networks. To date the discursive politics that rose to the level of a national debate in the wake of the publication of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) have yet to be investigated properly by social movement researchers.

Normative Foundations of Social Movements

Ideologies are extremely important to social movements given their unique ability to tie new and challenging ideas to values, emotions and normative judgments in a coherent fashion that can promote and direct social resistance to hegemonic theory and practice. Within the research literature on social movements we tend to find a general acknowledgment of the crucial role played by normative frameworks, rather than active scholarship that is devoted to explicating how such frameworks are established or how they act as catalysts to social action. The academy has been criticised for failing to attend to the normative function of leaders as well as neglecting the significance of ethical beliefs to motivating individuals to partake in social protest (Kruse 1996; Spickard 1991; Jasper 1997; Smith 2000). Only recently Ferree and Merrill (2000, p. 458) found it necessary to complain that "values have been absent from or portrayed as irrelevant to most social movement research."

Susan George (1997) has argued that left-wing social theorists in the US have been hampered by a sense of complacency: one that has left them feeling under no pressure to argue the ethical merits of their stance within the public domain. This has led, she observes despairingly, to self-satisfied feelings of intellectual and moral superiority that have seen the progressive left virtually abandon the field of ideology. The costly outcome of this complacency, set against a backdrop of think tanks funded by the Right, have seen the latter gain hegemonic ascendancy in the US. It is the Right that has, George ironically observes, taken on board Gramsci's lesson about the need to win the 'war of ideas' in advanced capitalist societies.

Strong Emotions as Motivators to Collective Mobilisation

The last decade of social movement research has seen increasing attention paid to the important role played by emotions to understanding movement emergence, mobilisation and the sustaining of protest (Gamson 1992, 1995; Lehr 1995; Jasper 1997; Robnett 1998; Barbalet 1998; Hercus 1999; Ferree & Merrill 2000). Gamson (1995, p. 91) has noted how perceptions of injustice are responsible for "the kind of righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul." In her discussion of the black civil rights movement, Robnett (1998, p. 77) has similarly contended that "mobilization often rested on emotional appeals, whether spontaneous or planned." Strong and sustained emotions are associated by movement theorists with 'moral shocks' that are key integers in the triggering a new cycle of protest. Moral shocks frequently combine a sense of threat, built on raw emotions like fear, dread, and hate, with the possibility of identifying a group or individual that may be blamed for that threat (Jasper 1997).

Macro-sociological investigation of emotions has much to gain from examining the broad based, discursive forces through which emotions are cultivated, repressed and controlled (McCarthy 1989). Despite the key role played by resistant ideologies to macro-social shifts in subaltern group consciousness and emotion cultures, to date much of the debate on emotion norms has tended to be concentrated at the level of interpersonal and smaller scale micro-social groups such as peer groups, work place dynamics and families. Barbalet (1998) in particular has argued that with important exceptions, sociologists of emotions have been slow to consider the dynamics of macro-societal shifts in emotion cultures and their significance to social movements.

With some recent exceptions (Hercus 1999), social movement research has not yet benefited in any thorough or systemic manner from observations made by sociologists of emotions about the social conditions that encourage displays of emotional deviancy by subordinate groups (Hochschild 1975, 1979; Thoits 1990). Gradual changes in emotion cultures remain uninvestigated as a causal factor useful to explaining social movement emergence. Attending to longer term, and more gradual shifts in emotion cultures may shed new light on how oppressed groups (eg women, blacks and minority groups), who are normally barred from feeling or expressing righteous

anger, come to display emotional deviancy. To date the role played by popular culture (magazines, films, books) in validating feelings of deviant emotions like righteous anger or hate has largely remained the prerogative of social historians, popular culture theorists and sociologists of emotions, rather than social movement theorists (Cancian and Gordon 1988; Scheff 1994; Hochschild 1994).

Culture and Auto/Biography

The structural and organisational focus of much of US based social movement research during the 1970-80s is now recognised as having led to a neglect of popular culture. McAdam (1994, p. 37) has observed that "until recently, 'culture' in all of its manifestations, was rarely invoked by American scholars as a force in the emergence and development of social movements." On the interface between culture and auto/biography, Jasper (1997, p. 54) has observed that "although scholars of social movements have recently begun to bring culture into their models, the realm of biography has yet to be rediscovered despite its considerable parallels with culture." Several productive contributions to the appreciation of the cultural dimensions of social movements and movement subcultures have been published (Johnston & Klandermans 1995; Taylor & Whittier 1995; Staggenborg 1998). Many social movement theorists are coming to see culture, not as an externalised, or independent variable, but as a symbolic force that is interiorised at the level of the biographical self. Feminist researchers have been especially sensitive to how the dynamic interaction between culture and biography can become core elements to social mobilisation.

The potential role played by authors in the dynamic of the self and culture has been explored by C. Wright Mills (1959) in *The Sociological Imagination*. He affirmed that novelists, critics, dramatists were frequently "formulators of private troubles and even of public issues" (Mills 1959, p. 18). The possibility that a critique of cultural symbols may become a vortex for the eruption of new narratives has been investigated more recently by Kane (1997). She noted how "people do refer first to cultural models as they try to make sense of situations and shape their strategies for action" (Kane 1997, p. 250). Thus compelling opportunities for social meaning

reconstruction crop up when there is a disjuncture between personal experience and cultural models. (This was precisely the kind of work Friedan was involved with in her assault on the 'happy housewife heroine'.) There remains an inherent radicalising potential to the normal practice of suppressing personal troubles within collective populations. As William Gamson (1995, p. 87) confirms "people distinguish between knowing something from having experienced it and knowing something secondhand or more abstractly, and they generally give a privileged place to their own experiential knowledge."

Leadership and Social Movement Theory

The importance of effective leadership to social movement success is widely acknowledged within the contemporary sociological literature. Both resource mobilisation and political opportunity models, as we have seen, accord pivotal roles to leaders and social movement organisations with respect to the framing and channelling of already existent social grievances. Despite their stated importance however, within the social movement literature it is uncommon to find an index listing covering the subjects of either 'leaders' or 'leadership'. It is an even rarer event to find direct discussion of these topics.

From the generalised discussions of leaders within the literature, it can be discerned that effective leadership is seen to rely on having a ready understanding of political processes within democratic systems. Leaders must be responsive to opening windows of opportunity. Leaders play essential roles in the mobilisation of consensus amongst members through the articulation of collective action frames that consolidate group beliefs and collective identity. They are called upon to make timely strategic decisions, formulate persuasive messages to attract new recruits (eg pamphlets, slogans, newsletters, telecommunications), and organise fund raising activities. In addition, they play key roles in the establishment of effective communication networks with other agencies and act as viable contact points to elected government representatives and bureaucrats.

As a consequence of the dominance of the resource mobilisation and political opportunity models, contemporary social movement analysis of leadership tends to coalesce around a limited range of prototypes. While due regard is paid to the unique appeal of charismatic figures like Martin Luther King Jr., in the main leadership has been analysed in terms of hierarchical position and functions that are set within formal, institutionalised structures, as in the case of social movement organisations (Oberschall 1973; McCarthy & Zald 1977; McAdam 1982; Snow et al. 1986; Gamson & Meyer 1988; Marullo 1988; Klandermans 1989, 1992; Snow & Bedford 1992; Melucci 1996). An organisational-based model of leadership also remains the norm in the analysis of the national and international women's movements undertaken by feminist scholars. This is evident in their on-going concern with the establishment of NOW and the smaller, more radical women's liberation groups, the increases and declines in membership numbers, unobtrusive mobilisations set within organisational settings, the attention devoted to lobbying tactics and strategies, issues dealing with professionalisation, and the concern to demonstrate the nexus between older existing feminist organisations like the League of Women and emergent organisations of the second wave movement (Freeman 1973, 1975; Yates 1975; Cassell 1977; Rupp & Taylor 1987; Staggenborg 1988; Taylor 1989; Martin 1990; Katzenstein 1990; Costain 1992; Ferree & Martin 1995; Taylor & Whittier 1997; Rupp & Taylor 1999). The limitations arising from this approach, however, are clearly demonstrated in the incisive observation made by Costain (1992) who found that it was the perception of widespread, grass roots anger amongst American women, rather than organisational-based strength and lobbying skills, that drove the early success of the Women's Liberation Movement.

Although the normative foundations of social movements have often been neglected as an active topic of investigation, organisational-based leaders are seen to make important contributions to the development and public dissemination of ideologies through the production of symbols, rituals, public discourse, representations, ideas and the rallying slogans of collective action frames. In this, they can be assisted by mass media discourse that works to disseminate 'ideological packages' (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Researchers have devoted some attention to assessing the conditions for successful or unsuccessful establishment of a normative discourse by a

social movement (Scott 1990; Brulle 1995; Lynch 1998; McCright & Dunlap 2000). Such analyses have however remained confined to the ideological work of organisations, and organisational-based leaders, and thus have missed the socio-cultural event of the 'author-leader'.

In recent years, the emphasis on hierarchical status and formal structure has been subjected to sustained criticism. Morris (2000), Herda-Rapp (1998) and Robnett (1998) have argued that existing models of leadership are overly rigid. They fail to account adequately for the full range of human agency as well as less visible, informal leadership networks. The 'top down' perspective provided especially by the resource mobilisation model has been questioned for failing to shed light on spontaneous and diffuse forms of social protest, such as the black student led sit-ins in segregated cafes and restaurants in the South that took place in 1960 (Killian 1984; Oberschall 1989; Polletta 1998). Oberschall (1989) has argued that cohesion and clearly defined organisation and leadership were often lacking from the narrative accounts of black students who were actually involved in these sit-ins. Both Oberschall (1989) and Polletta (1998) have observed that social movement research tends to explain the initial phases of new movements in terms of its later, organised public face. This brings with it an emphasis on leadership and social movement organisation and framing strategies which project expectations of cohesiveness and deliberation backwards onto newly emergent forms of resistance - in effect explaining origins in terms of their eventual products.

Recent feminist contributions to the sociological literature on the black civil rights movement have criticised the extent to which leadership discussion has been dominated by a focus on formalised, male leaders (Herda-Rapp 1998; Robnett 1998). Robnett has usefully expanded the concept of leadership to recognise the significance of what she calls "bridge leaders." This concept allows for recognition of the critical leadership role played by black women within the civil rights movement during the 1950-60s. While black women may have understood that their status as women meant that "they could never gain community sanction to act as formal leaders", this limitation also acted as a double-edged sword (Robnett 1998, p. 75). It left black women open to working in more radical ways than formal leaders such as Martin

Luther King Jr. whose actions and decisions were constrained by a need to maintain contact and be open to negotiation with the establishment, including the US administration.

As Melucci (1996, p. 332) has recently acknowledged "contributions to a theory of leadership in social movements have remained extremely sketchy." Robnett (1998, p. 67) concurred with this assessment arguing that "although social movement theorists often discuss movement leaders, the concept of leadership itself has generally not been analyzed." To date there has been little recognition or in-depth discussion of the importance of the 'author-leader' and how a best-selling text might work to disperse an ideological viewpoint across a community. The omission of the 'author-leader' by US social movement theorists is especially surprising given the known influence of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, and the new emphasis placed on the micro-social, discursive constructive of resistant political meanings.

Weber's Pure Model of Charisma

Important insights into a specific and rare form of leadership, namely charismatic leadership, were provided through the work of the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber provided a three part model of pure charisma which defined charisma in the following manner:

"The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a 'leader' " (Weber 1968, vol 1, p. 241).

The first prerequisite to be met for the emergence of charismatic leadership, according to Weber, is the appearance of a leader with special qualities who is imbued with sense of personal mission. Such leaders articulate a radical vision that typically

conveys their sense of destiny, set within a context of greater social salvation. They challenge the existing status quo and create the possibility of institution destruction as well as re-building. Charismatic leaders represent the rejection of the old and the creation of the new. In this sense, the revolutionary potential of the charismatic leader is noteworthy for s/he repudiates the past and represents a truly transformative force. As Weber wrote "charismatic domination transforms all values and breaks all traditional and rational norms" (Weber 1968, vol 3, p. 1115). Weber's discussion of charismatic leadership largely concentrated on religious figures such as prophets (Moses, Jesus, Mohammed), religious teachers (Buddha, Confucius) and heroic figures like warlords. But he also argued that charisma was a quality that could be found in other vocations including politics, science and the arts.

The second critical ingredient of Weber's pure model of charisma recognised that leadership necessitated a complex interactional relationship with other individuals, groups, organisations who collectively had to validate and believe in the mission statement expressed by the charismatic figure. Charismatic leadership is based on a dynamic relationship between the leader and her or his followers who give the leader their loyalty and devotion "by virtue of a mission believed to be embodied in him" (Weber 1968, vol 3, p. 1117). Followers of charismatic leaders can experience a dramatic altering of their underlying values and ideas - bringing them into alignment with the attitudes and beliefs of their chosen leader. Alternatively followers are drawn to leaders precisely because they espouse the kind of values and beliefs that they already hold. In essence, charismatic belief essentially "revolutionizes men 'from within' and shapes material and social conditions according to its revolutionary will" (Weber 1968, vol 3, p. 1116). The depth of the internal ties, beliefs and feelings of devotion that frequently bind followers to their chosen leaders makes charismatic leadership a very different commodity to other kinds of leadership. Some charismatic leaders are associated with especially disastrous outcomes for their true believers (eg Adolf Hitler, Jim Jones). Many socio-political commentators remain wary of the influence of charismatic leaders as they are perceived to undermine the official processes that normally work to identify elected political leaders within democratic systems (Marchetti 1998).

While Weber appreciated the intensity of the critical alignment of shared values or beliefs between charismatic leaders and followers, he recognised this need not be based on an appeal to ethics. Charisma was a quality that existed independently of moral premises. As Weber explained "how the quality in question would be ultimately judged from any ethical, aesthetic, or other such point of view is naturally entirely indifferent for purposes of definition" (Weber 1968, vol 1, pp. 241-242). What matters is the promise of salvation itself contained in the radical vision, and the leader's ability to create strong emotional bonds within their followers. Historic figures ranging from Adolf Hitler, Jim Jones, Napolean, Mussolini, Ayatollah Khomeini, Eva Peron, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Moses, Kwame Nkrumah to Jesus Christ have all been identified within the literature as charismatic leaders. As this vastly disparate list makes evident, charismatic leaders are understood to share many common properties that can have hugely divergent moral and/or amoral outcomes for humanity[5]. Despite their differences, a shared feature of charismatic leadership is the desire to exercise power and demonstrate political will by influencing others. Of interest to this current project on Friedan is Weber's views on the charismatic leader's 'will to power', a view that was shared by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci.

The third defining feature of charismatic leadership, according to Weber, was its association with a period of stress or crisis which gave rise to the unexpected rather than routine. Charismatic figures, he explained, occur in times of distress, "whether psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, or political" (Weber 1968, vol 3, pp. 1111-1112). They represent epiphenomena of periods of social flux, uncertainty and instability. As such they are the antithesis of everyday routine, rational and bureaucratic authority. The concurrence of the charismatic leader with moments of crisis in human history underscored Weber's appreciation of the rarity of their appearance on the world stage. Weber also maintained that the modern politico-social order, with its emphasis on instrumental rationality and bureaucracy, had decidedly

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[5] To date surprisingly little attention has be paid to delineating the differences between historic charismatic leaders. Howell (1988) has usefully suggested that a distinction be drawn between socialised and personalised charismatic leaders. The former she argues seek to wield power in a controlled and egalitarian manner designed to be of benefit to others and in a way that enhances the humanitarian values within a populace. In contrast, personalised charismatic leaders pursue self-

undermined the radical potential of the charismatic leader, relegating such figures to an ever narrowing field of human life.

Within the sociological literature, Weber has been criticised for having articulated a view of charisma that is either too narrow or too contingent. Edward Shils (1958, 1965) contended that Weber focused on an extremely rare and concentrated form of charisma which overlooked how charismatic propensities could be expressed in a more dispersed fashion. Charisma could, he maintained, be invested across a range of social phenomena, including national institutions, revered documents such as the Magna Carta, and other symbols. Such symbols were capable in and of themselves of transmitting charisma to associated office bearers.

Some dilution in Weber's three part theory of charisma has occurred within the literature. Contemporary analysts have questioned the necessity of all three conditions being met, or have emphasised some factors over others. Chinoy (1961), for example, gave priority to the contextual dimensions of charisma arguing that "no prophet (charismatic leader) can succeed unless the conditions are propitious" (Chinoy in Conger and Kanungo 1988, pp. 19-20). Willner (1984) on the other hand, took issue with the contextual prescriptions for charisma's emergence, finding that charismatic leaders can appear on the public stage during periods of no discernible crisis, and in his account of the power of charisma, Bryman (1992) emphasised the primacy of the relationship between charismatic leaders and their followers. Beyer (1999) has recently criticised this revisionary trend, arguing in favour of the sociological complexity of Weber's three part model. While criticising aspects of Weber's discussion of charisma, and in particular his neglect of the charismatic 'author-leader', I seek essentially to maintain the complexity of his model of charisma in my own analysis of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

The Routinisation of Charisma

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aggrandisement, dominance and establish the kind of personality cults that modern history has seen associated with totalitarian regimes like Stalin and Hitler.

Although Weber identified three key preconditions for the emergence of charismatic leadership, most of his analysis was dedicated to exploring how the visions of these leaders became routinised, formalised and embedded within institutions (Weber 1968, vol 2, pp. 815-831; vol 3, pp. 1121-1157). Weber understood that charisma was inherently unstable. It was a mercurial quality as it resided within historic persons who must inevitably die. Routinisation happens precisely because there is a desire "to transform charisma and charismatic blessing from a unique, transitory gift of grace of extraordinary times and persons into a permanent possession of everyday life" (Weber 1968, vol 3, p. 1121). To achieve longevity, charismatic figures must have their successors. Their ideas and visions must become incorporated within new hierarchical offices, institutions and wider social practices. Signs of the routinisation of charisma ranged from the development of an accepted canon (eg texts, doctrines, sacred scripts) to the establishment of hierarchical institutions such as churches, organisations and bureaucracies complete with official stations or positions.

With respect to our interest in the 'author-leader' and the status of the charismatic text, Weber made only cursory observations confirming that objects can exhibit or contain charismatic qualities in themselves. He acknowledged that charisma was "a gift that inheres in an object or person simply by virtue of natural endowment" (Weber 1968, vol 2, p. 400). He also speculated that charisma could be artificially imbued within an object or person through extraordinary or fetishistic means. Although he referred to the sacred documents associated with religious figures like the prophets of Israel and Islam, he did so largely to note how the teachings delivered by charismatic figures became codified into sacred law, sacred office and practices of jurisprudence (Weber 1968, vol 2, pp. 815-831). In effect, the framework of routinisation provided by Weber demonstrated a strong tendency to equate written documents, regardless of their contents, with the secondary institutionalisation of charisma. This oversight meant that Weber remained inattentive to the emergent charismatic potential of the 'author-leader' who seeks to impart their radical vision, in the first instance, through the written word.

Contemporary researchers have generally acquiesced with Weber's assessment that written documents reflect stages in the routinisation of charisma. Scholarly books on

charisma frequently fail to address issues pertaining to the emergent, charismatic qualities of the written word and the status of the 'author-leader'. To date Rachel Carson and Betty Friedan remain undiscovered figures within many influential accounts of charismatic leadership (Schweitzer 1984; Willner 1984; Conger and Kanungo 1988; Lindholm 1990; Bryman 1992). In his discussion of Adolf Hitler's charismatic appeal Schweitzer (1984) focussed on Hitler's staged speech performances and the dazzling effects of Nazi pageantry. *Mein Kampf* barely merited a mention and Schweitzer did not concern himself with how successful that text was in immediately disseminating Nazi party ideology amongst the German populace. Weber's lingering influence also can be detected in Trice and Beyer's (1986, p. 113) comment that routinisation required the incorporation of charisma "into written and oral tradition." They cited the publication of *The Twelve Steps and Traditions*, which consolidated and facilitated the on-going communication of the original charismatic message of the founder of Alcoholic Anonymous, as an instance of routinisation. A small exception to this overall inattentiveness to the charismatic potential of the 'author-leader' can be found in Bryman (1992). Bryman drew attention to the unusual case of Joanna Southcott (1750-1814), a millennium prophet, who communicated with her followers through apocalyptic pamphlets and books which warned of the Second Coming of Christ. During her lifetime, Southcott (1995 [1802]) published over 60 tracts, spurred on, she advised her readers by the 'Spirit of Truth' that visited her regularly in her dreams. She is said to have gained tens of thousands of followers through her writings. Southcott was an especially popular figure for women, many of whom appreciated her assertion that she had been chosen to reverse the defeat suffered by Eve in the Garden of Eden.

When Weber did consider the charismatic figure as historic person, he insisted that such individuals were distinguished by the visible performance of heroic or prophetic deeds. In effect, Weber believed that charismatic leaders are known by their actions. If they were to be prophets they must predict future events, disclose divine revelations or perform miracles in front of audiences. If they were to be charismatic warlords or military commanders, they must prove themselves on the battlefield through the display of exceptional courage or the performance of extraordinary deeds. Such deeds need not be directly viewed by individuals, but they must, in the first instance, have a

dramaturgical quality that renders them amenable to becoming known through social practices like story-telling and narratives. Weber's emphasis on the physical activities and presence of the charismatic figure was reflected in his discussions of the problem of succession, as well as the intimate nature of the interactions between charismatic leaders and their followers (Weber 1968, vol 1, pp. 246-249; vol 3, pp. 1123-1125). Such definitions leave little scope for understanding the heroism of the writer who struggles alone, spurred on by their determination to impart a radical vision through the power of the written word. It leaves little room for appreciating how the 'author-leader' may have little or no face to face contact with their readers, yet may still count their readers as dedicated followers.

Following the lead set by Weber, contemporary texts on charismatic leadership continue to concentrate on dramaturgical displays, such as the leader's ability to attract and 'work' a large crowd. Factors commonly examined include voice pitch and delivery style, the leader's appeal to a TV audience, their hand gestures, piercing eyes, the deployment of mythic metaphors, their ability to make an emotional impact, their use of alliteration and repetition, facial expressions, and the context in which a speech is given (Burns 1978; Atkinson 1984; Schweitzer 1984; Willner 1984; Wasielewski 1985; Bull 1986; Conger & Kanungo 1988; Lindholm 1990; House et al. 1991; Bryman 1992; Safire 1997; Fiol et al. 1999; Awamleh & Gardner 1999). Many of these concepts have ready application to the case of the charismatic author and text (McGuire 1977). Social movement theorists too have tended to focus on the impact of oral speeches on listeners, rather than the written word on readers, when discussing the impact of movement leaders (Billig 1995). This is reflected in their attention to the media profiling of social movement leaders by both television and the print media alike (Gitlin 1980; Gamson & Meyer 1988).

Research on charisma has attracted its own degree of criticism for neglecting the importance of the normative content of charismatic messages (Trice & Beyer 1986; Shamir et al. 1994; Smith 2000). The print medium is uniquely placed to convey a sustained, charismatic message in a way that can reframe collective consciousness, giving rise to a new understanding of pressing social problems. History has confirmed that books ranging from the Bible to the Koran to Marx and Engel's *The Communist*

Manifesto (1998 [1848]) can and have acted as important stimuli for social action over generations, and even millennium. Such texts bear ample witness to the continuously emerging charismatic qualities of the written word.

In a world characterised by increased literacy, education, readers and independent authorship, the continuing dominance of Weber's narrow perspective on the avenues for expressing charismatic leadership requires re-evaluation. His emphasis on visible performance leaves little room for appreciating the solitary, invisible act of writing undertaken by the 'author-leader'. Often the written word is the primary or only vehicle of communication. Modern practices of privatised, silent reading leave little room for gauging the effect that an author's words might have on their audience of readers. In subsequent chapters, I highlight the salutary impact that reading specific texts, including Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, had on activists of the second wave feminist movement. Due to the written text's alignment with the secondary routinisation of charisma, there has been a general inattentiveness to whether readers might not be transformed into emergent adherents of the philosophies expressed by a visionary 'author-leader'.

An additional factor to consider is how the modern era, aided and abetted by new media technologies and the ease of global travel, has increasingly eroded the previous invisibility of the historic author. Many authors now have promotional demands placed on them by publishing houses that require them to attend international events, book fairs, writers' festivals and to present public lectures. The cracking pace set for Naomi Klein in the wake of the success of *No Logo* (2001), a text which positioned her as a key spokesperson for the anti-globalisation movement, suggests that authors of charismatic texts may increasingly be called into the public arena in the future. The author has arguably become an especially important agent during a time when the demands of running an economy have usurped the moral leadership role previously played by politicians (Habermas 1975).

Charismatic Leaders, Emotion Ideologies and Salvation Scripts

Useful observations have been made with respect to the dynamic relationship between ideology, charismatic leadership and human agency. Noting the significance of the emotional bonds of charismatic leaders, Wasielewski (1985) has argued that charismatic leaders are distinguished by their demonstration of emotional authenticity and sincerity. Such leaders have an interest, she argues, in "establishing the emotional and motivational preconditions for change" (Wasielewski 1985, p. 213). Wasielewski explored how the ideological ceilings that are normally placed on emotions (especially 'deviant' emotions like anger) can be altered by charismatic leaders. Through emotional displays charismatic leaders are able to influence and reframe the emotional thresholds of their followers, facilitating the all important politicisation of energising positive emotions like righteous anger, hope or more negative feelings like hate and fear. The emotion display of the charismatic leader can work to disrupt hegemonic emotion cultures that breed compliance and an acceptance of the status quo, thereby creating new avenues for motivating emotions that are critical.

I conclude this discussion of charisma by drawing attention to Smith's (2000) argument that many contemporary explorations of charisma have lost sight of Weber's crucial observation that charismatic political leaders and social movement leaders are identified by their articulation of a vision of social salvation. Adopting a case study approach to such diverse leaders as Adolf Hitler, Winston Churchill and Martin Luther King Jr., Smith has emphasised that the salvation scripts mobilised by these charismatic leaders all contained religious overtones and engaged in a binary language of polarised good and evil. Smith's reiteration of the significance of salvation scripts to charismatic leadership is an important and timely one. It is also one that can readily be extended beyond the narrow normative framework of good and evil and his own attention to oration and visual performance. Salvation scripts have frequently circulated in the form of written texts. Many have been based on a normative appeal to the nature and meaning of human freedom (in the form of the authentic self or human consciousness), moral behaviour, nationalism, class relations and good government. Within the early history of America, for example, the demand for Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* (1976 [1776]), which gained widespread circulation despite poorly developed book distribution networks, is considered by many historians to be instrumental to the emergence of organised

settler resistance against British colonial rule during the American Revolution (Bailyn 1967; Gilreath 1987; Hibbert 1990). Paine had a definitive sense of America's destiny, and his passionate polemic against the British monarchy and aristocracy went through twenty-five editions, more than twice that of any other publication during the hothouse period of pre-revolutionary ferment (Tanselle 1980). It is estimated that over 150,000 copies were sold and the pamphlet is considered to have greatly facilitated public discussion of the judiciousness of British colonial authority (Hibbert 1990). Paine's pamphlet was so popular that several Loyalist supporters felt the need to counter his arguments by writing their own pamphlets, thereby augmenting the level of public discourse on the matter.

In effect, salvation scripts, whether they are based on appeals to good and evil, human freedom, national pride and good government, whether they are delivered to their audiences in oral or written form, have proved to be decisive turning points in human history. Their catalysing role is especially beckoning should they be launched: 1) during a period of crisis; and 2) in a way that succeeds in tapping into already existing (but unexpressed) grass roots grievances. In later chapters I illustrate how Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* can be usefully examined in terms of these criteria. I show how the author's language effected a form of emotional cathexis for her women readers. I argue that the salvation script of liberation that pervaded her text succeeded in having an enormous impact upon many American women, imbuing them with an urgent desire for social and personal change.

Concluding Remarks

This summary of major trends in social movement theory shows how research into social movements has become a vibrant field of sociological investigation, especially over the last few decades. Despite the many productive outcomes achieved by the recent blending of American and European theory, a sense of malaise and dissatisfaction permeates the social movement literature. Resource mobilisation and political opportunity models have been heavily criticised within academia on the basis that they are overextended, behaving like sponges in their endeavour to capture too many aspects of social movements with restricted and inadequate conceptual tools.

There is widespread agreement that the available paradigms for explicating collective action are inadequate, too specialised or lacking in their appreciation of crucial dimensions and underlying social dynamics (Gamson & Meyer 1988; Eyerman & Jamison 1991; Maheu 1995; McAdam et al. 1996; Jasper 1997; Robnett 1998; Ferree and Merrill 2000; Klandermans 2000; Morris 2000).

This chapter has discussed how social movement theory has been especially neglectful of the visionary power of the author and the agency potential of the charismatic text. To date much of the modern analysis of charismatic texts has been undertaken by linguists, historians, political scientists philosophers, sociologists of emotions and even scientists, rather than social movement theorists (McGuire 1977; Blain 1988; Scheff 1994; Wang 1997; Kemple 2000). The alignment of certain best selling 'middlebrow' books - eg Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), with the environmental and WLM respectively, suggests that charismatic texts deserve to be interrogated as 'active' cultural artefacts that have explanatory force in the emergence of social movements (Smith 1990). The organising potential of such texts is especially beckoning in the light of the 'new middle class' (Offe 1985) which has proved highly responsive in the twentieth century to the rallying call of authors who drive their narratives by means of a politicised deployment of auto/biography.

