

## CHAPTER III

### EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Extrinsic Elements

##### 3.1.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is a framework of thought aimed at understanding, analyzing, and critiquing the inequalities experienced by women across social, cultural, economic, and political spheres. In this study, feminist theory is drawn from the thought of Simone de Beauvoir, especially in her work *The Second Sex* (1949), a monumental work that remains one of the most important foundations of modern feminist philosophy to this day. Beauvoir wrote this book in two volumes: *Facts and Myths* and *Lived Experience*, both of which complement each other in built arguments about women's positions in patriarchal society.

The central concept that became the foundation of all of Beauvoir's analysis is the concept of "the other". She argues that in patriarchal society, men are always positioned as the universal and positive subject, while women are defined not in terms of themselves, but always in relation to men, as the negative, as the other. Beauvoir asserts that "women do not say 'We'" (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 29), reflecting that women have never formed an independent collective subject; they are always defined in relation to men. This condition, she argues, is not a consequence of biological facts but a product of social and historical construction, a view that leads her to reject all forms of biological determinism, including the perspectives of Freud and

Engels, both of whom she argues failed to identify the true roots of women's oppression by leaving unquestioned the assumption of women's inherent inferiority.

Beauvoir also criticized what she called the myth of “the eternal feminine”, an ideological construction that perpetuates the stereotype of women as passive, emotional beings who are naturally dependent on men. She argues that this myth functions as a tool of power deliberately produced to confine women to roles that serve the patriarchal system, asserting that “‘the eternal feminine’ corresponds to ‘the black soul’ and ‘the Jewish character’” (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 32), a sharp comparison that exposes how the myth of femininity operates in the same way as racial ideological constructions: both are labels created by the dominant group to justify the subordination of those deemed inferior, rather than reflections of any innate truth. As long as this myth is accepted and internalized by both men and women, women's subordination will continue to be socially and culturally reproduced.

Beauvoir’s iconic idea appears at the beginning of Volume II (*Lived Experience*), namely the statement that women are not born as women but are shaped into women by civilization, not by biological, psychological, or economic factors (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 330). This statement affirms that womanhood is a process, not a nature, that is fully shaped by social pressures, cultural norms, and patriarchal expectations. Building on this, Beauvoir introduces two existential concepts that became the core of her

analysis: *immanence* and *transcendence*. Transcendence is the ideal condition of humanity, the ability to transcend existing conditions, create meaning, and assert freedom as an active subject. On the other hand, immanence is a stagnant condition in which one is trapped in repetition and dependence. Beauvoir argues that the patriarchal system systematically deprives women of the right to achieve transcendence, as she asserts that “every subject posits itself as a transcendence concretely, through projects” (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 37), while women are instead conditioned to remain within immanence. This condition is not without existential consequences; Beauvoir warns that “every time transcendence lapses into immanence, there is a degradation of existence” (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 37), a degradation that, in patriarchal society, is systematically imposed on women not as a choice, but as a condition considered normal and natural.

However, Beauvoir did not stop at criticism; she also outlined a path toward true women’s freedom. This freedom, she argued, can only be achieved when women succeed in reclaiming their right to transcendence: when they participate in productive work and achieve economic independence, when they are actively engaged in social and intellectual life, and when they have the courage to reject their position as the other and entering the world as the equal subjects. Beauvoir asserts that it is only through productive work that women can achieve true freedom: “Work alone can guarantee her concrete freedom” (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 813). In the end, women’s emancipation is not only about legal rights or formal

equality, but an existential transformation that demands women to redefine themselves as free and autonomous subjects, not as objects defined by and for men.

Beauvoir's concept of transcendence is fundamentally rooted in legitimate productive work, intellectual engagement, and active participation in social life. Within this framework, Beauvoir does not explicitly discuss transgressive or illegal acts as forms of transcendence or paths to women's liberation. Nevertheless, the concept of "project" can be understood more broadly as any endeavor that is deliberately defined and pursued by an individual, through which they express their expertise, autonomy, and self-affirmation, regardless of its legal status within the narrative world under examination.

