

**University of Pardubice  
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**Relationships between Women in Fay Weldon's Novels**

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**Bachelor Paper  
2010**

Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta filozofická  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky  
Akademický rok: 2009/2010

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE (PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

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Studijní program: **B7507 Specializace v pedagogice**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk - specializace v pedagogice**  
  
Název tématu: **Vztahy mezi ženami v románech Fay Weldon**

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

Předmětem práce bude vybraná tvorba britské spisovatelky Fay Weldon. Autorka se zaměří na dva romány (Big Women, 1997 a Worst Fears, 1996) s cílem analyzovat, jak tyto příběhy vyobrazují vzájemné vztahy mezi ženami (matka - dcera, přítelkyně - přítelkyně, manželka - milenka). Rozbor se bude soustředit především na to, čím jsou tyto vztahy determinovány a jakým způsobem k nim přistupuje společnost. Autorka bude zkoumat, do jaké míry jsou vztahy mezi ženami ovlivněny muži z jejich bezprostředního okolí. Důraz bude kladen také na problematiku vývoje těchto vztahů pod tlakem okolností v krizových situacích. Práci uzavře kapitola shrnující závěry předchozích zjištění a úvah.



Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

**Primární zdroje:** WELDON, F. *Worst Fears*. London : Flamengo, 1997. WELDON, F. *Big Women*. London : Flamengo, 1998. **Sekundární zdroje:** ARBER, S., DAVIDSON, K., GINN, J. ( eds. ). *Gender and Ageing*. Maidenhead : Open University Press, 2003. HAYESOVÁ, N. *Základy sociální psychologie*. Praha : Portál, 2002. KASCHAK, E. *Engendered Lives*. New York : Basic Books, 1992. PARKER, E. ( ed. ) *Contemporary British Women Writers*. Woodbridge : D. S. Brewer, 2004. WELDON, F. *Auto da Fay*. London : Falmingo, 2003

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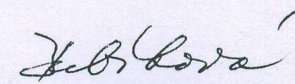
Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. dubna 2009**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **31. března 2010**



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## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my gratitude for help and advice to my supervisor, Mgr. Ladislav Vít.



## **Abstract**

This bachelor paper deals with relationships between women in the work of the British writer Fay Weldon. On the example of her novels *Big Women* and *Worst Fears* three women's relationships are analyzed: mother - daughter, wife - lover and friend - friend. The work is focused on the development of these relations under the pressure of various circumstances. Further the attitude of the society towards women's relationships is analyzed as well as the influence men have on them.

## **Keywords**

English prose, the second half of the twentieth century, Fay Weldon, relationships, women

## **Souhrn**

Tato práce se zabývá tvorbou britské spisovatelky Fay Weldon. Na příkladu jejích románů *Velké ženy* a *Falešné přítelkyně* jsou rozebrány tři vzájemné vztahy mezi ženami: matka – dcera, manželka – milenka a přítelkyně – přítelkyně. Práce se zaměřuje na vývoj těchto vztahů pod tlakem okolností. Dále analyzuje jaký postoj k těmto vztahům zaujímá společnost a také jak jsou tyto vztahy ovlivňovány muži.

## **Klíčová slova**

britská próza, druhá polovina dvacátého století, Fay Weldon, vztahy, ženy

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## **1. Introduction**

After the Second World War the situation of women changed. François de Singly claims that the era brought many changes in the perception of women, their role and an importance of a family. The period is characterized by a demand of autonomy especially in marriage; it became unstable, more fragile. Women were able to get employed and their financial incomes made them more independent on a husband. The movement for women's rights, the feminism, taught women to get divorced rather than stay in an unhappy marriage (87-91). These significant social changes are reflected in literature; in the world as well as in the British. The issue of women's rising emancipation is reflected especially in works of female writers who are more involved in the changes. One of them is a British writer Fay Weldon whose work is the subject of this bachelor paper.

Fay Weldon is a novelist, screenwriter and playwright. Much of her fiction works deal with women's issues such as relationships with men, parents and each other. Her women characters are well-developed and their relationships are very complex. Because Fay Weldon was considered a feminist she sensitively perceives all the social changes in the post war period and therefore they are reflected in her work. Both selected novels, *Big Women* and *Worst Fears*, are set in the second half of the twentieth century, the time which Weldon characterizes by massive social changes caused by the feminism.

This bachelor paper deals with three most significant women's relationships introduced in novels *Big Women* and *Worst Fears*: a relation between mother and daughter, wife and her husband's lover and a relationship of female friends. The paper is divided into three main chapters; on concrete examples each of them analyzes one of the relations. The analysis focuses on how the writer presents these relationships and their development. Because Weldon sets her novels into such a revolutionary time when men have to deal with increasing emancipation of women the paper further examines how men influence these relationships by their conscious or unconscious interference. The last analyzed topic is an attitude of the society towards women's relations.



## **2. The mother-daughter relationship**

There are four noticeable mother-daughter relationships in novels *Big Women* and *Worst fears*. All of them prove that this relation is highly significant and influential for both women of the dyad, especially for daughters. As Jorad and Chodorow in Brody suggest “mothers and daughters have permeable boundaries because of their same-gender identification.” (Brody, 1999, 149) The relation with their mothers has a major impact on daughters’ lives; they determine their attitudes and opinions on men, relationships, work and their own lives.

### **2.1 Zoe-Saffron**

The most significant mother-daughter relationship found in *Big Women* is that between Zoe and her daughter Saffron. Even though this relation does not have long lasting because of Zoe’s premature death it influences Saffron for the rest of her life.

Zoe is a young intelligent woman who graduated from sociology but had to stay home with her baby daughter Saffron. In the marriage with Bullivant Meadows Zoe is not happy. Bull is a middle-class working man with technical education only; this educational unbalance is a big issue of their marriage. He is traditionally minded man who believes that a woman should stay home, take care of her husband and their children. Sometimes he slaps Zoe when he decides that she is thinking of her lower status. Zoe realizes the helplessness of her situation: she is an educated woman who is not allowed to find a job and have a career and thus she misses an aspect of self-fulfilment in her life. She understands that her education was a waste of time, because she would not be able to use it. Zoe wants a better life for her daughter. She wants for Saffron the possibility of lead a self-sufficient life not dependent on a man. Therefore despite Bull’s prohibition she and her baby daughter Saffron join her friends Layla, Stephanie, Alice and Duffy on the unofficial meeting where the current situation of women is being discussed. Zoe risks the break up of her marriage for Saffron: “I’m doing this for her future not mine.” (Weldon, 1998, 13) During this encounter Zoe supports the foundation of a feminist publishing house called Medusa which is meant to become a voice of the women’s movement. But when Bull finds her and comes for her, she prefers her family to the feminist revolution. She stays with her husband and daughter Saffron although she knows that she will be excluded from Medusa and she

will lose her friends. “Zoe chose Bull, her husband. She chose the old wisdom of the past, no matter how little it seemed to apply to the thinking of the present.” (Weldon, 1998, 116) Her decision saved the family, but she had to sacrifice her friends and opportunity of working for Medusa Publishing and making her life meaningful. This and the disclosure of Bull’s occasional infidelities make her feel miserable and useless. Zoe is not able to leave her husband, on whom she is financially dependent:

“How could she leave her husband without leaving her children too? She had no money. Emotional ties are bad enough but any woman with children and unable to earn is helpless. She had a doctorate but who was going to give her a job? Who would look after the children when she was at work?” (Weldon, 1998, 190-191)

The only joy left for Zoe is writing a sociological book about a situation of educated women forced to stay home with children. Bull does not approve her writing but as long as it does not affect their family life, he finds it only a harmless distraction. Zoe wants her work to be published by Medusa, but she keeps it in secret because of Bull; he is afraid that women from Medusa can put feminist ideas in Zoe’s mind and destroy their ‘ideal’ marriage. Therefore it is a disaster when Stephanie, the editor of the publishing house, calls Zoe to announce that Medusa is interested in her work and the phone call is accidentally answered by Bull. He gets angry but instead of splitting up with Zoe he burns her whole work in front of her. To support the feeling of betrayal and alienation, Bull lies that Medusa was not interested in Zoe’s book and it has no meaning to keep the manuscript. The writing failure as well as the unsatisfactory family life makes Zoe depressed. She commits a suicide.

