



Filière :

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Session :

2024

Épreuve de :

OPTION/ANGLAIS

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LIVE

Consignes

- Remplir soigneusement l'en-tête de chaque feuille avant de commencer à composer
- Rédiger avec un stylo non effaçable bleu ou noir
- Ne rien écrire dans les marges (gauche et droite)
- Numéroté chaque page (cadre en bas à droite)
- Placer les feuilles A3 ouvertes, dans le même sens et dans l'ordre

In a famous letter sent to her husband in 1776, Abigail Adams urged him to "Remember the ladies". This letter epitomizes how the feminine and feminist issue is closely linked with other major economic, social and political problems: in this case the American Revolution.

Betty Friedan also wrote a founding text for American feminism, this time second-wave feminism. Inspired by Beauvoir's Second Sex (1949), she published in 1963 The Feminine Mystique, that became the Bible of new-wave feminism. Friedan highlights a paradox: legally, women -almost- have the same rights than men, yet actually they remain dominated. In her book that mostly addresses women, she explains how women have accepted the masculine domination because of their education: it is the "feminine mystique". In her perspective, the legal freedom women now have has to be coupled with economic and social equality between men and women. In the context of the triumph of the male breadwinner / housewife ~~model~~ couple model, she believes feminism has for task to free the dominated women, and does not question the differences ~~bet~~ within the ~~woman~~ ^{feminine} condition (doc 5).

In a similar albeit different perspective, Barbara

Bedichon advocates for the feminine vote in her Reasons for the Enfranchisement of Women (1866, document 2). She considers women as an unique group and writes in their name. She claims that a limited extension of the franchise to upper-class women would invite all women to be concerned with politics, paving the way for a general extension of the franchise to all women. She believes ~~women's~~ that feminine participation to politics would be useful as women have "good sense". She ~~published~~ delivered her speech when the Second Reform Act was intensely debated, the liberal "Bill had been rejected" by the Commons. However, neither the Conservatives nor the liberals proposed an extension of the franchise to women.

With the same idea of the feminine "good sense", Margaret Thatcher addressed an exclusively feminine audience in her "Speech to Conservative Women's Conference", given in 1988. Recently reelected, Thatcher had been Prime Minister for nine years. Thatcher praises the feminist ~~at~~ breakthroughs of the beginning of the century, but also has a political agenda, as she only gives credit to the Conservatives for the feminist legal changes and advocates for a return to the "Victorian values" in an almost reactionary manner (document 4).

Similarly, Anna Julia Cooper also uses the feminine question to propose a broader political project, in her A Voice from the South By a black woman of the South (1892, document 4). She published her book in a double context. The feminist context was the fight for the feminine suffrage, that was only ^{legal} accepted in a few states - and none of the southern - at the time. The racial

context, in the South, was the post-reconstruction period. After Hayes ended Reconstruction (1877), there was a sharp backlash for the African-Americans living in most Southern States. In this troubled context, Cooper advocates for ~~uniquely~~ an only-Black feminism.

Christine Bolt sums up ~~all these~~ some of these feminists points of view in her study The Women's Movements in the United States and Britain from the 1790s to the 1920s (1993, doc 1). Specialist of gender studies, Christine Bolt explores the social conditions that favoured - or not - the growth of feminist movements in the UK and the US. She also draws a comparison between British feminism and American feminism.

As one could see, feminism is closely linked to the social conditions in which it appears. To what extent is feminism ~~dependent~~ and the feminine question dependent to other social and political issues? Undoubtedly, feminism can appear - or not - depending on the social and intellectual context. Therefore, feminism is held back by the divergence of interests between different groups of women. However, feminists can overcome their differences, giving the chance to feminism to improve the feminine condition.

The creation and growth of feminist groups is dependent of the social and intellectual background. Feminism is a result of liberalization and democratization, while modernity questions the feminine condition.

Feminism, or at least first-wave feminism, needed the social changes caused by the growth of industry, but even more the intellectual context linked to the expansion of the democratic idea and

ideal. Christine Bolt emphasizes the "ideological climate" (line 10) in which "female activists" could "operate for the first half of the nineteenth century" (1.11). It is a reference to the ~~general~~ extension of the franchise to all white men in all states at the end of 1820s, without any condition of property, but also a reference to the importance of the abolitionist movement in the creation of feminism. Lucretia Mott, for instance, was an abolitionist and then became a feminist, and Frederick Douglass was present at the Seneca Falls Convention (1848), high tide of this early feminism. On the contrary, the context in the UK was less intellectually liberal. Before Barbara Bodichon, there were almost no well-known feminists, with the isolated and ~~except~~ extraordinary exception of Mary Wollstonecraft (A Vindication of the rights of women). In the UK, there was no universal male suffrage for white men until 1918, so almost a century after the US. This is what Bolt refers to when she writes about a favourable context for feminism.