This broader reading allows the idea of transcendence to be applied to fictional representations where a character's primary mode of agency takes the form of unconventional or transgressive pursuits. Women's empowerment as a broader concept does not automatically equate to feminism. Beauvoir's existentialist feminist framework is employed here as the analytical lens because its concepts of transcendence, immanence, and "the other" are most directly relevant to examining a female character who defines herself through her own project and actively refuses a subordinate position.

### **3.1.2 History of the Feminist Movement**

The feminist movement can be understood in terms of four waves, each

representing a distinct period of women's political and social activism that has contributed to transforming women's position in society (Mohajan, 2022). Feminism is the belief that women and men are equal, because of the advantages only given to men by society, a social movement is necessary to accomplish the equality (Freedman, 2002, p. 21). As a term, feminism was first created in France in the 1880s as *féminisme* and spread throughout Europe in the 1890s, and arrived in North and South America in the 1910s (Freedman, 2002, p.17). From the start, this term is already becoming controversial because of its relation with radicalism, but the political purpose remains unchanged and still redefines itself throughout time.

The first wave of feminism stemmed from women's suffrage in the 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The starting point was the first Women's Rights Convention in the United States, held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, where three hundred women and men launched a major social movement demanding legal equality and political rights for women (Fredman, 2002, p. 28). The first wave's struggle finally got the result when American women got their right to vote through the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920. However, this victory did not end the struggle, but rather became a foundation for the next waves that had a wider range.

The second wave of feminism emerged in the 1960s as a response to the discrimination in the workplace, reproduction, and social life. In the West, women's political movement revived under the 'women's liberation' flag. This turning point occurred in the 1960s during the politically tumultuous

(Freedman, 2002, p. 19). This second wave successfully pushed various legislative changes in the United States, including the 1963 Equal Pay Act, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the 1972 Title IX. Besides the demands of economic and political equality, the second wave also brought up private issues to the public sphere, such as domestic violence, reproductive rights, and sexual harassment. In the 1990s, the third wave of feminism emerged with various and inclusive perspectives. Young women in the United States promised to surpass the second wave of feminism and create a various movement which places greater emphasis on racial and sexual issues, emphasizing female empowerment rather than male oppression (Freedman, 2002, p. 20). The third wave acknowledges that women's experiences are not homogeneous, but rather built by many factors that intersect, such as race, class, and sexuality.

The fourth wave of feminism emerged in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and gained momentum with the rise of social media as a platform for activism. The fourth wave focuses on justice for women, particularly the fight against sexual harassment, violence, workplace discrimination, and rape culture. During this movement, social injustice campaigns exploded on social media, including the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements. The #MeToo movement, which went viral in October 2017, became the most tangible manifestation of this fourth wave, encouraging millions of women worldwide to speak about their experiences with sexual harassment and violence.

### **3.1.3 Women's Social Conditions in the USA (1960–Present)**

Women's social conditions in the United States since the 1960s have demonstrated significant transformations, even though the transformations have been going step by step and not always linear. The past five decades of social and economic progress for American women have been recognized as the “grand gender convergence” and “the rise of women”, terms that refer to the extraordinary transformation in women's social and economic roles since the 1960s (Bailey & DiPrete, 2016). Yet behind this narrative of progress, the actual circumstances of American women in the 1960s remained severely limited. Women entering the workplace faced systematic discrimination; they were steered toward jobs considered “feminine” such as nursing, secretarial work, and teaching. While leadership positions and high-paying jobs were almost entirely closed to them. In the 1960s, massive cultural shifts began to transform the role of women in American society; more and more women entered the paid workplace, and this heightened dissatisfaction with the significant wage gap between men and women, as well as sexual harassment in the workplace (Freedman, 2002, p. 99).

