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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**Feminist issues in Fay Weldon's *Remember Me* and *The Life and Loves of a She Devil***

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### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Práce by měla stručně shrnout historii feminismu včetně první, druhé a třetí vlny tohoto hnutí. Klíčový koncept a definice feministických otázek by se měla opírat především o díla Simone de Beauvoira (The Second Sex, 1949) nebo Betty Friedan (The Feminine Mystique, 1963). Zvláštní pozornost by měla práce věnovat specifické problematice britského feminismu. Součástí by měla být rovněž stručná biografie Weldonové se zdůrazněním na události v jejím životě, které ovlivnily její díla. Měly by být popsány události, postavy a témata ve Weldonové románech Remember Me and The Life a Loves of a She Devil a nalezeny přímé souvislosti s definicemi a principy druhé vlny feminismu, které byly již dříve v práci definovány. Závěrem by měly být shrnuty jak změny, tak i výzvy pro ženy od doby napsání románů do dneška.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis deals with feminist issues found in the novels *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* and *Remember Me* written by a significant British author Fay Weldon. It compares these issues and analyzes them according to the main characters of both novels. Ruth Patchett, the main character of Weldon's drama novel *The Life and Loves of a She Devil*, oppressed by her husband and the family realized the injustice which they caused her, began to act sharply, and stroke back at her husband and his mistress. She continued harassing them until she reached her goals. Similarly the next novel *Remember Me* is represented by women figures in the main role plays. For instance, Margot Jarvis, one of the main characters of the novel, was left by her husband. Due to her despair and loss, she took hopeless and embarrassing steps in effort to take revenge on her husband and his new wife, and only after her death she reached appreciation. The books were written in the 1970s and 1980s. Both novels mirror the traditional conception of women in society in contrast with the consciousness raising of women beginning around 1960s and 1970s.

**Keywords:** History of feminism, Fay Weldon, *The Life and Loves of a She Devil*, *Remember Me*, women

## **Souhrn**

Tato práce se zabývá nalezenými feministickými prvky v románech „Život a lásky jedné ďáblice“ a „Vzpomínejte na mě,“ které napsala významná britská spisovatelka Fay Weldon. Ruth Patchett, hlavní postava dramatického románu „Život a lásky jedné ďáblice,“ omezovaná svým manželem a rodinou si uvědomila příkoří, které jí její nejbližší způsobovali, tudíž začala rázně jednat a mstít se svému muži a jeho milence. Nepřestala do té doby, dokud nedosáhla svých cílů. Podobně tak i další román Weldonové „Vzpomínejte na mě“ je reprezentován ženami v hlavních rolích. Například Margot Jarvis, což je jedna z hlavních postav románu, kterou opustil manžel. Kvůli svému zoufalství a ztrátě Margot podnikala beznadějně a zoufalé kroky ve snaze se pomstít svému manželovi a jeho nové ženě. Pouze až po své vlastní smrti dosáhla uznání. Tyto knihy byly napsány v 70. a 80. letech 20. století. Oba romány jsou odrazem tehdejšího tradičního pojetí ženy ve společnosti v kontrastu s rostoucí emancipací žen, která se začala objevovat až v 60. a 70. letech 20. století.

**Klíčová slova:** Historie feminizmu, „Život a lásky jedné ďáblice,“ „Vzpomínejte na mě,“ Fay Weldon, ženy

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to find and analyze the feminist features in Fay Weldon's novels *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* (published in 1983) and *Remember Me* (published in 1976). For that purpose, chapter II introduces the brief history of feminism, feminist waves and mainly focuses on British feminism since Great Britain is setting of the work. Weldon, who is one of the best women writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Britain, found the inspiration for her writings in the social changes of women beginning after WWII, as well as in her life, which has been rather complicated regarding relationships with men. In her works she reflected the oppression of women by men, she maintained complex relationships between men and women as well as relationships between women, and she stressed the rising emancipation of women. To some extent, the following chapter is concerned about Weldon, her life and her works.

The second part of the thesis analyzes the first book *The Life and Loves of a She Devil*. Firstly it concentrates on depiction of the main figures of the novel – Ruth Patchett, Bobbo Patchett and Mary Fisher. Secondly it summarizes the plot, after it depicts the major themes of the novel, and finally it describes the endless problem between men and women. The further chapter analyzes the second novel *Remember Me*. It introduces and describes the main characters – Jarvis Katkin, Madeleine Katkin, Lily Katkin, Margot and Philip, after it summarizes its plot, and finally maintains the themes of the book.

The last topic analyzed points out the social changes since the novels *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* and *Remember Me* were written. It describes the progresses and challenges for women throughout 1970s, 1980s until 21st century, and it maintains the contrast with the traditional conception of women's society.

## 2. History of feminism

“Feminism covers a diversity of beliefs, practices and politics, and these overlap and interact with other beliefs, practices and politics.” Feminism in English speaking countries at the end of the nineteenth century dealt with defense of women's rights.



Women were participating in campaigns around “education, political representation, working conditions, health, sexuality, motherhood and legal rights.” These kinds of campaigns were not for all women. For instance, in United Kingdom there were special campaigns for middle-class women to attain an access to jobs and positions, and also campaigns for working class women to attain an access to contraception. All the campaigns were organized by radical feminists who “targeted male power over women’s minds, bodies, sexuality or labor,” and that was not generally acceptable. (RAMAYANOGLU, HOLLAND 2002: 5)

At the end of the twentieth century feminism was based more on “male dominance theories” and on political and general relationships between men and women. “Feminism, therefore, entails some theory of power relations.” Feminists were establishing new ideas and theories essential for feminism by solving what could change the power relations, and what were the effects of power. (RAMAYANOGLU, HOLLAND 2002: 5) In the late twentieth century women maintained their political, practical and social activity, and mainly cooperated together in achieving the main goal – “to transform unjust gender relations.” (RAMAYANOGLU, HOLLAND 2002: 6)

It is not quite possible to characterize feminism due to its diversity - different periods and different issues being solved, various cultures and plenty differing ways of expressing feminism. There are conferences organized by the United Nations where certain “limits of common experiences” are discussed; however, “there has never been a shared theory of gender oppression or male dominance; or a consensus on truths about gender.” (RAMAYANOGLU, HOLLAND 2002: 7)

## **2.1.Waves of feminism**

The term “Waves of feminism” indicates acts of feminist evolution from 18<sup>th</sup> Century until now. The Waves are divided into three periods which refer to all feminist movements during history when women struggled for their rights and protection in the society. Nowadays, when women and men share equal rights and respect, the astonishing fact is that in not remote past women were not able to vote or have their own freedom. Feminist movement arose from dissatisfaction and determination of women who desired not to be discriminated but equal. (KHARA 2010 [online])

### 2.1.1. The first wave of feminism

The first wave of feminism was significant to the movement. The first steps were made already in 18<sup>th</sup> Century. For instance when Mary Wollstonecraft, so called “mother of feminism,” wrote the book named *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which was a crucial book for its time. The book is concerned mainly about rights and education for women and explains much of a women’s history. (LEWIS 2012 [online])

In *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* Wollstonecraft enquires the basic questions of feminism and she also introduces reasonable justifications and disagreement with the sociable prejudice. According to Mary Wollstonecraft from “*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*:”

“In what does man’s pre-eminence over the brute creation consist? The answer is as clear as that a half is less than the whole; in Reason. What acquirement exalts one being above another? Virtue; we spontaneously reply. For what purpose were the passions implanted? That man by struggling with them might attain a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes; whispers Experience.” (WOLLSTONECRAFT 1975: 12)

Wollstonecraft refuses these “deeply rooted” arguments and claims that this reason is darkened by prejudices and these deceitful qualities were named virtues. Men prefer to maintain their reason instead of clearing it and they make up their own confined assumptions which “for a kind of intellectual cowardice prevails.” (WOLLSTONECRAFT 1975: 12)

“...though proof must be brought, or the strong hold of prescription will never be forced by reason; yet to urge prescription as an argument to justify the depriving men (or women) of their natural rights, is one of the absurd sophisms which daily insult common sense.” (WOLLSTONECRAFT 1975: 13)

One of the most important issues that Wollstonecraft deals with in her book is the right of women to be educated. She asserts that education for women is good for keeping up the marriage. She believes that as long as a marriage as an agreement between two individuals, a husband and a wife, it is necessary for a woman to obtain equal knowledge to a man. This makes a relationship stable and it also brings an education to children. (LEWIS 2012 [online])

In spite of the fact that women attended educational institutions more than before, they were still considered “a frivolous sex, and ridiculed or pitied by the writers who endeavour by satire or instruction to improve them.” Women spent many “acquiring a smattering of accomplishments” to be good enough to get married one day which was conceived as a way how a woman get up in her life and be somebody. (WOLLSTONECRAFT 1975: 10)

“And this desire making mere animals of them, when they marry they act as such children may be expected to act,—they dress, they paint, and nickname God's creatures. Surely these weak beings are only fit for a seraglio!” (WOLLSTONECRAFT 1975: 10)

An issue that also takes place in her book is about educating children. She asserts that it should be a national concern to educate children. Children grow up among adult society and that becomes a reason why they “acquire that kind of premature manhood.” She claims that they should all be put together so they can reach the same aims and they can develop their skills. (WOLLSTONECRAFT 1975: 157)

Women protested against so called “prison” marriage when they and their children were owned by their husbands. Later on the activism repelled the political power and fought for the right to vote. The result was that the Representation of the People Act 1918 was approved and women above the age 30 who owned houses could vote. Later in 1928 the right changed and verdict was that voting was possible for women above age 21. (KHARA 2010 [online])

Formally the first wave began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 in New York. About three hundred women and men assembled at the matter of equality for women. Seneca Falls Declaration evolved in belief of new ideology and politics of the movement by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In Victorian America was women’s behavior such as speaking in public, demonstrating or working in jails considered very “unladylike” and that promoted so called “cult of domesticity,” (RAMPTON 2008 [online]) which meant that a true women should be on her place at home taking care of her family. Women were expected to be humble, not to have the main word in the house, definitely not to get into any public activities and protect their reproductive abilities. Such asserts and others as for example that a woman had “a smaller brain and

a more fragile physique” resulted in women’s rights activism. (KROLOKKE, SORENSEN 2006: 5)