Seven years after Zoe’s death Saffron is fifteen years old. “She has a father but no mother. Her father drinks too much.” (Weldon, 1998, 195) Bull is not able to take care of the children and home, so Saffron takes over her mother and looks after her younger brother Sampson and domestic duties by herself. Sampson is ten years old and he has not been able to deal with Zoe’s death yet and neither has Saffron. Therefore she decides to find out the truth about why Zoe died and she starts her investigation immediately. Saffron is determined to find the true cause of her mother’s suicide; she is fearless while asking involved persons. But the only thing she finds is insensitivity and unconcern of women working in Medusa Publishing who once were friends of Zoe. None of them feels guilty, everybody blames someone else. Because Saffron does not

receive the clear answer to the question whose fault it is that Zoe left her and Sampson alone, she asks Bull about what happened. He does not know what made Zoe to kill herself and he refuses to take the burden of responsibility for her death. To stop Saffron's searching for the culprit he points out the obvious fact: "She was the one who swallowed the tablets, raised the bottle to her lips. Why can't you bring yourself to blame her?" (Weldon, 1998, 262) But Saffron does not accept this imputation of her beloved mother. Instead she considers feminists around Medusa guilty: "I will not let the loss of mine (mother) go unavenged." (Weldon, 1998, 255)

Few years later Saffron is a young, independent and successful woman, new manager of women's magazine *Tiffany*: "She looks wonderfully happy, in an efficient kind of way: she cares for nobody, no, not she, and therefore has her happiness in her own grasp." (Weldon, 1998, 269) As a new boss, Saffron takes the chance and uses *Tiffany* to avenge her mother's death. In *An introduction to cultural theory and popular culture* John Storey points out: "For a magazine to survive it has to ensure a complex combination of the right readership for the right advertising." (1997, 162). Thus a reconstruction of the magazine to be appealing to contemporary women readers allows Saffron to refuse an old-fashioned advertisement of Medusa Publishing in *Tiffany*. "The ads were what counted, what kept the new glossy formats going: not just circulation, but quality circulation counted." (Weldon, 1998, 106)

Not long ago Bull brought hidden copy of Zoe's manuscript to Medusa Publishing to repay the debt to his wife. "Zoe Meadows' posthumous book *Lost Women* had best sold worldwide and made Medusa a fortune though not for the Meadows family." (Weldon, 1998, 283) After publishing *Lost Women* Medusa is not able to find another feminist story with such a response. It is at the edge of a financial bankruptcy because feminism is not attractive any more and Medusa is not able to keep up with the new generation of women. Having advertisements in magazines like *Tiffany* is very important for Medusa and that is why Saffron's denial of its advertisements make the whole leadership disturbed. Stephanie decodes Saffron's rejection as revenge: "I want to know why Saffron won't run Medusa ads [...] Is it because my phone call to Bull drove Zoe to suicide?" (Weldon, 1998, 288) Stephanie is nervous also because one of her two sons Roland is occasionally meeting Saffron. "She has all London to choose from. Why Roland? Except to get back at us." (Weldon, 1998, 285) And it is indeed



thanks to Roland how Saffron discovers the weak spot of Medusa. And when she does not need him anymore, she breaks up with him. She manages to use the information and at the end she forces Layla, Stephanie and company to sell their publishing house to Saffron's boss. She takes over Medusa Publishing and becomes its new manager. Taking away their beloved creation is a vengeance for her mother's death.

The mother-daughter relationship is very important and influential for both but especially for the daughter. As Brody argues:

“[...] interactions between mother and daughter provides girls with a role model and love object with whom they can identify and to whom they can express and disclose feelings.” (1999, 148)

During her early childhood when Zoe was still living Saffron indeed tried to identify with her mother. She liked to wear mother's dress and shoes and she tried to make up her face like Zoe. Saffron loved her mother, she wanted to be just like her; she was always standing by Zoe. Jane Flax in *The Conflict between Nurturance and Autonomy in Mother-Daughter Relationships and within Feminism* claims that it is natural for an infant daughter to stay on a mother's side because they are of the same gender and thus have closer bond between themselves (1978, 174). But the suicide of Zoe caused that there was no woman model for Saffron during the rest of her childhood and teenage years. The young girl had to grow up fast and take care of her younger brother and drunkard father.

There are two significant influences on the mother-daughter relationship between Saffron and her mother; the marriage of Zoe and her husband and the behaviour of Zoe's former friends. Bull, as the masculine nature of his name hints, is a dominant ruler of the family. He believes that an absolute control over Zoe's life can help him to keep the family together. The way how Bull treats Zoe makes her submissive and passive: “She had a husband who undermined her confidence and diminished her.” (Weldon, 1998, 189) Zoe is used to apologize whenever she prevails over her husband, whether it is thanks to her education or her moral superiority over Bull's love affairs. In *Gender, Emotions, and the Family* Brody points out that women in subordinate positions can respond to such situations same as Zoe:

“If they (women) accept the idea that women should be in positions of low power, then they may express guilt if and when they manage to obtain positions of high power. They may apologize for any power they do wield.” (1999, 215)

Zoe is unable to enforce her will in any area of her life. Because she is financially dependent on him she had to stay with him and stand his pretensions on her; she had to be passive: “Zoe was passive, and Saffron never would be. So much a child can learn.” (Weldon, 1998, 262) As Brody suggests:

“[...] there are in fact two (or more) different groups of women: those who freely express feelings, including anger, and those who don't, thereby becoming depressed and dissatisfied.” (1999, 302)

Zoe belongs to the second group of women. Her own disablement to change Bull's behaviour towards her makes Zoe angry. She hides her anger because she wants to be a good mother for her children, Saffron and Sampson: “She needed to keep cheerful for the children. What was the point of giving up your life for them if the life you gave them wasn't worth living?” (Weldon, 1998, 117) Hence the total dissatisfaction with her life fully subordinated to the husband makes Zoe depressed.

Saffron was too young to understand and even remember the nature of the relation of her parents. She can hardly remember Zoe at all. There are only pieces of memories in Saffron's head. But she is raising her awareness about parent's relation and mother's life through the searching for the reason of Zoe's suicide. Stories and opinions of mother's current and former friends mixed with her own memories helps Saffron to piece together the image of her mother and the life she had. She realizes what Zoe's life was like and to what tragic end it led. Even though Saffron loves her mother, she decides not to be like her and thus she accepts Zoe as an 'anti-model'. Because Bull was a dominant and controlling principle in Zoe's life he also has the major influence on Saffron's relation to her mother. It is because of him why Saffron denies Zoe as a model and uses her life as a warning. Bull is the most important ground for a change in Saffron's relation to Zoe because he unconsciously changed Saffron from a little girl imitating her mother to a young woman trying to avoid any similarities with her mother.

