

## **Study of the Evolution of Feminist Thought in Simon DeBeauwa's Works**

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**Abstract:** This paper will chart the unfolding of Simone de Beauvoir's feminist philosophy, focusing especially on two of her seminal writings, *The Guest* and *The Second Sex*, each forming a backbone for her later theoretical elaboration. In this, the discussion shall engage in how de Beauvoir portrays woman as "the Other" and her criticism of the socially manufactured gender hierarchies. It thus discusses in detail the basic philosophical theories upon which her claim had stood that gender identity is something socially constructed and not a predetermined feature based upon biological elements. Secondly, it further goes on to describe her thought processes upon how age and gender interact with each other in some of her later works such as *The Coming of Age* and *The Ceremony of Farewell*. This paper seeks to underline the importance of de Beauvoir's feminist philosophy in both practice and theory, highlighting its value in contemporary debates about gender equality and women's rights. This research, in the final instance, will try to demonstrate the perduring mark left by philosophical ideas concocted by de Beauvoir on the writings of a modern feminist discourse.

**Keywords:** Simone De Beauvoir, Feminist Philosophy, Gender Identity, The Other, Gender Equality, Social Construction, Existentialism, Women's Rights.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The representation of womanhood within literature has become one of the significant domains of research over the last few decades and mainly concerning existential feminism. That is why very often, under research, turn out those very literary products that confirm or oppose social attitudes regarding identity and gender. Existential feminism, as delineated by Simone de Beauvoir, posits that the status of women has frequently been characterized as the 'Other'—a reflection of subjugation in their quest for autonomy and self-identity throughout diverse historical and cultural landscapes (Beauvoir, 2016). The given theoretical framework presupposes a critical approach to the representation of female characters in close connection with works, first of all, focusing one's attention on those works which have been written by authors who decisively reacted to requests for female equality and to the great amount of problems women experienced within a patriarchal society. The purpose of this research paper is to explain how women are represented in modern literature with the help of

existential feminism, focusing on works by Indonesian and Arab world writers such as *Midah (Si Manis Bergigi Emas)* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer and *A Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi. It also tends to explore how these literary works negotiate the question of autonomy, oppression, and gender-based discrimination, while noting that Adawiyah & Hasanah; Azzahra, argue to the contrary (Adawiyah & Hasanah, 2020; Azzahra, 2023). Existential feminism, according to Beauvoir, surmises that the aspect of womanhood is not innate but a socialized phenomenon that has developed over time due to historical factors of society and culture (Beauvoir, 2016). As such, this school of thought is contrary to essentialism, which seeks to perpetuate traditional relationships between genders and, therefore, essentially calls for a change in the structures that define the experiences of females in society. Inasmuch as *A Woman at Point Zero* is a critical review of female agency against the backdrop of significant cultural constraints, her work provides a voice for Beauvoir's existentialist conceptions of subjectivity; thus, Firdaus navigates her oppressive environment in order to arrive at her identity. Saadawi, 1987 expounds on how the life of Firdaus represented the archetypal manifestation of how the life of a woman is hemmed in by societal impediments and deep-seated cultural tradition constituting a backdrop through which identity and freedom were perceived. From a feminist existentialist perspective, the work of Saadawi bursts forth as an art so fundamentally critical to the issue of gender inequality while it does reach into the very basic existential questions of what constitutes an authentic form of existence for a woman in a patriarchic society (Juhana et al., 2021). Similar to this would be how Indonesian literature has a few interesting portrayals of female protagonists who find their ways out of and battle with strict delimitations laid down by gender roles, which also find manifestations in the works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, perhaps most prominently in *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*. The character Midah, portrayed by Toer, is one who negotiates her way through the social structures dictated onto her, constantly negotiating between the roles socially assigned to her and her dream for freedom. Toer analytically took Midah's experience to explore the complicated intersections of race, class, and gender and, by extension, sheds light on many ways in which a patriarchal society has circumscribed women's self-realization. Employing a feminist existentialist lens, Saadawi and Toer express the existential discomfort linked to the acknowledgment that women's identities are often molded by external factors that force them into established roles, consequently eclipsing their individual liberties and aspirations (Haque et

