



## A FRINGE LOOK AT THE FEMALE PORTRAYALS IN THE CINEMA INDUSTRY: THE REPRESENTATION OF THE IMAGINED FEMINIST WOMAN FIGURE BY “THE FALL” SERIES<sup>i,ii</sup>

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### Abstract:

This study explores how an idealized image of a feminist woman, presented as a symbol of feminism through her speech and lifestyle, is depicted and reflected on screen. “The Fall” series portrays a female model who was expected to conform to all guidelines of feminism through a masculine perspective. In “The Fall,” a series about a high-ranking female detective trying to solve a serial killer case, the narrative explores how the series depicts the feminist character demonstrated in her conduct, speech, and interpersonal relationships. This character's portrayal of feminism, especially her strong feminist attributes, illustrates how men view feminist women and highlights how feminism is idealized in her persona. This study claims and validates Stella's feminism not only through historical qualitative analysis, tracing the key issues that feminism focused on during the struggle for rights, but also by exploring the key characteristics revealed through discourse analysis, reflecting feminist texts in Stella's speech and character. Despite the feminist idealistic depiction of Stella character, she was also the target of violence due to her

<sup>i</sup> SİNEMA SEKTÖRÜNDE KADIN TASVİRLERİNE AYRI BİR BAKIŞ: “THE FALL” DİZİSİNDE HAYAL EDİLEN FEMİNİST KADIN FİGÜRÜNÜN TEMSİLİ

<sup>ii</sup> Bu çalışma, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Radyo Televizyon Sinema programında Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu'nun danışmanlığında yürütülmekte olan Doktora Adayı Latifah Aydın'ın tezi ile ilgili bir makale çalışmasıdır. / This article is a component of Ph.D. Candidate Latifah's thesis, which is being carried out in the Radio, Television, and Cinema program at Istanbul University's Institute of Social Sciences under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu

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occupation and her defiance of masculinity. Even if her sexuality sparked a scandal and she was condemned to loneliness due to her lack of private life, marriage, or motherhood, her nightmares revealed her psychological disorders.

**Keywords:** feminism, woman, "The Fall" series, qualitative, semiotics, discourse

### Özet:

Bu çalışma, konuşması ve yaşam biçimiyle bir feminizm sembolü olarak sunulan idealize edilmiş bir feminist kadın imgesinin nasıl betimlendiğini ve ekrandan nasıl yansıtıldığını ele almaktadır. Seri katil vakasını çözmeye çalışan yüksek rütbeli bir kadın dedektifi konu alan "The Fall" dizisi ekseninde, anlatının, karakterin davranışlarında, konuşmasında ve kişilerarası ilişkilerinde sergilediği feminist kişiliği nasıl serimlediği incelenmektedir. Stella karakterinin feminizmi tasviri, özellikle de güçlü feminist nitelikleri, erkeklerin feminist kadınlara nasıl baktığını gösteriyor ve feminizmin onun kişiliğinde nasıl idealleştirildiğini vurguluyor. Feminizmin haklar mücadelesi sırasında odaklandığı en önemli konuları izleyen tarihsel nitel analizler ile Stella'nın konuşmalarında ve karakterinde ortaya konulan özellikler, onun feminist kadın karakter özelliklerini serimler ve doğrular niteliktedir. Stella karakterinin feminist ve idealist bir şekilde betimlenmesine karşın, mesleği gereği ve erkek egemenliğine meydan okuması nedeniyle o da şiddetin hedefi olmuştur. Sonuçta, cinselliği bir skandala yol açmış ve özel hayatı, evliliği veya anneliği olmadığı için yalnızlığa mahkum edilmiş olsa da, kâbusları psikolojik rahatsızlıklarını ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** feminizm, kadın, "The Fall" dizisi, nitel araştırma, göstergebilim, söylem

## 1. Introduction

This study focuses on how, in the context of societal development, women, the values they represent, and their visibility in society have evolved. It also seeks to demonstrate how much these feminist discourses have impacted the evolving portrayal of women in performing arts and narratives.

The beginnings, evolution, and history of feminism will not be the main topics of this study; instead, it will focus on a few significant feminist eras. For instance, it will restate that feminism first appeared in its Early Period (Late 18th Century) as Mary Wollstonecraft established the groundwork for contemporary feminism with her groundbreaking ideas in her 1792 essay "A Vindication of the Rights of Women". Although the phrase was first used in the 19th century, especially by the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier (around 1837), it is generally acknowledged that the First Organized Movement (1848) took place at the Seneca Falls Convention in America, where women held their first formal gatherings to demand legal equality and the right to vote. As a result, feminism changed throughout time from being a movement opposing social injustices to a complex movement that also faces challenges in the cultural and economic domains. Feminism can now be depicted in a variety of ways inside the narrative world due to the abundance of visual resources.

In their fight for equality and rights, feminist groups raised a number of problems that are significant to feminism's history, but they also led to conflict and divergent viewpoints throughout the years. Black women, women of color, lesbians, radicalism, liberalism, socialism, Marxism, ecofeminism, and other feminist movements all have branches. Feminism descended into discord and a diversity of viewpoints due to disagreements over the main concerns, including sexuality, the body, abortion, the private and public spheres, and other topics. However, radical feminism was one of the most popular because of its sexual beliefs, which saw lesbianism as a way to end male dominance and superiority, as well as its views that questioned patriarchal society and called for the rejection of motherhood, the institution of marriage, and the family.

Radical feminism garnered significant media attention when it established the "Society for Cutting Up Men," despite the diversity of feminist movements and their divergent viewpoints. SCUM In 1967, a group of young women led by Shulamite Firestone broke away from NOW (Rodker, 2019: 73). The extreme viewpoints of the various feminist groups that emanate from them are what characterize feminism as a whole because of the diversity of viewpoints, the number of groups, and the role played by patriarchy and institutions like the media.

The extreme feminist viewpoints that arose from the various feminist organizations challenged society in a way that became the most pervasive and unfairly associated with the term feminism, making it dominant in people's minds and keeping other feminist opinions and accomplishments in the background. But while defining the movement, many concentrated on extreme feminist viewpoints. The ideas of the movement became closely associated with the term "feminism," creating an imaginary framework that encompasses any woman claiming to be a feminist while ignoring the fundamental role that feminism played in transforming the lives of millions of women and providing them with rights to property, education, and custody, among other things.

However, as Sarah Gamble notes in her post-feminism article, Naomi Wolf claimed that corrupt feminism does not exist in the sense that it is not an ideology that a particular person or group seeks to spread, but rather a misconception created by the media (Gamble, 2000: 85). The media, as we know it today, played a significant role in the association of corrupted and extreme concepts associated with feminism, just like the real news and fake news getting mixed up in the media.

To some, there was no difference in the assessments of men and women because "*Several studies have concluded that feminists are often evaluated negatively*" (Twenge & Zucker, 1999: 592), which reflects how people are associated with the word feminist and how it is reflected in their minds. An evaluation included several studies about stereotypes about feminists as being aggressive, ugly and man-hating, lesbians, opinionated, authoritarian, aggressive, and politically liberal.

### **1.1 Feminism and Feminist Groups**

The term "feminism" is becoming hard to define nowadays. Due to the various feminist waves that have arisen over time, as well as the meanings ascribed to the female body and the image

of women in society, have varied so much that even the definitions of feminism and its historical context have become distinct areas of study.

So, as Mohajan indicates, there is no precise definition of feminism (Mohajan, 2022: 11). Feminism has been portrayed in a variety of sometimes contradictory ways, each with a unique social relevance (Aleramo, 1980/2009: 62; Delmar, 1976). All of them, nevertheless, aimed for gender equality. Mohajan defines feminism as "*a women's basis socio-political movement and ideology and supports the idea that women should share equally in society's opportunities and scarce resources*" (Mohajan, 2022: 11).

Furthermore, Maggie Humm notes that "*the definition incorporates both a doctrine of equal rights for women (the organized movement to attain women's rights) and an ideology of social transformation aiming to create a world for women beyond simple social equality*" (Humm, 2003) in her book "*The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*," despite emphasizing that there are no precise definitions for feminism and a feminist person. A feminist, on the other hand, is defined as "*a woman who recognizes herself and is recognized by others, as a feminist.*" However, today, we also know that men today can be feminists or embrace a way of thinking that supports feminists.

A woman must have experienced consciousness-raising, be aware of women's oppression, and acknowledge women's distinctions and communalities in order to have that awareness (Humm, 2006). In her translation of "*looking again at Engels origins (1979), A woman (una Danna) by Sibilla Aleramo*," Roslinda Delmar (Delmar, 1976) stated that many women might agree that a feminist is a woman who feels that women experience discrimination due to their gender and that they have needs that are denied and unmet, and that addressing these needs may necessitate a radical change, even a revolution, in the social, economic, and political system (Aleramo, 1980/2009: 62; Delmar, R. (1976). She is aware, nevertheless, that using this term makes things more difficult because feminist movements have chosen several classifications based on racial, cultural, and class.

