Sanca Odigitria Manesanulu

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S FEMINIST EXISTENTIALISM IN TAYLOR JENKINS REID'S MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE

Quick Submit

Quick Submit

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

Document Details

Submission ID
trn:oid:::1:3611557390

Submission Date
Jul 15, 2026, 9:11 AM GMT+7

Download Date
Jul 15, 2026, 9:27 AM GMT+7

File Name
Fakultas_Ilmu_Budaya_1612200028_Sanca_Odigitria_Manesanulu.docx

File Size
132.7 KB

68 Pages

19,409 Words

99,851 Characters

7% Overall Similarity

The combined total of all matches, including overlapping sources, for each database.

Filtered from the Report

- Bibliography
- Quoted Text
- Cited Text

Match Groups

96 Not Cited or Quoted 7%
Matches with neither in-text citation nor quotation marks

0 Missing Quotations 0%
Matches that are still very similar to source material

0 Missing Citation 0%
Matches that have quotation marks, but no in-text citation

0 Cited and Quoted 0%
Matches with in-text citation present, but no quotation marks

Top Sources

6% Internet sources
2% Publications
3% Submitted works (Student Papers)

Integrity Flags

0 Integrity Flags for Review

No suspicious text manipulations found.

Our system's algorithms look deeply at a document for any inconsistencies that would set it apart from a normal submission. If we notice something strange, we flag it for you to review.

A Flag is not necessarily an indicator of a problem. However, we'd recommend you focus your attention there for further review.

Match Groups

- **96** Not Cited or Quoted 7%
  Matches with neither in-text citation nor quotation marks
- **0** Missing Quotations 0%
  Matches that are still very similar to source material
- **0** Missing Citation 0%
  Matches that have quotation marks, but no in-text citation
- **0** Cited and Quoted 0%
  Matches with in-text citation present, but no quotation marks

Top Sources

6% Internet sources
2% Publications
3% Submitted works (Student Papers)

Top Sources

The sources with the highest number of matches within the submission. Overlapping sources will not be displayed.

1	Student papers	
Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya		2%
2	Internet	
repository.untag-sby.ac.id		1%
3	Internet	
www.goodreads.com		<1%
4	Internet	
confessionsofabookwhore.com		<1%
5	Internet	
sobrief.com		<1%
6	Internet	
etd.aau.edu.et		<1%
7	Student papers	
Belmont University		<1%
8	Internet	
www.degruyter.com		<1%
9	Publication	
Sushil Ghimire. "Across Borders of Patriarchy: A Comparative Feminist Study of E...		<1%
10	Internet	
dspace.daffodilvarsity.edu.bd:8080		<1%

11	Student papers	
universititeknologimara		<1%
12	Internet	
digilib.uinsby.ac.id		<1%
13	Internet	
e-journal.unimudasorong.ac.id		<1%
14	Internet	
repository.unj.ac.id		<1%
15	Student papers	
CSU, Fullerton		<1%
16	Internet	
etd.hu.edu.et		<1%
17	Student papers	
Universitas Mulawarman		<1%
18	Internet	
www.coursehero.com		<1%
19	Student papers	
Universiti Teknologi MARA		<1%
20	Student papers	
Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala		<1%
21	Internet	
jerometbooks.blogspot.com		<1%
22	Internet	
cdn.bookey.app		<1%
23	Internet	
eprints2.undip.ac.id		<1%
24	Internet	
etheses.uin-malang.ac.id		<1%

25 Internet
journal.ubm.ac.id <1%

26 Internet
readingbookslikeaboss.com <1%

27 Publication
Phenikaa University <1%

28 Internet
arkkukari321.blogspot.com <1%

29 Internet
ejournal.gunadarma.ac.id <1%

30 Internet
jhss.koyauniversity.org <1%

31 Internet
media.neliti.com <1%

32 Internet
quodid.com <1%

33 Internet
repository.uinsaizu.ac.id <1%

34 Internet
www.fast-hit.com <1%

35 Internet
www.researchgate.net <1%

36 Internet
dspace.univ-chlef.dz <1%

37 Internet
ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id <1%

38 Internet
eprints.ust.ac.id <1%

39 Internet
iep.utm.edu <1%

40 Internet
scholar.sun.ac.za <1%

41 Internet
www.mostlyyalit.com <1%

42 Publication
Anna Chitando, Eunice Kamaara, Ezra Chitando. "Routledge Handbook of Contem... <1%

43 Publication
Lisa Folkmarson Käll, Kristin Zeiler. "Intersections of Feminist Technoscience and ... <1%

44 Publication
Rindu Putri Ananda. "Representasi Ideologi Patriarki dalam Film Trafficked (2017)... <1%

45 Internet
core-varnish-new.prod.aop.cambridge.org <1%

46 Internet
e-research.siam.edu <1%

47 Internet
ebin.pub <1%

48 Internet
repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id <1%

49 Internet
researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz <1%

50 Internet
so01.tci-thaijo.org <1%

51 Internet
www.moe.gov.my <1%

52 Internet
www.scirp.org <1%

53 Publication

Dana Rognlie. "Repeating Her Autonomy: Beauvoir, Kierkegaard, and Women's Li... <1%

54 Publication

Harvey Langley. "Freedom and Agency in The Second Sex", European Journal of P... <1%

55 Internet

repository.nwu.ac.za <1%

56 Internet

www.kspublisher.com <1%

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S FEMINIST EXISTENTIALISM IN TAYLOR JENKINS REID'S *MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE*

By

SANCA ODIGITRIA MANESANULU

1612200028

FAKULTAS ILMU BUDAYA

UNIVERSITAS 17 AGUSTUS 1945 SURABAYA

2026

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S FEMINIST EXISTENTIALISM IN TAYLOR JENKINS REID'S *MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE*

A THESIS

Presented in a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Completing the Sarjana Degree in Department of English Literature

By

SANCA ODIGITRIA MANESANULU

1612200028

FAKULTAS ILMU BUDAYA

UNIVERSITAS 17 AGUSTUS 1945 SURABAYA

2026

APPROVAL SHEET I

This is to certify that the Sarjana Thesis of SANCA ODIGITRIA MANESANULU entitled "SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S FEMINIST EXISTENTIALISM IN TAYLOR JENKINS REID'S *MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE"* has been approved by the thesis advisor for further approval by the Examining Committee.

Surabaya, 17 Juni 2026

Advisor,

Linusia Marsih, S.S., M.Pd.

APPROVAL SHEET II

This is to certify that the Sarjana Thesis of SANCA ODIGITRIA MANESANULU entitled "SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S FEMINIST EXISTENTIALISM IN TAYLOR JENKINS REID'S *MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE"* has been examined and approved by thesis Examining Committee as the requirement for Sarjana Degree in English Literature.

Surabaya, 29 Juni 2026

Thesis Examining Committee

Drs, Yoseph Bavo Agung Prasaja,M.Hum — Chairperson

Mateus Rudi Supsiadji, S.S., M.Pd. — Secretary

Linusia Marsih, S.S., M.Pd. — Member

Acknowledged by,
Dean of The Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

Dr. Pariyanto, M.Ed.

SURAT PERNYATAAN

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Sanca Odigitria Manesanulu
NBI :1612200028
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris

Dengan ini menyatakan bahwa skripsi saya dengan judul

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S FEMINIST EXISTENTIALISM IN TAYLOR JENKINS REID'S *MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE*

belum pernah diajukan untuk memperoleh gelar sarjana atau gelar akademis lainnya di suatu perguruan tinggi, dan sepanjang pengetahuan saya juga tidak mengandung karya atau pendapat yang pernah ditulis atau diterbitkan oleh orang lain, kecuali yang secara tertulis diacu dan disebutkan dalam daftar pustaka.

Bilamana dikemudian hari ditemukan ketidaksesuain dengan pernyataan ini, maka saya bersedia dituntut dan diproses sesuai dengan ketentuan yang berlaku.

Demikian pernyataan ini dibuat dengan sesungguhnya dan dengan sebenar-benarnya.

Surabaya, 17 Juni 2026

SANCA ODIGITRIA MANESANULU

MOTTO

"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me…"

(Psalm 23:4)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My deepest praise and gratitude are devoted to Almighty God for His endless love, guidance, and abundant blessings that have accompanied me throughout my life. It is only through His grace and mercy that I was able to complete this thesis entitled *Simone de Beauvoir's Feminist Existentialism in Taylor Jenkins Reid's Maybe in Another Life*. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support, encouragement, and assistance of many individuals. Their contributions, both moral and material, have been invaluable throughout this entire journey.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Dean of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pariyanto, M.Ed., and the Head of the English Literature Department, Muizzu Nurhadi, S.S., M.Hum., for their dedication, guidance, and leadership throughout my academic journey at Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. Their commitment has contributed significantly to my growth and development as a student.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my thesis advisor, Linusia Marsih, S.S., M.Pd, for the patience, guidance, and time devoted to supervising me throughout this research process. The valuable feedback, thoughtful suggestions, and continuous encouragement provided have greatly contributed to the completion of this thesis and my personal development. Through this guidance, I have learned not only academic skills but also the importance of independence, perseverance, and self-confidence.

I am profoundly grateful to my family, my mother Maria Imelda Bria, my father Rofinus Bau, my sisters Adelaida Krista Manesanulu, Jeanne Sacekavia Bau, Ermenilda Philadelfia Bau, my brother Duns Pelagio Manesanulu and my fiance Petrus Peterson Bere for their endless love, prayers, and unwavering support. Their trust and encouragement have been my greatest source of strength throughout this journey. I would also like to express my appreciation to all my extended family members for their continuous support and prayers.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my friends Salsabila Damayanti Samal and Alfira Amalia Latif who have accompanied,

supported, and encouraged me throughout this long and challenging journey. Thank you for your kindness, efforts, and prayers. I sincerely hope that success, happiness, and abundant blessings will always accompany all of us in the future.

Surabaya, 17 Juni 2026

Sanca Odigitria Manesanulu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER
BLANK PAGE

TITLE PAGE

APPROVAL SHEET I i
APPROVAL SHEET II ii
SURAT PERNYATAAN iii
MOTTO iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT v
TABLE OF CONTENTS vii
ABSTRACT ix
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Background of the Study 1
1.2 Statement of the Problem 3
1.3 Objectives of the Study 3
1.4 Scope and Limitation 3
1.5 Significance of the Study 4
1.6 Organization of the Study 4
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 6
2.1 Previous Study 6
2.2 Theoretical Framework 7
2.2.1 Simone de Beauvoir's Feminist Existentialism 7
2.2.2 Freedom and Choice 10
2.2.3 Transcendence and Immanence 12
2.2.4 Becoming a Woman and the Social Construction of Identity 13
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 15
3.1 Literary Approach 15
3.2 Research Design 15
3.3 Data Source 16
3.4 Research Instrument 16
3.5 Data Collection Procedure 16
3.6 Data Analysis Procedure 17
CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS 18
4.1 Hannah Martin's Social Conditions and Experiences as a Woman 18

4.1.1 Hannah Martin's Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity.....19
4.1.2 Hannah Martin's Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction.....22
4.1.3 Hannah Martin's Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances .24
4.2 Hannah Martin's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths.....27
4.2.1 Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices 28
4.2.2 Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action 32
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION.....38
REFERENCES.....41
APPENDIX I SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL
APPENDIX II BIOGRAPHY OF TAYLOR JENKINS REID
APPENDIX III TABLE OF DATA

ABSTRACT

Patriarchal structures have long confined women to subordinate roles, and literature offers a space to examine such structures and women's responses to them. This study uses feminist literary criticism, guided by Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism framework to examine Hannah Martin's position as a woman and how her choices across two parallel life paths reflect her movement within that position, in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life* (2015), a narrative built around a single choice that divides Hannah's life into two trajectories. The research addresses two questions, the conditions shaping Hannah's position as a woman, and how her choices reflect her movement within that position. The study applies four concepts from Beauvoir's framework, woman as the Other, freedom and choice, transcendence and immanence, and the social construction of feminine identity. The method is descriptive qualitative, with the novel as the primary data source and the researcher as the main instrument for collecting and interpreting narrations, dialogues, and character actions. The results show that before the novel's split, Hannah exists within conditions that position her as the Other, including relational dependence, economic instability, and surrendering decisions to fate. Across both paths, Hannah moves toward self-direction and the claiming of her own subjecthood, though neither path concludes with complete freedom. The study reveals that confinement deepens when relational dependence is reinforced by economic instability and belief in fate, while transcendence remains an ongoing process, contributing to understanding how fiction represents women's positions as situated and continuously negotiated.

