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Coercive Youth: Women's Sexual Development Through the Course of Youth

Simone de Beauvoir pays critical attention to women's sexual role-playing and desires in the anthology *The Second Sex*. Set in the contextualization of sexual development as an outgrowth of societal conditioning in childhood, Beauvoir makes the claim that sexual development can be traced back to societal conditioning of manhood and femininity, and with the spurring contestations of young development there is a trajectory that women follow to gain societal pleasure. We see this in her unit on "The Formative Years," in which there is a chronological critical approach to the essences in each period of conditioning that precludes sexuality for the woman. Beauvoir begins her section on childhood, making the infamous claim that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman." This statement has relieved social scientists in every direction of feminist studies, and it means that one is not born with the societal pressures that cartographically place gender as a site of toolmanship for societal function. Beauvoir sees childhood as a molding place for sex, love, friendship, indentureship, lovemaking, and the like, and it is this mold onto a ripening young mind that sets girls' virtuous standards rolling downhill, like pinball's in a machine. Womanhood is constructed as if there are not avenues to re-change oneself after mishap, such that a woman is not only formed over time, but exacts the amount of her experience onto one totalizing womanhood. It is as if women must piece themselves together to make sense, rather than

making erasures and contradictions. This contradiction of womanhood is one which I will explain further, but I think that Beauvoir's roadmap regarding the sexual development of woman can be taken as an affirmation of the women's right to change regardless of societal pressures to end up one selected stereotype out of a chosen few which women bear.

She begins her discussion with the adage that "no biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole which produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine." (Beauvoir 249) We see in the passages that follow a look at how the environment surrounding the subject, the child molds her mind to endure psychological choice regarding who and what she is. Is she a free person or is she a male or female? Children make these choices on one's own, and it is with her account of how the child develops that I will reach to further support this interesting aim. She says that the newborn feels at first, rather sensations, sunlight, eyes, tongue, or mouth, and it is with these sensations that the child first develops his or her sensory precepts. Then, he rushes into the embrace of his mother or abandons doing anything alone to betray these first sensations. Adults are supreme to him, and he feels much more sensation of mind and body than ever before. His senses are trained out of subjection and onto higher learning from adults. This is indicative of the rush that a curious child feels at learning something new or participating in the same world as adults, for this is the foundation of this first set of endearments of childhood. Next, gender takes a place, as some of the first lessons one teaches his children is to be both feminine or non-feminine. It is not always that one is being masculine, but it is in the act of being unfeminine too

often that we cling. The girl is allowed to “play pretty” by clinging to her mother’s skirt (as Beauvoir says) or leg, lending her company when she washes the dishes or does the monthly folding of clothes. The boy though, is encouraged to stay away from his mother, whereas being a man is projected in one’s affinity for manhood in societal terms. The woman is a site of difference before he has any responsibility to carry out tasks. In addition, then, his penis is given more value than his manhood can keep up with, for he is treated for exhibiting stoic behavior indicative of his caste and racial make-up. It is the girl who is treated as if womanhood can never be demonstrated to her, as if she must feel her mother, the grown-up “girl” in the household, whose womanhood is further simplified as she remains close to her child far longer than weaning.

Then, Beauvoir contemplates the excretory functions, when children’s first pleasing sensations are gendered. First, we must take a look at how women’s roles co-involve with this issue of excitement, when woman is first accorded her passive role as objective and not as subject of power. The girl is seen as an object of one’s desire, her sexual organs not being located with the same strong urges to dominate that are thrust upon the developing male, enough to phrenologize his penile system in languorous temptations. This feeling of healing one’s mind with feminine and masculine reduction is somehow violent and irreparable, as Beauvoir tends to obfuscate in the narrative, but without direct say. Such endearing behavior is transcending into other arenas of her life, when, not the body but, the girl is taught sewing, doll-making, dressmaking, treatment like a seamstress for the pleasures of enduring life as a human doll (262-263). Such behavior is indicative of gentility and observation about life, rather than being immersed in the handiwork of molding society. Such behavior forms the basis of her dreams of lore

and play, in which she fantasizes about those behaviors she exhibits but cannot explain (and neither do we ask her to, for this is the danger: a lack of intervention points for a girl child). Should we intervene is another question that social scientists can ask themselves when approaching the topic of womanhood in adolescent girl child behavior? When such behavior grows as practice onto the little girl, and she must compete with the boy in terms of space and place, then there is a contestation over authority between the sexes that the girl first learns. Whereas at once she was a figure in the emancipation of her youth, she now becomes engendered in the first heterosexual roles accorded to the belaboring adolescent. Beauvoir writes,