In this chapter I also attended to Weber's three part theory of charismatic leadership and his appreciation of the extraordinary, institution-breaking strength that charisma can have. Weber's emphasis on the radical vision proffered by charismatics leader, their need to gain followers, and their concurrence with a period of crisis, serves as a template to my own case study investigation of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. Because of certain inadequacies in Weber's conceptualisation of charisma's emergent character, however, we must look elsewhere to excavate the hidden potential of the 'author-leader' who produces a charismatic text. In the next chapter, I discuss Antonio Gramsci's philosophical insights on the power of the written word and the role the elite organic intellectual must play in the battle to win the 'war of ideas' announced by the socio-economic conditions of advanced capitalism.

Chapter Two -Gramsci on the Exercise of Moral and
Intellectual Leadership Through Texts

"The *Manifesto* has become an index, as it were, of the development of large-scale industry...[which] ... can be measured with fair accuracy by the number of copies of the *Manifesto* circulated in the language of [each] country"

Frederich Engels (Engels in Kemple 2000, p. 45).

Introduction

Antonio Gramsci was born in the province of Sardinia in southern Italy in 1891 and died in 1937 not long after finally being released from prison where he had been detained for the last ten years of his life due to his political activities on behalf of the Italian worker. During his life time Gramsci remained a committed communist. He had a long history of active involvement in the emancipatory struggle of the proletariat whose position as privileged revolutionary agent, according to Marxist doctrine, he never questioned. After leaving his university studies in linguistics and literature Gramsci went to work as a journalist. His political activities on behalf of the Italian proletariat ran from writing numerous articles in newspapers and journals to direct involvement in the Italian factory council movement of the 1910-20s. He joined the staff of the socialist weekly paper *Il Grido del Popolo* in 1915 when he was 24 years old, wrote a regular theatre column for *Avanti!* and was later one of the chief instigators in the establishment of the left wing weekly *L'Ordine Nuovo* in 1919. In his writings Gramsci developed a rather distinctive perspective on the permutations of Italian and European popular culture of the early twentieth century. He regularly reviewed cultural events including theatre and film and was an astute commentator on current events and Italian politics. He eventually became the leader of the Italian Communist party in 1924, and shortly thereafter was arrested and imprisoned by Mussolini's fascist regime. By this stage, so feared was Gramsci for his formidable intellect that upon his imprisonment in 1928 the public prosecutor infamously declared that "we must stop this brain working for twenty years" (*Selections from the Prison Notebooks* 1971, [SPN] p. xviii).

If the Italian fascist authorities had been serious about stopping Gramsci's brain they must have regretted their decision in January 1929 to grant him special permission to write in his prison cell. For Gramsci's most important contributions to the political struggle against the hegemonic practices of the capitalist ruling class were completed in prison. By the end of his period of internment he had filled over 30 school exercise books (8 x 6 inch) despite his own failing health and conditions of censorship. These conditions required Gramsci to disguise the content of his writings by the use of a rather transparent code which included redefining Marx's 'historical materialism' as the 'philosophy of praxis', substituting the words 'fundamental social group' for 'class' and leaving gaps in the text where the names of Engels and Marx needed to be inserted.

Antonio Gramsci is routinely attributed by his scholars with having made the most significant contribution to the advancement of Marxist theory in the twentieth century (Boggs 1976; Mouffe 1979; Femia 1981; Simon 1982; Sassoon 1982; Martin 1998). His theoretical analysis focussed on aspects of the human condition which remained glaring lacunae in Marx's own writings. Gramsci ended up refuting many ideas central to Marx's writings, especially his tendencies toward scientific reductionism, the determinative power he gave to the economic and his belief in the inevitability of a proletariat revolution. In important respects, Gramsci's writings marked a return to Hegel, and with this he brought renewed attention to how power operates through the realms of ideology, language and culture.

Gramsci's ideas on moral leadership, authors and the power of the written word allow me to establish the innovative nature of my own approach to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). His insights into how power operates in advanced capitalist systems provides the keys concepts to this discussion. In this chapter I explore how: 1) the leverage points for challenging the distribution of power are to be found at the site of ideology; 2) the distinction between civil society and the state and Gramsci's appreciation of how power works through hegemony ('rule by consent'); 3) the critical role played by the elite organic intellectual in the switch from the 'war of manoeuvre' to the 'war of ideas' heralded by advanced capitalism; and 4) the

avenues Gramsci foresaw were open to the author for engaging in this tactical 'war of ideas'.

Gramsci's analysis of Machiavelli's rhetorical style, in his charismatic text *The Prince* (1983 [1532]), highlights his assessment of the leadership potential of authors and the transformative effects that texts can have on readers. His views on culture and the primacy he placed on the written word and popular literature provide insight into the power of Friedan's text. Gramsci failed to attend to the agency of the middle class and this caused him, ironically, to be extraordinarily inattentive to the latent power of the 'middlebrow', charismatic text. This was a mistake that Friedan herself did not make.

Gramsci on Ideology and Resistance

Marx's theory of historical materialism attempted to demonstrate that economic forces were the driving engine of human history. To this end he detailed the underlying structure of the system, complete with its modes and forces of production, the class based stratification of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie that created 'false consciousness', alienated labour, the misappropriation of surplus value and the inherent global and monopolising tendencies of the market. The machinations of the capitalist system of economic production were elaborated by Marx in various works including his major opus *Capital* (1990 [1867]) which he proffered to the public as a theory that was based on incontrovertible scientific principles and knowledge.

Gramsci ended up rejecting Marx's scientific prescriptions. Femia (1975, p. 38) has clarified that for Gramsci "*the base determines what forms of consciousness are possible*" rather than being strictly determinative of human consciousness (original emphasis). As Boggs (1976, pp. 36-37) has further explained, "instead of conceiving of the superstructure as a simple reflection of the economic base, Gramsci viewed the relationship as constantly changing and reciprocal in its historical complexity; politics, ideas, religion, and culture may not be autonomous in any 'ultimate' sense, but their causal power in any given transitional period could be overriding." The more complex and dynamic relationship between the base and superstructure allowed Gramsci to ascribe a degree of autonomy to politics, culture, language, religion and

folklore which was reflected, for example in his interest in the production and diffusion of popular culture and his insistence on the importance of moral and intellectual leadership and the exercise of political will.

In his prison notebooks Gramsci drew repeated references to a key passage in Marx's 'Preface' to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1970 [1859]) . In this preface Marx acknowledged that it is only at the level of the superstructure that a class acquires consciousness of the underlying structural conflicts created by the economic base. As Marx (1970, p. 21) explained:

"No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation."

Gramsci himself restated this passage in a more succinct and clear fashion asserting "that it is on the level of ideologies that men become conscious of conflicts in the world of the economy" (SPN, p. 162).

Gramsci's early academic grounding in literature studies and linguistics had sensitised him to how knowledge and power operate within the nebulous realms of ideology, culture and politics with a degree of autonomy from the economic base. Instead of the orthodox Marxian focus on class conflict that remains contained at the base level of the economic structure, Gramsci's philosophy of praxis recognised the need to engage with and transform the cultural norms, language and beliefs that constitute the everyday, unconscious acceptance of our common sense[1] understanding of the world

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[1] Gramsci drew an important distinction between 'common sense' and 'good sense'. Common sense was based on traditional forms of knowledge including folklore, superstition and popular religion. As such, it represented less coherent ways of grasping the socio-material conditions of human existence. Good sense, in contrast, was based on empirical knowledge provided through the sciences and actual life experience.

which in turn establishes 'consensual' hegemony and underpins social conformity.

The superstructure is precisely that realm that eludes the kind of exactness and calculated outcomes and formulas provided by Marx. The indeterminacy of the realms of language, ideology and culture find an apt reflection in Gramsci's own writings. As Nowell-Smith (1985, p. 9) notes in his introduction to *Selections from Cultural Writings*, much of Gramsci's prison writings can be characterised as "open texts" as they fail to observe the normal protocols of sequential discussion, analysis and argument that typically lead to conclusions either being drawn or refuted. Not infrequently Gramsci was satisfied with outlining the bare bones of an idea, or a possible course of action without filling in the detail. He often wrote in an aphoristic style, conceptually condensing ideas about issues that he may or may not have intended to analyse and cover in greater depth at a later stage[2]. Gramsci's sensitivity to the operation of power within language meant that he often engaged in projects designed to subvert the accepted meanings of words by using them in a two fold fashion, old and new, with the new meaning "indicating an extended or advanced concept which bursts beyond the bounds of the old" (Sassoon 1990, p. 17). The desire to escape grammatical structure made the notebook an apposite writing format for Gramsci. The final product, content and format, is a testament to Gramsci's own appreciation that human life is a continuing process that must defy attempts at final or definitive articulation (meta-theory) if it is itself to avoid the trap of conceptual ossification.

Unlike Marx, Gramsci did not believe that the social emancipation of the proletariat was an inevitability. Freedom was not a product of a proletariat revolution that was strictly determined by economic forces, but instead resided in the sharing of knowledge and consciousness about the oppressive conditions of social life that were themselves ultimately reflections of the economic structure. Gramsci dismissed as "primitive infantilism" orthodox or vulgar conceptions of Marxism depicting the

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[2] The subtlety of Gramsci's writing owes a debt to the complexity of his thinking and dialectical writing style. His personal struggle lay with the actual meaning of words themselves and the normative grammatical structure of language which reflected entrenched and unequal socio-political relations (Sassoon 1990; Ives 1998).

unfolding of human history as an outcome of scientifically verifiable and incontrovertible laws

(SPN, p. 407). This mentality had misled communist followers, particularly after the

Second and Third Internationals, to sit around waiting for capitalism to fall in a heap due to its own internal contradictions, rather than organising to bring about its end. Gramsci derisively referred to these kinds of communists as "pocket geniuses" (SPN, p. 428). For Gramsci the manner in which human history unfolded was contingent upon the exercise of decisive political will and the demonstration of moral and intellectual leadership within the relatively autonomous realm of politics. The first rule in the science of politics, Gramsci insisted, was that "there really do exist rulers and ruled, leaders and led" (SPN, p. 144).

Following the failure of the workers factory council movement within Italy (evident by the early 1920s) Gramsci was increasingly drawn into questioning Marxist deterministic assumptions that the proletariat would necessarily achieve, by sheer force of their subordinate class position, the kind of revolutionary consciousness they needed to free themselves from their oppressive living conditions. Gramsci eventually aligned himself with Lenin on this issue, recognising the necessity of an organising revolutionary party that was capable of demonstrating leadership and political will. He also realised that the emancipatory struggle of the proletariat had become especially difficult under conditions of advanced capitalism which had insidiously drawn workers into consenting to their own subordinate hierarchical status.

Gramsci on the State and Civil Society

According to the orthodox view provided by Marxist doctrine, the realm of the superstructure (ideology, culture, language, politics, the state) lacked any real autonomy from the underlying forces of economic production. As Marx and Engels proclaimed in *The German Ideology*:

"the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class, which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it" (Marx and Engels 1965 [1846], p. 60 - original emphasis).

In addition to its monopoly over dominant ideology, the bourgeois, according to Marx, was able to wield coercive force over the masses through the instrument of the state. The state gave the bourgeoisie command and control over the police, the armed forces, prisons and the criminal justice systems. This meant that overturning and seizing control of the state was a crucial step in the emancipatory struggle of the proletariat. Given that the state is always an instrument for obtaining forced consent, the move toward the establishment of a proletariat utopia would inevitably, Marx believed, mean a withering away of its coercive structure.

Gramsci's philosophical differences from Marx were based on his own appreciation of the complex manner in which power operates within states that had progressed to the stage of advanced capitalism. Following the failure of the workers' revolution within his own country and across Europe generally, Gramsci spent time and effort investigating the important differences between the socio-political and economic conditions prevailing in the East (Russia) - where an unexpected workers' revolution had taken place - and those conditions of advanced capitalism in the West (Europe and America) - where a proletariat revolt should have taken place, but had not. The difference, as Gramsci saw it, lay in how the state in advanced capitalism was reinforced by a complex arrangement of institutions and practices that comprised civil society. As he wrote in a famous section in his prison notebooks:

"In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earth works..." (SPN, p. 238).

The fact that the state was everything in Russia meant that effective power could be seized by overthrowing the Tsarist regime using old style tactics that relied principally on the use of military strength, force and frontal attack. Such tactics defined what Gramsci called the 'war of manoeuvre'. In Russia in 1917 the Tsarist state had fallen in the wake of a mass social protest led and organised by Lenin's revolutionary Bolshevist party. Such an event was no longer possible, as Gramsci understood it, in nation states whose economic systems had progressed to the stage of advanced capitalism.

Gramsci appreciated that power operated differently and in much more complex ways in advanced capitalist societies. Under advanced capitalism power operated principally through the realm of civil society - through hegemonic forces that educated the masses to accept existing socio-economic relations. Power was embedded in legal, educational, political and bureaucratic institutions. It saturated the cultural ideas and discourses generated by popular theatre, literature, film, the media. Ultimately it was reflected in the grammatical structure of language and human consciousness itself. Through these various mechanisms, civil society gained the voluntary 'consent' of the masses. Civil society thus indoctrinated the individual, gaining their collaboration with a system that was capable of producing such paradoxical results that involved "turning necessity and coercion into 'freedom' " (SPN, p. 242). This effectively meant that the 'war of manoeuvre', which relied on the use revolutionary force or military might and strategic tactics against the state had been eclipsed by a 'war of position' that must be won on the battle field of civil society. The real battle now raged around the production of the ideologies and philosophies that constitute hegemonic (dominant) theory and practice. This war, while difficult and protracted, was also, Gramsci believed, much more decisive once it was won. This was precisely the 'battle field' occupied by Betty Friedan in her 'undeclared war' on US domestic ideologies and the sexualised prescriptions attached to womanhood by the market.

Gramsci on the Traditional and the Organic Intellectual

The need to win the war of position and gain hegemonic influence by providing moral and intellectual leadership led Gramsci to place considerable emphasis on the role of the intellectual within advanced capitalist societies. Although Gramsci declared that "all men are intellectuals" in so far as we all share language and therefore a conceptualised understanding of the world, he also stipulated that "not all men have in society the function of intellectuals." For many individuals their primary relationship to work is defined, he explained, by "muscular-nervous effort" (physical labouring) rather than "intellectual elaboration" (SPN, p. 9).

Gramsci divided the type of intellectual who performed intellectual work into two distinct social groups. Firstly there are the intellectuals whose authority is based on traditional sources of socio-economic power. These sources include the power vested in intellectuals by ecclesiastical authorities (priests, the dioceses, the Vatican, the institution of the Catholic church), the vestiges of foregone economic relations of production (eg lingering remnants of the feudal system), and the intellectual authority associated with acquiring the specialised bodies of knowledge and skills that define the regular professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, scientists, artists, academics, city councillors etc). The second type of intellectual identified by Gramsci was the organic intellectual, which every new class creates alongside itself. The organic intellectual, whose existence is reflective of current economic relations of power, occupies various strata. Some organic intellectuals serve predominantly functional purposes within the existing economic system of production. Hence the latest economic system of advanced capitalism has generated its own range of organic intellectuals in the form of entrepreneurs and technical specialists such as stock market experts, corporate lawyers, marketing and advertising specialists.

In addition to the organic intellectuals who fulfil functional purposes within a social system, there is a specialised band of *elite* organic intellectuals who elaborate the ethico-political visions that act as organising principles within human society. These individuals are, in effect, the philosophers of a society. This type of elite was Gramsci's "whalebone in the corset" (SPN, p. 340). They provided the essential philosophical principles that organised the ideologies, social structure and cultural practices prevalent under reigning hegemonic conditions. While the ideas expressed

by elite organic intellectuals very commonly reinforced a rationale for the status quo, intellectuals could also advance the cause of the socially oppressed. These were the philosophers who engaged in the 'war of ideas', and in the battle to gain hegemonic ascendancy Gramsci maintained a true philosophy of praxis must perform two essential tasks. It must "combat modern ideologies in their most refined form, in order to be able to constitute its own group of independent intellectuals" and it must also strive "to educate the popular masses, whose culture was medieval" (SPN, p. 392).

Gramsci's interest in the ideas of elite intellectuals was a consequence of his own conclusion that social innovation, at least in its beginning phases, cannot come from the masses "except through the mediation of an *elite*. For it was elites who acquired the kind of consciousness that became sufficiently advanced and coherent to articulate "a precise and decisive will" (SPN, p. 335). As Gramsci declared:

"Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an *elite* of intellectuals. A human mass does not "distinguish" itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organising itself; and there is no organisation without intellectuals, that is without organisers and leaders, in other words, without the theoretical aspect of the theory-practice nexus being distinguished concretely by the existence of a group of people "specialised" in conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas" (SPN, p. 334 - original emphasis).

Creating a new culture does not simply rely, Gramsci argued, on the elite organic intellectual making 'original' discoveries. Far more importantly, this type of intellectuals acts to heighten awareness of the hegemonic commitment of the world as it is already conceived and which is already felt or experienced by the masses in less cognitive or conceptually distinct ways. Gramsci insisted that the capacity of the elite organic individual or philosopher to lead the masses of people "to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present world" was a philosophical event that was much more significant than the discovery of isolated truths that remain the property of small elite groups within academia, government or other social sectors (SPN, p. 325). For this process could involve Gramsci explained "the diffusion in a critical form of truths already discovered." The sharing of such truths across wider

social audiences could become "the basis of vital action, an element of co-ordination and intellectual and moral order" (SPN, p. 325). The philosophical activity engaged in by the elite organic intellectual involves the conceptualisation of a new world view which is powerful because it makes possible a "cultural battle to transform the popular 'mentality' " thereby enabling historical truths to become more universal (SPN, p. 348).

By working with basic levels of consciousness, the elite organic intellectual who is dedicated to advancing the interests of subaltern groups can facilitate the transformation of accepted common sense into new forms of knowledge. Such knowledge may even be capable of disrupting the existing social order that protects the interests of the ruling bourgeoisie. Betty Friedan's impact on 'middle' America is an illustration of these Gramscian principles.

Other Subaltern Groups and their Leaders

Gramsci's own primary allegiance lay with the Italian worker, but his humanitarian agenda embraced the interests of other subaltern groups. Scattered observations in the prison notebooks indicate that he was not insensitive to how social oppression often reflected forces aligned with racism and sexism, rather than class position. With respect to blacks in the US for example he commented:

"It seems to me that, for the moment, American negroes [sic] have a national and racial spirit which is negative rather than positive, one which is a product of the struggle carried on by the whites in order to isolate and depress them" (SPN, p. 21).

The reality of social group oppression based on race could Gramsci recognised create opportunities for intellectuals to emerge that were affiliated with that cause. However at the time of writing in the 1930s he saw no immediate challenges arising from this sector and he commented upon the "surprising number of negro [sic] intellectuals who absorb American culture and technology" (SPN, p. 21).

The Italian dissident also made a number of incisive observations about the status of women under advanced capitalism and he denounced the aesthetic practices associated with the beauty pageantry and film industries in the US which were turning women into "luxury mammals" (SPN, p. 306). Gramsci commented, as John Stuart Mill had done previously in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), on the possible future "formation of a new feminine personality" (SPN, p. 296). Such comments anticipate the work of contemporary feminist researchers like Judith Butler (1990, 1993) who have emphasised the discursive performativity of gender. In the new morally progressive world order Gramsci saw that self-determination would be an issue not only for workers, but for women too. He declared:

"Until women can attain not only a genuine independence in relation to men but also a new way of conceiving themselves and their role in sexual relations, the sexual question will remain full of unhealthy characteristics and caution must be exercised in proposals for new legislation" (SPN, p. 296).

Although he recognised the diverse nature of subaltern groups, Gramsci did not discuss how the privileging of economic relations provided by historical materialism provided an inadequate conceptual framework for understanding either racism of sexism. Gramsci's general appreciation of the communist writings of Rosa Luxemburg clearly demonstrated, however, that he thought being a woman posed no barrier to being a member of the elite vanguard of organic intellectuals. The Italian communist would, I believe, have been quick to identify Betty Friedan as a moral and intellectual leader of the second wave Women's Liberation Movement in the US. In all likelihood, he would have been appreciative of the concerted assault Friedan made on the hegemonic common sense dominating American women's daily lives in *The Feminine Mystique*.

Contemporary Use Of Gramsci by Feminist Scholars

Into the 1970s much of the debate and discussion of Gramsci's philosophy remained locked within the parameters of a Marxist and neo-Marxist framework (Martin 1998). Today however his most enduring influence is to be found within the field of cultural

studies and the sociology of language. In England, academic institutions like the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) emerged in the late 1960s and early '70s with left wing scholars turning their attention to the hegemonic practices vested within language, media and popular culture. A plethora of sites of new resistance to dominant culture have now been located within youth culture, ethnicities and black culture. While the 'Gramsci effect' on feminist studies of dominant culture's oppression of women has been, as Harris (1992) points out, less obvious due to the enduring problems presented by a Marxist framework, it is nonetheless existent. Some feminist scholars have attempted to apply Gramsci's insights in their understanding of the hegemonic dominance of women under conditions of patriarchal capitalism.

Much of contemporary feminist critical theory excavates non-Marxist sites for organising resistance. These sites have provided critical perspectives on: 1) Freudian psychoanalysis; 2) Lacan's emphasis on the phallus as the significative object that determines access to power in social relations; 3) the possibilities of a politics of resistance based on writing the (female) body; 4) the articulation of positive desire aimed at deterritorialising current discursive forms of (oppressive) subjectivity; and, 5) postmodern investigations of gender performativity (Mitchell 1975; Deleuze & Guattari 1977; Irigaray 1985; Cixous 1986; Butler 1990, 1993; Grosz 1990). There have also been some valuable contemporary attempts by feminist scholars to work with Gramsci's theoretical insights (Riddiough 1981; Sassoon 1987, 1990; Weiler 1988; Garcia 1992). Riddiough used Gramsci's observations on the operation of hegemony to critique the norms created by patriarchal conceptions of human sexuality. She argued these norms suppressed not only heterosexual women's desire, but the sexuality of gays and lesbians as well. In critical education theory, Weiler (1988) has drawn on Gramsci to discuss how education systems function as sites of social control, working to inculcate and instil consent within children to dominant hegemonic values. Garcia (1992) has extended Gramsci's narrow class based conception of dominant hegemony under advanced capitalism to argue that male supremacy over women should be viewed as a gendered 'historic bloc', one that must be acknowledged and taken account of separately if we are to explain the full complexity of women's oppression. Resistant feminist practices are to be viewed, she

went on to argue, as a form of counter hegemonic struggle against patriarchal ideology. Garcia's own analysis, while useful, is somewhat limited by her tendency to remain locked within a socialist framework centred around the politics of women's reproduction and labour. She hence fails to address issues relating to how the 'historic bloc' of patriarchy also operated through a politics of desire, gender and violence.

The relevance and applicability of Gramsci's theories to feminist visions has perhaps most succinctly been acknowledged by one of Gramsci's long established British scholars, Anne Showstack Sassoon. Sassoon (1987, 1990) is observant of Gramsci's insight that critical theory (ie theory which connects itself to social praxis) demands utmost attentiveness to the everyday lives of ordinary people, engaging not only with their thinking, but with their emotions and sentiments. It must work with and through what is accepted as common sense, opening up these sediments of ideology to new ways of looking and new forms of consciousness that can arrive at a transformative moment. Sassoon (1987, p. 16) has astutely observed that Gramsci could well be seen to have been "lurking in the kitchen" when arguments took place about how politics must critically engage with the everyday authority of common sense in people's lives if it is to become thoroughly challenging. This, in effect is the underlying sentiment we find expressed in the feminist slogan "the personal is political." She also drew attention to the central importance of the intellectual within this struggle, explaining that Gramsci validated:

"questions arising from daily life as providing the raw material for advanced, specialist, intellectual labor, and here he coincides with one of the lessons of feminism" (Sassoon 1990, p. 23).

It was precisely here, in this attention to the mundane, routine, everyday conditions of women's work that we can see how Betty Friedan emulated Gramsci's theory of revolutionary change.

Later feminist scholars now owe a debt to Gramsci's general awareness of how oppression must be elucidated at the level of ideology. Angela McRobbie's (1982 [1978]) critique of girls' teen magazine culture in England, succeeded in exposing

that industry's ideological commitments to turning girls into 'slaves to love' and romance. Her analysis challenged the hegemonic practices of media forces directed at teenage girls which were promoting highly questionable and oppressive role models of submissive female sexuality and desire. Though less influenced by Gramsci's theories than their UK counterparts, American women academics have also pursued their own analyses of the patriarchal commitments of teen magazine culture (Peirce 1990, 1993; Duffy & Gotcher 1996; Milkie 1999). Other sites of ethnographic investigation have devoted attention to the possibilities of women's resistance and/or domination within popular culture by analysing the relationship between the reader and the romance novel (Light 1984; Radway 1984; Jones 1986) and the audience of TV soap operas (Hobson 1982; Modelski 1982; Geraghty 1991; Rogers 1991; Brown 1995).

Despite the promising trajectory suggested by Sassoon's earlier focus on leadership, feminist cultural studies theorists have generally failed to investigate the importance of Gramsci's insistence on the pivotal role played by moral and intellectual leaders who are the philosophers of new ideas. They have been especially neglectful of the 'author-leader' who opts to engage in the war of ideas through the medium of a popular, charismatic text. There are brief glimpses of how productive it might be to attend to such issues. Richard Jones (1995), for example, used the Italian theorist's views on organic intellectuals to address the relationship between agency and structure on the public stage of international relations. He outlined how the intellectual work begun in the 1970s within the peace movement eventually gained a foothold within international politics via the discursive language of "common security." Concepts that emerged from within the peace movement worked to defuse the Cold War mentality, replacing a language of antagonism with one of mutual interest within a broader framework of international interdependency.

Machiavelli's *The Prince*

In keeping with his emphasis on the role of leadership in creating social change, Gramsci devoted a considerable amount of attention in his notebooks to the history and failure of intellectuals in Italy. His concern with the problem of disunity within

Italy had been shared by an earlier Italian intellectual, the Florentine diplomat Niccolo Machiavelli. Gramsci's own in-depth discussion on the relationship between the charismatic text, authorial intentions and reader audience effects - which is central to my analysis of Betty Friedan's impact - are to be found in his analysis of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

The Prince was first published in Italy in 1532, several years after the Machiavelli's death. At the time Italy was divided into a large number of principalities and city states, some of which were ruled by indigenous elements, others were under the control, or under direct threat from invading and colonising forces. During his lifetime, Machiavelli witnessed incessant war in the course of which parts of Italy were invaded and conquered by both France and Spain. He worked as a high ranking diplomat for 15 years in the service of the Florentine republic and at the time of writing *The Prince* his beloved republic of Florentine was under imminent threat. These conditions were the key socio-political factors motivating Machiavelli in his decision to write a treatise on the art of government. He wrote the tract with the explicit aim of assisting the yet to emerge Italian leader who would, he hoped, unite the country and expel the French and Spanish foreign invaders. For Machiavelli, Italy's major weakness lay in her disunity which rendered her vulnerable to attack. While Italy had not been failed in battle by its militia, she had, he believed, been let down by the lack of skill and talents displayed at the top by her leaders. *The Prince* was written to address this grievous problem. Upon its publication, the treatise immediately earned its author a posthumous reputation for encouraging unscrupulous and immoral political practices. It has since become a classic treatise within the established canon of political writings and is widely associated with the harsh, but pragmatic world of "Real Politics."

Machiavelli's short book begins by providing an account of the three models of government in existence in Italy and discusses the relative strengths and weaknesses of each. *The Prince* is full of practical advice to the prospective leader on effective tactics and strategies for governing as well as conducting warfare, drawing on lessons from both ancient and contemporary history. Without discrimination, Machiavelli discusses the merits of crushing a people, colonising them or maintaining oligarchic

control by ruling through existing laws and customs. *The Prince* can be read as a tool-kit or manual for the aspiring leader who wants to know the rules, guidelines and historic examples they must follow in order to maintain effective leadership and authority. To stay in power, Machiavelli insisted that political leaders had to be ruthless, brutal and uncompromising. He commented on how, in ancient legends, leaders were often sent to be brought up and trained by Chiron, the Centaur. Machiavelli (1983, p. 99) applauded the allegory of the half-beast, half-man teacher as "a prince must know how to act according to the nature of both." He did not flinch from advocating that an invading leader had to exterminate all the remaining hereditary heirs of the previous regime. This was necessary, he advised, to retain power in the long run as it would subdue a people who might otherwise remain loyal to the ancient lineage. Equally pragmatically he instructed that men "must be either pampered or crushed, because they get revenge for small injuries but not for grievous ones" (Machiavelli 1983, pp. 37-38). Leaders had to learn how to anticipate trouble and move swiftly to squash dissent or opposition. The need for quick responses to threats to power meant that Machiavelli approved of the establishment of settlements, or colonising forces and he complimented the ancient Romans on their astute use of this method as a way of maintaining control over conquered peoples.