Women around Medusa Publishing have an impact on the mother-daughter relationship between Zoe and Saffron as well. During her investigation of causes that led to Zoe's suicide Saffron finds out that all friends of her mother working for Medusa

have relatively satisfactory life thanks to their job. Saffron realizes how much Zoe must have loved her when she voluntarily dedicated her life to her children instead of fulfilling her dream of working for the women's movement. It makes Saffron angry that these women excluded her mother from the sisterhood, left her alone with her husband and after a few years they profit on Zoe's book. Saffron blames them for her mother's death:

“You have your movement, your feminism, you have each other. I just have my life. You killed my mother with your theories. The way I see it is that you put ideas into her head, then you wouldn't publish her book.” (Weldon, 1998, 260)

The love to her mother later motivates Saffron to revenge her death.

The bond between Zoe and Saffron is very close even though Zoe died. Saffron feels there is something missing in her life: “It is worse to lose a mother than a wife. You can get a new wife but you can't replace a mother.” (Weldon, 1998, p.220) Losing her mother was a determining moment in Saffron's life:

“How children respond to such losses and traumatic events will vary considerably and is partially determined by how they perceive and interpret the situation. What is important are child's reactions and feelings associated with the loss that brings on feelings of loneliness and how adults respond to and support the child.” (Bullock, 1993, p.47)

Because it is painful for him Bull does not speak about the suicide. Therefore Saffron welcomes every reference of Zoe. When Bull likens Saffron to Zoe she feels the bond between her and her mother: “He had never compared her to her mother before: Zoe's name was almost never even mentioned.” (Weldon, 1998, p.204) Bull's tiny references of Zoe makes Saffron feel closer to her dead mother. But few references cannot help Saffron to deal with the loss. Hence Saffron finds her own way how to do so; she finds those, who are responsible for Zoe's death and punishes them. The love she feels for her mother becomes a powerful stimulus in Saffron's life.

Zoe wanted a better life for Saffron and in that she succeeded. Her conscious effort of changing the society and the unconscious push toward independence really provided Saffron with completely different life than she had. When Zoe died she



unwillingly forced her daughter to become more independent and aggressive than she used to be herself. As Brody claims:

“When fathers are more involved in child care, daughters express relatively less emotional vulnerability and become more competitive and aggressive in comparison to other daughters.” (1999, p.197)

This behaviour helped Saffron to become what she has become. Zoe’s book *Lost Women* contributed to rising women’s awareness of an importance of their own needs and desires. Under the influence of feminism the society starts to change.

The major impact on the mother-daughter relationship between Saffron and Zoe was Bull’s. His influence on Zoe’s life makes Saffron to change her attitude to her mother’s model and his references of Zoe, makes Saffron more connected to Zoe. Women of Medusa Publishing have a considerable influence on the relationship as well. When Saffron compares their lives to the life of her mother she realizes how Zoe loved her and how important she was for her. Because of this obvious unbalance between lives of the big women from Medusa and her mother Saffron can fully appreciate mother’s decision to stay with the family and not use the opportunity of becoming one of the big women.

## **2.2 Irene-Alexandra**

The relationship between Irene and Alexandra is a relation of two independent women. Each of them has a different view of life but a strong bond between them bridges all their disagreements.

Irene is a strong and practical woman. She lives with her fourth husband Abe, the banker, by a golf course and they seem a perfectly happy couple. Her daughter Alexandra is successful stage actress, married to a theatre critic Ned with whom she has a young son Sascha. They live in the country and they seem to have an ideal family life. But one day Ned suddenly died of a heart attack. Sascha was at his grandmothers’ and Alexandra was in London so nobody else was home. After the death of her daughter’s husband Irene decides to keep her grandson with her to prevent the young child from unfavourable emotional upset: “So I’ll keep him till you’ve got your act together, if you don’t mind, in his interests not yours.” (Weldon, 1997, 20) Alexandra would prefer to

have Sascha by her side as well as tell him about his father's death as soon as possible but she is too tired and shocked by the death so she agrees with her mother.

During frequent phone calls between Irene and her daughter, Irene does not provide Alexandra with what she needs most: a consolation: "Alexandra, usually so independent, missed her mother and whipered." (Weldon, 1997, 65) Instead Irene is hard on her to make her strong and further she tries to points out some suspicious facts around the death of her son-in-law: "Her mother was convinced, as mothers often are whose own lives are not above suspicion, that Ned was unfaithful to her daughter." (Weldon, 1997, 21) She is wondering why the body was found at 5.30 am by Alex's friend? What was she doing there so early? But Alexandra who knows that Irene has never liked Ned, her husband, does not take it seriously and she promises to find out the explanation only to make her mother happy. But when she asks a few friends finds that there was a woman, Lucy Lint, who worshiped Ned. Later she learns that Lucy and Ned had an affair, probably for many years. This finding turns Alexandra into a broken woman. She feels alone and calls her mother and wishes Sascha to come back home. But Irene insists on having him with her:

"I know you must be feeling bad about Ned and that dreadful woman, and Sascha is so very like Ned. Same eyes, same chin. You might find yourself very hostile, unconsciously. Then accidents happen. I should leave him here a little longer." (Weldon, 1997, 131)

Desperate Alexandra more than ever wants Sascha by her side. But her mother Irene is adamant. She doubts Alexandra's mothering qualities and even suggests that Sascha is not Ned's son but a child of a co-worker of Alex, an actor Eric Stenstrom. Alexandra is horrified that her mother believes more to gossips than to her own daughter: "Do you have no loyalty to me at all?" (Weldon, 1997, 133) She suspects Irene from trying to steal her son: "And if you think you're taking Sascha from me, Mother, you've got another think coming. I'm driving over to collect him tomorrow afternoon and that's that." (Weldon, 1997, 133) But when she comes to collect Sascha she finds out that her mother was true: "Alexandra looked at Sascha and thought he was very like Ned. [...] The fact was, she seemed to have suddenly un-bounded with Sascha." (Weldon, 1997, 163) So she leaves him with his grandparents and returns home alone.

Back home Alexandra is shocked when she learns that according to Ned's last will all their possession will go to Lucy Lint, she and Sascha will not get anything. Realizing that she has nothing at all Alexandra burns their house to get at least some money from an insurance. She also accepts an offer to star in a Hollywood movie. She decides to leave Sascha with Irene: "Alexandra called her mother and said now she, Alexandra, was homeless, could she leave Sascha there by the golf course, with the kittens, where he was happy?" (Weldon, 1997, 217) She leaves her son behind and flies to Hollywood to start a new life.

The relationship between Irene and Alexandra is developing and changing from the time when Ned died and the time when Alexandra left to Hollywood. At first Irene proved herself like a strong and practical woman who had laid to rest two husbands and thus has some experiences how to deal with the situation. She wants to help her daughter to deal with the loss in the same way she has because according to her it is the best way how to do so:

"Mothers may only think that they understand what their daughters are experiencing. They may assume a false sense of similarity and impose their own feelings [...] onto their daughter's experiences." (Brody, 1999, 150)

Irene wants Alexandra to get together and be strong; no crying is allowed. Irene also keeps Sascha with her, so he does not have to see his mother broken by sorrow. She insists on not telling him about his father's death until Alexandra is ready to tell him by herself. Alexandra on the other hand wants to explain Sascha that his father is gone as soon as possible because she had experienced how it is to wait till your mother tells you:

"Alexandra recalled how the news of her own father's death had been kept from her for a week or more, till Irene felt strong enough to tell her. She had always resented it. A similar fate was being prepared for Sascha." (Weldon, 1997, 20)

However she does as her mother wants because she is too tired.