If the girls want to struggle with the boys and first for their rights, they are reprimanded. They are doubly envious of the activities peculiar to the boys: first, because they have a spontaneous desire to display their power over the world, and, second, because they are in protest against the inferior status to which they are condemned. (Beauvoir 267)

This first lesson on how childhood is appropriated for gender surprises her and warrants her affection turned outward for adjoinment with male children. But, she must gain access to the world through men, a gendered perspective, and find agency in her relationships with pleasing men and relishing in complacency. She must not fight with men, and here is when the quote “one is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman” is first represented in the text, when the girl child has learned all of her behaviors only to put them in conditions with interactions with men. First, we see that she has been treated

with undo malcomformity, being chastised for her very uncontrollable nature to ensure her body is counted and active in participation with men, but her every lesson regarding gender is learned and set in stone for a survival of gendered relationships in which one mistake and the entire fabric of one's femininity is gone. One's societal standards or who and what is a woman becomes malconfigured, and with each step toward sexual socialization, its ultimate effort, she must peruse the abandonment of certain sides of herself with caution, lest she be unlike all the other women who are favored for their docility. One may make the argument that you can't condition both sexes to an act of role-playing, because the man will be conditioned outside of that role every time. But, I ask said individual to convince himself that one gender is supreme over another. What do you get? A gendered individual who only sees his role as part of his biology, one who sees the limits of his brain in what his body can or cannot do, and who ever said what the body can or cannot do is a contestable aim in the first place. That in its very essence is conflating femaleness with an object of male, and indoctrinating words unsaid in Christian doctrine regarding who and what is perceived to be a grander object. Objectively speaking, human beings do not have to be conflated at all. Women can exist without men, and men can exist without women. It is in biologically undergirding existence that we get at an enwombed society, one which predicates itself on its very act of being: its breathing, rather than its autonomy. If the girl wants to struggle with the boys then so be it, for her gender is not under contradiction; her humanity is saved in conditioning a male child to believe in who and what is right, rather than what is male.

The superiority of the male is one which is inordinate, and Beauvoir makes this claim in her incompatibilities with the nature of overwhelmingly contestable patriarchy.

In this superiority is where the first fruits of patriarchy mold themselves, making defenses primitive and inordinate without measuring where they come from. Such is the argument that many gender theorists try to make, whether they can fathom immaturity in one's way of thinking or not, but certainly this pessimistic view of gender takes shape in one's thinking over the nature of one's biology, and the seeds of knowledge in one's appropriate place. For it is with biological determinations of knowledge that Beauvoir takes aim to teach that biology does not teach us what we know. Such is the relationship between mother and daughter in a postmodern society, one in which a mother dutifully serves to condition her daughter to a life of service, one which the daughter repugnates³ for its stifling effects on her mode of thinking. Her outburst of daydreaming and games resolve in her a life less dutiful than her mother, and she resigns to be more than her mother has been. Beauvoir offers up this notion of non-complacency, and accords this stage in the girl's development as a sign of superiority. Breaching the codes of womanhood, the girl goes into a life of wanting more than she sees, for seeing more than she has learned. Leaning toward a different conception of womanhood, the girl goes into wanting more than a womanhood, but wanting to know about sex and sexuality. Her sexuality is a means by which she gains agency in the act of figuring out the world on her own. Lacking balance between her interests, curiosity, and biology, she is her first teacher regarding who and where she comes from, not conforming to gender roles anymore. Beauvoir goes through a series of development theories, pictured with interstices of examples of girl children going through development of learning capacities. What stands out in her argument is the relationship between these pre-pubescent forms of exposure to the actual expose.