The goal of attaining gender equality unites the many feminist organizations that have emerged throughout history. Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism were among the types of feminism that Alison Jagger (1983) presented. In contrast, liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism, ecofeminism, cultural feminism, black feminism, and postmodern feminism are the seven categories that Haradhan Kumar Mohajan listed in his paper "*An Overview on Feminism and Its Categories*" (Mohajan, 2022).

The most significant viewpoints that have evolved from feminist organizations will be used to analyze feminism in this study. Each of these organizations sought to highlight women's oppression, pinpoint its causes and effects, and offer solutions for attaining women's liberation and putting an end to their reliance, despite the fact that the majority of them encountered criticism and held divergent viewpoints. Numerous women and men have been impacted by their acts during the years of conflict, and their effects are still felt today.

## **1.2 The Data: The Woman Figure (Stella) in a Thriller**

One of the most popular television series, "*The Fall*", has an 8.1/10 rating on IMDb and falls into the Crime, Drama, and Thriller categories, and it is rated 18+

([https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2294189/?ref=ttpl\\_rvi\\_i\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2294189/?ref=ttpl_rvi_i_1)). In the same way that a series of Enola Holmes stories followed the Sherlock Holmes series, "The Fall" seeks to highlight the prospect that at least some of Britain's well-known chief investigators could be female. A series' success is typically determined by its viewership or the difference between its budget and box office receipts. Since this series is a BBC production and is normally funded by television production funds, there is no publicly accessible official budget data. As a result, box office data is unavailable. Nonetheless, the television series was well praised both domestically and abroad and had extremely high audience ratings during its broadcast. Following its BBC broadcast, the series has also become available on platforms such as Netflix. In conclusion, "The Fall" is a top-notch television show that has demonstrated its efficacy through viewership ratings and critical praise; as such, it merits additional analysis of its plot, characters, and representative traits.

According to a study by Alyssa N. Zucker and Jean M. Twenge, people think feminists are primarily heterosexual, politically liberal, and forceful in their employment. Feminists are viewed less positively than the typical woman, despite receiving neutral to somewhat positive evaluations. Many people decide not to identify as feminists because of false beliefs about unfavorable sentiments toward them (Twenge & Zucker, 1999). Therefore, we may observe some facets of Stella's way of life, behavior, and language that exemplify feminist ideals when we examine her as a symbol of modern women and the current feminist movement that has endured for more than a century.

However, the viewer's point of view must be taken into consideration while analyzing the fact that a female heroine is a narrative protagonist. For instance, audiences seldom anticipate seeing a female detective in a show like "The Fall", which is about a serial murderer and involves violence, terror, and delicate visuals.

In "The Fall", a British Chief Inspector is assigned to investigate a politically sensitive murder in Belfast. To put it briefly, there are two hunters with different motivations and psychologies: a serial killer and a chief inspector who is attempting to apprehend him, and the murdered, the hunted women, on one side. The fact that one of the hunters is a male and the other is a female creates the main conflict, which leads to a psychological thriller that explores their lives. Against the general stories of the man running after a woman, in this serial, the man is chased by a woman. One is a professional chief inspector of the Metropolitan Police Department, while the other is a serial killer who attacks people in and around Belfast.

## 2. Aim and Methodology

This study is significant because it shows how the term "feminist" is associated with radical activities in people's minds while portraying a feminist woman image through a male's imagination. Furthermore, it demonstrates how, in spite of the passage of time, women in patriarchal societies are still penalized if they choose to adopt certain feminist beliefs, particularly those that are viewed as extreme by society.

In addition to distorting this ideal persona with the potential repercussions of challenging the dominant male and patriarchal civilizations, the series conveys themes of warning and

intimidation. Nevertheless, males are nevertheless impressed by this type of female figure because of her bravery, which makes them want to subdue, punish, or defeat her.

The main character in the BBC series “The Fall”, which has been replayed on Netflix, is the subject of this study. Stella's persona is examined, along with facets of feminism, including female sexuality, female body image, female relationships, and women's private and public realms, using notes made throughout the viewing of seventeen episodes across three seasons. The research takes into account the progression and diversity of feminist ideas on these characteristics while placing them within their historical context. Stella's feminist discourse and the settings in which her feminist literature is used are assessed, despite the fact that she is regarded as a character in a television show. The series' material is analyzed from a semiotic and semantic standpoint within the context of these dimensions.

### 3. Findings and Discussions

The study's conclusions are sufficiently varied to be categorized under various topics. Different informational, semantic, and discursive links are brought about by each viewpoint. The findings, thus, could be summed up under the headings of the woman figure, Stella and Sexuality, Body Image, The Public and Private Spheres.

In the framework of feminism in general and extreme feminism in particular, this study seeks to present one of these fictitious views of women. From a masculine perspective, Stella's character in the television series “The Fall” was presented as a portrayal of a feminist woman in terms of her choices, behavior, and speech. Detective Superintendent Stella Gibson (Gillian Anderson), assigned to the Police Service of Northern Ireland to investigate an unsolved case that led her to a serial killer, is the protagonist of “The Fall” TV series, a crime drama produced by the BBC network from 2013 to 2016. Allan Cubitt created and wrote the series, and Jakob Verbruggen and Allan Cubitt directed it.

Furthermore, despite the attempt to portray Stella as the perfect feminist personality who embodies feminist views, the potential repercussions for a woman who chooses to adopt feminist ideas and values are discussed. Stella is a woman in a world where men predominate. The way the males perceive the feminist woman in their mind is reflected in this ideal feminist character, which was depicted in accordance with the facets of feminism, particularly the severe feminist attributes. Through historical qualitative analysis, which traced the most important issues that feminism focused on during its fight for rights, and discourse analysis, which mirrored feminist texts in Stella's speech and character claims to confirm her feminism.

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### **3.1 Sexuality**

The late 19th and early 20th centuries have been viewed by traditional male historians as a time of advancement in the history of sexuality. Jeffrey (2008) states that as the initial forces of sex reform movements and sexual liberation, science and liberal individualism are portrayed as opposing the forces of the era, fundamentalist religion, and anti-sex bigotry. However, according to feminist historians, this was a time of much higher complexity and a significant battle, challenging men's sexual rights because they wanted to eradicate prostitution, child sexual abuse, and marital rape, as well as change male sexual behavior so that it posed no threat to women. According to Jeffrey (2008), sexologists, or sex scientists, aimed to legitimize and defend conventional male-dominant, female-submissive sexuality in the name of science. The ideological conflict between feminists and sexologists on the construction of male and female sexuality should be explored in the actions of the protagonists.

A new paradigm for comprehending women's sexuality and sexual orientation was questioned by Peplau & Garnets (2000). They believe that sexual orientation has little to do with mental health and that there is no intrinsic connection between women's sexual orientation and gender conformity; in certain social situations, sexual orientation is associated with masculinity and femininity, but not in others. Even if major biological or childhood antecedents of women's sexual orientation have not yet been identified by research, women's sexual orientation and sexuality may be malleable, change over time, and vary depending on the social setting. The researchers come to the conclusion that women's sexuality has significant similarities regardless of sexual orientation. Women in particular typically view sexuality as relational or partner-centered.

#### **3.1.1 Stella and Sexuality**

In relation to the findings of this section on sexuality, some information must be gathered, mostly about Stella, the protagonist. Though there are implications regarding the victims or the serial murderer in between the lines, Stella is the primary subject of the story, and the purpose of this study is to explore her reflections on feminism. "The Fall" is a crime drama serial that explores the complex relationship between a serial killer and a detective who is dedicated to finding him. In the series, Gillian Anderson plays "Stella Gibson," a senior police detective in charge of the investigation into the killings of Paul Spector (played by Jamie Dornan). The sexuality of Stella is examined in this section. The main goal of this part is to examine her on-screen persona, behaviors, decisions and choices about sexuality.

The decisions of acceptance and rejection of Stella are important since she is portrayed as a bisexual woman who has casual sex with both men and women without forming close emotional relationships. For example, in the first season, she invites a fellow detective to her hotel room after spotting him at a crime scene. She subsequently figures out that he is married, but she doesn't care about his personal life. She also had an affair with a younger investigator who works for her. Throughout the following episodes, she also discloses that she was previously romantically involved with her employer, who was also married to another woman at the time. Stella's sexuality is a feature of her character that demonstrates her independence and self-assurance rather than a major plot aspect in the series.