Apart from that there are some disagreements between the mother and the daughter because of Ned. Irene suspects him from being unfaithful to Alexandra, but Alex is defending him. Irene never liked Ned so there have been such problems since



they got married so Alexandra is used to it. Another conflict occurs when Alexandra gets a suspicion that Irene wants to take away her child.

Irene wanted Alexandra to be like she wanted to be: “Yet because the mother identifies so strongly with a girl child, she also wants the child to be just like her.” (Flax, 1978, 175) So she sent her to a stage school: “[...] Irene, who’d always wanted to go on the stage but had been thwarted, or so she said, by an early marriage and Alexandra’s birth.” (Weldon, 1997, 63) Alexandra loves her mother and therefore fulfilled Irene’s dream and became an actress. But Irene uses Alexandra’s profession as an excuse why Ned’s infidelity is indirectly her fault: because of the obvious erotic tension between Alexandra and Eric Stenstrom on the stage Ned felt humiliated. And because Alexandra was often in London Ned, who was home, started an affair with Lucy Lint: “If the wife leaves an empty bed a husband’s first impulse is to fill it.” (Weldon, 1997, 63)

Irene also points out that because she is an actress and she is working outside the home very often, she is not able to be a good mother: “I’m not sure you’re the best person to be his mother.” (Weldon, 1997, 131) Alexandra does not want to lose her son so she drives to her mother to collect him. When she sees how happy and unconcerned Sascha is she changes her mind. She understands that Irene really wants the best for him and she does not want to keep him; because Alexandra and Irene do not have a close relationship Alexandra did not recognize an offered help. Irene is not used to express her concerns and fears so she tried to make Alexandra realize that Sascha does not need to be with an upset mother in a place where his father died through listing her imperfections and failures. She wanted Alexandra to calm down before she will take him home.

At the end Alexandra realizes that Irene was right; about her husband Ned, her attitude towards Sascha and about her own presumption of being a good mother. She decides Irene will be a better keeper for Sascha than she is: “Sometimes grandmothers are better than mothers, with children.” (Weldon, 1997, 218)

Irene and Alexandra love each other but they have a complicated relationship. Although the mother and the daughter are in touch frequently they do not understand each other well: “[...] contact between mothers and adult daughters did not necessarily reflect closeness.” (Rastogi and Wampler, 1999, 329) They are not close because they

do not express their feelings for each other. Irene is strong and dominant and she wants her daughter to be like her. She has never expressed warm feelings towards Alexandra and her daughter learnt to do the same:

“[...] they (mothers) may inhibit, restrict, or ignore their children’s emotional expressions (possibly in accordance with their own discomfort with or denial of a particular feeling).” (Brody, 1999, 166)

Irene is highlighting all Alexandra’s failures and mistakes but not because she would like to hurt her; she want Alexandra to realize it. She loves her daughter and she wants her to become stronger so nothing can hurt her.

Their relation is developing: at first Alexandra follows orders of her dominant mother; she is tired and believes that Irene knows what to do. Later their relation grows cold for a while because Alexandra resists to her mother. She thinks Irene is trying to take away her child and she is shocked by her disloyal thoughts. And at the end she realizes Irene’s assumptions were right and her mother was in her own way trying to help her all the time. But because Irene supports Alexandra’s independence she wants her to deal with the situation by herself. She ease Alexandra’s situation by keeping Sascha but unfortunately this gesture is interpreted as an attempt to take away the child from his mother.

The considerable influences on their relationship are Alexandra’s marriage with Ned and an upbringing of Sascha. Alexandra loves Ned and Irene’s constant suspicions and accusations of him caused that the relation cools down. Arguing about what is the best for Sascha is another issue that makes the mother and the daughter to disagree. But the bond between them is strong so even though men make Alexandra and Irene to stay against each other when Alexandra does not know what to do, she calls her mother and relies on her advices and help.

### **2.3 Maria-Vilna**

The relationship between Maria and Vilna is remarkable because of an absence of emotions involved in it. Though these two women live together and due to a lack of friends they spend almost all the time in each other’s company their relation is very cold and hosting.

Vilna and her mother Maria came from Yugoslavia. They live together in the English countryside in Pineapple Lodge. This mansion was originally purchased for Maria by Vilna's husband Clive who is in prison. The house is very noticeable and does not fit the English countryside style; because of Clive's enemies it is provided with different kinds of security systems and because of the origin of its owners it is decorated in the Balkan style and therefore it "looks like a Turkish harem" (Weldon, 1997, 47 ). Neither women living inside fit to the village, people think they perform their wealth too obviously. Hence they stay out of a social life, awaits Clive and hoping to move to South Africa when he is free again.

Vilna is an eccentric woman who misses the busy social life she is used to. She thinks that Englishmen are hypocrites and she is bored by the countryside. She likes to display her wealth and generosity by wearing extravagant clothes and lending things to her friends. Her mother Maria is her opposite; she is suspicious towards people and mean: "Vilna's mother pottered around the room [...] She was making sure her daughter gave nothing valuable away to her treacherous friends." (Weldon, 1997, 121) Vilna treats her mother as a servant: "She clicked her fingers and her mother appeared from nowhere with more drinks [...] Vilna did not speak to her." (Weldon, 1997, 53) But though it may seem that Vilna is the dominant one, she is in fact helpless to her mother because she knows that Maria works for her husband: "My mother spies on me. Clive pays her to, I know he does. It's a very bitter thing; one's own mother to keep one prisoner." (Weldon, 1997, 183)

There is a tense between the mother and the daughter; although Vilna ignores her mother, Maria is always pottering around in the background "scarcely letting Vilna out of her sight." (Weldon, 1997, 184) Even though Vilna is very self confident and vigorous she cannot do what she wants because her mother controls her. Maria is more loyal to Clive who pays her than to her own daughter. She repays Vilna her degrading behaviour by controlling every aspect of her life and reporting about it to Clive. Because Clive pays his mother-in-law to spy on his wife he is destroying their relationship. He is the reason of their feelings for each other growing cold.



## 2.4 Summary

The fact that Weldon sees mother-daughter relationship as influential for both participating women is observable in all analyzed cognations. These examples also show that in Weldon's selected novels the relation has larger impact on lives of daughters. In *Gender, Emotions, and the Family* Brody argues:

“Mother-daughter relationships are thought to be characterized by a lack of autonomy on the part of daughters. Research does indicate that in Western contexts, adolescent girls have more conflict over autonomy, particularly in relation to their mothers [...]” (1999, 168)

Same pattern is followed in both novels *Big Women* and *Worst fears*. Intentionally or not all daughters fight for their independence on mothers; but only Saffron, whose mother died, succeeded. Even though mothers of Saffron and Alexandra do not interfere daughters' lives by physically the daughter's remains dependent on them mentally; they compare their lives to their mothers whether on purpose to be like them or to avoid their models.

All mother-daughter relationships described in this chapter are characterized by a significant role of men from the immediate vicinity of participating women. In fact men have the major impact on these relations. For Saffron it is her father Bull who affects her attitude to her mother as a model for her life. When she realizes how Bull's actions and behaviour made her mother depressed she do her best not to be like her mother even though she loves Zoe very much. Bull also helps his daughter to feel closeness to her mother while compare her to her mother. For Alexandra is it her husband Ned and her son Sascha because of which she has disagreements with her mother. They are both very independent women and neither of them wants to give away her viewpoint. But later Alexandra realizes that her mother Irene was right and she starts to trust her opinions. And for Vilna it is Clive, her imprisoned husband, who has the major impact on the relationship. Clive pays Maria to control her daughter and prevent her from starting an affair. Because of this irritating matter Vilna's feelings for her mother grow cold. To repay Maria her spying Vilna treats her as a servant and Maria's feelings for Vilna congeals as well.