There were many discussions about women participating in politics or voting and it resulted in examination of men and women and their difference. Some of the results showed that women were morally superior to men and therefore public behavior and the political process would improve by their presence. (RAMPTON 2008 [online])

Discontented with access and determined to uphold the equality for women, struggling for politics and women’s issues like right to divorce, abortion or against sexism, the first wave feminists continued to affect feminism in Eastern and Western world throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (KROLOKKE, SORENSEN 2006: 7)

### **2.1.2. The second wave of feminism**

The second wave of feminism began in the early 1960’s until the late 1980’s. The main issues of this period dealt with better position in working society for women, sexuality and reproductive rights. This stage started in Atlantic City in 1968 and 1969 in America by protesting against so called “Miss America pageant.” It was a parody what feminists named “cattle parade” which meant degradation of women to “objects of beauty” who were supposed to be at home or have some kind of foolish job with little salary. Organizations incurred from the second wave were for example “The BITCH Manifesto,” “Sisterhood is Powerful,” NOW or “consciousness rising.” (KROLOKKE, SORENSEN 2006: 9)

While the first wave of feminism was in general joined by white women from the middle class, the second wave was joined by women of all nations and colors, looking for sisterhood and assertion “Women’s struggle is class struggle.” (RAMPTON 2008 [online])

Betty Friedan was one of the main activists of the second wave who fought for more opportunities for women in society and also women’s private issues such as sexuality, personal lives, reproduction and other important issues of this time. Her book *Feminine Mystique* (published in 1963) had fundamental influence on the progress of the second wave movement in America and mainly on lives of everyday women. There was a “happy woman” ideology in America at 1950’s and Friedan came up with so

called “problem without a name” called feminine mystique, which became a name of her famous book. According to her own experience she found out that the reality was very different from the ideology of happy woman as a housewife. After making many researches Friedan made a deep analysis and she offered a new “plan” to women that connected family and work together. (FRIEDAN 2002: 45)

“Betty Friedan for women’s movement is like Martin Luther King for black people.”(FRIEDAN 2002: 45, my translation)

While in 1790s Wollstonecraft fought for women’s education, in 1960s the situation with education of women was completely different. Women were allowed to study; however, they usually were not really motivated to due to kind of a “fashion” at that time which determined that being a married woman to a man that provides a good life is better than to study. According to the Friedan’s research, which was also published in the book *Feminine Mystique*, women’s opinions about studying were mostly matching each other. Usually women maintained that university education is not necessary because as soon as they finish they plan on getting married (even in case they were single or in not serious relationships). Women were convinced it was having children and functioning as housewives that were their life roles. (FRIEDAN 2002: 230)

“Girls aren’t interested in such thing as they used to be. Career doesn’t interest us. Our parents expected us to go to universities and so we did. If we didn’t go they wouldn’t understand it. But a woman who would seriously study or who would want to deal with a research work, that one would be suspicious and unfeminine. In my opinion, every one of us wants to finish university with a diamond wedding ring. That’s what it is about now.” (FRIEDAN 2002: 229, my translation)

In *Feminine Mystique* Friedan compares the situation since the book was written with the situation 20 years later. In contrast, one of the facts introduced is that 1980s became a decade of universities crowded with women. Women had a free choice of being a mother, a student or employed. There was no longer the myth of a woman being born for motherhood. A woman remains productive and a family and children do not exclude her from other activities. Women had many more options and that brought certain problems. For instance, the economical situation of that time necessitated women to be at work and if they decided to have children they usually had return to

work right after childbirth. (FRIEDAN 2002: 12) According to *Feminine Mystique*, during 1960s and 1980s we may see changes of women's world everywhere. These changes are sometimes insensible, other times noticeable, some of them are enormous. However, all of them are splendid changes, unexpected, painful, pitiless and most likely disposable changes in many women's and even men's lives. Women have begun working in men's positions, for example as firemen, politicians, priestesses, ministry chairwomen or scientists. Men's lives have also changed in many aspects. Nowadays there's nothing unusual about men being in roles of housewives, children vested in men's care or no more differences between housework for women and men. Women started to be more ambitious, more of them began to study universities and they achieved equal payment to men. Families with one parent, first childbirth in later age, boycott of traditional men's role, professional attitudes towards women, marriage contracts and many other important changes which nowadays seem to be obvious for the new generation but it needed an amount of courage, determination, endurance and strength for reaching such success. (FRIEDAN 2002: 5, 6) The second wave has spread the analysis of gender inequality which was not only in public life but also in relationships between men and women. (FRIEDAN 2002: 45)

### **2.1.3. The third wave of feminism**

The third wave began in the 1990's and continues until now. It has been following the aims of the two former phases. The main thought is still the empowerment of women but now it assigned to the wish of women to discover their own voice and to admit many different groups of women like lesbians, bisexuals, transgender women or women of different color. (KHARA 2010 [online])

In *Manifesta, young women, feminism, and the future*, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richard express third wave activists as "little girls with temporary tattoos at women's World Cup soccer matches to single mothers who organize the babysitting chain on Election Day – celebrate individual acts." (BAUMGARDNER, RICHARDS 2000: 30)

“It’s a sign of the times that feminist today are more likely to be individuals quietly (or not so quietly) living self-determined lives than radicals on the ramparts.” (BAUMGARDNER, RICHARDS 2000: 360)

In the new phase of feminism we have noticeable changes as for example reversible male birth control, a women’s soccer team, gays as parents, maternity leave also for men, various centers for child care, legalized gay marriage in many countries and continents in the world and other. (BAUMGARDNER, RICHARDS 2000: 316)

“The Third Wave is buoyed by the confidence of having more opportunities and less sexism” (BAUMGARDNER, RICHARDS 2000: 83)

Third wave feminists feel like very competent, brave and confident generation. This feminist phase has been influenced and encouraged by the new world situations such as for example the fall of communism, new risks of biotechnologies and religious and ethnic threats. American title for this wave is “grrl feminism” and the European title is known as “new feminism.” (KROLLOKE, SORRENSEN 2006: 17)

This phase can be characterized by “local, national, and transnational activism.” It has been orientated on issues like surgery on women’s body and mutilation of bodies, violence used against women, business and media. The third wave feminists have been criticizing feminism of the previous waves for “presenting universal answers or definitions of womanhood.” Feminists of this time are threatened of the new world order and therefore of the new danger women’s rights. (KROLLOKE, SORRENSEN 2006: 17)

Young third wave feminists “readopted” high-heels, low cut necklines, and lipstick which feminists of the two former phases asserted to be a matter of male pressure. An opinion about the new position of young feminists was expressed by one of them: “It’s possible to have a push-up bra and a brain at the same time.” The beauty of women is not considered as “object of a sexist patriarchy” but as subject. (RAMPTON 2008 [online]) Another typical feature for the third phase is that it “breaks boundaries.” Feminism is now multicultural and feminism is not “us-them” anymore. They sometimes even refuse to be called as “feminists” at all. Questions of gender or sexuality are marginalized. Differences like sexual orientation, origin or class are accepted as “dynamic, situational, and provisional.” (RAMPTON 2008 [online])

How feminism will continue from now is quite uncertain. Women who were part of former feminist activism feel disheartened by younger generation and their ignorance of what the previous group struggled for. Older feminist fear the imagination of younger women with red lips and high heels letting the movement slide back. However, feminism is not only “one ideology” and there have always been and will probably always be chaos, tension, and restlessness which are hopefully the positive signs that it is successful. (RAMPTON 2008 [online])

### **3. British Feminism**

#### **3.1. Individualistic Feminism in Britain**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century feminist promoted and spread liberal ideas. The main figure of liberalism based on individualism was Harriet Martineau, who influenced feminism at that time mainly with a book *Edinburgh Review of 1859*, which is concerned about “the industrial position of women in England.” Martineau criticized the position of women in the society in those days and she was also a member of an organization of a feminist movement in 1850’s and 1860’s. The primary interest of the individualistic feminism was basically to reach “the basic and natural equality of worth of men and women.” In historical society women were not accepted as “complete persons in their own right.” (DAVIES 1987 [online])

The issue about women being able to vote was greatly discussed in various meetings, presentations in Parliament and petitions. The comments that a woman’s personality and interests were part of those what her husband or father had or that she was “subjected to a rule and authority to which she had not consented as a sovereign individual,” created an important part of the movement’s philosophy. The other argument why women should not be able to vote was that they were not equal to men. The typical assertion of “separate spheres” meaning “private and domestic of women, public and political for men” was disproved by feminists. (DAVIES 1987 [online])

Finally, an employment of women was also an actual subject to argue about. Feminist activists rejected all restrictions on employment of women. The argument was mainly concerned about the fallible conviction of women not being able and responsible



enough to be employed and that their place was only at home as housewives. An important step in improving this issue was the organization called “The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women” established by Jessie Boucher and Helen Blackburn, began to help women in finding work and also provided training. Married women did not have the right to hold property. Even if they earned some money during the marriage it was their entire husband’s property. The law was established according to the idea that husband and wife was one person which was a great refusal of wife’s individual autonomy. Libertarian feminist movement disappeared between 1900 and 1920 when there was decay of classical liberalism and all feminist activism after 1918. (DAVIES 1987 [online])

### **3.2. British Feminism in the 1950’s**

Around 1950s, British “future feminists” still lived in believe that “a happy domesticity” was going to be the aim of their lives and the reason why they grew up to be “bright, popular, and good.” Only a decade after this vision appeared to be mistaken and many fundamental changes took place in society. Before that “Feminism had been dead for over thirty years. Even the word “feminism” had become faintly embarrassing. Feminists were seen as unfulfilled, neurotic, grasping women.” The changes of women’s roles evoked plenty of discussions and criticism. For instance, the critics asserted “such changes induced severe neurosis in women” and that they “transformed them into narcissistic “Moms” who devoured their sons and husbands, robbing them of independence and ego strength.” Moreover, it was recommended by Freudians to use “psychotherapy, government propaganda and awards for good motherhood, cash payments to mothers, and the restoration of such traditional home tasks as cooking, preserving, and decorating.” Regression to “traditional home” was seen as the only way women would be balanced, how they would keep on having children and therefore reproducing mankind and also as the only way of reducing “the level of hostility in the world.” (EVANS 1979: 4)

By the middle fifties, when women were actually happy to be married young and have four children, these worries appeared a little inconvenient. Housewives called themselves as housewives even if they worked outside the house. The number of

women studying was growing; however, the only purpose was getting ready to become better wives and mothers.