Stella is portrayed as Stone Butch in the scene of the sexual encounter. Despite being associated with lesbians, Robin Maltz claims that the phrase originated in the United States in 1950 and referred to "*a butch who was sexually 'untouchable,' meaning that stimulation of the butch's genitals and breasts was not part of the sexual act*" (Maltz, 1998: 275).

In contrast, the scene depicts Stella refusing to take off her clothing, keeping him from touching her, and choosing to be at the top as proof of sexual control and her refusal to be submissive.

Throughout the episodes, once more, Stella is drawn to a younger police officer, and immediately, she invites him to work with her so they can have a deeper and more intimate relationship after watching him on TV discussing a death case with the media.

Through flashback scenes, we are also informed that Stella had an affair with her married male supervisor, Assistant Chief Constable Jim Burns, who used to be her boss in Belfast. During one of their disputes, Burns said he was willing to sacrifice his wife and kids for her sake. Even if he tries to attack her once more when intoxicated in her hotel room, she stops him by striking him in the face.

Later on, Stella is introduced as bisexual when the audience witnesses her kissing a woman to protect herself from a male annoyance. She then asks the other woman to her hotel room so they can have a sexual encounter, but the other woman abruptly leaves before getting into the elevator.

This indicates that Stella could be bisexual and accepting of her sexual orientation. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines bisexual as "*relating to or characterized by a sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex and of the opposite sex.*" As a result, the audience gets the impression that Stella is someone who acts impulsively and pursues out fleeting pleasures rather than someone who makes deliberate judgments and is not interested in long-term, meaningful relationships. As a result, the audience understands that Stella doesn't hesitate to approach individuals for sex when she feels like it. She typically has casual sex rather than attempting to build a committed relationship.

### **3.1.2 Findings of Stella and Sexuality**

Diverse viewpoints, including radical and liberal ones, exist within feminism regarding the subject of sexuality. In order to demonstrate the variety of perspectives within the feminist notion, this study focuses on Stella's perspective. It additionally takes a glimpse at how people's views of feminist ideas can be influenced by radical beliefs.

Sexuality was a major topic of discussion throughout the second wave of feminism. Since sex was strongly linked to gender and sexuality, feminists emphasized that it was a key component of women's oppression. As Taylor points out, Katherine Mayson likened feminist sexuality to Marxist labor in that it was a crucial but sometimes disregarded component of existence (Taylor, 2016: 142).

The development of the feminist sexuality movement indicates that early on, in the late 1960s, feminists did not differentiate between different ideas of sexuality. They concentrated on securing legal protection against unintended pregnancies, such as "*the right to abortion,*" and preserving women's right to pleasure, including "*female orgasms.*" The subsequent stage, referred

to as "*lesbian feminism*," saw feminists emphasize women's right to have sex with other women in the early 1970s. Many feminists have changed their focus to emphasize the danger and violence connected to heterosexual institutions like pornography in the present, the third wave of the movement, when sexual pleasure has become more socially acceptable (Ferguson, 1984: 106).

Although sexuality can be used to maintain gender inequity and impose dominance, it may also provide women with pleasure and empowerment. Some feminists dispute the notion of women as both moral protectors and victims of society (Liskova, 2009: 316-317). Unlike the emphasis of the 1960s, feminism in the 1970s perceived sexuality as oppression rather than freedom (Taylor, 2016: 142).

Feminist sexual morality has a twofold split. Radical feminists are against heterosexual sex that is dominated by men and frequently identify with the lesbian-feminist group. They contend that sexual behavior in a culture where men predominate can be harmful and encourage aggression against women. Since they associate dominant/subordinate power dynamics with maintaining male supremacy, they condemn practices like sadomasochism, pornography, prostitution, cruising, and sexual role-playing (Ferguson et al., 2002: 67). The opposing group, "*self-styled*" "*anti-prudes*," or "*libertarian feminists*," are typically "*heterosexual feminists or lesbian feminists*" who support any kind of consensual sexuality that expresses the enjoyment of the participants, since engaging in sexual activity may include both pleasure and risk.

Libertarian feminism's proponents contend that it is unjust to exclude sexual minorities, while radical feminism's position on pornography and sadomasochism is a contentious issue. Some libertarian feminists who identify as "*S/M*" lesbian feminists believe that radical feminists' emphasis on morality discriminates against sexual minorities and encourages "*vanilla sex*" and a limited, conservative understanding of sexuality (Ferguson et al., 1984: 352).

Liskova (2009) claims that patriarchy is frequently related to male sexuality (Liskova, 2009: 316). This is demonstrated by the series' frequent emphasis on Stella's romantic relationships, which portrays sexuality as a tool for gaining control and authority. This explains why a feminist such as Atkinson, who noted that "*Feminism is a theory; but Lesbianism is a practice*" in a 1970 lecture, regarded lesbianism as a solution (McBean, 2021: 215).

Examining Stella's sexuality as a feminist character reveals how feminist sexual ideologies shaped the character in the narrative. She does, however, lean toward the libertarian goal since it is more radical; while libertarian feminisms support gender equality, they also emphasize their autonomy over sexuality by arguing for the freedom to get involved in fulfilling and pleasurable behaviors (Ferguson et al., 1984: 109). It is evident in the narrative that Stella is portrayed as a bisexual woman who does not hesitate to pursue pleasure through casual sex with both genders whenever she wants and without attachment.

Feminists have different views on sexuality; some feminists prioritize closeness, such as radical feminists, while others prioritize pleasure, such as libertarian feminists. Other groups of feminists may hold other perspectives. The sexual feminist worldview cannot be defined universally because sexuality is a complicated subject influenced by many different aspects. Stella, the female protagonist of the narrative, is currently pursuing a male serial killer. Her perspective on sexuality influences how she thinks, perceives, and acts, like a man who

disregards other people's feelings and facts in favor of achieving his goals. Stella appears to be practising a lot to comprehend a different way of thinking to achieve and associate herself with her target.

### 3.2 The Body Image

Body image is a combination of the thoughts and feelings that you have about your body. A person's experiences with their body can range from pleasant to bad, and they may experience both at various periods. Body image is a complicated issue that is intimately linked to mental health and influenced by a wide range of external factors, including people, places, pictures, culture, and more. Any age group can experience body image problems, which have a direct impact on mental health (<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/body-image>).

A body image with qualities that others also find appealing has always been attractive; body image is more than just an idea of what we find pleasing. In some societies, having green eyes, being blonde, and having a tall, slender body have become desirable traits. Furthermore, the last century has seen an increase in awareness of the significance of physical integrity and how we feel about our bodies. Fisher (1986) published numerous books and scholarly articles on the concept of the "*body boundary*," dedicating a significant part of his career to the psychoanalytic study of body image.

Cash (2204) states that about a century ago, clinical efforts to comprehend neuropathological forms of body experience such "*phantom limb*," "*autotopagnosia*," "*hemiasomatognosia*," and "*anosognosia*" led to the discovery of "*body image*" or "*body schema*" as Fisher pointed out in 1990's (Fisher, 1986; Fisher 1990). In the past, researchers like Franklin Shontz viewed body experience as multifaceted and criticized the psychodynamic viewpoint of his contemporaries (Shontz, 1969). The potential of embodiment is being discussed in a variety of ways these days.

According to Grabe et al. (2008), women's body image disorders may be related to their exposure to the thin-ideal body in the media. This meta-analysis looked at experimental and correlational research examining the connections between eating habits and attitudes, internalization of the thin ideal, and media exposure to women's body dissatisfaction. The findings support the idea that women's body image issues are linked to exposure to media representations of particular structures.

Ziemke (2013) asserts that embodiment is now a key idea in several branches of cognitive science. The precise definition of embodiment and the type of body required for each type of embodied cognition, however, vary greatly. As a result, whereas a large number of people presently concur that humans are embodied knowers, there is much less agreement on the kind of artifacts that fall under this category. However, the protagonist of the narrative, Stella's job as a hunter chasing her target, is expected to explore a serial killer's mind and enhance his abilities, anticipating his thoughts and actions to capture him without further victims.

### 3.2.1 Stella and the Body Image

"A prevalent notion in the film industry across the globe suggests that female-led films may underperform, leading producers to avoid casting women as leads", Kik states (Kik, 2019).

In movies, feminist female protagonists are typically portrayed as powerful individuals who oppose patriarchal norms and expectations, take charge of their own lives, enjoy financial independence, and foster unity. Their physical attributes are highlighted as realistic bodies that violate conventional "passive/sexual object" stereotypes, comfortable and practical clothing, minimal or no makeup, and self-assured postures (Wilk, 2024).