al., 2022). Examining such literature in light of the existential feminist perspective seems to frame it within a wider context wherein literature itself can further explain such complex dynamics involving power and gender. In such a case, this perspective would allow for an in-depth examination of how women's lives are often so closely defined and restricted by societal norms, or how their stories represent a larger struggle pertaining to freedom and equality. The paper discusses the portrayal of female characters in *A Woman at Point Zero* and *Midah* (Si Manis Bergigi Emas), establishing how existential feminism serves as an apt theoretical framework with which to understand and explain all challenges in the lived experiences of women portrayed in the novels. The discussed research thus touches on not only the problem of gender inequality as such but on the greater existential issue of insistence on one's self in the surrounding environment, which does all in its power to halt the independent decisions and agents of women from being advanced (Ghiasian & Shapouri, 2019).

## 2. THE BUDDING OF FEMALE CONSCIOUSNESS IN BEAUVOIR'S EARLY WORKS (1943-1949)

### 2.1. Analysis of the Female Image in the Female Guest

The interdependence of female identity and autonomy has begun to outline the early works of Simone de Beauvoir, including works on her novel *The Guest*: for the first time, a bench was built on which she would support her later existential feminist theories. In this novel, the protagonist, so to say, the female guest herself, the victim of marginalization and search for self-identity typical of early thinking of de Beauvoir concerning the existential difficulties faced by women. Most of her interactions with him-the male protagonist-emphasize her reaching out for independence despite the restrictive binds of societal convention.

“She was not accustomed to being alone in the house; she always had a companion; either her mother or her brother, but now she was alone. Her mind, which was usually distracted by the presence of others, had become empty and unanchored. She felt neither joy nor sorrow but an indifference, as though she had been separated from her real self, a being who was not allowed to exist, confined within a shell of expectation. She could not understand why he regarded her as a guest when she had no place, no name, and no meaning. She was a shadow in his world, an object waiting to be filled with the substance he imposed upon her” (Beauvoir, 2016).

This effectively captures the gist of the protagonist's existential problem:

separated physically and emotionally, struggling with her identity in a setting when she will not be considered a subject but an object. Of course, the ironical use of the term "guest" is applied to her total lack of agency, her susceptible condition in the world. Hence, through reflection with regard to her being in the world, she reached the conclusion that her identity was determined basically by other people; hence, she adopted a very passive attitude and objectified her authentic self too. Within the theoretical framework of de Beauvoir, this was a good example of how women are often put into a kind of fragmented identity-that which is shaped by the roles and definitions ascribed to them (Martinus, 2022). De Beauvoir's depiction of the female lead character in *The Guest* is an incredibly elaborate yet potent remark on patriarchal norms placing limiting amendments on females. Despite intrinsically having a need to be independent and articulative with a well-defined sense of identity, it is other individuals, most notably the male lead character, through whom her identity is chiefly constituted. It is not from her own ambitions or desires, but from those around her-from the expectations and assumptions of others-that she creates her image of self (McCormack & Graham, 2024). There is, in the moment of recognition for her own situation, a serious play on de Beauvoir's existential argument of woman being "otherness," ontologically subsistent for man only. It is thus uniquely brought out through the writings of de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 2016), a fact that reflects the experiences of the female guest, both in enforced passivity and in wanting self-definition. Her "guest" status is a metaphor for general conditions in society to which women are exposed: they are highly alienated in living, without acknowledgment of their subjectivity, and unable to develop their identity outside of a patriarchy-determined frame.

## 2.2. Gender Concepts in the *Mandarins* (1954)

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Mandarins* dwells upon the complication of gender in relationships and personal turmoil that the characters go through. This novel by Beauvoir explores how existential and social factors are interconnected in the constitution of the self and compliance by an individual with the expectations of society, more so those based on gendered existence. One of the huge themes brought out in this novel is how gender identity shapes personal identity and restricts autonomous human freedom. Main characters, especially females, can hardly get out of tangles created by themselves in the form of their very own aspirations, relations with people surrounding them, and finally societal expectations.