According to the *Life* magazine a “typical” housewife: “Busy Wife’s Achievements: Marjorie, Sutton is Home Manager, Mother, Hostess, and Useful Civic Worker.” A woman became a “superwoman” who managed “household with the help of a full-time maid, worked with the Campfire Girls, the PTA, did charity fund raising, and sang in the choir.” Except that she of course cooked, took care of the children, entertained guests, and exercised for keeping herself fit. Mass media published an amount of advertisements for domesticity. They “displayed feminine fashions with cinched waists, billowing petticoats, and accented bust lines.” The typical women idols of that time were “blond, buxom, sexy-but-innocent stars” Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. A woman was supposed to use the advertised products so she could serve the family in “whiter clothes, odor-free kitchens, and “Poppin’ Fresh” breads.” (EVANS 1979: 5)

It was not only the housework that a woman was expected to have always done but also, and now even more importantly, her function at emotional support of the family and assuring the family’s health and happiness. New technology, which introduced automatic washing machines for instance, shortened the time that women spent on housework, therefore they had less to do and more time to become a so called “suburban super-moms.” Such a woman had many activities for a community and supported her husband and his career success by “well-kept home and lavish entertaining.” (EVANS 1979: 7)

“Led to fantasize that marriage would provide them with total emotional and intellectual fulfillment, more and more women experienced acute disappointment and then guilt when it fell below the mark. In particular, educated suburban housewives, the women who attempted to live out the mystique in its fullest form, found that their goal had become a trap.” (EVANS 1979: 7)

Even if women were thought to educate themselves for only a purpose of being good mothers and wives, they still received the same level of training for future professions as men did. Therefore when they finally lived their married and familiar lives, they gradually found out that “suburbia had become a female ghetto.” Women

became more and more isolated from the public society and started realizing what all they were missing. Their husband was often far away from home, their families lived somewhere else and women became to be lonely and bored. The only way of escaping the reality was shopping and a husband was “their major link to the public realm.” However, there were also older married women who decided to work outside the house as for example secretaries, teachers, waitresses, or social workers. These were women entering the labor force very fast and simply trying to do whatever they could to help their families. These types of jobs were generally accepted as “women’s work” and the requirements were just like for women at home. An economy was changing and new considered “female labeled” positions were opened. Employers had to change their prejudices about married women with children due to not having enough young and single women who could work for them. Therefore millions of families acquired the second income and they “achieved their “middle-class” status in the surge of postwar prosperity. Women achieved a certain advantage of earning money, being independent, gaining new skills or being a part of decision making in the family, and these all new facts were at the same time a threat to their husbands. He felt he was not a “good provider” anymore. As a result, women felt guilty and stopped taking their jobs seriously which cause a “deep insecurity and negative self-image.” And of course, it caused their salary being lower. “In 1966 women received a smaller income relative to men than in 1939.” Percentage of women’s job positions rose, however, their salaries in the same occupations as men fell. (EVANS 1979: 8, 10)

Moreover, the society feared some kind of a “breakdown of social norms” because of women working and not being at home with their children. John Bowlby, the main protagonist of the theory of so called “maternal deprivation,” asserted that any kind of separation of a child from mother could lead in “juvenile delinquency,” meaning that working mothers would probably bring up children with mental disease. (CLEMENTS 2008 [online])

It is quite essential to mention that in 1961 was introduced the first contraceptive pill, in 1964 was opened the first birth control clinic for not married women, and abortion was legalized in 1967. Since then the birth rate descended. (CLEMENTS 2008 [online])

This period was certainly crucial for British women. Campaigns for the rights of women continued by active and very influential associations. The essential influence was basically in promoting another life outside of the house and that was happening despite of the fact that the media advertised the home and family should be the only interest for women, thereby the organizations were significant in this and of course in other periods as well. They acquired freedom for women, they pushed the change of the attitude of society towards women, and they reached the goal of women being accepted as individuals with their own concerns and needs. (CLEMENTS 2008 [online])

## **4. Autobiography of Fay Weldon**

### **4.1. Weldon's life**

Fay Weldon was born in England, 1931. When she was only a few weeks old, she and her mother moved back to New Zealand where her mother was born. Her parents got divorced when she was only five years old. She grew up in a feminine environment and that was probably the reason why she believed that “the world was populated only by females.” In her early twenties she got married to a man over twenty years older than her, however, not for a very long time. She raised her first son as a single mother in a difficult period of “odd jobs and hard times.” She began her career as an advertising copywriter with the slogan “Go to work on an egg.” She says that advertising was the only way to earn enough money for living at that time. (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

She got married for the second time in 1962 and from this matrimony had three more children, all boys. Around her thirties she went through an emotional crisis while trying to gain courage to finish her career in advertising and become a writer. Her writing career took off with the novel *The Fat Woman's Joke* (1967). After this first novel she wrote more than twenty others, short stories, magazine articles, non-fiction books and television and radio plays. (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

Weldon's life is pretty interesting itself. She's been in many different life situations that probably also influenced her writings. As young, she was poor unmarried mother living in London, she experienced more unsuccessful marriages, she tried to be a

perfect housewife as so called “spat-bot-cook” and “winer-and-diner,” and moreover she has been active in feminist issue. (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

“If I am a prolific writer and turn my hand, with what seems to some as indecent haste, from novels to screenplays to stage and radio plays, it is because there is so much to be said, so few of us to say it, and time runs out.” (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

She grew up with her mother, grandmother and sister therefore she did not really know much about men for a long time. Around 1960’s, when she moved back to London, her life began to change rapidly in all directions. For many people she became an idol, for many she became a “thorn-in-the-flesh” but she never disappointed anyone in provoke, inflame, or interest. “Love, sex, babies, blokes, poverty, work, politics, and not a few Very Famous Names” these are the key words for her life and period. (BUCKMAN 2008 [online])

## **4.2. Weldon’s writings**

During her writing career Weldon was well praised but received a lot of criticism as well. The main subjects in her books are women’s struggle with domestic duties, rude and cruel behavior of husbands, and their children’s demands. She has been “a fellow-traveler” of the feminist movement. In her early writings she criticizes women by accusing them of believing in “Darwinian rules of individual survival rather than the possibilities of solidarity” but in her later writings she states that “her true heroines are the pragmatic or subversive manipulators of a masculine world.” (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

As mentioned above, themes of Weldon’s writings are mostly fictional, related to feminism, telling about women’s tricky and troublesome life situations. She is concerned about relationships between women and men, about marriage, motherhood, sexual attraction, power and many other topics of every day life, which she writes about in an extraordinary and humorous way. An absorbing fact about her writings is that she does not always argue for women. Her women characters are usually victims of their husband’s crude behavior, however, women of her novels are not infallible and it often happens to be their fault that things end up wrong. Her novel *Worst Fears* (published in

1996) is a narrow example. The main character Alexandra is an ambitious, popular actress in Britain. She has all that any other woman would desire to have - attractive and kind husband, little son, beautiful house, a lot of friends and success. She is so occupied with her career that she lives in a belief her marriage is the happy one. Only when her husband dies and she tries to find out what exactly caused his death, a certainty of her life begins to collapse. Gradually she learns that everything she believed in was an illusion, and she wishes to know why her husband lived a double life, why he was unfaithful to her, why one his mistresses was her best friend, and why her best friend remained silent also about his next affair. Finally, Alexandra finds out she lived with a man she barely knew. In this novel Weldon points out that sometimes “blindness” in a relationship can have serious and unexpected consequences. Her other writings are typical for the kind of special of humor she is talented for. She depicts her characters in a ridiculous, exaggerated, and realistic way, which makes her novels uncommon and original the way Weldon is.

To compare, one of the authors writing her works at the same time as Weldon is Doris Lessing, a recipient of 2007 Nobel Prize in Literature. She is an excellent author of many novels, essays or shorts stories, mostly pointing out “social injustices” and “contemporary life.” Although she is not considered a feminist writer, her famous novel *The Golden Notebook* (published in 1962) “became an iconic novel for the feminist movement for its consciousness-raising theme.” This novel treats of a woman, Anna, who wants to stay independent from men, “in a time of re-examining sexual and political norms.” (LEWIS, 2012 [online]) What in Weldon’s novels is not certain, Lessing surely uses autobiographical features in the novel. She identifies herself with the main character Anna, who keeps four notebooks of different colors to note down her life aspects and experiences. These notebooks constitute Anna’s feelings about “her roles as writer, mother, political activist, and sexual being.” Anna is not capable of connecting these four notebooks into one until she experiences a nervous breakdown that inclines her to write just one – *The Golden Notebook*. In contrast with Weldon, Lessing did not maintain the “interactions between men and women.” She does not try to avoid any “evaluations of her characters’ physical and emotional relationships.” “*The Golden Notebook* made many men feel guilty about their gender at the same time it

seemed to advocate for women.” The fact that Weldon and Lessing agree on is that women are often the ones to blame for the consequences. (LEWIS 2012 [online])

Weldon has written “over twenty novels, five collections of short stories, several children’s books, non-fiction book, magazine articles and a number of plays written for television, radio and the stage, including the pilot episode for the television series *Upstairs Downstairs*.” (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online]) In her novels one can clearly recognize the “early philosophy of the feminist movement.” The primary concern in her fictional novels is on “everyday lives of women, and political action often happens in kitchens, on playgrounds, or at suburban dinner parties – wherever women spend their lives.” According to some of Weldon’s interviews it seems that her fictional novels are based on her own life experiences to a great extent. However, she “refused to clarify a number of conflicting or ambiguous biographical details.” (JANIK, JANIK, NELSON 2002: 349)

To compare her works, one of her earlier novels is called *Down Among The Women* (published in 1971). In this novel, for instance, the author depicts three generations of women and their complicated and difficult lives - “from their collapsed marriages, perilous finances and adulterous liaisons to their betrayals of friendship, illness and suicide.” The novel *Down Among The Women* is mostly about “a bitter portrait of female identity.” The world Weldon introduces shows the other side of not that pleasant reality of life. The reality of imperfect thicken women figures, of temporary absurd sexual relationships where sex is considered an “animal spasm,” and also the reality of men firstly being attracted, secondly making pregnant, after being unfaithful, and finally leaving. (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