The young maturation embedded in the article "Young Girlhood" serves to make the argument more poignant in its deliverance of issues that garner attention to gender. While the child must endure issues of bullying and non-conformity, testifying against preconceived notions of what it means to be a girl, the young girl must go through added emphasis on her controllability and attributes which lead to marriage. Beauvoir is very concerned with this act of knowing, which involves masochistic forms of honor. Throughout our discussion of childhood we get a compact glimpse at what it means to be instilled with womanly virtues in an age of related concepts of gender. Young women preparing for marriage appear weak and docile, garnering attention for the servile domestic training that are received in girlhood, played out for the acceptance by a mate. Beauvoir finds this concentration of femininity alarming and sees a contradiction between the young girl's status as a human being and her "vocation" as a female. Beauvoir finds that the young girl may transform into this new role of woman or she may take on a mother role to balance the competing aims of childlessness and young adulthood. I think that this is quite a connection to make between young woman and social role play, because it displays the choices that are available for young women to make about growing into adulthood. Surely, the most tried and true way to identify oneself with womanhood is to identify as mother, a role that shows the preparation for marriage that Beauvoir collapses earlier into the model of thought that young girls are prepared for since childhood. Further can be explained about this idea of matriarchy, as women have implied it in previous centuries and cultures.

Matriarchy is not matrilineal terminology. It is not substitute rhetoric for the social obligations that many mothering women feel for their mothers and women in their

families. It is a logic that is in direct opposition with the foundation of rhetoric by feminist scholars: patriarchy. No one has ever said that patriarchy never existed. In fact, it is precisely the foundation that this American democracy is founded upon. With the succession of American presidents, the foundation of patriarchy in the trade system that fueled the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the plantation autocracy, and the history of literature to date, there is no disputing that within the fabric of pre-civil democracies there is a hinge of patriarchal, and patrilineal, dependency. The whole system of power was predicated upon that you were a land-owning free man, with a wife and children as representations of societal sophistication. Patriarchy is the root of the movements that fueled labor to transgress by people of color, in the United States⁹ and every other society that traded in slaves and migrated. Thus with the rhetoric of matriarchy, it seems that scholars are taking hold on what means motherhood in societal standards and appropriating it to mean power. Women do not have power because they rule a household, and it has been shown (by scholars such as Toni Cade Bambara, Patricia Hill Collins, Barbara Christian, and Mamie E. Locke) in the passage on matriarchy that women serve, not rule, in the household. When women get a certain agency when they can move about the household and society in differing ways, instead of interrogating the movement alarm sounds siren to many scholars that women rule households. No matter that a scholar pressing the issue of matriarchy would not exactly state the claim in like manner, what abounds is this issue of looking at women's place and assuming that she is a matriarchal figure. With this rhetoric it should seem easy to see that all of the pleasure in its belief is, indeed, a fallacy, with the level of societal misfortune that plenty of women are ending up serving a man in the house. The fabric of the home, balance, unity,

tradition, needs to be interrogated, because with power comes a level of respect with nothing asked or requested.

The often used lens of measuring woman's worth through the responses her children and grandchildren have toward her seems the only way that matriarchal intellect is possible, but societal pleasures have rarely informed scholarly research, so no pleasure arising from mother-to-child bond should forewarn of an impending matriarchal state of society. There is nothing ethical about taking the state of rearing children and cooking and cleaning, visitation, and telephone receiving and twisting and turning it into a state of power. With the advent of new relationships between the terms underrepresented and minority, maybe the turn of feminist movements happened too soon. When a matriarchal rhetoric abounds in society, the level of femininity inherent in the act of raising kids is necessarily in need of being traced to its root: patriarchy. What seems women do from power is a representation of the order that she has labored to produce in the household from the act of service to father and provider, protector, and leader. As I alluded to before, the young woman's preparation for womanhood by adopting the mother role is an example of her conditioning to serve rather than to investigate other attributes of her womanhood. Matriarchy does not exist, but the fascination with watching women mother does exist.

How women get into this state of regurgitating standards of womanhood is inherent in how they attract themselves to a partner. Beauvoir states that women begin to "double" themselves (Beauvoir 316), by picking up parts of culture which induce transformation and eroticism in their personhood. This can all be traced back to the alluring gaze of women onto men to select a partner's attention or the learning to be

gentle in the presence of men (typifying men to induce sexual responsiveness of machismo). Therefore, as she comes of age, her inner voice is less about herself, but more about the transformation from child to adult, alone to partner, single, to married, or, even, curious to demure. This act does for women what Beauvoir states as relegated sex roles. She writes,

“Anatomic destiny” is thus profoundly different in man and woman, and no less different is their moral and social situation. Patriarchal civilization dedicated woman to chastity; it recognized more or less openly the right of the male to sexual freedom, while woman was restricted to marriage.
(Beauvoir 350)

