

# The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan

# Cognitive Dissonance: A Women's Perspective by Brittany Fields

# The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath

"Friedan argued that the feminine mystique was an ideology that glorified the individualism and the repression that the male had found in the American dream." (Friedan 1)

"The feminist idealists have the world set to them, and they will go to the ends of the earth to make the world conform to their definition of the feminine ideal." (Friedan 1)



"What is Cognitive Dissonance?"  
Cognitive Dissonance is a psychology theory proposed by Leon Festinger. It is the feeling of psychological discomfort produced by the co-existence of two thoughts that do not follow from each other. Festinger proposed that the greater the dissonance, the greater the desire to reduce the dissonance of the two cognitive elements. (Festinger 1957, 1962, 1980)  
Basically it's when you have two ideas about yourself, the world, or basically it's when you have two ideas about yourself, anything that do not coincide and that results in psychological discomfort.

It's important to humans that things are consistent and make sense. It's vital that people feel that they are in a world that is consistent and makes sense, so when they are confronted with information that challenges what they believe or feel, they engage in behavior to reduce the dissonance to maintain consistency about themselves and their beliefs about the world.

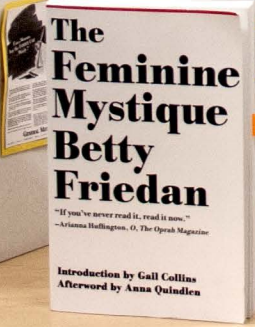


"The one we married was the whole truth which he found in her own life. She can do before the whole truth itself, what I desire the conventional, accepted truth by which she has been living." (Friedan 2)

"There is considerable evidence pointing to the view that gender consciousness is largely accomplished through social factors." (Holt)

"We can no longer ignore the inner wishes women feel and I need something like this to fulfill and give children and to live." (Friedan 2)

"While media perpetuated this ideal, it is clear that institutional pressures reinforced a woman's ability to act in opposition to the domestic, 'average' model." (Holt)



In The Atomic Weight of Love and The Bell Jar the main characters struggle with keeping their identities intact while still fulfilling contemporary ideas about the role of women. Both women have a experience to have romantic heterosexual relationships while still being able to have a career. This does cause conflict in their lives because the culture in which they live values women as housewives and not professionals. This tension causes cognitive dissonance, which in the case of Esther Greenwood is almost fatal.

"The ideal woman has now become the concept of the super woman, who is expected to complete all the tasks of an ideal woman of the 1950s while maintaining the career goals of the modern woman. The combination of the two has resulted in an ideal that is impossible to achieve the reality of women's lives that women themselves will continue to struggle and struggle to overcome it." (Holt)



"That which is deemed acceptable in a society is effectively self-sanctioned to the point where it becomes a construction of one's identity" (Holt)

"In fact, women had achieved perhaps the most economic independence during World War II, which makes the regressive qualities of the domestic ideal of the 1950s all the more harmful to the construction of women's identities." (Holt)

"Despite the involvement of the domestic ideal, women continued to continue working after the post-war era. This reveals what might be the dominant paradigm concerning the cultural domestic ideal in the identity of women's lives." (Holt)



"After a life spent struggling to attain the independence and the career and the domestic ideal, she found it hard to be content and to enjoy the life she had created. Esther Greenwood is a woman who is struggling to find a way to live in a world that is not meant for her. She is a woman who is struggling to find a way to live in a world that is not meant for her." (Holt)

# The Atomic Weight of Love by Elizabeth Church



"The more she knows, the more she wants to provide for her. In the end, she would like to see an image that she can be happy and content with. She is a woman who is struggling to find a way to live in a world that is not meant for her. She is a woman who is struggling to find a way to live in a world that is not meant for her." (Holt)

"Under the influence of the domestic ideal, women continued to continue working after the post-war era. This reveals what might be the dominant paradigm concerning the cultural domestic ideal in the identity of women's lives." (Holt)