Characteristics of feminist representation in film are usually represented with female characters in the subject position who are positioned as "*the owners of the gaze*" (the subject) who create the narrative, act, and make choices rather than as "*objects*" being observed. Their presence in the narrative is shaped by their "*being*", and they tend to exhibit traits of disobedience to the patriarchal structure. In the home, at work, and in social settings, they fight against discourses and limitations that are dominated by men. Their appearance also reflects their rebellious spirit. In general, they might have dreadlocks, tattoos, or short hair, even with overpowering coloring. They can also be portrayed as people who disregard social standards and smoke or use drugs in a controlled way.

One of the most notable examples of feminist representation is *Frida* (2002), a free-spirited and passionate portrayal of an artist who does not live in the shadow of men. In *Suffragette* (2015) the audience experiences the class-conscious, resistant women striving for the right to vote. In *Hidden Figures* (2016) knowledgeable and helpful women who oppose male domination in technology and science. The well-known example, *Thelma and Louise* (1991), are characters that break free from social constraints to establish their own freedom.

As a reflection of feminism, the stories usually stress sisterhood and solidarity rather than female rivalry, emphasizing support and shared hardship (e.g., *Thelma and Louise*). Realistic bodies and aesthetics are typically prioritized over youthful, breathtakingly gorgeous bodies. These are portrayed in the stories as modest females who want to live through their minds rather than their bodies. More natural, comfortable-dressed bodies that defy conventional beauty standards (heavy makeup, excessive thinness) and are engaged in daily life are preferred. Alongside the idea of the body, women are frequently shown as having social and economic independence, being independent, educated, or employed.

The television series "*The Fall*" focuses on an exceptional female detective who pursues an extraordinary serial killer committing unusual crimes against women. In this regard, practically everything pertaining to the main character's portrayal is likely to focus on extreme details.

Stella is a middle-aged, white, blonde woman with sharp features, light makeup, and a slim build. She typically wears skirts or pants, a long-sleeved silk top, and heeled shoes since her attire is formal and firmly feminine rather than eye-catching or revealing. She regularly swims, which accounts for her slim figure. A closer look at her body reveals that she lacks curves and has a slender shape. Furthermore, there are no signs of Botox therapy on her body or face, such as swollen cheeks or lips.

### 3.2.2 Findings of Stella and the Body Image

It is well recognized that educated, middle-class white women started the main feminist movement, known as liberal feminism (Korolokke & Sorensen, 2006). This explains why Stella was selected as an educated white woman. White feminism, a belief system that focuses only on the experiences of white women and ignores the struggles and forms of oppression faced by women of color and other marginalized groups, portrays feminist women as white women while ignoring black women and people of color (Trevisan, 2022).

Women continued to work for a variety of causes after the First World War ended, and women were granted the right to vote in several countries. Whether they have their roots in psychoanalytic feminism or radical feminism, proponents of sexual difference theories emphasize how unique female physically. When male experiences are taken as the norm for all of humanity, this viewpoint is frequently ignored. Freeing women from the burden of reproductive responsibilities was a goal in the early days of the feminist movement.

Three types of feminist beliefs about the body are distinguished by Elizabeth Grosz. Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone, Mary Wollstonecraft, and other feminists, like humanists and ecofeminists are all part of the first, egalitarian feminism. While some perceive the female body as a source of knowledge, others see it as a barrier to power. Nevertheless, patriarchal presumptions regarding the female body are accepted by both viewpoints, as Cleary noted (2016:1). According to Grosz's second category, social constructionists, women are oppressed because of societal meanings associated with the female body rather than biological factors. The body is therefore viewed as fixed and organic. Julia Kristeva, Nancy Chodorow, Marxist feminists, and psychoanalytic feminists are notable individuals in this group (Cleary, 2016: 1). Scholars like Irigaray, Cixous, Spivak, Wittig, and Butler, who concentrate on the body's function in women's lives, fall under the third category, sexual difference. They believe that the body is not only related to biology or culture, but also to meaning and representation. They focus on the materials that construct subjectivity and challenge sex/gender distinctions (Cleary, 2016: 2).

Furthermore, feminists have struggled with the idea of beauty, *from Mary Wollstonecraft 1793 to Susan Bordo 1993* throughout history. In order to achieve equal social and political chances, feminists urge women to defy normative beauty norms (Cahill, 2003: 42). The goal of feminist movements has frequently been to question conventional notions of beauty. Women protested the objectification of the female body and the exploitation of visual symbols by the beauty industry during the 1969 Miss America contest. Because it is unacceptable to put a woman's looks ahead of her achievements in real life, they burned and destroyed objects they believed to be oppressive femininity tools (Korolokke & Sorensen, 2006:8). However, other writers have argued in recent years that beauty may promote equality, encourage progress, and highlight the strength of women. Rethinking their beliefs could be beneficial for feminists (Cahill, 2003: 42).

On the other hand, A significant contribution of liberal feminism was its influence on women's clothing choices (Rodker, 2019: 199). For example, in the 80s, clothing choices were used to display power, wealth, and competition. However, in the 90s, this trend was discarded in favor of a focus on purity. This led to the emergence of the strong woman image, as depicted

in the series. This image emphasizes stunning beauty and shows that women need to act like men to succeed (Gamble, 2000: 179).

According to studies, a large number of women experience weight and body image problems to the extent that it is regarded as a widespread problem. Due to the media's promotion of thinness as the ideal of female beauty, sociocultural influences are thought to be the primary source of these issues (Posavac et al., 2001: 325). Many women prefer reaching an ideal weight, which is frequently below what is deemed normal and healthy, over their desire to succeed in their careers or romantic relationships, according to a 1984 Glamor magazine study (Gamble, 2000: 180).

Orbach, (2006), in *"Fat is a social disease, and Fat is a feminist issue,"* states that Compulsive eating and being overweight in women are caused by distorted hunger signals and the unconscious desire to be fat as a coping mechanism, both due to social and psychological pressures and oppression. However, Diamond (1985) claims that such an investigation is politically driven because it appears that an anti-feminist approach is utilized in the questions and answers, both by framing obesity as the problem and by suggesting that losing weight is a component of the solution. (Diamond, 1985: 46).

According to Susan Auerbach (1978), being obese can be interpreted as a rejection of the objectification of women's bodies in society. But this idea is frequently overshadowed by the media and cultural standards of the *"perfect"* figure (Gamble, 2000: 180). The important factor is how certain visual cues make a lady appear *"thin"* (healthy and appealing). The visual image presents a positive chain of sameness: *"Thin"* as *"desirable = female sexuality = healthy = ideal/end goal"* can only be posed as such by establishing a negative relational opposite, *"fat,"* etc. (Diamond, 1985: 46).

The reason for Stella's current thin and less traditionally feminine body type in her design may be rooted in feminist ideals. Women who identify as feminists may avoid clothing or practices that objectify their bodies and maintain a slimmer physique.

The fashion and beauty industry saw the emergence of *"Skinny Girl"*. In 1990, Naomi Wolf highlighted in her book, *The Legend of Beauty*, how working women striving for success and attractiveness are weighed down by societal expectations of feminine beauty. This often leads to feelings of self-loathing due to the fear of aging and inadequacy (Gamble, 2000: 180).

On the other hand, one of the most important topics discussed by feminism in its second wave was the issue of the representation of women as a stereotype or object of the male gaze in the arts and visual culture. In her essay on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, Laura Malavy (2013) examines the man's gaze at a woman as an object and explains the cinematic pleasure of male viewers derived from stimulating the imagination by looking at images of women as fetish objects.

Feminism aimed to shift society's focus from women's physical appearance to their intellect and to break the connection between women's mental abilities, physical traits, and societal roles. Thus, Stella's apparel as a bisexual woman working in a male-dominated field reflects her visual identity as a strong, confident, feminine individual, despite the historical and social changes that have influenced women's fashion throughout time.

Studies have shown that bisexual women prioritize their attractiveness over men, especially in relationships with men. This often leads them to engage in traditional beauty practices and embody more feminine qualities. Additionally, bisexual women who identify as feminine tend to incorporate lesbian masculinity and heterosexual feminine elements into their appearance. As a result, according to Hayfield et al., there is no everyday aesthetic in their dress and appearance to define their sexual identity (Hayfield et al., 2013: 6).

Stella continued embracing her feminine style by keeping her silk blouses, mid-length skirts, heels, blonde hair, and light makeup. However, she made some adjustments by wearing blouses with long sleeves, knee-length skirts, and pants in formal, muted colors. As Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska explained, Stella Gibson "*Dressed in silky blouses, looking very feminine, but almost entirely in control*" (Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska, 2014: 7).

Moreover, Stella's body structure portrays an athletic, slim woman with minimal feminine curves. Stella's particular appearance style portrays a woman who has maintained a unique identity that does not conform to traditional gender norms. While she leans towards femininity, she also embraces a touch of masculinity necessary for her job and as a bisexual woman.