In *Big Women* and *Worst fears* Fay Weldon introduces different kinds of mother-daughter relationships. Although their features are distinct they have something

in common: all these relationships are strongly influenced by men and in all of these relations daughters fight more or less successfully for their independence. But apart from the relation between Vilna and Maria the mother-daughter relationships presented in selected Weldon's novels are based on a strong emotional bond. The bond ties mother and daughter together despite of disagreements they have.

### **3. The wife-lover relationship**

Both novels introduce quite a lot of relationships in which a man is unfaithful to his partner but only two of those meet the criteria of the wife-lover relations. In *Worst Fears* the affair of the main character's husband is the key event of the story and thus it gets an appropriate attention. The extramarital relation changes the whole life of the wife and therefore it negatively influences her relation to the mistress. On the other hand the affair in *Big Women* does not cause such a damage to the wife. Even though she gets divorced she sees it as a new start and she keeps the relation to her rival cold but respectful at the same time.

#### **3.1 Alexandra–Lucy**

The relationship between Alexandra and Lucy is very uneven. Alexandra does not know about the lover till her husband is dead. She lived in an illusion of a happy marriage and thus she is not prepared to face the lover who knows almost everything about her.

Alexandra is a successful stage actress who lives with her husband Ned and their son Sascha in a countryside manor called The Cottage. The family has a high standard of living; they own the old house in the country furnished with rare antiques and decorated with significant paintings, and an apartment in London. Ned is a theatre critic and his work is not providing him enough money to take care of the family. The main breadwinner is therefore Alexandra who stars as Nora in the play of the same name. The drama is performed in London so she has to stay out of home very often. She spends most time of the week in the London apartment while Ned and Sascha are in the country. Ned stays at The Cottage because he needs a calm and peace to write his books and reviews. Sascha stays in the country as well. He is only four years old and he spends his time in a nursery school or with a child care Theresa. Even though

Alexandra's part in Nora makes it difficult for her to spend much time with her husband and son she is glad to have this job because it financially ensures the family.

She is convinced she has a perfect life: a loving husband, beautiful son, successful job, satisfying life standard and lot of friends. But when Ned suddenly dies of a heart attack shocked Alexandra breaks down. She deeply loves her husband and she cannot imagine her life going on without him. The sorrow she feels causes that she does not notice a blatant evidence of a presence of another woman in her house. She acknowledges this fact later when there is no other way to deny it. The unpleasant feeling of the disclosure of the affair is accompanied by the behaviour of the lover, Lucy Lint. She wants to make friends with Alexandra to share their loss.

Lucy openly acts as if she is the widow and because nobody seems to be surprised by that Alexandra finds out that all people from the village, her friends and even her own son knew about Ned's affair with Lucy. She thinks it cannot be worst. But Ned's solicitor informs her that in his last will Ned endows all his and Alexandra's possession to Lucy Lint. Alexandra loses everything. But instead of breaking down she takes it as an opportunity to start a new life: she burns The Cottage to get money from the insurance, leaves Sascha with his grandparents and flies to Hollywood to star in a film with Michael Douglas.

Lucy Lint is almost complete opposite of Alexandra. She lives a perfect small town life. Her occupation is associated with a theatre too, but unlike Alexandra she works at home. She sews costume miniatures for theatre plays so the director can express his views on it before the real costumes are made. She is married to Dave Lint but they live separated for some time. The separation was one of suggestions of Leah, the therapist. Lucy is spiritually oriented person and she follows Leah's advices to improve her life.

When Alexandra first meets Lucy she believes that Lucy is a mad woman obsessed by her husband. As Leah advised her Lucy is ventilating her sorrow over her lover's death by loud wailing and keening around The Cottage where Ned died. She tries to converge with Alex:

“‘Please can't we be friends?’ asked Lucy Lint, pathetically. ‘I hate you being so hostile to me. If I meet aggression I go completely to pieces. We've both of us lost Ned. I'm holding on by a thread. Please be nice to me.’” (Weldon, 1997, 108)

Lucy hopes that Alex will respect her distress though she cannot understand it because she did not love her husband: “‘I loved Ned,’ said Lucy, ‘and he died. You didn’t love him.’” (Weldon, 1997, 33) But the denial of friendship and Alex’s hostility suddenly changes her demeanour. She starts to accuse Alexandra from heartless behaviour and desiring Ned’s possession: “‘You’re just back here to lay your greedy hands on what you can,’ spat Lucy Lint. ‘You don’t care about Ned. It breaks my heart.’” (Weldon, 1997, 39)

All these accusations make Alexandra angry and she expels Lucy from her land. The sudden change in the behaviour of the intruder only confirms Alexandra’s notion that Lucy Lint is mad. She thinks Lucy dreamed up the whole affair. But the unpleasant feeling makes Alexandra to call her friend Abbie to ask her about Lucy. Abbie approves the suspicion that Lucy bothered Ned with her affection and she points out that Ned was probably too embarrassed to tell her wife about it. Alexandra is appeased by Abbie’s words. She believes Lucy is insane because it is easier than accept Ned’s infidelity. She even starts to think that the unexpected appearance of Lucy in The Cottage may cause Ned’s heart attack. “That mad woman killed my husband.” (Weldon, 1997, 93)

But Alexandra gets concerned when people from the town express their condolences to her and add that poor Lucy must be in a terrible condition. Alexandra cannot ignore this; it drives her crazy because she is not able to admit herself that her beloved husband could cheat on her. But when she finds out Lucy Lint visited Ned in the mortuary sooner than her, the widow, she decides to learn more about her. She uses the absence of Lucy and breaks to her house. She discovers Lucy has a collection of photographs of Ned and some Ned’s personal stuff. This is the evidence she is looking for: “All I have here, thought Alexandra, is evidence of a woman obsessed by my husband. A plain, mad, unhappy woman. I should feel sorry for her.” (Weldon, 1997, 59) She takes off all the photos and Ned’s things along with Lucy’s address book and diary. Through Lucy’s personal belongings she wants to find out how is their owner like. Alexandra is so keen to know everything about the woman who stalked her husband that she calls some people from the address book. At first she calls Leah pretending to be Lucy, and then she calls Dave Lint, Lucy’s husband. Alex begs him to talk to Lucy and persuades her to stop lying about her relationship with Ned. She wants

to vindicate her marriage in the eyes of the public. But his response surprises and upsets her: “Lucy never lies. You’re the one who’s mad, not Lucy. You’d go up to London knowing they’d be together. The moment you’d walk out the door she’d walked in.” (Weldon, 1997, 84) She is shocked; finally she is forced to see the truth: Lucy Lint was a mistress of her husband. Alexandra’s life is in ruins, illusion of her happy married life is gone.

After finding out that Alexandra stole and used her address book to contact her therapist and husband Lucy revenge herself: she starts to spread rumours about her competitor. She tells Alexandra’s friends about her one night indiscretion with an actor, colleague from the theatre. She also tells them that Ned believed that Sascha was not his son, but a child of the actor: “She’s so frivolous. She has no idea how distressed Ned was about her being pregnant by another man.” (Weldon, 1997, 200) Friends of Alex therefore lose their sympathy for her:

“‘Lucy Lint came over this afternoon,’ said Abbie, ‘and told me all about you and Eric Stenstrom. So you really shouldn’t be shocked and surprised if Ned had his own entertainments. It’s hypocritical of you, Alexandra.’” (Weldon, 1997, 107)

Alexandra is confused by how much Lucy knows about her but she is unable to deny the false allegation. She does not believe Ned could think such a thing about her and therefore she is unpleasantly surprised when the solicitor informs her about Ned’s last will. He decided to bequeath all his possessions to Lucy Lint because he suspected Sascha from being a misbegotten. Alexandra and her son have no right to question the will because there is no way how to prove the opposite as Ned’s body was ashed after the funeral.