Yet, as Bolt points out (1.57), at the end of the nineteenth century the American and British socio-economic background became similar. This idea can also be found with Cooper that points out that "changes of such moment are in progress" (line 20). At the end of the Gilded Age, the US was becoming a more and more ~~rural~~ urban country. Socio-economic changes would, according to Cooper, favour the feminine ~~over~~ condition and especially the condition of Black women. Bodichon also acknowledges the importance of ~~the~~ industrialization on the feminine condition when she emphasizes that women care - or should care - of "the roads [that] are bad, the drains neglected, the water poisoned". The feminine and feminist issues are closely

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Consignes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remplir soigneusement l'en-tête de chaque feuille avant de commencer à composer• Rédiger avec un stylo non effaçable bleu ou noir• Ne rien écrire dans les marges (gauche et droite)• Numéroté chaque page (cadre en bas à droite)• Placer les feuilles A3 ouvertes, dans le même sens et dans l'ordre		
<p>linked to the social, economic and intellectual context of the time.</p> <p>Therefore, modernity questions the feminine condition. One could think that modernity is helpful for the feminine condition as technical progress eases the domestic burden that weighs on women. It is, according to Betty Friedan, a myth, a mystique! From line 26 to line 33, she gives a sarcastic picture of "the women that had everything that women ever dreamed of" (l.33). The image of the happy housewife is according to Friedan a myth, and even a lie "that we read "in the millions of words written about women, for women" (line 9), but not by women. In <u>Women, work, family</u> (1978), Joan Scott and Louise Tilly show how the image and model of the "happy housewife" glad to do the domestic work while the "male breadwinner" had a paid work was at its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s. To Friedan, women suffer an inequality and the economic modernity of the 1950s did not bring result in an improvement of the feminine condition. To Friedan, this economic modernity must be coupled with a social modernity, and it passes by a new-wave feminism that attacks the most noble</p>		
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signs of sexism.

But Friedan's view is far from being unanimous and some believe economic modernity is enough for women. Thatcher, for instance, makes fun of second-wave feminists that would, according to her, refuse the word of "chairman" (line 19) because it has "man" in it. Thatcher opposes "feminists like that". Aside her joke, she seriously tackles second-wave feminism when she claims that "many women wish to devote themselves mainly to raising a family and running a home" (l. 31-32). This could be a direct answer to Friedan! With her perspective of a return to "Victorian values", she does not believe that economic modernity should necessarily imply a change in the gender roles. Therefore, if feminism is a product of modernity, modernity also triggers antifeminism. The link between the social, economic, intellectual background and feminism is undeniable, but not straight nor clear.

As one could see, the feminine condition and feminism are dependent of the background. But the feminine condition is not unique, it is plural, which makes the link between the context and feminism unclear, and questions the existence of a "pure" feminism that would set step aside of other social and political issues.

Feminism is held back by the differences between the feminine conditions. Different groups of women have diverging interests. Class and race divisions can form an important obstacle to feminism, while all women do not feel feminists.

Other criterion than gender can split women and make feminism difficult. For Christine Bolt (1.911), the fact that class divisions were less marked in the US helped feminism, while it hampered it in the UK. More broadly, Bolt emphasizes how class, racial and xenophobic divisions made it difficult for feminism to unite. For instance, in the last sentence of the excerpt, she writes that "for immigrant women, feminism often seemed to be either an irrelevance or a force which was unduly dominated by comfortably off, middle-class elite" (line 87-89). The example of Emma Goldman epitomizes the difficult links between feminism and other social issues. She immigrated in the 1890s, was without doubt a feminist, but as she was a socialist, she did not want to ally with "class enemies" and therefore refused to ~~ally with~~ cooperate with upper-class feminists.

Bodichon and Friedan try to deny those divisions by describing average women ("suburban housewife" 1.3), but it comes is clearly visible in Thatcher's speech. She mentions Nancy Astor, first woman to stand in Parliament. But Nancy Astor was married to Lord Astor, an aristocrat, and this is why she was a Conservative despised by the feminists, but Thatcher silences those divisive criterion. On the contrary, Anna T. Cooper makes a positive affirmation of these divisions. From line 25 to line 34, she develops an eugenic rhetoric explaining how the "Negro woman" has a positive role to play in the next decades. Eugenics were popular at the time and Herbert Spencer was one of the most-read author. Cooper,

with originality, reexploits the rhetoric usually used to "prove" the inferiority of Black ^{people} to make it positive for the Black ^{people}, and especially for the Black women that have to lead the fight against the Black Codes (1.38-40). According to Cooper, divisions that do not ~~only~~ ^{imply} gender are not a problem for feminism, but an opportunity to affirm a Black feminism. As one can see, other criterion than gender can split women and make feminism divisive, or at least divided.

