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Lisa Greenwald, *Daughters of 1968: Redefining French Feminism and the Women's Liberation Movement*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. xii + 403 pp. Figures, notes, bibliography, and index. \$65.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 9-78-1496207555; \$30.00 U.S. (pb). ISBN 9-78-1496217714.

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In *Daughters of 1968*, Lisa Greenwald charts the evolution of French feminism from the liberation of France in 1944 to the election of François Mitterrand in 1981. This book is the product of decades of research, and it provides a rich but accessible account of the origins, vicissitudes, and impact of the women's liberation movement in France in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Having completed her PhD in the 1990s, Greenwald works as a high school history teacher, and her book is "emphatically a work of history" (p. 14): she offers a chronological narrative, emphasizing key events and figures over the particularities of feminist theory or literature. In Greenwald's account, the French women's liberation movement is characterized by a level of continuity: she locates the first seeds of second-wave feminism as early as the 1940s, and presents the movement as consistently beset by competition between factions. At the same time, she emphasizes positive material change, demonstrating that women at the end of the period benefitted from many more rights and far greater autonomy than they did at the start.

Greenwald's purpose in *Daughters of 1968* is to rectify the disproportionate emphasis in the Anglo-American academy on psychoanalytic or linguistic schools of French feminist thought, and connectedly, to underline the significance (to feminism and to history) of materialist, pragmatic, and/or reformist feminist activism in France since the Second World War. Numerous other scholars have critiqued the Anglo-American construction of "French feminism" as "postmodern, psychoanalytical, or deconstructionist" (p. 12), yet Greenwald succeeds in making a novel contribution. [1] She argues that feminism's "significance to the building of the modern French state" has been underacknowledged, especially in the US context in which she works herself (p. 12). Countering the notion (particularly prevalent in the US) that "women philosophers and writers were the prime representatives of second-wave French feminism", Greenwald sheds light on "the ideas and actions of a fiercely political movement... that brought women into the streets and legislatures to create material transformation of society" (pp. 13-14). As the book's title suggests, Greenwald—like the feminist activists she studies—is engaged in the task of "redefining French feminism." Although she acknowledges the impact of radical and philosophical feminisms, her position is that pragmatic and assimilationist feminists made the most significant contribution to women's liberation in France in the second half of the twentieth century.

The range of primary material in this volume is one of its strengths. Greenwald brings to light rich and previously unpublished sources from the private collections of major figures in the French women's liberation movement, such as Christine Delphy and Anne Zelensky, and she draws on insights gathered from interviews with women who experienced the movement first-hand. All source material in the book is quoted in English, making it particularly valuable for its intended Anglophone readership; as Greenwald points out, many recent studies of the French feminist movement since the Second World War are written in French and remain untranslated (p. 15). However, it would have been useful to clearly signal when the English translations provided are Greenwald's own, rather than citations from a translated source text; likewise, bilingual readers and students of French would have benefited from the inclusion of the original French quotations.

Greenwald's primary interest is in the feminist movement that emerged in France in the 1970s, following the events of May 1968—hence the designation “daughters of 1968.” However, she begins her study in 1944, viewing the liberation as a watershed moment for the renegotiation of gender roles in France. Greenwald traces the ideas and actions of a variety of stakeholders—women, men, feminists, antifeminists, some well-known, many largely forgotten—in what she calls the “woman question” from the 1940s to the 1980s. Throughout this period, certain problematics recur: the body, motherhood, and sexuality are consistently central to feminist debates, and the abovementioned tension between revolutionary and reformist approaches persists. In addition, Greenwald and her subjects continually grapple with the uneven application of the French Republican ideal of universalism. That is to say that women in the period in question struggled to be recognized “as full citizens *and* as women” (p. 55), confronting the contradiction between the French universalist model and the particularist treatment that women received on the basis of their gender difference.

In chapter one, Greenwald explores how this tension between (or fusion of) universalism and particularism shaped French feminism in the postwar years. She examines a number of competing discourses about women's role in the newly liberated French nation: with a declining birthrate and depleted population in the aftermath of two world wars, the French government was ardently pro-natalist, and both feminist and antifeminist figures mounted defenses of women's special role as mothers. Foreshadowing the fissures within 1970s French feminism, most feminists in the postwar years celebrated women's singularity and embraced “womanness” as a source of power (p. 54), although others, most notably Simone de Beauvoir, emphasized women's equality with men. Greenwald acknowledges the importance of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), but rightly notes that it remained “a theoretical anomaly” in the late 1940s (p. 25).