The nature of the relationship between Alexandra and Lucy is slowly developing during the story. At first Alexandra finds Lucy Lint as an obtrusive and desperate woman who imagined Ned and herself having a close romantic relationship. She believes Lucy is insane and she confuses her fantasy with the real world. By the constant wailing and talking about her spiritual connection to Ned Lucy supports this theory. Alexandra loves her husband so much that the possibility of Ned’s infidelity ever comes to her mind at all. She finds Lucy’s behaviour very disturbing so she does not hesitate to slap her in the face to send her back to the limits. But even though the

widow is so hostile to her Lucy tries to make friends with her for a few more times. Alexandra believes Lucy is an obsessed fun of her husband and she is only trying to harass the wife of her idol. She imagines Lucy's plan:

“[...] at his death [I will] grieve so hard and so publicly the world will believe that we were intimately related, the better to humiliate his widow. I will steal her happy memories: I will disturb and upset her, fill her mind with doubts.”  
(Weldon, 1997, 97)

Alexandra accepts this made up version as the only possible explanation. She despises Lucy and thinks she is a dangerous woman who stalked her husband.

Although she is aware of the public opinion that Lucy and Ned was in love Alexandra believes it is only Lucy's fantasy that she managed to forced to people from the town. But after the phone call to Dave Lint she doubts her belief. Her whole life turns up side down when admits herself Ned's betrayal. Ned was always describing Lucy as a boring and uninteresting being and Alexandra adopted his verdict as she always did. But he was lying her in the eye. Her love to Ned obscured her mind so she did not recognize Ned was hiding his true affection. As De Beauvoir claims: “Through timidity, or awkwardness, or laziness a wife may leave it to her husband to form their common opinions on all general and abstract subjects.” (1993, 488) Alexandra bonded herself to Ned and she accepted everything he said, all his opinions and values without thinking.

“Perhaps there are all kinds of things I now think which are really Ned's thoughts, not mine. Judgements I make about people and things, not really mine but Ned's and mine combined. Marriage is a terrible intertwining, a fearful osmosis; I will have to relearn myself.” (Weldon, 1997, 72)

Alexandra hates Lucy because she makes her to reconsider her whole life and doubt everything she believed in. When she realizes all her opinions might be Ned's she has to admit herself Lucy Lint was indeed a lover of her husband. Alexandra suffers from the infidelity of Ned because she thought they love each other. As Fisher argues: “Research on mate selection has shown that men prefer attractive women (e.g. Buss 1989).” (2004, 283) And that is why Alexandra finds it is so hard to believe that Ned and Lucy had an affair. She does not understand why Ned betrayed her, a beautiful



actress who loved him and did everything to please him, with a woman like Lucy. “If Lucy had been less sludge-like, had been a prettier, younger, cleverer person, Alexandra would not feel so shop-soiled, so picked over.” (Weldon, 1997, 61) Broken Alexandra is changing her attitude towards Lucy. Now she sees her as a sophisticated seductress who systematically pursued Ned till he really succumbed to her temptations. She hates Lucy and she is disgusted by her. Broken Alexandra starts to behave even more madly than the lover and she destroys everything in The Cottage which might be sullied by Lucy’s presence. She still reject Lucy’s absurd wish to be her friend and does not allow her to take over her ‘prestigious’ status of a widow.

After Alexandra is confronted with her friends because of the accusations that upset Lucy brought against her she starts to wonder how much Lucy Lint knows about her. Much more than a man would say to his lover if he did not love her. Alexandra meets her worst fears when she realizes that according to the information Lucy mentioned she can tell the affair between her husband and Lucy was lasting for many years. Such a long relation means Ned loved his mistress. Till Alexandra was thinking it was only a sex relation she could stand it even though it damaged her self-confidence. But when she realizes Ned was in love with another woman she is ruined. She might be able to forgive him a sexual indiscretion but not a romantic relationship lasting for several years because “men are more intensely focused on sexual and women on emotional infidelity” (Buss, Larsen , Westen, 1996, 373). Alexandra has to accept that Lucy Lint was stealing her Ned while he was living and now she keeps on stealing him when he is dead. “She and Lucy were in some international war; Lucy winning: pushing forward, taking territory, defiling memory, altering history. Now she, Alexandra, must retreat.” (Weldon, 1997, 208) The last shock comes when Lucy triumphs over her rival during the reading of Ned’s last will. But Alexandra decides not to be passive. “The failure of absolute love is a fruitful lesson only if the woman is capable of taking herself in hand again [...]” (De Beauvoir, 1993, 700) And Alexandra does so. “She adopts a scorched-earth policy.” (Weldon, 1997, 208) She burns down The Cottage and prevents Lucy Lint from winning absolutely.

The changes in the relation of the wife and the lover are mainly caused by Alexandra’s knowledge of the affair. At the beginning when she considers Lucy as a mad obsessed woman Alex feels disregard to Lucy and she tries to avoid contacts with

her. But Lucy manages to fill her rival's mind with doubts. Alexandra wants to put an end to it so breaks into Lucy's house to find some evidence of Lucy being a mentally disturbed person. Proofs she finds there confirm her theory. Alexandra starts to feel sorry for Lucy but she cannot help herself to feel hate for her at the same time. Because Lucy upsets her and makes her doubt her husband's loyalty Alex decides to revenge herself and call Lucy's close ones. But when Lucy finds out she decides to get her own back too. She uses pieces of information Ned told her about Alex and starts to spread rumours about her adversary. Alexandra is not able to defend herself and so her helplessness and hate towards Lucy makes her act unreasonable and a little bit mad. She and Lucy are in an open war now. Both loved Ned and both were lied by Ned in some way: his marriage with Alexandra was a lie and his assertions to Lucy that he does not love his wife any more, that he discussed a divorce with her and that they did not have sex since Sascha was born was an untruth as well. Knowing all this either of these two women is able to retreat. They fight for Ned even though he is dead and for the moral right of being the one who should be pitied for the loss. At the end Lucy is the one who wins but Alexandra leaves stronger with her head held high.

The story is being told from Alexandra's point of view so the reader does not know much about Lucy's feelings and motivation. It is unclear if she really seduced Ned as Alexandra believes or if she was just a victim of Ned's desire. Another thing that remains indistinct is if she started the affair because she can profit on it or because she loved Ned. But what is clear from the beginning is that Lucy is the one who prevails. She has the advantage of knowing about the existence of the wife, her life and her weak spots. Although she could fall back and let Alexandra keep her illusion of the perfect marriage she tries to hurt her on purpose while speaking openly about her relation with Ned. Her absurd attempts to offer the widow a friendship might be seen as a well thought out plan how to bring Alexandra down in the eyes of the public because it is obvious that the wife would never converge with the mistress of her husband. People from the town think Lucy is very kind when she tries to make friend with Alexandra and consider the widow arrogant and heartless when she does not provide Lucy with sympathy and understanding:

“She is very upset. The whole thing must have been traumatic for her. And no understanding at all from you, which is what the poor woman needs. You're

behaving very badly towards her: in your situation it's not wise." (Weldon, 1997, 111)

Whatever Lucy's motives are her acts make the widow humiliated and hurt.