Feminism also has for challenge to convince women that feminism is in their best interest. Anna Cooper hopes that Black women will understand their role: "May she see her opportunity and vindicate her high prerogative" (1.46). Friedan regrets that women do not understand that they are alienated and dominated: "If a woman had a problem in the 1950s and 1960s, she knew that something must be wrong with her marriage, or with herself." Women do not think of putting the blame on the system, or do not wish to. If she triggered a wave of feminism, Betty Friedan had no precedent: in the 1950s and 1960s, feminism almost did not exist, before Friedan. The conservative backlash against Friedan's idea and the Equal Rights Amendment epitomizes it perfectly, some women do not believe in feminism. The backlash was led by some women, and their ideas were clear: "If they (the feminists) win, what will we lose?" (Phyllis Schlafly). Conservative women consider that their position has advantages and do not want to lose them. Thatcher agrees with this idea when she claims that "Very few jobs can compare in long-term importance and satisfaction with that of housewife and mother" (1.33).

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<p>Therefore, feminists ^{the feminist} have a large part of their ^{the feminist} mission to convince women that feminism benefits to women. This is why Barbara Rodichon wants "to show why some care, and why those who do not ought to care" (1.16). Her strategy is simple. As upper-class women are the most involved in politics, enlarging the franchise to them would progressively attract other women to politics. One day could then be achieved universal suffrage and women could defend their then be able to defend their own interests. In the same context and with similar ideas, John Stuart Mill published <u>Subjection of women</u> (1865). Like Rodichon, Mill insisted that the introduction of women to politics and feminism needed to be progressive, but that for it not to be too slow, it implied effective changes (like the extension of the franchise to some women). To convince women to get involve in feminism is a hard task for feminists. Feminism is held back by the differences between feminine conditions, but also by the benefits of the condition that can convince some women (like Thatcher) that changes are unnecessary.</p> <p>Dependent of a favourable socio-economic context, 9 / 13</p>		

feminism faces a lot of obstacles. But can ~~we~~ feminists find common ground to achieve breakthroughs? How?

Feminists can overcome their differences, and therefore give a chance to feminism to improve the feminine condition. Despite the differences between groups of women, all women have some common goals. Therefore, by some perspectives, the feminine condition can be considered united.

Despite the undoubted differences between feminine groups, women can commonly benefit of feminist advances. Thatcher refers (line 1) to the "Representation of the People" Act of 1918 that gave all men and all women over 30 years of age the right to vote. It is a good example of a reform that benefits to all women regardless of their class or social condition. On the contrary, there is no doubt that Thatcher's will to "strengthen the family" (1.52) ~~will be a~~ represents a blow to the feminine condition. The "Family Credit" (line 46) convinced some women to stop seeking for work and played a key, a pivotal role in keeping the traditional roles criticized by Friedan. In the last paragraph of Friedan's excerpt, the "woman" seems abstract, but it far more refers to the life of the majority of the American women.

The fact that Christine Holt refers to the "separate spheres" concept is ~~is~~ important. The concept is pivotal, because if women and men do not live in the same sphere, women

for we live in the same one. In Christine Holt world, it "gave the feminists a concept they could reconstruct for their own use when they sought a fairer social order. By trying to prove that women do not belong to the public sphere left to the men, the concept of "separate spheres" gave to ~~women~~ and feminists common ground ^{unite} against the system. Feminism is an ideology that overcomes the differences between women and groups of women in order to contest ~~parliamentary~~ ^{sexist} legislations and laws. To Holt, feminism is what "produce[s] an ideology which was powerfully persuasive to the mass of women" (1.36).

Therefore, feminism produces a united feminine condition, independent from the other social and political issues. When Bodichon talks of an "independent body" (1.7), she does not mean that the women form a single group, she means that in the perspective of getting the franchise, ~~the~~ women form a group that has common interests and therefore can be considered as united even though she does not count women that do not pay taxes. When the women that presented a petition (1.15) present it, they only present it as women. The feminine condition gives their claim legitimacy. This is why Christine Holt can state that "the emergence of organized women's movements which, by the 1920s, had immeasurably strengthened the bonds between women." Feminism is the condition of the creation of a united feminine condition.