Machiavelli's tract is structured in such a way as to facilitate easy reading and quick appropriation of the rules and lessons provided. The writing style he deliberately adopted was clear, concise and direct. As he explained in his dedicating letter to Lorenzo de' Medici (the Duke of Urbino) "I have not embellished or crammed this book with rounded periods or big, impressive words..." He wanted the tract to commend itself to its reader solely on the basis of 'the variety of its contents and the seriousness of its subject-matter." (Machiavelli 1983, pp. 29-30). Further on he explained, "my intention is to say something that will prove of practical use to the inquirer. I have thought it proper to represent things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined" (Machiavelli 1983, p. 90).

Machiavelli's principal objective was to provide highly pragmatic, unequivocal and clear advice to the aspiring leader of Italian origin who sought to gain and retain political power by uniting and requiring loyalty of the general populace. The

problems of disunity and powerlessness within Italy demanded a solution. Machiavelli saw that solution in the form of the prince who understood the art of government, the tactics for deploying successful warfare and the art of maintaining control and power once it had been won. His own fervent wish was that such a prince would be able to unite Italy under a single, indigenous authority and expel the foreign enemies. As he wistfully assured in the closing passages of his treatise, the people of Italy, like himself, awaited an Italian "saviour." Such a person would be welcomed, he assured in the closing paragraph, with "what thirst for revenge, what resolute loyalty, with what devotion and tears" (Machiavelli 1983, p. 138).

Gramsci's Analysis of *The Prince*

Gramsci's keen interest in the exercise of political will, moral leadership and the mediating role that a text might play in imparting the practical knowledge gained by the elite organic intellectual to wider audiences is clearly evident in his admiration of Niccolo Machievelli's political tract. Gramsci concurred with Machiavelli in believing that the effective use of political power required that special skills and knowledge be acquired and exercised by prospective leaders. Despite being separated by several centuries, Machiavelli and Gramsci were also driven by common nationalistic concerns. Both desired to see their country established as a strong modern state.

In his long essay in the *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci focused on Machiavelli's writing style, the author's stated intentions and the possibility that the author may have had other, hidden intentions for writing his treatise that were not explicitly divulged either in the text itself or his introductory letter to Lorenzo de Medici. His analysis of the galvanising impact of *The Prince* draws attention to the passion of Machiavelli's writing and its very style which he identifies as "the style of a man of action, of a man urging action, the style of a party manifesto" (SPN, p. 134). The liveliness of the text is guaranteed, Gramsci explained, by the very starkness of Machiavelli's plea for immediate and direct remedial action by a princely saviour. It was the author's personal identification with the people of Italy in the closing passages of his treatise that gives the text, in Gramsci's eyes, its status as a "political

manifesto" (SPN, p. 127). In these passages Machiavelli revealed his true bonds with the people, who must understand their own need for allegiance to a united government, even if it is forged under the iron fists of a privileged autocrat. Gramsci stated:

"Machiavelli is not merely a scientist: he is a partisan, a man of powerful passions, an active politician, who wishes to create a new balance of forces and therefore cannot help concerning himself with what 'ought to be' " (SPN, p. 172).

Rather than seeing inherent contradictions between the extremities of instrumental thinking and the raw emotions displayed by Machiavelli in the text of *The Prince*, it is precisely this blend that Gramsci suggests is capable of providing a political boost to the commonality of feelings that lay dormant within the broader community.

Many of the other reasons Gramsci gives for his admiration of and the continued relevance of Machiavelli's *The Prince* are revealing and informative. "The best thing about *The Prince*" Gramsci tells us is that the text is "a live work" which fused political ideology and advice on the tactics of politics into "the dramatic form of a 'myth' " (SPN, p. 125). The power of the myth worked, he argued, as a kind of "concrete phantasy which acts on a dispersed and shattered people to arouse and organise its collective will" (SPN, p. 126). Thus while Machiavelli ostensibly wrote *The Prince* as a kind of instruction manual for a much sought after political leader, Gramsci also sees Machiavelli's purpose in terms of its wider, unifying effects on its audience of readers. An audience with whom the author himself is ultimately in collusion.

In coming to this innovative perspective on the underlying intentions of the author, Gramsci noted how Machiavelli himself had admitted that the practices he described in his treatise were widely known amongst existing leaders, even if they were not discussed or written down. Rulers in effect did not need the kind of instructions or advice provided by Machiavelli in his treatise. The act of writing, printing and disseminating this text can be better seen as an act of popular education directed toward the people themselves. "One may therefore suppose," he wrote " that

Machiavelli had "in mind 'those who are not in the know' and that it was they whom he intended to educate politically" (SPN, p. 135). Gramsci thus provides an ulterior motive behind Machiavelli's decision to write *The Prince*. He argues that the tract was designed at least in part to stimulate an Italian national-popular collective will and identity. Through it, readers were to understand they must tolerate an immediate future that would require leaders to act with ruthlessness and cunning in order to bring about the desired end of national unity. Rather than simply being a supporter of the autocratic exercise of political power by a single ruler, Gramsci reads into Machiavelli's act of writing *The Prince* a covert, popularly directed, education program.

While suggesting that Machiavelli may have had purposes other than those explicitly acknowledged in writing *The Prince*, Gramsci did not proceed to discuss the extent to which, if any, Machiavelli can be considered to have been successful in achieving his wider purpose. Low levels of literacy experienced by the general community into the twentieth century and communication problems created by the prevalence of dialects and the history of the modern state of Italy itself, suggests that Machiavelli's deployment of a charismatic text as a strategy designed to progress the cause of national Italian unity could only be deemed to have failed. Still what is important to draw out of this discussion is Gramsci's own sensitivity to the issue of the author's purpose and the possible politicising effects that a popular, adequately distributed, text might have on its audience of readers provided that basic literacy standards are met. This will certainly be relevant to the consideration of the popularity and impact of Friedan's text.

Finally, in so far as it was intimately concerned with achieving a desired outcome (Italian unity) in a practical manner, Machiavelli's *The Prince* could also, Gramsci considered, be commended as an elaboration of a philosophy of praxis. "Machiavelli wrote books of 'immediate political action, and not utopias", Gramsci explained (SPN, p. 248). He thoroughly approved of how Machiavelli based his arguments on concrete realities and empirical calculations rather than an appeal to transcendental purposes.

On the Party as the Modern Prince

Beyond the ethereal realm of grand philosophical theory, Gramsci followed Lenin's lead on the necessary role played by the political party when it came to envisaging how ethico-political visions were to be organised at the ground level. While in earlier historic times, the social organiser could be the individual ruler or Prince, this was no longer the case. "The protagonist of the new Prince could not in the modern epoch" Gramsci asserted "be an individual hero, but only the political party" (SPN, p. 147). He also confirmed that while leaders must lead, "an historical act can only be performed by 'collective man' " (SPN, p. 349).

Given the on-going problems with illiteracy within the Italian working class and peasantry, it is understandable that Gramsci did not pursue the possibility that a text might be capable of performing at least part of the organisational role he assigned to the party. He was overwhelmed by a deep sense of dismay at the intractable problems presented by the continuing dominance of dialects rather than a common language in Italy. At the time of Italian unification in 1861 it is estimated that as little as 2.5% of the entire population actually spoke 'Italian', which was itself originally a medieval dialect of the region of Florence popularised by Dante's writings (Forgacs 1985). Low levels of literacy were especially prevalent amongst the subaltern groups to whom Gramsci was aligned, namely the working class and peasantry. [3]

While Gramsci did envisage the possibility that intellectuals might be able to communicate directly with the masses in an environment of greater literacy, the situation in Italy called for a different solution. Pragmatically speaking the political party was Gramsci's modern Prince. Party organisers, rather than texts, were the key

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[3] Despite the provisions of the 1859 Education Act which required the standardisation of the language in Italy, progress in improving literacy rates remained slow due to high rates of school absenteeism by the poorest children and inadequate funding of the education system. Attendance levels in the middle and secondary schools ranged around only 15% of children in the year 1931 (Forgacs 1985). The little progress made under the 1859 Act in Italy was subsequently undermined by the 1923 Education Act introduced by Mussolini's fascist government which abandoned the early objective of teaching a national language and grammar. The new Act was bitterly criticised by Gramsci for condemning poor and working class children to illiteracy and fragmentary forms of consciousness. In the absence of an effective school system, the Italian language was doomed, Gramsci feared, to remain a closed shop accessible only to the Italian ruling elite. Interestingly, Gramsci and Friedan shared similar concerns

to uniting subaltern groups (especially the Italian worker) into resistant collectivities. To this end, they must develop social plans, party slogans, mission statements and simple manifestos that galvanise workers, forging a collectivity capable of fighting for its own cause.

In an environment of improved literacy and book distribution networks, set against a backdrop of suppressed dissatisfaction amongst subaltern groups, the best-selling 'author-leader' who is prepared to take up the cause and fight the good fight could well usurp some of the initial functions associated with party and organisation based leadership. The latent potential a text has to spark collectivising energies amongst women as an oppressed social group may be especially significant given the inability of economic categories of class, capital and unifying structures such as unions or labour parties, either to reflect or represent women's interests. The inadequacies of the party model that acts as a modern prince capable of uniting women in the first instance, yet again speaks to the hidden power of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

Culture, Literature and the Power of the Written Word

Gramsci's cultural writings demonstrate his constant attentiveness to how attempts to organise human consciousness through cultural products can either succeed or fail in creating certain effects amongst its target audience of viewers, listeners and readers. His distinctive conceptual approach is evident even in his early reviews and articles on art. Not infrequently he devoted as much space to the dynamic between stage performers and the audience, the relationship between the viewer and the *objet d'art* as to the merits of the play, the performance standards of the actors or the aesthetic value of the thing itself. This was a perspective that he continued to develop in his prison notebooks. A typical example is demonstrated by his acute sensitivity to the relative popular national appeal of cultural artefacts. Gramsci noted for example that while Japanese and Laplander tourists may admire a statue by Michelangelo, an opera by Verdi, or poems by Dante their artistic emotion "will not be of the same intensity

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with the upbringing and education of children, though when discussing schooling, Friedan remained focussed on issues affecting girls.

and quality as the emotion of an average Italian, still less that of the cultured Italian" (SCW, p. 123). Such differences in aesthetic appreciation bear witness, Gramsci believed, to a subtle cultural substance which effectively matched a people to their own culture and which was reflected in the development and cultivation of diverse national tastes and sentiments. In a similar manner, the distinctive national character of the popular culture Friedan addressed in *The Feminine Mystique* was extremely successful in terms of radicalising American women, while at the same time effectively containing its greatest impact to American shores.

Gramsci recognised that there were various cultural or ideological media available to the elite organic intellectual who desired to express an alternative moral vision. Moral visions were not only elaborated through political philosophies, they were also contained in cultural artefacts such as the theatre, film, literature, folklore, songs, photography and radio. Just as every class had its own elite group of organic intellectuals who elaborated and organised new philosophies, each class potentially had its own distinctive artistic vision, culture and art. The defeat of the decadent bourgeoisie would mean, Gramsci hypothesised, that "there will be a poetry, a novel, a theatre, a moral code, a language, a painting and a music peculiar to proletariat civilization" (SCW, p. 50).

While Gramsci was interested in various media of cultural expression, at a fundamental level it was the written text (novels, books, treatise) and other kinds of printed materials (pamphlets, leaflets etc) that he believed were especially powerful for dispersing, not only the moral visions and conceptual political philosophies of intellectual, but also the emotions, feelings and national-popular culture. Much of the manner in which he wrote about the novel, including his interest in the public reception of new literary formats and genres, his observations about the advancement in the production and diffusion of books (the serialisation of novels through newspapers, book fairs etc), his attentiveness to the national flavour of popular literature anticipates, as Nowell-Smith (1985, p. 13) noted, "what nowadays might be called sociology of literature." Gramsci's assessment of the power of the written text and his overall interest in elevating the moral and intellectual fibre of the general community helps to explain his consternation at the rising popularity of pulp fiction in

Italy (romance, crime, detective novels etc). As he complained in a letter to his sister-in-law Tania "what emotions and attitudes emerge in this squalid literature, to have such popular appeal?" (*Letters from Prison* 1975, p. 145).

The early precursor to the modern day TV soap opera, the serial novel, began emerging in the daily newspapers of the nineteenth century and Gramsci dedicates some attention to how texts can have real and unintended consequences for their audience of readers. Such popularly available, serialised novels were, he declared in a 1918 article for *Il Grido del Popolo*, "a powerful factor in the formation of the mentality and morality of the people" (SCW, p. 34). He was equally assured of the necessarily deleterious effects of reading the romance novel (cf Radway 1984). He considered that such a novel was only "suitable for stupefying the women, girls and youngsters who feed on it" (SCW, p. 36). Gramsci was so convinced of the unproblematic and direct power of the written word that he even expressed worry that the reader effects of popular detective novels may have included an "increase in crime among adolescent loafers" (SCW, p. 36). Perhaps there is an autobiographical resonance to his own observation of how the theories studied by young people with "heroic fury" can take "possession of his whole personality"(SPN, p. 383).

The reasons Gramsci gave for his emphasis on the potency of the written word as opposed to the spoken word, painting, piece of music, film, drama production or still photograph were varied. Unlike other artefacts which may reflect past ages of human history or which may possess, like music or painting a more cosmopolitan appeal, contemporary literary language was he insisted "strictly tied to the life of national masses and it develops slowly and only molecularly" (SCW, p. 120). In particular he found that there was a "continuous adhesion and exchange between [literary] popular language and that of the educated classes" (SCW, p. 120). While its appeal might be more restrictive for this very reason, it was what made literature inherently more powerful within its own community. It could be said that Gramsci appreciated that popular literature was capable of achieving, for want of a better word, a closer 'fit' between the moral, emotional and feeling states explored by the text and moral, emotional and feeling states experienced and provoked within the reader. This fit

allowed for what he referred to as "immediate contact between reader and writer" (SCW, p. 121).

Due to the stress he placed on the molecular strength of the popular novel, Gramsci remained in a constant state of dismay at the paucity of Italian popular literature. Its absence had helped to guarantee the Italian public's appetite in the 1930s for the newly serialised nineteenth century French novels that had began to appear in the daily newspapers including Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*. For Gramsci this state of affairs implied no less than that Italian readers thereby "*undergo* the moral and intellectual hegemony of foreign intellectuals... that there is no national intellectual and moral bloc, either hierarchical or, still less, egalitarian" (SCW, p. 209 - original emphasis). Popular novels that were consumed by large sections of the literate community were the equivalent of what religion had been for the masses according to Marx - namely a kind of narcotic or opiate. Their popular reception was indicative of "the philosophy of the age" and "the mass of feelings and conceptions of the world predominant among the 'silent' majority" (SCW, p. 348). What kind of literature was read in which social groups provided clues to the mental and moral stratification of the community. Hence Gramsci instructed that one can turn to the Italian romance text *Guerin Meschino* as a kind of reservoir or encyclopaedia of the folkloric taste, and "mental primitiveness" prevalent within a certain strata of Italian society (SCW, p. 351).

When Gramsci directly assessed and compared the power of the spoken, as opposed to the written word, he allowed that although the spoken word have a "rapidity, a field of action, and an emotional simultaneity far greater than written communication", he also surmised that it was more superficial and therefore was incapable of acquiring the same level of "depth" (SCW, pp. 382-383). For Gramsci the cognitive tasks involved in even elemental reading comprehension, to say nothing of the possibility of reading and re-reading a text in order more intensely and deeply digest its contents, had a unique ability to penetrate and organise human consciousness. The written word not only created history, but public memory. It paved the road to hegemony in ways not produced by the ephemeral words of the orator or other kinds of cultural epiphenomena of the superstructure. Hence for Gramsci it was the written word that

was most capable of providing the organising principles to channel emotions, feelings and sentiments into the kind of enduring passion informed by higher levels of cognition that could lead to social change. It was precisely this kind of advancement that was imperative to the formation of a progressive collective will.

Gramsci's thoughts on the molecular strength of the written word find a macro-social echo in Eisenstein's (1980) observation that historians have drastically underestimated the significance of the invention of the printing press in the mid 1450s as a harbinger of widespread social change. The communications revolution that followed in its wake included not only the unprecedented retention and dissemination of Renaissance scholarship but the establishment of new technical standards of information storage and retrieval (indexing, cross-referencing, cataloguing etc) thus enabling the growing accumulation of a shared body of public knowledge. The invention of the printing press is also integral to the general rise in literacy within the community, the greatly increased affordability of books, and the standardisation of national languages. More than any other medium, the combined strength of the printed text and the increases in literacy and the social practices of reading have meant that unprecedented amounts of information can now be shared across social groups, communities and nations, enabling common reference points of knowledge and shared consciousness.[4]

On the Political Efficacy of the Author

As we have seen, the struggle to gain hegemonic influence under advanced capitalism meant that Gramsci placed an especially high value on the elite organic intellectual who articulates, disseminates and organises new ethico-political visions and philosophies of life. The articulation and circulation of new philosophies, especially through the print media, gained a prominent position in his theory on the key

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[4] One of the most enduring testaments to the power of the printed word and its unprecedented ability to facilitate shared public memory and social meaning is to be found in George Orwell's famous novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). There Big Brother's frightening, totalitarian, grip on human consciousness is consolidated not only through the terrifying work of the Thought Police, but through the constant pruning and diminution of the official vocabulary in each revised edition of the Newspeak dictionary. The vital work of the Newspeak lexicographer is further complemented by the Ministry of Truth's diligent erasure of public memory by altering the written words contained in historic documentation to meet its own insidious purposes.

ingredients of social change. Throughout the prison notebooks, Gramsci is frequently involved in discussions on the relevance and influence of numerous political philosophies. Amongst topics of discussions are the writings of Croce, Gentile, Vico, Hegel, Kant, Marx, Labriola and Machiavelli. His interests were obviously wide ranging and his reading list is testimony to Gramsci's own firm conclusion that one must "know thine enemy" if one is to succeed in the fight for hegemonic control.

Gramsci constantly affirmed that it was language itself that constructs our world view in any given time in history. "Every truth", he explained "...owes its effectiveness to its being expressed in the language appropriate to specific concrete situations" (SPN, p. 201). The shared world of language guaranteed that a point of contact was always open between the elite organic intellectual and the masses. Through the medium of language guided by a philosophy of praxis, leaders could not only exercise individual will, they could also forge a sense of collective political direction and rouse the masses.

While language provides a bridge across humanity, Gramsci recognised that contact between intellectuals and the masses could be extremely difficult to achieve due to the fact that:

"the popular element 'feels' but does not always know or understand; the intellectual element 'knows' but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel" (SPN, p. 418)[5].

Gramsci disparaged intellectuals (elites and party organisers) whose language had become too technical and riddled with jargon. In this stultifying transformation, language was good only for "byzantine and scholastic abstraction" (SPN, p. 201).

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[5] A recent documentary film on DDT and the environment lauded Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) precisely because it connected feelings to scientific knowledge. As US-based environmental activist Roland Clement observed:

"Well Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* woke up the whole country. It was a poetic statement of a complicated scientific problem, if you will. And this is something that puts most people to sleep. But Rachel Carson had the knack of making people *feel* the implications for themselves and this is why the book was read by a half a million people within a month or two, and therefore changed public opinion so that the country became concerned about the contamination of the environment by chemicals" (Clement in *The Miraculous Poison - A History of DDT* 2000).

Intellectuals who wrote too analytically commit a fundamental error by abstracting knowledge from human understanding. In the process they divorce knowledge from human emotions and feelings which provide the foundation stones to human agency. At the end of the day intellectuals who had fallen into this trap merely demonstrated their allegiance to the existing moral order and status quo. If they are to succeed, intellectuals must strive to communicate through a philosophy of praxis grounded in the everyday. The philosophy of praxis was precisely that which did not "tend to leave the 'simple' in their primitive philosophy of common sense", rather it promises to "lead them to a higher conception of life" (SPN, p. 332).

The bridge between knowledge and feelings suggested by Gramsci is to be found in the realm of understanding. Intellectuals had not only to be passionate and committed to their cause or purpose, they had to succeed in communicating that passion through their rhetorical style, pitch, tone and by demonstrating their personal commitment to the cause. Language is thus the indispensable channel for the task of social cathexis that is performed by the philosopher of praxis at the level of ideology.[6] Effective political writing is thus defined for Gramsci not only through its engagement with the everyday material world of common sense, but with its delineation of a praxis that deliberately engages with the nebulous grounds of human emotions that give rise to agency. This was the intricate bridge that intellectuals of a philosophy of praxis had to construct to achieve true efficacy. These were precisely the qualities that Gramsci believed were contained within Machiavelli's political treatise *The Prince*. They also

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[6] Gramsci maintained that language that connects what is known to what is felt, is capable of transforming necessity provided by the economic base into understanding and practices of freedom at the level of the superstructure:

"The term 'catharsis' can be employed to indicate the passage from the purely economic (or egoistic-passional) to the ethico-political moment, that is the superior elaboration of the structure into superstructure in the minds of men. This also means the passage from 'objective' to 'subjective' and from 'necessity' to 'freedom'. Structure ceases to be an external force which crushes man, assimilates him to itself and makes him passive; and is transformed into a means of freedom, an instrument to create a new ethico-political form and a source of new initiatives" (SPN, pp. 366-367).

Gramsci's reference to catharsis in this passage demonstrates a debt to Freud whose work he rarely discusses in a direct fashion. This reflects Gramsci's dislike of the middle class characteristics of the psychoanalytic model, based, as it is, on the intimate and privileged relationship of therapist and client. His views on how the intellectual can work to free society from the chains created by the economic structure through the articulation of a new philosophy at the level of the superstructure anticipates the later work of Jürgen Habermas (1984). Habermas' theory of normative communicative action similarly suggests that the intellectual can help to purge broad based distortions in communication practices that are a product of underlying systems of oppression and exploitation.

help to explain the intrinsic potency of Betty Friedan's best selling book, *The Feminine Mystique*. Neither of these writers were disengaged or disinterested observers of the social problems they were addressing. Both authors wrote with the specific intention of educating their readers. According to Gramsci, intellectuals not only demonstrated the soundness (or unsoundness) of their ideas in their writings they critically demonstrated their methods of thinking. As such they were invaluable sources of instruction and education to their readers.

Gramsci's attention to the important status of the author of a new philosophy led him

to stress the need to understand and address the author as a biographical subject.[7] However, while the biography of the author was important, Gramsci did not elaborate on how the strategic deployment of auto/biography by an author within a text itself might serve as a rallying point for collective identity formation. The fertile fields connecting autobiography and shared subjectivity were, as we shall see in the last two chapters, the grounds where Friedan herself chose to plant politicising seeds about women's identity in *The Feminine Mystique*.

Gramsci's Neglect of the Middlebrow

Contrary to his own recognition of the potential appeal of writings like Machiavelli's *The Prince*, in an environment of greater literacy, Gramsci himself paradoxically maintained a biased orientation toward 'grand theory'. This bias relied on the necessary role played by the *elite* organic intellectual who was by definition either an extraordinary writer and intellectual like Marx, or a party organiser like Lenin. Gramsci's elitism has been the source of criticism by a number of scholars including Michael Walzer (1988, p. 453) who has complained about the Italian philosopher's confident assuredness that "he knows that he knows a superior doctrine."

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[7] To this end he sketched a genealogy for the critical biographer, outlining the essential elements that would render such an endeavour worthwhile and useful. These included tracing the effect of other influential thinkers on the author's philosophical development, using correspondence as complementary points of reference, maintaining a chronological catalogue of all the author's work to extract its underlying rhythm and leitmotiv, and carefully distinguishing between completed and

Surprisingly, Gramsci did not evaluate Marx and Engels own popular attempt to educate the masses through the passionate and accessible writing style displayed in *The Communist Manifesto*. His comments on that particular document, whether due to censorship or other reasons, were extremely limited. Even more revealing was Gramsci's derisive and limited comments on yet another 'middlebrow' charismatic text, Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. After summarising Hitler's argument that the destruction of a religion was a much more significant event than the destruction of a nation state he simply wrote "superficial and acritical. The three elements - religion (or 'active' conception of world) State , party - are indissoluble..." (SPN, p. 266). Despite the parallel rise of fascism in Italy and Germany, Gramsci failed to anticipate how Hitler's text, complete with its mythic, fatidic assertions and colloquial writing style might have a special appeal to the German lower middle classes and workers who had the highest comparable rate of literacy across Europe (McGuire 1977).

In a country characterised by mass illiteracy, Gramsci saw no alternative to the political party as the primary vehicle for organising grass roots consciousness. Nonetheless, we can see that Gramsci appreciated the galvanising potential of the charismatic text and the historical significance of the author who strives to appeal directly to the people through a text that is based on a philosophy of common sense. As his comments on Machiavelli's text suggest, authors were capable of effecting broad social changes in consciousness amongst their audience of readers, generating the first glimmerings of a collective identity.

Although Gramsci did recognise that the middle class was able to concede power, it did so only on the basis of self-interest - in order to gain a tighter grip on the 'voluntary' consent of the masses thereby consolidating its hegemony. Gramsci never considered that the middle class might be interested in pursuing universal truths in its own right. Once vested in the robes of privilege, the middle class remained incapable of challenging itself in a thorough manner. It lacked an ability to consider the wider humanitarian issues now reflected in the language of human rights, the fight against poverty and racism, the rights of women and children and the struggle for world

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unfinished works as well as works published by the author and those published in edited form at a later stage.

peace. Due to his presumption that progressive social forces always lie with the most disempowered, those "least in the know" in society, Gramsci did not discuss in any meaningful way whether subaltern groups of middle class status (eg women, blacks) might be capable of pursuing their own progressive agendas (SPN, p. 136). One gets the impression that Gramsci would have been surprised by the new politics of class, (rather than for class) that has become a defining feature of the new social movements of the twentieth century.

Concluding Remarks

Gramsci's inattentiveness to the relationship between the middle class and the text stands out as a discordant feature, an odd lacuna, in the Italian intellectual's philosophy given his own emphasis on the links between language, ideology, human consciousness and the molecular power of the printed word that can achieve wide public distribution and discussion. Had he any faith in the middle classes' ability to act out of a sense of community, rather than self interest, had he paid more attention to the significance of the middlebrow text and the educational aspirations of the rising middle class, it is arguable that Gramsci would have been much more appreciative of the progressive power inherent within the text and its relationship to the middle class reader. He may have been less confident in his vehement assertion that "in all countries, though in differing degrees, there is a great gap between the popular masses and the intellectual groups" (SPN, p. 342).

Despite the shortcomings presented by Gramsci's lack of interest in middle class agency, there is much to be trawled from his cultural and political writings that can shed light on the role played by the charismatic 'author-leader' and their text. Investigating this relationship more thoroughly in the future may help illuminate existing gaps within social movement theory when it comes to understanding the initial stages of collective identity formation and the emergence of more spontaneous expressions of protest. Gramsci's insistence on the leadership role that is open to the author and his appreciation of the hidden power that can be unleashed by destabilising

accepted common sense readily complement Weber's exegesis of the three fold nature of charisma. The combined insights of these theorists provide suitable lenses for evaluating the social impact of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. But before finally turning to this task, I discuss other relevant issues in the next chapter, including sociological perspectives on literature, reader response theory, defining features of the middlebrow, and the social practices surrounding reading that can contribute to the birth of a new discursive politics.

Chapter Three - Readers, Book Clubs
and the Middlebrow Text

Introduction

 Rising literacy and the emergence of the aspiring new middle class of the twentieth century have combined to create a powerful new position for the independent author of the middlebrow charismatic text whose targeted audience is the educated, generalist reader. This kind of author and text may be capable of provoking critical reflection that may be accompanied by strong feelings of outrage or fear. Their writings might even contain 'moral shock' value, as in the case of the investigative reporting by journalists Woodward and Bernstein on the Watergate Affair. At optimal impact, best-selling charismatic texts have the potential to reach and politicise readers who do not normally engage in political protest within their society or local community. It is precisely this kind of event, the politicisation of average citizens, that is a critical precursor to the outbreak of visible social protest and movement.

In this chapter I explore issues relating to the politics of subjectivity, difference and struggle within the author/text/reader relationship. I outline salient trends within the sociology of literature which focus on the tensions between the self and social structure. I also examine specific attempts made by feminist scholars to preserve the significance of difference and subjectivity through their focus on women authors and the political dimensions of readership. Later in this chapter I turn to the subject of the perceived impediments to demonstrating leadership experienced by intellectuals and then discuss the opportunities open to the author of the middlebrow book. Issues relating to the social practices surrounding reading which demonstrate the inadequacy of the prevailing ideology of the 'solitary reader' (Long 1992) are also reviewed. This, in turn, allows me to suggest how a 'charismatic text' may trigger, feed and further stimulate an emergent and widely dispersed discursive politics based on new forms of knowledge. I provide anecdotal evidence of the dramatic effects that reading non-fiction and fiction texts have had on individual women's consciousness, up to and including their decision to become more directly engaged in political activism.

This discussion will presage more specific discussion of women readers' responses to Betty Friedan *The Feminine Mystique* in chapter four.

Sociology of Literature

The sociological imagination is that which can 'grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society"(Mills 1959, p. 6). Literature is now being regarded by sociologists as a means of illuminating the historic relationship between the life of the inner self and social structure. Antonio Gramsci was one of the first to take up and develop the preliminary excursions made into the field of the sociology of literature which was next extended by the Hungarian communist writer Georg Lukács. Lukács (1962) deliberately overlooked the significance of Shakespeare's work, and located the emergence of the truly 'historic novel' in the early eighteenth century. He highlighted how authors of this era, like Walter Scott, became sensitive to the dynamic interaction of economic and social forces and how these forces were reflected in the inner life of a fictional character. Truly historic novels for Lukács had to be concerned with more than the external shell of period mannerisms, rituals, dress and the recounting of events. What matters, he instructed was that "we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality" (Lukács 1962, p. 42).