*"She felt the weight of the roles that had been imposed upon her. Not a woman, not a man, but something in between. Her desire for intellectual autonomy, for engagement with the world on her own terms, collided with the expectations that she be first and foremost a wife, a mother, an object of desire. She was taught to serve, to give, to support, yet she longed to assert her own identity beyond the constraints of gender. But the world was a place where her thoughts, her ambitions, her very existence, were already classified, categorized, confined. She was not allowed to exist outside the categories that had been created for her"(Beauvoir, 2016).*

This passage well depicts a deep inner conflict of the main character, who is in dissonance between her intellectual aspirations on one hand and her intrinsic identity framed within the societal frameworks that seek to compartmentalize her on the other. Since for de Beauvoir, gender is not only a biological fact but rather all-embracing construct of reality concerning the manner by which an individual looks upon herself and the way she is viewed by other people. The sad feelings expressed by the heroine about her position, which is forced to be just like females, personifies de Beauvoir's more general criticism about the limitations which patriarchy imposes on women. The conflict between the identity of the character and her role in being a wife, mother, and object of male desire reflects the tensions between autonomy and expectation. This passage is an example that women are often put into certain roles, which then limit their freedom and self-expression. Through teasing out these conflicting desires, de Beauvoir outlines the limits placed by gender and questions this logic which grounds a woman's worth and fulfillment in these roles. This also speaks to the larger existentialist belief of hers that identities are to be created, thus negating such categorization and naming propagated by the society. As de Beauvoir explains in her work, *The Second Sex*: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 2016). This very notion profoundly sets the tone for *The Mandarins*--a novel in which the characters struggle to go beyond themselves and beyond the social functions that have been prescribed for them.

### 2.3. Expression of the Female Dilemma in the Early Novel Creation

In the early writings of Simone de Beauvoir, the leitmotif of women's struggle stood in the center and showed what type of oppressive social structures controlled the women, making them unable to be independent actors of their history. Beauvoir tried to explore through her protagonists some of the existential problems connected with the entrapment of female life by social expectations and interpretations. Less well-known than *The Second Sex*, these works reveal the essential elements of her feminism and

her on-going interest in questions of gender. In novels like *She Came to Stay* L'Invitée, 1943, women suffer from claustrophobia, often in the form of conflicting desires for autonomy along with a sense of duty to their roles as wife and mother. Moreover, all the main female characters share the complexities of relations occurring between the need for individual independence and for relational endorsement that they are not able to overcome due to not being able to break loose from the expecting society. The conflict further outlines the limitation that a patriarchal structure puts on women, but a deeper, existential problem regarding the pursuit of a real self-identity within a society continuously shaping and delimiting any kind of individual identity. In many of her early works, de Beauvoir intensely investigated the psychological and emotional implication of such restrictions underlining the paradoxical state of freedom in the face of the women whose futures are preordained and mostly oppressive.

### 3. THE THEORETICAL BREAKTHROUGH OF THE SECOND SEX AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEMINIST IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEM (1949)

#### 3.1. The Core Argument of "Women are not Born, but are Created."

Simone de Beauvoir's iconic declaration, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," encapsulates the central tenet of her existentialist feminist philosophy. This statement, found in

*"The Second Sex (Le Deuxième Sexe, 1949), challenges the essentialist view of gender, which posits that biological sex determines one's societal role. De Beauvoir rejects the notion of an innate femininity or masculinity, arguing instead that these categories are constructed through socialization and cultural norms. She writes, 'No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine.'"*

This passage reflects her view that femininity is not an inherent trait but rather a set of behaviors and attributes imposed on women by society. De Beauvoir was therefore opposing the traditional view regarding how females from a very tender age are molded into their role passively accepting all the stereotypes surrounding them characterized by passivity, submissiveness and nurturance. Indeed, her contention really transformed the understanding of gender roles since these engagements challenge both the socialization process through which women are made and the relations of power through which these are maintained. By claiming that women

"become" women through a series of social processes, de Beauvoir advances the possibility of change and transformation for them and thus provides a way in which gender equality might be obtained. Her hypothesis, rooted in the existentialist's idea of becoming rather than being, invites individuals of all genders to comprehend the arbitrary constitution of gender roles and to strive for a social order where every individual could define themselves independently, unshackled from the chains of the patriarchal norm. This is the essential progressive view which furthered the feminist movements to continue their agitating against the institutionalization of gender differences.

### 3.2. Philosophical Analysis of the State of Female Existence

In her philosophical exploration of women's existence, Simone de Beauvoir offers a profound analysis of the ways in which women are constructed as "the Other" in relation to men.