Keywords: *Female Agency, Feminist Existentialism, Immanance, Transcendence*

23

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Historically, women's position in society has been largely defined by patriarchal structures that confined them to subordinate roles in both public and private life. Patriarchy refers to male domination in both public and private spheres, and patriarchal institutions and social relations are responsible for the inferior or secondary status of women in society (Sultana, 2011: 2). Women across the world have long faced inequality, subordination, and secondary-class status as a result of these structures, and have been victims of oppression, marginalization, and exploitation in patriarchal societies (Mohajan, 2022b: 12).

Over time, however, social movements and feminist discourse began to challenge these limitations. The world has already experienced four waves of feminism that have each acted against women's abuse and oppression, and feminist movements have also accelerated other social movements related to civil rights and gender equality around the world (Mohajan, 2022a: 3). Issues related to women's identity, autonomy, and personal freedom have therefore gained significant attention across various fields of study, including literature (Sen & Das, 2021: 20).

Feminism has grown as a widespread social and intellectual movement that advocates for women's rights, equality, and the recognition of women's experiences in society (Mohajan, 2022b: 11). Feminist literary criticism emerged as part of this movement, closely linked to feminist thought and focusing on how literature reflects gender inequality and women's social experiences (Sen & Das, 2021: 20). The inequalities that women face in their personal and social lives have been widely discussed, particularly in relation to gender discrimination, women's representation, and the struggle for equal rights in various cultural contexts (Mohajan, 2022a: 3). These discussions reflect how feminism remains a relevant and growing area of concern in understanding women's lives and social positions (Kjellgren, 2023: 1287).

Since feminism is broadly concerned with women's experiences and identities, one of its central concerns in both social and literary discussions is the concept of female agency. Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act, make choices, and negotiate their own social conditions rather than being entirely controlled by external structures (Pour & Rad, 2024: 10). Female agency therefore refers to women's ability to make choices, take action, and determine their own identities despite social or personal limitations (Pour & Rad, 2024: 10). This involves the capacity of women to pursue their own goals and assert their own presence within social structures that may otherwise constrain them (Pour & Rad, 2024: 10).

The representation of female agency frequently appears in literary works because literature often reflects human experiences and identity struggles. Feminist literary criticism examines how female characters are represented in literary texts, focusing not only on how women are portrayed but also on how their gender shapes their experiences, choices, and identities within the story (Sen & Das, 2021: 21). Works of fiction play a central role in the production of cultural stereotypes and have long been a space where women's agency is shaped and communicated to readers (Stuhler, 2024: 29). Research shows that female characters are persistently portrayed as more passive in fiction, which points to how literature both reflects and reinforces social attitudes toward women (Stuhler, 2024). Through feminist literary analysis, therefore, readers are able to examine how female characters assert their identities and exercise agency in different circumstances (Dharshini & Moorthi, 2023: 2).

Through feminist literary analysis, therefore, readers are able to examine how female characters assert their identities and exercise agency in different circumstances (Dharshini & Moorthi, 2023: 2). One literary work that portrays these issues is *Maybe in Another Life* by Taylor Jenkins Reid. The novel tells the story of Hannah Martin, a woman whose life develops into two different possibilities depending on the choices she makes. The story portrays how Hannah's social conditions and life experiences shape her position as a woman, as well as how her choices across two different life paths reflect her agency throughout the narrative.

Based on these explanations, this study applies Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist framework to examine Hannah Martin's position as a

woman and the ways her choices reflect her agency in *Maybe in Another Life*. Drawing on Beauvoir's concepts of woman as the Other, freedom and choice, transcendence and immanence, and the social construction of feminine identity, the researcher aims to analyze the social conditions and experiences that shape Hannah's position as a woman and to examine how her choices across two life paths reflect her movement toward agency throughout the novel.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. What social conditions and experiences shape Hannah Martin's position as a woman in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life*?
2. How do Hannah Martin's choices across the two life paths reflect her agency as a woman in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the social conditions and experiences that shape Hannah Martin's position as a woman in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life*.
2. To analyze how Hannah Martin's choices across the two life paths reflect her agency as a woman in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life*.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on *Maybe in Another Life* (2015) by Taylor Jenkins Reid as the primary object of analysis. The study centers on the character of Hannah Martin by examining the social conditions and experiences that shape her position as a woman and analyzing how her choices across the two life paths reflect her agency throughout the novel. The analysis applies feminist literary theory, particularly Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist concepts related to freedom and choice, transcendence and immanence, and the social construction of identity.

This study is limited to the analysis of the social conditions and experiences that shape Hannah Martin's position as a woman and the ways her choices across the two life paths reflect her agency in the novel. The research focuses only on the textual aspects of the novel, including character, experiences,

relationships, and events related to Hannah's agency. This study does not discuss psychological, sociological, or biographical aspects outside the text. In addition, this research does not compare the novel with other literary works by Taylor Jenkins Reid or other authors.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the field of literary studies, particularly in the area of feminist literary criticism, by demonstrating how Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist framework can be effectively applied to contemporary fiction, specifically a parallel-narrative novel such as *Maybe in Another Life* by Taylor Jenkins Reid. The research offers academic value by providing a clear and systematic example of how the concepts of woman as the Other, freedom and choice, transcendence and immanence, and the social construction of feminine identity can be identified and interpreted within a modern novel. By tracing the social conditions that shape Hannah Martin's position as a woman and examining how her choices across two parallel life paths reflect her movement toward agency, this study also highlights the flexibility of Beauvoir's framework in explaining how female characters navigate social constraints in contemporary fictional narratives. Furthermore, the findings may serve as a reference for future researchers and students in Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, particularly those in the English Literature programme, who wish to analyze female agency or other related themes in similar works, showing that Beauvoir's feminist existentialism remains a relevant and practical tool for examining how literature represents women's social experiences and identity.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, scope and limitation, significance of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter consists of the review of related literature that includes previous studies and theoretical framework. The third chapter explains the method of this research, which consists of literary approach, research design, research instrument, data source, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure. The fourth chapter describes the analysis of this study, in which the findings are discussed and the

problem statements are addressed based on the collected data. The last, chapter five explains the conclusion of the research. Appendix is placed at the end of the research and it contains additional material supporting the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Previous Study

At Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist framework has previously been applied to examine the position and experiences of a female character in a literary work, demonstrating that this theoretical framework holds academic relevance in the field of feminist literary studies.

Berya Kamayan Adi Martinus and Linusia Marsih (2022) explored this framework in their study entitled *"Existentialist Feminism Reflected in Acevedo's With the Fire on High,"* published in *Elite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language and Literature*. Both researchers are affiliated with the English Literature Study Program, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. Centering their analysis on Emoni Santiago as the main character, the study investigates how Emoni's life reflects the domestication of women and how she gradually comes to terms with her circumstances as a woman. Through Beauvoir's existentialist feminism and a qualitative method, with the novel serving as the primary data source, the findings reveal that Emoni successfully moves beyond her dependence on and subordination to men across economic, personal, and marital dimensions. Ultimately, Emoni is found to achieve transcendence by engaging in both domestic and public life, thereby refusing the label of "the Other" that patriarchal society had imposed upon her.

While Martinus and Marsih (2022) share the same theoretical foundation as the present study, their work leaves untouched the question of how Beauvoir's feminist existentialist concepts operate within Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life* (2015). No existing study has turned its attention to Hannah Martin's social conditions and choices across two parallel life paths through this lens. It is precisely this absence that the present study seeks to address, positioning itself as the first application of Beauvoir's framework to this novel and contributing an original perspective to feminist literary analysis of contemporary fiction.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism as articulated in *The Second Sex*, first published in 1949 and translated into English by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier in the 2011 Vintage Books edition. The framework is organized around four interconnected concepts which are woman as the Other, freedom and choice, transcendence and immanence, and the social construction of feminine identity. Together, these four concepts form the analytical basis for examining how Hannah Martin's social conditions and choices across two parallel life paths are shaped and reflected in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life*.

2.2.1 Simone de Beauvoir's Feminist Existentialism

Feminist existentialism is a philosophical framework that brings together the existentialist concern with human freedom, subjectivity, and the construction of the self through lived experience, and the feminist concern with understanding the conditions under which women exist in a world structured primarily by and for men. Simone de Beauvoir is the foundational figure in this tradition, and her work *The Second Sex* (1949) remains its defining text. Drawing on existentialism, particularly the premise that existence precedes essence, Beauvoir redirected this framework toward understanding women's oppression not as something natural or inevitable, but as a historically and socially produced condition.

The starting point of Beauvoir's feminist existentialism is the recognition that woman has been historically cast not as a subject in her own right but as the Other. She argues that man defines woman not in herself but in relation to himself, and that he is the Subject, the Absolute, while she is the Other (Beauvoir, 2011: 26). This construction of woman as the secondary and inessential term in the man-woman dyad is not a reflection of any natural inferiority but of a particular social and philosophical arrangement in which man has claimed universal subjectivity while projecting onto woman everything he wishes to distance himself from. The concept of the Other, which Beauvoir reworked from Hegel, thus becomes the central analytical category through which she explains women's subordination.

What makes Beauvoir's contribution distinctly feminist is her insistence that this situation is not metaphysically fixed. Because existentialism holds that

human beings are not determined by any essential nature but are always in the process of making themselves through choice and action, the condition of being the Other is something that can be challenged and refused. Woman is the Other not because of what she is biologically or essentially, but because she has been placed in that position by historical forces and kept there by a combination of social structures, ideological myths, and her own complicity, sometimes reluctant and sometimes unconscious, in accepting that position. Feminist existentialism is therefore not only a diagnosis of oppression but also a call to freedom, insisting that women can and must reclaim their subjectivity and refuse the role of the inessential Other (Beauvoir, 2011: 26-29).

This foundational position continues to generate significant scholarly engagement across several interconnected dimensions. Langley (2024: 100-113) argues that the essence of Beauvoir's theory of freedom is deeply consistent with the broader existentialist tradition, while also showing that her account of situated freedom is original and philosophically indispensable to feminism. Langley demonstrates that freedom for Beauvoir must be distinguished from power, in that freedom is the ontological condition of consciousness and remains infinite irrespective of one's situation, while power is the concrete manifestation of freedom through projects, finite and subject to material reality. It is precisely this distinction that illuminates what Langley calls "woman's drama," which is the conflict between her existential freedom and patriarchy's attempt to doom her to immanence. This reading reinforces the understanding of feminist existentialism as a framework in which philosophical rigor and feminist critique are inseparable.