Thus, then, women’s whole ranking in society has to do with her ability to wed her biology with femininity to extract a marriage from the theatrical act of severing selfhood for availability. Her ability to reproduce is taken from its blatant artifice and flattened into a role in which societal pressure to marry reduces marriage to the binding of one’s vagina into man’s matrimony. But the purview of such theoretical lens of women’s bodies serves to reduce her to a complexity that needs focus, for its aim to produce property. The vagina and penis are theorized as autocratic, thinking components of the body, which are used in their societal function and representation. Because the man has no protruding inner cavity, he must be decided (by a higher power which is commonly called upon in patriarchal rhetoric) to be free, whereas a woman’s body, with its ability to reproduce must account for only one partner. Nonsense is made of the body,

and women's roles are further reduced to mothering, which intersects with the available means by which to accord tradition with power and reduce what is a very complex lifestyle to satisfaction, or matriarchy.

Beauvoir writes,

“The relative rank, the hierarchy, of the sexes is first brought to her attention in family life; little by little she realizes that if the father's authority is not that which is most often felt in daily affairs, it is actually supreme; it only takes on more dignity from not being degraded to daily use; and even if it is in fact the mother who rules as mistress of the household, she is commonly clever enough to see to it that the father's wishes come first; in important matters the mother demands, rewards, and punishes in his name and through his authority.” (Beauvoir, 268)

Thinking in terms of gender distinction, it is curious to note that the matriarch phenomenon does not make sense here. The matriarch in the heterosexual female/male household is an incompatibility in the discussion of who takes supremacy in the household. For long, scholars have discussed the enduring figure of the active female voice in the household, only to notice that, that voice has no endurance in relationship with her male head of household. Woman as a figure of plentitude and action in the household is a myth predicated upon a topical view of those parts of household that a woman has been entrusted to handle. That she handles the parts of household that involve family, bills, relationships with neighbors, children, and family members only further serves to ratify the legacy of female headed households that are conducted by

male pursuits. Woman as purveyor is a construct with many intricacies in the family grain. Without a male head-of-household, the application of those aims would be incomplete. When women run households they run them for the purpose of domesticating members of the household, forming bonds with members of the family for the sake of being recognized as woman of the family. With heated debate, scholars such as Barbara Smith and Patricia Hill Collins (*Towards a Black Feminist Criticism* (1977) and *Black Feminist Thought* (2000)) have argued that women have not served as matriarch figures within the family, while political leaders such as Patrick Moynihan have counter-argued this, but this is not true. With the advent of the marriage comes a certain generalization that woman will take care of the family, handle the family money, and make sure that things are in order. But, it is the man to whom each member of the family answers, whom members talk to with discretion, who is cognitively patriarch of the household, for his ability to hand the responsibilities of family and gendering sex to the woman, the mother. Gendering sex is the same thing as the second sex that Beauvoir signifies on in the title of her book, when sexuality is gendered for the sake of according womanly scripts to passivity in sexual nature and ascribing masculine roles upon domineering in sexual nature. It is the difference between virginity as sexuality and promiscuity, or homosexuality and heterosexuality, in which gendered notions survive within roles in the sex act. However, the woman's sexuality is not only gendered in terms of her performance during sex, but her performance as the recipient of sex act outcomes: motherhood. While the man becomes responsible for the sex act long after a child is born, the woman's duties become transformed into what it means to be a mother and away from what it means to be a partner. The woman's daily roles are inscribed in

providing the necessary task of mentoring and obligations with raising children. She is constructed as a queen for the interplay between marriage and motherhood, but she is quietly kept as laborer, seeing the foreseeable in all dealings relating to keeping house and mothering. Her capacity to bother with individualism and self-care are taken as secondary to the complexities of raising a household, and it is with the ulterior motive of naturalizing this distinction of gender roles that the father, the patriarch of the family, serves silently to assure that everything is going correctly. Beauvoir writes that "[the father's authority] only takes on more dignity from not being degraded to daily use" (268). With the individuality and self-service that comes along with being a husband comes the exactitude of measures to complete the family with roles. Within pleasing the man by assuming childrearing responsibilities, the woman foregoes lessening a strain on the marriage, thus leaving her husband happy. What work does a man do in traditional sense of the scene of purported "matriarchy," when the woman is assuming tasks that the entire family looks upon with favor? When the family prides the woman (not privileges) on assuming parenting roles, conversational partner, providing for grandchildren, keeping house, purchasing gifts, remonstrating grandchildren, cooking for visitation by daily visitors, then what is the use of the woman in her requested role as partner? What does it mean to ask someone to be married, only to relegate the task of wife to child-bearer and confidante? Whereas the task of working one's way from the precociousness of the question of marriage to the way of life of a partnership seems the only valid trajectory, when does such a trajectory occur? A woman is seen as matriarch from the time that she bears children who exhibit language that she is fulfilling their needs. Thus, she gets the title of childbearer. A woman is considered a matriarch if she makes sure that the entire