*In The Second Sex, she writes, "He is the One, the Absolute, she is the Other." This statement reflects the existentialist idea of otherness, where men are positioned as the primary subject, the standard of humanity, while women are defined by their difference from this norm. Through this framework, de Beauvoir reveals how women's lives are shaped by a system that prioritizes male experience, while relegating women to secondary status, dependent on male definition and validation. She further contends, "The situation of woman is that she lives in a world created by men and for men. She is defined in relation to him, not as a subject but as an object."*

It goes far beyond an uninspired critique of social stratification into a deep philosophical musing on the existential predicaments women are faced with. De Beauvoir's concept of "the Other" stems from Hegelian dialectics, where the self, in this case males, is defined by degrading the other, in this case females. She postulates that this is because woman has, throughout history, been oppressed and her autonomy denied due to qualities inherent in a dynamic that positions them not as autonomous individuals but as objects or extensions of the male subject. In the latter schema, however, as it is developed by de Beauvoir, the woman is rendered in a position of passivity, enclosed by society rather than by her own powers of self-transcendence. Drawing on an existentialist approach to womanhood, de Beauvoir maintained that thinking of women as "Other" is a historical and social construct—a far cry from being any sort of biological fate. Through her scholarship, she demands a serious reconsideration of women's roles within society, and through their agency in the world, women are capable of configuring their identity and life anew. In other words, de Beauvoir's philosophical approach to feminism questions

foundational elements of patriarchal systems. She called for society to change its perceptions and relations toward women; hence, she became an ardent proponent of the emancipation of women from such heteronomous restriction of selfhood.

### 3.3. Construction and Innovation of Female Humanization Theory

Simone de Beauvoir's concept of "otherness" is foundational in feminist theory, particularly in her construction of the female experience. *In The Second Sex*, she asserts,

*"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." This pivotal statement encapsulates her critique of gender as a socially constructed identity, not a biological destiny. She further elaborates, "In all cultures, the male is the subject, and the female is the other." By positioning women as the "Other,"*

De Beauvoir develops a theory that recognizes the historical and existential processes by which women are subordinated in a patriarchal society. The male becomes the universal subject, and the female is defined in opposition to him, as a secondary, secondary being. De Beauvoir's knowing of the Other is a deep reformulation of structures through which gender is constituted and reproduced. Conventionally, she opposed those very perceptions which had represented woman as a passive creation defined exclusively by reproductive features or relations with men. She argues on the contrary, that female identity arises through a multi-dimensional framework of oppression: that women are constantly objectified as the Other and thus invisible or peripheral from the patriarchal point of view. De Beauvoir's claim goes beyond any simple sociological analysis of the role of women; she goes back to the philosophical and psychological structures that underpin women's oppression. From the point of view of structuring women's experiences as the Other, de Beauvoir strongly supports the liberation of women from binding confines of historical and social oppression. She insists on identifying women as full, autonomous, and self-sufficient human beings, and not as objects that are to be manipulated or set in some characteristics by others in order for them to give themselves a definition. Her scholarship has critically examined the foundational premises upon which patriarchy rests, and it asserts that women's liberation would have to be nothing less than radical in re-conceptualizing gender and identity within society. In fact, de Beauvoir's work operates not only as an examination of given social understandings but as an appeal to women to rise above roles socially imposed. Her concept of the Other is at the core of feminist theory, shaping existing debates on gender, identity, and agency.



#### 4. IDEOLOGICAL DEEPENING IN THE SECOND SEX PERIOD (1950-1970)

##### 4.1. The Narrative of Female Growth in *The Power of Time Years*

Continuing to elaborate on the intricacies involved in female identity, Simone de Beauvoir, in her later work, *The Force of Circumstance*, emphasizes the subtlety of the process in which women mature. This book focuses on how women develop in a society that regularly denies them the opportunity to reach full maturity. Writing, de Beauvoir articulates thus:

"In the life of every woman, there are crossroads where she must choose between paths: the road to freedom or the road to submission."