Oksala (2022: 137-150) approaches Beauvoir from another angle, arguing that Beauvoir's analyses of women's lived experience constitute a form of critical phenomenology, which is a mode of inquiry that examines how social and historical structures are embedded in and shape conscious experience from within. Oksala contends that Beauvoir's method goes beyond mere personal description, as it is a historico-transcendental inquiry that reveals how the conditions shaping women's experience are not natural givens but historically produced and therefore open to transformation. This reading extends feminist existentialism by emphasizing its methodological dimension, showing that Beauvoir does not only theorize women's oppression but develops a way of reading and analyzing the lived reality of that oppression as it appears in experience.

Knowles (2022: 1317-1334) offers a phenomenological account of one of the most challenging aspects of Beauvoir's framework, which concerns why women sometimes actively reinforce their own unfreedom. Knowles argues against the dominant view that women's complicity is reducible to adaptive preferences imposed by external conditions, proposing instead that women may remain complicit even when genuine alternatives are available to them. Drawing on Heideggerian phenomenology to illuminate Beauvoir's account, Knowles demonstrates that self-responsibility is not automatic and must be actively claimed, and that the existential temptation to remain within the comfort of socially prescribed femininity persists even for women who possess the material conditions for resistance. This reading deepens the understanding of how agency and constraint interact in Beauvoir's framework.

Garcia (2023:195-214) makes a direct argument for the ongoing philosophical relevance of Beauvoir's framework, countering the tendency to treat her work as merely a historical starting point for feminist philosophy. Garcia defends the fertility of Beauvoirian philosophy for contemporary debates in moral and political philosophy, particularly in relation to female submission and the role of erotic experience in emancipation. By showing that two classic critiques of Beauvoir regarding her alleged essentialism and her treatment of embodiment are more limited in scope than commonly assumed, Garcia argues that *The Second Sex* continues to provide analytical resources that contemporary feminist theory cannot afford to ignore.

Rognlie (2023: 453-474) recovers a neglected dimension of Beauvoir's account of freedom by foregrounding the influence of Søren Kierkegaard on her thinking. Rognlie argues that Beauvoir articulates a dual model of repetition, consisting of mundane repetition, which traps women in the circular routines of femininity, and sacrificial repetition, which is a temporality of freedom through which women continuously reclaim their autonomy. For Beauvoir, genuine liberation requires that women retake themselves not as a single act but as a continuous practice of self-reclamation oriented toward an open future. This temporal dimension of freedom is directly relevant to analyzing how female characters navigate between the pull of social conformity and the possibility of authentic self-determination.

53

Stendera (2022: 1-20) extends the reach of Beauvoir's existentialist feminism by reading her account of oppression alongside that of Frantz Fanon. Stendera argues that both thinkers understand oppression as fundamentally constraining the subject's relationship to time, and that for Beauvoir, reductive temporalities sever women's future from their past and present, producing the stagnation characteristic of immanence. By showing the structural affinities between Beauvoir's and Fanon's accounts despite their different emphases, Stendera demonstrates that Beauvoir's temporal analysis of oppression has broader applicability beyond gender alone, while reinforcing the centrality of futurity to any viable conception of feminist freedom.

Pickard (2023: 215-241) engages the relationship between Beauvoir's concept of becoming and Butler's notion of gender performance, clarifying what is at stake in each framework for understanding ongoing gender inequality. Pickard argues that Beauvoir's view, namely that women are shaped by an interplay of culturally constructed femininity and sexed embodiment, departs significantly from Butler's reading of it, and that Beauvoir's account retains distinctive analytical purchase, particularly in attending to how temporality and the life course are embedded in the process of becoming a woman. This contribution is especially relevant to literary analyses concerned with how female characters are formed across time, situating becoming not as a single moment of emergence but as a process unfolding through lived social experience.

It is within this tradition, understood as both a philosophical framework and a critical method, that the present study situates itself. The scholarship reviewed above confirms that Beauvoir's feminist existentialism is not a closed chapter in the history of ideas but a living body of thought whose central concepts, including the Other, transcendence and immanence, and the social becoming of feminine identity, continue to be refined, contested, and extended. These concepts provide the analytical tools this study employs to examine female agency in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life*.

2.2.2 Freedom and Choice

At the heart of existentialist thought is the proposition that human beings are radically free. Because existence precedes essence, there is no predetermined human nature that dictates what a person must be or do. A human being is first

thrown into the world and only subsequently, through the choices she makes and the actions she takes, does she create her own identity and meaning. Freedom, on this account, is not a privilege that some people possess and others lack but the fundamental structure of human existence itself.

Beauvoir accepts this starting point but complicates it significantly by insisting that freedom can never be understood in abstraction from the concrete situation in which a person finds herself. She writes that freedom is accomplished only by perpetual surpassing toward other freedoms, and that present existence finds its justification only in its expansion toward an indefinitely open future (Beauvoir, 2011: 37). Freedom is not simply an inner state or a philosophical abstraction; it must be exercised concretely, in and through the material and social conditions of one's life. A woman who is denied education, economic independence, or social recognition is not simply a free being who has chosen not to exercise her freedom. Her freedom has been structurally curtailed, and that curtailment is itself a form of oppression.

Choice, for Beauvoir, is inseparable from freedom but must likewise be understood situationally. When she analyzes the choices women make, whether to marry, to remain in the domestic sphere, or to accept the role of the Other, she does not condemn these choices, but she does examine the conditions under which they are made. She acknowledges that women often derive genuine satisfaction from dependence and that refusal to be the Other would mean renouncing the material and psychological security that such dependence provides (Beauvoir, 2011: 10). The choice to accept one's situation is still a choice, but it is one made under constraint. Beauvoir also introduces the concept of bad faith to describe the retreat from freedom into the comfort of a predetermined role, presenting oneself as something fixed and necessary rather than as a free subject who is always in the process of becoming.

This concept serves as a tool for examining how characters navigate the constraints of their social world. It allows the analysis to ask not only what a character chooses but what choices are available to her, what forces shape the range of possibilities she perceives, and whether a given decision reflects genuine self-assertion or a flight from freedom into the security of an assigned role.

2.2.3 Transcendence and Immanence

The opposition between transcendence and immanence is one of the most important conceptual pairs in Beauvoir's framework. Transcendence refers to the specifically human capacity to go beyond what one is given, to project oneself into the future, and to engage with the world through activity, creation, and self-determination. Every subject, Beauvoir writes, posits itself as a transcendence concretely, through projects (Beauvoir, 2011: 37). To exist as a transcendent subject is to be an agent, to act upon and transform one's world rather than simply being acted upon by it.

Immanence, by contrast, refers to a mode of existence in which the subject is enclosed within herself, unable to project toward the future or engage freely with the world. Beauvoir associates immanence with stagnation, repetition, and the reduction of a human being to a mere thing. When transcendence lapses into immanence, she argues, there is a degradation of existence into the in-itself, of freedom into facticity, and this represents an absolute evil whether it is consented to or inflicted upon the subject (Beauvoir, 2011: 37). Immanence, when it is imposed rather than chosen, is therefore not simply an unfortunate circumstance but a form of oppression, a violation of the fundamental human need to become.

Beauvoir's central argument is that the situation of woman has been systematically structured to confine her to immanence while reserving transcendence for man. The domestic sphere, with its endless cycle of tasks that must be repeated without producing any lasting result or transformation of the world, is the paradigmatic site of immanence. Man, by contrast, has claimed for himself the sphere of work, art, politics, and thought through which human beings leave their mark on the world and achieve transcendence. What singularly defines the situation of woman, Beauvoir writes, is that being an autonomous freedom, she discovers herself in a world where men force her to assume herself as Other, as an attempt is made to freeze her as an object and doom her to immanence (Beauvoir, 2011: 37).

This conceptual pair provides a precise vocabulary for examining how characters are positioned within their social worlds with respect to agency and self-realization. It allows the analysis to identify which modes of existence a

character is permitted or denied, what social mechanisms enforce the confinement to immanence, and whether and how characters resist or exceed those confines.

2.2.4 Becoming a Woman and the Social Construction of Identity

Perhaps the most foundational claim in *The Second Sex* is the one with which Beauvoir opens the chapter on childhood: "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman. No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine" (Beauvoir, 2011: 330). This statement encapsulates the existentialist insistence that there is no fixed essence, no eternal feminine, no natural femininity that women simply are. What counts as womanly or feminine is not a given but a produced result, the outcome of a long and ongoing process of socialization, education, and cultural conditioning.

Beauvoir traces this process through the way the girl child gradually comes to inhabit the position of the Other that society has prepared for her. From the earliest years of childhood, the girl is treated differently from the boy, encouraged toward passivity, docility, and dependence while the boy is encouraged toward activity and engagement with the world. The girl is taught to define herself in relation to others, to subordinate her own desires and projects to the needs of those around her, and to locate her value in her appearance and her capacity to please. This socialization is not experienced primarily as coercion because it is woven into the fabric of everyday life, into language, gesture, and the distribution of praise and criticism, and into the images and stories through which a culture represents itself to its members.

The significance of this account for identity as a theoretical concept is that it insists identity is not something one simply has but something one is made to do and be, repeatedly and over time. This insight resonates with Judith Butler's argument in Gender Trouble (1990) that gender is performative, constituted through the repeated enactment of acts that, over time, produce the appearance of a natural and stable identity. While Butler radicalized Beauvoir's claim by extending it to the sexed body itself as a partly discursive production, the two thinkers share the fundamental conviction that femininity is not given but made. For the purposes of this study, the emphasis remains on Beauvoir's original

framework, which foregrounds social situation and historical process as the primary forces shaping feminine identity.

This concept guides the examination of how female identity is constructed and contested in the object of study. It directs attention to the social forces that shape characters' understanding of themselves as women, to the processes of formation and conditioning that have brought them to their present situation, and to whether and how they find ways to become otherwise than what their society has prepared them to be.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Literary Approach

This study applies a feminist literary approach to analyze female agency as shown through Hannah Martin's character in *Maybe in Another Life*. Feminist literary criticism is an approach that focuses on women's experiences, positions, identities, and representations in literary works. According to Tyson (2015: 83), feminist criticism examines how literature reflects, reinforces, or challenges patriarchal ideology and gender inequality, particularly in the representation of women and their experiences.

Through feminist literary criticism, female characters are analyzed not merely as passive figures, but as individuals who are capable of making decisions, expressing autonomy, and shaping their identities. This approach is considered relevant to the study because the novel portrays Hannah Martin's social experiences, relationships, choices, and personal development throughout the story.

3.2 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Creswell (2014: 4), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative research is commonly applied in literary studies because it focuses on interpretation and analysis rather than numerical data.

A descriptive qualitative design is considered appropriate for this study because the research focuses on examining female agency through Hannah Martin's social conditions, experiences, and choices in the novel. The data analyzed in this study are presented in the form of words, dialogues, narrations, and character actions found in *Maybe in Another Life*.