Swingewood (1972) expanded on Lukács' concern with the internal life, at the same time he resisted Wimsatt and Beardsley's (1954) declaration of the irrelevancy of authorial intentions. Swingewood proposed three different investigative fields for the new sociology of literature. A piece of literature, he argued, could be analysed in terms of: 1) its being a mirror, or document of its age (whose accuracy may be uncertain due to the ambiguity of the author's motives); 2) how it elucidates the norms and attitudes of the particular period allowing the reader to grapple with the historic place and intentions of the writer; and 3) an alternative perspective which "attempts to trace the ways in which a work of literature is actually received by a particular society at a specific historic moment" (Swingewood 1972, p. 21). Michel Zeraffa (1976, p. 75) subsequently agreed that the way a novel was read, and "the various receptions and impacts it has within society", were appropriate matters for

sociological investigation, though he considered this kind of academic analysis to be of the most arduous kind.

For both Swingewood and Zeraffa issues relating to authors and their intentions remained legitimate sites of scholarly analysis and interpretation. Through their characterisations, authors illuminated the kind of tensions that arose between the life of the self and social structure. To this end the life of the individual (fictional or otherwise) remained a principal preoccupation of the author and the literary genre. The disturbing nature of the "art of the novel" as Zeraffa saw it, consisted precisely in how it anchored its narrative through the individual. "Even the literature that is richest in sociological content and meaning" he explained "thrusts society, social life and social relationships into the background, making their presence felt in the persons of specific individuals" (Zeraffa 1976, p. 27). Fictional characters acted as mirrors of a specific time and place. Consequently disjuncture, tension and conflict could reflect a lack of fit between the aspirations of the self and the constraints placed on the self by prevailing socio-cultural norms and conditions.

The critical role played by the artist in raising personal problems to the level of social attention had drawn earlier comment from the American sociologist C. Wright Mills. In the absence of grounded social science, Mills (1959, p. 18) astutely observed that "critics and novelists, dramatists and poets have been the major, and often the only, formulators of private troubles and even of public issues." Not only were artists capable of raising personal issues within the public arena, some authors did so with deliberate political intent. Authors like Flaubert, Dickens and Kafka, according to Zeraffa (1976, pp 24-25) "wrote so that fiction would stop being a matter of 'literary activity' (in institutional terms) and become 'social action' ." Novelists could be immediately involved in a project of exposing socio-historic conditions thereby lifting the private suffering of the fictional character to the level of a socio-political event. For example, an apologetic, compliant female character who attributes her sense of inner turmoil to being 'too sensitive' or 'non-accepting' of her role in society might become a source of potential awakening for readers. Social conventions, role expectations can thus be transformed into obstacles to individual happiness and liberty, rather than oppressive forces that must be endured.

Although much of the sociology of literature has been dedicated to the analysis of fiction, sociologists have remained alert to the insights that can be gained through the art of autobiography and biography (Mills 1959; Merton 1988; Stanley 1992; Evans 1993). As a distinct genre, auto/biography is perceived to carry the authority of authenticity for readers that can serve as a meeting place for shared experience. Stanley (1992) has argued that feminist writers may in fact be capable of generating a new form of auto/biography - one which situates and embeds the primary subject more firmly within a network of familial, social and community relations. Writing lives as inherently social, she argues would present a departure from the normal protocols surrounding auto/biography which typically pursue and give rise to a more isolated self. For feminists interested in illuminating the struggle of the self , auto/biography presents many exciting opportunities for exploring the dimensions of how 'the personal is political'. Despite the popularity of auto/biography amongst feminist literary scholars, there is, as Stanley observes, a distinct absence of sustained interest in auto/biography amongst feminist sociologists. This is an absence which Stanley (1992, p. 5) believes requires explanation "particularly so given that the major epistemological issues of our time are raised in connection with the nature of 'selves'." Although auto/biography is a more popular topic of discussion within feminist literary circles, here too academics have tended to bemoan the on-going marginalisation of issues relating to subjectivity and auto/biography in the face of entrenched post-structuralist practices within the academy. Nancy Miller (1995, p. 209 fn), for example, has observed that although there has been much shared discussion between mainstream and feminist literary researchers, "there is no evidence yet that feminist critical theory has affected dominant organisations and theorisations."

Reader Response Theory and the Feminist Reader

As outlined briefly in the introduction (pp. 1-3), the conceptual tools developed by postmodern literary interpretation announced the death of the author and her/his relegation to a purely functional status. This has seen the production of meaning transposed to a multiplicity of sites forged by the reader/text relationship. A new and

popular arena of academic research has since opened up within cultural studies known as reader response theory. The new literary criticism has dedicated itself to excavating the relative strengths of the text and reader in the production of shared meanings and knowledge. Within this field Stanley Fish's (1980) work on how readers and texts were subsumed by a third category of 'interpretation' which binds readers and texts, necessarily situating them within historic and culturally specific norms and communities, has been especially influential. In her introduction to reader response theory, Elizabeth Freund (1987, p. 7) detailed the dizzying proliferation of reader positions which include "the mock reader (Gibson), the implied reader (Booth, Iser), the model reader (Eco), the super-reader (Riffaterre), the inscribed or encoded reader (Brooke-Rose), the narratee (Prince), the ideal reader (Culler),the literent (Holland), the actual reader (Jauss), [and] the informed reader of the interpretive community (Fish)."

Feminist literary scholars have made their own distinctive contributions to reader response theory and criticism - eagerly looking to charge the reader (rather than the author) with political significance and responsibilities. Recognition of how hegemonic ideology operates through the medium of texts has brought attention to the political position of the reader who can be transformed from being a mere consumer to a potential recruit in the broader struggle for women's emancipation. Fetterley (1978, p. xxii) instructs that "the first act of the feminist critic must be to become a resisting reader rather than an assenting reader and, by this refusal to assent, to begin the process of exorcizing the male mind that has been implanted in us." To avoid hegemonic control, the resistant feminist reader can no longer afford to immerse themselves in the text, but rather must stand outside in order to challenge its values and assumptions. More recently, Felman (1993) has criticised Fetterley's failure to recognise the unpredictable force of reading as a social practice and the tendency to read texts as though they were monolithic blocs devoid of dissenting voices. "If reading" she argues "has historically been a tool of revolutions and of liberation, is it not rather because, constitutively, reading is a rather risky business whose outcome and full consequences can never be known in advance?" (Felman 1993, p. 5). Contrary to Fetterley she maintains that the reader can "*tune in to the forms of resistance present in the text*" which inadvertently betray their own transgressions

against male superiority and privilege (Felman 1993, p. 6 - original emphasis). Expanding the focus from readers to literary critics themselves, Lynne Pearce (1997) has explored how critics and scholars can become constrained by their professional and intellectual training. In becoming part of the interpretive community of literary analysis they are required to maintain a stance of 'disinterestedness' which can often stifle more personal, emotional and potentially more politicised responses on the part of the feminist critic or reviewer.

Women as Authors

Feminist literary scholars have been fruitfully elucidating the politicised dimensions of women as authorial agents. The agency of the woman writer is seen to reside in how she writes women, addresses women's concerns, claims cultural space, and works directly or indirectly to promote new forms of consciousness. Through her interpretive lens the woman author is able to expose her readers to new ways of identifying with and understanding the social constraints placed on women's autonomy. Elaine Showalter (1977) has proposed that the categories of feminine, feminist and female usefully capture the changing self-awareness of British women authors from Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing. Kelley (1984) has coined the term 'literary domestics' to describe America women writers like Susan Warner, Maria Cummins and Charlotte Gilman Perkins who struggled with their contradictory ambivalence toward women's sequestering within the private sphere given how they themselves were stepping out into the limelight under the public identity of author. Works by various women authors (eg George Eliot, Louisa May Alcott, Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing, Fay Weldon, Margaret Atwood, Jeanette Winterson) are routinely interrogated by literary scholars with a view to exploring their role in reflecting and promoting a burgeoning feminist consciousness.[1]

Non-fiction texts too have been subject to rigorous analysis by feminist literary

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[1] The possibility of direct resistance to gender ideologies was writ large by Louisa May Alcott through her portrait of Jo March in *Little Women* (1983 [1868]). The pervading influence of such novels can even percolate through into the non-fiction writings of women authors. Simone de Beauvoir for one admitted that Alcott's account of Jo March's passion for knowledge was formative of her own lauding of female creativity, economic independence and personal autonomy in *The Second Sex* (Malcolmson 1995).

scholars. Women write women, Virginia Woolf informed us in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), only when she escapes the narrow confines of her own gender and writes from an androgynous perspective. To write unimpeded, she must ignore male opinion that slights her abilities and seeks to limit her horizons simply because she is 'a woman'. To reach her full potential, this writer needed a steady income, education and a suitable creative space. Only then did the woman author have the potential to write the world as she sees and experiences it. Her style may then become unfettered, to such an extent that an entirely different sentence structure might emerge. Woolf speculated this liberated writer might pay attention to details not normally deserving of literary comment. She has the ability to represent women as friends, rather than the rivals they were typically depicted to be within the novel setting. In a later essay, drawing on the tragedy of her own life, Woolf wrote passionately about the need to kill off 'the angel in the house.' This artificial angel represented the form of domesticated femininity that became idealised during the Victorian era. Like Woolf's mother and sister, such women were so chained by their sense of duty to family and menfolk that they forfeited all sense of self autonomy and happiness. Let biography act as a witness to history was the central catchcry of Woolf's acerbic anti-war text, *Three Guineas* (1938). In its pages she wondered why so much of the art of biography had been dominated by the stories of famous men and their military campaigns. The kind of intolerable friction generated between auto/biography and deleterious socio-cultural structures, explored so thoroughly by Woolf, were later destined to be reiterated in the kind of critiques launched by both Rachel Carson (1962) and Betty Friedan (1963). The substantial impact made by the non-fiction polemics of these two women authors takes issue with Elaine Showalter's (1984, p. 33) contention that the female witness is "still not accepted as first-person universal", as she is preconceived to be an unreliable narrator.

The question of authorial intentions and what it means to 'write women' in the postmodern world has become fluid in an era replete with ideologies of social construction and gender performativity which reject essentialist or biological accounts of the feminine. In *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1986a [1976]) the French feminist writer Hélène Cixous demanded that we seize our pens and defeat the fears that would

suggest that writing is a form of madness. Writing, she confidently proclaims, has always been a revolutionary activity for women. "I write woman: woman must write woman" she declared triumphantly (Cixous 1986a, p. 227). For Cixous however, the practice of writing women was so flexible as to include avant-garde male writers like James Joyce and Franz Kafka. Consequently her account of what it meant to 'write women' was regarded, at least initially, with suspicion by feminists steeped in Anglo-American traditions which maintained a greater commitment to the biological foundations of gender politics (Burke 1995).

The issue of what it means to write women, and one's motives for doing so, has become more problematic in the days of the backlash against feminism which has seen women writing controversial books for popular consumption (Roiphe 1993; Sommers 1994). In a short article Elizabeth Minnich (1998) successfully resisted the postmodern erasure which has deemed authorial intentions irrelevant to how readers actually appropriate information from texts. She directly questioned the political motivations of authors like Kate Roiphe and Christina Hoff Sommers who self-identify as feminists, but whose rhetorical techniques are, she maintains, profoundly mischievous and anti-feminist in their overall social impact. "I cannot know, of course, what the author's actual motives are..." she declares uneasily all the while suggesting the possibility of conspiracy in their affiliations with Right wing think tanks - or at the very least a selfish desire to make a quick buck by writing for the lucrative lecture circuit (Minnich 1998, p. 161). The techniques used by these women authors were she insisted not "merely" rhetorical, instead they constituted "public, political actions for which authors of popularly aimed books are responsible" (Minnich, 1998, p. 174). In Minnich's eyes there is an on-going battle around ideology that is intimately concerned with the motivations and intentions of the author of non-fiction. Her specific attention to 'popular' non-fiction books reflects her own assessment of the political efficacy of the 'middlebrow' text that is engaged in 'claims-making' activities about social realities.

Despite the considerable attention now being paid by feminist academics to texts, authors and readers, questions remain concerning the politicising effects of books and novels and how some texts achieve wider social effects amongst their audience of

readers. Rosalind Coward (1986, p. 159) has observed that we still await answers to "the relationship of the practice of reading, both of fiction and non-fiction, with political movements, in what way are texts effective, and, most importantly, which ones are." Social movement researchers have been neglectful of how charismatic authors of non-fiction texts may be actively engaged in the critical work of constructing social problems and promoting solutions. The transformative impact that such texts might have on followers (readers) is beckoning should it arrive on the social scene during an identifiable period of socio, economic or (inter)national 'crisis'. The new attentiveness to the importance of micro-social aspects of social movements, including outbreaks in new and widespread discursive politics, may sensitise researchers to the dynamic possibilities raised by charismatic texts.

The Intellectual as Social Critic

Issues relating to the contemporary political efficacy or inefficacy of the academic intellectual has been the subject of much debate amongst academics themselves over the last few decades (Bauman 1987; Bloom 1987; Jacoby 1987; Agger 1990; Said 1994). While anxious to preserve a role for the intellectual in the unfinished project of modernity, Bauman (1987) sees academics as being trapped in a double bind that has been created by postmodernity's moral relativism. This has meant that "we are angry when a scholar, having thoroughly and cogently criticized the shortcomings of our condition, fails to end up with a prescription for improving it. But if he or she does come up with such a prescription, we meet it incredulously and deride it as another utopia" (Bauman 1987, p. 194).

As outlined above (pp. 40-43), social movement researchers have, with important exceptions, been neglectful of the relationship between leadership, intellectuals, new forms of knowledge and ideologies to the emergence of social movements. In a manner reminiscent of Gramsci's philosophy, Eyerman and Jamison (1991, p. 56) have stressed that "the ability of 'movement intellectuals' to formulate the knowledge interests of the emergent social movement is particularly crucial." Despite the centrality of the intellectual's role to social movement emergence, Eyerman (1994) does not consider the academy to be fecund terrain for the future production of

organic intellectuals under conditions of postmodernity. He sees the decline of the intellectual reflected in the academic abandonment of humanist principles and the regimenting of knowledge fields to suit market purposes. This concomitant privileging of instrumental, specialist and technological applications of knowledge does nothing, he argues, to challenge underlying social norms and values. While not completely abandoning the academic intellectual, Jamison nonetheless contends that the academy's ability to sustain intellectual traditions linked to emancipatory outcomes has narrowed dramatically.

Steeped in a Gramscian appreciation of the need to win the battle for hegemonic ascendancy, academics associated with the left wing Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) have been especially attuned to the critical positioning of the elite organic intellectual. Stuart Hall has attested to the sense of difficulty involved in accurately predicting or artificially 'creating' such an individual:

"... there is no doubt in my mind that we were trying to find an institutional practice in cultural studies that might produce an organic intellectual... we weren't sure we would recognize him or her if we managed to produce it. The problem about the concept of an organic intellectual is that it appears to align intellectuals with an emerging historic movement and we couldn't tell then, and we can hardly tell now, where that emerging historical movement was to be found" (Hall 1992, p. 281).

Despite the radical intentions of many left leaning scholars like Habermas, Bourdieu and Hall, various critics have argued that their intentions are undermined by the complexity of their academic writings (Jenkins 1989; Agger 1990; Harris 1992; Sefcovi 1995). In respect of much of the work of the CCCS, Harris (1992, p. 198) has argued that "all gramscianism's intertwining of theory and practice has produced is a theory that is too political and partisan to be credible, and a politics that is too theoretical to be popular and effective." A similar tone of disapproval of the intellectual work performed by feminist academics comes through in observations made by social movement researchers like Schmitt and Martin (1999). They have compared the productive outcomes achieved by feminists engaged in 'street talk'

about sexual violence to the distancing and alienating work of "ivory tower" feminist informed journal articles and academic texts (Schmitt & Martin 1999, p. 367). Academic researchers and intellectuals are routinely criticised for having lost fundamental contact with a wider readership. Their writings are deemed to be popularly inaccessible and therefore lacking in transformative potential. It would appear that many intellectuals have failed to attend to one of Gramsci's key insights - namely that to exercise effective leadership, the elite organic intellectual must work from the ground up, revealing the oppressive hegemonic practices of 'common sense'. On this note, Sefcovi (1995, p. 29) has pragmatically observed that for academic research to move beyond its limited orbit of academic institutions and already initiated specialists, the general public "must be able to read it."

Authorial Style and the Middlebrow Text

Understanding the contemporary strength of the middlebrow charismatic text is crucial to understand Betty Friedan's early positioning as leader of the second wave Women's Liberation Movement in the US. It is therefore helpful to consider what are some of the distinguishing features of the 'middlebrow'.

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) Pierre Bourdieu has documented how taste and perceptions of aesthetic legitimacy became a means of codifying class based social identities and hierarchies in the twentieth century. A genre of taste, representative of new class distinction that has emerged within advanced capitalist systems, is the phenomenon of 'middlebrow' culture. This type of culture Bourdieu argued is aligned with the new middle class (*petit bourgeoisie*) which is distinguished by its educational aspirations and autodidactic tendencies. Middlebrow culture, he explained, is defined by its intermediary nature, by how it combines "two normally exclusive characteristics, immediate accessibility and the outward signs of cultural legitimacy" (Bourdieu 1984, p. 323). For the middle class, the middlebrow text holds out a promise that it can continue learning (and thus gaining 'cultural capital') well past the years of formal studies and education.

The postmodern death of the author, in addition to narrow conceptions of charisma and inadequate attention to the genre of non-fiction, are all implicated in the lack of sociological interest in the author who is engaged in direct ideological struggle through the medium of the middlebrow text. This omission now appears especially curious given how the 'new social movements' have been noteworthy for their decidedly middle class foundations. This is not to deny that many cultural theorists and social historians have been preoccupied with tracing how philosophies and ideologies permeate popular culture. However as Sean Burke (1995, p. ix) has rightly complained, while certain stances toward authorship are always implied within literary criticism and cultural theory, "there are yet very few texts outside of film theory which address the issue of author in anything like a systemic or comprehensive fashion." The accounts provided by Peter Mann (1982) and Janice Radway (1997) are exceptional in this respect as they have both paid specific attention to the 'middlebrow author'. While neither has ventured to explore the efficacy of the charismatic author who is engaged in a battle to win the 'war of ideas', their discussion of this author's defining characteristics are both relevant and informative.

In *Authors and Readers* (1982) Peter Mann argued there is a tendency amongst sociologists of literature and non-fiction to discuss and classify books in unnecessarily polarised terms, delineating high culture books that cater for intellectual elites (eg the accepted literary canon, or 'classics') from books designed for the uncritical reader who is a consumer of low grade, mass popular culture (eg romances, westerns, thrillers, travel books, cookbooks, crime pulp fiction, coffee table books, 'trade books', do-it-yourself books on gardening or interior decorating). This kind of polarisation fails to recognise that there is an important third category of book, one which creates bridges between high and popular culture by straddling the intermediate fence of the 'middlebrow'.

Mann explained that authors of middlebrow books write to an acceptable scholarly level but they are primarily motivated by a desire to represent and share ideas with an audience of less informed readers. Middlebrow authors may or may not be involved in primary research themselves. They may or may not be academics. But they must be sufficiently skilled to interpret existing scholarly research and its often complex

language, working to eliminate jargon and thereby transforming difficult or impenetrable material into accessible form. Such authors remain constantly mindful of their intended audiences and typically use a writing style that is appealing and engaging to the reader. The import of this type of author was, as Mann understood it, vastly under-rated. The "good populariser of a difficult subject" who is able to stimulate readers to take an interest in a new subject has, he argued "very special skills which are worthy of high praise" (Mann 1982, p. 30). What especially distinguished the authors of the middlebrow book according to Mann was their skill as a *communicator*. The neglect of the middlebrow author and text by the social sciences in part reflected , he believed, how communication skills were generally perceived to carry "less prestige than the skills of imaginativeness or scholarly research" (Mann 1982, p. 46).

In her ethnographic research Janice Radway eschewed academic preoccupations with the literary canon, choosing instead to explore the terrain of more popular, accessible literature in the form of the romance novel (1984) and more recently, the middlebrow text championed by the Book-of-the-Month Club (1997). Radway links the emergence of the genre of the middlebrow book in America with new packaging, marketing and book distribution methods that began with the Little Leather Library (which distributed miniature copies of Shakespeare plays along with Whitman's chocolates) and the Book-of-the-Month Club founded by Harry Sherman in 1926. In its initial phase the middlebrow book, Radway argues, did not represent a new genre of book, reader or author. Rather it was a bridging mechanism between popular and highbrow culture which relied on advances in consumer marketing and new packaging techniques. These often conveyed a commodity driven, fetishistic attitude to books, as exemplified by women's magazines of the 1920s which discussed the merits of books not in terms of their literary merit, but rather their ability to add decorative effect to the living room.

Over the decades, editors and judges of the Book-of-the- Month club have worked hard to create a market for the interested and educated 'generalist reader'[2].

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[2] Jacoby (1987) has argued that the generalist reader is fast disappearing from the American society - squeezed out by academics who wrap themselves up in an impenetrably obscure language and a consumer driven society in which citizens succumb to the quick and easy pleasures provided by new

Such readers were constructed in part, Radway found, through ideologies of difference. They were readers of "mid-list" publications situated between the avant-garde and more commercial publications (Radway 1997, p. 90). Such readers were not satisfied by either pulp fiction (romance, detective novels etc) or the kind of mass block busters purchased by the omnivorous and less discriminating reading public. The generalist reader was defined as being well educated and autodidactic. S/he wanted to be challenged, informed and absorbed by the reading materials that offered substance and food for thought. Yet at the same time they were readers who were uninterested in the too technical, formal and specialised writings that characterised academic scholarship. Radway found that Book-of-the-Month Club staff regularly dismissed academic texts as being too dry or boring for their membership.

Radway's research on the generalist reader provides many common points of reference to Mann's when it comes to describing the qualities of the middlebrow author and text. Such authors are defined, she found, by their ability to write readable, accessible material for the committed generalist reader. While the author and authorial intention may have disappeared from literary criticism, Radway (1997, p. 102) discovered that Book-of-the-Month Club editors specifically selected books for members on the basis that they exhibited "a strong, intelligent, authorial presence that could guide readers in how to think about their own world." Such authors were perceived by editors to create bridges between specialised fields of knowledge generated within the rarefied atmosphere of the academy and generalist readers. As she observed "what the editors were after were those few, special offerings from people who could call attention to their particular expertise as professional writers and still speak to an audience of individuals quite different from themselves who did not possess equivalent expertise" (Radway 1997, p. 104). Such writers both appreciated and challenged the reflective abilities of the reader without voiding their responsibility to act as instructive guides. Regardless of their subject matter (history, science, the arts, medicine etc) authors of middlebrow texts were distinguished by the

forms of visual entertainment technologies. Radway (1997) found anxiety about the future health of the generalist reader rife at the Book-of-the-Month Club during the time of her own ethnographic study. The Club's corporate owner, Times Warner Inc, was moving to integrate it more fully into its mass book selling operations. The commercial, business imperatives being introduced as a result of this streamlining were perceived by existing Club staff, editors and judges as a potential threat to the quality of its recommended reading list to existing book club members.

"narrative sweep" of their writing style, and their mindfulness of the need to maintain communication with their targeted audience (Radway 1997, p. 106). To this end they frequently engaged their readers through the mobilisation of fictional and non-fictional characters, including the use of auto/biography - all techniques used by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*.

The key, distinguishing features of the middlebrow text and author are exactly those features that are missing from the contemporary world of academic writing and scholarship. Within the academy auto/biographical disclosures are generally viewed as sources of contamination or distractions from the required disinterested presentation of 'objective' facts, observations and conclusions. The use of an accessible writing style rather than being complimented, can provide evidence of having failed to gain sufficient prowess in the specialised and technical language of one's chosen field of knowledge. Popularising intellectual research then involves transgressing "the 'language' of scholarship", the rules of communication, that constitute the boundaries of specialised, academic 'speech' and 'interpretive communities' (Hymes 1974; Fish 1980; Brodkey 1987, p. 5). It is hardly surprising to find Agger (1990) remarking that academics who have succeeded in writing a popularly accessible, generally educative book are extremely rare. Amongst contemporary American intellectuals, Agger has basically narrowed the field to two authors, Harold Bloom and Robert Jacoby. Many American book publishers, he reports, were at a loss to explain the popular appeal of Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) and did not envisage this kind of success befalling another academic intellectual in the immediate future (if at all). While Agger's list was seen by many as being overly narrow and restricted (especially when one considers the popularity of writers such as Umberto Eco, Bill Bryson and Stephen Jay Gould), there are still merits to his overall argument.

Agger has keenly observed that Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (1987), whilst influential, was only a moderate success compared to Bloom's text. He attributes the enormous appeal and popular success of Bloom's book to its autobiographically driven narrative. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* share this characteristic, being driven by

the intimacy of the author's personal voice. It is also noteworthy that while Rachel Carson and Betty Friedan were both highly trained in academic research skills, both chose to speak as independent authors of middlebrow texts who were driven to write by their passion for a cause and an urgent desire to appeal to a much wider public. While mobilising academic research as part of their social construction of the problems of environmental degradation and feminine identity, both women authors placed themselves in outsider positions with respect to the academy.

A further example of the kind of cultural authority that can be wielded by the author who deliberately eschews the overly technical and specialised language of their chosen field can be found in *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973 [1971]) put out by the Boston Women's Health Collective. The collective authors of this text intentionally set out to undercut the authority of specialists and experts by making medical information on women's bodies accessible to the average woman reader. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* never told women, as Dr. Spock and his colleagues had done during the 1950-60s, 'if in doubt, call your doctor'. Medical information on sexual pleasure, contraception, lesbianism, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and childbirth, complete with explicit illustrations, photographs and humorous cartoons, were all delivered in a highly accessible and readable format. In a recent glowing tribute to the book Gordon and Thorne (1996) have suggested that the social impact of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* on American women was comparable to that of the Bible. They correctly attributed its influence in its inherently middlebrow character - in how it moved freely "between the popular and the academic..." (Gordon & Thorne 1996, p. 322). *Our Bodies, Ourselves* demonstrates how authorial writing styles were powerfully shaped by the democratic ethos of the Women's Movement. It eventually went on to become a 'prime mover' in the emergence and diffusion of the larger National Women's Health Network in the US that began in 1975.

Reading as Politicising Practice

In *De Oratore* (1942 [written circa 135 BC]) the ancient Roman citizen Cicero, was amongst the earliest of writers to observe that comprehension appeared to be improved by reading as opposed to listening to a speech. There may be a neurological

basis to his perception of reading's enhanced efficacy. Mapping of human brain activity verifies that different functional areas are involved when we are reading a text as compared to listening to words (Manguel 1996). Though research on this matter remains scant, it is possible that information may even be subject to different storage and retrieval mechanisms within the brain depending on whether it is obtained through our auditory or visual senses. Reading may have an enhanced ability to organise and structure human consciousness compared to oral speech or visual media like film documentaries. Reading practices themselves (like re-reading) provide greater opportunity for critical reflection and information absorption. Through texts, authors exhibiting leadership traits can work to saturate public consciousness through rhetorical strategies which nullify the multiple responses that postmodernism opens to the reader.

Social movement theorist Bert Johnston (1995, p. 220) shares a sense of the greater efficacy of the written compared to the spoken word. In part he puts this down to the fact that when one is reading "the written word is the only channel used to convey information." Speaker-listener dynamics on the other hand necessarily introduce other 'distractions' in the information exchange, such as voice inflection, hand gestures and the dramatic (or stupefying) effects of the public space. The saliency of these dramaturgical factors has given rise, as discussed earlier, to a tendency amongst researchers to attend to issues relating to the delivery, rather than the content, of charismatic messages (Shamir et al. 1994). While unscientific, Gramsci's description of the greater 'depth' or 'molecular' nature of information gleamed through the medium of a text helps to explain his own prejudice in favour of readings' greater transformative impact on human consciousness. Reading can fundamentally restructure our understanding of social problems and present fundamental challenges to hegemonic ideologies (hence the importance of literacy and mass education).

Not infrequently auto/biographical confessions by women activists describe how they reached a critical turning point, or felt spurred into engaging directly in political activism by something they read. Digesting *The Second Sex* in the 1950s gave Roberta Salper the opportunity to explore how her "condition as a woman was a social problem, not just a silly neurosis" (Salper in Dijkstra 1980, p. 292). Salper

eventually went on to establish the first women's studies program in the US at the San Diego State University in 1970. Reading can act, as Gramsci observed, as a conduit for less well formulated gut feelings and sentiments that allows them to crystallise into new cognitions and knowledge. One gets a sense of this kind of transformation in Meredith Tax's account of reading the radical women's magazine *No More Fun and Games* in the summer of 1968. She recalls the magazine "had a message that was entirely new to me, though it resonated through my subconscious like a bell to which I was already tuned" (Tax 1988, p. 457). Prompted by this article, Tax later found herself and other women searching through library stacks for more information on the history and social status of women. Dissatisfaction with the accounts they were then able to find on the library shelves resulted in some of these women deciding to become women's historians.