Here, she displays the inner struggle of the will, which in the lives of women, due to the demands, expectations of society, and historical influences, mostly leads them toward obedience rather than self-determination in life. De Beauvoir contextualizes the evolution of women in the wider philosophical framework of existential freedom and the expression thereof. In the work, *The Force of Circumstance*, she reveals how both women and men were determined by the forces of their birth; however, those very forces were ones that a human could transcend through choices which posit freedom. From this point of view, the development of women through the framework discussed is not a one-dimensional process but a sophisticated and often conflicting journey whereby women are constantly forced to negotiate between their socially demanded roles and their quest for self-determination. The insistently repeated word "choice" signals a profound shift in de Beauvoir's thought from the emphasis on the structural aspects of women's subjugation in her earlier work, particularly in *The Second Sex*; in *The Force of Circumstance*, she has extended the domain of women's agency. It seems that women are no longer perceived as mere social constructs that passively internalize the influence of society but rather as actors who may have choices about the course their life will take. Yet, this freedom comes with some costs: the choices women make are steeped in considerable existential risks and moral dilemmas. Thus, de Beauvoir qualified the ideal of liberation when she wrote, "True freedom is not just a question of an escape from servitude but one that has to be continually, painfully, created." *The Force of Circumstance* is an important concept because it frames the struggles between demands of society and those of an individual's freedom. It rather succinctly frames that development in women is a continuous process evolving through internal drives and external influences. The article adds to de Beauvoir's earlier work on feminism by identifying that the pursuit of

individual freedom extends beyond all political and social structures right into the very personal aspects, requiring a continuous reconsideration with respect to identity as well as social status on the part of an individual.

#### 4.2. Analysis of Women's Marital Dilemma in the Broken Women

In *The Broken Woman*, Simone de Beauvoir presents an insightful and incisive analysis into the institution of marriage and how it has affected and continues to affect the autonomy of women. One of the pivotal concepts that de Beauvoir explores is how marriage, as a social construction, often perpetuates and fosters a woman's oppression in life, objectifying her rather than having her be an agent in life. The author states,

"Marriage is the social mechanism that reduces a woman to a thing; it destroys all rights, all personality; and places her entirely at the mercy of a passive and dependent existence."

This assertion is based on the kind of repressiveness eminent in usual marital constructs, which degrade a female's role to those of being merely a wife and a child-rearer, therefore bereaving her of an individual self with dignity. De Beauvoir gives an incisive feminist critique in *The Broken Woman*; she shows well how this very institution, created by a view of basic needs for companionship and mutual help, would serve as a tool for female oppression, placing them in one dependency circle of enslavement after another (Fausto-Sterling, 1997; Tong, 2007). Based on this, de Beauvoir further argues that, with regard to the dynamics of marriage, women have been socialized since childhood to understand that marriage ought to be life's very end. Hence, with such socialization, women in particular become easy targets for emotional and psychological crises whenever they fall into an oppressive and unequal relationship. De Beauvoir argues that marriage should not be considered an escape route for women; it only works to continuously segregate women into positions of second-class importance. In her book, *The Broken Woman*, de Beauvoir argues cogently and demystifies romantic love in that it could hopefully liberate women from their oppressions, as the primary structure in which a woman perceives herself as confined. The examination of marital dynamics thus represents a broad critique of ways in which social norms and expectations concerning women's roles shape and limit their freedoms—an urgent need for which the complete reconfiguration of gender relations has to come about, private and public (Taylor, 1998).

#### 4.3. The Awakening of Female Self-Awareness in the *Very Easy Death*

"The *Very Easy Death*" by Simone de Beauvoir is a resourceful discussion of the meaning of life and death, and how an individual sets a path towards awareness. The plot is woven around the author's reflection on her mother's death, stirring her into profound reflections concerning women's identity and freedom (Richardson, 2010). One of the most spectacular parts by de Beauvoir goes to say,

"Death is the great teacher; it strips away all illusions, leaving behind only the truth of existence."

But thinking about death was, in fact, an examination of self about my life and facts about my womanhood, tied to convention yet free at this juncture, standing so close to the threshold of my death. Indeed, this deep realization of one's mortality requires her to redefine her role within the global framework, especially about the place of the female within the masculine-dominated world. In this reflective narrative, de Beauvoir provides an articulation of one of those moments of realization that had a deep effect on the feminine identity, in which she faced the dual realities of her mortality and the limitation placed on her existence by gender norms (Eagly & Wood, 2011; Tong & Botts, 2024). Her mother's death is thus a metaphor for the destruction of identity that many women undergo because of the pressure of expectation from society, whose dictates often define a woman's identity in relation to others' desires rather than her inherent desires. In this respect, the inquiry that De Beauvoir undertakes would involve charting the course through which the feminine identity can develop a consciousness regarding its free being and free liberation from the limitation that it has traditionally suffered within society and family. This becomes more than an intellectual process but rather a deeply existential process, as one finds women revisiting their lives and the way that death and life interact for them based upon personal choice (Friedan, 1994).