3.3 Data Source

The primary source of data for this study is the novel *Maybe in Another Life* (2015) by Taylor Jenkins Reid, published by Atria Books. The novel spans 352 pages and is narrated in the first person by Hannah Martin, structured into two alternating parallel storylines that unfold from a single pivotal choice, one following the path in which Hannah stays with Ethan, and the other following the path in which she leaves with Gabby. The data in this study consist of narrations, dialogues, and character actions that depict the social conditions shaping Hannah Martin's position as a woman, as well as how her choices across the two life paths reflect her agency. Based on a systematic reading of the full text guided by the two research questions, the researcher identified 45 relevant data items, with 25 items addressing Research Question 1 and 20 items addressing Research Question 2.

3.4 Research Instrument

The main research instrument in this study is the researcher herself. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016: 244), human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, which allows the researcher to access and interpret meaning directly rather than through a fixed external tool. As the main instrument, the researcher reads, identifies, classifies, and interprets the data related to female agency found in the novel.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure in this study is conducted through several stages. The researcher begins by reading *Maybe in Another Life* thoroughly and repeatedly in order to understand the story as a whole and to identify the issues related to female agency present in the novel. Following this initial reading, the researcher identifies, selects, and classifies narrations, dialogues, character actions, and descriptions related to Hannah Martin's female agency, guided by the research questions and the relevant theoretical concepts used in the study. Once this classification is complete, the researcher organizes the categorized data systematically in order to facilitate the process of analysis that follows.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

48

In collecting data, the researcher performs several steps related to the focus of the research. The researcher begins by reading *Maybe in Another Life* repeatedly and thoroughly in order to understand the overall narrative and Hannah Martin's development across both life paths before selecting any data. The researcher then identifies passages in the form of narration, dialogue, or character action that are relevant to the two research questions. The identified passages are organised into a data classification table and assigned sequential numbers, Data 1, Data 2, Data 3, and so forth, with the table containing the quotation, category, subcategory, and page number for each data item. Finally, the researcher organises the collected passages into categories based on their relationship to the research questions and the analytical framework established in Chapter II.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study through the analysis on Hannah Martin as the central character in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life*. The analysis is guided by two research questions: what social conditions and experiences shape Hannah Martin's situation as a woman in the novel, and how her choices across the two life paths that structure the narrative reflect her agency as a woman. These two questions are not independent of each other. The conditions that shape Hannah's situation are precisely what makes the agency she later exercises so difficult to arrive at, and the significance of her choices cannot be understood without first understanding what she is choosing against.

The central argument of this chapter is that Hannah Martin begins the novel as a woman whose sense of self is constructed almost entirely through conditions and relationships outside her own control, and that across both life paths, through processes that differ in their catalysts but converge in their direction, she moves toward a position in which her choices are genuinely her own. The measure of that movement is not whether Hannah arrives at a simple or uncomplicated freedom, but whether she begins to inhabit her own life as a subject rather than continuing to occupy it as the Other.

4.1 Hannah Martin's Social Conditions and Experiences as a Woman

Before Hannah Martin reaches the point where her life divides into two separate paths, she is already living inside a set of conditions that have been accumulating for years. These conditions are not things she actively chooses. They are the situation she finds herself in, shaped by the people around her, the structures she has moved through, and the habits of mind she has developed in response to both. What they have in common is that each of them places Hannah in a position where her sense of self is located outside of herself rather than within it. Her identity depends heavily on her relationships with men, her financial and professional life remains unstable and shaped by others, and her general approach to her own circumstances is to wait rather than to act. Together, these three

conditions form the foundation on which everything that follows is built, and they are the focus of this section.

4.1.1 Hannah Martin's Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity

Hannah's life in New York begins to unravel the moment Michael disappears from it. The relationship itself was already troubled, since Hannah unknowingly became involved with a married man, and the affair ended once his wife discovered the truth. What follows is not simply the grief of a breakup but the exposure of something that was already missing before it. As Hannah admits afterward, "*When Michael was out of my life, I realized I didn't have much else going for me in New York* (Reid, 2015: 10)". The sentence is almost casual in how it delivers its revelation, but what it discloses is significant. Her job, her apartment, her sense of belonging in the city, none of these things had ever formed a foundation of their own. They had functioned as background details to a life that was organized, in practice, around one person. The structure only becomes visible at the exact moment it collapses, which means it was never visible at all while it was still standing.

What makes this pattern more than a simple case of heartbreak is the way it had already been operating before the relationship ended, in ways Hannah did not register as unusual. At a restaurant in SoHo, Michael tells Hannah she has something in her teeth and suggests she go check in the bathroom. She goes, finds nothing there, and acknowledges that she found it difficult to look at herself in the mirror before returning to the table (Reid, 2015: 8). The detail that stays is not Michael's deception but Hannah's response to it. She does not pause to ask why she is being sent away. She does not stay at the table. She accepts the excuse and removes herself without resistance, as though this kind of treatment had already become something that did not require examination. That she is aware enough to find it difficult to look at herself in the mirror, and still returns to the table anyway, points to the distance between what she understands and what she is able to act on.

When Gabby names what is happening directly, describing the relationship as wrong and telling Hannah she should not allow a man to treat her like a mistress (Reid, 2015: 9), the clarity of Gabby's account makes Hannah's

response all the more striking. Hannah does not dispute what Gabby is saying. Instead, she describes what happens to the words "*I let all of her advice fly right through my head and out into the wind. As if it was meant for someone else and wasn't mine to hold on to* (Reid, 2015: 9)". The advice lands accurately and slides away without taking hold. Hannah treats a description of her own situation as though it belongs to a different person entirely. What this response reveals is not a failure of understanding but a failure of application. The information reaches her and passes through her, as if there is no self inside it that recognizes itself in what is being described.

What replaces Gabby's account is a shift in vocabulary rather than a shift in understanding. Rather than engaging with what Gabby has said, Hannah reaches for a different frame altogether, one built around coincidence and fate. *"Michael and I met at a bar in Bushwick on a Wednesday night. I never go to Bushwick. And I rarely go out on a Wednesday night. And neither does he! What are the odds of that?"* (Reid, 2015: 9). She goes on to suggest that even if Michael is married, that does not mean they were not fated to meet. What this substitution accomplishes is a removal of Hannah from any active role in what is happening. If the relationship is fate, then Hannah is not making a choice. She is simply the recipient of something that was already determined. The language of destiny does not change what the relationship is. It changes what Hannah has to be responsible for within it, which is to say, nothing at all.

The cost of this substitution only becomes clear after the relationship ends on its own. Looking back, Hannah acknowledges that she had been playing what she calls the *"Well, But"* game and the *"We Don't Know That for Sure"* game, ways of keeping the truth abstract enough that she did not have to face it directly (Reid, 2015: 10). The admission itself is telling not only for what it says but for when it arrives. As long as the relationship remained active, the language of fate was doing real work, allowing Hannah to remain inside a situation that, described plainly, was one in which she was hidden, dismissed, and lied to. Once the relationship ends without Hannah having to act, the clarity she could not find before arrives without difficulty.

What is also significant is how Hannah feels about Michael's voice mails after the breakup. He keeps calling, saying he wants to leave his wife for her, and Hannah admits this makes her feel better even as it makes her feel absolutely

terrible (Reid, 2015: 11). The simultaneous relief and self-disgust in this admission captures something precise about the nature of her dependency. She already knows the relationship is over and wrong, and still the sound of being wanted by him restores something in her that has no other source to draw from. The dependency does not dissolve with the relationship. It simply loses its object and makes itself visible in the residue it leaves behind.

A version of this same structure reappears later, after Hannah has begun to rebuild her life in Los Angeles and things genuinely seem to be improving. She reflects "*I think maybe I need someone in my corner in order to thrive. I think I am one of those people who need people* (Reid, 2015: 120)". On the surface, this reads as honest self-knowledge. But the content of what she is describing matters. After years of moving between cities without establishing anything lasting, the sense of progress she now feels depends on the presence of people who believe in her. The feeling of moving forward is not something she generates from within. It is something she receives from outside herself, and it depends on that outside source remaining available. Even her experience of her own capability, her sense that she can do this, arrives from someone else's belief before it arrives from her own.

Taken together, these moments trace a consistent shape that runs from Hannah's most self-deceptive period to the moments in which she is most honestly reflecting on herself. In each case, her sense of having a place in the world, her position within a relationship, and even her experience of her own capacity are located in someone else's presence or belief rather than in herself. This is not a pattern she names or deliberately constructs. It is the condition she keeps returning to without recognizing it as a condition at all. What Beauvoir (2011) describes as the position of woman as the Other is legible here. A woman who comes to understand herself not through her own terms but in relation to others, and for whom that relational definition has become so naturalized that it no longer appears as a constraint but simply as the way things are.

4.1.2 Hannah Martin's Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction

Standing in front of a magnifying mirror in Gabby's bathroom on her first night back in Los Angeles, Hannah takes stock of where she is. The crow's feet she notices prompt not a reflection on aging but something closer to an inventory.

> I have no apartment and no job. I have no steady relationship or even a city to call home. I have no idea what I want to be doing with my life, no idea what my purpose is, and no real sign of a life goal (Reid, 2015: 13).

The structure of this passage is worth pausing over. Career and purpose appear alongside relationship and home as though they belong to the same list, which in Hannah's accounting they do. What strikes her is not the absence of one thing but the absence of any stable ground at all. Time, as she puts it, has found her. She has not found anything in return. The image of looking in a mirror and finding only evidence of passing time, rather than evidence of progress, captures the condition precisely.

One detail in particular makes the economic dimension of this picture concrete in a way that goes beyond simple poverty or unemployment. Hannah mentions that she does not know how much money is in her bank account because she is afraid to look (Reid, 2015: 19). This is not the same as not having money. It is a refusal to know the full extent of her own situation, a deliberate turning away from information that would require her to act on it. She puts the drinks on her credit card without checking the balance and describes herself as simply putting it out of her head. The economic instability is real, but what this moment reveals is the particular relationship Hannah has to that instability, one in which not knowing functions as a way of not having to decide.

The absence of career direction becomes sharper when placed next to a visible alternative. "*Gabby's the VP of Development at a nonprofit that works with at-risk teenagers. I'm a waitress. And not a particularly good one* (Reid, 2015: 8)". Two people who started from the same point have arrived at completely different relationships to their own work. Gabby's description carries a title, an organization, and a sense of purpose that extends beyond herself. Hannah's carries a job title with no organization attached to it and an immediate qualifier that

undercuts even that. The asymmetry does not require commentary. Hannah states it as plainly as a fact about the weather. What the comparison also reveals is that both women were shaped by similar starting conditions, the same high school, the same friendship, the same city, which means the divergence between them is not explained by circumstance alone.

Later, sitting with Ethan, Hannah puts it in terms that go further still. "*Oh, come on. You're talking to a woman with no career, no home, barely any money, and no potential* (Reid, 2015: 37)". When Ethan suggests she does not really believe this, she does not soften it, "*I don't know. I sort of really think that* (Reid, 2015: 37)". Two things in this exchange deserve attention. First, Hannah uses the word woman rather than person when naming what she lacks, which locates her situation not only as an individual condition but as something she connects to what a woman at her age is expected to have already built. Second, the word potential extends the absence beyond the present moment. She is not only describing where she has not yet arrived. She is questioning whether arrival is possible for her at all, which is a different and more serious form of the same absence.