In her later writings, Weldon begins to use various subjects related to science. A pure example is the novel *Puffball* (published in 1980), in which the author describes in detail how a woman changes physically during the pregnancy. Whereas in the novel *The Life and Loves of a She Devil*, the main character Ruth undergoes series of dubious plastic surgery in order to become a woman of men’s dreams. (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

Weldon also published her autobiographical book named *Auto da Fay* (published in 2002). In this book she narrates the story of her life – her childhood, her

marriage, the difficulties she had to go through, and her expectations versus the reality. (BRITISH COUNCIL 2011 [online])

## ***5. The Life and Loves of a She Devil***

*The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* is an outstanding fictional novel with feminist features, and one of the funniest, most readable and most shocking novels written in 1980s in Britain. In this book Weldon describes every day life issues; however, she ennobles the story with the unique and extreme style of her writings. She depicts a typical woman, the main character of the novel, living in a common middle-class home in British society. This woman represents an ordinary second-wave women's prototype – serving to her husband, being enslaved by her children and household, not having any of her own interests, not contradicting her husband's requirements, and trying to become so called "super-mother and wife." However, at the end of the second wave, when the book was written, women's self-consciousness became rising, and these obsolete prejudices how women should behave were changing rapidly. The contrast between the old stereotype and a new modern woman being capable of living only by herself, earning enough money to have a very good life, leaving her unfaithful husband and annoying children, and gaining self-confidence, is excellently and unconventionally portrayed in this book.

"It takes every mistreated wife's fantasies of revenge on every spoiled, philandering husband, and explodes them into a wild, fast-moving, and outrageously perverse fable of the battle between men and women – and between women and women." (BUCKMAN 2008 [online])

### **5.1. The Characters**

Weldon's depicts her characters in a comic and detailed way. Her remarkable narration of the figures is an essential component of the novel thanks to its originality and sharp humor. The characters never surrender, and they suffer in order to realize their "own identities," and to evaluate their "economic, sexual, and reproductive rights" situation,



which necessitates considerable amount of “courage and tremendous sacrifice.” (JANIK, JANIK, NELSON 2002: 349)

### 5.1.1. Ruth Patchett

Ruth is an unlucky woman. She is unprepossessing, unwieldy, and apprehensive and she plods through her life knuckled under the troubles of an unloving marriage. The one who makes her suffer and causes her life to be strenuous is and insolent, is unfaithful and apathetic man, her husband Bobbo. She encounters an assortment of insults and humiliations from him, however, her patience is diminishing and her pain and anger are starting to seethe. Ruth, lowborn and clumsy but good wife and mother, tries her best in spite of the daily routine she is objected to in order to delight her self-satisfying husband, her two ungrateful children, and the pet dog and guinea pig that live in her domestic house.

“I know what a life is like: I know what people are like. I know that we all make common cause in self-deception and wishful thinking, and who more so than adulterous lovers? I have time to think about it, when the dishes are done, and the house is quiet, and life ticks by, and there is nothing to do except wonder whether Bobbo and Mary Fisher are together *now*, *now*- how strange time seems! And I think and think and I act each role, sometimes him, sometimes, her.” (WELDON 2003: 6, my translation)

At the beginning Ruth is a dutiful and orderly housewife, gradually because of circumstances she turns in a she-devil. Not only that she makes the biggest and serious steps in her life, as leaving her husband and children, but she also undergoes many changes of her appearance, and her character as well. The way she achieves her goals, with the patience she needs to do so, she shows a mixture of various sides of her character. For instance, high intelligence and purposefulness, or madness.

“Now. Outside the world turns: tides surge up the cliffs at the foot of Mary Fisher’s tower, and fall again. In Australia the great gum trees weep their bark away; in Calcutta myriad flickers of human energy ignite and flare and die; in California the surfers weld their souls with foam and flutter off into eternity. And I am fixed here and now, trapped in my body, pinned to one particular spot, hating Mary Fisher. It is all I can do. Hate obsesses and transforms me: it is my singular attribution. I have only recently discovered it.”

“Better to hate than to grieve. I sing in praise of hate, and all its attendant energy. I sing a hymn to the death of love.” (WELDON 2003: 3, my translation)

Her strategies for achieving revenge and power are preciously intricate, however, becoming serious. She uses other people and benefits from them in some way; however, she does not hurt anyone except Bobbo and his mistress Mary. She treats them with such cruelty that they finally become desperate, weak and miserable. She does dreadful things to them, and all of this is done for only one reason; she wants the love of her husband back. (HOLMES 2000 [online])

“Does Mary Fisher love my husband? Does she return his love? Does she look into his eyes, and speak to him without words?” (WELDON 2003: 5, my translation)

The power given to Ruth in this novel is quite provocative. Ruth’s eagerness to undergo various surgical procedures to change her own body in order to achieve power raises serious queries about the value of the power that she accomplishes. (HOLMES 2000 [online])

Ruth’s figure represents a typical woman, who determines herself a housewife, contented by her wifely role, and who finally happens to become dishonored by the value system which appreciates mainly beautiful, dependent and passive women.

### **5.1.2. Bobbo Patchett**

Bobbo, Ruth’s husband, is a handsome and successful accountant. He is careless and does not behave as husband to Ruth. Bobbo is in love with Mary Fisher, who is a charming author of romance novels.

“When Bobbo looks in the mirror, he doesn’t see himself, but the man whom Mary Fisher loves. He thinks that life and money is the same thing. Bobby makes a monetary scale for lovemaking.” (WELDON 2003: 17, my translation)

Bobbo wants his marriage with Ruth to be an open one so that both of them are allowed to live their lives to the fullest. He tells Ruth that he is in love with Mary Fisher. He believes in honesty and love, so he admits to Ruth that he is having an affair

with Mary. He does not want to leave his wife, but wants to act accordingly to the feelings he has for Mary. (WELDON 2003: 14)

Bobbo's behavior is unacceptable, mainly in the first part of the novel. He is ignorant, rude and moreover hurtful towards his own wife. He is very strong character at the beginning; however, he ends up miserably. Firstly he behaves as there is no moral, no family, and no wife for him. Finally, he begs for moral and for his family to stay by his side when he at the bottom.

### **5.1.3. Mary Fisher**

Mary Fisher, as it was already mentioned, is a rich author of romance novels, and she is the complete opposite of Ruth. She was born a perfect woman. Her appearance is just dreamy, and moreover, she knows how to obtain what she wants from the world. Not only that she is successful, rich, beautiful, and famous, she also has Ruth's husband who loves her and unreservedly prefers her to his clumsy wife.

“Mary Fisher is small and pretty and delicately formed, prone to fainting and weeping and sleeping with men while pretending that she doesn't.” (WELDON 2003: 2, my translation)

Mary Fisher represents the “new modern” woman of the 1980s. She is divorced; she is emancipated, and independent. Moreover, she dislikes children; she lives in a materialistic world, and she is enough rich to pay servants, to have a beautiful residence on the seashore and unreasonable equipment. All that she earned by writing superficial novels principally concerned about similar kind of women she is – blond, attractive and rich. These romance novels are read especially by women like Ruth – unattractive, plump, exhausted mothers, which read these vague novels in order to dream about the kind of life Fisher's characters have.

In the first part of the novel, Mary Fisher gains all that was missing in her entire life, even what she would not desire - as for example Bobbo's and Ruth's children. At the beginning her amatory relationship with Bobbo is splendid. However, when Bobbo finally lives in her residence, things became to complicate. Gradually Mary loses everything as fast as she gained it.

## 5.2. The Plot

The story takes place in middle and upper-class environment around 1980s in Britain. It depicts a woman's misery, misfortune, an unexpected self-consciousness rising and finally a windfall, however, under questionable circumstances.

It all begins when Bobbo makes Ruth "accidentally" pregnant. His parents, whom she works for, commiserate with young Ruth, and they offer her Bobbo's room and more importantly his bed. He feels annoyed when coming back for Christmas to be offered a sofa instead of his own bed, so he creeps into the bed at night and has sex with Ruth. After Ruth finds out that she is expecting a baby, Bobbo has to marry her. (WELDON 2003: 28-30)

During their marriage, they happen to have two children, a house and a few pets. Ruth displays the indispensable member of the family, although not really noticed by the other members. What makes her indispensable is that she takes care of absolutely everything and everyone. She keeps the house clean, she cooks, she shops, and she tries to be unduly helpful. Nobody in the house appreciates her sacrifice, however, she does not mind – she is happy when everyone else is happy.

Once it happens that Bobbo and Ruth give Mary Fisher a lift to her residence from a party, where Bobbo and Mary spend the night staring at each other. Suddenly Bobbo drops Ruth out of the car somewhere still quite far from their house and all excited drives Mary to her tower. That night he does not return home anymore. After that he leaves two or three times every week and comes back home exhausted. He begins to feel that Ruth stands between him and his happiness. (WELDON 2003: 36-37)

"It is a good life. Bobbo tells me. He comes home less often, so does not say so as often as he did." (WELDON 2003: 5, my translation)

The day that there is supposed to be supper for Bobbo's parents, Ruth is not able to concentrate and everything goes wrong. Bobbo finds it highly embarrassing and that is the reason why he gets furious and tells her cruel things.

BOBBO: "It would serve you right if I went to see Mary, you have worked terrible mischief tonight! You have upset my parents, you have upset the children and you have upset me. I see you as you really are. You are a third-rate

person. You are a bad mother, a worse wife and a dreadful cook. In fact I don't think you are a woman at all. I think that what you are is a she-devil!" (WELDON 2003: 46, my translation)

The moment when he calls her a she-devil, a change has come over her. She decides to take up arms against God and to really consistently behave as a true she-devil. Finally she comprehends and concedes that anger and hate inside of her, and she decides to reach power, success and glamour that have been kept back from her all these years. She takes revenge on her obstinate husband and his wicked mistress. While accepting the "she-devil" inside of her, she reveals the aversion of the superficial world in which we live in. This culture has a special liking to reward on those already rewarded by fate. Ruth perfectly transforms herself. She burns down her house and gets rid of her disobedient children. She does all this in order to successfully reach her goals.