family goes to church, or has a religion that the whole family can pursue (whether actively or from personal committed relationship). A woman is seen as a matriarch in ways that overthrow her ability to be anything more than a character outside of the home, whereby in the scene of this matriarchal discourse, the man is functioning within and outside of the home. Within this discourse, he is a static figure, whereas she gets about the task of daily living with plentiful duties and contentment. But what is to be said of this figure remains involved in one's ability to traverse greater spaces than the spaces of family. If matriarch is a way of looking at woman with pride, then what is to be said of the treatment of woman without the family? What can be said about the women's mind in accordance with the applause that her family accords her, never questioning her aspirations to have more out of life than a personal relationship with each of her children. The very idea of matriarch superimposes the pride of children onto woman to foresee for her the very same construction of femininity that endangers women's relationship to societal involvement. Women as do-gooders for the household, rather than woman as do-gooder for society is a distinction that Germaine Naecker de Stael contributed to feminist theory in *On Literature Considered in Its Relationship to Social Institutions*. She attests,

“Ever since the Revolution men have deemed it politically and morally useful to reduce women to a state of the most absurd mediocrity. They have addressed women only in a wretched language with no more delicacy than wit. Women have no longer any motive to develop their minds.
(Stael 606)

Such a distortion of women and men is a fact of her lamentation here, only to feed into the sort of dialectic that is the crux of this argumentation: that women and men have been conditioned outside of their primordial status, and it is this primitiveness that Stael wants to revisit. Although her argument does not show how men have reduced women, nor does it determine women's roles in reducing themselves, in a contemporary context (but not akin to blame), through the acts of their children (as discussed previously). What Stael is getting at is a sort of theocracy, in which men philosophize heteronormativity in the household and democracy. The matter of fact is that there is a body regard that must be included in the fabric of the democracy and social strata. The treatment of women in terms of matriarchal royalty is indicative of master theology. I believe that this is a fitting term for the ideology behind master family relationships in the wider terms of American early democracy. Man's ability to serve as surveyor of the household, while woman serves as dual function as both wife and mistress, makes a double economic survival of the male leadership, functioning to provide men with people and property as well.

Monique Wittig has made a similar point in her article "One is Not Born a Woman, One Becomes a Woman," stating,

"A materialist feminist approach shows that what we take for the cause or origin of oppression is in fact only the mark imposed by the oppressor: the "myth of woman," plus its material effects and manifestations in the appropriated consciousness and bodies of women. Thus this mark does not predate oppression: Colette Guillaumin has shown that before the socioeconomic reality of black slavery, the concept of race did not exist, at least not in its modern meaning, since it was applied to the lineage of families." (Wittig 2016)

Wittig agrees with my theological sampling of slave society to predate human standards. Her theory that material is used in society to construct femininity in patriarchal standards, such that sex is gendered is a patriarchal phenomenon, in the same way that race is a construct which we take for granted today. Further delving into this reaching conversation, one could say that just like matriarchy is a phenomenon made fairly recently, society has failed to change to undo systems of oppression which harbor discontinuous male-female roles in gender construction. Master theology is when a society pictures itself upon the property aspect. It is a system of thought in which the stencil of human civilization in a developing society, one which America fashioned from the slavocracy, or one in which peoples are familial and misconstrued with hegemonic order and conformity. It breathes the same airs as slavery, sharecropping, and shareholding, in which the economic and consumer foundations of society are theorized as part of some order, but in fact, there is terrible disorder; a male based understanding of whole peoples who are understood as having no thought which influences the state of the democracy at all. Master theology is drawn from the picture of whiteness painted in the literary imagination, one which author Toni Morrison is concerned with in her novel *The Bluest Eye* and in her literary thinkpiece *Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1997). It is the listless counsel afforded the slave South for enduring a fabric of family and social life which many autocratic thinkers are unwilling to give up. It is the linking history with enlightenment and affording every gesture made in history as material for looking at the common conception of American life. It is the abuse of history. This male superiority left unquestioned, as in the state of motherhood, affords maleness unquestionable

posterity in the fabric of life. This question of male-headed societies can be further elaborated in its relationship to women structures in patrilineal nature of patriarchy.