Even within this already unstable position, the limited control Hannah does have over her economic situation is not fully hers to keep. During her final weeks in New York, she recalls that her boss "*hit on me and implied that better shifts went to women who showed cleavage* (Reid, 2015: 11)". This detail adds a specific dimension to everything else. Hannah's income is already minimal, but even the small degree of control she has over it is conditional. Whether she earns more depends in part on how she presents her body to a man with authority over her schedule. The instability she describes elsewhere is therefore not simply a gap waiting to be filled by effort. The terms on which that gap could be filled are themselves shaped by something outside Hannah's control, which means her economic position is doubly constrained by what she does not yet have, and by what she is not permitted to access on her own terms.

It is also significant that when career direction does arrive for Hannah, it does not come from within but from Carl Hudson, who offers her a receptionist position at his pediatric practice without Hannah having sought it out or applied for it (Reid, 2015: 83). The offer is generous and well-intentioned, but the fact that it reaches Hannah from outside rather than from any direction she pursued herself reinforces the pattern already visible in the rest of this section. Hannah's economic

ground does not come from Hannah identifying where she wants to go. It comes, again, from another person stepping in to provide what she has not managed to locate on her own.

These moments build on each other rather than simply repeating the same observation. The mirror scene establishes the absence as something Hannah recognizes privately. The refusal to check her bank account shows the particular relationship she has developed to that absence. The comparison with Gabby places the absence next to a visible alternative, making concrete what a different trajectory from the same starting point might have looked like. The exchange with Ethan moves the absence from something Hannah notices quietly into something she says aloud and ties explicitly to her identity as a woman. The detail about her boss shows that even the limited economic ground she occupies is not entirely under her own authority. And Carl's offer confirms that what movement does occur arrives from outside rather than from Hannah's own direction. What Beauvoir (2011) identifies as immanence, an existence that remains enclosed, repetitive, and unable to project itself toward a future built through one's own activity, is visible across all of these conditions taken together.

4.1.3 Hannah Martin's Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances

Alongside the relational dependency and the economic instability that mark Hannah's situation, there is a third condition that connects them and gives them a particular shape. It is not a single event or a specific relationship but a habit of mind that runs through how Hannah approaches nearly everything in her life. Rather than identifying what she wants and moving toward it, Hannah tends to wait, operating under an assumption that the direction she needs will arrive on its own without requiring her to locate or pursue it. This is not something she reflects on or examines. It is simply the posture she returns to, across years and across very different circumstances, as though it were the natural way for a life to proceed.

The earliest version of this appears in how Hannah describes the period just after high school, when Tina encouraged her to find her own way. Looking back on it, Hannah recalls "*I'm still not sure what that way is. But back then, I just assumed it would all fall into place, that the big things in life would take care of themselves* (Reid, 2015: 6)". The invitation Tina extended was toward action.

Hannah's response was not a different plan but the replacement of any plan with an assumption that planning was unnecessary. The big things, in her own framing, would handle themselves. This is not a decision about what to pursue. It is a decision, absorbed early and without examination, that the question of what to pursue does not need to be asked. The fact that Hannah is still not sure what her way is when narrating this as an adult suggests that the assumption she formed then has never been seriously challenged.

Years later, the same orientation appears in how Hannah describes why she has moved through so many cities.

> I don't move from place to place on purpose. It's not a conscious choice to be a nomad. Although I can see that each move is my own decision, predicated on nothing but my ever-growing sense that I don't belong where I am, fueled by the hope that maybe there is, in fact, a place I do belong, a place just off in the future (Reid, 2015: 3).

The tension inside this passage is what makes it significant. Hannah acknowledges in the same breath that each move was her decision and that none of it was intentional. She is not contradicting herself carelessly. She is describing a form of movement in which she is always deciding to leave but never deciding where to arrive. The hope she names points toward a place just off in the future, which is to say nowhere specific, and nowhere she has set out to find. Ethan later responds to this pattern without realizing how precisely he is naming it. When Hannah jokes that she came back to Los Angeles because she was "*running out of cities* (Reid, 2015: 18)", Ethan replies, "*I like to think you've just come to your senses* (Reid, 2015: 18)". Even in a moment meant as a compliment, the explanation on offer is either that Hannah ran out of options or that something inside her finally clicked into place, neither of which involves Hannah making an active choice for a specific reason.

A related pattern shows up in how Hannah handles difficulty in the immediate moment. On the night before she is meant to start over in Los Angeles, after acknowledging that her life in New York had not been working, she does not sit with that admission. Instead, she tells herself *"My life may be a little bit of a disaster. I may not make the best decisions sometimes. But I am not going to lie here and stare at the ceiling, worrying the night away"* (Reid, 2015: 14) She goes to sleep believing things will simply be better tomorrow, that she will figure it all

out tomorrow, because *"tomorrow is, for me, a brand-new day"* (Reid, 2015: 14). What is happening here is not denial exactly, since Hannah names the disaster and the poor decisions without flinching. But acknowledgment is immediately followed by closure rather than by any plan for what tomorrow's figuring-out will actually involve. Tomorrow is treated as a guarantee rather than as a day she will need to do anything with. The pattern here is consistent with how Hannah has handled difficulty before. She registers it clearly and then closes the thought before it can ask anything of her.

There is also something telling in the physical gesture Hannah makes most often when she is uncomfortable or pressed. "*I shrug, because it's an impulse. It's always my impulse to ignore the bad, to run toward the good* (Reid, 2015: 3)". She says this on the plane, when a stranger asks about the difficulties of her nomadic life, and then she adds something that she has apparently only recently admitted to herself that she is not sure her impulses are getting her where she wants to go. The shrug is the physical version of everything else in this section. It is a reflex that closes off a line of inquiry before it becomes uncomfortable, and it is so automatic that Hannah has to consciously stop herself from doing it. The awareness that her impulse to close things off may not be serving her is one of the first signs that she has begun to examine the posture she has been living inside.

This pattern reaches its most explicit form on the night of the party, when Hannah stands before a decision that visibly matters to her and names the logic she has been living by all along "*Life is long and full of an infinite number of decisions. I have to think that the small ones don't matter, that I'll end up where I need to end up no matter what I do. My fate will find me* (Reid, 2015: 25)".This is the clearest possible version of everything that came before it. The earlier moments were instances of Hannah not deciding. This moment is Hannah explaining, to herself, why deciding is not necessary in the first place. The outcome, she tells herself, is fixed regardless of what she does, which means the decision in front of her, and by extension any decision, carries no real weight.

What connects these moments is not only that Hannah is passive in each of them, but that the passivity becomes more explicit and more reasoned as it moves forward. The assumption that things will fall into place is something Hannah absorbed without examining it. The pattern of movement without direction is something she can describe but still frames as unintentional. The habit of postponing until tomorrow is something she notices in herself in the moment

but cannot move past. The physical shrug is a reflex she has only just begun to question. And the surrender to fate at the party is something she articulates fully, as a belief she is choosing to act on. By the time she reaches that last moment, Hannah is no longer simply failing to make decisions. She has built, gradually and across years, a working theory of her own life in which decisions do not matter, and she is now applying that theory consciously to a moment that clearly does matter to her.

This kind of waiting, and the reasoning Hannah develops to sustain it, can be understood through two connected ideas in Beauvoir's account of how women come to occupy the position they do. The first concerns conditioning Beauvoir (2011) argues that women are directed, from early in life, toward passivity and dependence rather than toward activity and self-direction, since identity is not something given but something produced through repeated experience and habit over time. Hannah's movement from an unexamined assumption in adolescence to a fully reasoned belief in fate by her late twenties is, in this sense, not a single choice but the visible result of a much longer process of conditioning. The second concerns what Beauvoir (2011) describes as bad faith, the retreat from one's own freedom into a comfortable story that removes the need to choose or act. The substitution Hannah performs throughout this section, replacing the discomfort of an open decision with the reassurance of a predetermined outcome, is precisely this kind of retreat. Both the passivity and the reasoning she uses to justify it point toward the same underlying condition that a woman who has learned, through years of repetition, that stepping back from her own freedom is the easier and more familiar way to live.

4.2 Hannah Martin's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths

The night of Gabby's welcome-home party is the point at which Hannah's story divides. One version of her stays out with Ethan. Another goes home with Gabby. From that single moment, two entirely different sets of circumstances unfold, each placing Hannah in situations she has never been in before and each asking something of her that her life up to that point has not prepared her to give easily. What both paths share is that they do not allow Hannah to stay still. In one, an unplanned pregnancy forces her to make decisions that cannot be handed over to fate or postponed until tomorrow. In the other, a near-fatal accident strips away almost everything she might have leaned on, leaving her physically helpless and

emotionally exposed in ways she has no script for. How Hannah moves through each of these paths, what she chooses, what she refuses, and how she responds when circumstances press against the way she has always lived, is the focus of this section.

4.2.1 Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices

When Hannah decides to stay out with Ethan rather than go home with Gabby, the decision arrives less as a deliberate choice than as an impulse she follows without examining it. "*I'm eager to spend time with a good man for a change*, she tells herself (Reid, 2015: 33)". The phrase for a change is small but it gives away more than Hannah probably intends it to. It frames the decision as a correction of something rather than a pursuit of something, she is not moving toward Ethan because of anything specific she wants from him in this moment, she is moving away from whatever she has just decided a good man is not. That is a subtle but important distinction. A choice built on relief is still a choice, but it is a choice with its attention pointed backward, at what is being escaped, rather than forward, at what is being built. The path that opens from this moment therefore does not begin with Hannah exercising freedom in any meaningful sense. It begins with the same drifting logic that has carried her from city to city without her ever quite deciding where she wanted to land, dressed up, this time, as a preference for a nice guy over an exciting one. What makes this path worth close attention is not this opening but the exact point at which drifting stops being an option.

That point arrives with the discovery of the pregnancy. Alone on Ethan's floor after he has left for work, Hannah's thoughts move through a rapid, unresolved sequence, when to tell Michael, when to tell Ethan, how to afford a baby, whether she has been stupid, and then, almost on reflex, whether she is simply fated to keep ruining her own life (Reid, 2015: 131). What is worth sitting with here is not simply that the word fate appears again, but where it appears in the sequence. It comes last, after every practical question has already been asked and left unanswered, which suggests it is not offering Hannah an explanation so much as a place to rest once the practical questions have become too uncomfortable to hold onto. It is the mental equivalent of the shrug she has relied on for years, an automatic reach for the one thought that has always let her stop

thinking. Except this time the reach does not land anywhere. A pregnancy does not behave like a chance meeting in a bar that can be quietly reframed as destiny after the fact. It has a due date, a body attached to it, and a string of decisions that will have to be made regardless of what Hannah believes about who is really in charge of her life. The fact that the old reflex fires anyway, out of pure habit, and then simply fails to do anything, is arguably more revealing than if it had never appeared at all. It shows a woman whose instincts have not caught up with her circumstances yet, and the distance between the two is exactly where her agency in this path will have to be built.

What she builds first is almost aggressively practical, and that practicality is itself worth reading closely, because it is the opposite of everything Hannah has been until now. Where she once refused to check her own bank balance because not knowing let her keep avoiding a decision, and once took a job that arrived at her rather than one she went looking for, this Hannah walks into a car dealership and negotiates like someone who has done this before, even though she has not. When the sales manager calls her "sweetheart" in a transparent attempt to stall and condescend his way to a higher price, she does not let the tone of the room decide the outcome of the conversation. "*Look, I told you I'd pay eight thousand even. Take it or leave it* (Reid, 2015: 116)". There is nothing uncertain in that sentence, which is precisely what makes it interesting, because everything around it suggests Hannah is not actually certain of anything yet. That contradiction resolves itself in what she does the moment she is alone. Driving off the lot, she says out loud, to no one, "*I'm doing this. I'm making a life for myself. I am doing this* (Reid, 2015: 117)". The repetition here is doing something specific. It is not confirming a fact that is already settled, it is performing the settling, saying the sentence enough times that it starts to feel true rather than starting from the position that it already is true.

