
Friedan focused mainly on short fiction in *Ladies' Home Journal* and three other women's magazines, Meyerowitz points out. Meyerowitz surveyed 489 *nonfiction* articles about women that appeared between 1946 and '58 in eight monthly magazines, ranging from *Reader's Digest* to *Woman's Home Companion*. She found that the magazines "did not simply glorify domesticity or demand that women return to or stay at home." They "advocated both the domestic and the nondomestic, sometimes in the same sentence."

More than 60 percent of the articles dealt with individual women and their achievements. (Other articles concerned more predictable subjects, such as women's paid work, marriage, and domesticity.) The individual women profiled included prominent entertainers and others in the public eye, such as "star reporter" Dorothy Kilgallen and athlete Babe Didrikson Zaharias. "In general, [these] articles suggested that the noteworthy woman rose above and beyond ordinary domesticity." Many such articles saw women "both as feminine and domestic and as public achievers." In an article by journalist (and future senator) Richard L. Neuberger, for example, Dorothy McCullough Lee was portrayed as both an "ethereally pale housewife" with a "frail, willowy" appearance and the hard-nosed mayor of Portland, Oregon, who had successfully fought organized crime and was "headed for national distinction."

The magazines that set the tone of postwar America did not pretend that women were creatures only of hearth and home. In reality, Friedan, herself a veteran magazine writer when *The Feminine Mystique* was published, elaborated on a conflict in women's lives that magazines had been exploring for years.

Bad Business

"Hollywood's Dirty Little Secrets" by Michael Medved, in *Crisis* (March 1993), 1511 K St. N.W., Ste. 525, Washington, D.C. 20005.

A majority of Hollywood movies these days (61 percent in 1991) are rated R, barred to children

under 17 unless accompanied by a parent. Is that because the American public craves flicks full of profanity, sex, and violence? Not at all, says film critic Medved. Hollywood is insistently giving the public what it *doesn't* want.

Some R-rated films, such as *Basic Instinct* (1992), do well at the box office. But most do not. Only one (*Beverly Hills Cop*) of the 10 top money-making movies of the 1980s was R-rated. In 1991, movies aimed at families—those rated PG (parental guidance advised) and G (general audience)—reaped, as a whole, three times the median box-office gross of R-rated films. These family movies ranged from *Beauty and the Beast* to *City Slickers*. A recent analysis by Paul Kagan Associates found that of 1,187 films released between 1984 and '91 (and shown, at their peak, on at least 100 screens), those in the PG category were most successful. Since 1983, Medved says, there has not been a single year in which R-rated movies did as well as those rated PG—and yet the proportion of "adult" films on Hollywood's menu has increased every year.

The film industry violates its own business interests, Medved argues, because of Tinsel Town's peculiar culture. "There is a sense in Hollywood that in order to be . . . serious . . . one must be an alienated artist convinced that life is bleak and meaningless and dishonest and hypocritical," he says. Even though a moviemaker may have a Rolls Royce in the garage and a per-picture paycheck in the millions, he still needs "to attack conventional institutions" to show that he has kept faith with his artistic roots. Hence, the filmmakers have produced a raft of movies, such as *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Agnes of God*, and *The Pope Must Die*, casting organized religion in an unfavorable light—even though all such films have bombed at the box office.

With a desperation born of insecurity, moviemakers want the respect of their peers. "Their pretentiousness, their preening, their desperate desire to be taken seriously runs very deep," Medved says, "and even leads to financial risk-taking on a grand scale, as the industry shows its 'integrity' by ignoring—and even assaulting—the sensibilities of much of the public." Among the politically correct film projects bubbling away today are *five* about the radical Black Panthers of the 1960s.

"We look upon the Black Panther movement as a very positive one, but one that was re-

pressed by white society," explained a Warner Brothers vice president.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Secret Cabinet of Dr. Foucault

A Survey of Recent Articles

Little known outside the academy, Michel Foucault (1926–84) is an exemplary figure to many tenured radicals within it and an influential one to many other scholars. "Whatever else Foucault was, he was a great Nietzschean hero," Princeton's Alexander Nehamas writes in the *New Republic* (Feb. 15, 1993). That is just what the French historian and philosopher, who died of AIDS at the age of 57, ardently tried to be, contends James Miller, author of *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (1993). Foucault struggled all his life "to honor Nietzsche's gnomic injunction, 'to become what one is,'" Miller says in a *Salmagundi* (Winter 1993) symposium occasioned by his controversial book, which details, among other things, Foucault's homosexuality, sadomasochism, drug-taking, and attempts at suicide.

"The inner logic of [Foucault's] philosophical odyssey, and also of his public political statements and actions," Miller contends, "is unintelligible apart from his lifelong, and highly problematic, preoccupation with limiting the limits of reason, and finding ways—in dreaming, at moments of madness, through drug use, in erotic rapture, in great transports of rage, and also through intense suffering—of exploring the most shattering kinds of experience, breaching the boundaries normally drawn between the unconscious and conscious, order and disorder, pleasure and pain, life and death; and in this way, starkly revealing how distinctions central to the play of true and false are pliable, uncertain, contingent."

Foucault, who occupied the chair of History of Thought at the prestigious Collège de France in Paris and lectured widely on both sides of the Atlantic, contended that what is deemed

"knowledge" at any one time is little more than the dominant interests' convenient fiction. Those in power manipulate social attitudes so as to define such categories as insanity, illness, sexuality, and criminality, in ways that allow them to oppress "deviants." "More often than most people dream," Miller adds, "we can *change* the rules of the game . . . even if few of us ever will, inhibited as we are by the conventions of ordinary language, common sense and conscientiousness, reinforced by the threat of punishment and a more diffuse, hence insidious set of fears: of being branded as queer, crazy, abnormal."

Foucault's thought had two basic components, Alexander Nehamas explains. "The first, derived from Nietzsche and never abandoned, was that every human situation is a product of history, though we may be convinced that it is a natural fact." Insanity, for example, has no fixed character but has been "constructed" in different ways throughout history. The second component, which Foucault modified in later years, "was a relentless suspicion of 'progress.' He had an uncanny ability to see the dark side of every step toward the light, to grasp the price at which every advance had to be bought. And he believed that the price was never a bargain."

Power was Foucault's obsession, observes Roger Kimball, managing editor of the *New Criterion* (March 1993): "He came bearing the bad news in bad prose that every institution, no matter how benign it seems, is 'really' a scene of unspeakable domination and subjugation; that efforts at enlightened reform—of asylums, of prisons, of society at large—have been little more than alibis for extending state power;