In the second chapter, Greenwald focuses on the years between the publication of *The Second Sex* and the events of May 1968, a period previously neglected in histories of twentieth-century French feminism. In these years, Greenwald finds evidence of a “quiet activism” (p. 57): lesser-known, pragmatic feminist campaigns that resulted in moderate yet significant progress for women in France. A notable example of such progress is the 1965 reform of the Civil Code, which granted married women the right to open their own bank accounts, control their assets, and work without their husband's permission, but stopped short of abolishing the husband's status as head of the family. In chapter three, Greenwald moves to consider the events of May 1968 and the birth of the more radical feminist movement that has come to be known as the “second wave.” [2] Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that this movement lies at the heart of Greenwald's work, the sections on the development of the Mouvement de libération des femmes (MLF) in the 1970s are

among the most interesting and lively of the volume. These sections are animated by a wealth of primary sources, and Greenwald brings to life numerous important and colourful characters, such as Delphy and Antoinette Fouque.

The fourth chapter foregrounds the various factions that emerged in the MLF in the 1970s. Greenwald has a kaleidoscopic knowledge of the different groups and publications that existed in and around the MLF, and constructs a detailed history of the ideologies, positions, alliances, and disharmonies that characterized French feminism in this period. The entirety of chapter five is devoted to the campaign to legalize abortion in France, which shows how important reproductive rights were to the second-wave feminist movement. Greenwald demonstrates that the fight for abortion rights united the different factions within the MLF; the abortion campaign effectively ended with the passing of the Veil law in 1974 and, interestingly, Greenwald frames this as the point at which the MLF truly began to fragment (p. 173). Chapter six further explores this fragmentation, with a focus on the fraught relationship between the MLF and mainstream party politics. In chapter seven, Greenwald provides an engaging account of the final years of the 1970s, in which Fouque and her radical, psychoanalytic faction *Psychanalyse et politique* (known as *Psych et po*) trademarked the name *Mouvement de libération des femmes*, claiming control of the movement as a whole. This was a scandal that tore apart the French women's liberation movement; in Greenwald's telling, this infighting coincided with dilution resulting from feminism's integration into the ascendant Socialist Party, such that the feminist cause became far less prominent in France in the final two decades of the twentieth century.

Throughout *Daughters of 1968*, it is clear that Greenwald looks more favorably upon the pragmatic, activist strands of the MLF than she does upon radical theorists and philosophers. She insinuates that more could have been achieved had the movement not upheld "ideological purity... at the expense of political expediency" (p. 14). There is a hint of derision in her description of the "obsession over theory and ideology" in France (p. 13) and her portrayal of the antiestablishment feminist position as "Janus faced" and "rarefied" (p. 210). Reading this, I found myself wanting to defend the radical feminist philosophers, ironically recreating the very feminist dispute that Greenwald documents in her book. She tends to equate theory with ivory-towered detachment, yet theorists and writers can be activists too. Greenwald writes that "the antireformist wings of the movement, notably the radical feminists and *Psych-et-Po*, were operating at a theoretical pitch beyond the hearing range of the average French woman" (p. 210); she critiques antiestablishment feminists for being "intellectual and urban", preventing "many women from small-town France" from identifying with feminism (p. 252). Yet Greenwald's book does not uncover the voices of any of the "average" or "small-town" women whom she claims were alienated by radical feminism.

Although she does consider class, education, and socio-economic background, and mentions colonialism and migration, when Greenwald talks about "women" in her book or describes "women's desires and... needs" (p. 30), the women in question are often implicitly white and French. Greenwald notes that "French-African and immigrant feminist groups" began independently organizing in the late 1970s, "with the express understanding that their needs were not being met within standard political organizations or umbrella groups" (p. 264). However, she does not take this as a cue to interrogate potentially exclusionary tendencies within the MLF. In chapter three, Greenwald describes "the return to female solidarity" as a strategy for the post-1968 women's movement, citing an MLF flyer that addresses "all of us women" (pp. 114, 93). Yet she does not consider how this recourse to woman as a universal category may