"I am frightened. I belong nowhere, neither to the ranks of the respectable nor the damned. Even whores, these days, must be beautiful. As a woman my physical match is an old, epileptic, half-witted man. And I accept it, and in the accepting have lost my place, my chair at the edge of the great ballroom where the million, million wallflowers sit, and have done since the beginning of time, watching and admiring, never joining the dance, never making claims, avoiding humiliation, but always hoping. One day, we vaguely know, a knight in shining armor will gallop by, and see through to the beauty of the soul, and gather the damsel up and set a crown on her head, and she will be queen. But there is no beauty in my soul, not now, and I have no place, so I must make my own, and since I cannot change the world, I will change myself. I am invigorated. Self-knowledge and reason run through my veins: the cold slow blood of the she-devil." (WELDON 2003: 53, my translation)

"I want revenge.  
I want power.  
I want money.  
I want to be loved and not love in return." (WELDON 2003: 47, my translation)

She gains skills, power, and money. She explores and critiques key sites of power and powerlessness in contemporary society, including the church, the law, the geriatric institution, the family home, and above all the bedroom.

At the very beginning Mary loves Bobbo and he loves her. He wants to live with her and so he leaves his own family due to the love he feels for Mary. However, the

situation changes and they begin to experience a pressure put on their relationship. Thanks to Ruth their love is now complicated and they both become stressed, nervous and desperate. Ruth slowly starts to win this “game.”

The novel ends with Ruth’s complete success in accomplishing all her goals. However, her achievements bring forward some intricate questions. She uses the same handling and disrespect that was done to her, and also she undergoes very complicated and painful surgical procedures to look the same as Mary Fisher, the woman she hates the most. (HOLMES 2000 [online])

It begins as Bobbo being an uncaring husband, loving somebody who is not his wife, showing his power to Ruth, and finishes as Ruth transforming from being the housewife going through various struggles because of Bobbo into a strong self-confident woman wanting revenge, money and power.

### **5.3. The themes**

In fact, the main theme of the book is revenge of Ruth, who returns all her husband Boobo did to her. It is revenge of a woman, who used to be submissive to her husband as most of women of that age. Weldon stressed out the situation between men and women, the relationship of domination and submissiveness, and mainly she pointed out that this situation had changed, and after a certain boundary of misfortune women started opposing men. Women started to live their lives into the fullest, and remaining quiet and silent suffering was over.

Simone de Beauvoir brilliantly explains the traditionally set relationship between men and women in her book *The Second Sex* (published in 1949). Beauvoir analyses a woman being according to deep historical roots. As for instance, when Aristotle said that “the female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities,” or St. Thomas expressed a woman being to be an “imperfect man” or an “incidental” being. Also Genesis defines Eve as a being made from “a supernumerary bone” of Adam. “Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as an autonomous being.” (BEAUVOIR 2010: 16)

“She is simply what man decrees; thus she is called “the sex,” by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex –

absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.” (BEAUVOIR 2010: 16)

Beauvoir is concerned with the cause of women being the Other. She compares the meaning of the word “Other” with its usage in the society. The “category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself.” In ancient times the “expression of a duality – that of the Self and the Other” can be already found. However, it was never used for expressing a division of the sexes. “Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought.” (BEAUVOIR 2010: 16) How did it happen that women let men’s domination prevail? Understandably the dominant one, “the Subject,” will not voluntarily become the submissive one, “the Other.” “But if the Other is not to regain the status of being the One, he must be submissive enough to accept this alien point of view.” (BEAUVOIR 2010: 18) It is not only a “historical event” but a “historical development” that resolves the “status” of women in the “membership of particular individuals.” Women have always been “subordinated to men, and hence their dependency is not the result of a historical event or a social change - it was not something that occurred.” In truth, it is not any “historical reality” but the nature of women, and women’s incapability to come up with the change from being inessential to essential. (BEAUVOIR 2010: 19)

“...it is impossible to regard woman simply as a productive force: she is for man a sexual partner, a reproducer, an erotic object – an Other through whom he seeks himself.” (BLUNDEN 2005 [online])

*The Second Sex* was written in 1950s when women started being active in the movement of feminism, and they gradually began to realize that their positions in the society and their roles at home were not satisfying them. Self-consciousness rising is one the occurring themes as well. Weldon depicted Ruth as an ordinary, rather boring suburban woman, living her life mostly for the others. In the first part of the book, she is still “the Other” - a woman with no self-confidence under a complete influence of her family, and especially her husband, who is described firstly as ignorant towards Ruth, afterwards rather crude, and in the end exhausted and desperate after Ruth revenges

herself. In the second part of the novel Ruth introduces a new modern woman, and she finally becomes fed up with the behavior of others towards her. She changes in all aspects of her entire life.

Furthermore, the contrast between good and evil is essential in the novel and it may be called another important theme. Major example is Ruth's character - being an obedient, good wife and mother switching into a devil using wicked tools to reach her revenge. Another example is Ruth's husband – at the beginning rude, in the end defeated and restrained.

Finally, the last themes in the novel to be mentioned are the moral ones, such as Ruth's plastic operations to look like the mistress of her husband Mary Fisher, Ruth leaving her children, or the acts Ruth uses in order to reach the revenge including illegal acts or frauds in her husband's name.

#### **5.4. The endless conflict**

Many men think that there will always be conflicts between both sexes and the fraternity will never occur. The fact is that today neither men nor women are contented with each other. The question is to know whether there is a curse that condemns both sexes to clash with each other or whether the conflicts in which they are opposed just mark a transitional moment in human history. (BLUNDEN 2005 [online])

Beauvoir's claims that when women make weapons at once of her weakness and of her strength due to salvation which they seek for. However, a man usually becomes bitter when he treats a woman as an independent being and then realizes that she is still a trap for him. If he satisfies her in her position as prey, he finds her claims irritating. Whatever he does, he feels tricked and she feels wronged. (BLUNDEN 2005 [online])

The conflict between man and woman will last as long as they recognize each other as equals. That means, as long as femininity is perpetuated as such. Which sex is more avid to maintain? A woman wishes to keep her privileges, which she is being emancipated from, and a man wants her to acquire his limitations. Natured habits are hard to break, because they are both victim of themselves and other ill-natured habits.



“Man is concerned with the effort to appear male, important, superior, he pretends so as to get pretence in return; he, too, is aggressive, uneasy; he feels hostility for women because he is afraid of them, he is afraid of them because he is afraid of he personage, the image, with which he identifies himself.” (BLUNDEN 2005 [online])

In everyday life we are confronted with an abundance of cases that deal with women who are suffering in relationships with men. A man who is obliged to support a woman financially and morally feels victimized when he no longer loves her. However, if he leaves the woman who has sacrificed her whole life to him without any reason, he will be unbearably victimized. Women loose the weight, and they just suffer. The feeling what they are experiencing in that moment can be compared to a parasite sucking out the living strength and life out of another organism. (BLUNDEN 2005 [online])

## **6. *Remember Me***

The novel *Remember Me* written in 1976 by Fay Weldon, is a great piece of satiric novel, where Weldon points out principally “the age-old” struggle between women and men, women’s rivalry, and most importantly the psychological impact of a divorce on all members involved, and especially a woman who never reconciled to it. The author narrates story about five adult people, the way they live their lives, and the obscure way they are linked to each other. The novel is based on everyday life issues and maintains the absurdity of marital life; however, it is put in Weldon’s unique “astonishing nerve and a lovely felicity of style” narration. (BUCKMAN 2008 [online]) Weldon describes a woman, living her misery because of her husband, who left her and her daughter for another woman. The fundamental concern is how far this desperate woman can go, what all she has to go through, how she changes, and finally the reason why it happened to her. All women of the novel represent typical reflection of the period the novel was written at. They all display housewives of 1970s in Britain, however, they very much differ. Weldon uses a contrast between the “super wife and mother,” and a woman that in this role fails. *Remember Me* also raises several fundamental questions: What emotions are kept between former and current wives of the same man? What if a

mistress appears? Is it morally correct to use the prior couples' children for revenge on the past significant other?

## **6.1. The Characters**

As in all her novels, the characters are described in a very detailed and witty way. Weldon created five main characters, which are somehow connected between each other. The connections are sometimes odd, sometimes clear, and sometimes not understandable. Some of the main figures are strong characters, who know exactly what they desire and what they think, or at least they think they know it. The other figures are weaker. They suffer from various depressions, complexes, or feelings of guilt. The author managed to depict all the members of the cast in impressive, elegant, and original way.

### **6.1.1. Jarvis Katkin**

Jarvis Katkin, an architect, has large blue eyes and thick, pale and graying eyebrows. His skin is loose because he is dieting. Every morning he reads *The Times* newspaper, eats toasts and eggs and drinks freshly squeezed orange juice. The morning ritual of his is properly prepared by his new cleaning-obsessed and ideal housewife Lily. He had been married to Madeleine, his grubby ex-wife, before he married Lily. He now hates Madeleine and does not feel guilty for leaving her and their daughter Hilary for this new and considered better wife. He has a new life where the furniture keeps polished and sex is considered fun. Lily is Jarvis's jackpot winning lottery ticket, this according to his mother. (WELDON 1994: 11)

“I am Jarvis, Lily's husband. Now I have Lily and I am the great and bad Jarvis, son of my father. I will never leave her. I will never send her away. I will keep her by my side, I will love her and I will reward her. What I do is necessary and absolutely correct. It is salvation for everyone.” (WELDON 1994: 85, my translation)

“Madeleine, I hate you. Lily, I love you.” (WELDON 1994: 86, my translation)

Jarvis is cruel and careless to Madeleine but his behavior towards Lily is different. He feels love for her and behaves accordingly to it. The irony is that Lily is

the stronger one after her marriage to Jarvis. She is charming to him due to her perfection and due to the fact that she is the opposite of his former wife. When the novel begins she is much more interested in her marriage, hates and disregards Madeleine while also being a distant, cold mother. She takes care of her son but shows no motherly emotions. After Madeleine dies Lily actually discovers these motherly emotions and stops paying so much attention to Jarvis and their marriage and focuses on her son.