That is not a small distinction. It means the decisiveness Hannah showed at the dealership was not evidence of a woman who already believes in herself, it was the first move in a process of becoming someone who does, built out loud, in real time, with no one else in the car to hear it. She repeats the same structure days later with the pediatric practice's HR department, talking her starting salary up from forty thousand dollars to forty-four thousand, and reflects afterward, half joking, that she has talked a car salesman down and a HR representative up in the same week (Reid, 2015: 118). The joke in her own voice is worth noticing rather

than dismissing, because self-deprecating humor has always been one of Hannah's ways of avoiding the weight of a moment, and yet here the humor sits on top of an accomplishment rather than replacing one. She is allowed to be proud and funny about it at the same time, which itself suggests the achievement is stable enough not to need protecting from her own instinct to undercut it. Held up against a woman who once let a bar tab run without checking the total because looking away was easier than deciding what to do about it, these two negotiations are not minor plot details. They are evidence of someone who has started to treat her own material circumstances as things she is responsible for shaping rather than things that simply happen around her. It is only after establishing this that Beauvoir's account of freedom becomes useful to name what is happening rather than to explain it away, since Beauvoir (2011) argues that freedom is never exercised in ideal, pressure free conditions but always inside whatever situation a person actually occupies, and Hannah is occupying one of the most pressured situations of her life when she does this.

The same pattern of ownership sharpens further, and becomes more confrontational, in how Hannah handles the two men now attached to this pregnancy. When Ethan offers to help and folds himself into the situation with the word we, Hannah's refusal is worth reading carefully rather than treated as a simple no. "*I have a baby that's not his. I'm taking on a dog he didn't ask for. I'm not going to make these things his problem*, she thinks, before walking to her own car (Reid, 2015: 130)". Notice that she is not rejecting Ethan's help because she does not want it, the internal logic she gives herself is about what belongs to whom, a boundary drawn around responsibility rather than around affection. That distinction matters because it shows Hannah separating what she wants emotionally from what she believes she is entitled to ask of someone else, a separation she has never been able to hold onto with any consistency before. It is the opposite of the woman who once let an entirely accurate warning about her own relationship slide through her mind without leaving a mark.

The same instinct becomes unmistakable, and considerably higher stakes, in the phone call to Michael. When he tries to close the conversation on his own terms, informing her that they are finished and that she should not contact him again, Hannah refuses to let his framing become the frame. "*I'm not asking for your money or your attention or your support, OK? I'm having the baby. Step up to the plate and deal with it or don't. That's your business* (Reid, 2015: 172)".

What stands out here is the flatness of her tone. There is no plea in it, no attempt to convince him of anything, and that absence is the argument. She is not trying to change Michael's mind because changing his mind is no longer the point, she has already decided what she is doing regardless of what he chooses, and she is simply informing him of a fact rather than negotiating a position. Beauvoir (2011) describes the position of the Other as one in which a woman's existence is defined by, and made dependent on, the man she is attached to, and that description gives a name to exactly what Hannah refuses in this call. She is not waiting to find out who Michael needs her to be before she decides who she is.

There is a smaller, quieter choice sitting inside this same stretch of the story that deserves just as much attention as the confrontations above, precisely because there is no one watching it and nothing being proven by it. The night before she plans to tell Ethan about the pregnancy, Hannah makes a private decision at his dinner table.

> I decide, right this second, that I'm not going to tell him tonight. I love him. And I think I have always loved him. I want to experience how it feels to be his, to be loved by him, to believe that this is the beginning of something. Because I'm pretty sure it's the end (Reid, 2015: 179).

On first read this could look like the same avoidance Hannah has always practiced, a woman putting off something difficult because it is easier not to face it yet. But the word right this second is doing something different than avoidance usually does. Avoidance, for Hannah, has always worked by not naming the thing being avoided, by keeping it vague enough that it does not require a decision at all. Here she names the ending explicitly, she says she is pretty sure it is the end, and then chooses, with that ending fully in view, to have one more night before it arrives. That is not the same mechanism as pretending a problem does not exist. It is closer to someone standing at the edge of something and choosing exactly when to jump, rather than being pushed. Beauvoir's (2011) distinction between bad faith and genuine choice is useful here only after the scene has already made the case on its own terms, bad faith requires deceiving oneself about what one's situation actually is, while a genuine choice is made with full awareness of it, and Hannah's choice here is made with more awareness of what is coming than almost any other decision in the entire narrative.

By the time Ethan returns near the end of this path, Hannah has already spent weeks constructing an entire future for herself in which she does not need him, a life built around the baby, the job, the apartment she negotiated into being. It is worth noticing what she does not do in this moment. She does not run the numbers on what a life with him would look like compared to a life without him, and she does not open the door out of relief that she will not have to manage everything alone. She opens it (Reid, 2015: 245) from inside a life that is already hers, which changes what the door means entirely. It is no longer an escape route. It is an addition to something that already stands on its own. This is what Beauvoir (2011) means by freedom as situational rather than absolute, not the absence of every constraint, but the capacity to act with full ownership inside whatever situation a person actually inhabits. None of the individual choices in this path look dramatic when set beside each other. What makes them add up to something larger is that each one takes a specific habit Hannah has spent years practicing, refusing to check her finances, letting other people's warnings slide past her, waiting for fate to spare her the discomfort of deciding, and does the precise opposite of it, deliberately, under real pressure, with no guarantee of a good outcome. That accumulation, rather than any single scene, is what makes this path a demonstration of freedom rather than simply a sequence of things that happen to her.

4.2.2 Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action

The other path does not give Hannah an unplanned pregnancy. It gives her eleven days in a hospital bed, unable to walk to the bathroom on her own, dependent on other people for nearly every physical need, at the exact moment she is developing feelings for her night nurse, Henry. Nothing about the conditions that have shaped Hannah's life is removed here. If anything the accident concentrates them into a single room, she is more physically reliant on other people than at any other point in the story, which means this path is in some ways a harder test than the pregnancy, because Hannah has almost nothing left to negotiate with except her own thinking. What changes is not the conditions themselves but what she does with them once she is forced to sit still inside them rather than move toward the next city.

The first sign of a genuine shift appears when Ethan visits the hospital and it becomes clear that he went home with another woman the same night as the accident. Hannah's private response is worth reading for what it does not do as much as for what it does. "*I want to be realistic, for once. I want to be grounded. I want to make smart decisions* (Reid, 2015: 70)". She does not construct a story that makes Ethan's behavior forgivable, and she does not reach for fate to explain why this keeps happening to her. The phrase for once is the hinge of the whole sentence. It is Hannah admitting, to herself alone, that realism has not been her default setting, which is a strange kind of honesty, an honesty about her own dishonesty. And she is doing this while the situation is still open, while there is still a version of events in which she could choose to overlook what she knows and let the old pattern continue. With Michael, clarity had only ever shown up once the relationship was already over and asking nothing further of her. Here it shows up while a choice is still sitting in front of her, and she uses it instead of waiting for time to make the decision unnecessary.

A quieter version of the same instinct appears with her own father, who admits that he and her mother made a mistake in leaving her behind years earlier. The habitual move for Hannah in an emotionally serious conversation has always been the joke, the deflection, the thing that keeps a moment from getting too heavy to carry. She does not reach for it here. "*I feel like I'm on my own so much, and I just, I miss you a lot* (Reid, 2015: 75)". The plainness of that sentence, its lack of any protective irony, is itself the point. She is stating a need rather than managing the comfort of the person in front of her, which is not something the earlier Hannah, the one who let advice about her own relationship slide past her untouched, would have been able to do.

This same instinct to claim something for herself extends, almost surprisingly, into her physical circumstances, the one area of her life where she has the least control of anyone in the entire novel. When Henry puts her hair up in a bun at her own request, Hannah reflects, "*I feel like myself for the first time today. Which... feels great* (Reid, 2015: 63)". It would be easy to read past this as a throwaway detail, but its smallness is exactly what makes it significant. In a hospital where every medical decision about her body is being made by someone else, where she cannot even walk herself to the bathroom, asking for something as specific as her own hairstyle, and then recognizing herself in the result, is one of the only moments in this entire path where Hannah's appearance reflects her

own request rather than someone else's judgment or necessity. It is a small act, but small acts are the only kind available to her right now, and she takes it anyway. The fact that this recognition of self comes through something as ordinary as hair, rather than through a dramatic realization, fits a woman whose sense of identity has for years depended on being seen and defined by whoever she happened to be with. Here, for a moment, she is the one doing the seeing.

When Hannah notices her feelings for Henry beginning to form, the comparison she reaches for is worth pausing on because of how unromantic it is. She does not tell herself this feels like fate or like something meant to happen. She tells herself, flatly, that this is Michael all over again (Reid, 2015: 68). That is not the language of someone falling into a story, it is the language of someone checking her own behavior against a pattern she already knows is dangerous. Naming a feeling accurately, even an inconvenient one, is different from simply having the feeling, because naming it creates distance, a place to stand outside the pattern and look at it rather than be carried along inside it. What she does with that distance is not to retreat from Henry but to act, directly and on her own terms, deciding to tell him how she feels before she is discharged, even after Gabby suggests she slow down and think it over first. "*You can only muster up this type of courage a few times in your life. I'm just stupid enough to have it now. So help me into the damn wheelchair so I can go make a fool out of myself* (Reid, 2015: 201)".

The self mockery in that line is doing real work, it lets Hannah act without having to first convince herself she is certain of the outcome, which is itself a kind of courage distinct from confidence. She does not need to believe this will work in order to try it. This is transcendence in the specific sense Beauvoir (2011) gives the term, the capacity to project oneself toward a future through one's own activity rather than remaining enclosed inside repetition, and the story makes the idea almost literal by having Hannah wheel herself through the entire hospital searching for Henry, floor by floor, and not finding him, without ever treating the failure to find him as the real point of the scene.

The most complete reversal in this path arrives when Mark's infidelity comes to light and Gabby's composure finally breaks. For the whole of the novel it has been Gabby who has direction, the stable career, the clear eyed read on Hannah's situation that Hannah could never quite manage to apply to her own life. What is notable about the moment this arrangement reverses is how little

ceremony it has. Hannah does not announce that she is stepping into a new role, she simply does it. She tells Mark firmly not to touch Gabby (Reid, 2015: 158), holds her while she breaks down, and says, "*Count on me. Let's get through this together. Lean on me. Squeeze my hand* (Reid, 2015: 163)". The absence of any self-congratulation in how the scene is narrated matters, because it suggests this capacity has been building quietly the whole time rather than arriving all at once. It is in the confrontation with Mark that follows, though, that Hannah reaches the single most important realization in the entire novel, and it is worth taking the line apart piece by piece rather than moving past it quickly. Watching Mark try to excuse his own choices by appealing to feelings, accident, and fate, the exact language Hannah has leaned on for years to excuse her own drifting, she rejects the entire framework out loud, to his face, without hedging.