naturalize whiteness as the norm, erasing differences between women and producing blindness to the ways in which axes of difference such as race, ethnicity, and sexuality inflect women's experiences and needs. At multiple points in the volume, Greenwald cites primary sources in which the situation of (presumably white, French) women is compared to that of colonized subjects (pp. 85, 120) and African Americans (p. 111), but she does not problematize these comparisons or point out that race and gender are mutually constructed. Similarly, Delphy is quoted as stating that Islam is "a religion that subjugates women" (p. 114), and this quotation is neither critiqued, nuanced, nor analyzed. These sources provide opportunities to critically assess some of the voices within the French women's liberation movement, but they are unfortunately presented without comment.

In a similar fashion, Greenwald briefly details the conflict between radical feminists and radical lesbian separatists in the late 1970s (the latter group including Monique Wittig); she concludes that "feminism did not fare well when promoted by radical lesbians because the French found their separatist ideals so unpalatable" (p. 267). This is not, however, extended into a critique of the conditions which produced hostility to lesbianism in France, notably French universalism and its demand that particular interests (such as sexuality) be abstracted in the interest of the nation as a whole. Ilana Eloit has recently argued that "female universalism" within the MLF demanded the repression of lesbian difference; contra Greenwald, she frames the schism at the end of the 1970s as the result of ten years of such repression, rather than "the *beginning* of a new lesbian 'problem-space'".^[3] Around the same time as Greenwald's volume, other scholarship appeared that echoes Eloit's in taking a more critical approach to the French women's liberation movement. In *Le Ventre des femmes* (2017), for example, Françoise Vergès provides a very different history of the abortion campaign to that in *Daughters of 1968*. Vergès shows that the French women's liberation movement chose to ignore the history of racialized reproductive violence in the French empire, such that they defended white women's reproductive autonomy at the expense of women of color.

On the final page of *Daughters of 1968*, Greenwald states her conclusion that French feminists' success can be measured by their "ability to engage with French law, economic policy, and society, and to implement concrete changes in them" (p. 278). Not everyone will agree with this definition of feminist success as change within a system, nor with Greenwald's account of the relationship of race and sexuality to second-wave French feminism. Nonetheless, this book is a rich and valuable resource that will be of particular use to history students and to Anglophone enthusiasts of French feminism. *Daughters of 1968* is also a timely volume, published in 2018 just after the height of the #MeToo movement and its French equivalent, #BalanceTonPorc. If, as Greenwald suggests, feminism fell off the agenda in France in the final decades of the twentieth century, then it is back with a vengeance in the twenty-first. Writers, artists, scholars, and activists working in France today continue to redefine French feminism—grandchildren, perhaps, of 1968.

NOTES

[1] See, for example, Diana Holmes, *French Women's Writing 1848–1994* (London: Athlone, 1996), pp. 216–217; Claire Goldberg Moses, "Made in America: 'French Feminism' in Academia," *Feminist Studies* 24 (1998): 241–274; Christine Delphy, "The Invention of French Feminism: An Essential Move," *Yale French Studies* 97 (2000): 166–197.

[2] Greenwald does not problematize the notion of feminist “waves”, though other scholars have done so. Lisa Downing and Lara Cox write that “the metaphor of ‘waves’ to describe the history of feminism is notoriously unstable and inaccurate, since it assumes that one version of feminism follows consecutively from another, rather than acknowledging overlaps, traces and discontinuities” (p. 261). On the other hand, Dorothy Sue Cobble argues that “the homogeneous, univocal wave does not exist in nature. Up close, the ocean is full of cross-currents and eddies... If used carefully and self-consciously then, the ocean-wave language could be stretched in some instances to accommodate...diversity, heterogeneity, and multiplicity” (p. 87). See Lisa Downing and Lara Cox, “Introduction to ‘Queering the Second Wave: Anglophone and Francophone Contexts’,” *Paragraph* 41 (2018): 261-267; and Kathleen A. Laughlin, Dorothy Sue Cobble et al., “Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor,” *Feminist Formations* 22 (2010): 76-135.

[3] Ilana Eloit, *Lesbian Trouble: Feminism, Heterosexuality and the French Nation (1970-1981)* (Ph.D. dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2018), pp. 3, 41.

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