The only external force which influences the wife-lover relationship in *Worst Fears* is the society; people from the town. Both women fight for the sympathy of the local people. The community resents Alexandra's way of life and they approve Lucy's.

"Alexandra knew well enough that she herself was not exempt from local criticism [...] Just about all right for Alexandra to be an actress, so long as she was a failed actress, a woman trying to get pregnant – for as such they defined her, once the receptionist at the surgery had spread the news. Alexandra was acceptable inasmuch as her husband was, and so long as she was unfortunate and could be pitied. But once her fortunes changed, once the rune of A Doll's House had started, once her picture was in the paper, once she'd had her photograph taken with Princess Anne – and since she now had a child and couldn't be pitied and, worse, has more or less handed the child over to be looked after by Theresa the help- she was seen flashy." (Weldon, 1997, 48)

Lucy Lint on the other hand is seen as a perfectly normal woman with respectable occupation who lives an ordinary life. When Ned fell in love with her nobody was surprised; it is logical that a man whose wife is chasing her fame instead of taking care of him and their child finds a woman who loves him, spends all her time with him and serves him. After his death it is Lucy who mourns in a loud voice broken by a sorrow that gets more sympathy of the local people and not shocked Alexandra who deeply grieves inside. By staying on the side of the lover the community suggests that Alexandra caused her misery by herself. The opinion of the local people makes Alexandra to hate her rival more and more.

### **3.2 Stephanie-Duffy**

Stephanie and Duffy are fellow fighters for women rights, they share the feminist conviction. But they are of a very different temper: one desires an autonomous life in an equal marriage and the second desires a loving man and children.

Stephanie is married to Hamish and she has two sons with him. Her emancipation irritates him. Hamish earns his living as an antiques dealer and he finds it difficult to accept Stephanie's job in an advertising agency. Especially when she earns more than he does. Their marriage is not happy. Neither of them is satisfied: Stephanie

wants an equality of rights between the husband and wife and Hamish wants a reliable housewife. “Things had not been going well between them. Hamish had what was called a wandering eye, though he would claim it was woman’s eye wandered him.” (Weldon, 1998, 31) Therefore it is not such a surprise for Stephanie when she finds Hamish in bed with Duffy.

Duffy is a feminist too but she is not so much excited for it, she is not a ‘let’s hate men’ type. She is ravishingly pretty and she likes men’s attention. She is a typist and thus she does not earn much money. Duffy still lives with her parents but she hopes to get marry one day and have a family. Her dreams become truth when Stephanie catches Hamish in her arms. The wife decides to free herself: she leaves the husband, children and the house to Duffy and she drives away naked in her car.

The relationship between Stephanie and Duffy is nearly the same from the beginning of the story till the end. Stephanie envies Duffy her beauty and Duffy envies Stephanie her family: they do not like each other. The wife feels threaten by gorgeous Duffy because she knows about her husband’s affection to her. Therefore she is angry at her rival and she tries to humiliate her at the feminist meeting in her house: “‘Daffy,’ said Stephe, ‘you’re such a fool it’s hopeless telling you.’” (Weldon, 1998, 20) Duffy is insulted: “‘What right have you to call me a fool?’ she asked. ‘You’re so pompous, Stephe. You think you own the universe. You’re worse than a man.’” (Weldon, 1998, 20) But all this is just a harmless prodding. When Stephanie finds Duffy and her husband in flagranti she is angry, but she knows her marriage with Hamish would break down anyway, it was only a matter of time. She is just disappointed that he cheats on her with Duffy, her feminist colleague: “‘What upsets me,’ said Stephe, ‘is that some women are just constitutionally incapable of sisterhood.’” (Weldon, 1998, 35)

After the uncovering of Hamish’s indiscretion the wife and the lover switch their positions to the satisfaction of all. Even though Duffy and Hamish are not married, she managed to get a loving man and children. She takes care of them and Hamish is happy to finally have a housewife. Stephanie is now free to devote her whole life to fight for women rights. As De Beauvoir claims: “There are women who find true independence in a profession [...]” (1993, 507) She is not tied down by the family any more. She and Duffy still do not get on well but they do not hate each other. They are not friends any more but they are not enemies. Duffy rejects all comparisons with Stephanie even

though they are favourable for her; she finds it disgusting and tries to defend her predecessor in front of Hamish and children who hate their mother because she left them. And when Duffy finds out Hamish has another mistress Stephanie satisfied that the break up of her marriage was revenged offers Duffy to move in with her when she decides to leave Hamish.

Even though they cannot forgive the betrayal in this wife-lover relationship women stand together. They may behave maliciously towards each other but the feeling of solidarity and respect is still there. Duffy and Stephanie are able to help each other when it is necessary.

### **3.3 Summary**

The relationships between the wife and the lover described by Weldon in her selected novels are very different. Whereas the relation between Alexandra and Lucy is very hateful and hostile, the relation between Stephanie and Duffy is cold but respectful. The reason is that Stephanie unlike Alexandra knows there are several problems in her marriage and that her handsome husband will sooner or later fall for another woman. But Alexandra though Ned loves her as much as she loves him so when she discovers the affair is unable to accept her husband betrayed her. Therefore she blames the lover and hates her.

But there are some things these relationships have in common. From the nature of the researched relationship it is obvious that men are the cause of the emergence of it. In both novels the reason why the husband is not satisfied in the marriage and finds himself a lover is the financial independence of the wife. Further in both cases the wife earns more money than the husband. They feel threatened by this fact because “a man is an independent and complete individual; he is regarded first of all as a producer whose existence is justified by the work he does for the group [...]” (De Beauvoir, 1993, 448) So they find themselves a lover, less emancipated woman who will not jeopardize his self confidence. But in both wife-lover relationships introduced in this chapter men have no influence on their development. They determine the nature of the relation but once it starts the man gets his hands-off it.

“And indeed, in those days, it was generally accepted that in any quarrel over a man the women were to blame. The women who lost him had failed to keep

him. The women who won him had led him on. The man stood centrally, smiling, erect, free from accusations.” (Weldon, 1998, 92)

Ned is dead when his wife learns about his affair so he cannot influence the relation between her and the lover. Hamish is still living but he rather stays in the background till the wife and the lover clarify the new situation and switch their positions. The wife-lover relationship is paradoxically very little influenced by men.

Another thing these two relations have in common is the pressure of the society. Weldon describes the time as unsuitable for employed mothers:

“[...] any woman with a career was still seen at best as a contradiction in terms, at worst as a description of a masculined woman with a moustache and aggressive tendencies – was more to do with her desire to get out of the house and away from the children than any need to earn money.” (Weldon, 1998, 31)

Either of the cheated women dedicates more time to her job than to her children and that is why they have to face a negative public opinion. Stephanie does not take the experienced pressure so seriously because she is a feminist and she chose to be different. But Alexandra is irritated by that and the opinion of the local people from the town she lives in has an influencing impact on her attitude to the lover of her husband.

In her novels Weldon sees the unfaithfulness between a husband and his wife as a common phenomenon. In *Big Women* and *Worst Fears* she described two different wife-lover relationships which both end the same: even though the lover wins the man's affection the wife leaves stronger to begin a new life.

#### **4. The friendship**

In both novels Fay Weldon presents many examples of women's friendship. In each book there is one important, complex relationship and a number of accessory ones. This chapter deals only with the two major relationships because they are more influential for participating women. In *Big Women* it is a friendship between Layla and Stephanie, women who run a feminist publishing house called Medusa and in *Worst Fears* it is a relation between Alexandra and Abbie who have to deal with an unexpected death of Alexandra's husband.