> It doesn't matter if we don't mean to do the things we do. It doesn't matter if it was an accident or a mistake. It doesn't even matter if we think this is all up to fate. Because regardless of our destiny, we still have to answer for our actions. We make choices, big and small, every day of our lives, and those choices have consequences. Fate or not, our lives are still the results of our choices. I'm starting to think that when we don't own them, we don't own ourselves (Reid, 2015: 221).

What makes this passage carry as much weight as it does is not simply what it says but the structure of how Hannah gets there, working through every excuse in order, intention, accident, fate, and dismantling each one before arriving at the conclusion. She is not simply stating an opinion, she is closing off every escape route she herself has used at some point in the novel, one at a time, as though she needs to rule each of them out explicitly before she can trust the conclusion she is left with. The final sentence is the sharpest one, and also the strangest, because owning a choice and owning oneself are treated as the same act rather than two separate things. That equation is not something Hannah could have written a few months earlier, because for most of the novel she has behaved as though a self exists independently of the choices attached to it, as though she could keep drifting and still, somewhere underneath, be someone.

What this line suggests instead is that there is no self-sitting underneath the choices waiting to be discovered. The self is made out of the choices, which is exactly why refusing to own them amounts to refusing to exist as anyone in

particular. This is the conclusion Hannah's entire arc has been assembling piece by piece, and it lands with force here specifically because she is not saying it in a moment of private reflection, she is saying it to someone actively trying to talk his way out of responsibility, using the very same excuses she once used on herself. Seeing the excuse from outside, aimed at someone else, is what finally makes its emptiness impossible to miss.

The morning she is discharged, Hannah stands in front of a mirror and states, without flinching, "*I am not ready to be a mother. I am nowhere near it,* reflecting on the pregnancy she lost in the accident (Reid, 2015: 200)". What is notable is the register of the sentence. It is not delivered as grief, and it is not delivered as relief either, it is delivered as an assessment, something closer to a fact she is reporting on herself than a feeling she is confessing. That flatness is itself meaningful, because it suggests Hannah has reached a point where she can look directly at something painful and describe it accurately without needing to perform a particular emotional response to it for anyone, including herself. The same capacity for self-directed movement toward the future shows up in the path she eventually builds, training to become a nurse rather than remaining in the receptionist role that was handed to her without her ever having gone looking for it. The difference between those two jobs is not really about the work itself, it is about the direction the decision travels in, one arrived at her from outside, the other she went out and got for herself, which is exactly the kind of forward projecting activity Beauvoir (2011) sets against a life that simply repeats what is already familiar.

The path closes with Hannah telling Gabby that she intends to keep living without over-worrying, trusting that the people and the purposes meant for her will find her in time (Reid, 2015: 238). It would be easy to hear an echo of the old fatalism in this line, and in a sense there is one, the vocabulary of things finding their way has not disappeared. But vocabulary is not the same as position, and the position from which Hannah is speaking here is nearly the opposite of where she started. At the beginning of the story she used the idea of fate to avoid a decision sitting directly in front of her, one she knew mattered and did not want to face.

Here she reaches for a similar idea only after having already made every decision that mattered, which means the sentence is no longer doing the work an excuse does. It is doing the work of description, a woman explaining how she plans to hold her life now that she is no longer using that same idea to avoid living

it. The final line of this path, "*I found my home... And it's not New York or Seattle or London or even Los Angeles. It's Gabby* (Reid, 2015: 229)", is the clearest statement of transcendence the novel offers, and it is worth noticing what kind of sentence it is. It is not a discovery, as though home had been sitting somewhere waiting to be found. It is closer to a conclusion, arrived at only after everything else in this path has already happened, which means the home Hannah names here is not something she stumbled onto. It is something her choices built, whether she was fully aware of building it or not.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher concludes the findings of the study, which examines female agency as experienced by Hannah Martin in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life* through the lens of Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism. The preceding analysis addressed two research questions: what social conditions and experiences shape Hannah Martin's position as a woman in the novel, and how her choices across the two life paths that structure the narrative reflect her agency as a woman.

The first part of the analysis established the foundation from which any discussion of Hannah's agency must begin. Before the novel's pivotal moment divides her life into two separate paths, Hannah already exists within a set of conditions that have been accumulating for years. The analysis showed that her sense of identity has been organized around her relationships with men rather than around anything she has built or chosen for herself. This was most evident in her relationship with Michael, where Hannah remained inside a situation she privately recognized as wrong by substituting the language of fate for the language of responsibility. Her economic situation reinforced this position, since Hannah arrives in Los Angeles without stable employment, without savings she is willing to examine, and without any sense of professional direction that she has pursued on her own initiative. Even the small degree of economic access available to her, as a waitress, was conditional on how she presented herself to a male employer. Running alongside both of these conditions was a habit of passivity that Hannah herself articulates clearly by the night of the party, where she states that her fate will find her, transforming what had been an unexamined assumption into a consciously held belief. Together, these three conditions position Hannah at the beginning of the novel firmly within what Beauvoir (2011) describes as immanence and the role of the Other: a woman whose existence is organized around conditions and relationships outside herself rather than through her own active engagement with the world.

The second part of the analysis examined how Hannah's choices across both life paths represent a departure from these conditions. In the accident path,

the removal of Hannah's physical mobility proved to be an unexpected catalyst for self-recognition. Unable to leave, defer, or distract herself, Hannah confronted what had shaped her before she arrived at this moment. She recognized her feelings for Henry without reaching for fate to explain them, identified the pattern of what was happening before it could take hold, and chose to act on her recognition in a moment where she could still choose otherwise. She asked her parents to leave because she needed space, not because she wanted to be polite. She pursued Henry from a wheelchair through hospital corridors because she decided the feeling was worth the risk of being wrong. These choices do not arrive as transformations of character. They arrive as decisions made inside a specific situation, which is precisely what Beauvoir (2011) means by situated freedom. By the time Hannah leaves the hospital and states plainly what she knows about herself in relation to the pregnancy she lost, she is speaking from self-knowledge rather than from social expectation or the comfort of a prefabricated story.

In the pregnancy path, the catalyst was different but the direction of movement was the same. Rather than physical immobility, Hannah was confronted with an unplanned pregnancy that required her to act rather than wait. The list she made of what she needed, a car, a job, an apartment, marked the first time in the novel that Hannah projected herself concretely into the future through her own initiative rather than through the arrival of someone else's plan or offer. When Ethan left after learning of the pregnancy, Hannah did not collapse back into the posture of waiting she had carried for years. She continued building the life she had begun. She refused her parents' offer to move to London, not out of stubbornness but out of a clear sense of where she belonged and who she wanted to be near. When Ethan returned, she did not open the door immediately. She held the decision in her own hands long enough to ensure that what she chose would be genuinely chosen rather than received.

The analysis also found that neither path concludes with Hannah in a condition of complete or uncomplicated freedom. In both paths, a romantic relationship is present at the close of the story. This could be read as a return to the pattern established at the beginning, where Hannah's sense of position depended on her relationship to a man. What distinguishes the endings of both paths from Hannah's starting condition, however, is the sequence in which the relationship arrives. At the beginning of the novel, Hannah's sense of self depended on the relationship being present. By the end of both paths, the

relationship arrives after Hannah has already moved, decided, and oriented herself toward a future she has chosen. The relationship is not the reason she has direction. It is something she can receive without losing the direction she has already established.

Taken together, the findings of this study demonstrate that female agency in *Maybe in Another Life* is not represented as a fixed state that Hannah either possesses or lacks, but as a situated and ongoing process of becoming. This is consistent with Beauvoir's (2011) understanding of transcendence as something that must be continuously practiced in and through the conditions of one's actual life, not simply claimed in the abstract. The study also shows that the novel's structural device of two parallel life paths is not merely a narrative experiment. It performs a philosophical argument, demonstrating that the conditions shaping a woman's situation are not the same as her destiny, and that the same woman, with the same history, can move differently depending on what she chooses to do when she finds herself inside a situation that demands a response.

This study contributes to the existing body of feminist literary scholarship by demonstrating the continued relevance of Beauvoir's feminist existentialism as an analytical framework for reading contemporary fiction. By applying her concepts to a novel that explicitly structures its narrative around choice and its consequences, the study affirms that de Beauvoir's account of situated freedom, immanence and transcendence, and the social construction of feminine identity remains a precise and generative tool for examining how female characters are positioned within, and can move against, the conditions that shape their lives.

REFERENCES

Bagherian Rafsanjani Pour, F., & Fatehi Rad, N. (2024). The concepts of female agency and subjectivity in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: A feminist study. *Middle East Research Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 4(1), 9–14. https://doi.org/10.36348/merjll.2024.v04i01.002

Beauvoir, S. de. (2011). *The second sex* (C. Borde & S. Malovany-Chevallier, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1949)

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Dharshini, M. P., & Moorthi, S. (2023). *Reimagining the feminine voice: Analyzing women's agency in literature with special reference to Arundhati Roy and Virginia Woolf. ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts, 4*(2), 1868–1872. https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v4.i2.2023.3059

Garcia, M. (2023). Thinking with Simone de Beauvoir today. *Analyse & Kritik*, *45*(2), 195–214. https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2023-2018

Kjellgren, A. (2023). The myth of Woman: Simone de Beauvoir and the anthropological discourse on myth. *History of European Ideas*, 49(8), 1286–1301. https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2023.2198542

Knowles, C. (2022). Beyond adaptive preferences: Rethinking women's complicity in their own subordination. *European Journal of Philosophy*, *30*(4), 1317–1334. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12742

Langley, H. (2024). Freedom and agency in *The Second Sex*. *European Journal of Philosophy*, *32*(1), 100–113. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12841

Martinus, B. K. A. M., & Marsih, L. (2022). *Existentialist feminism reflected in Acevedo's "With the Fire on High". ELite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language and Literature, 2*(4), 235–243. https://doi.org/10.26740/elitejournal.v2n4.p235-243

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mohajan, H. K. (2022a). Four waves of feminism: A blessing for global humanity. *Studies in Social Science & Humanities*, 1(2), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.56397/SSSH.2022.09.01

Mohajan, H. K. (2022b). An overview on the feminism and its categories. *Research and Advances in Education*, 1(3), 11–26. https://doi.org/10.56397/RAE.2022.09.02

Oksala, J. (2022). The method of critical phenomenology: Simone de Beauvoir as a phenomenologist. *European Journal of Philosophy*, *31*(1), 137–150. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12779

Pickard, S. (2023). Beauvoir or Butler? Comparing 'becoming a woman' with 'performing gender' through the life course. *Analyse & Kritik*, *45*(2), 215–241. https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2023-2010

Reid, T. J. (2015). *Maybe in another life*. New York: Atria Books.

Rognlie, D. (2023). Repeating her autonomy: Beauvoir, Kierkegaard, and women's liberation. *Hypatia*, *38*(3), 453–474. https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2023.36

Sen, T., & Das, K. (2021). Salient features of feminist literary criticism. *Shanlax International Journal of English*, 10(1), 20–24. https://doi.org/10.34293/english.v10i1.4199

Stendera, M. (2022). Time's entanglements: Beauvoir and Fanon on reductive temporalities. *Continental Philosophy Review*, *56*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-022-09588-7

Stuhler, O. (2024). The gender agency gap in fiction writing (1850 to 2010). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(29), e2319514121. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2319514121

Sultana, A. (2011). Patriarchy and women's subordination: A theoretical analysis. *Arts Faculty Journal*, 4, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.3329/afj.v4i0.12929

Tyson, L. (2015). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.

