

Simone de Beauvoir Studies

CELEBRATING A CENTENARY

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SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR STUDIES

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VOLUME 24 2007-2008

**CELEBRATING
A CENTENARY**

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Volume 24 is respectfully dedicated
to the memory of
Agnes Porter Beaudry,
who served faithfully as Associate Editor
of the *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* for ten years

A WORD FROM YOUR EDITOR

What a difference a century makes! Some of you of my vintage may remember humming a catchy tune entitled "What a difference a day makes, twenty-four little hours." Contemplating how life has changed, particularly for women, since January 9, 1908, when Simone de Beauvoir came into this world is even more mind-boggling. Just look at early photographs of Simone and her sister H el ene posing demurely in their frilly dresses and lace hats and compare them with the young girls zooming along on their skateboards and turning upside down on the bars at the playground today. Examine the statistics of the number of women earning college degrees before World War II compared with recent reports that women graduates now outnumber men at a great many universities in the United States.

Many recent conference presentations and articles have been devoted to examining the extent to which Simone de Beauvoir influenced the course of women's lives and of gender relationships when she decided to use her extremely perceptive brain to analyze the differences between the way men and women were raised and expected to act in Western society.

Centennial celebrations of Simone de Beauvoir's birth began with a bang in Paris on January 9, 2008 with three very full days of presentations and events. In our April 2008 newsletter, I attempted to share the excitement and details of those heady days with our members. As this volume goes to press, we are anticipating a gathering of Beauvoir Society members in Newcastle-upon-Tyne at our 16th international conference, ably put together by Alison Holland and Susan Bainbrigge. Some of us will gather again June 27th and 28th in Berlin to celebrate the centennial with the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, and subsequently in September at New York University. Each of these events and many more throughout 2008 will pay tribute in its own way to the woman who sat down to write her own autobiography and decided instead to begin by tackling the thorny problem of what we now refer to as gender relationships.

Newsstands in Paris in January were full of magazines with hefty dossiers dealing with all aspects of Beauvoir's life and works. Numerous books have been published celebrating the centenary, with more scheduled to appear throughout the year. The hefty volume of presentations from the January colloquium at the R efectoire des Cordeliers will soon be available for purchase.

This volume contains articles by members of various generations, male and female, inspired to share their thoughts about Beauvoir as a writer and as a human being. Topics will take us from Elizabeth of Austria to the present day, examining fictional works, feminism, racism, and consumerism along the way.

As time marches on, we mourn the loss of long-time members of the Simone de Beauvoir Society who have been an integral part of our activities over the years. You will find tributes to Agnes Porter Beaudry, Hazel E. Barnes, and Eva Lundgren Gothlin in the "In Memoriam" section at the end of this volume.

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