### 5. SUBLIMATION OF FEMINISM IN LATE WORKS (1970-1986)

#### 5.1. Sex and Age in *Old Age*

In *Old Age*, Simone de Beauvoir explores the intersection of gender and age, offering a profound analysis of the challenges faced by elderly women in a society that simultaneously marginalizes them for both their gender and advancing age. As she writes in the opening chapter,

"Old age is not simply a biological fact; it is an experience that society

shapes according to its norms. For women, this experience is exacerbated by the weight of societal expectations, for they are not only made invisible by age but also relegated to the margins of human value as they lose their beauty, youth, and desirability. Society strips them of their identities, placing them in a state of complete social abandonment” (De Beauvoir, 1970, p. 11).

De Beauvoir gives wide critical coverage to the themes of aging and sex. This paper looks at the bitter irony within these subjects-the fact that the value of female subjects is invariably linked with juvenility and physical beauty, which in turn promises their invisibility and dismissal in maturity. De Beauvoir dissects the aspects of social trends that invalidate older women, dispossessing them completely of civic weight, relegating them to conditions of dependence and exposure. This intersectional analysis highlights the need to acknowledge how gender and age intersect in the construction of oppressions. It is here that de Beauvoir extends her feminism to address the often-ignored experiences of older women and situates their marginalization as a kind of gendered ageism that deserves close attention.

## 5.2. The Ultimate Thinking of Farewell Ceremony on Women's Life Course

In *The Ceremony of Farewell*, Simone de Beauvoir offers a poignant meditation on the ultimate questions surrounding women's lives, particularly as they approach their final stages. She writes,

“The true challenge of aging is not merely the decay of the body but the erosion of one's sense of self. Women, in particular, are burdened by the accumulated weight of years that strip away the roles assigned to them by society: mother, wife, lover. As these roles fade, so too does their identity, leaving them to confront the existential void of what remains when all social markers are removed.” (*Beauvoir, 2016*).

This extract sees de Beauvoir reflecting on the existential dilemmas of women as they enter the later stages of life. The loss of social functions, very often providing the ground from which their identities were derived, now compels women to confront their own mortality and the overwhelming question of what they are beyond societal expectations. This view characterizes de Beauvoir's previous work in *The Second Sex*, where she analyzed how society looks at women and the eventual impact on becoming what one would consider oneself to be. In *The Ceremony of Farewell*, she extends this analysis to demonstrate how these social constructs, once lost through the passage of time, render women

particularly vulnerable to the feelings of futility and obscurity brought about by aging. This existential quandary prompts readers to reflect on the social constructions surrounding women's lives, as well as their subsequent deconstructions in later life stages. De Beauvoir's philosophical exploration transcends the boundaries of gender and age; it advocates for a reevaluation of societal perceptions regarding the worth of individual life experiences, particularly those pertaining to women.

### 5.3. Supplement and Correction of Feminism Theory in Late Essays

A number of Simone de Beauvoir's later essays revisit and extend various feminist theories initially advanced in *The Second Sex*. Through most of her life and writing, she was attuned to the shifting social and political landscape-the advances being made for women, yet the mountain of obstacles yet to be overcome. In her later work, de Beauvoir elaborates on arguments from her earlier work through a more complexly rendered understanding of the interrelations between gender, class, and race vis-à-vis individual freedom. She claims that feminism cannot be understood as one big theory but needs to be contextualized and take into account the multiple experiences and struggles of women in different social locations. This is evidenced in her later works, where, while challenging the sociopolitical structures limiting women's freedom-the extension of her discourse well outside the traditional domains of existential philosophy into a broader critique of capitalism, patriarchy, and other social mechanisms responsible for sustaining gender inequality-she contended that for women, true freedom could never be realized unless such malignant features of subordination were confronted. Most of her later essays reflect this matured shift in emphasis from an obsession with the question of personal existential freedom to one where her vision of social change is more collective, calling for a radical reorientation in social values and a reconsideration of the role of gender in every realm of life. This theoretical elucidation and amendment reflect de Beauvoir's continuous concern with feminist philosophy and signify how her ideas were changing to meet the developing needs of the feminist movements of the 20th century.