Beauvoir writes,

“She has always been convinced of male superiority; this male prestige is not a childish mirage; it has economic and social foundations; men are surely masters of the world. Everything tells the young girl that it is for her best interests to become their vassal . . . Marriage is not only an honorable career and one less tiring than many others: it alone permits a woman to keep her social dignity intact and at the same time to find sexual fulfillment as loved one and mother.” (Beauvoir, 307)

Men have supremacy in the nature of society that affords them the luxury of being swooned after and heralded. When women wait for being chosen, they are looking for that eligible bachelor who is singular and breathtakingly superior in physical and social mobility. Their aptitude for advancement in the social world is one which affords women the luxury of being a wife and mother, two roles that counterbalance high achievement in society. Each is a role situated on providing and caring for a man who looks on in contempt for what she can bear. Women afford men a luxury, in aspiring to be caregiver, to reconcile themselves to privileged status within a hegemonic society. What then is a marriage but a servile attempt at chance and providence? This young girl that prepares herself as a readymade wife from societal standards of what a wife does and feels (and thinks) is one of an insane person. This limiting oneself to roles which determine her status in society is one that Beauvoir mentions here, but that I would further say is an attribute of young women's development before blossoming into adulthood. Women thwart maturity by lowering their standards. What one woman sees as forthcoming about

marriage, another woman sees as failing. The tendency to look after a mate in one's growing development, this always looking at oneself as a partner rather than as an individual, is a development of the trope of matriarchy. Matriarchy is really a shroud for the absence of examination of men or the silencing of maleness in relationship to women providers. For when women are looked upon as subjects, rather than as relatives, then the matriarchy rhetoric is forthcoming.

Men have a certain prestige in society because of the value on womanhood their marriage proposal invites. When women see themselves as objects, then the object that is chosen is more valuable than those who are not. Women see themselves as objects when they conform to gender norms and invite constraints on selfhood over womanhood. It is a matter of fact that at adolescence, right before a girl heads to college or outward bound for a life of her own, she makes sure that she prepares herself to be a wife. It is a psychological thing that happens, one in which women ponder on those attributes of wives, thus categorize personality standards, which will make them more suitable for a life of wifehood. Beauvoir champions the notion that to get a male mate is a prestige, for the standards of maleness that young women invite is one of provider and caretaker. These standards are equivalent to a life of not having to be a whole self. Previously in her narrative Beauvoir discusses the effects of childhood on the mind and body. In the gendered world, childhood is a delicate feature with which women and men illustrate their gender standards onto the child. Beauvoir demonstrates, "If the girl wants to struggle with the boys and fight for their rights, she is reprimanded . . . As she becomes more mature, her universe enlarges, and masculine superiority is perceived still more clearly" (Beauvoir 267). Women are conditioned to substitute brains for brawns in a

society which looks upon assertion and aptitude as masculine attributes. Men are thus grown to be revered for tasks which women have always done, but which men are relegated to do. Such reprimandment on the part of older adults recycles a legacy of violence, since those tasks which are accorded to men are seen as physical, then physical abuse is something that men do and women must not talk question. There is a dichotomy between how gender orders society by ways that men work and how women work. Look further,

“But for the young woman, on the contrary, there is a contradiction between her status as a real human being and her vocation as a female. And just here is to be found the reason why adolescence is for a woman so difficult and decisive a moment. Up to this time she has been an autonomous individual: now she must renounce her sovereignty. Not only is she torn, like her brothers, between the past and the future, but in addition a conflict breaks out between her original claim to be subject, active, free, and on the other hand, her erotic urges and the social pressure to accept herself as a passive object.” (Beauvoir 314)