### 3.3 The Public and Private Spheres

The concept of the "*public sphere*" is primarily linked to philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who dated its emergence to the bourgeois society of the 18th century, where newspapers and coffee shops offered forums for opposing governmental authority (Habermas, 2020). The primary goal was to promote democratic involvement by giving citizens the ability to participate in public conversation, influence policy, and shape public opinion. But in the digital age, the public sphere is a combination of online and offline venues rather than a single physical location. To Goodman, each sphere, whether public or private, has its own supporters and historiographical traditions. However, this division of historical labor has led to a misinterpretation of the relationship between these two domains of activity in eighteenth-century France, which has resulted in the fabrication of a false dichotomy between the public and private domains (Goodman, 1992).

To Thompson, in contemporary societies, the shifting boundaries between public and private life have emerged as a new arena where people and organizations engage in an entirely novel kind of information war, where established power relations can clash and conflict, lives can be ruined, and reputations may occasionally prove lost (Thompson, 2011:49). And as Thompson pointed out, according to Arendt, "*a life spent entirely in public, in the presence of others, becomes, as we would say, shallow.*" In a very real, non-subjective sense, it is still visible, but it no longer has the quality of rising into sight from some darker ground that must remain hidden if it is not to lose its depth (Arendt, 1958: 71).

The separation between the public and the private sphere of life means the separation between home, family, what can be considered personal and society, work, politics, and everything that can be considered public issues. Furthermore, since the separation between public and private is rooted in cultures, women are diagnosed as unfit to participate in the public sphere, and their appropriate place is the home and the family, called the private sphere. Yet, to Wischermann & Mueller, the evolution of feminist theories regarding the division of public and

private domains reconstructs the criticism of a dichotomization of both concepts and applies more recent problematizations, such as the concept of experience, to the earlier women's movement dictum that the private/personal is political. The examination of feminist discourses offers a glimpse into the future, into a changed media and cultural environment, and raises issues regarding the place of the private in the public and other domains, as well as whether or not the public domain would need to safeguard privacy (Wischermann & Mueller, 2004).

In the end, the feminist movement revolves around the disparity between the private and the public, which is fundamental to nearly two centuries of feminist writing and political activism. Feminist criticism is mostly focused on the division and opposition between the public and private domains in liberal theory and practice, even though some feminists see the dichotomy as a universal, transhistorical, and transcultural aspect of human existence (Pateman, 1983).

Radical feminism believes that separating public and private spheres distanced women from politics. Men claim that women cannot participate in political affairs because of their emotional nature and that politics is not commensurate with women's basic interests, such as home and family. Another opinion adopted by feminists is that men promote the inappropriateness of politics for women to keep women away from this field so that they focus on their homes and serving men (Rodker, 2019: 199). The definition of politics often neglects issues of utmost importance to women. It has been observed that men tend to view matters relevant to women through a moral lens rather than a political one. According to Philippa Gates, in general society still links masculinity with strength and femininity with weakness, causing female detectives only to be seen as successful if they exhibit masculine traits. Any display of feminine characteristics can lead to them being labeled as failures (Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska, 2014: 6).

The concept of family has been debated among feminists as it holds significant sway over women's lives and social involvement. Gender-based role separation is evident in the family, representing the private aspect. Typically, women are associated with motherhood and household work within the family. Many feminists view the family as a woman's workplace and the space for childbearing. Women tend to avoid having children unless they are in a family and marriage setting. Additionally, a woman's domestic duties are often connected to her presence in the household alongside her husband and children. Some people believe that feminism indicates eliminating the family, leading them to view all feminists as opposed to motherhood and the family. However, it is essential to note that feminism encompasses a variety of perspectives, not all of which advocate for the dissolution of the family. These negative perceptions of feminism are often perpetuated by those who are against the movement.

There were two orientations within feminism. The first orientation accepted the concept of family but called for reforms, while the second orientation opposed the institution of family and demanded its abolition. Feminists discussed the advantages and disadvantages of family and motherhood, which they consider a unique aspect of women's lives.

Even though liberal feminists believed that marriage was unjust and contributed to the oppression of women due to the unjust behavior of men within the family and the loss of independence and personal identity that women often experience after marriage, they still

regarded marriage as a sacred institution that promotes public morality. Instead of abandoning the idea of family altogether, they sought to introduce some reforms (Rodker, 2019: 152).

According to Wollaston Craft, women's oppression is largely caused by keeping them in the home and limiting their independence and social chances. She maintained that women might exhibit their independence and reason by working at home, which would increase their effectiveness as wives and mothers. Because they defended the family against radical feminist criticisms, some liberal feminists—such as Betty Frieden, Germaine Greer, and Jean Bethke Elshtain—were referred to as family feminists. It's interesting to note that Germaine Greer, who had earlier opposed the nuclear family, ultimately came to support it because she believed it satisfied the emotional requirements of women.

Elshtain also rejects the politicization of private life and defends it, and considers motherhood an activity rich in hard work that brings happiness to women, which is a natural, social, and emotional matter (Rodker, 2019: 156). The concept of liberalism, which forms the basis of the fight for women's rights, asserts that women should have the opportunity to grow and develop as individuals without being confined to the private sphere (Ozbey & Bardakci, 2019: 1802).

Marxist feminists saw the patriarchal family as an essential part of capitalism and, therefore, a source of oppression that needs to be eliminated. Early socialist feminists saw the patriarchal family structure as linked to capitalism and oppression. They called for an end to undervalued women's work, monogamous marriage, and objectification within families. They also wanted to include women in collective bargaining units and provide better working conditions and equal pay (Armstrong, 2020: 41).

On the other hand, radical feminism sees the family as a means of man's oppression of women through sexual enslavement and forced motherhood. Marriage is an institution that oppresses women economically, financially, legally, emotionally, and politically. It is a place where men can dominate women to feel psychological satisfaction. Divorce is considered a positive thing and frees women from the institution of marriage (Rodker, 2019: 199).

The concept of motherhood has divided feminist movements. Some view it as a common factor among women and advocate for women's rights, while others use it to discriminate against women. Until the mid-1980s, mainstream feminism rejected motherhood as necessary to overcome women's subordination and achieve equality (Neyer & Bernardi, 2011: 164).

Whereas liberal feminism supports motherhood, it emphasizes that it must be women's choice, and they are not obligated to have children. To protect women's rights, they thus demand access to birth control and abortion as well (Rodker, 2019: 199).

Kate Millett, in her book *sexual politics* (2016), advocates for a sexual revolution and the end of monogamy and paternity so that the care of children becomes communal instead of the private family and freedom of choice in sexual relations, whether with the opposite sex or the same sex.

Simone de Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex* (1997), believes that men hold women responsible for these roles by sanctifying pregnancy and motherhood and persuading women to assume their responsibilities.

Despite feminist radicalism, it agrees with liberalism on women's right to abortion and birth control, but it considers the role of motherhood as a reason for women's oppression and subordination. However, many opinions emerged about motherhood (Rodker, 2019: 199).

While some feminists saw IVF babies (in vitro fertilization technology) as a key to women's freedom from foreigners, there were feminists such as Jancis Raymond, who saw modern technology as a means for males to control childbearing and withdraw it from women's hands. While Simone de Beauvoir, in her view, "*the decision to become a mother is therefore never performed "in complete liberty,"* not even through ART" (Neyer & Bernardi, 2011: 165). The decision not to get married may not necessarily be linked to feminism. Various factors and motivations influence a woman's choice to marry or opt out. These reasons might not be connected to feminism, as many other reasons influence them. Marriage is influenced by individual and societal factors such as personality, cultural traditions, and gender roles. These roles dictate the social structure and expectations for behavior and thinking (Ercan & Uçar, 2021: 9).

### **3.3.1 Portrayals of Stella in Public and Private Spheres**

In this context, it becomes apparent that Stella's private life reveals a single woman, having no children, and not being married or having experienced a true romantic relationship. She seemed to have lived her entire life in the public sphere and hardly had a private life of her own. In addition, it has been revealed that she has no siblings and no details regarding her mother, but that she had a unique bond with her father, who passed away, and that she saw him in her dreams. In the last scene, we witness Stella for the first time in her personal space—sitting by herself in a dark, dimly lit, empty house—after three seasons of uncovering the murder and ending her public life. Feminist perspectives on the private domain, family, and motherhood are evoked when we explore Stella's private life. It is uncertain why Stella is not currently married or in a committed relationship. It is unclear whether her stance on feminism is a contributing factor or if there are other undisclosed reasons.

### **3.3.2 Findings on Stella's Public and Private Spheres**

This paper assumes that the character maker envisions a feminist woman as hesitant to marry and have children. This sets the standard for feminism based on the most radical opinions, which suggest that a feminist woman practices free love, declines marriage and childbearing, and prioritizes independence and freedom, even if it means being alone in their personal life and constantly fighting in public life.