“To have a husband is nothing. To be a wife is nothing. Sex is just empty amusement. The only meaningful thing is to be a mother.” Lily realizes that and it shocks her. She loses speech for a while; she falls into depression and fear which belong to motherhood.” (WELDON 1994: 217, my translation)

### **6.1.2. Madeleine Katkin**

Madeleine Katkin is Jarvis’s ex-wife and mother to his daughter Hilary. Madeleine is in her forties. She has sallow skin and elf-flock red hair. She also has sunken cheeks and large rolled eyes. She is emaciated even though she eats as much as her chubby daughter Hilary. Unlike Hilary, she is quite vain. Shabby jeans and an old brown sweater ripped in the armpit let the whole world know how she feels. This is what Madeleine looks like and what Jarvis turned her in to. Madeleine says she was Jarvis’s first and the only real wife. She is not over the divorce yet. She feels as Jarvis betrayed her and she wants to take revenge on him and his new wife Lily. (WELDON 1994: 19)

“She harbors such rage that not even death can shut her up.”(BUCKMAN 2008 [online])

### **6.1.3. Lily Katkin**

Lily Katkin is Jarvis’s new and perfect wife and also an emotionless mother to Jonathan, their son. She is in her early thirties. Lily has long, strong legs but still too thin for her big round bottom. She has a narrow waist and rounded breasts. Her face reflects shrill beauty demonstrating her experience and maturity. She cannot relax in the kitchen or even in the house due to her true housewife nature but in bed, she can be quite different. She does her best to keep Jarvis happy in order to make him want to stay with her. She even wants Hilary, Jarvis’s daughter, to be happy by giving her everything

which Madeleine does not. She wants to show everyone that she is a really successful woman: as a wife, daughter, mother, and stepmother. (WELDON 1994: 12, 32)

#### **6.1.4. Margot and Philip**

Margot is Dr. Philip's wife and mother of two children. Margot is petite, soft and a plump woman with nice breasts. Her face is round and pleasant. She feels un-cared for because her husband, a doctor, does not show any kind of interest in her anymore. He does love her but "in his own way." So at least she tries to be useful for the family. She suffers from the marriage and from the life which she leads. (WELDON 1994: 8-10)

"Yes, I am doctor's wife, mother of doctor's children. They use me and overlook me. I am doctor's wife, only partially welcome guest, supplement to my husband, not witty, neither beautiful nor successful but useful." (WELDON 1994: 96, my translation)

Philip and Margot show quite typical evidence of men being the stronger ones in relationships. Even though he loves her in his own way, she suffers due to the behavior of both her husband and her children. She feels used and emotionally unfulfilled. She sacrificed her life for her husband. She created home for him and their children. She is always doing what her family expects from her and what she is supposed to do in their eyes. But what about her dreams and desires? Nobody really cares. At the end of the novel she can not bear her submissive life anymore and starts speaking her mind, all this thanks to Madeleine.

MARGOT: "I have never loved you."

PHILIP: "So why did u marry me?"

MARGOT: "Because I was pregnant."

PHILIP: "But I did love you." (WELDON 1994: 220, my translation)

## 6.2. The Plot

Jarvis gets divorced with Madeleine and leaves her and their daughter for a younger, prettier and better woman Lily. He loves Madeleine until she turns out to be constantly unhappy, depressed, dissatisfied, starts neglecting her and him as well. He meets Lily while he is still married to Madeleine. When Lily conceives, she moves into his and Madeleine's house while Madeleine and Hilary still live there. Lily begins to create "her" new home and she completely changes everything in the house. Madeleine and Hilary are forced to leave after the divorce and they move into an awful basement apartment. Madeleine is desperate. She can not bear the divorce and the fact that Jarvis has a new family. She continually bothers Jarvis and Lily. She makes hysterical scenes, calls their house and threatens them. She can not cope with being neither mother nor wife. She only seeks out revenge. Hilary suffers from the divorce as well because she thinks she caused it by disappointing her parents. She also suffers from living with her careless mother. Later on, Madeleine dies in a tragic car accident and all relations between characters begin to change gradually.

Many years ago, a drunken night quite forgotten by Jarvis, he makes love to Margot on a pile of damp coats. This happens while Jarvis is still married to Madeleine. Margot conceives that night and after she gives a birth to Laurence. Philip has no clue about his wife's affair and he is absolutely certain Laurence is his son. Only Margot knows. It is her life secret and it is a heavy burden that she has to carry. However, Margot is quite content with her life until Madeleine's death, because it seems like Madeleine speaks through Margot's mouth and deals with both their unresolved issues. "Madeleine wants revenge, wants to be remembered, to be loved." (BUCKMAN 2008 [online]) After her death it appears that she reaches what she wants. Jarvis becomes psychologically disturbed, which influences his relationship with Lily. Lily becomes nervous about Jarvis's behavior and about being the only wife now. She is worried about the responsibility of being the only one who he depends on.

"Yes, I am Lily, once a second wife, today the only wife. What is going to happen now? I did not mean it like this. Not at all. I married Jarvis, Madeleine's husband. Is he going to be dependent on me now? Jarvis, Lily's husband and Lily, Jarvis's wife and the only wife?" (WELDON 1994: 98, my translation)

Margot finally helps Jarvis realize that he does not hate Madeleine. She also gathers courage to finally tell Jarvis about their sexual affair years ago, and rises against being used by her family.

“I should have behaved better to Madeleine,” says Jarvis finally after years. It’s too late. “I was being unfair. You are absolutely right.” (WELDON 1994: 203, my translation)

Hilary moves to Margot’s house because it was Madeleine’s wish. Hilary now feels relieved. She loved her mother but was not happy with her.

“I am Hilary, daughter of once-living mother, mother of my future children. I will never eat sweets anymore. My mother’s death released me. My life, her death – that is all she gave me. Her death was the best thing she has ever given to me – that was her last but good gift.” (WELDON 1994: 227, my translation)

At the beginning of the novel Jarvis hates Madeleine and at the end he remembers her as a wife and mother of his daughter. Madeleine sacrifices her life for him and he leaves her. He is absolutely infatuated with Lily, his new wife. He does not care about what Madeleine feels, how desperate, weak and miserable she is, and why she does all these things to them. All Madeleine does have one only objective – she wants to be loved and remembered.

### **6.3. The Themes**

In *Remember Me*, marital life and everything it contains is one of the essential themes. Weldon describes how a man, who finds another woman because he is fed up with his wife, being a nervous and annoying wife, can easily change women and his feelings towards them. In the end of the novel, the consequences of his decisions are maintained. Not only that the woman suffers and never gets over it until her death, but also the children display an important part of this issue, however, that is neglected by the adults. Moreover, Weldon is concerned about the contrast between women characters, which is also an important theme of the novel. A woman that fails in the traditional role of perfect wife is left by her husband, and a woman that seems to be perfect wife gains everything. An occurring theme, quite indispensable in the novel, is a deprivation of one of the main characters. Madeleine, who gets completely lost in her life after her

husband divorces her. The theme about wasted personality after some kind of an experience is analyzed in Betty Friedan's book *Feminine Mystique*. Friedan points out what is necessary for a person to be normal is just to be capable of being happy and reconcile with oneself, living without a feeling of guilt, and becoming what one is able to become. The neurosis is considered as an obstacle to live ones life into the fullest, and also something that causes a lot of pressure. So called "inside conflict" occurs when one has to give up his own life, when one is empowered by despair, and it is only a matter of time when it leads into a complete self-destruction. Furthermore, Friedan stresses out "unhealthy adaptability" of women in households, and also the adaptability to the feminine mystique when women hoped that through their husbands and children they will live their lives to the fullest. Women only desired to be loved, and supported by their husbands, they demanded a social status, however, they were never responsible for the social development nor for their future, and their probably never realized their "human potential." Women living in their "feminine mystique," women who only live for their families, women that do not have any of their own goals that would include a future, these women can not ever fully develop their individualities. Without any aim, a woman loses awareness about who she really is because mainly this aim gives sense to our everyday life. Friedan states that a woman's individual fundamentally needs love and sexual satisfaction. (FRIEDAN 2002: 429–435) Not even a need of self-respect or respect of others is not that appreciated by women, which is how the character Madeleine was depicted by Weldon – as a woman who would do anything to get her husband back, to have his love, and as a woman who does not really care about any kind of respect of the others. And so she does embarrassing and odd things, and all just to live that normal and ordinary life again.

The last women issue theme is a feeling of guilt and frustration of a life of a woman. Margot, who displays an assistant to a man that she had an affair with, and she is in love with, however, she is married to someone else, who does not fulfill her image of a ideal man. One of the moral themes is her life secret, which is conceiving a child with another man she is married to. She keeps silent her whole entire life, however; finally Madeleine speaks through her mouth and enounces the shocking truth.

## 7. The Social Changes and Challenges since 1970s and 1980s

In 1970s, when *Remember Me* was written, Betty Friedan commented on the edition of her book *Feminine Mystique* published ten years ago. Friedan compares the differences between 1960s and 1970s, and the changes happening during interval of these ten years. She stresses out the finding herself and her attitude towards feminism, her feelings when beginning to write the book, and during the years of research. She says: “I openly admit that until I began to write the book I had not been conscious of any kind of feminine problem. At that time we all lived in captivity of feminine mystique, which made us passive and lonely creatures, and which did not see the real problems and the real possibilities. I was not the exception in this respect, and the same as the others I was asking myself what was wrong with me when I did not feel an orgasm while washing the floor.” When a woman felt she desired more than washing the floor, or loving her family, she automatically considered herself “insane” and “neurotic.” With these kind of “problems” women searched for psychological help, and they just tried to adapt as much as they could. Friedan maintains that all the women she happened to know during the time she was making a research for her book were living untruthful lives. The lies were supported by all the specialists and psychologists, and so these women adjusted their homes and all the activities to them. (FRIEDAN 2002: 34-36, my translation) Similarly as the women’s characters of Weldon’s novel *Remember Me*, which is a reflection of that time. These women are pictured in a way of women still being depended on men, and not finding any other possibilities.

