

## CHAPTER III

### EXTRINSIC THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1. Extrinsic Aspects: Feminism

The contemporary notion of feminism did not exist in early America. Biblical doctrine and centuries of custom have taught that women are inherently inferior to men. Meanwhile, feminism advocates equal opportunities for women in the social, legal, educational, and economic spheres and acknowledges the worth of women's contributions to society. Early Americans, with the exclusion of a few exceptional individuals, did not expect women to be treated equally (Mays, 2004).

In the 1920s, the campaign for women's rights came to an end, and men were unquestionably in charge of American society. Women had struggled for almost a century for the right to pursue higher education and careers, as well as the opportunity to work at any job they were after. Although they had made steps in the economy, they continued to face discrimination in numerous ways once the feminist movement ended (O'Neill, 1998: n21).

Walby in the *Theorising Patriarchy* characterized "patriarchy" as a system of social compositions and practices in which males dominate, oppress, and exploit females. Males are destined to be dominant, and so do females to be subordinates with their lot. Patriarchal society favors men to control over the women's life because men live life fully and women cannot live without men. This type of system stimulates women to always depend on men: her brothers, her father, her husband, or her sons, to the point that she believes that there is no self-sufficient with her 'self' alone since she used to be a slave. By contrast, because of patriarchy, men

abuse women with their destined privilege such as rape, wife beating, father/daughter incest, flashing, sexual harassment at work, or sexual assault. There are six major patriarchal compositions in which defined as connected terms of the social relations. These are: a patriarchal mode of production in which women's labor is expropriated by their husbands; patriarchal relations within waged labor; the patriarchal state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal culture (Walby, 1989).

Today, the reward of feminism has become a conquest for most women globally whereas freedom and justice have no genders. The patriarchal prudence of confining women to the conjugal life has been brought down during First-wave feminism. Women had assigned the citizenship rights and privileges to the extent of public realm access formally equal to those of men. They were no longer seen as toys in the eyes of their husbands or fathers. First-wave feminism altered the type and scale of patriarchy (Walby, 1989).

In her book *Feminist Thought*, Rosemarie Tong (2014: 1) writes “feminism is not a monolithic ideology and that all feminists do not think alike”. Feminism has diverse frameworks and points of views depending on the oppressions women overcome in their respective districts. Furthermore, she constitutes eight forms of feminism: Liberal Feminism; Radical Feminism; Marxist and Socialist Feminism; Psychoanalytic and Care-Focused Feminism; Existentialist Feminism; Postmodern Feminism; Women of Color Feminism, and Ecofeminism. Thus, I will discuss one form of feminism alone which is Existentialist feminism.

### **3.1.1. Existentialist Feminism**

Tong (2014: 179) discusses the work of existentialist from Beauvoir that men designated “man” the self; and “woman,” the other. The women’s otherness elucidates the significant thought that man is the essential, woman is inessential being. This construction shows how woman has always been subordinated and inferior to man in many aspects such as social, politic, and economic.

Thus, existentialist feminism voices notable account on the liberation of women from oppressive social, political, and economic structures. Mainstream women’s movements have been focused on the liberal agenda which provide women equal opportunities and pathways, whether in science, the professions, business, government, or military (Johnson, 2005: 17).

Like Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, Beauvoir believes that one of the keys to women’s liberation is economic, becoming an independent woman. When a woman sets her mind to whatever she wants to be, she must bring to the table the kind of society that will provide her with material supports to surpass her present limits (Tong, 2014: 187). Existentialist feminism addresses many certain topics, but here I will only discuss a few topics such as social life, the married woman, and the independent woman.

#### **3.1.1.1. Social Life**

Since the Cold War ended in the early 1990s, capitalism institutions have risen to most nations, impacting both national economies and working people. The U.S. domestic economy and the global economy tend to be remarkably alike. On a global scale, workers have been shedding gain at the same rate as they have in the United

States. Authority, wealth, and earnings have been dispersed far more unequally both within the nation and worldwide. Working-class individuals compose a significant proportion of the population in the United States. In 2002, approximately 88 million people, or 62% of the labor force, held positions in working-class jobs (Zweig, 2004).

Beauvoir explains that it is essentially the woman who will organize this social life. Therefore, the most basic social unit, home, represents her expression alone. It exhibits the living standard, social class, and preference which others will judge. Home has deeper value, not a mere “interior”. This becomes her social duty to “represent” and will contemplate herself and the family of her supreme among certain others. However, most women are not sufficiently wealthy to afford their life’s profession in “socializing” (Beauvoir, 1956: 505).

Way before showing her household off, woman must represent herself both inside the house and when she engages with other citizenships. She dresses up and dolls up for which social class she is standing. As woman is an object, working woman in America obviously spends bigger share of her budget on beauty treatment and outfits. This attitude towards appearance turns look and wardrobe care into routine chores. Beauvoir mentions that the more she is trying to get a job, the more it is beneficial for her to look well-off; here again elegance plays an important role as a sign of respect and even a letter of recommendation (Beauvoir, 1956: 510).