However, it is important to note that feminism comes in many forms, and not all feminists are opposed to marriage, having kids, or starting a family. The focus should be on implementing reforms and creating conditions that support women's lives and align with their beliefs. In the narrative, Stella follows the beliefs of feminist radicalism. She decided not to participate in traditional marriage practices, have children, and create her own family. Instead, she preferred to live in a secluded home and retreat there after her duties in public spaces were completed.

The final scene of the series, which portrayed Stella sitting alone in a dark house after the trial is over, makes it abundantly evident that this representation supports patriarchal ideals,

even though it's likely that the character developer purposefully portrayed her in this way to reflect an extreme image of feminist women. This image implies that feminist women end up isolated and alone, loneliness and isolation as a patriarchal punishment for defying social norms and expectations. Or, like a child waiting for a rebirth in the womb, she may be waiting for the start of a new existence there in a distant, quasi-dark environment. Beyond this, there is another Stella, a "*source of information*" whose every statement creates a crucial information environment for the public sphere, whose every detail discussed and debated is critically important, and who is forced to spend almost her entire life in front of cameras with all her photos, interviews, and actions. There is also the angle where Stella's "*private life*" remains in the dark, or where bringing it to the forefront seems dangerous. In short, it is also necessary to keep alive the foggy, misty atmosphere in which she hunts.

### 3.4 Gender Relations

In its most basic form, feminist theory and gender issues can be summed up as an academic and social endeavor to comprehend and eradicate gender injustice. In contrast to biological sex, this field contends that gender is socially produced and influences power dynamics. In terms of a fundamental approach, "*Increasing Equality*" refers to attaining gender equality both conceptually and practically. Expanding human choices, on the other hand, seeks to free people from conventional positions so they can develop their skills in accordance with their interests. Ending gender stratification is one of feminism's primary goals, and it challenges cultural and legal conventions that limit chances for employment, education, and income. Ending sexual abuse and giving women complete autonomy over their bodies and safety is another major goal. In addition to promoting reproductive rights and the ability to express one's sexuality, feminist thought also advocates sexual freedom.

The social relations of power between the modernist-Western elites and those who oppose them are revealed by feminist questions of identity, which include problematic relationships to gender on the one hand and to Western modernity on the other. In other words, to Göle (1997), feminist ambition to set itself apart from modernist liberal programs and its attempt to dominate the public sphere revolve around gender concerns, such as communitarian morality, women's modesty, and the social encounter between men and women.

While discussing themes of gender and historical change, we might also consider changes resulting from technological features (Newman, 2003). In addition to examining the gender dynamics of organizational cultures and how these dynamics are changing as public sector organizations adapt to outside change (Kelkar & Nathan, 2002), we may also consider some of the conflicts that arise in both theorizing culture and enacting cultural change.

#### 3.4.1 Stella's Relations with Men and Women

Stella's interactions with males might be examined in both the private and public realms. In the overall framework, Stella leads men of lower rank to work in case solving and carrying out orders while interacting with guys in higher ranks within the police department. Additionally, Stella comes into a male journalist who is eager to learn more or perhaps incite controversy by publishing false information. Stella's major confrontation with the serial murderer, who speaks

to her over the phone and eventually declines to divulge any information or admissions to anybody other than her, continues to take place in public.

In the private space, Stella's relationship with men is limited to having sex without any engagements or promises. While the most important relationship she has with masculinity remains her relationship with her father, which is captured for us through dreams in which she sees her father waking her up from her sleep or speaking to her. These parental relationships are always portrayed in an image in which we see Stella able to face challenges.

On the other hand, Stella's relationship with women remains in the public sphere as a working relationship, but she was a strong advocate for women in "The Fall" series. She chose a female officer as her assistant and encouraged her to stand up for herself in a male-dominated profession. She taught her how to deal with sexism and harassment in the workplace and how to assert her authority and competence. She showed compassion for the killer's wife and arranged for her to receive counseling instead of blaming her for lying to the police. She understood that she was a victim of manipulation and coercion by her husband, who had hidden his true identity from her. She tried to help a troubled teenager who had a connection with the killer and to prevent her from getting hurt. She offered her guidance and protection and tried to dissuade her from pursuing a dangerous relationship with the killer. She reached out to a woman who claimed to have a past relationship with the killer and risked her life to rescue her when she became his target. She defended herself against her husband and other powerful men who did not understand her actions. She explained to them the psychological effects of trauma and abuse on women and how they might cope differently. Stella treated women with respect, empathy, and logic, without judging or belittling them, and with much support and solidarity.

### **3.4.2 Findings on Stella's Gender Representation**

Taking into account all of these instances and actions, it is evident that Stella, who is attempting to exist as a woman in a male-dominated world, is attempting to foster the idea of being strong for both herself and other women, as required by her job responsibilities.

Previous sections of this research mostly delve deeper into the feminist viewpoints on gender, work, sex, marriage, and childbirth, framed primarily within the framework of women's relationships with men, while several areas of feminist and gender studies focus more extensively on the relationship between women and men. But in this part, it is necessary to concentrate on the idea of feminist sisterhood and its significance to the feminist definition. Because it is evident from a structuralist perspective that Stella's actions constitute a discourse in and of themselves. Stella is involved in spreading these concepts and emphasizing the spirit of unity among women, rather than just demonstrating and living her own feminist beliefs.

To Rodak, sisterhood is a key part of the four waves of feminist discourse. It has been both supported and criticized, but it remains central. Sisterhood has two main components: identity and solidarity. Identity is about who qualifies as a sister and what it means to be one. Solidarity is about sharing, supporting, and cooperating; the four waves of feminism approached the two issues differently. During the first wave of feminism, sisterhood was viewed as a way for women to empower each other and compete with men. It assumed all women had

the same interests and united them through their shared experience of oppression caused by male dominance (Rodak, 2020: 120).

Furthermore, Zaytoun & Ezekiel point out that the use of familial languages, such as 'brother' and 'sister,' played a significant role in the social movements leading up to the US First Wave, especially among Black freedom movements. This language originated from the experience of slavery and was seen as a political act. The precursors to US First Wave feminism also adopted the term 'sisterhood,' which was initially used in the church and abolitionist movements. However, the term has had problematic meanings in the past, with both oppressive and supportive connotations. The practice of sisterhood was widely discussed and debated in nineteenth-century social movements (Zaytoun & Ezekiel, 2016: 198).

To Evans, being a sister traditionally implies being a female, which suggests that a true feminist must also be female. However, this narrow view of sisterhood can overlook the potential for oppression and exploitation of women by other women, which is an unfortunate reality (Evans, 2015). Rodak points out that during the second wave of feminism, there was criticism of equity feminism. The slogan "*I am not the sister of my mother*" aimed to create a non-hierarchical feminist sisterhood. The second wave also sparked a discussion on the meaning of sisterhood and the importance of women supporting each other, as competition became a central topic of conversation. (Rodak, 2020: 120). The Women's Liberation Movement in the US and France adopted the term "*sisterhood*" as a symbol of feminist solidarity from the 1960s to the 1980s. Consciousness-raising groups were vital in fostering this sense of sisterhood and were the foundation for organizing and taking action. The idea of sisterhood went beyond mere friendship and required women to come together as a political and formalized group, working for the betterment of all women. Without it, the movement would have been drastically different (Zaytoun & Ezekiel, 2016: 198).

However, a book like *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970) by Robin Morgan was a key text of the second-wave feminist movement. The New York Public Library deemed it one of the century's most important books. Morgan later released *Sisterhood is Forever*, a collection of essays on feminist scholarship and the enduring importance of sisterhood among women. (Clark-Taylor et al., 2015: 77).

During the third wave of feminism, Bell Hooks (1986) brought attention to the importance of sisterhood and the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society. She argued that the concept of femininity, as defined by men, is oppressive and affects women's daily lives. Many women have internalized male-dominated values that promote harmful and competitive behavior. Hooks believes that women need to confront their differences in order to strengthen sisterhood and work towards ending sexist oppression through political commitments. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to transform female consciousness (Rodak, 2020: 121).

The fourth wave of feminism is gaining attention in the media and social networks. It takes an anti-essentialist approach and includes all individuals in discussions about sisterhood. The focus is on building bonds between diverse group members (Rodak, 2020: 121). Criticism of sisterhood has come from within feminism and from antifeminists and neo-conservatives. Radical feminists point out emotional violence within the movement, while other feminists reject a universal definition of "*woman*." Feminists of color argue that the assumption of commonality

overlooks differences. Queer and Trans Studies deconstruct and reimagine sex and gender beyond binary thinking. However, Feminism may not exist without the concept of "women" and "sisterhood." However, a sisterhood based on political process and struggle, influenced by social relationships, could be a crucial part of liberatory movements (Zaytoun & Ezekiel, 2016: 196).