“Whether women are human beings – no less, no more -, they will have to change all those things, which foil them to their lives as human beings, to the fullest and as an equal part of the society. And women, who will reveal the feminine mystique, will finally understand how they deceived themselves when they did not consider themselves serious, and they will understand what an imposture it was, when they revered themselves as goddesses, however, in reality they were only sexual objects.” (FRIEDAN 2002: 36, my translation)

The social changes for women in 1970s in Britain and United States distinctively improved compare to the previous last decades. The occurring changes were for instance the extension of women’s leadership positions, the control under reproduction thanks to the contraception pills, less cases of sexual harassment, better attitude towards



education, more possibilities in their careers, higher salaries, meaningful jobs, all these and more issues have been gradually changing since then. (TREI 2004 [online])

In 1980s, when the next Weldon's novel *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* was published, Friedan added another chapter to the *Feminine Mystique*, recapitulating and commenting on the great changes since the book was written. She is amazed how much her work meant for the movement and how revolutionary it in fact became. All the changes still unknown twenty years ago were now considered quite common. The traditional men's and women's role changed rapidly. However, Friedan points out that "all we finally achieved, namely our sons and daughters nowadays consider obvious, and that is why they face new problems and also new pressures, they have to make different decisions, and deal with before unknown conflicts." The time changed so vitally that it became difficult to continue developing oneself. Those who found it better before this revolution just probably could not reconcile with the enormous change of the revolution. The only necessary thing to do was to hold up and go ahead. (FRIEDAN 2002: 6, my translation)

Furthermore, when Friedan lectured in various universities, and she was telling stories about seemingly far history to her students, she was actually talking just about their mothers, who refused the obedience of housewives, and acceptance of traditional deep rooted roles of women in the society, and therefore helped the revolution begin. (FRIEDAN 2002: 8) And practically on the same themes Weldon's *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* is based on. Weldon's novel also deals with a woman refusal of traditional concept of femininity, and also with a woman's beginning a revolution, mainly in her own life.

The fact is that young community considers the "woman's individuality" as something normal. Friedan maintains that "if the issues we fought for are too commonplace for young people now, if they for example have too many worries because of their jobs, if they can not decide whether to have children or not to have, they think how to manage with one or two incomes or without them, they take more responsibility they can bear -, and that is the proof of how far our revolution has come, and it means that we are entering another phase." (FRIEDAN 2002: 8, my translation)

Women's issue and feminism has been still developing until now, the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the question is: How has it been changing? Even though it appears as

a certainty that women's positions in the society are nowadays absolutely equal to men's, in truth it is just seemingly. Still majority of leading positions are occupied with men. There is no doubt that its role has also the biological functions of women which limit them vitally in progressing to a complete success in their careers. However, this fact provokes a principal question. Is it because of men, because they want to lead, or is it just because women want it or do not mind it this way?

“If you think that there's no need for feminism because the world is basically equal, consider this: women are 51 percent of the U.S. population, but only 13 of 100 U.S. senators and only 59 of 435 representatives are women. This means that women occupy only 13.8 percent of the seats in Congress. Only 2 of the 9 Supreme Court justices are women, and have never had a female president or vice president.” (DICKER, PIEPMEIER 2003: 6)

Today's feminism is a step back. With all the opportunities what women have in 21<sup>st</sup> century, they should be “university deans, bank presidents, and members of Congress, but they are not.”

“We need a feminism that is dedicated to a radical, transformative political vision, a feminism that does not shy away from hard work but recognizes that changing the world is a difficult and necessary task, a feminism that utilizes the new technologies of the Internet, the playful world of fashion, and the more clear-cut activism of protest marches, a feminism that can engage with issues as diverse as women's sweatshop labor in global factories and violence against women expressed in popular music.” (DICKER, PIEPMEIER 2003: 5)

In Weldon's novel *Remember Me* and *The Life and Loves of a She Devil*, Weldon pictured the honoring the traditional values, and finally effort of escape and refuse such values. Weldon points out the seriousness with which women's acted when they decided to act. Today's women are completely different. Almost nothing including relationships between men and women is considered serious. The values in relationships are gradually fading away, and in case it continues to change to fast as until now, soon it may happen that there will sooner or later be no values.

## 8. Conclusion

Though changing throughout history, the essential thought of feminism remains the same. It deals with women's oppression by men, equality of women, emancipation of women, and social status of women in the society. Finding these feminist issues was the aim of the thesis as it tried to assimilate them to specific examples from Weldon's novels *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* and *Remember Me*, both written within the second wave of feminism. The main task of the thesis was to prove that Weldon applied feminist features in her writings, reflecting the period of 1970s and 1980s in Britain. To support the idea, detailed analysis of the main characters, the plots, and the themes of *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* and *Remember Me* were made. Furthermore, the brief history of feminism, feminist waves, and especially British feminism, which is the setting of the books, was outlined. Moreover, the novels were written also according to the author's life experience, therefore a short description of Fay Weldon's life as well as some of her writings was mentioned.

The second wave of feminism in Britain began around 1960s and 1980s, and it displayed mainly the major conversion of the traditional conception of women in the society to the new conception of women being emancipated, self-conscious, and equal beings to men. For instance, the main figure of *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* Ruth Patchett, who was a traditional woman of a British suburb resigned to her family. Once she realized the misery she was living in and she all lost patience to endure her husband's outpourings, she began to act promptly. Leaving her children, taking revenge, and transforming herself into a self-confident beautiful woman, all that she did to begin a new independent life. The other examples of the traditional conception of women in British society represent basically all the women characters of the novel *Remember Me*. Madeleine Jarvis, Lily Jarvis and Margot were women who desired to be perfect wives, however, not managed to be. Margot succeeded nor in the role of wife neither the role of mother. Her husband left her for another woman, Lily, and Madeleine never lived up to it. Lily began as a perfect wife and bad mother, however, ended up a better mother than wife. An assistant of Lily's husband Margot lived a misfortune life. Though she displayed a perfect housewife, she was never truly happy with the kind of life she had. She revealed as an unfaithful and unloving wife, because the whole life she desired

someone else than her husband. Similarly, women of the second period of feminism, experiencing so called “feminine mystique” or a “problem without a name” decided to start a revolution a change the myth of the traditional women’s position.

To sum up, in both novels *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* and *Remember Me* Weldon introduces various interpretations of women’s relationships. These relationships differ from each other; however, they are all unique and complicated. Weldon depicts the relations between the characters since their development in a highly detailed way. The major idea of the bachelor paper set before writing the thesis was to find the feminist issues in the novels *The Life and Loves of a She Devil* and *Remember Me*. A number of features were found and analyzed according to history and theories of feminism.

## 9. Resumé

Předmětem této práce je nalézt a analyzovat feministické prvky obsažené v tvorbě britské spisovatelky Fay Weldon, konkrétně v románech „Život a lásky jedné d'áblice“ a „Vzpomínejte na mě.“ Práce se zaměřuje především na jednotlivé postavy románů, jejich charakteristiky a vztahy mezi nimi, jak je Fay Weldon popisuje. Všechny tyto charakteristiky a vztahy jsou v práci detailně popsány a analyzovány. Kniha se zabývá vývojem těchto charakterů a jejich vztahů a také vlivy, které na ně působí, a to především vlivy mužů či společnosti.

Práce je představena stručným úvodem. Poté následuje kapitola první, což je historie feminismu a jeho jednotlivých fází. Obzvláště se zaměřuje na fázi druhou ve Velké Británii, ve které se děj obou románů odehrává. Dále následuje kapitola, která se zabývá samotnou Fay Weldon a jejími životními událostmi, které pravděpodobně do jisté míry ovlivnily její tvorbu. Jejich několik typických děl zde autor zmiňuje. Ve druhé části práce autor analyzuje hlavní postavy, děj a témata prvního zkoumaného románu „Život a lásky jedné d'áblice.“ Tato kapitola je rozdělena do čtyř hlavních částí a několika podkapitol, které korespondují se zkoumanými feministickými prvky. Po analýze prvního románu následuje obdobná analýza druhého vybraného románu „Vzpomínejte na mě.“ Poté autor poukazuje na změny a výzvy od doby, co byly oba romány napsány. V závěru této bakalářské práce autor představuje výsledky své analýzy.

Prvním analyzovaným románem je „Život a lásky jedné d'áblice.“ V první kapitole autor zkoumá především jeho hlavní postavy, a zaměřuje se přitom na prvky typické pro druhou fázi feminismu, které se promítají v jednotlivých charakterech. Jako první je analyzována postava ženy, která je odrazem tehdejší doby. Je to žena, jejíž jediný smysl života tvoří její rodina a povinnosti, které jako žena v domácnosti má. To, že její role v rodině není doceněna, ovšem trpí s nevídanou odevzdaností. Žije v domnění, že na světě nic důležitějšího než její muž a potomci není, a navíc trpí jakýmsi komplexem ze sebe sama. Tento komplex narůstá ještě více v době, kdy jí její muž začíná být nevěrný a vztah s jinou ženou, která je navíc ideálem ženské krásy, neskrývá. V jejím životě ovšem nastává chvíle, kdy jí trpělivost v roli domácí služebné dojde a začíná se rázně bránit. Uvědomuje si, co všechno jí dosavadní život přinesl a také vzal,

a rozhodne se svoji situaci zásadně změnit. S touto změnou souvisí i náležitá pomsta jejímu muži a jeho milence za veškeré způsobené příkoří. Aby mohla své cíle uskutečnit, podniká několik zásadních kroků, které evokují určité morální otázky. Zpočátku se zbavuje domu a tím pádem veškeré minulosti tím, že v domě způsobí požár. Hned na to opouští své potomky, a záludně je přenechává svému muži a jeho milence v naději, že jim ratolesti překazí jejich líbánky. Poté nastává nová etapa jejího života v roli „d'áblice“, jak ji již v minulosti označil její manžel, do níž se náležitě vžívá. Jejím hlavním cílem je pomsta a dále pak změna její vlastní osobnosti. Těchto cílů dosahuje pomocí nejrůznějších prostředků, které jsou mnohdy nemorální, někdy i ilegální a přinejmenším podivné. Přesto se jí nakonec podaří uspět. Nejenže naprosto zničí svého muže a jeho krásnou milenku jak po finanční stránce, tak po té životní, ale také mění sebe samu. Po několika letech prostřednictvím nejrůznějších chirurgických zákroků docílí identického vzhledu milenkou jejího muže, dostává se na vrchol kariéry, a tím pádem se stává i nezávislou ženou. Všechny tyto prvky korespondují s dobou druhé poloviny dvacátého století, v němž je román napsán, a je této doby odrazem. Ta se vyznačovala především snahou o odproštění se od tradičního pojetí ženy, její již předurčené funkce a rostoucí emancipací žen vlivem feminismu. To vše byly hluboko zakořeněné předsudky společnosti, a proto jejich změna nebyla vůbec jednoduchá. Zpočátku ženy, které se rozhodly změnit svůj stereotypní život a přispět do rodinného rozpočtu nějakou prací, obdržely značnou kritiku společnosti. Pro společnost byla žena špatná v případě, že se nějak odlišovala od ostatních, a když, a to především, kvůli práci zanedbávala výchovu svých potomků a péči o svého muže. Weldon, považována za feministickou spisovatelku, sympatizuje se svými silnými ženskými charaktery, jejichž prostřednictvím, i když poněkud svérázným způsobem, poukazuje na změny, které se ve společnosti za ta desetiletí udály.