The economic gap between men and women in the 1960s was striking. In the 1960s, women earned only about 60% of what men earned, and this figure has only risen to about 80% today (Bailey & DiPrete, 2016). This situation was worsened by the fact that women did not have equal access to financial institution, they could not open a bank account or apply for credit without their husbands' or fathers' permission until the Equal Credit

Opportunity Act was passed in 1974 (Freedman, 2002, p. 100). In the education field, women step by step start to close the gap. In the 1970s, 58% of students were men, but in the 1980s this gap turned around, and in 2010, 57% from the students were women (Bailey & DiPrete, 2016). Even though the advancement in the education field is real, its not automatically mean that equality in the workplace and leadership has been accomplished.

In the 1980s and 1990s, American women started to enter various professions that were dominated by men before, from law, medicine, to business. However, this advancement brings a new phenomenon called the glass ceiling, which is the invisible struggle that prevents women from reaching higher positions in the professional and corporate hierarchy. Although American women now hold some of the most influential positions in the country, they still account for less than 10% of corporate board members and less than 2% of CEOs (Bailey & DiPrete, 2016). This situation indicates that while doors have opened, the glass ceiling remains firmly in place, barring women from the pinnacle of institutional power. The persistent wage gap, the lack of women's representation in leadership positions, and the double burden of balancing careers and domestic responsibilities remain challenges that continue to haunt American women even in the modern era (Bailey & DiPrete, 2016).

The latest chapter in the social conditions of American women was marked by the explosion of #MeToo movement in October 2017, which highlighted the reality of sexual violence and harassment that women had

long endured in silence across various sectors. The #MeToo movement emerged as a social media campaign focused on women's experiences with rape, sexual harassment, and sexual assault, and spurred the creation of Time's Up, a collaboration between Hollywood and the National Women's Law Center that established a legal aid fund for working women from all walks of life (Reger, 2022). This movement serves as a significant marker that, although the social conditions of American women have seen significant progress since the 1960s, the struggle for equality and safety in both public and professional spaces continue to this day (Bailey & DiPrete, 2016).

#### **3.1.4 The Heist Cases in the USA**

The concept of a "heist," frequently depicted in popular cinema as the *caper movie* genre, is defined by Julian Hanich as a film that centers on a group of criminals executing a complicated theft. However, far from being limited to Hollywood fiction, large-scale robberies are common criminal acts with a long and notorious history in the United States, often relying on meticulous planning, insider knowledge, and split-second execution (Mala, 2025). Landmark cases like the Lufthansa Cargo Heist (1978), which stole \$5.9 million and was the largest cash robbery at the time, and the Dunbar Armored Depot Robbery (1997), netting \$18.9 million, underscore the history of large financial scores committed on U.S. soil (Mala, 2025).

The most prominent historical heists showcase the diverse ingenuity of criminal enterprises. In the realm of cash and financial theft, inside jobs

were instrumental: the Dunbar Armored Depot Robbery (1997) was masterminded by a former safety inspector, Allen Pace III, using insider keys, while the Loomis Fargo Vault Robbery (1997) was executed by vault supervisor David Scott Ghatt, netting \$17.3 million (Mala, 2025). In terms of property value, the most staggering case remains the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Theft (1990) in Boston. In this incident, thieves posing as police stole 13 works of art, including pieces by Vermeer and Rembrandt, valued at an unprecedented \$500 million, setting the record for the largest property crime in U.S. history (Mala, 2025). While many perpetrators of these cash heists were eventually arrested, the Gardner Museum theft, like the Pierre Hotel Jewelry Heist (1972), remains officially unsolved (Mala, 2025).

While these historical events highlight the complexity of past criminal efforts, modern large-scale heists continue to utilize advanced planning and exploitation of logistical vulnerabilities. This is exemplified by the 2022 Brink's heist, which involved the indictment of seven conspirators who orchestrated a multi-state operation to steal 24 bags of gems and jewelry with a potential value of up to \$100 million (Miller, Mejia, & Winton, 2025). The planning and execution of this modern theft, including the use of smaller-scale crimes to refine tactics, reaffirm that criminal enterprises today still target high-value shipments, echoing the insider threats and meticulous operational planning seen in landmark cases like the Dunbar and Lufthansa robberies (Miller, Mejia, & Winton, 2025).