Subsequently, women those who deny the real existence of a united feminine condition can be uncomfortable. Cooper's demonstration has for goal to prove the existence of a separate

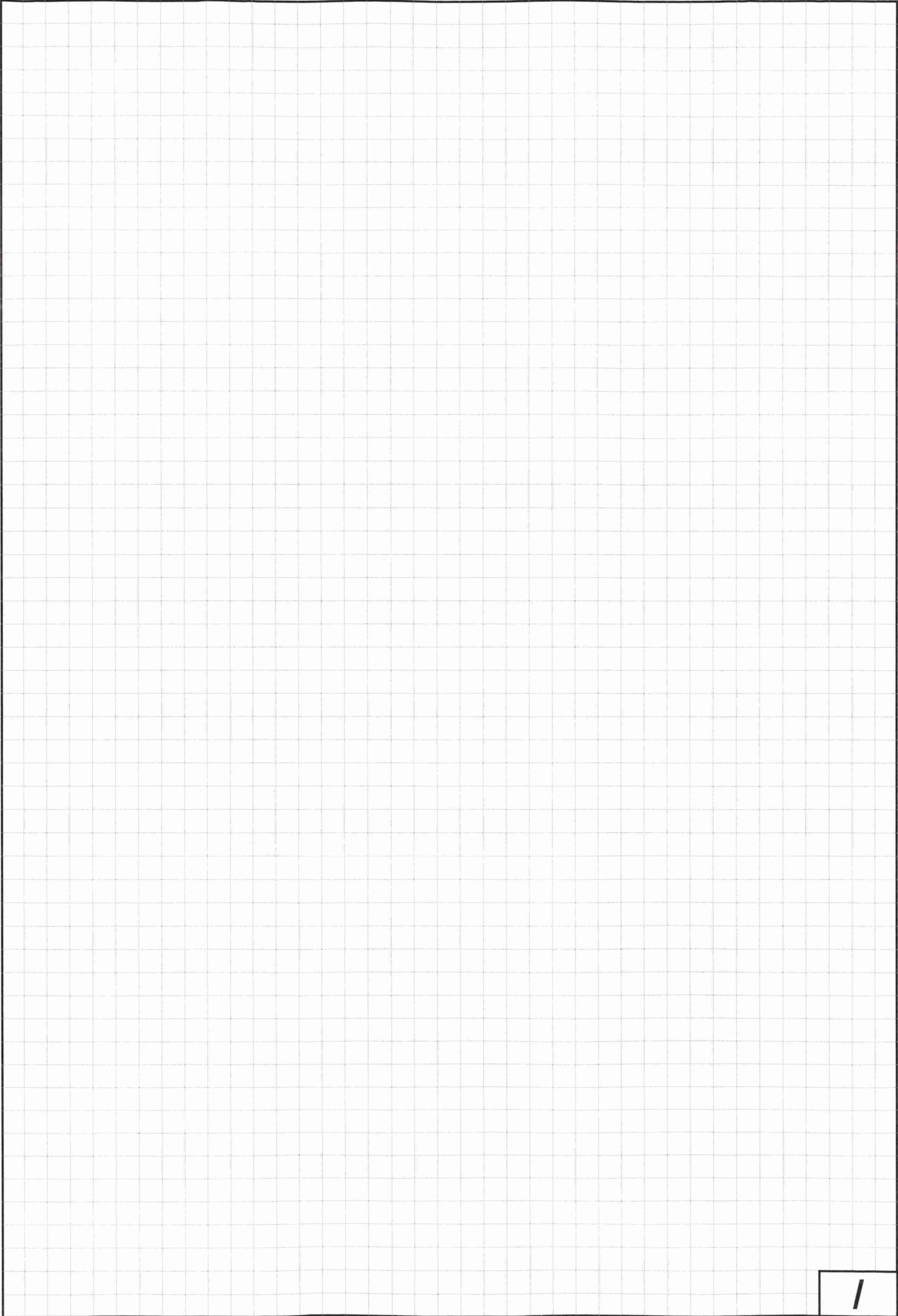
Black feminine condition. But for that, she needs before all to prove the ~~special~~ common ground women have: "To be a woman in such an age carries with it a privilege and an opportunity never implied before." (1. 25). Similarly, Thatcher wants to show that Emmeline Pankhurst, founder of the WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union), was a conservative before being a feminist. It's a partial point of view, because Pankhurst was fighting the liberals because they were in power, and could not be close to Labour because she did not want to propose a socialist feminism, but a feminism that talks to every woman. Therefore, she had no choice than to be close to the conservatives, but it does not occult her belief that the feminine condition could be considered as one, or at least considered as united. Feminists can patch up their differences to present a united front, united feminine condition, to the system they consider as sexist.