Reading demonstrably stirs up exactly the kind of strong emotions such as righteous anger that are recognised as essential emotional seeds to social movements. Lynne Segal recalls the heady impact of Florence Rush's early 1970s article on child sexual assault when it first began circulating amongst conference members and other women's meeting groups in America. "I remember its photocopied contents circulating at the packed feminist gatherings ... Rush's essay was part of a profound and abiding cultural consciousness-raising around the criminal extent and obscene neglect of child sexual abuse" (Segal 1996, pp. 290-291). For Segal (1996, p. 291) it was clear that the impact of Rush's article on women readers meant no less than it was "a political catalyst for crucial feminist campaigning."

Accounts like these lend support to looking at a small number of key or pivotal political writings as being especially important integers to the emergence of new forms of discursive politics. Modern book distribution networks, sales promotion mechanisms like 'best-seller' lists and social practices surrounding reading can all feed into the birth of a widely dispersed discursive politics centred on the ideas and social problems raised by a single text or article. In some instances books can even transgress boundaries of national identity through the international book trade. For Siobhan Lloyd reading Rush's *The Best Kept Secret: The Sexual Abuse of Children* (1980), while working in Scotland at a women's refuge, also became a transformative

experience. Re-reading the book fifteen years later Lloyd (1996, p. 281) was not surprised to find herself reconnecting with her earlier "feelings of outrage, anger and of recognition...."

Book Clubs and Consciousness-Raising

To discuss how reading can be a catalyst to the politicisation of an individual or collectivity requires an appreciation not only of how authors convey new forms of knowledge that can radically transform and alter the consciousness of individual readers, it also requires exploring the social practices surrounding reading, including 'book-talk'. Book-talk routinely occurs on a very informal level, as is the case in the spontaneous and unplanned sharing, discussing and recommending books between friends and family members. It moves on to more structured activities in the form of reading book reviews, watching best-seller lists, attending writers' festivals and public talks given by authors during promotion tours, or joining a local book club. In this section I focus on book clubs as one example of the importance of the intrinsically social nature of reading. I suggest how book clubs have in the past been, and might be again in the future, implicated in the outbreak of a new form of discursive politics centred on a charismatic text which politicises the middle class reader.

Many book clubs do not possess an overtly political character. However some book clubs have been set up specifically for explicit political purposes. The *Left Book Club* in England, established in 1936 through Victor Gollancz' publishing company is a case in point. In a manner not unlike the Book-of-the-Month Club in the US, this club recommended and sold books at a reduced cost to members, operating through book store outlets rather than the postal system. The *Left Book Club* was set up specifically to spread the ideas of the progressive Left, its central objective being no less than to stop the outbreak of the Second World War by giving the general public a crash course in political education (Lewis 1970). By the war years the *Left Book Club* had achieved a membership of 57,000. Over 1,500 associated study and discussion groups were, more or less spontaneously, established by members across the nation in direct response to readers' desires to have a forum in which to discuss the reading materials

recommended to them. Study groups were soon "sending the authors of chosen books on nation-wide tours to lecture on their works" (Lewis 1970, p. 24).

Elizabeth Long (1986) also notes the permeable line that can separate book clubs from political activism in her observation of how progressive era women's reform groups in Texas, that concerned themselves with public policy matters relating to schooling, temperance and public health, often owed their roots to literary societies or book clubs. Within the US, women's book clubs have a long history (going back as far as 1813) whose effects have remained largely hidden and undocumented by social scientists. Book clubs can provide educated, middle class women isolated in the suburbs with opportunities for intellectual debate and discussion in an informal setting that is not unlike the college tutorial room. Since the 1970s, Long observed that book clubs have become especially significant conduits for promoting shared discussion amongst middle and upper middle class women. She also found that, as a rule, the women's reading groups she studied were not content with 'trash'. Instead they were engaged in "complex dialogue with various incarnations of cultural authority when they select and interpret books" (Long 1986, p. 594). While none of the women's book clubs included in Elizabeth Long's ethnographic research were explicitly informed by feminist politics, she nonetheless found their critical responses to established cultural authority replicated feminist-like stances of resistance to dominant ideologies. Long (1992) has also noted how reading can facilitate new forms of social interaction. Books and book-talk, she argued, can nurture new ideas, acting as a coalescing force amongst individual women. Sociologist Pamela Cotterill remembers meeting up with other individual women in 1978 to discuss their ambivalent relationship to food. For all these women, reading Susie Orbach's *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (1978) proved a common factor precipitating the establishment of the group. The permeable line that exists between 'book-talk' and an awakening political awareness is reflected in Cotterill's (1993, p. 70) statement that these meetings "soon became a consciousness-raising group, for me and for other members..."

In formal and informal settings the social practices surrounding reading indicate that books provide important gateways for initiating conversation between women who might otherwise be strangers. When re-reading Herman Wouk's *Marjorie*

Morningstar (1955) on the beach as part of her research on middle class taste and desire, Janice Radway (1997) was struck by the number of women who interrupted her to observe how much they had enjoyed reading the book years ago. " 'I loved that book', they told me again and again, just as others had once repeatedly shared stories of their own pregnancies and asked me when I was due. 'My sister and I read it together'. 'My mother read it and gave it to me. We never stopped talking about it' "(Radway 1997, p. 329). Conversations like these illuminate how some books come to be used as significant reference points, or cultural tool kits, for the construction of feminine identity. Long (1986, p. 603) also confirmed that women book club members used selected texts as channels for "self-understanding and revelation of the self to other participants rather than for discovery of meaning *within* the book" (original emphasis). Books can work as refracting lens, heightening awareness of tangible dissonances in the life of the reader's self. This highlights the potentially disruptive impact of a book which deliberately sets out to challenge women's perceptions of themselves by attacking common sense gender based ideologies in the way that Betty Friedan did in *The Feminine Mystique*.

Long (1992) offers two important insights about book clubs, namely that women comprise the vast majority of book club members and that book clubs are more pervasive than expected. (In Houston where she conducted her research, Long expected to find six reading groups, but was still counting at seventy-five.) She found that many women "join reading groups during the time when they find themselves isolated in the suburbs with young children" (Long 1992, p. 198). Catch up time, chit-chat and personal disclosure are routine parts of book club discussion groups. A spokesperson for a major book retailer (Dymocks) in Australia recently estimated women comprised 95% of book club members in Australia (Cameron & Munro 2002). Yet despite how book-talk can unusually link "cultural consumption to moral reflection", the predominantly female character of locally based reading groups meant that book clubs have remained devalued sites of sociological investigation (Long 1992, p. 197).

The future significance of books and book clubs for the generation of a political discourse centred on women's identity in the US was arguably heightened by Oprah

Winfrey's decision to introduce literary content into her daytime television talk show on a regular basis. While it lasted, Oprah's Book Club was credited with kick starting millions of American women back into reading fiction of discernible quality and substance. For Toni Morrison having her novel *Song of Solomon* (1978) selected by Oprah for her book club in 1996 proved to be more valuable than winning the Nobel prize a few years earlier. Total sales figures for the book nearly tripled in the space of a few months, zooming over the 1 million copies barrier after it became recommended reading in 1996 (McCarthy 2002). Publishers rushed to release hundreds of thousands of copies of Oprah's selected novels, despite many titles having been already consigned to the backlist. A recent press article on her astonishing influence on the book industry credited Oprah with being "the biggest thing to happen to the industry economics since amazon.com" (McCarthy 2002, p. 8). Demonstrating the importance of both authors and book-talk, Oprah's Book Club included an invitation to the author to appear on the show to discuss her or his work. Readers were encouraged to submit their opinions on books online and could even be selected to participate in a face to face discussion with the author. While confining her choices primarily to works of fiction, the authors Oprah recommends (eg Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Lalita Tademy) frequently reflect an enduring concern with the oppressive realities experienced by women and in particular black women.

Although Oprah recently decided to end her monthly book club, she promised to continue featuring occasional books on her program when they merit her "heartfelt recommendation" (Wyndham 2002, p. 28). For social movement researchers, Oprah may yet prove to be an important touchstone in any future outbreak of a discursive politics engaged with the politics of the meaning of women's liberation. Due to the international syndication of her talk show and the transformation of taste created by the globalising impact of American culture, feminist ideologies are now capable of reaching directly into homes via the television medium in a manner that defies international borders. Australian publishers have, for example, been surprised at how "Winfrey's favoured stories of dysfunctional American families and triumph over hardship have become surprising local successes." Sales figures for *The Deep End of the Ocean* (1998) in Australia leapt dramatically from 7,500 to 120,000 in Australia after being "Oprahed" (Wyndham 2002, p. 28). The public forum Oprah has provided

for the discussion of serious literature has arguably opened up newly democratised space for a more considered and thoughtful kind of public debate whose passing has been much lamented by the progressive Left (Habermas 1975; Jacoby 1987; Agger 1990). Such ventures suggest that reading practices may no longer be in decline. As the earlier example of the *Left Book Club* in England proved, the desire to discuss books runs hand in hand with the reading of books.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I highlighted how the sociology of literature has maintained a focus on the intentions of the author. I introduced reader response theory, focussing on discussion of the politicised woman reader, and examined the position of women as authors. I have also touched briefly on the marginalised position of the intellectual in an academic environment that promotes jargonised, technical language. The adoption of postmodernist language by many intellectuals has effectively undermined their ability to reach out and win Gramsci's all important 'war of ideas'. I then moved on to detail the salient features of the emerging 'middle brow' text. This genre is distinguished by its deliberate attempt to bridge gaps between specialised forms of knowledge and the general populace. The impact of the middle brow text has proven especially noteworthy for the new middle class, given its autodidactic tendencies. I have joined with Elizabeth Long in a critique of the ideology of the 'solitary reader' and the lack of attention paid to the inherently social, discursive practices surrounding reading. These social practices are potentially very significant for women readers, given their proven propensity for joining book clubs. I have argued that books, whether fiction or non-fiction, can be understood as active 'tool-kits' that are germane to identity construction. Such constructions may include the ideologically energised reader who is prepared to take the advice of a charismatic 'author-leader' to heart. All these factors contribute to explaining the impact of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). In Chapter Five I intend to illuminate exactly how Friedan's book worked to spur middle class American women into reddressing their inequitable position within US society. But before turning to assess the relative success her

rhetorical strategies, it is first necessary to examine the contradictory socio-economic structural pressures American women faced in the postwar years. These pressures were to breed an underlying sense of a 'crisis of identity'. In effect, they primed middle-class American women for the emergence of Betty Friedan as an 'author-leader'; a leader who was prepared not only to recognise their problems, but who reassured them that solutions were at hand.

Chapter Four - American Women in the Postwar Years and the Place of *The Feminine Mystique*

Introduction

In this chapter I mobilise the conceptual frameworks provided by Weber's theory of charisma and Gramsci's views on the organic intellectual in order to explicate the significance of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) to the emergence of second wave feminism in the United States in the late 1960s. In particular I focus on the issues of leadership and how Friedan's text may have created coalescing effects amongst its audience of readers by destabilising accepted 'common sense' about the role of middle class women in American society. By framing questions about the nature of freedom, Friedan's text became a critical stepping stone to the emergence of the collective identity of women, the crucial sense of 'we', that eventually underpinned the Women's Liberation Movement. I show that Friedan's analysis of the 'trapped housewife' syndrome worked not only to raise middle aged women's understanding of the common identity problem they faced, it also raised pertinent issues for younger women who had grown up during the 1950s and who were destined to become the more radicalised, grass roots agitators of the WLM.

Reading *The Feminine Mystique* had a transformative effect on many American women. The significance of Betty Friedan's text grows with the passage of time. It was and continues to be widely read to this day. A new edition of the book was released in 2001, in recognition of its significance. Its ideas have circulated for decades and become part of the standard ideological fodder of feminist women. Given the links between the publication of charismatic texts (eg *Silent Spring*, *The Feminist Mystique*, *Animal Liberation*) and the emergence of social movements in the twentieth century there is a need to commence the analytical work that can help to provide a conceptual framework for evaluating these phenomena.

To understand its impact, Friedan's text must be located within its socio-cultural and economic milieu of America during the 1950s. For it was at this time that structural pressures reached critical mass in terms of the position and role of women in the

postwar years. *The Feminine Mystique* offers insights into these systemic strains. The book's popularity, the appeal of Friedan's writing style, its continuity with American psychologising traditions, and its cultural resonance, all help to explain why *The Feminine Mystique* gained a wide audience of women readers in the US, whereas Simone de Beauvoir's earlier book on a similar theme, *The Second Sex,* did not.

A Time of Extremes - the 1950s in the US

It is impossible and unnecessary for our purposes to arrive at a coherent picture of what was happening for women during the 1950s in the US. As Susan Ware (1990, p. 281) has observed the "1950s continues to fascinate and, in many ways, to elude historians studying American women". Despite its staid appearance, the 1950s in America was a highly conflicted era involving a volatile concoction of arch conservatism, political anxiety and various radical breaks with tradition.

Constituting the conservative agenda were a variety of associated events including the paranoid, anti-communist rhetoric of the McCarthy era, the execution of the Rosenbergs, the Korean war, nuclear tests confirming the Soviet's status as a superpower and the continuing hysteria about 'who's got the Bomb'. These events helped to forge an environment in which building bomb shelters and stocking underground larder shelves became a reasonable way of spending one's free time on the weekend. A defining moment entwining marital norms and domestic bliss with the bomb was reached in the summer of 1959 when *Life* magazine ran an article on the "sheltered honeymoon". It featured a smiling couple descending in newly wedded bliss into a 8-by-11 foot shelter stocked with canned foods and all the other basic essentials (May 1988).

In addition to losing its monopoly over nuclear technology, America appeared to be slipping even further behind its Cold War arch rival in the wake of the Soviet Union's successful launch of the first satellite into outer orbit. Sputnik's journey across the heavens was watched warily by many American citizens. Senator Joe McCarthy continued his diatribe against the "commies" lurking in Federal government as well as Hollywood where they were masked as screen writers, producers and directors. The

witch hunts that ensued ruined many lives, reputations and careers. Meanwhile the FBI, headed by the closet cross dresser J. Edgar Hoover, was making its own outstanding contribution to the conservative agenda, extirpating suspected homosexuals and other 'sexual deviants' who had been employed in Federal and State governmental positions.

Conservative 1950s ideologies extended from the public to the private sphere and were exemplified by the American sociologist Talcott Parson's theories on the family and social stratification. In *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (1955) Parsons expounded his sex role theory of the nuclear family proclaiming that men were naturally destined to be the primary bread winners of the family. Women due to their biologically given status as mothers were necessarily relegated responsibility for being the primary carers of children. While men were, Parsons instructed, suited to instrumental tasks (like fixing fences, mowing the lawn) he did not attend to their parenting responsibilities as fathers of young children, despite the baby boom then in full swing. Conservative sex role theories and the strict demarcation of public and private spheres were being reinforced by new, popular TV sitcoms featuring white, middle class families including *Father Knows Best* (1954 -1958), *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (1952 -1966), *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963) and *The Donna Reed Show* (1958-1966). At a time when married American women were flocking back to the work force, women in these sitcoms were homogeneously depicted as happy stay-at-home Moms who dutifully packed lunches for children, attended church and PTA meetings and greeted husbands with delight as they stepped back through the front door. Supper was always waiting on the table. In the TV series *Leave it to Beaver*, June Cleaver regularly delivered up two hot meals a day to her family in her immaculately clean house. When she vacuumed she wore high heels. There was little hint of the domestic effort required to obtain the unrealistic hygiene standards then being promoted by the commercial market. Susan Douglas (1995, p. 44) recalls the surreal impact of these television images when she was growing up during the fifties:

"No wonder so many of our mothers were pissed. They worked all the time with little or no acknowledgment, while their ingrate kids watched TV shows that insisted that

good mothers, like true princesses, never complained, smiled a real lot, were constantly good-natured, and never expected anything from anyone."

Opposing the wave of conformity and fear cultivated by both McCarthyism and the new homogeneous mass media being delivered into the home via television, new trends in music and sexualised forms of communal dance were beginning. Elvis Presley's swivelling hips gyrated suggestively over his blue suede shoes creating a demand for censorship until Ed Sullivan vouched for his character and gave him a clean bill of health on national television. Teen magazines and fan clubs for stars like Frankie Avalon, Ricky Nelson and Bobby Darin were gathering momentum across the nation. The expanding market began selling to teenage girls promoting cosmetics and fashion styles ranging from bobby socks to twin sets to pleated skirts. Teen sexuality (petting, kissing and dressing sexy) were also being encouraged through teen magazines. This appears to have resulted in a rising tide of moral panic amongst parents that was reflected in their letters of alarm to the magazine editors (Brown 1961). Despite parental alarm *Seventeen* was on its way to becoming the 'bible' for the 13-19 year age group of junior and senior high school girls (White 1971, p. 248).

Race relations in America were being strongly challenged throughout the fifties. In a unanimous decision in 1954 (*Brown v. Board of Education*) the US Supreme Court ruled that segregated schooling of black and white children, prevalent throughout the South at that time, was unconstitutional. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama a year later. The murder of 14 year old Emmett Till from Chicago in Tallahatchie County repulsed the nation and created a groundswell of protest across America. Civil rights marches began with Martin Luther King Jr. emerging as a charismatic leader espousing a philosophy of non-violent resistance. Affirmations of a new black aesthetics for men and women were promoted through the glamorous dress fashions and hair styles of singing groups like The Platters, the first black group to crack the top ten pop charts in America with songs like 'Only You', 'The Great Pretender' and 'My Prayer'. Motown kicked off in the late '50s creating a booming record trade in early rock'n'roll. The influence of black music was reaching wider and wider radio audiences and made unprecedented incursions

into white, middle class culture. Progress in improving race relations was slow, but nonetheless it was being made.

Other radical forces at work in the 1950s operated through less obvious media such as academic institutions. While in many states it was still illegal to have sex in anything other than the missionary position, Alfred Kinsey's 1948 and 1953 reports on the sexual practices of American males and females documented an astonishing range of activities engaged in by the general population which defied all social norms and expectations. The empirical evidence his research team gathered on nocturnal emissions, masturbation, homosexual experiences, premarital sex (petting to coitus), extramarital sex and the pursuit of a range of other unconventional sexual 'outlets' (including bestiality and sexual acts with children) sent shock waves around the country when the reports were first released. At least one US Senator urged that the *Comstock Act*, which prohibited obscene materials being sent through the mail system, be enforced to stop the report's distribution (Allyn 1996).

The assault on traditional values was also being conducted within the realm of adult fiction. While social norms for men in the postwar years promoted family life, children and the home, new novels by writers affiliated with the Beatnik generation, such as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) were encouraging young men to eschew onerous family obligations. Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* (1957 [1955]) fuelled men's anxiety about becoming dispensable and bland cogs caught within the machinery of bureaucratic and corporate institutions. His characters Tom and Betsy Rath became a married couple precursor to Friedan's 'trapped housewife': "both began to think of the house as a trap, and they no more enjoyed refurbishing it than a prisoner would delight in shining up the bars of his cell (Wilson 1957, p. 11). Arthur Miller struck back at the mass hysteria being generated by the McCarthy era drawing analogies between it and the Salem witch trials in his play *The Crucible* (1953). Vance Packard in *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957) exposed the new 'depth' psychological strategies of the motivational analysts and symbol manipulators now permeating the market playing on fears and anxieties of the American public. Betty Friedan became an instant fan of Packard's after hearing him speak at a public lecture in New York. Spectorsky's *The Exurbanites* (1955) tapped into widespread anxieties

about the homogeneity and conformity and sense of dislocation inherent in suburban life. Assumptions about the innocence of children were also challenged in the conservative fifties with representations of the evil child in novels like William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), March's *The Bad Seed* (1954) and Nabokov's *Lolita* (1958).

New mores and standards of sexual behaviour between men and women were being explored at an increasing pace in American popular culture. Hefner launched *Playboy* magazine in 1953 and within a few years it had reached a circulation figure of 600,000 (Halberstam 1993). In *The Uses of Literacy* (1981 [1957]) Richard Hoggart complained that an immoral appetite for fantasies involving sexual violence against women was being created amongst British male readers through the new market of cheap detective genre paperbacks. Hoggart (1981, p. 258) argued that the problem originated with the "new style of sex-novels spreading from America" that had first begun gaining a foothold amongst the reading public in the 1920s and '30s. This market of cheap paperbacks frequently pedalled sexual violence against women. In *60 Years of Best Sellers* (1956) Beverley Hackett found that seven of the top ten best-sellers were written by Mickey Spillane who specialised in eroticised violence featuring misogynist tough guy detective and communist fighter Mike Hammer. Six of these titles (eg *My Gun is Quick*, *Vengeance is Mine*, *The Long Wait*, *The Big Kill, One Lonely Night* and *Kiss Me Deadly*) were released in rapid fire succession between 1950-52. Other sexual secrets and fantasies were being exposed and promoted as the spectre of incest began raising its hoary head in the wake of Grace Metalious' *Peyton Place* (1956). A different genre of film began appearing at the local cinemas with movies like *Baby Doll* (1956) and *Rally Round the Flag Boys* (1957) which capitalised on tantalising and exploitative images of teenage girls' sexuality.

America in the 1950s was a nation at a crossroads in an era of high political anxiety. It was dominated by a stultifying, narrow and conservative culture which was increasingly under attack at the hands of an ever expanding range of newly emerging discursive practices centred around sexuality and gender performativity. The rigid controls and values that had cemented the immediate postwar era were being challenged and undermined. Aided and abetted by the market, new kinds of freedom

were being explored. Old codes of sexual morality preached from the pulpit and at home were being compromised by the world of fantasy and reality delivered up by low-high culture fiction novels, films, advertising, television and academic research alike. Along with many other conservative ideologies, the 'sex role' theories propagated by sociologists and psychologists like Talcott Parsons (1942, 1955) and Farnham and Lundberg (1947), which sanctified strictly defined masculine and feminine behaviour, were being increasingly undermined.

American Women in the Postwar Years

The story of American women during the 1950s cannot be explained without attending to critical events in the 1940s. Women's status and roles swiftly changed following America's abrupt entry into the Second World War in the wake of Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. American women, many of them married, flocked to join the workforce replacing the men who enlisted for military service. After a brief survey of two hundred war positions, the US Employment service found that women were capable of filling 80% of the positions with minimal training. Practically overnight cosmetic girls and housewives metamorphosed into switchwomen for the railway, precision tool-makers and crane operators (Chafe 1972). By 1944 the work force participation rates for women had climbed to 35%. One in three women, working in defence of their nation, had previously been full-time homewives (Gluck 1987). Child care facilities were established for the first time to free up women with children for paid work in industry. Eight million women were eventually to find jobs within government and industry during the years when symbolic models of womanhood in the US ranged from the heavy machinery dexterity of Rosie the Riveter to the fearlessness of Commando Mary in the women's auxiliary of the Armed Services (Klein 1984).

Despite the arduous and trying circumstances surrounding their entry into the workforce, many women experienced new found satisfaction and pleasure in pursuing paid employment outside the home. A survey of ten different employment sectors found that, of those women who had entered paid work to help America's war effort, 75% indicated that they wanted to continue working after the war had ended (Klein

1984). Over half of these were women had formerly been dedicated housewives (Gluck 1987). Aspirations like these conflicted with traditional values which sought to re-establish the normalcy of males as head of the family and sole bread winner in the postwar years. With the end of the war, attitudes toward women in the workforce changed dramatically - "where earlier the working woman with child-care problems had been the object of commiseration, she became now the object of blame for the rising rate of juvenile delinquency" (Gluck 1987, p. 15). Popular culture experienced a dramatic decline in the visual representation of women on production lines and Rosie the Riveter completely disappeared. Women's magazines were often at the front line of the propaganda war, making women primarily responsible for men's social readjustment to domesticity after demobilisation (Hartmann 1978; May 1988). Within two months of the war finishing, eight hundred thousand women had been fired from the aircraft industry. The number of retrenched women workers in the immediate postwar years was very high with estimates of between two to four million women getting the sack by 1946-47 (Castro 1990; Halberstam 1993). A popular magazine at the time *House Beautiful* instructed women to make the returned serviceman realise that "he's head man again.... Your part in the remaking of this man is to fit his home to him, understanding why he wants it this way, forgetting your own preferences" (Hartmann 1978, p. 227). By late 1944, women's magazines were already promoting a new future for women with kitchens stockpiled with all new electric appliances.

Defying the immediate social pressures placed on them to conform to domestic ideals, the postwar job participation rate of American women remained higher than before the war. In his study *Women and Work in America* (1959) Robert Smuts contrasted the labour force participation rates for married women in 1940 to their participation rates in the late fifties. He found that whereas in 1940, six out of every seven married women were full time housewives, by the late fifties nearly one third of wives were combining housework with paid employment. During the 1950s it was married rather than single women who comprised the majority of women participating in the paid workforce. In defiance of prevailing ideologies on the importance of the early nurturing of young children by mothers, 12% of women in the work force by the late fifties were mothers with preschool aged children (Klein 1984). By 1960, 39% of all

mothers with school-aged children were in the labour force (Ware 1994). Business, union and other participants in the National Manpower Council (established in 1951) were all actively involved in facilitating women's participation in paid employment.

Younger, predominantly unmarried women participated more in higher education in the postwar years. From 1940 to 1950 to 1958, the percentage of women aged 18-21 enrolled in institutions of higher education in the US increased from 12.2% to 17.9% to 23% respectively (Newcomer 1959). While rates of women entering higher education may have been increasing, the total number of women completing their studies paradoxically decreased. Two out of every three women who entered college dropped out before finishing their degrees. Marital and domestic norms figured highly as reasons for this surprising disparity between the number of young women enrolling and those graduating. Sixty percent of these women left college "in order to marry or because they feared that a college education would hurt their chances of marrying" (Mintz & Kellogg 1988, p. 181).

Postwar trends toward early marriage, higher overall rates of marriage and the baby boom saw the demographics of American society alter sharply. American families in the 1950s were distinctive not only for their large sizes but for the relatively young age of their parents. Average age at marriage in the 1950s dropped to 22 years for men and 20 years for women. By age 24, seventy percent of all women were married (Mintz & Kellogg 1988). The baby boom saw women bearing more children spaced closer together than ever before; a prevailing viewpoint saw childlessness as "deviant, selfish, and pitiable" (May 1988, p. 137). Strategies promoting motherhood were hugely successful and most young women had borne on average three children within a matter of a few years. The sharpest increase in the birth rate occurred amongst the most highly educated women (May 1988). America's population growth rate rose by 50% between 1940 to 1957 (Mintz & Kellogg 1988). When surveyed in the 1950s women indicated an ideal family size meant three, four or more children. This contrasted with women surveyed in 1941 who replied that two children was ideal. Younger, more inexperienced mothers with increased numbers of children found the new advice books from early childhood experts like Dr. Benjamin Spock and Albert Gesell indispensable guides. By 1955, Benjamin Spock's *The Common Sense Book of*

Baby and Child Care (1946) was listed second on the sixty years of best-seller's list, having sold nearly eight million copies (Hackett 1956). The 1950s were remarkable for the growth in the industry of professional experts (eg psychoanalysts, doctors, psychologists and marriage counsellors) providing handy advice to women in one form or another. Sociologists Cancian and Gordon (1988) found that advice from 'experts', featured in women's magazines, increased from 30% of content in the 1930s to 50% in the 1950s.

In the 1950s surging economies in both the US and the UK were gearing up to sell a whole new range of domestic appliances specifically aimed at catering to women's defined role within the home. On commercial television, Betty Furness, the Lady of Westinghouse, became the prototype of the all-American wife in the all-American kitchen. During the week of the 1952 political convention the immaculately coiffed Furness made up to twenty five appearances per day, changing her clothes regularly to maintain the interest of her audience (Halberstam 1993). The market of goods available in the 1930s to the existent middle class was expanding to embrace the old working class now climbing up the socio-economic ladder. The middle class sector across the US grew rapidly during the late '40s and '50s. By 1953 the middle class represented 35% of the total population and 42% of the nation's spending power (Malcolmson 1995). During the '50s the number of families deemed middle class (having an income over $5,000 per annum) increased by 1.1 million per annum (Halberstam 1993). Improved models of washing machines, freezers, hair dryers, vacuum cleaners, and floor polishers were on the market complementing new consumer goods like the television which usurped the role of radio and consolidated itself in the home as the family entertainment centre. The world of food expanded with the availability of convenience foods and snack foods (TV dinners, frozen foods etc). Tupperware was launched, guaranteeing freshness, handy storage facilities and the economical use of leftovers. Fast food outlets like McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken burgeoned and quickly established franchise-based businesses across the nation. In a heated discussion in 1959 between Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Vice-President Richard Nixon (widely known as 'the kitchen debate'), the manifest superiority of the American versus the Soviet way of life did not hinge on military stockpiles or modes of government. Rather it was evident in the range of modern

appliances in the American kitchen and the attractive allure of the American suburban housewife compared to the masculine appearance of the desexualised Soviet woman worker (May 1988).

Affordable, mass produced houses brought increased rates of home ownership in newly established suburban environments. The entrepreneur Bill Levitt adopted a factory line, compartmentalised approach to house building bringing out the Cape Code and Rancher house models. By 1955, Levitt alone accounted for 75% of all new suburban houses (Halberstam 1993). Between 1950 and 1968 the percent of the total US population living in the communities and suburbs outside of urban centres increased from 24% to 35%(Chafe 1972). The decade after 1948 saw 13 million new homes built in the US with over 11 million of these (85%) built in the suburbs catering predominantly to the growing middle class (Mintz & Kellogg 1988). New shopping malls and giant discount stores offering variety under the one roof were established to cater for the needs of families in the new suburban communities. US Federal government expenditure on highways sky-rocketed. Increased affluence ensured higher rates of car ownership rising from 49.3 million at the beginning of the decade to 73.8 million when it ended (Halberstam 1993). The baby boom made the family station wagon a popular model.

