

The following text excerpts are designed to be used with the [Pick a Number lesson plan](#) about 20th-century feminist philosophers. Choose any five excerpts below for the lesson.

Excerpts from Three 20th-Century Feminist Philosophers

Simone De Beauvoir:

1. "The little girl feels that her body is escaping her, that it is no longer the clear expression of her individuality: it becomes foreign to her; and at the same moment she is grasped by others as a thing: on the street, eyes follow her, her body is subject to comments; she would like to become invisible; she is afraid of becoming flesh and afraid to show her flesh." - *The Second Sex*
2. "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman. No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine." - *The Second Sex*

Hannah Arendt:

1. "The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of our moral standards of judgment, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together." - *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 1963
2. "A mixture of gullibility and cynicism had been an outstanding characteristic of mob mentality before it became an everyday phenomenon of masses. In an ever-changing, incomprehensible, world the masses had reached the point where they would, at the same time, believe everything and nothing, think that everything is possible and that nothing was true. The mixture in itself was remarkable enough, because it spelled the end of the illusion that gullibility was a weakness of unsuspecting primitive souls and cynicism the vice of superior and refined minds. Mass propaganda discovered that its audience was ready at all times to believe the worst, no matter how absurd, and did not particularly object to being

deceived because it held every statement to be a lie anyhow. The totalitarian mass leaders based their propaganda on the correct psychological assumption that, under such conditions, one could make people believe the most fantastic statements one day, and trust if the next day they were given irrefutable proof of their falsehood, they would take refuge in cynicism; instead of deserting the leaders who had lied to them, they would protest that they had known all along the statement was a lie and would admire the leaders for their superior tactical cleverness."-*Origins of Totalitarianism, 1951*

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Judith Butler:

1. "The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination." - *Gender Trouble, 1990*
2. "The misapprehension about gender performativity is this: that gender is a choice, or that gender is a role, or that gender is a construction that one puts on, as one puts on clothes in the morning, that there is a 'one' who is prior to this gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender and decides with deliberation which gender it will be today."- *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex", 1993*
3. "[W]e must recognize that ethics requires us to risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness, when what forms us diverges from what lies before us, when our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human. To be undone by another is a primary necessity, an anguish, to be sure, but also a chance--to be addressed, claimed, bound to what

is not me, but also to be moved, to be prompted to act, to address myself elsewhere, and so to vacate the self-sufficient "I" as a kind of possession. If we speak and try to give an account from this place, we will not be irresponsible, or, if we are, we will surely be forgiven."-*Giving an Account of Oneself, 2003*