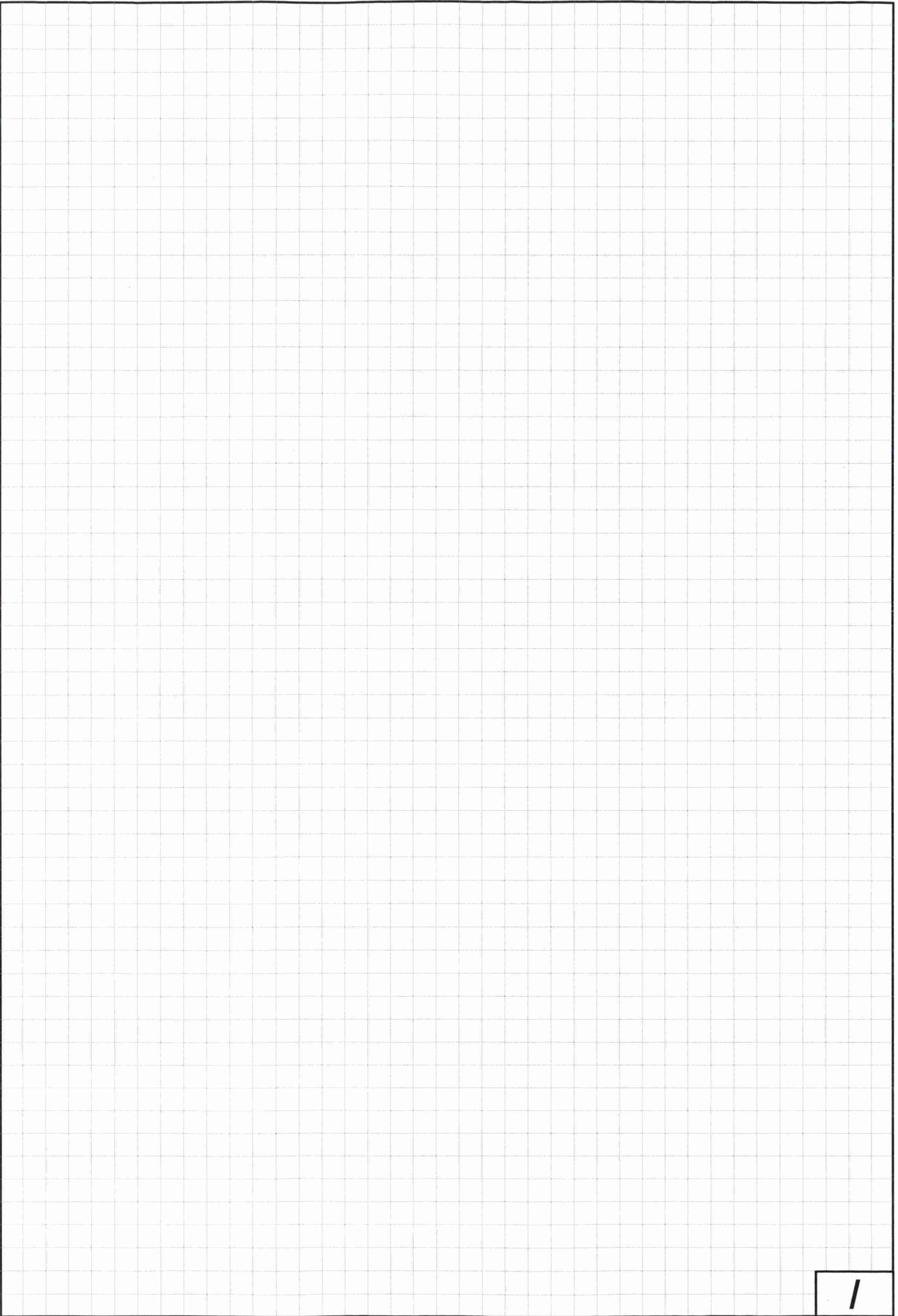
To sum up, feminism can somehow extract itself from the conditions that brought it up. For instance, suffragism was mostly led by middle and upper class feminists, but it benefited to all women, so it found a way to distance itself from the conditions that made it possible. Yet, this capacity to create a united feminine condition must not occult the fact that only specific social and intellectual conditions made it possible for feminism to simply appear. And the existence of a united feminine condition should not hide the fact that women's realities are diverse. It is the sense of the concept of "intersectionality", invented by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Black women are

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<p>not only discriminated as women, not discriminated as African-American, but discriminated as African-American women.</p>		
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NE RIEN ÉCRIRE DANS CE CADRE





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