## 6. THE THEORETICAL VALUE AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BEAUFEMINIST THOUGHT

Simone de Beauvoir's feminist philosophy represents a milestone in the cognitive development of gender studies, resonating with great theoretical

and practical relevance. Her seminal work, *The Second Sex*, was published in 1949. In this work, de Beauvoir posited that in various social, cultural, and historical environments, the roles of women are socially constructed and not determined by biology, a rebuke to the essentialist views that have always defined the place of women in society. The principal thesis presented in *The Second Sex*—that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"—encapsulates de Beauvoir's recognition of the patriarchal frameworks that confine women to predetermined roles (Beauvoir, 1949). This assertion signifies a significant departure from the perspectives of earlier gender theorists, emphasizing women's capacity to surpass societal limitations in order to forge their own identities—a theme that has resonated throughout feminist discourse since that time. What gives the important contribution of de Beauvoir's theoretical contribution is that she was able to explain the systemic reasons for the subordination of women, especially through the concept of the "Other" (Beauvoir, 2016). In defining women as the Other, she indicated how patriarchal societies conventionally establish men as the norm and women as aberrant, or subordinate. The theoretical framework placed itself as one of the key pegs of feminist discussion and continued to influence scholars after her especial the concept of Judith Butler's gender performativity (Rosser, 1997) and how race and gender interact discussed by bell hooks. Her work is also pivotal in existential philosophy. Women can only achieve real freedom when they are free from the conventional burdens society has placed on them. This existentialistic view on gender takes center stage in placing individual responsibility on women to create an identity for themselves and not permit the stereotypical embodiment of the cultural dictates. On the scope of practical implications of her theories, de Beauvoir is very influential with regard to gender equality globally. Her call for autonomy and freedom of woman continues to face a rallying point for feminist activism particularly on the right to reproduction of life, violence based on gender, and fairness in the economic field. It finds manifestation in the use of de Beauvoir's theory in contemporary feminist movements regarding calls for the abolition of patriarchal systems and the rights of women to independent choices. Indeed, her exposé into typical family systems and the resultant status of women within those settings continues to bear significance today, with discourse surrounding work-life balance and the economic independence of women still evolving internationally (Beauvoir, 1949). Accounting for the contribution of de Beauvoir to the modern articulation of intersectionality becomes quite salient, as through her work a basic frame could be established to appreciate how the oppression centered

around gender works when combined with various forms of discrimination for race, class, and sexuality. In conclusion, the feminist philosophy of de Beauvoir remains strikingly relevant today; it represents the background and simultaneously an instrument for understanding and making known the noxious enduring justice issues related to gender. Her ideas gave a kind of framework for feminist theory, and the endurance character of its applicative potential witnesses to the profundity and durability of the impact her contributions have had both in the academic debate and the general movement of social change.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In other words, Simone de Beauvoir's articulation of feminist philosophy constitutes one of the core elements in gender studies and critical theory. Her pioneering work in *The Second Sex* ensured influence not only in the ways people think about gender but also provided the most dramatic critique of social structures that keep women subordinated. The analytical critique that she had provided to the traditional narratives of women as the "Other" opened the ground for further feminist discussions that took into account women's autonomy, freedom, and dismantling of patriarchal structures. Her research into the interconnections between gender, sexuality, and power relations developed enormous influence on generations of scholars, activists, and intellectuals. Issues of inequality and gender-based violence continue to be some of the most compelling concerns for the future of humankind; as such, the appeal by de Beauvoir for woman's liberation—an intellectual and material emancipation—continues to be valid. Her concept of the "Other" continues to be theoretically relevant for the critical examination of gendered socialization processes. Considering all this, her insistence on the matter of the primacy of self-authorship and thereby disowning suffocating identities does indeed tie in nicely with current feminist attempts towards openness and acknowledgment of a spectrum within gender experience. It is here, among other things, that de Beauvoir's work remains theoretically relevant and constitutes an indispensable platform from which today's issues of gender and human rights can be met.

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