While offering the advantages of having a separate family life, an inevitable outcome of these structural changes meant the straining and even severing of extended family ties. Grandparents and other relatives were no longer as available for companionship or to help out with baby-sitting or other household chores. Both May (1988) and Mintz and Kellogg (1988) have emphasised how workforce patterns were transformed for men in the years after the war. Many men left locally based small business enterprises to join the corporate workforce in the city. Not infrequently the long hours of commuting into the city reduced many young fathers to kissing their kids good-bye in the morning and peeking in on them after bedtime upon arriving home in the evening. One commentator wryly observed that the dislocation of men from parenting roles created by these structural pressures meant that America was building a "matriarchal society, with children who know men only as nighttime residents and weekend guests" (Mintz & Kellogg 1988, p. 184). The absence of fathers saw

mothers taking on the extra task of chauffeuring children to school and after school activities (eg cubs, scouts, girl guides, dancing lessons, baseball).

Prevailing ideologies over the nineteenth and twentieth century switched from viewing the home front as a site of productivity, to one of consumption. These views were reinforced by international accounting systems established in the post war years for calculating GDP and GNP which failed to recognise housework as productive labour and which further hid the real value of domestic work (Waring 1988). Despite the advertising glitz that emphasised convenience, speed and the ease of performing domestic tasks, middle class women's domestic burdens increased in the years after the war. New technologies like washing machines, disappearing laundresses, the decline of delivered services to the home and of domestic servants all contributed to the housewife's longer hours (Cowan 1983). Exacting hygiene standards associated with social status and mothering proficiency were also becoming a tyranny. Women's newly acquired status as consumer and style setter meant endless hours at the shopping mall and grocery store where she encountered parking hassles and queues. A sophisticated national survey conducted in 1965 concluded that the average American housewife spent fifty-four hours a week on housework and rearing children (Cowan 1983). Women in the paid workforce were working even longer hours than this. At the same time, surveys showed most men restricting their housework contributions to locking up at night, fixing things that had broken and cleaning up the yard (Mintz & Kellogg 1988). A young mother's forum convened by the *Ladies Home Journal* in the mid-fifties came up with two succinct answers to the issue of the problems faced by the modern American housewife: too much to do and too much social isolation (Matthews 1987). Janice Winship (1987, p. 43) affirms that "the gains for women ... were very much double-edged. Even as commodities physically lightened much housework for women the tasks of their domestic role were both transformed *and* increased" (original emphasis).

The isolated reality faced by women at home, and the double burden now being carried by married women who had joined the paid workforce, was frequently denied by popular culture magazines. Sociologists Ognash and Nimkoff (1954) argued that one of the main problems faced by American women was that new technologies and

household products had either eliminated or eased most of their earlier burdens, depriving them of a sense of purpose. Into the early 1960s media discourses continued to insist that American women as a whole had "never had it so good" (Douglas 1995, p. 123).

Despite their growing consciousness of gender inequality and increasing participation rates within paid employment, discriminatory work practices against women continued to prevail. Newspaper ads separated jobs by sex, channelling women into relatively unskilled and lower paid jobs as clerical workers, typists, personal secretaries, nurses and teachers. Where women performed the same work as men, they were paid less. Gender based discriminatory practices prevailed across education and other service industries as well. During the 1950s, Harvard's Lamont Library was off limits to women as they would distract the male students. Bars often refused to serve women and banks routinely denied women credit and loans. Women were excluded from jury duty in some American states. Women's general credibility in certain occupations such as media reporters and newscasters on radio and television was restricted by perceptions that their voices lacked appropriate depth and timbre (Rosen 2000). Across America abortion was illegal and women continued to resort to using coat hangers, knitting needles or backyard abortionists with high mortality rates ensuing. No language yet existed to describe experiences of rape, sexual harassment or domestic violence. American historian Ruth Rosen (2000, p. 5) tersely condensed the daily reality lived by American women during the 1950s: "Just two words summed up the injuries women suffered in silence: 'That's life' ".

Girls growing up in the 1950s faced especially deep structural contradictions in which their increasing affluence and educational opportunities clashed with conservative pressures to fulfil the roles in the home that had previously been filled by their mothers. These were based on expected notions of womanhood which included marriage, having children and maintaining the family home aided and abetted by the latest range of household products. At the same time, girls were being squeezed between conservative 1950s sexual mores and a market that was actively promoting sexualised performances, behaviours and appearances (Banner 1983). Sara Evans (1979, p. 23) drew early attention to how the conflicts generated in the 1950s between

conservative values and a market that "commoditized sexual titillation", set against the backdrop of the arrival of the Pill in the early 1960s, effectively turned young, educated women into "dry tinder", awaiting the prerequisite spark. In *Young, White and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (1992), Wini Breines provided a detailed account of how the normative straitjacket of acceptable behaviours placed on white girls and women in the US was in the end responsible for the explosive force of change associated with the WLM in the 1960-70s. Having grown up in the '50s herself she writes "our memories are imbued with the sense that the 1950s were not a good time for women because we learned to understand our lives as a flight from that time" (Breines 1992, p. xiii). In their analyses of the generation gap that divided daughters from their mothers during the 1950s, Rosen (1995) and Malcolmson (1995) concurred in noting the radicalising force of these kinds of contradictions. "However much they enjoyed their families and homes, fifties mothers also seethed with quiet resentment; from an early age, daughters sensed it" (Rosen 1995, p. 318). Many daughters, conscious of their mother's sense of entrapment and unhappiness were desperate to avoid a future in which they also filled out census forms which summarised their existence with the annotation "Occupation: Housewife". In recounting the enormous discrepancy between June Cleaver's non-harried ways on TV and the reality of her own mother's frantic attempts to juggle work and home commitments, Susan Douglas (1995, p. 42) grew up with the realisation that "I especially wanted to avoid ending up like Mom". *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen recalled feeling that "when I was growing up, motherhood was a kind of cage...You stayed at home and felt your mind turn to the stuff that you put in little bowls and tried to spoon into little mouths and eventually wound up wiping off of little floors" (Quindlen in Rosen 1995, p. 321). The feeling it seems was mutual. Many mothers desired a different kind of future for their daughters than their own. In a 1962 Gallup poll only 10% of mothers indicated that they wanted their daughters to experience the same kind of life they had had (Rosen 1995).

By the mid 1960s Parsons' (1945, p. 95) prescription that "the woman's fundamental status is that of her husband's wife, the mother of his children" was being viewed with an increasingly jaundiced eye by many middle class women who had lived that life and found it dissatisfying, boring and stultifying. Women who had found their

lives as mothers and housewives rewarding were feeling bereft and lacking in purpose as their children left home in droves to go to college or join the workforce. Due to the early age of marriage and childbirth that had characterised the postwar years, many of these women were still in their early forties with decades of role uncertainty and an uncomfortable sense of a lack of real purpose pervading their lives. The problems faced by mothers in America by the mid 1960s were exemplified by the newspaper article on a four day conference organised by the American Psychoanalytic Association which focused on a rather unusual collection of "perennial problems - unhappy wives, rambunctious teenagers and compulsive gamblers" (Jaffe 1965, p. 40). An article in the *New York Times* not long after referred to "the increasingly knotty problem of what to do about Mother" (Lanahan 1966, p. 27). When interviewed, Dr. Osbourne the director of a 15 week college course set up specifically for middle aged mothers, stated "its shocking what happens to mothers in this country...They die at 40, and they're not buried until they're 80" (Osbourne in Lanahan 1966, p. 27).

In the immensely popular TV show *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957) Lucy Ricardo struggled with her designated role as idealised and domesticated woman in 1950s American suburbia. Her madcap exploits, culinary disasters in the kitchen, and dreams of launching herself into show biz all spoke of her desperate desire to break out onto the public stage. While her disastrous escapades made her a foil for public ridicule, Lucy's complaint to her husband Ricki in one episode that she had "all this talent bottled up inside of me and you're always sitting on the cork" may well have struck a chord with members of her female audience (*American Masters: Finding Lucy*, 2000). Evidence of a rising political awareness amongst middle class women during the conservative '40-50s is evident in the rapid 44% increase in membership of the League of Women Voters between the years 1950 and 1958 (Ware 1990). Trends toward a greater consciousness based on gender identity amongst middle class women also appeared in the rapid growth in the combined membership of the League, the American Association of University Women and the General Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Membership of these women's organisations grew from 192,000 in 1940 to 430,000 by 1955 (Klein 1984).

Between the manifest signs of dissatisfaction and anomie amongst older women, the rising expectations of a new generation of younger women eager to shake off the narrow prescriptions, conflicting ideologies and hypocrisies of the old, we can feel the underlying tremors of a looming crisis around women's status and identity on American soil. It is arguable that all that American women needed was a catalytic trigger in the form of a decisive leader, whose radical vision of the future they could share, in order to bring on a major new cycle of protest. When considered in relation to Weber's three part theory of charisma, the sociological conditions of a period of crisis amongst American women were being met, but where was the leader?

The Second Wave Women's Liberation Movement

The origins of the second wave of the US based Women's Liberation Movement have been much discussed by social movement researchers (Freeman 1973, 1975; Carden 1974; Deckard 1975; Yates, 1975; Huber 1976; Cassell 1977; Evans 1979; Klein 1984; Harrison 1988; Taylor 1989; Buechler 1990; Costain 1992; Mueller 1994; Staggenborg 1998). The dominant view provided by these accounts is that the participants of the women's movement can be separated into two distinct groups, one "reformist" and the other "radical". As the influential US social movement theorists Taylor and Whittier (1997, p. 544) have observed, most analyses of the WLM "divide it into two wings, with origins in the grievances and pre-existing organizations of two groups of women: older professional women who formed bureaucratic organizations with a liberal ideology, and younger women from the civil rights and New Left movements who formed small collective organizations with radical ideology."

The reformist strand was comprised largely of older, professional women, employed in government, higher education and unions who were already affiliated with established women's organisations (eg Women's Equity Action League, American Association of University Women, League of Women Voters, National Women's Political Caucus). Many of these women, as well as entirely new recruits to the cause, joined the emerging National Organization for Women (NOW), established under Betty Friedan's presidency in 1966 (Freeman 1975; Taylor 1989). Reformist minded women were motivated by liberal ideologies and they primarily pursued the

improvements of the pay and conditions of working women. Their equity-based activism focused around interactions with government officials, lobbying politicians and bringing about legislative reform. These efforts eventually culminated in the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a battle that was lost in 1982.

The second strand of younger women activists were generally perceived to have been radicalised as a consequence of their involvement in the New Left and the civil rights movement during the 1960s (Freeman 1973, 1975; Carden 1974; Deckard 1975; Evans 1979; Cohen 1988; Brownmiller 1999). These women had participated in a range of political campaigns (eg the Mississippi Freedom Summer, anti-Vietnam war protests) coordinated by organisations ranging from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Accounts typically discuss how these young women grew to resent the limitations placed on their activism as a result of their gender. Stereotyped role expectations (typified by male put-downs requesting "chicks to volunteer for cooking duty") frequently saw women participants delegated responsibility for more mundane and menial tasks and having to fight off the sexist language and presumptions of their male colleagues (Cohen 1988, p. 150). These difficulties are perceived to have contributed to a growing awareness amongst younger women of their oppression as women, and to have helped forge a sense of collective identity.

Unlike their older, professional counterparts, younger women eschewed formal organisations and hierarchical based leadership. Instead they established 'sister chapters' and local networks that eventually became linked nationally by underground newsletters, journals and conferences. A main activity of these women included the establishment of consciousness-raising groups which politicised the personal. The political agenda of radicalised women became focussed on issues relating to women's experience of violence (physical and sexual), child sexual assault (especially incest), and the exploitation of women by the porn and prostitution industries. They promoted women's right to choice around abortion and greater freedom of sexual expression and identity (lesbianism and bisexuality) for women. Radical women's ideology recognised that women were oppressed as a class, and that the source of this

oppression was to be found in the control and regulation of women's bodies made possible by entrenched hegemonic, patriarchal privilege.

In addition to their concerns with male violence, radical women also attacked socio-cultural prescriptions regulating feminine appearance and behaviour, best epitomised by the pageantry industry. The public face of the radicalised Women's Liberation Movement is commonly depicted as emerging with the media attention given to women protesters, led by radical activist Robin Morgan, who picketed outside the American Beauty Pageant at Atlantic City in 1968. Armed with placards like "If You Want Meat Go to the Butcher" these demonstrations were important early expressions of resistance toward a stereotyped performance of a distinctively white femininity. These protests inspired journalist Lindsy Van Gelder of the *New York Post* to write her famous article which described the women demonstrators as 'bra burners', though none of the protest organisers she interviewed had in fact stated they were about to set fire to that rather useful piece of apparel. (Fire by-laws in Atlantic City prevented such gestures, in any case.) After the article was run, the police responded by revoking the demonstrators' protest license. This necessitated Robin Morgan having to take remedial action behind the scenes. She hastily reassured the police:

"We're *not* going to have fires, we're going to have a Freedom Trash Can. We're going to *throw* bras into it. Nobody talked about a fire - where did this idea come from? We're not burning anything" (Morgan in Brownmiller 1999, p. 37 - original emphasis).

Gelder's sensational headline "Bra Burners of Miss America" paradoxically succeeded in attracting considerable attention to the women demonstrators message of 'Women's Liberation'. While Gelder later personally regretted her hyperbolic words, the article was a harbinger of the on-going assault that would be directed by the mainstream media against the WLM. Subsequent analysis has indicated that this largely succeeded in its intended purpose of discrediting and dismissing the voice of radical feminist women (Van Zoonen 1992; Creedon 1993; Ashley & Olson 1998; Beck 1998).

Many younger activist women became involved in establishing collectives which provided abortion counselling, women's health services, rape crisis counselling and refuges for women and children fleeing domestic violence. The collective structures set up initially by younger women were intended as an alternative to centralised, hierarchically based decision making processes and structures. Over the years however the services established by radical women have not resisted the forces of routinisation suggested by Weber's theories which have since seen rape crisis, abortion clinics, refuges and other services subsumed under the rubric of professionalism and formalised management practices (Staggenborg 1988; Martin 1990). Despite the considerable ideological differences between liberal and radical feminism, over the longer term these separate forces have often proved to be compatible and mutually reinforcing.

As a result of the perception that there were two distinct strands to the second wave WLM in the US, contemporary investigation of its origins has tended to look for different reasons to explain why it was that both older and younger women began to agitate around women's interests and issues at the same time. However, as social movement theorists who are informed by the insights of collective behaviourism have observed, there is a questionable tendency to explain the initial phases of movements in terms of their later, organised public face (Killian 1984; Oberschall 1989; Polletta 1998). In particular, organisational-based accounts of social movements neglect issues relating to the emergence of new narratives, shared meaning and changes in collective beliefs that help to explain the greater spontaneity of the initial stages of mobilisation. The inadequacy of present analyses is suggested by Taylor and Whittier (1997, p. 550) who, while they acknowledged that "these two strands emerged separately", are unable to give an adequate account for the simultaneous mobilisation of both older and younger women.

Within the political/sociological literature four key factors are routinely acknowledged as crucial integers to understanding why the second wave Women's Liberation Movement kicked off in the late '60s in the US. In 1961 Esther Peterson, then assistant secretary for labour for women's affairs, attended a meeting of women trade unionists. At the meeting she suggested that a committee should be set up to

investigate discriminatory practices affecting women in paid employment. She sent a formal recommendation to that effect to President Kennedy and by December 1961 the bipartisan Commission on the Status of Women had been established. The Commission's report, *American Women*, was released in 1963 (the same year as Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*). The Commission documented widespread discrimination against women in the workplace. It recommended that action be taken in particular to ensure affordable child care, equal opportunity in hiring and paid maternity leave. Following its release, state commissions on the status of women were established in all 50 states. Real progress in improving women's employment conditions proved to be a slow and arduous process, however. Some feminists (eg Freedman 1973) dismissed these commissions as a cynical ploy by state governors to pay political debts without conceding any real power or influence to women.

The second factor cited in the literature was the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 by the US Congress. The Act had been drawn up largely in response to the black protest movement sweeping across the South at that time. Title VII included a last minute amendment prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, as well as on the basis of race, colour, religion or national origin. The amendment to include sex had initially been proposed by a conservative Virginian Congressional member in an attempt to block the entire Bill. At the time, it was reported to have been met with gales of laughter and disbelief from other male members on Capitol Hill, as well as mixed feelings from the much smaller number of elected women representatives (Yates 1975). The merriment and confusion ended rather abruptly when President Johnson sent a quiet word to Congress indicating his support for the amended Bill. The Bill was then passed without its significance and its radical implications for workplace gender relations being truly appreciated by Congress or any one else, at that time.

The third factor identified in the literature as being critical to the launching of the Women's Movement in the late 1960s was the establishment of NOW in 1966 under the presidency of Betty Friedan. Friedan was a natural choice for the presidency following the establishment of her reputation as a women's rights advocate in the wake of the publication of her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). By the mid

1970s, NOW boasted a membership of 35,000 and this climbed to 250,000 by the time of the defeat of the ERA Amendment in July 1982 (Taylor & Whittier 1997).

The fourth factor that social historians, sociologists and social movement theorists are inclined to cite as being a key explanatory factor involved in the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement in the late 1960s is the publication and dissemination amongst the reading public of *The Feminine Mystique*. Despite the prominent position accorded the text, analysis of its significance has frequently been reduced to a reference, a single sentence or couple of paragraphs within the social movement literature. The neglect of this text by social movement researchers continues to this day, despite the growing emphasis being placed on claims-making activities, social meaning production, new discursive politics and the significance of cultural context, to understanding the dynamics of collective identity formation and social movement emergence over this last decade (see pp. 27-36 above).

Women's Liberation - Middle Class or What?

The Women's Liberation Movement in the US is commonly depicted in the literature as a quiet, self-interested revolution that began amongst white, middle-class, relatively well-educated women who had lived unfulfilled lives in the suburbs of American towns and cities during the 1950s. This profile has been repudiated by some feminist scholars including long term scholar and activist Cynthia Epstein (1999), who bemoans this image of the women's movement as an unfounded myth. This myth has resulted in an unwarranted tendency for feminist women to be apologetic for the outcomes achieved by women through the movement. In dismissing the need to be over critical of the movement on the basis of its middle class whiteness, Epstein states emphatically that, from the very beginning, many of NOW's political activities and legal challenges centred around promoting the interests of working class women who received unequal pay and poorer occupational conditions on the factory floor. The first legal cases addressed by NOW challenged discriminatory practices against working class women who were being denied promotions and fair work conditions. In the airline industry, stewardesses jobs were being terminated upon marriage, pregnancy and advanced age. In supporting the grass roots basis of the

movement Epstein (1999, p. 83) also controversially contended that during the 1950-60s the term middle class "was a point of identification for working-class as well as middle-class women - for black women too...".

Epstein's attempt to establish retrospectively the cross-class and multi-racial appeal of the WLM runs contrary to the evidence which supports the largely middle class and high education profile of political activists involved in the new social movements of the twentieth century. The significance of middle class status to political engagement in the WLM in the US is confirmed by Ethel Klein (1987) who found that young, single or divorced college educated women living in urban areas were the strongest supporters of the feminist cause. The kind of political tactics these women favoured (letter writing campaigns, lobbying, rallies etc) has been cited as hindering black women's participation (Marshall 1978; Reid 1984). Other scholars (Jackson 1998) have also noted how the stigmatising of women's liberation as a "white girl thing" by organisations like the Black Panther Party served as a deterrent to black women's participation.

Epstein's insistence also ignores the evidence presented by Friedan's book itself which clearly falls into the middlebrow genre. *The Feminine Mystique* is replete with survey results, statistics and questionnaire results, and theoretically pitched discussions. The author constantly demonstrates her scholarly credentials and acumen managing to combine these with an accessible and engaging writing style. These features appeal to a readership that is skewed toward relatively high levels of educational achievement. Friedan's book was written with white, middle class, educated women in mind, women who had been caught in an ideological trap of feminine ideals. The very concepts and language of middlebrow texts like *Silent Spring* (1962), *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and *Animal Liberation* (1976) are geared to the educated reader. Each grounds itself through the use of statistics and other academically instilled validation practices including cross-referencing to other research undertaken in relevant fields.

Epstein appears to be on safe grounds when she asserts that the second wave feminist movement, like its predecessor, addressed issues affecting women living in poverty

and working class women, and to a lesser extent, women of colour. However her argument about the active involvement of women regardless of class or race is less sustainable. This is not to deny that there was strong support for feminist objectives amongst educated black women as Klein (1987) and others have argued. Nonetheless, high education levels and middle class, or aspiring middle class, status became defining characteristics of women activists. Recalling her experience of interviewing women who had been active in the movement back in the 1970s, Rosen (1995) observed that some of these women had grown up in white, working class families, or were second generation immigrants, and were only just making the transition to the middle class. Stressing the importance of higher education to the politicisation of these women, Rosen (1995, p. 325) remembers that her fellow activists were often "the first children in their families to enter college."

Between the 1950s and 1970s there was a threefold increase in the number of American women successfully completing undergraduate degrees (Malcolmson 1995). Daughters who grew up in the '50s witnessing the frustration experienced by their mothers were eventually to become the young, middle class, educated and thoroughly radicalised women of the late 1960s and early '70s. It was these younger women, sometimes acting in concert with middle age women like Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug and Gloria Steinem, sometimes in opposition (as in the case of radical feminists who rejected liberal feminism's failure to attend to the agenda of male violence), who would form the grass roots, mobilising force of the Women's Liberation Movement in the US.

Within the social movement literature there is currently little discussion of the importance of the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* to the politicisation of middle class daughters. Yet I argue here that Friedan's book was destined to become a great politicising event for younger women as well as the middle class suburban housewives and mothers for whom the book was primarily written.

The Feminine Mystique and Second Wave Feminism

From the earliest days of scholarly analysis of the emergence of second wave feminism, the publication of Friedan's book has been identified as a significant event. Despite Friedan's own targeted audience of middle class suburban housewives, its influence has been acknowledged by older and younger, more radical, feminist women alike. Amongst the first radical feminist scholars to give the book its due was Juliet Mitchell (1971, p. 52) who declared in *Woman's Estate* "if a single inspiration for the movement is to be cited, it was the publication in 1963 of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (and her subsequent foundation of NOW in 1966)". The emotional impact of Friedan's argument was alluded to by Alice Rossi who, when writing in the *ADA World Magazine* in 1971, stated that the very suggestion that women might feel ambivalent about marriage, maternity or home-making was so disturbing that it provoked public responses ranging from a "shiver of distaste to a convulsion of hate" (Rossi in Epstein 1999, p. 83). In another early academic journal article which heralded the on-going organisational focus of scholarship devoted to the WLM's emergence, Jo Freeman (1973, p. 798) affirmed that Friedan's book became "an immediate best seller, it stimulated many women to question the status quo". Reiterating these sentiments, Gayle Yates (1975, pp. 36-37) noted that *The Feminine Mystique* was reported by many women to have changed the direction of their lives and that Friedan's book "was a signal of the resurgence of American Feminism. Her woman rang true for thousands of women and sparked the flames of considerable feminist reflection and activity."

The author herself was extremely confident about the salutary impact of *The Feminine Mystique*. In the opening paragraph of her follow up book *It Changed My Life* (1976), Friedan informed the reader that one of the most frequent questions asked of her in interviews was "what happened in your life that made you start the women's movement?" The author was only too happy to wear the crown as instigator of the WLM, as introductory statements like the following make clear - "because words of mine, based on personal truth, led me and others to organize the women's movement..." (Friedan 1976, p. xiv).

Affirming comments on the importance of Friedan's monograph to the emergence of the second wave WLM are to be found throughout the scholarly research of the '70s

and '80s. This tradition has continued well into the '90s with Bowlby (1992, p. 76) acknowledging the links between Friedan's text and the emergence of the women's movement - "...*The Feminine Mystique* is commonly regarded both as a feminist classic and as a book which acted as a catalyst to the western feminist movement which began in the mid- to late 1960s". In his recent biography of Friedan, Daniel Horowitz (1998, p. 197) surmised that her text 'was a key factor in the revival of the women's movement...*The Feminine Mystique* helped millions of women comprehend, and then change, the conditions of their lives". Even staunch critics of feminism like Harvey Mansfield (1997, p . 292) have identified Betty Friedan as the "founder of [second wave] feminism in America ..." a position that he credits as being largely due to the astonishing influence of her text.

A number of scattered anecdotes attest to the enormous impact of *The Feminine Mystique*. In Carden's (1974) analysis of the origins of the WLM, we find an account of how black and white women working together on a civil rights project during the mid '60s had become estranged from each other due to their competitive interest in the men involved in the project. She reports how "one white woman brought the others together to listen to extracts from Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and to discuss their situation" (Carden 1974, p. 60). The ensuing discussion served as an ice-breaker with the black and white women alike agreeing that they shared a common sense of discontent at being relegated to performing all the menial work involved in the campaign. The text acted as a catalyst uniting them (at least temporarily) along gender lines. In her interviews of women activists Carden found that approximately half of her respondents (aged 28 years plus) had read *The Feminine Mystique* shortly after it was published in 1963. Of these women, half again reported "that they were seriously influenced by Friedan's ideas and greatly relieved to discover that someone else shared their worries." One of the women interviewed by Carden actually commented that the book had "hit me like a bomb...For one thing, I knew then there were two kooks in the world" (Carden 1974, p. 155). There is also some evidence that mothers used *The Feminine Mystique* as a vehicle for conveying a sense of dissatisfaction about their lives and social status to their daughters. Sara Evans (1979, p. 122) reports that "many women urged their daughters to read *The Feminine Mystique*, perhaps because Friedan had touched their latent feminism,

perhaps because she also had described more of their day-to-day reality than they might have wished".

In her introduction to the re-released 2001 edition of *The Feminine Mystique* Anna Quindlen remembers the unusual sight of her mother, whom she describes as "not a great reader" (she usually only read just before going to bed), hunched over the book in broad daylight at the kitchen table. Quindlen does not believe it was Friedan's analysis of Freud or her critique of American consumerism that held her mother's attention. "I think" she says "it was probably the notion of seeing her own life there in the pages of that book, the endless, thankless cycle of dishes and vacuuming and meals and her husband's ironing and her children's laundry" (Quindlen 2001, p. ix). Only eight years after catching her mother out at the kitchen table, Quindlen remembers the transformative effect Friedan's book had on her when she read it at the age of twenty as part of her women's studies course at Barnard University. In the prologue to her recently published book on the Women's Liberation Movement, Susan Brownmiller, journalist and author of *Against Our Will* (1975), similarly recalls the salutary impact of Friedan's book on her own ideas and values when she read it for the first time in paperback in 1964. She remarked that "although Friedan had defined the problem largely in terms of bored, depressed, middle-class suburban housewives who downed too many pills and weren't making use of their excellent educations, I'd seen myself on every page. *The Feminine Mystique* changed my life" (Brownmiller 1999, p. 3).

Friedan's *Mystique*

In both the preface to her seminal text as well as her follow up book *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (1976), Friedan traced the inspiration behind *The Feminine Mystique* to having dedicated much of a year (1956-57) administering an alumni questionnaire to her former Smith college class mates. As she recounts, her research documented a general sense of purposelessness and frustration then pervading the lives of her peers. (Ware (1990) and Horowitz (1998) have since challenged Friedan's negative spin on her research results, arguing that she over-emphasised the dissatisfaction of her peers.) What is perhaps most

significant is that Friedan found that these women did not feel that they had succeeded in utilising their college education in their roles as housewives and mothers. The article she subsequently wrote "Are Women Wasting Their Time in College?" argued that women should see themselves as individuals, not simply housewives and mothers. It was rejected by *McCall's*, who had originally commissioned it. The *Ladies Home Journal* rewrote the ending to arrive at opposite conclusions to Friedan, prompting her to withdraw it. *Redbook* also quickly sent Friedan a shocked rejection letter, opining that the article was one which "only the most neurotic housewife could possibly identify [with]" (Friedan 1976, p. 17).

It was as much the story these women told about their lives, as well as the resistance she encountered to its being told, which Friedan highlights as the key factors behind her decision to write *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan set out to prove that it was not women being educated that was the problem so much as it was the narrow definition of women's role within the private sphere. While she intended to take one year to complete the project, the book eventually took five years to research and finish. In it, Friedan engaged in a critical comparative analysis of the fiction articles published by women's magazines between the 1930-50s and countered the conservative ideologies foisted on women through marketing strategies and educators alike. All of these were, she complained, contributing to the 'trapped housewife' syndrome suffered by American women. By the time it was ready to go to press Friedan had parted with her literary agent who failed to promote it as she expected. The first print run was for three thousand copies. Despite these unassuming figures, Friedan herself felt assured that she had written something momentous. She recalls being beset by a "calm, strange sureness, as if in tune with something much larger, more important than myself that had to be taken seriously" (Friedan 1976, p. 18). Betty Friedan was filled with a sense of prescience about the public impact her book would have.

