

# Dilemmatic Constraints on Women in Emerging Second-wave Feminism Heideggerian Ambivalence and Oscillation between Authenticity and Inauthenticity

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## Abstract

This paper adopts Heidegger's philosophy, its authenticity and inauthenticity in particular, to analyze ambivalent representations of women in emerging second-wave feminism. During the consciousness-raising stage of second-wave, women's consciousness-raising enabled their struggles for feminist ways of living, while meanwhile patriarchal society's struggles against feminism were commonly seen. Therefore, enormous constraints made women with consciousness raised, who were thirsty for employment, cringe from getting out of homes to strive for rights in the public sphere. This phenomenon can be explained by Heidegger's existential authenticity and inauthenticity, especially their oscillation, with reference to humans' existential structures. Authentically, in the hope of striving for economic independence, women as Dasein with feminist consciousness raised were encouraged to speak up for themselves to reclaim the long-lost authentic "Self of one's own" by confronting the oppression by patriarchal society as "The They". However, due to social constraints which exacerbated women's fear of confrontation and weakened their rebel, many women chose to live by the status quo which was the usual inauthentic state in average everydayness with full absorption where women largely gave up on reflecting on assigned domestic roles and avoided taking responsibility for strenuous life-planning. This paper argues that volatile and oscillatory transitions between authenticity and inauthenticity among women witnessed the struggle and constituted the ambivalent representations of women, existentially due to first the temporariness of authenticity and strong pulling power of inauthenticity in the less influential emerging second-wave, and second the unavoidable existence of the influence of "The They" on women as ontologically Being-with.

**Keywords:** authenticity, Heidegger, inauthenticity, patriarchal society, second-wave feminism