

(Download) The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir

## The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir

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**From Brand: Northeastern University Press : The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A MARVELOUS COLLECTION OF WRITINGS FROM ABIGAIL ADAMS TO DE BEAUVOIR By Steven H Propp Editor Alice S. Rossi wrote in the Preface of this 1973 book, When the publisher approached me The magnitude of the task---to select and abridge the critical documents in feminist

history over the past two centuries---seemed overwhelming My sociologists and feminists imagination was fully engaged by the attempt to trace out the connections among the ideas expressed in a published work, the personal life behind an essay or book, and the larger time and place in history in which both the life and the work were anchored. The idea grew to precede each abridged selection with an essay that would serve to integrate the personal lives with the published essays and books (Pg. ix-x) She continues, As an activist and feminist scholar, I have felt the wish to continuity Now I have acquired a long line of feminists in the past. There is strength in the vision of a sisterhood that has roots in the past and extends into the future. I hope this volume enables its readers to share in that vision. (Pg. xi) [NOTE: page numbers below refer to the 716-page 1974 paperback edition.]Writings included begin with Abigail Adams famous Remember the Ladies letter to her husband John Adams; also included are excerpts by Mary Wollstonecraft; Frances Wright; Margaret Fuller; John Stuart Mill; Sarah and Angelina Grimk; Elizabeth Cady Stanton; Susan B. Anthony; Friedrich Engels; Emma Goldman; Margaret Sanger; Charlotte Perkins Gilman; Jane Addams; Virginia Woolf; Margaret Mead; Simone de Beauvoir, and others. The selections are well-introduced by Rossi, and are (unlike other collections of this type) lengthy enough to give a fair representation of the writers views.To give you a brief idea of what is contained herein, here are a few brief excerpts: Abigail Adams wrote, in the new Code of Laws I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend. Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity Regard us then as Beings placed by providence under your protection and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness. (Pg. 10-11)Mary Wollstonecraft wrote, the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practicing various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband she will not find it necessary to conceal her affection, or to pretend to an unnatural coldness of constitution to excite her husbands passions. In fact, if we revert to history, we shall find that the women who have distinguished themselves have neither been the most beautiful nor the most gentle of their sex. (Pg. 51) She adds, To render mankind more virtuous both sexes must act from the same principle; but how can that be expected when only one is allowed to see the reasonableness of it To render also the social compact truly equitable, and in order to spread those enlightening principles women must be allowed to found their virtue on knowledge, which is scarcely possible unless they be educated by the same pursuits as men. (Pg. 81)John Stuart Mill argues, Neither does it avail anything to say that the nature of the two sexes adapts them to their present function and position, and renders these appropriate to them I deny that anyone knows, or can know, the nature of the two sexes, as long as they have only been seen in their present relation to one anotherWhat is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing---the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others (Pg. 203) Later, he adds, The second benefit to be expected from giving to women the free use of their faculties, by leaving them the free choice of their employments, and opening to them the same field of occupation and the same prizes and encouragements as to other human beings, would be that of doubling the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity. (Pg. 232)Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote in her introduction to The Woman's Bible, The only points in which I differ from all ecclesiastical teaching is that I do not believe that any man ever saw or talked with God, I do not believe that God inspired the Mosaic code, or told the historians what they say he did about woman, for all the religions on the face of the earth degrade her, and so long as woman accepts the position that they assign her, her emancipation is impossible. (Pg. 405-406)Friedrich Engels states, Thus when monogamous marriage first makes its appearance in history, it is not as the reconciliation of man and woman, still less as the highest form of such a reconciliation. Quite the contrary. Monogamous marriage comes on the scene as the subjugation of one sex by the other; it announces a struggle between the sexes unknown throughout the whole previous prehistoric period The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male. (Pg. 482)Charlotte Perkins Gilman observes, If the wife is not, then, truly a business partner, in what way does she earn from her husband the food, clothing, and shelter she receives at his hands? By house service, it will be instantly replied. This is the general misty idea upon the subject---that women earn all they get, and more, by house service. Here we come to a very practical and definite economic ground. Although not producers of wealth, women serve in the final processes of preparation and distribution. Their labor in the household has a definite economic value The labor of women in the house, certainly, enables men to produce more wealth than they otherwise could; and in this way women are economic factors in society. But so are horses The labor which the wife performs in the household is given as part of her functional duty, not as employment. (Pg. 573)Virginia Woolf points out, I could not help thinking, as I looked at the works of Shakespeare that it would have been impossible for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare. Let me imagine what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as ago to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of

learning grammar and logic She picked up a book now and then But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about books and papers She had the quickest fancy, a gift like her brothers, for the tune of words. Like him, she had a taste for the theater. She stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said. Men laughed in her face She could get no training in her craft That, more or less, is how the story would run if a woman in Shakespeares day had had Shakespeares genius (Pg. 639-640) She adds, That woman, then, who was born with a gift of poetry in the sixteenth century, was an unhappy woman, a woman at strife with herself. All the conditions of her life, all her own instincts, were hostile to the state of mind which is needed to set free whatever is in the brain. (Pg. 642) This is a wonderful, comprehensive, and eminently useful collection of the writings which led up to the Second Wave of the womens movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Reading this book is like a crash course in pre-feminist history. It will be immensely valuable to anyone studying the background of the womens movement. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A MARVELOUS COLLECTION OF WRITINGS FROM ABIGAIL ADAMS TO DE BEAUVOIR By Steven H Propp Editor Alice S. Rossi wrote in the Preface of this 1973 book, When the publisher approached me The magnitude of the task--to select and abridge the critical documents in feminist history over the past two centuries---seemed overwhelming My sociologists and feminists imagination was fully engaged by the attempt to trace out the connections among the ideas expressed in a published work, the personal life behind an essay or book, and the larger time and place in history in which both the life and the work were anchored. 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