The fact that women face similar emotional struggles which is away from visible, it is because they are the second sex and their lot is solely to obedient and respect while there is no longer grasp even in mind inasmuch the reality will affect

them. It constitutes the condition of women: many men assert that women will never be equal to men and their demands result in vain. Also, it constitutes her as inessential being (Beauvoir, 1956: 567).

Therefore, Beauvoir (1956) suggests women are comrades for each other in captivity, they help each other endure their prison. Feminine friendship is like 'sharpening her weapon' when they are getting along with other women. Their truthfulness is something which makes this relationship precious. They become comrades and often seek from each other the affirmation of their common universe in the first place: their general destiny as women and its long-lasting torture (1956: 521).

Meanwhile, a woman who make relationship with a man, a lover. She only expects to be justified through him. Hence, the absence of her lover later becomes torture for her. She turns to be worrisome as being assimilated to him and confused if he probably never returns (Beauvoir, 1956: 655).

#### **3.1.1.2. The Married Woman**

A June 2008 piece in the New York Times Magazine titled "When Mom and Dad Share It All" reveals the full depth of gender role dilemma. The article features several instances of couples who have attempted to establish a partnership in their marriage, with a special focus on the one of the three that was most successful in implementing this egalitarian idea. Little has changed, the article spends the most of its space highlighting how most American households breach this norm (Bournival, 2008-2009).

Marriage ties the union of female and male into making tribes and communities. Most married women, in the past and present, never get paid for the labor they work on repeatedly day after day (Johnson, 2005: 62). Besides, the traditional society claims that woman is considered succeed in her life once she gets married because her destiny says so: to maintain the species and manage the home. Through marriage, woman can possibly become a complete individual if there is no falling down or divorce (Beauvoir, 1956: 419).

Since then, the home is used to be the material standard of ones' happiness story, be it a cottage or a castle. It actualizes immortality and separation. Nevertheless, the meaning of home today has changed and lost its patriarchal dignity. For most men, it is solely a roof to live under and no longer deluging memories of deceased descendants. Still, women attempt to put her "interior" some meanings and cherish a genuine home owned (Beauvoir, 1956: 435).

Under the same roof, the family plays pivotal role in many different aspects. It is frequently mother whom most burdens weigh on. Mother will naturally be recognized as the one who takes responsibility yet her central role in the household often served when she is 40 or more. She is responsible for every resource in the working-class families. She takes care of her family throughout arduous journey like disease, aging, firing, arrest, and such. Thus, woman holds the salient project while living in the immanence as her nature because she is a woman (Campbell, 1990). As the result, mother seeks a double in her daughter and when it does not work out, she feels betrayed (Beauvoir, 1956: 497).

In another hand, Beauvoir argues that there is a type of husband who let himself be caught up in pity when he is at disadvantage. Meanwhile, the 'real woman' who wants to live both like men with male superiority and like women traditionally; her workload, worry, and fatigue are multiplied as the result. Socially beaten even before trying, her effort seems worth less and she rarely earns respect as much as how her friends or family respect a man's (Beauvoir, 1956: 432).

### **3.1.1.3. The Independent Woman**

The evident of college degree fundamental in the powerful article *A Room of One's Own*, by Virginia Woolf published in 1929, asserts that women are capable to go beyond career limits for they are educated in a university. Inasmuch as the women getting their degree, the door to financial independent of their fathers or spouses is unlocked. Also, this allows women to acquire a fathom of control over their own existences (Keohane, 2020).

The increasing number of women in the workforce is one of the most important shifts of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. According to the National Science Foundation, women's labor force participation in the United States has surpassed doubled since the 1950s (Meece, 2007).

Despite the fact that women have greater career opportunities than ever before, there is still a significant amount of gender inequality in the workplace. For instance, the majority of women in the United States often work in traditionally female-dominated fields ranging from teaching in elementary and middle schools, nursing, office administration, reception, and housekeeping (Meece, 2007).

Once woman gets a job in the man's profession, she most likely finds discrimination at workplace. Most people will picture her as a woman first then as a worker. Such condition explicitly suggests her conjugal duty as wife or mother to the point that she loses her credibility as professional employee (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011).

Beauvoir (1956) argues that the independent woman endures the inferiority complex as a female particularly those whose critical thought on wellbeing. She explains, it is the fact the gap between women and men will be perished through work. Also, the work alone secures their concrete freedom. However, most working women who has economically emancipated cannot avoid the traditional feminine world where she is no equal to men in a moral, social, or psychological condition (1956: 464).

There is no much leisure time to spend on beauty care with the purpose of seductiveness alone. She understands what she brings to the table; she knows her worth and value since she is a consciousness, an intellectual, a subject. If she gives up what she has sacrificed, she is no different from a pariah: proper living accommodation, clothing, entertainment, and even affection will vanish into air (Beauvoir, 1956: 643).