As it turned out, the author's expectations were not misplaced. The book rocketed onto the *New York Times* best-seller list and stayed there for two years. It was taken up as recommended reading by the Book Find Club and ranked on other best-seller lists like *The Herald Tribune*. In its second year it sold 1.3 million copies making it the top selling paperback non-fiction book of 1964 (Hennessee, 1999). Despite

considerable hindrances to sales (including Friedan's lack of status as an established author and the extensive newspaper strike in New York that meant no reviews or ads promoting her book were written in that city for several months after it was first released) "her book was moving off the shelves without benefit of a famous author or newspaper publicity; women were coming into bookstores and asking for it" (Hennessee 1999, p. 77).

In the introductory comments to *It Changed My Life* (1976) Friedan reported that *The Feminine Mystique* sold over 3,000,000 copies but reached an audience five times that size through excerpts and truncated articles that were subsequently printed in various women's magazines (Friedan 1976, p. 19). Final and precise sales figures in terms of book sales are not easy to find. In his biography of Friedan, Daniel Horowitz (1998) confirmed that *The Feminine Mystique* eventually sold millions and millions of copies. The rough estimates of its total readership indicated by direct sales figures give little indication of the social practices surrounding the reading of the text. But it can be assumed that many readers would have accessed *The Feminine Mystique* through public libraries or borrowed the book from friends. Sales figures also do not give any insight into how the text was read within families, especially by the pubescent and adolescent aged daughters of their middle aged mothers.

From the outset, it was evident that Friedan's text had struck a chord. Women's magazines *McCall's* and the *Ladies Home Journal* were inundated with unprecedented mail from readers which reflected a highly polarised audience. In later years the author recalled receiving thousands of letters of relief and gratitude as well as angry letters from women who accused her of destroying families and betraying feminine values (Friedan 1976). The huge sales figures and the extreme responses to *The Feminine Mystique* satisfied Weber's first and second criteria for the emergence of charismatic leadership, namely the articulation of a revolutionary vision and the gathering of a devoted following holding congruent beliefs and values. The personal nature of the issues Friedan addressed in her book and her intimate, confessional writing style combined to render more direct contact with readers unnecessary. The letters received by the author and by women's magazines all indicate that *The Feminine Mystique* provoked a great deal of what I referred to earlier as "book-talk",

that is discussion amongst women who had read the text. Reportage in magazines and the press ensured that public debate extended well beyond the usual array of informal friendship networks and social settings. In *It Changed My Life* (1976) Friedan recalled: "I would hear of cocktail parties being broken up by women arguing over my book who hadn't even read it (Friedan 1976, p. 18). Such displays give some indication of the powerful emotions that Friedan's book stirred up.

The strength of feelings provoked by the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* suggests strongly that the text registered amongst its targeted audience of women in a manner akin to a 'moral shock'. These kind of events, like the US Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* which galvanised anti-choice activists, are widely recognised by social movement theorists as catalytic moments that can lead to the triggering of social resistance and a new wave of protest (Luker 1984; Jasper 1997). Feelings of moral shock experienced privately by the reader became accentuated by widespread 'book-talk'. Together these gave birth to an intense, national discursive politics centred around women's identity and status within American society.

It can be surmised that *The Feminine Mystique* was hugely successful not only in gaining widespread dissemination amongst the reading public of American society, but in making a significant social impact. Its readership was especially concentrated amongst those women whom Friedan had specifically addressed, namely white, middle class, American women. While primarily written for women of her own age group (Friedan was 42 when her book was first published), its message about avoiding the housewife trap was not lost on America's less encumbered daughters. These were the women who were seeking to escape the contradictions created by the clash between the new sexual mores and rigidly conservative straitjacket of the 1950s; they were looking back over their shoulders at their harried, over-burdened and under-appreciated mothers, and were determined to make a 'jailbreak'.

Neglect of Friedan's Text by Social Movement Researchers

Before assessing the role of Friedan in terms of Gramsci's emphasis on moral and intellectual leadership, and the significance of a text as a challenge to dominant

hegemonic practices and ideologies, it is useful to review recent scholarly analyses of the text. Several articles raise rather surprising questions about the validity of Friedan's own analysis of the identity problems faced by middle class American women in the late 1950s. Many of the inaccuracies that have been located in Friedan's portrait of American women's lives merely raise more important and intriguing questions as to how and why the text obtained the level of efficacy that it did.

Concerted attempts to assess the efficacy of *The Feminine Mystique* by social movement researchers remain virtually non-existent. In text after text, article after article on the women's movement from the 1970s right through to the late 1990s one finds Friedan's book either not mentioned at all, reduced to a reference citation or briefly acknowledged in a fleeting, albeit laudatory sentence (Mitchell 1971; Freeman 1973, 1975; Deckard 1975; Cassell 1977; Klein 1984; Rupp & Taylor 1987; Harrison 1988; May 1988; Costain 1992; Mueller 1994; Taylor & Whittier 1992, 1995, 1997; Staggenborg 1998). Some social movement researchers have managed to devote a few paragraphs or even several pages of discussion to the text (Carden 1974; Yates 1975; Evans 1979). More thoughtful attempts to address the text through historical investigation of the ideological trappings of the language of 'just a housewife', such as those by Matthews (1987), continue to remain scant.

Social movement theorists are inclined to note that there was a simultaneous eruption in 1966 and 1967 in both older and younger women through organisations such as the Women's League for Peace and Freedom and the emergent organisation NOW with the freshly radicalised younger women's groups who had drawn lessons from the civil rights and New Left movements (Freeman 1973; Deckard 1975; Evans 1979; Klein 1984; Rupp & Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989; Mueller 1994; Rosenfeld & Ward 1996; Taylor & Whittier 1997). Exactly why older and younger American women reached critical mass at the same time remains an intriguing coincidence.

The continued neglect of Friedan's book is even more surprising given the new focus within the literature on the micro-social dimensions of movements, including the dynamics of social meaning production and street level emergence of new discursive

politics. While attempts have been made over the last decade to integrate discussion of popular culture, narratives and social scripts into US based social movement theory, no one has yet addressed the unique role that might be played by the charismatic text in this equation. A controversial, best-selling charismatic text that addresses itself to a pressing social problem may be an important originating source of new discourses and reflection. It could be that Friedan the author should, in Foucauldian terms be recognised as the initiator of new discursive practices surrounding the status and role of American women. Such discursive practices are capable of rupturing silences and providing a longed for sense of direction. They are capable of instigating widespread transformations in human consciousness.

Even when prominent scholars of the women's social movement have directly addressed the role played by written documents to explain the grass roots mobilisation of American women, they surprisingly omit listing Friedan's text. Carol Mueller (1994), for example, cites the publication of a little known journal article by Helen Hacker (1951) on women's social status prior to next mentioning the publication of the feminist journal *Notes from the Second Year* in the mid 1970s. Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier (1995) who explore the cultural symbols, discourses and emergent norms of the Women's Liberation Movement also fail to mention *The Feminine Mystique*. Their discussion remains preoccupied with the early 1970s publications put out by younger, radical, often lesbian women. American social movement feminist researchers have also discussed the role played by women's publishing houses and feminist and lesbian literature to the maintenance of collective identity boundaries (Taylor & Whittier 1992; Mueller 1994; Staggenborg 1998). Thus there remains as yet little appreciation of the role played by Friedan's book to the emergence of new norms, the formation of an initial collective identity or the kind of collective behaviourism associated with the earlier, less structured and more spontaneous phase of a social movement. As analyses like Costain's (1992) clearly demonstrate, theorists of the second wave have yet to explain why American women were angry. They have yet to provide adequate answers as to why older and younger women mobilised almost simultaneously.

The astonishing neglect of Friedan's text by social movement theorists suggests that there may be other factors involved. Perhaps the most important of these was the schism that opened up between Friedan and the younger generation of 1950s daughters who were to become the grass roots activists and ideologues of the movement during the 1960s and '70s. Friedan's dogged insistence on a liberal equity approach to improving the status of women ran counter to the generally much more radical assessment of women's oppression undertaken by the newer and younger generation of feminist writers and scholars. Equity feminism pursued an agenda that assumed women's social status problems could be effectively addressed by securing equal rights and anti-discrimination practices. This was immediately apparent in the campaign and language of choice around abortion services. The concerns of American radical feminists on the other hand - as exemplified by the writings of Robin Morgan (1970), Shulamith Firestone (1970), Kate Millett (1970), Mary Daly (1973), *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973 [1971]), Andrea Dworkin (1974), Susan Brownmiller (1975), Adrienne Rich (1976), Louise Armstrong (1978), Florence Rush (1980) and Susan Griffin (1981), as well as noteworthy contributions from Australian and British scholars Germaine Greer (1970) and Juliet Mitchell (1975) - focused on the body as the primary site of women's oppression. Their writings raised concerns about women's experience of motherhood, domestic violence, rape, prostitution, child sexual assault, women's reproductive health issues, the pornography industry, patriarchal religion and the oppressive construction of male and female sexuality and desire under conditions of patriarchy. In opposition to equity feminism, their analyses drew attention to the kinds of issues and social problems affecting women that resisted remedial action through a legislative reform program.

In addition to disagreeing with equity liberalism's relatively conservative platform for pursuing improvements in women's status through legislation, an entirely different reason for the contemporary neglect of Friedan's book by feminist social movement theorists can be found in a lingering distaste for the author's transparent homophobia. Friedan's negative attitude toward homosexuality was evident not only in the text of *The Feminine Mystique* itself, but in her later writings, journal articles and speeches. At times her shrill language made her sound like an uncomfortable echo of her arch nemesis Senator Joe McCarthy in her battle to stop the infiltration of the women's

movement by what she called the "lavender menace" - namely those women who "were continually trying to push lesbianism or hatred of men" (Friedan 1973, p. 33). The lampooning response of one women's group to Friedan's charge was to embrace the label as their own and then to pass a resolution confirming that the "Women's Movement is a lesbian plot" (Knight 1997, p. 49). While the debate obviously had its moments of comedy, Friedan's attitudes toward homosexuals and lesbians, combined with her antagonism toward the political agenda of radical feminists has ensured that she has remained a difficult figure in the movement for many feminist scholars to this day. As Horowitz (1998, p. 232) confirms, even though Friedan toned down her opposition to radical feminists in the interests of presenting a united front in the fight for the ERA, "the breach was never healed". In *The Second Stage* (1981) Friedan continued to harangue radical women for failing to follow her instructions. She also chose to cast overly personal aspersions on Gloria Steinem in her complaints about the conspiratorial forces that had robbed her of her rightful claim to leadership.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that Friedan's sense of her own self-importance and tendency to claim personal credit for starting the Women's Liberation Movement, also alienated her from her younger sisters whose collective politics decidedly rejected (at least in theory) attributing leadership status to any one person. Friedan's self-aggrandisement is frequently transparent in her writings and speeches. In the valedictory speech upon leaving the presidency of NOW in 1970 Friedan unabashedly declared "I have led you into history. I leave you now - to make new history" (Friedan in Faludi 1992, p. 356).

Reviews of Friedan's *Mystique*

The Feminine Mystique was reviewed by many prestigious journals and major tabloids in 1963 (eg *The Economist*, *The Saturday Review*, the *American Sociological Review*, the *New Statesman*, *The New York Times Book Review* and the *New York Herald Tribune Books*). The majority of critics received the book favourably, though some substantial criticisms were also made. Lillian Smith (1963, pp. 34, 44) happily reported "I did not find one dull chapter in the book" and commended Friedan for writing with "passionate drive" and scholarly dedication. Sociologist Sylvia Fava

criticised Friedan's too psychological approach. Still there is more than a suggestion of the new discursive politics being generated by *The Feminine Mystique* in her acknowledgment of "the wide reading and discussion it is already gaining" (Fava 1963, p. 1054). *The Economist* (1963, p. 519) critic considered the book to be meritorious, while naming 'the feminine mystique' "an unsatisfactory label" and accused Friedan of displaying "humourlessness, righteousness and running on too long." The *Tribune* critic complimented Friedan for expressing herself with passion, rather than militancy, and found her suggestions "not only sensible but mandatory if women are ever to clear away the mists of the feminine mystique..." (Mannes 1963, p. 1). Lucy Freeman called Friedan's book "highly readable" and "provocative" while at the same time denouncing the author's tendency to make "sweeping generalities". Catching the ambiguity within Friedan's own argument she took issue with the author's tendency to blame women's magazines for the plight of American women, rather than the choices individual women themselves had made. "The fault Mrs Friedan" she clarified, "is not in our culture, but in ourselves " (Freeman 1963, p. 46).

While Friedan and her book have been neglected by social movement theorists, a number of useful and insightful comments and observations have now been made by social historians, biographers and cultural researchers who have engaged in the important work of trying to understand the text's social impact. Beginning in the late '80s, the attention devoted to *The Feminine Mystique* has dramatically increased. From the rather lonely foray made by Dijkska (1980), more sustained and insightful critical comments about the text can now be found in Matthews (1987), Ware (1990), Meyer (1991), Bowlby (1992), Meyerowitz (1993), Moskowitz (1996) and Knight (1997). A new critical biography of Friedan has been published by the cultural theorist Daniel Horowitz (1998) as well as an authorised, more gossipy biography by Judith Hennessee (1999).

The publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 was preceded by the earlier ground-breaking text perceived to have launched the feminist challenge to hegemonic patriarchal practice in the West in the postwar years, namely Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. First published in Paris in 1949, *The Second Sex* was subsequently translated into English in 1953. De Beauvoir's book is considered by

many to be a keystone in the history of women's sense of collective consciousness and identity. The text was obviously formative of Friedan's own views and she refers to *The Second Sex*, albeit in a fleeting manner, within the body of her own book. Although de Beauvoir's text has remained a seminal text for highly educated women and subsequently became part of the standard reading list of women and gender studies programs within academic institutions, *The Second Sex* never achieved the kind of wide popularity and public dissemination acquired by Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. It is not surprising, therefore to find that part of the cultural analysis dedicated to understanding the efficacy of Friedan's book has been couched in terms of a comparison - why did Friedan's text 'work' whereas de Beauvoir's generally did not, outside of exclusive, academically orientated circles?

Short journal articles by Dijkstra (1980), Mansfield (1997) and more recently Gornick (1999) have engaged in direct comparisons between de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. While rather grudgingly acknowledging, on the one hand, that "historically, Friedan played an important role in encouraging ...consciousness raising", Dijkstra (1980, p. 296) was one of Friedan's fiercest critics. She expresses disdain for Friedan given the author's failure to acknowledge her intellectual debt to de Beauvoir, and her psychologising approach to women's oppression. Despite her antagonism, Dijkstra does manage to make a few cogent and pertinent observations. As a French intellectual, Simone de Beauvoir had been heavily steeped in the academic traditions of European philosophy. Her analysis was driven by Hegelian dialectical theories about identity formation that created woman as "Other" and theories of historical materialism provided through Marx's philosophy. Consequently *The Second Sex* (1953) was a highly philosophical book that devoted a considerable amount of space to abstract thinking. The text also suffered from being very densely written and overly long. These features meant that it lacked an immediate context or sense of appeal for US readers. Its radicalness would also have been alienating to many US women due to its author's (dubious) conclusion that the obstacles to liberation created by the institutions of motherhood and marriage were so intractable that women's only avenue for redress lay through socialist revolution. The problems presented by de Beauvoir's authorial style and suggested remedies for change created barriers to its American appropriation, especially given

the anti-communist hysteria that had been stirred up by the McCarthy era. This point is not lost on Dijkstra. She ruefully acknowledged that while the French intellectual's analysis of women's lack of social status was vastly superior to Friedan's, her book lacked public appeal. "De Beauvoir's book was not really designed to reach the masses" she confirmed. She further conceded that if the French intellectual had written "an easy-to-read manual with practical advice, its impact would have been more immediate and more perceptible" (Dijkstra 1980, p. 291). Therein, at least, lay the strength of Friedan's own practically oriented and reformist approach. In rejecting the inherent radicalism of *The Second Sex,* Friedan was able to utilise and adapt many of its basic premises "reducing them from radical to reformist solutions, from philosophical to popular jargon, and from European to American references" (Dijkstra 1980, p. 294). Friedan's book was not only far more accessible, it was also much more ideologically compatible with its socio-political, democratic environment.

While hyper critical of Friedan and feminism generally, Mansfield makes a similar observation with respect to the relative success of her book. In contrast to the French intellectual's philosophical approach, the power of Friedan's book is to be found, he observed, in how it catered to the American fascination with psychological themes. In how Friedan "anchored her book more concretely in time and place than had de Beauvoir" (Mansfield 1997, p. 294). Gornick (1999) has moved onto different but equally promising terrain in her assessment of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of de Beauvoir's and Friedan's books. A major problem with *Second Sex* she argued was that:

"the book is written in a tone of voice remarkably self-distancing. The author of *The Second Sex* is at pains to put space between herself and her subject. She knows the condition whereof she speaks *intimately* but make no mistake, reader, she does not share it. Women - in this book written by a brilliant and angry woman - are distinctly 'they' not 'we' " (Gornick 1999, p. 70 - original emphasis).

The problematic manner in which de Beauvoir constructed the author and reader relationship reflected, as Gornick is aware, larger, autobiographical issues faced by the French philosopher who predominantly desired to be perceived as Sartre's

intellectual companion and equal. To a great extent de Beauvoir lived the life of the mind, remaining childless and therefore without exposure to the double-edged gifts and burdens associated with motherhood. Friedan, on the other hand, was the mother of three children. She also had been preceded by the earlier American feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton who had also written 'we' not 'they' from the moment she put pen to paper. As Gornick (1999, p. 71) cogently maintains "it is not until 'they' transmutes into 'we' that you've got a movement - and that is why feminism belongs to America".

A different trend in the analysis of the efficacy and success of Friedan's text has drawn attention to the author's lively writing style. Bowlby (1992) and Knight (1997) have both drawn attention to how the book elicits pleasures for the reader due to its dramatic congruency with the detective novel genre. The popularity of Friedan, Knight (1997, p. 41) explained, resides in how "the book reads like a thriller, with Friedan as the lone detective chasing up the clues to the mysterious mystique". Knight's comments on the intrinsic appeal of the detective-style of *The Feminine Mystique* can usefully be expanded. By situating herself as the detective on the trail of elusive clues, Friedan not only entertained the reader, she actively engaged the reader as a participator in a formulaic game (Dove 1997). The detective fiction genre launched in the nineteenth century by Edgar Allen Poe has given us a variety of well-known quasi realist, fictional characters like Dupain, Sherlock Holmes and Inspector Poirot. It is distinctive in that it insists that there are in fact hidden truths that the detective alone has the skills to ferret out (Thomas 1999; Dove 1997). George Dove (1997) has identified four rules or qualities that define the detective genre, namely that; 1) the main character is the detective; 2) the main plot hangs on the investigation and solution of a mystery; 3) the mystery is a complex secret and requires special skills; and, 4) that the mystery is solved. While one may quibble with the success of Friedan's own solution, *The Feminine Mystique* faithfully adhered to this formula and this adherence, combined with the expectations created by the detective genre itself, in turn worked to convince the reader. By identifying herself in the role of a detective, Friedan enhanced her own authority and the soundness of the conclusions she drew. Rather than using Thomas' (1999) forensic science based "devices of truth" (eg the polygraph, fingerprints, mug shots etc), Friedan demonstrated her acumen through her

skills in interrogation and her ability to spot changes in the images of American women in popular culture, much as though she is putting them under a magnifying glass. Throughout her text, we follow Friedan into libraries searching through tomes of women's magazines, conducting surveys of her college peers, undertaking content analysis of magazines, interviewing psychiatrists, high school guidance counsellors, obstetricians, doctors, young women college students and housewives, gathering all the clues together in order to make her case that women want more than simply a life at home. Dove (1997, p. 19) has argued that the formulaic assurance provided by detective fiction that there is indeed a solution, "acts as a structuring force" on the reader. This in turn creates a reader who is an especially "interested spectator" who is driven by a strong compulsion to find out the answer to the mystery.

Along with her entertaining style, Bowlby has also argued that the impact of Friedan's text is located in how the author drummed home her message through the reiterative use of key words like 'brainwashing', 'manipulation' and 'waste' to describe women's sequestering within the domestic sphere. Repetition is a central skill of the adept rhetorician. Friedan's authorised biographer Judith Hennessee (1999, p. 81) also comments on how the author's "prolix, repetitive, obsessive" writing style readily conveyed the author's deep sense of passion and commitment to her subject matter and successfully "infused the book with its power".

Knight (1997) has recognised that Friedan's book marked the beginning of a discursive trend in modern feminist writing to read signs of conspiracy within American culture. Conspiracy theories were rife in the US in the 1940s and 1950s, with major discourses creating fears and anxieties around failed masculinity in the form of homosexuality and the ever lurking communist threat (Epstein 1994). Friedan's conspiratorial language in *The Feminist Mystique* is conveyed through her tendency to wonder at the significance of certain 'coincidences' and how she found clues for "the new image of women as housewife-mother" in texts largely created by male writers and editors. Friedan constantly deployed the Korean war neologism of 'brainwashing' thereby inferring that women were being manipulated by anonymous external forces into accepting a life of domestic drudgery. Despite the thoroughness of her expose of popular culture via various media including advertising and women's

magazines, Friedan eventually went on to disown her "conspiracy theory" explanation for women's lot in American society. She opened the door, only to close it. This analytical trend is also evident, Knight has argued, in the work of more contemporary feminist writers like Naomi Wolf (1991) and Susan Faludi (1992) who have similarly built up to, but then disowned, the language of conspiracy.

In his chapter on Friedan in *Portraits of American Women* (1991) Donald Meyer observed that Friedan's rhetorical style encouraged women, who were victims of 'the problem with no name", to learn more about their problems by looking within their own hearts and minds rather than reading articles and books. In addition, he noted, the persuasive strength in how the author pitted science (Maslow) against science (Freud, Mead) to undermine the authority of received, learned opinion and to present a different, scientifically derived view of the lives women could lead. Meyer contends that Friedan's book was a precursor to popular self-help books in its firm assurances that individual women could change themselves.

On a different tangent, Somerville (1997), who is a social movement theorist, saw *The Feminine Mystique* in relation to the early 1940s writings by the influential sociologist Talcott Parsons. Parsons had commented upon "the insecurity of the adult feminine role in our urban society" (Parsons in Somerville 1997, p. 675). In his paper on gender and social structure in American society, Parsons further elaborated on this theme. He defined the insecurity being experienced by women in terms of a crisis of identity that was being generated in part by the conflicting social roles and expectations placed on women by the war effort (Parsons 1942). Somerville (1997, p. 675) surmised that Friedan's construction of the problem of women's identity in *The Feminine Mystique* was in effect "precisely about this phenomenon".

Finally in his recent biography of Betty Friedan, Horowitz (1998) has provided one of the more comprehensive overviews of Friedan's famous text. Joining revisionist accounts by social historians such as Ware (1990), Meyerowitz (1993) and Moskowitz (1996), Horowitz notes that what Friedan had written was hardly news to the American public, especially to women. Magazine articles routinely attested to deep feelings of dissatisfaction, anger and frustration being quite commonplace

amongst suburban, middle class housewives. In fact, while Friedan received many letters of support and praise in the wake of her book's publication, there was a significant proportion of women who responded by complaining that she had added nothing to what had already been said and that they were tired of the overly negative evaluations of their daily lives. *The Feminine Mystique* was one of many books published at that time which addressed itself to the issue of women's social status and the problems faced by middle class educated women. Other contributions included Flexner's *Century of Struggle* (1959), Newcomer's *A Century of Higher Education for Women* (1959), Smuts' *Women and Work in America* (1959), Hunt's *Her Infinite Variety: the American Woman as Lover, Mate or Rival* (1962), Nye and Hoffman's *The Employed Mother in America* (1963), as well as Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962). The prevalence of this kind of book within popular culture is confirmed by Friedan's own publishing firm W.W. Norton which found it necessary to warn an assigned reviewer (Pearl Buck) that "one of our problems is that much is being written these days about the plight (or whatever it is) of the educated American woman; therefore, this one will have to fight its way out of a thicket" (Horowitz 1998, p. 202).

Horowitz himself puts forward a number of suggestions to help explain the attractiveness of much of Friedan's argument to middle class women readers. In doing so he draws attention to how Friedan reworked the familiar themes found in women's magazines in new and challenging ways, imbuing everyday issues with a sense of passion and urgency. He notes that Friedan was careful not to provide overly negative evaluations of men and their attitudes to housework and that she reassured women that overthrowing the feminine mystique would led them to having more, not less, satisfying sex lives. He also highlights how she eased women's concerns about the overly masculine influence that the public sphere might have on them by denouncing lesbians, while at the same time feeding fears about bored and clucky mothers trapped at home who turned their sons into homosexuals. Friedan worked hard to resurrect feminism by debunking the stereotype of the feminist woman as an ugly, frigid neurotic who bore a personal grudge against men. She replaced this image with the pretty, married, lady-like image of the earlier pioneering feminist Lucy Stone. He cites the possible effects of Friedan's (controversial) use of rhetorical devices

including fears about the Bomb and Nazi death camps, commending the strength of Friedan's deployment of contemporary psychology to promote goals of self-actualisation for women. Addressing the strategy that often lurked behind her line of attack, Horowitz identifies (without going into detailed exegesis), how Friedan frequently gave common themes a twist. By way of example, he points out how Friedan turned the tables on discourses that suggested that domesticity would solve women's sense of frustration, asserting to the contrary that women's confinement within the home was the cause of her misery, not the cure. Finally Horowitz importantly noted the importance of Friedan's text as a middlebrow book. *The Feminine Mystique* was, he confirmed, "a crossover book, one that combined the seriousness and research of social and behavioral sciences with a lively and accessible style" (Horowitz 1998, p. 207).

Discontinuity or Continuity?

Most contemporary feminist scholars and historians have tended to echo Friedan's view of a rigidly conservative popular culture - a culture that was heavily implicated in creating an illusory world of deeply unhappy middle aged women who bred rebellious daughters (Yates 1975; Cohen 1988; May 1988; Breines 1992; Halberstam 1993; Malcolmson 1995; Rosen 1995, 2000). Mirroring Friedan's line of attack Marcia Cohen (1988), for example, argued that the standard editorial style of women's magazines such as *Collier's*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *McCall's*, promoted an unrealistic, saccharine world which falsely depicted American women leading happy and fulfilled lives nestled within the bosom of their middle class suburban homes. She sees support for Friedan's general argument reflected in the kinds of political strategies adopted during the 1970s which at one stage saw the New York Radical Feminist group occupying the offices of the *Ladies Home Journal* (Cohen 1988)[1]. The failure by most scholars to question whether Friedan was justified in attacking this medium of women's popular culture is conveyed by Moskowitz (1996,

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[1] It was Susan Brownmiller (1999) who first proposed the sit-in protest action at the *Ladies Home Journal* to the New York Radical Feminist group. Although Brownmiller began attending the group in her capacity as a journalist, she quickly found herself swept along by the ideas and the aspirations of these women. The on-going influence on Brownmiller of Betty Friedan's attack on the editorial policies of women's magazines in *The Feminine Mystique* appears clearly evident behind this suggestion for organised protest .

p. 66) who recently observed that "to this day, women's magazines of the Cold War era remain symbols of antifeminism".

While they have been vastly outnumbered by those historians and cultural commentators who broadly agreed with Friedan's central thesis, there have been voices of dissent which challenged the legitimacy of her account. British scholar Cynthia White (1971) undertook an analysis of women's magazines published in the US in the '50s and '60s and rejected Friedan's argument that there was editorial collusion in restricting magazine content to the domestic sphere. She also maintained that Friedan's entire argument had been based on "highly selective and unrepresentative sampling of women's periodicals which ignores a considerable amount of non-domestic, outward-looking content" (White 1971, p. 266). American historians, William Chafe (1972) and Eugenia Kalendin (1984) challenged Friedan's overly negative portrait of women's roles and activities during the period from the 1940-60s. Contrary to Friedan they argued that married women continued to lead interesting and diverse lives in the postwar years. In his extensive research on the political, economic and social position of American women William Chafe (1972) pointed out that the labour force participation rate of married women doubled between 1940 and 1960, increasing from 15% to 30%. Kalendin (1984) similarly noted that the number of women over the age of 35 in the paid workforce climbed from 8.5 million in 1947 to almost 13 million in 1956. The employment figures for mothers were especially astonishing, leaping over 400% from 1.5 to 6.6 million during this period. Thirty-nine percent of mothers with children aged between 6 and 16 years had jobs. Kalendin's research also found that when married women did stay home they found productive outlets for their energies by doing volunteer work, getting involved in local community politics and schools, undertaking recreational activities, or becoming Den mothers for cub scouts and girl guides. Matthews (1987, p. 217) has similarly challenged the lack of historical perspective in Friedan's account indicating that she "exaggerated the novelty of the suburban housewife's plight relative to earlier decades." The multiple realities of married women in the 1950s have now been affirmed by other researchers (Ware 1990; Meyerowitz 1994).

Social historians of American women during the 1950s are now inclined to agree that Friedan painted a one-sided picture of an unhappy, neurotic housewife which did not convey "either the complexity of many middle-class women's lives or the contributions such women made to their communities and public life" (Ware 1990, p. 294).