Druhou analyzovanou postavou románu je muž, který představuje manžela, otce a zároveň milence. Zkoumaný je především důvod jeho chování ke své současné ženě v porovnání s chováním k milence. Manželka pro něj symbolizuje pouze jakousi funkční součást života, které by si pravděpodobně vůbec nevšiml, nebýt občasných chyb, jichž se ona dopustí. Jeho jediná funkce manžela a otce v podstatě spočívá pouze ve finanční podpoře domácnosti, všechno ostatní považuje za samozřejmé. Ve chvíli, kdy začíná aféra s jeho dokonalou milenkou, považuje svoji ženu pouze za přítěž, která

ho v jeho stylu života omezuje. Vztah se svojí milenkou považuje za oficiální, a své ženě to dává patřičně najevo. Ovšem díky vydařené pomstě jeho manželky končí nejen bez milenky, ale také bez veškerých finančních prostředků. Následně lituje, jak se ke své ženě choval.

Posledním zkoumaným charakterem tohoto románu je samotná milenka. Tato žena je příkladem typické ženské krásy, rozvedené a bohaté. Weldon zde popisuje ženu, která již představuje novodobý typ moderní ženy 80. let 20. století. Moderní žena se již nenechává omezovat, ale naopak se prosazuje - především v profesním životě. Nemá již potřebu stát se za každou cenu perfektní matkou a manželkou, ale spíše se soustředí sama na sebe a svojí vlastní nezávislost. Přesně tak Weldon zobrazuje tuto ženu jako naprosto nezávislou a sebevědomou bytost. Jejím zdrojem příjmu a také slávy je psaní romantických příběhů o dokonalých a šťastných ženách, čímž v podstatě popisuje svůj osud. Ona sama zpočátku získává vše - cizího muže, kterého si přivlastní, a slávu získanou především díky ženám, které jsou nedokonalé a nešťastné, a pro něž tyto romány představují útěk z reality. Ovšem to, co tak rychle získala, nakonec stejně rychle ztrácí.

Další část analýzy románu se věnuje samotnému ději. Zde se autor zabývá převážně vývojem vztahů jednotlivých postav. Dále pak rozebírá důvody, příčiny a následky situací, které se v románu odehrávají.

V předposlední části analýzy autor rozebírá nejdůležitější témata knihy. Jedním z těchto témat, kterým se autor zabývá, je pomsta ženy, která se mstí především za veškeré příkoří, které jí bylo způsobeno jejím vlastním mužem. Ten je po celou dobu jejich manželství svým dominantním chováním omezoval. Ona, jakožto slabší jedinec, se musela přizpůsobit. Vztah nadřazenosti muže a podřazenosti ženy autor analyzuje na základě tvrzení feministické spisovatelky Simone de Beauvoir, která tento tradiční vztah vysvětluje téměř od počátku jeho existence. Dalším tématem románu je rostoucí emancipace žen, která začala být aktuální již v 50. letech 20. století, a Weldon prostřednictvím svých ženských charakterů na emancipaci a její průběh upozorňuje. V analýze témat je také popsán kontrast mezi dobrem a zlem, tj. mezi dobrou a poslušnou ženou, a mezi tou samou ženou dychtící po kruté pomstě. Posledním tématem románu jsou nemorální činy, kterých se hlavní postava dopouští, aby dosáhla svých cílů a vytoužené pomsty. V závěrečné podkapitole analyzovaného románu se autor zabývá

problémem mezi muži a ženami obecně. Teorie se opírají především o knihu „The Second Sex“ od výše zmíněné autorky Simone de Beauvoir.

V následující kapitole této bakalářské práce se autor zabývá analýzou dalšího vybraného románu od spisovatelky Fay Weldon „Vzpomínejte na mě.“ Obdobně jako u rozboru předchozího románu je zde první část analýzy věnována samotným postavám románu. Hlavních charakterů v tomto románu je více a jsou navzájem propojeny různými komplikovanými vztahy mezi sebou.

První zkoumanou postavou je muž, jehož role v románu má zásadní dopady na osudy dalších postav. Tento muž odchází od své ženy a dcery, protože mu již nevyhovuje trávit svůj život ve společnosti neustále depresivní a protivné partnerky. Ožení se proto s novou, mladší, krásnější a podle něj dokonalou ženou, se kterou má dalšího potomka. Svě bývalé manželce způsobuje jakýsi životní kolaps, se kterým se není schopná vyrovnat. Tím je také zásadně ovlivněn život jejich dcery v pubertálním věku, která soužitím se svojí depresivní matkou trpí. Muž je přesvědčen, že svou novou ženu bezmezně miluje, a ke své bývalé ženě cítí nenávist, ačkoliv to byl on, kdo ji opustil. Situace se ovšem mění ve chvíli, kdy jeho bývalá žena umírá při tragické nehodě, a on si zpětně uvědomí, co pro něj vlastně znamenala. Vzpomíná na ni především jako na svoji ženu a matku jeho dcery, čímž se zásadně narušuje onen dokonalý vztah s jeho novou partnerkou.

Jako druhou hlavní postavu románu autor zkoumá ženu, která zklamala v roli dokonalé manželky a matky, a nedokáže tento fakt unést. Cítí se zrazená a opuštěná, a jediné po čem touží, je pomsta svému bývalému muži a jeho nové ženě. Během svého života se jim pokouší překazit idylické soužití, ale to se jí příliš nedaří. Její pomsta začíná až ve chvíli, kdy tragicky umírá při automobilové nehodě, jelikož tím znatelně rozruší své okolí a hlavně svého bývalého muže a jeho ženu, kteří díky této události prochází nemalou manželskou krizí.

Rozebíranou postavou je i mladá žena představující bezchybnou manželku muže, jehož omrzela jeho bývalá žena. Tato mladá žena si potrpí na dokonalost všeho druhu. Ať už se jedná o dům či o sebe samu. Zpočátku se soustředí především na samotný vztah, na svého muže a na to, aby ho učinila šťastným. Mateřskou roli přitom nepokládá za příliš důležitou. Po smrti bývalé ženy jejího muže se ovšem vžívá do role



matky, čímž nahrazuje doposud dokonalou roli manželky, což stávající manželské soužití samozřejmě narušuje.

Posledními zkoumanými postavami je zdánlivě ideální, ve skutečnosti však ve lži žijící, manželský pár. Nic netušící muž je rádoby spokojen, jelikož sám nemá potřebu projevovat city, a tím pádem nic takového nevyžaduje ani od své ženy. Jeho představa o manželství spočívá spíše v jeho praktičnosti. Dokud je tedy v domácnosti pořádek, a jídlo je navařeno, pak je podle něj vše tak, jak má být. To je ovšem opak názoru jeho ženy toužící po lásce, které se jí nedostává. Touží po jiném muži, s nímž byla v minulosti svému muži nevěrná a otěhotněla s ním. Ve skrytu duše trpí tím, že skrývá tajemství, a proto žije nespokojeným životem. Její situace se ovšem mění díky smrti ženy, která jakoby mluvila jejími ústy, a ke všemu se přiznává.

Neméně důležitou součástí analýzy románu je zkoumání samotného děje. Zde autor rozebírá vývoj jednotlivých vztahů a důvody, které vedly charaktery k různým činům. Jde zde také detailně popsáno, jakým způsobem jsou jednotlivé charaktery propojeny, a jaké jsou dopady jejich chování.

Poslední analyzovanou kapitolou románu „Vzpomínejte na mě“ jsou témata, která se jeví jako nejdůležitější. Autor zde poukazuje na absurditu manželského života, která je v knize vyobrazena podle běžného každodenního života. Dalším tématem je kontrast mezi ženskými charaktery v tomto románu, jehož pomocí Weldon poukazuje na tehdejší společnost trpící předsudky o tradičních ženách, které by měly vykonávat své role náležitě a bezchybně, jelikož být skvělou manželkou a matkou je to jediné, co se od nich vyžaduje. V případě, že žena v této roli neuspěla, nejenže byla kritizována společností, ale sama se s tím nemohla smířit. Téma ztraceného já je analyzováno především podle knihy Betty Friedan „Feminine Mystique.“ Tyto teorie jsou porovnány s vyobrazením postavy ženy, která se nedokázala vyrovnat se svým osudem. Jako poslední téma románu je uveden pocit viny a frustrace ženy, která celý svůj dosavadní život skrývá tajemství a city, které chová k někomu jinému, než ke svému muži.

Další důležitou součástí analýzy obou románů je stručný popis doby, ve které byly romány napsány, a s tím související změny a výzvy, které probíhají až do dnešní doby. Tato kapitola se opírá především o knihu „Feminine Mystique,“ a podle ní porovnává jednotlivá období s vybranými romány. Dále pak autor poukazuje na změny

postavení žen ve společnosti až do 21. století. Tyto změny jsou porovnány se změnami předcházející fáze feministického hnutí, které se zdají být daleko významnější.

Závěrem této bakalářské práce autor shrnuje analýzy obou vybraných románů. Z výsledku je zřejmé, že Weldon v obou románech komplexně popisuje dobu druhé fáze feministického hnutí a předsudky tehdejší společnosti a žen samotných, které se týkají tradičních rolí manželek a matek, a také změny postavení žen ve společnosti a jejich narůstající emancipace, což je pro toto období charakteristické.

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