Stella's relationship with the women around her appears clearly in the series; how she tries to support and help them as an essential part of her personality, she explains their behavior, justifies their actions, defends them, and supports them within the framework of the public space. She is the first supporter of the women around her, as it seems that this is a major part of her feminism.

Being a feminist woman, it means being an advocate for women and helping them. This is what was conceived of as a feminist woman. Although feminism itself is based on difference, difference does not mean segregation, or so it should be. She also has the capacity to recognize and address both small and large hazards, as well as to maintain calm and rational thinking even under the most trying circumstances. Even though such attitudes and behaviors may appear rather dispassionate, soulless, cold, and masculine, one cannot deny that Stella is a woman hiding behind a masculine mask that is necessary for her job. Ultimately, the option of being "*a wolf in sheep's clothing*" versus "*a lamb in wolf's clothing*" can be seen between the lines of the narrative.

### 3.5 Discourse Analysis vs Content Analysis

It is crucial to recognize the connections between discourse analysis and content analysis. To gain a deeper understanding of a subject, content analysis (CA) and discourse analysis (DA) integrate quantitative breadth with qualitative depth. While DA studies how language creates social reality, power, and identity, CA methodically classifies what is contained in a text (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024).

These techniques are frequently combined by researchers utilizing two fundamental strategies (i.e. Feltham-King & Macleod, 2016). In order to find broad patterns or prevailing themes in an immense dataset, this study framework mainly employs a basic content analysis. This context defines the sequential breadth to depth of how feminism has been treated across time, as well as how feminist ideologies have influenced female characters in movies, etc. In order to investigate the meanings and power dynamics underlying these themes, the research then focuses further on a chosen sample of the television show "The Fall" as a smaller, representative subset of these texts for a thorough discourse analysis. However, in a parallel application, the same dataset is subjected to both approaches concurrently. For instance, content analysis (DA) discloses the precise language mechanisms employed to create these identities, whereas discourse analysis (CA) can monitor the frequency of particular "*subject positions*" (identities) over time.

By merging both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the research's key synergies are preserved while addressing each method's shortcomings. Content analysis might at times "flatten" meaning when it comes to contextualizing data by merely counting words, activities, etc. In this instance, contextualized situations have been used to study and examine Stella's attitudes toward men and women. Consequently, incorporating discourse analysis into the

study offers the social and historical background required to explain the reasons behind these statements or behaviors. On the one hand, it offers empirical power; on the other, it adds the richness of a mixed methods framework, putting the specifics on display.

However, discourse analysis may occasionally be criticized for being based on tiny samples or being unduly subjective. In any case, researchers may demonstrate that their discursive findings are common in a broader, quantifiable dataset by employing content analysis.

In order to address both "*how much*" (quantitative) and "*how/why*" (qualitative) research questions, the mixed methods approach utilized in this study provides a combination that is increasingly used in disciplines like media studies and policy analysis.

Stella's speech and conduct demonstrate her awareness of, comprehension of, and application of feminist concepts. She won't accept responsibility for her sexual orientation. She publicly shows the man in front of her that she is capable of judging her own sexual behaviors because she feels that she has the right to do so. She won't accept that male ones are superior to her. In a variety of ways and on multiple times, she makes it clear to men that she finds it bothersome that men are made the object and she the subject, but historical and societal contexts often mandate that women are the object and men the subject.

She reveals to him the double standards of masculine society openly, boldly, and confidently, refusing to be seen by these standards. Like a man, she has the right to have a sex life outside a relationship, and she can do so without being judged or belittled. She explicitly declares her equality with the man standing in front of her and prevents him from trying to hold her accountable.

[Stella Gibson:] :*"That is what really bothers you, isn't it? The one-night stand? Man fucks woman. Subject: man. Verb: fucks. Object: woman. That is okay. Woman fucks man. Woman: subject. Man: Object. That is not so comfortable for you, is it?"* (Gibson, 2013, "The Fall" Season 1, Episode 3).

Stella has a high understanding of the media's portrayal of women. She understands the implications of certain labels and a certain method of presentation that the media uses to blame women at every available opportunity. She rejects the labels that women are associated with as prostitutes and virgins, and she refuses to define women according to their sexuality or way of life.

She is very aware of how women's mistakes are trolled and how language is manipulated to give entitlement, and how it is always much easier to blame women than to search for the real culprit.

The permanent conflict is linked to the concepts of sexual harassment, exposure to harm, or even rape or murder. The blame is always placed on the victim's clothing or way of life, which indicates that she is the cause of her being a victim.

While describing the victims, she asked the word *innocent* to be deleted from the press release.

[Stella Gibson:] *“Let us not refer to them as innocent. What if he kills a prostitute next or a woman walking home drunk late at night in a short skirt? Will they be in some way less innocent, therefore less deserving? Culpable? The media loves to divide women into virgins and vamps, angels and whores. Let us not encourage them”*. (Gibson, 2013, Season 1, Episode 3)

Stella teaches the team under her command, especially the men and her male superiors, about the different perspectives that both men and women practice in their lives.

One of her famous sayings in the show is when she told her male team a quote attributed to Margaret Atwood. We can see how this quote falls within the framework of feminism perfectly. Stella's quotation reflects a woman who is aware of the difference in agenda and even a woman able to deliver voices and messages that males may not understand. Fears change, and while male fears seem somewhat trivial, women's fears seem more serious, something many men may not understand.

[Stella Gibson:] *“A woman, I forget who, once asked a male friend why men felt threatened by women. He replied that they were afraid that women might laugh at them. When she asked a group of women why women felt threatened by men, they said: We are afraid they might kill us”*. (Gibson, 2014, “The Fall” Season 2, Episode 6)

However, Stella's emergency presence is necessary to bring points of view closer as a woman who speaks in a clear feminist tone that belongs to many groups. However, there are concerns and points that women may meet, regardless of their different races and orientations.

In a dialogue with her female assistant, Stella reminds her that, in this world of men, women must support each other and that, as potential enemies, men are more than enough; women should not allow similar enmity among themselves.

The series reflects an amazing contrast between the worlds of men and women, and a feminist woman tries to be an agent between the two. She tries to tie them together, but she does not hesitate to defend her sisters in front of tyranny and male arrogance. It is challenging for men to understand the behavior of women, and they try to explain them according to their special societal status, their behavior, and their nature, without a real understanding of women and their differences.

She demonstrates to her husband how a woman's nature is different from a man's when she is afraid. The woman will rather sacrifice herself to defend herself in her own way by giving up in order to protect people around her, even while the male may attack for defense.

Fear makes a person unable to think properly and may freeze. A woman may not attack or rush as a man does. She tries to get out with the least possible losses, even at the expense of herself, especially if she can protect her children through that.

[Tom:] *“Why didn't she cry out? Or scream? Why didn't she fight him? Why did she go with him?”*

[Stella Gibson:] *“Tom—”*

[Tom:] *“Do you know that Nancy saw them crossing the street arm in arm?”*

[Stella Gibson:] *“Tom, I need you to listen to me right now... Men always think in terms of fight or flight. In fact, the most common instinct in the face of this kind of threat is to freeze. If she did not fight, if she did not scream, if she was silent and numb, it is because she was petrified. If she went with him quietly, it was because she was afraid for her life. And not just her life—yours and Nancy’s and the baby’s. In that state of fear, she might well have been compliant. She might well have submitted. But that does not mean she consented”* (“The Fall”, 2016, Season 3, Episode 1).

She tries to explain to a patriarchal society with an unyielding main judgment of the activities of Spectator's wife in another attempt to defend the behavior of the women in her immediate vicinity. She attempts to demonstrate to them how women can be trapped by the emotional power that men employ to trick and manipulate them. She makes an effort to encourage them to be more perceptive and understanding. The psychological state of a woman who learned that she was the wife of a murderer and the mother of two children from him was the cause of her attempt to drown herself and her two children, despite Stella's efforts to stop the prosecution of the wife on charges of concealing her husband. This illustrates the degree of men's incapacity to comprehend women's psychology and the projection of their own world on women's worlds, making Stella an urgent and significant model for bridging the two worlds. Alternatively, the feminist woman is portrayed in this series as a strong woman attempting to correct both parties' mistakes. When a man's ego surpasses the required comprehension, he stops. She therefore clarifies the ideas and behaviors of women that males find hard to comprehend.

She has characteristics that allow her to exist in both realms and is a being suspended between them. She can handle the difficulties posed by males and helps her sisters. Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska, claims that Gibson is skilled at responding to the casual misogyny, presumptions, and prejudices of her ignorant coworkers in a way that challenges patriarchal ideas and perpetuates victim-blaming. It is noteworthy, nonetheless, that Gibson works well with other female professionals in Belfast despite being an outsider (Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska, 2014: 7).