Such dialectic that Beauvoir brings up is one in which sexuality is gendered. Her sex is situated as an object of womanhood. There is a contradiction between her status as a sexless human being and someone who performs her sex upon others. Her being and identity are mixed into one, and her selfhood takes a contrary position to her role as servile and mother. Female is to male, as male is to humanity, whereby maleness is a representation of civilization, whereas femaleness is a representation of sex. Beauvoir does a great deal of work on this in her essay on young girlhood, one in which she makes

the claim that a lesbian propensity is ideal of the female when her race is gender and she is put into contest with competing aims of womanhood and racing against men. Whereas this argument can seem to confront the issue of sexuality with great obstruction, reeking of sexual classism, I think that it would further the ideal of early feminist studies on women's roles. As Adrienne Rich points out, this status of woman is one of feminist studies, not one of lesbianism, or when one goes from men's relevance to the closure of woman-headed spaces. Up to the time of young womanhood, the girl has been an automatic individual, thinking of ways to enrich her own being and dreaming a world. But, when socialization at school and at home comes into a matter of concern over how the girl will grow, automatically one thinks of her suitability for a mate. After having crafted herself, her ability to get a mate is one community into which she is ushered. Along a continuum of life choices, it is as if the deciding factor in a woman's life must be her agility and ability to continue to construct herself in feminine ways in order to be desirable to the male gaze. Beauvoir is locating courtship as an early rite of passage for the female in the tradition of encapsulating her womanhood. She grows torn because the terms of being an adolescent do not prepare her for growth into more representative bodies. The preparation of adolescent girls for marriage in youth by locating femininity in dating is one which identity is determined by one's affinity for prescribed feminine roles within society. So, one goes into life determining to be a member of somebody's household, locating femininity in baby-sitting or childrearing, and further objects of one's femininity and esteem. Thus, one goes through an adolescence predicated on proving how feminine or masculine one can be, while losing one's ability to cope without the societal pressure to date. One knows the pressures of parenthood on a young woman

when her parents expect her to date, but don't see the insecurities inherent in that very part of childhood: when one pairs up for the first time.

Such gendered distortions are inherent in the questions that Judith Butler brings up in her criticism *Gender Trouble*, in which she talks about and extends the theories of Simone de Beauvoir. She asks, in the section subtitled "III. Gender: The Circular Ruins of Contemporary Debate," "Is there 'a' gender which persons are said to have, or is it an essential attribute that a person is said to be, as implied in the question 'What gender are you?' When feminist theorists claim that gender is the cultural interpretation of sex or that gender is culturally constructed, what is the manner or mechanism of this construction?" (Butler 11) There is no gender which persons are said to have, for gender³ is a construction of practice and it becomes a part of a whole being. Gender is only essential inasmuch that distinctions between the sexes are essential to account for some statistic, whether social or scientific. If we consider the aspect of discovery in childhood that grows into knowledge, then we do have a gender. But, what feminists attempt to deconstruct is how gender is formed and how it leads to socialization that proscribes more violate gender roles onto women and men. The work of Simone de Beauvoir is not to assert that all conditioning is bad, but to assert that all conditioning is constructed upon disparate roles between the sexes. They are deconstructing culture to solve the problem of gender disparities atop race, class, and sexuality. Surely, the idea that gender is constructed is taboo to the fact that we walk within gender everyday. But, undoing the socialization that constructs gender into violate roles, in which sex is raced, show promising answers to manifesting gender disparities inactive. If we think about how gender is constructed, then maybe we will depart from constructing so much disparity

between sexes, and allow for intelligence to rule the space in which we judge how qualified someone is for anything (much less marriage).

My discussion of master theology above could undo the racist hegemony that governs genderism (if I may say so), which could link the legacy of patriarchy, which is predicated upon racism, in the matrix of gender. In America, the plantation is still a functioning part of society, as cities are still built according to safety and closeness to one's product. White suburbs still govern the city and county in alarming respects, while city workers tend to be black and working-class. This living at a distance from the city, yet locating one's business in this metropolis shows an autocratic, plantation theology which is rooted in women's roles as suggestive³ of rank and power. Then, having made this claim, I must say that the biggest disproportion in America is the divide between white and black women. Beauvoir talks about gender in terms of common socialization, with her discussions of childhood, but there is more to be done on how gender divides races, or how a construct divides an even further construct. Beauvoir hints at a metaphorical relationship between the sexes and the work of "Negroes" as a whole, so there is more work to be done on differentiating sex from the trans-Atlantic construction of race. One is a construct of the gaze, while another is the construct of the eye, and when we construct our minds around gender we get a lesser use of our mind's potential to make better inferences than what is appropriate to one's label. Although I spent no time on this, I hope that feminist scholars do not use their podium to make sudden inferences that are not rooted in research. For Beauvoir's stellar argumentation, I decided to pass on this topic as interrogation of her wider arguments. The implications of my study have

been described, and it is my hope to withdraw from constructions of gender for the sake of representing my body in its most intelligent form.

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