Over the last decade, the perception that women's popular culture was as heavily implicated as Friedan had argued, in producing monotonous propaganda that stifled women's opportunities and horizons, has become the subject of deeper scrutiny. As a result, a rather different trend has emerged in the assessment of Friedan's text in the wake of the publication of two important journal articles by American social historians Meyerowitz (1993) and Moskowitz (1996). Both of these women academics have questioned the validity of Friedan's original analysis of American women' lives, and in particular her portrait of 1950s American women's magazines. Like White (1971), Chafe (1972) and Kalendin (1984) they have concluded that her analysis was overly biased and suffered from a selectivity which tended to support her arguments about a singular reality that denied the multiple and complex realities that women actually lived.

Meyerowitz and Moskowitz have supported their respective critiques of Friedan by undertaking representative sampling and content analysis of women's magazines between the years 1940-60s. As a result of going back to the original sources, both of these social historians have ended up arguing in favour of a different leverage point for understanding the impact of Friedan's text. In effect they have surmised that there were distinct lines of continuity, rather than discontinuity between *The Feminine Mystique* and prevailing discursive practices found in women's popular culture. As their contesting analyses draw on precisely that medium of popular culture (ie women's magazines) that Friedan herself relied on so heavily in order to emphasis the novelty of her own argument, it is important to explore their findings in some detail.

Meyerowitz's (1993) research concentrated on a survey sample of 489 non-fiction articles published in magazines in the years 1946-58. (This is unlike Friedan who concentrated primarily on fiction stories up to and including the year 1959.) The

sources Meyerowitz consulted differed also in that they included mass circulation general magazines ranging from the middlebrow *Reader's Digest* and *Coronet* to the high brow *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*, in addition to material gathered from the *Ladies Home Journal* and *Woman's Home Companion*. In 1955 Meyerowitz tells us these magazines had a combined circulation level of over 22 million. Based on her own content analysis she found, contrary to the arguments made by Friedan, that these articles promoted both the domestic and non-domestic sphere for women, frequently expressing "overt admiration for women whose individual striving moved them beyond the home" (Meyerowitz 1993, p. 1458). Meyerowitz has specifically disputed Friedan's argument that American women had become divorced from the world of politics in the postwar years. She found that regular 1950s features like Margaret Hickey's "Public Affairs Department" published in the *Ladies Home Journal* encouraged women to participate in the world of politics at the local and even national level. Matthews similarly took issue with Friedan's analysis of the difference between 1930s and 1950s ideologies with respect to women's role in politics. She found that women's magazines, up until the bombing of Pearl Harbour, had instructed women to "tend to their knitting - literally" (Matthews 1987, p. 198).

Unlike Friedan, Meyerowitz found that journalists and popular writers generally reassured women readers that no threat to the home, to gender or to heterosexuality was posed by women competing successfully at work, politics or sports. Themes which valorised domesticity and femininity were less prominent, Meyerowitz surmised, than those which trumpeted the importance of a work ethic for women. She also found that the overall proportion of articles that focused on women in their roles as mothers, wives and housewives declined over the period of the 1930-50s from 36% in 1932/34, to 27% in 1942/44, down again to 21% in 1952/54. Only 15% of the articles she sampled focussed primarily on the role of women as mothers and wives. Based on her own content analysis Meyerowitz (1993, p. 1465) has come to opposite conclusions to Friedan in arguing that "an ethos of individual achievement subtly subverted domestic ideals."

Meyerowitz has also questioned Friedan's portrait of how the ideals of heterosexual marriage found in women's magazines automatically relegated women to passivity

and an acceptance of male domination. In contrast she found that postwar magazines tended to portray "the ideal marriage as an equal partnership, with each partner intermingling traditional masculine and feminine roles" (Meyerowitz 1993, p. 1471). Popular support for norms of partnership in marriage were being conveyed via a variety of media in the 1940-1950s including the music industry (eg Pat Boone crooning that marriage was a "fifty-fifty deal"). In an article published in *Coronet* entitled "Ten Commandments for a Happy Marriage", psychoanalyst Dr. Binstock (1949, p. 95) affirmed that marriages should not be based on master/slave model but should be "a true partnership" in which husband and wife "share and share alike."

Meyerowitz's revisionist account of 1940-50s American popular culture can be criticised for leaning too far in the other direction in her attempt to repudiate Friedan's analysis. She over-emphasises the positive portrayal of women seeking to combine paid work with familial and domestic responsibilities and neglects the harsh realities of widespread practices of discrimination experienced by women in paid employment. She also fails to attend to the kind of negative coverage given by mainstream magazines to women who were seen to be subverting accepted gender norms by being too ambitious. *Life* magazine, for example, ran an article by Robert Coughlan in 1956 who observed that "in New York City the 'career woman' can be seen in fullest bloom and it is not irrelevant that New York City also has the greatest concentration of psychiatrists" (Coughlan in Kidd 1975, p. 33). According to Coughlan, women who found too much satisfaction in the paid workforce were in danger of inflicting psychological damage not only on themselves, but on their husbands and children. Magazine articles entitled "Nearly Half the Women in Who's Who are Single" bore testimony to the impossibility of successfully combining career with marriage and motherhood. Halberstam (1993) supports Friedan's account that the short stories featured in women's magazines routinely depicted career women as unhappy, emotionally deprived, hard and brittle. While Meyerowitz emphasises the partnership norms of marriage, this does not undermine the observations by historians like Mintz and Kellogg (1988, p. 186) who maintained that partnership in 1950s terms did not mean real equality as "a wife's primary role was to serve as her husband's ego massager, sounding board - and housekeeper". Surveys from the 1950s indicate that a strict division of labour operated around the domestic front. This

placed a much heavier burden on women than men as it conveniently ignored the 30% of married women in paid employment. Meyerowitz is also less than generous to Friedan when it came to reviewing her concerns about the beauty and fashion industries. On the one hand, she acknowledged that women's magazines overwhelmingly endorsed women's needs to meet beauty and fashion standards (summarised rather alarmingly by one *Coronet* article which bluntly advised women " 'if anything's lacking, she can take immediate steps to remedy it - go to a hairdresser, a psychiatrist, whatever is needed' " (Meyerowitz 1993, p. 1473). However, she also contended that Friedan's polemic assertion that women had been reduced to sex creatures was "unabashedly hyperbolic" (Meyerowitz 1993, p. 1473). Individual women may indeed have been resisting the hegemonic dictates of American beauty standards, but this does not mean these standards did not exist. Nor did it mean that individual women escaped their prescriptions about feminine appearance.

While her analysis suffers from a hyper-critical stance, Meyerowitz does nonetheless score a number of important points against Friedan. Especially with respect to attitudes expressed within popular culture magazines towards women who overstepped the boundaries of stereotyped gender roles by joining the paid workforce. In her entire sample, Meyerowitz found only 2% of the articles met the definitional requirements of arch conservatism which Friedan's diatribe against the psychiatrist Dr. Marynia Farnham and sociologist Ferdinand Lundberg had suggested was much more commonly in evidence. (Farnham and Lundberg's deeply conservative book *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (1947) had argued that American women were in danger of becoming masculinised by joining the paid workforce and by failing to fulfil their feminine roles of having children and staying at home.) Whereas Friedan told a story of declining women's fortunes in the postwar years, Meyerowitz has countered by suggesting that women's popular culture, while it failed to acknowledge issues of sexism in the workplace or to challenge the accepted sexual divisions of labour in the private and public spheres, staunchly advocated that women could legitimately aspire to both domestic and public spheres of influence. She found that magazine articles routinely addressed women as workers, and local community political agents. Rosie the Riveter may have died an unceremonious death following the departure of women out of heavy industry and the armed forces in the postwar

years, but this had been replaced by another ideal of women in paid work. This one embraced a role for women in business, politics, entertainment, community and social service. In her conclusion, Meyerowitz graciously concedes that some of the differences between her own and Friedan's analysis of postwar women's magazines may be a product of their respective focus on non-fiction versus fiction articles and stories. However, like White (1971) before her, she also argued that Friedan cited sources "reductively" in a manner designed to bolster her own arguments (Meyerowitz 1993, p. 1479). The distortions created by Friedan's selectivity are clearly transparent in the contradiction that at a time when Friedan was suggesting that more and more women were being trapped within the home, labour force statistics were demonstrating that married women were entering the paid workforce in increasing numbers. Perhaps we can detect better reasons for the impact of Friedan's text in Kalendin's (1984) observation that while the employment rate of married women was rising, that of younger women had actually fallen over the twenty year span from 1940-60.

Meyerowitz affirms that Friedan's book made a significant impact on American women's lives. She readily acknowledges that "hundreds of women have testified that the book changed their lives, and historical accounts often credit it with launching the recent feminist movement" (Meyerowitz 1993, pp. 1455-56). Meyerowitz does not devote much attention to the question of why *The Feminine Mystique* had the social impact that it did - an issue that has become ever more pressing in the light of the level and kind of inaccuracies which it contained. Nonetheless, she concluded her argument by suggesting that in part the impact of *The Feminine Mystique* can be located in how Friedan reworked old themes in new, compelling ways, equating work achievement outside the home with an authentic sense of self identity and individual autonomy. In doing so, she ideologically relegated women's sense of themselves and their role within the domestic sphere to a form of 'false consciousness', the "problem with no name", which she redefined as "the feminine mystique". Meyerowitz surmised that it may not be so much Friedan's discontinuity, as it is her continuity with the postwar women's magazine culture, a culture which promoted women seeking individual fulfilment through work within the public sphere, that may be crucial to explaining the impact of her text.

Like Meyerowitz, Moskowitz (1996) has also questioned the accepted status of Friedan's text as a definitive "eureka" moment which overturned the observed, oppressive silence surrounding women's intrinsic unhappiness. She further elaborates on the theme of Friedan's distorted misrepresentation of popular women's magazine culture in the postwar years, questioning her assessment of the emotional culture reflected in its pages. In particular, she refutes Friedan's claim that up to the 1960s women's magazines invariably depicted happy housewives surrounded by a world of consumer products, new kitchen appliances and babies, complete with husband in tow. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) Friedan had argued that 1960 was the watershed year in which "the problem that has no name burst like a boil through the image of the happy American housewife" (TFM[*], p. 22). Based on her analysis of women's magazine culture from 1945-1965 Moskowitz maintains that over this period, the home was not depicted as a happy haven. To the contrary she found that:

"women's magazines often rendered it as a deadly battlefield on which women lost their happiness, if not their minds. Images of unhappy, angry, and depressed women figure prominently..." (Moskowitz 1996, p. 67).

Rather than parading visions of marital bliss, magazine culture frequently commented on the reality of marital dissatisfaction. Moskowitz found that women's magazines in the 1940-60s regularly circulated articles with titles like "How Do You Beat the Blues?" (*Women's Home Companion* 1948), "Why Do Women Cry?" (*Ladies Home Journal* 1948), "It's Good to Blow Your Top" (*McCall's* 1950), "How Emotions Cause Unnecessary Surgery" (*Cosmopolitan*, 1955), "The Lonely Wife" (*Women's Home Companion* 1956), and "I Can't Stand It Anymore" (*Good Housekeeping* 1961). Although the number of these articles cannot, Moskowitz admits, be said to be significant in terms of their overall quantity, their qualitative impact is suggested in that they were featured prominently either within the magazine or on the front cover. She also found no articles over this period addressing women's states of mind that bore testimony to their happiness.

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[*] To facilitate reading, I reference all direct quotes from Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) using the abbreviation TFM.

While articles in women's magazines in the 1940-50s may have acknowledged women's sense of frustration, unhappiness and emotional problems, Moskowitz found there were clear limitations to the remedies being offered. Instead, a relentless discourse organised around popularised and jargonised psy-disciplines routinely provided women with handy hints on how to 'adjust' as individuals to their expected roles as housewives. While women may be unhappy, the source of the problem lay within individual women themselves, not in the implausible social ideologies that insisted that women could be happy enduring isolated conditions in the suburbs where

they were burdened with thankless hours of housework.

The tone and commitment of women's magazines to maintaining women's role within the domestic sphere and psychologising their problems can easily be illustrated. In its handy hints on the favourite methods used by two thousand readers for coping with depression ("How Do You Beat the Blues?") the following remedies for depression were recommended by a leading women's magazine: 1) sewing a fine seam; 2) playing with children, kittens or puppies; 3) reading a book; 4) a cleaning binge; 5) religion and

prayer; 6) dressing up and taking off ("preferably to the movies" were the additional cautionary words of advice); 7) therapeutic shopping; or 8) going for a walk alone "preceded by a good cry" (*Women's Home Companion* 1948, pp. 153-155). In a self-administered psychological test, readers of the 1954 article "Are You a Restless Wife?" (*Ladies Home Journal*) were advised: "The higher your "yes" score, the more serious your maladjustment. If your score is five or more, you are neither very happy in your marriage nor in most of your close relationships. Though your husband may be partly responsible, your trouble is probably *within yourself*. Unless you can take a greater interest in your marriage and your husband, you should seek professional help" (Moskowitz 1996, p. 75: emphasis added). In his 1949 article for *Ladies Home Journal*, Clifford Adams (PhD psychology) listed the ten top reasons for discontentment with their marriages as indicated by 100 unhappy wives. Objections to housework ranked number five (after lack of companionship, money worries, sexual problems and in-law troubles). However Adams (1949, p. 26) summarily dismissed

this as an issue stating "few people would deny that homemaking is a wife's responsibility... Granted, a housewife's tasks are varied, exacting and often tedious. Yet a man's job, too, involves many irksome chores. At least a wife can usually see the tangible results of her efforts - which is not always the case for her husband." "Autoconditioning Can Make You a Happy Person" guaranteed yet another article in *Cosmopolitan* magazine in January 1956; it assured women readers that overcoming feelings of discontent was merely a matter of self-administering proven scientific techniques and then watching their sense of well-being improve by way of the conveniently provided "mood meter" (Moskowitz 1996, p. 71). Suggestive psy-techniques like these all help to explain how the culture of the 1950s in North America has since been described by social historians as "cloying, conventional, and socially coercive" (Malcolmson 1995, p. 562). These were precisely the kind of psychological techniques identified unflinchingly as forms of 'brainwashing' in Friedan's text.[2]

Moskowitz concludes by observing that Friedan's seminal text, *The Feminine Mystique*, presents an inaccurate liturgy about the buried, unacknowledged unhappiness of the American housewife. In many important ways Friedan's book represents a moment of continuity rather than departure from the prevailing discourses of discontent that this researcher found within women's magazines. Where Friedan did depart from the prevailing rhetoric was in her assessment that women should reject the advice provided by magazine experts which urged women to adjust to the sterility of their roles as domestic slaves, consumers, mothers and wives who lived through their children and husbands. Friedan called on women to achieve their own, independent sense of selfhood. Consequently Friedan's text, Moskowitz argues, importantly marked the beginning of a discourse within American culture in which women's personal troubles were destined to become political issues. As Moskowitz insightfully argued, one of the relatively unexplored effects of this magazine culture for women was that it assisted in the creation of the identity of "woman" as a national problem within American society. She contends that "by focusing public attention on

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[2] It is not difficult to see how the 1950s 'auto-conditioning' culture, gave rise to Friedan's rhetoric of 'brainwashing'. Such language provided a backdrop to the production of early feminist films like *Stepford Wives* (1975) where women were forcibly 'adjusted' from individuals with chaotic houses,

the plight of the American housewife, turning her into a national social problem, these magazines contributed to a discourse of discontent" (Moskowitz, 1996, p. 78).

Beyond women's magazines, we shall see there was another popular text which was helping American women get in touch with their unexpressed feelings of discontent at being burdened with the joyless, unpaid and never ending responsibilities of housework and this was Peg Brackens' *I Hate to Cook Book* (1960). In the next chapter I explore how this text helped to set the scene for the impact of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

Concluding Remarks

There were evident signs of conflict, ambiguity and structural tension surrounding the role of American women in the postwar years. American women had loyally responded to their nation's call, rising to the challenge of new employment expectations and industry demands placed on them by the Second World War. When the war ended, these expectations were just as quickly reversed as a campaign started to return women to the domestic sphere, demanding that they relinquish their jobs to returning soldiers. Many women who had previously enjoyed receiving their own pay packets, and the greater independence that came with it, now found themselves leading isolated lives in the suburbs, weighed down with the primary care responsibilities for children and uninspiring household chores. By the 1950s, increasing numbers of women were returning to the paid workforce, paying the price in terms of the 'second shift' (Hochschild 1989). The strains around their status all suggest that women, and educated women in particular, were positioned to be a highly receptive audience to a ground breaking text that dared to suggest women take control of their own lives, as Friedan did in *The Feminine Mystique*.

A number of important observations have been made which help to explain the impact of *The Feminine Mystique* amongst its predominantly white, middle class audience of women readers. Whilst all the ingredients cited above are clearly important, several

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haphazard parenting skills and cluttered shopping trolleys into robotic, and thoroughly organised, apparitions of their former selves.

are crucial factors, including Friedan's use of 'we' rather than 'they', and how she reframed the social problem of identity for women. It is also significant that the book was middlebrow. Overall, however we have seen that the commentary dedicated to *The Feminine Mystique* has been less than generous. Rather than applauding Friedan for her accomplishments, analysts have tended to attack her for missing a golden opportunity to address macro structural and institutional inequalities such as class, race and patriarchy (Dijkstra 1980; Knight 1997; Horowitz 1998). They have argued that she presented an unbalanced, overly negative picture of 1950s American culture which overlooked the continuity between her own arguments and those proffered by popular culture of women's magazines (Ware 1990; Meyerowitz 1993; Moskowitz 1996; Horowitz 1998). Alternatively they have criticised her for middle class politics, for failing to acknowledge her intellectual debt to earlier theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir and Thorstein Veblen, and looked askance at her propensity to blame mothers for turning America's sons into homosexuals (Dijkstra 1980; Horowitz 1998). While they have a degree of validity, all these criticisms, fail "to credit her for bringing the more basic issues of sexism and inequality to public consciousness" (Epstein 1999, p. 83).

To date, little attempt has been made by scholars to undertake a more in depth analysis of the performativity of Friedan's actual words. As a result we still lack an adequate understanding as to why the text had the galvanising effect on American women that is widely attributed to it. In this respect, Horowitz (1998, p. 219) himself admits "all my efforts to contextualize the book and understand how it might have been different only begin the task of explaining why it had such an enormous impact". The many valid complaints raised in particular by recent social historians like Meyerowitz and Moskowitz only serve to raise deeper and more important questions about Friedan's text - rendering even more pressing our need to understand its springboard function to the re-emergence of the second wave Women's Liberation Movement.

Conclusion - On Authorship and Leadership

The invention of the printing press in the mid 1400s signalled the birth of the modern author who became free to address the populace directly through the written word and to comment on contemporary political affairs. They duly debated topics ranging from the divine right of kings, to the nature of human freedom and human rights, to class relations and the foundation of private property, to the origins of the social contract. Such commentaries evolved into a variety of forms, ranging from short pamphlets, manifestos, *belle lettres*, ribald cartoons and declarations, to more extended treatises and books. It is within this genre of non-fiction writings that we find a number of key documents that are germane to the development of Western political thought; these include such disparate works as Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1983 [1532]), Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1968 [1651]), Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1960 [1690]), Rousseau's *A Social Contract* (1968 [1763]), Paines' *Common Sense* (1976 [1776]), Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1978 [1792]), Marx and Engel's *The Communist Manifesto* (1963 [1848]) and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869). All these texts are now recognised as part of the distinctive 'literary canon' that belongs to the realm of politics.

In the twentieth century rising rates of literacy and improved socio-economic conditions saw the political or 'charismatic text' take on a new garb in the form of the popularly accessible, middlebrow texts whose intended audience of readers was the new middle class. Their potency has been augmented by improved book distribution networks and marketing strategies (eg the best-seller list). Collectively these factors help explain the middle classes' ascendant position within contemporary, Western social movements. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1971[1927]) worked successfully to consolidate the support of the German middle class behind Nazi party objectives. The publication of books like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1976) and most recently, Naomi Klein's *No Logo* (2001), all highlight the significance of the 'author-leader' and their texts as critical rallying points for the emergence of mass protest amongst middle class activists.

In this thesis I have outlined how social movement theory currently lacks appreciation for the range of media now available for expressing formal and informal leadership. Due to its focus on structure and organisational-based leadership, social movement researchers have systematically failed to attend to the leadership avenue that is open to the less visible, independent author who succeeds in writing a popular and accessible text that displays charismatic qualities. I have chosen to mobilise key aspects of both Weber's and Gramsci's writings in an attempt to conceptualise why the independent author is such a critical ingredient in the emergence of the new social movements within developed nations. In doing so I have worked with many of the concepts provided through social movement theory (eg collective identity formation, discursive politics, moral shocks, political opportunities, claims-making activities, collective action frames) in order to highlight the significance of the independent author to the emergence of protest. I have applied these theories on leadership and social movement paradigms in a case study approach to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and attempted to demonstrate why the publication of this text proved to be a crucial turning point to the emergence of the second wave Women's Liberation Movement in the United States in the late 1960s.

Following Weber's pure model of charisma, I have illustrated how authors are able to impart new, radical, moral visions, imbuing their writings with a sense of urgency and mission. Such visions may be capable of challenging existing societal arrangements and hegemonic ideologies. It is my argument that Betty Friedan was involved in precisely this kind of ideological work when she launched her passionate attack and announced her New Life Plan for American women. I maintain that the charismatic properties displayed by authors must properly be understood as being part of the emergence of charisma, not its routinisation, as Weber maintained. I have disputed Weber's narrow definition of charismatic leaders as historically visible actors who are seen to perform miracles and heroic deeds. In line with the recognition of the charismatic 'author-leader', I have upheld the recasting of readers of texts written by the 'author-leader' as potential followers, whose primary allegiance is to the philosophical ideas expressed by the author, rather than the personality traits, or personage, of the author themselves. Friedan was clearly not personally embraced as a charismatic figure by the majority of younger women involved in the women's

movement. If anything, these younger women were distinctly hostile to Friedan due to her homophobia, her tendency to blame mothers for wider social problems and her flair for making self-aggrandising statements. Although they disowned Friedan, I have argued that many of these younger women were nonetheless heavily influenced by *The Feminine Mystique* and supported key elements of the author's analysis of American culture.

I have attempted to demonstrate that the impact of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was contingent upon it being launched in an atmosphere of a quietly brewing crisis of identity amongst American women in the postwar years. The application of many of Weber's insights into charismatic leadership to Betty Friedan as an author takes issue with scholars who have disputed the importance of charisma to the women's movement. This includes Trice and Beyer (1986, p. 131) who maintained that "there are obviously many other collectivities, organizations, and social movements in which charismatic leadership had not emerged. The women's liberation movement and the U.S. antiwar movement of the 1960s and early 1970s are prominent examples." It also takes issue with premature postmodernist declarations with respect to the 'death of the author'.

In this thesis I have mobilised the many important insights provided through Gramsci's writings on politics and culture. In particular I have attended to his emphasis on the greater 'depth' and molecular nature of the written word, his stress on the importance of winning the 'war of ideas' that must be waged at the level of civil society within advanced capitalist societies, and his awareness of the importance of politicising feelings. Gramsci appreciated that the passion and commitment demonstrated by the author was integral to the stimulation of strong emotions like righteous anger amongst readers. Such fervent displays by leaders were capable, he maintained, of encouraging bursts of energy from subaltern groups as a whole. I have focussed much of my analysis on the salutary impact Gramsci argued could be made by disrupting the ideological face of accepted common sense. I have done so in order to assess the hidden strength of Friedan's attack on the "mindless busywork" that hegemonic domestic ideologies were supposedly effecting. I have suggested that common sense can also have a distinctly counter-hegemonic face. This helps to

explain the implicit success of Friedan's appeal to her readers' gut feelings. Though her diagnostic skills were lacking, American women, mothers and daughters, basically responded to Friedan's central argument that something had gone awry in the construction of feminine identity within their culture. Though they disagreed over the strategies required for solving this social problem.

The emergence of social movements has been linked by movement theorists to the development of new forms of knowledge, conceptual awareness, collective beliefs and cognitive frames. Using concepts provided by social movement theory, I have argued that the rise of the charismatic author rests on their success in identifying, cognitive framing , and proposing solutions to social problems. To have an impact, the 'claims-making activities' engaged in by the independent author must strike a chord. The power of the charismatic author lies in her or his ability to channel and conceptualise pre-existing, grass roots grievances and feelings. In this respect, I have suggested that the independent author is capable of performing the same kind of diagnostic and prognostic work now deemed to be the prerogative of social movement organisations and their leaders who are charged with the task of articulating 'collective action frames'.

Unlike social movement organisations and leaders, authors are provided with unique cultural space that allows them to examine a social problem at length. Authors have the space to develop their analysis and to bring on board relevant research (eg scientific research, surveys, anecdotal evidence) to support their conclusions. Authorship thus provides a platform for carving out a sustained and comprehensive site of resistance to hegemonic ideologies. On rare occasions, the way an author addresses a social problem and the 'discoveries' they make in doing so, may give rise to feelings of 'moral shock' amongst their audience of readers. Literary events like these in the past have sparked controversy, creating the seeding work for a national debate that reaches out to wider and wider audiences through an assortment of avenues including book clubs, best-seller lists, talk-back radio as well as mainstream press coverage, television and the print media. The arguments advanced by authors are potentially disruptive precisely because they are not confined to the newsletters

mailing lists of social movement organisations where information is sent out to already committed members.

In addition, the sustained space of resistance created by the author may prove to be less vulnerable to the pitfalls of 'celebrity status' experienced by organisational-based leaders that has resulted, all too frequently, in their becoming captives of the print and visual media that created them in the first place (Gitlin 1980). The status of the 'author-leader' may be especially important for women as an oppressed social group. The ideas of such leaders could be less vulnerable to being derailed by the mainstream media simply on the basis of the author's unwillingness or inability to adhere to socially accepted beauty norms or feminine behaviours. The efficacy of the charismatic author for women as an oppressed social group beckons given their dominance of book clubs and the social practices surrounding reading. These features suggest an unexplored potential for concentrated 'book talk' to give birth to new resistant forms of grassroots politics.

Moving from auto/biographical confession to the level of the social statistic and back again, I have argued that the charismatic author is critically implicated in the creation of emotional and politicised bonds between individuals who might normally be isolated from each other. The author is in a position to facilitate the rise of the salutary 'we' that speaks to the formation of a more cohesive, collectivised identity. The arguments made by the charismatic author can work to 'connect the dots', providing a missing key, and arousing a sense of common purpose, common beliefs and common identity amongst oppressed social groups. Authors, in effect, can take on the unique task of the organic intellectual who, as Gramsci understood it, was capable of connecting knowledge to feelings through the intermediary road of understanding - thus offering an avenue for social cathexis and transformation. An author who succeeds in inflecting their text with a sense of urgency, passion and mission can succeed in igniting strong emotions (whether it be fear, hate, righteous anger, or hope) and become a social force to be reckoned with. This is especially the case when their charismatic message is contained within a normative framework that appeals to a language of good and evil, to notions of human freedom, social salvation or to national destiny. If such a text emerges during a period of recognisable crisis, when

people are already, consciously or unconsciously, 'looking for answers' the impact of the 'author-leader' is potentially formidable. At such moments, the moral imperatives communicated by an elite organic intellectual can mount an effective challenge to the common sense of hegemonic ideologies. The author's radical vision can become a prescription for action that is embraced by a much wider audience of readers.

As Susan Brownmiller (1999, p. 3) judiciously commented "a book by itself does not make a movement, as Friedan, an old warrior in progressive causes knew full well." While books do not make movements, I have argued that they can be critical and, in some instances, even irreplaceable integers to the emergence of a movement. It is clear, however that the politicised energy galvanised initially by a charismatic text must be nurtured, sustained, and channelled if it is to prove politically efficacious. This stage heralds the second phase of a movement when new social movement organisations and organisational-based leaders must emerge and routinise radical activities. The way in which a text addresses a social problem and the solutions it puts forward may have an on-going effect on the political agendas set by social movement organisations, once they do emerge. It is at this point that the spontaneous, less predictable and emergent qualities associated with early collective behaviourism become transformed into organised social protest.

Aided by the skills of translators, books refuse to observe the integrity of national boundaries. Given the constant advances in our communication systems and the book industry, charismatic texts can reach an increasingly interconnected world community. While texts have obviously crossed international borders in the past (eg *The Communist Manifesto*), the speed at which they can do so now is unprecedented. The future role open to the 'author-leader' may in fact provide answers to the concerns raised by social movement theorists about the future of organised protest (Tarrow 1994; Lynch 1998; Klandermans 2000). Theorists have noted that modern social movements have developed alongside the rise of the modern nation state. They have consequently wondered what kind of future lies ahead for social movements in a world where national borders are being overrun by supra-national forces like multinational capital. A charismatic text that supports the ethical responsibilities of democratic systems to protect life on Earth and basic human freedoms by reining in

the exploitative capitalist market may yet prove to be a uniting force for the global community in the future. Both Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Naomi Klein's *No Logo* (2001) offer examples of the kind of resistant cultural space that can be carved out by the charismatic 'author-leader' as we move from the modern states of the past toward a more globalised world.

Social movement theorists are now inclined to express dissatisfaction with the conceptual tools at their disposal, acknowledging the limitations of their concepts of leadership and their ability to predict or explicate the initial emergence of mass social protest. I have attempted to demonstrate how expanding the existing paradigms to embrace the 'author-leader' may cast illuminating light on these important issues. The independent author of the charismatic, middlebrow text is uniquely positioned to be an especially powerful figure in the ideological battle to win the 'war of ideas'.

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