#### 4. Conclusion

Choosing an accurate portrayal of feminism might be challenging due to the many interpretations and generalizations. The absence of specific guidelines has led to various individualized uses, challenging societal norms and patriarchal beliefs (Delmar, 1910: 63). Stella Gibson resembled an explicit fantasy of what a feminist woman can be like from a man's point of view. She is a role model who may sexually exploit men and can stand up to the greed, corruption, and sexism imposed by men everywhere, especially in workplaces that they may see as their own.

Therefore, this feminist model, who challenges men with her intelligent answers and vast knowledge, is an essential advocate for the women around her, whether those she works with, witnesses, or even victims.

She represents the female fraternity in all its aspects, as she is a supporter and defender of the women around her to reflect a meaningful image, which is that the feminist woman is a woman who must put her sisters first, defend and understand them, and explain to men what may be difficult for them to understand about the feminine essence.

Stella is the bridge of gender, a woman who understands women and their way of thinking because she is a woman. However, she is no less skilled, aware, and strong than the men who surround her, as she understands them and their desires, thoughts, and views of women and themselves.

She is an emergency woman, and no woman can reach what she has reached because she lives in a society that was made for her, a society that cannot be compared or reversed to the real societies of the real world so that a woman can overcome scandals, compete with men, educate them, and be alone with them only to return and abandon them.

It is a fictional feminist model that every woman wishes to be like, and every man could think this is how a feminist woman looks. However, it does not fully reflect the reality of feminist women today.

A feminine woman, but with a touch of masculinity, free, strong, not afraid of loneliness, not in need of a family, successful in her work, refusing to submit to any man, even in her sexual relations, not afraid of scandals or society, defying men, advising them if necessary, nothing could make her think less about herself, and no one has the right to control her life.

This feminist figure, which is presented through "The Fall" series, reflects patriarchal fantasies about feminist women and creates extreme or even negative expectations and perhaps challenges that make ordinary women afraid and intimidated by this label. According to Twenge & Zucker, although society's attitudes toward women's roles have become more liberal over time, many young women today choose not to identify as feminists. They may hold negative views towards the feminist movement (Twenge & Zucker, 1999: 592).

Furthermore, feminism varies according to various cultures, societies, classes, and races because it cannot be generalized and there are no rules that define what constitutes a feminist. Some women's priorities have evolved over time to include freedom of speech, clothing, and education. On the other hand, despite the disparity in priority, it becomes linked to sexual freedom, employment, or reproductive rights for others. But for some things, like feminism, to become inherent rights and not associated with a particular label, the fundamentals must be agreed upon.

Now, women's needs vary from place to place and from culture to culture, which is the primary cause of the numerous and expanding feminist organizations that have emerged. Labeling everything radical as feminist is unfair and detrimental to feminism because there are differences in what constitutes extremism and what does not.

A woman being a feminist does not mean that she is an extremist or bisexual, hating men, or looking for casual sex only. Although it is said that every woman can take from feminism what is commensurate with her and her convictions, it is unfair to generalize and not correct the misconceptions of feminism, just as the media continues to support erroneous and extremist images and portray women who refuse to be called feminists because they refuse to be stigmatized for their extremist behavior...

Since every woman is a feminist in her own unique way, feminism does not equate to radicalism. However, neither the radical assertion that the patriarchal system robbed our female nationalities nor the liberal feminist viewpoint that claims oppression deprives women of sexual pleasure can be accepted. According to Ferguson et al. (1984: 110), these societal standards have become a general matter associated with the male and female genders, despite the fact that men and women are perceived differently in terms of their sexual relationships, with males having sex for pleasure and women for emotional attachment.

Thus, portraying a woman who reflects in all her speech and behavior as a feminist woman means, from the patriarchal point of view, a woman who practices sex for pleasure as men do and does not aim to establish a family or be associated with a man. Although the radical feminists are correct that sexual objectification distinguishes heterosexuality based on power Patriarchy, this is confirmed by what we said earlier that the existence of a woman like Stella who is able to treat men as objects without being subjected to sexual danger and objectifying men for her pleasure without being judged by the patriarchy and other feminist women is an imaginary thing that is reflected in masculine desires in the presence of such a woman who exploits men for her pleasure. However, she is also used for their pleasure.

A man is not afraid of being sexually objectified or made into an object by a woman who thinks that control is in her hands. He does not usually lose. Women usually bear the risks and fears of free sex, while the man feels comfort as the one who penetrates and is physically more robust, so he does not mind that the woman imposes her femininity on him in this way.

When talking about the public and private spheres, women do not need to work in male jobs or stay single and alone to be called feminists; neither she need to be addicted to work and choose casual sex over emotional relations to be called feminists. However, sharing the same amount of work inside and outside the house is essential, not only from a feminist view but also from the justice perspective. Women who abstain from marriage know that... Achieving an equal sharing of domestic duties remains a challenge, as women often work at home and in the workplace (Ercan & Uçar, 2021: 8). This is why women like Stella could choose to stay single, as Autonomous individuals tend to resist being controlled by others and prioritize success and independencies (Ercan & Uçar, 2021: 9).

Stella's feminist character was drawn on what any woman with a feminist attitude would hope for in her relationships but with more extremes. While Individuals with pro-feminist attitudes tend to desire less sacrifice and dependency, greater independence, less conformity, fewer traditional gender roles, and more verbal expression (Eplau & Gordon, 1985: 261), Stella Gibson was all that and more.

Even if its a BBC product, in a way that many post-9/11 Americans could identify with, *The Fall*, a 2010s entry in the serial killer genre in a country marked by memories of sectarian terrorism, is based on the tensions of balancing public and private history with the present as well as an examination of the history of the serial killer fictional drama in which the narrative exists (Benecchi & Colapinto, 2011). Jermyn (2017) contends that, crucially, *Prime Suspect USA*'s story of sexist bullying in the NYPD was viewed as cliched and exaggerated, while "*The Fall*" skillfully addressed a media culture that rewards gender-based violence while gaining ratings by means of a superficial but glossily packaged nod to the female detective's postfeminist

"progress." As McRobbie labeled as an era in which "feminism has been taken into account" (McRobbie, 2007: 255), it should be questioned how these series' references to feminism or "feminist issues" can be seen as essential to their distinct successes and failures. However, it should be explored how feminist criticism of crime dramas on television might be developed in the future. The complicated gender politics and genre position of "The Fall" are utilized to highlight the intricate ways that noir today functions throughout Anglo-American television and society, as Steenberg notes, highlighting the close relationship between "The Fall" and television noir (Steenberg, 2017). She believes that "The Fall" is self-conscious, if not self-reflexive, in its mobilization of noir to aspire to the cinematic, arguing that the series uses noir as a legitimation strategy, frequently to excuse obscene stories of sexualized violence, because calling something noir, especially visual fiction, is a way of insisting on its status as art. Whereas Gómez Ponce (2018) argues "The Fall" has transformed the roots of the literary "museum" of Gothic, alluding to its aesthetic nature as a privileged way of capturing cultural meaning, some of the academic research focuses on the other characters in "The Fall" series (Zrilić, 2023; Barton, 2021). The narratives were also handled by Klinger (2018) as UK-produced (for the USA) imported serial crime TV as linked to various genres and well-known gender and racial tropes, frequently depending on the identification of white female victims to spark police investigations, act as gothic spectacles, and bring life to family melodramas. According to her, these shows finally shed light on the role that feminism itself plays in transnational migration by frequently matching such victims with female detectives.

Feminism is a term that allows for intellectual pluralism. Every woman can choose from feminism what suits her needs and convictions, and this is what we should focus on when presenting a feminist model to the public. Choosing a feminist portrayal representing true feminism is challenging due to the vast range of interpretations and generalizations. Feminism allows for intellectual diversity; each woman can choose what aligns with her beliefs and needs. It is important to focus on this when presenting a feminist model to the public. However, Stella Gibson was the ideal female feminist who speaks from the perspective of gender politics, feminism, and gender studies; she is educated, aware of women's behavior and their understanding because she belongs to them, approaches the world of men with confidence, but also as an intelligent teacher who explains to her students of both sexes the need to create bridges of understanding. She is the same who is portrayed by the character maker as a woman suffering from The Electra complex, sheds light on her recurring dreams and the image of the father who frequents her, and is portrayed as a woman who is attracted to a murderer who killed many women, fascinated by his intelligence,

She is the one who chooses to be punished by the character developer with loneliness and deprivation in her private life; she is the one whose regular sexual encounters outside of official relationships were condemned and punished with scandal. Despite her leadership qualities and feminist beliefs, she is condemned to loneliness since, in our patriarchal culture and men dominated society, a woman like her has no place.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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