APPENDIX I

SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL

Maybe in Another Life (2015) is a contemporary fiction novel by Taylor Jenkins Reid that follows Hannah Martin, a twenty-nine-year-old woman who has spent much of her adult life drifting from city to city without finding a clear sense of purpose, direction, or belonging. At the opening of the novel, Hannah returns to Los Angeles, her hometown, after a series of failed relocations and a painful entanglement with a married man named Michael. She moves temporarily into the guest room of her best friend, Gabrielle "Gabby" Hudson, and is soon reunited with Ethan Hanover, her first love from high school.

On her first night back in the city, the group gathers at a bar. As the night ends, Hannah faces a simple but consequential choice: go home with Gabby and Mark, or stay behind with Ethan. At this moment, the novel splits into two parallel timelines that run simultaneously, each exploring the life Hannah lives depending on the path she takes.

In the Gabby Timeline, Hannah leaves with Gabby and Mark. While stepping into the street outside the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to photograph a light installation, she is struck by a car. The accident leaves her hospitalized for weeks with severe injuries to her leg and pelvis. During her long recovery, Hannah is cared for by Henry, a kind and steady night nurse, and she begins to build a genuine friendship with him. Confined to a hospital bed, she reflects seriously on her life for the first time, writes out practical goals for herself, and begins to make concrete decisions about the kind of person she wants to become. She finds a job at the medical practice of Gabby's father, Carl, negotiates her salary, purchases a car, and adopts a stray dog she names Charlemagne. She also discovers she is pregnant with Michael's child and, after calling him and refusing to be swayed by his pressure, decides to raise the baby independently. Over time, her relationship with Henry deepens into love, and he proposes. The timeline ends several years later with Hannah married to Henry, expecting their daughter, working toward a nursing degree, and fully grounded in a life she has built through her own effort.

In the Ethan Timeline, Hannah stays at the bar and spends the night walking through Los Angeles with Ethan, eating street food and rediscovering their old connection. They begin to explore the possibility of a relationship, and Hannah finds herself feeling more like herself than she has in years. However, complications arise when she realizes she is pregnant with Michael's child. She tells Ethan the truth, and he initially withdraws, telling her he cannot handle the situation. Hannah, though hurt, refuses to make his uncertainty the center of her life, and she begins building her own independence: a job, a car, an apartment, and a plan for the future. Eventually, Ethan returns, having reconsidered, and declares his willingness to be part of her life and her child's. The timeline ends with Hannah and Ethan married, raising their daughter together, and Hannah studying toward a nursing degree.

At the heart of both timelines is Hannah's gradual movement from passivity, fate-thinking, and emotional avoidance toward genuine self-direction, accountability, and purpose. The novel ultimately suggests that although different choices lead to different lives, what matters most is the quality of engagement a person brings to the life she is living. Both endings are presented as whole, meaningful, and earned through Hannah's own developing agency.

APPENDIX II

BIOGRAPHY OF TAYLOR JENKINS REID

Taylor Jenkins Reid is an American author born on December 20, 1983, in Acton, Massachusetts. She grew up in New England and later attended Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts, where she studied media arts and studied the craft of storytelling in a professional context. After graduating, Reid pursued a career in writing and eventually established herself as one of the most prominent voices in contemporary American popular fiction, particularly known for her emotionally rich character studies and her inventive structural choices.

Reid published her debut novel, *Forever*, I*nterrupted*, in 2013, a story about grief, love, and identity that drew immediate attention for its emotional depth and accessible prose style. Her second novel, *After I Do* (2014), continued to explore questions of long-term relationships and personal reinvention, and it helped solidify her reputation as a writer with a genuine interest in the interior lives of women navigating complex emotional circumstances.

Her third novel, *Maybe in Another Life* (2015), marked a turning point in her career in terms of structural ambition. By splitting the narrative into two parallel timelines that develop simultaneously from a single pivotal choice, Reid invited readers to consider how much the seemingly small decisions of everyday life shape who a person becomes. The novel received widespread positive attention and introduced Reid to a significantly broader readership.

Reid continued to develop her signature blend of accessible storytelling and structural experimentation in subsequent works. *One True Loves* (2016) explored the question of what happens when a woman is forced to choose between two men she genuinely loves under extraordinary circumstances. *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* (2017) became one of the most celebrated novels of the decade, following the fictional life of an old Hollywood screen legend and exploring themes of ambition, identity, sexuality, and the cost of fame. The book spent years on bestseller lists and attracted an enormous global readership.

Daisy Jones and The Six (2019), written in a documentary oral history format, traced the rise and fall of a fictional 1970s rock band with an almost cinematic vividness and was adapted into a television series for Amazon Prime

Video in 2023. *Malibu Rising* (2021) and *Carrie Soto Is Back* (2022) further demonstrated Reid's range, moving between family saga and sports drama while maintaining her central interest in women's ambition, identity, and self-determination.

4 Reid lives in Los Angeles, California, with her husband and daughter. Her work has been translated into numerous languages and has reached millions of readers worldwide. Across her body of work, she returns consistently to the question of how women make meaning from the choices available to them, a preoccupation that makes her fiction a rich and relevant object of feminist literary study.

APPENDIX III

TABLE OF DATA

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
1	"When Michael was out of my life, I realized I didn't have much else going for me in New York."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	10
2	"I let all of her advice fly right through my head and out into the wind. As if it was meant for someone else and wasn't mine to hold on to."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	9
3	"Michael and I met at a bar in Bushwick on a Wednesday night. I never go to Bushwick. And I rarely go out on a Wednesday night. And neither does he! What are the odds of that?"	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	9
4	"I think maybe I need someone in my corner in order to thrive. I think I am one of those people who need people."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	120
5	"Maybe he's married and that's OK because it's how things were meant to be."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	10

6	"I want to tell him how scared I am, how much I feel I need him."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	187
7	"He makes me feel better about myself, which makes me feel absolutely terrible."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	11
8	"He'd done this before. She'd found two others."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	10
9	"I didn't know he was married at first. And for some reason, I thought that meant it was OK. He never admitted he was married."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Dependence on Romantic Relationships as a Source of Identity	8
10	"I have no apartment and no job. I have no steady relationship or even a city to call home. I have no idea what I want to be doing with my life, no idea what my purpose is, and no real sign of a life goal."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	13
11	"I don't know how much money I have in my account, because I'm afraid to look."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	19

12	"Gabby's the VP of Development at a nonprofit that works with at-risk teenagers. I'm a waitress. And not a particularly good one."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	8
13	"Oh, come on. You're talking to a woman with no career, no home, barely any money, and no potential."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	37
14	"[My boss] hit on me and implied that better shifts went to women who showed cleavage."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	11
15	"I put three thousand down and drive off the lot with a car. There goes most of my money. But it's OK. Because I have a plan."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	117
16	"I hand over my credit card. I don't know how much money I have in my account, because I'm afraid to look. But I know I have enough for now."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	19
17	"I don't know. I sort of really think that."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Lack of Economic Independence and Career Direction	37
18	"At the end of the flight, during the five tricky minutes when we land,	Social Conditions	Lack of Economic Independence	4

	maybe we can talk about my lack of career choices."	and Experiences	and Career Direction	
19	"I'm still not sure what that way is. But back then, I just assumed it would all fall into place, that the big things in life would take care of themselves."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	6
20	"I don't move from place to place on purpose. It's not a conscious choice to be a nomad. Although I can see that each move is my own decision, predicated on nothing but my ever-growing sense that I don't belong where I am."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	3
21	"My life may be a little bit of a disaster. I may not make the best decisions sometimes. But I am not going to lie here and stare at the ceiling, worrying the night away."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	14
22	"I shrug, because it's an impulse. It's always my impulse to ignore the bad, to run toward the good."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	3
23	"Life is long and full of an infinite number of decisions. I have to think that the small ones don't matter, that I'll end up where I need to end up no	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	25

	matter what I do. My fate will find me."			
24	"Everything happens for a reason. Isn't that what they say? ... I think I have to believe that life will work out the way it needs to."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	187
25	"Well, I was running out of cities."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	18
26	"I had been playing the 'Well, But' game. The 'We Don't Know That for Sure' game."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	10
27	"I'd prefer to believe that things happen as they are meant to happen."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	187
28	"Sometimes I worry I'll never find a place to call home."	Social Conditions and Experiences	Passive Acceptance of Her Social Circumstances	3
29	"I'm eager to spend time with a good man for a change."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	33
30	"I have a baby that's not his. I'm taking on a dog he didn't ask for. I'm not going to make these things his problem."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	130

31	"I woke up this morning, resolved to work this out."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	170
32	"I'm not asking for your money or your attention or your support, OK? I'm having the baby. Step up to the plate and deal with it or don't. That's your business."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	172
33	"I decide, right this second, that I'm not going to tell him tonight. I love him... And I'm going to lose him. And just for tonight, I want to experience how it feels to be his."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	179
34	"I just started working at Carl's office, and it has been both hugely stabilizing and really eye-opening."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	240
35	"I'm doing this. I'm making a life for myself. I am doing this."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	118
36	"I'm choosing to take care of her. The parallels do not escape me."	Hannah's Choices and Agency	Hannah Martin's Exercise of	129

		Across Two Life Paths	Freedom in Her Own Choices	
37	"I'm staying. You're going. Don't use me as an excuse to avoid your own problems."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	177
38	"Everything happens for a reason... maybe it's because I'm supposed to have this baby. That's how I'm choosing to look at it."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	187
39	"And I am finally finding my confidence... I no longer feel a rush to leave this city and head for greener pastures, because there are no greener pastures and there is no better city. I am grounded here."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Exercise of Freedom in Her Own Choices	239
40	"I want to be realistic, for once. I want to be grounded. I want to make smart decisions."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	70
41	"What is happening here is Michael all over again."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-	68

			Directed Action	
42	"You can only muster up this type of courage a few times in your life. I'm just stupid enough to have it now. So help me into the damn wheelchair so I can go make a fool out of myself."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	201
43	"Count on me. Let's get through this together. Lean on me. Squeeze my hand."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	163
44	"I am not ready to be a mother. I am nowhere near it."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	200
45	"I'm not going to go around worrying too much. I'm just going to do my best and live under the assumption that if there are things in this life that we are supposed to do... we'll find them. In time."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	238
46	"I chose to go home with Gabby and Mark because that's the choice I made. Nine billion choices I've	Hannah's Choices and Agency	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence	133

	made over the course of my life could have changed where I am right now."	Across Two Life Paths	Through Self-Directed Action	
47	"I can walk now. Without a walker. On my own."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	246
48	"I told my parents that I wasn't moving to London... I told her I was staying. I said I wasn't going anywhere. I said I was here to stay. I didn't even think twice about it."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	247
49	"I don't know if I can bear to say it out loud, to tell my father that I need him to leave."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	105
50	"I'm not sure that pushing yourself around in a wheelchair is that difficult. I think I might just be that uncoordinated."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	209
51	"I'm starting to think that when we don't own them, we don't own ourselves."	Hannah's Choices and Agency	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence	221

		Across Two Life Paths	Through Self-Directed Action	
52	"I found my home... And it's not New York or Seattle or London or even Los Angeles. It's Gabby."	Hannah's Choices and Agency Across Two Life Paths	Hannah Martin's Attainment of Transcendence Through Self-Directed Action	229