

THE SECOND WAVE

A Reader in Feminist Theory

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Preface

The idea for this volume occurred several years ago when I taught my first graduate course in feminist theory. No one text included many of the essays I viewed as marking important turning points in feminist theory debates. Like many teachers who encounter such a dilemma I put together a "course packet" for teaching. While there were many collections already available in Women's Studies and even in feminist theory, many of these seemed oriented to a student with less background than those I was preparing to teach. Many of these volumes offered lots of "snippets" from famous writers, rather than essays in their entirety. These kinds of volumes might be useful for a first and second year student, but seemed less appropriate for a more advanced undergraduate or graduate student who wanted to be exposed to an author's ideas in the form that the author had chosen. Also, many of the available collections seemed organized around topics, either of women's oppression or of types of feminist theory. While, again, these can be useful schemas for introducing students to the field of Women's Studies or feminist theory, they seemed less appropriate for more sophisticated students who wanted some sense of changes within feminist theory over time.

Two features of this volume follow from this original motivation. For one, most of the essays are full length essays or chapters. For the sake of producing a manageably sized book I did have to shorten a few of the longer essays. Those selections that have been shortened from their original size are: "Introduction" to

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