#### **4.1 Alexandra-Abbie**

Alexandra and Abbie are very close friends though they have very different life styles. Their friendship is put through a test when Alexandra's husband suddenly dies of a heart attack. Her life is turned upside down but luckily Abbie is ready to help her and Alexandra can lean on her.

The previous chapter introduced Alexandra as a famous stage actress living in the country who frequently has to stay in London apartment because of her role in Nora. The unexpected death of her husband Ned and following disclosure of his infidelity deeply hurts her. Her mother does not help her to overcome the pain so Alexandra relies on the support of Abbie, her best friend.

Abbie lives in the country as well. She is married to Arthur and together they "run a residential school for would-be English teachers from foreign lands." (Weldon, 1997, 26) It is her who found the dead body of Alex's husband early in the morning. She called the doctor and cleaned up the house; out of nervousness Alexandra presumes. Abbie obviously loves her friend and she tries to make everything as easy as possible for her. She is there for Alexandra anytime she needs her: "What are friends for?" asked Abbie. "It's OK. Just lean on me." (Weldon, 1997, 68) When Alexandra starts wondering about queer facts around Ned's death and doubt his faithfulness Abbie tries to appease her even though she knows about Ned's lover Lucy Lint. She does not want to upset Alexandra and destroy her illusion about Ned.

But everything changes when Lucy tells her about Alexandra's affair with a well known actor. To hear it from Lucy and not from Alexandra, Abbie takes it as a betrayal of their friendship: "[...] Alexandra can't even tell me the truth, can't even be honest with me, so I feel like a fool [...] Alexandra is so hypocritical!" (Weldon, 1997, 121) Their relation grows cold but not for long. Once Alexandra finds out that Ned and Lucy planned to live together and interchange The Cottage with a house where Abbie and Arthur live in she realizes Abbie knew about the affair all the time. Abbie feels sorry and guiltily when confronted with it. She hopes Alexandra will forgive her.

Her misery makes Alexandra apathetic; she is not able to get angry at her friend. But Abbie's apologetically behaviour suggests there are more things she should be feeling sorry for. Alexandra figures out that Abbie was not cleaning the house because she wanted to get rid of all signs of Lucy's presence the night Ned died. Abbie cleaned

the house to remove signs of her presence; it was her who was in bed with Alexandra's husband when he died. She has only one excuse: "I did it for you, Alexandra," said Abbie. "To break the Lucy spell." (Weldon, 1997, 176)

Finally the cause of his heart attack is revealed: Ned died of a shock when his lover Lucy caught him in bed with another woman. Because Alexandra already lost all her illusions about Ned's fidelity, she forgives Abbie and promises to keep it a secret because of Arthur. However, when Lucy Lint triumphs at reading of Ned's testament Alexandra breaks to promise and announce the true reason of the heart attack to erase the smile from her face. Then she flies to Hollywood and leaves Abbie to deal with it by herself.

The relationship between Alexandra and Abbie is changing during the story. From the very beginning Abbie feels guilty and therefore she tries her best to ease Alexandra's pain and help her to deal with the loss. Alexandra trusts Abbie so she is not able to imagine that her friend was at The Cottage early in the morning to meet Ned. While unsuspecting Alexandra interprets Abbie's care as a sign of her friendship, Abbie does everything to prevent Alexandra from finding out about Lucy and hence about her: "Why does she have to know? What are friends for? Not to speak the truth, that's for sure." (Weldon, 1997, 25) Abbie does not hesitate to lie Alex in the eyes when she asks her directly about Lucy. And even though Alexandra becomes sure Lucy did not harassed Ned but they had an affair she believes Abbie did not tell her the truth only because she wanted to protect her. She believes Abbie is on her side although her explanation why she lied about Lucy is not so friendly: "'You're an artist,' said Abbie, just with a hint of malice. 'No one wants to upset you.'" (Weldon, 1997, 45)

It is ironical that the reason of the change of their friendship is Abbie's feeling of betrayal. Even though she knew about Ned's infidelity all the time, planned to move to Alexandra's house as soon as Ned starts to live with Lucy and even had sex with him she cannot stand Alexandra did not tell her about her relation with the actor. She gets angry and their relation cools down. Alexandra is confused; she cannot understand Abbie believes to Lucy's lies. People from the town do not think best about her because she is an actress and therefore she is shocked that her good friend thinks the same: that she is superficial, arrogant and heartless. Without a friend Alexandra is alone.

But soon Abbie realizes that it is Alexandra and not her who should be feeling upset. When Alexandra comes around to ask a few questions her behaviour towards her friend is different: “Abbie’s coolness had evaporated. She greeted her friend with a hug.” (Weldon, 1997, 172) Alexandra is confused by such a change and therefore she considers there must be some reason for it. She confronts Abbie with her findings about the house switch but when Abbie still looks guilty she finally perceives the truth about Abbie and Ned. She is tired and she does not want to lose her friend again so she forgives her. They promise not to speak about Ned’s affair with Abbie and their friendship is maintained for the moment.

But the bitter taste of Abbie’s treason makes Alexandra to reveal the secret because she knows it can hurt Abbie just like Abbie hurt her. As Walker claims: “Earlier ideologies of friendship represented women as incapable of loyalty and true friendship.” (1994, 261) This is true especially when one woman hurts her friend because the friend will certainly revenge her just like Abbie and Alexandra.

Although Abbie argues that her indiscretion with Ned was only one night thing and she did it to break the Lucy spell there is another possible reason why she was able to treat her friend like this: jealousy. At the beginning Alexandra had everything a woman can desire: a loving husband, beautiful son, manor in the country, successful career, publicity and media attention. Even though the local people considered her superficial and arrogant they came to her parties which were always great social events.

Abbie on the other hand had a normal small town life, loving but not so interesting husband and her job was very demanding but highly rewarded. She loves Alexandra and she takes it as a honour to be her close friend. But she feels malice and jealousy at the same time. This might be the reason why she did not tell Alex about Ned’s affair and things that happened behind her back. The knowledge she has a better live than her friend makes her feel good.

Later when Alexandra reveals Abbie’s secret the jealousy might be the cause again. Her life is in ruins and her friend who helped to destroyed it gets no punishment. Abbie can continue her small town life with her husband while she, Alexandra, lost everything. The jealousy and revenge might make Alexandra to consciously spoil her friend’s life. The friendship of Alexandra and Abbie is irreversibly damaged.

## **4.2 Layla-Stephanie**

These two women have a close relationship based on the same conviction: they are both feminists. Fighting for women's rights brought them together while they studied at Cambridge and they are friends ever since. The friendship of Layla and Stephanie is very firm and warm but it also has some problems.

Layla is an attractive young woman. She is single and has no husband to financially support her but she has enough money from her rich relatives. She is a feminist though not so keen: she is an emancipated, independent woman who is able to control her life. Although her easygoing life style seems desirable she misses something: she has very non-feminist wish to have a husband and children.

Stephanie's life is an opposite: she has a family and she wishes to be more independent. She has a job but her husband does not approve it and at work she does not receive much understanding from her male colleagues either. Therefore she is a dour feminist who demands absolute equality between women and men.

The preceding chapter described how Stephanie left her husband and children and started new life. She had nowhere to go so it was only natural that Layla offered her to stay in her house till she finds something else. So Stephanie lives with Layla and she finally becomes a full-time feminist. Both friends work in Medusa, a feminist publishing house which tries to raise women's awareness and independence. The publishing house has not a usual company organisation: it is managed by women to help other women thus they do not need a career structure. Only four women have superordinate position: two of them are Layla and Stephanie. Layla is more profit orientated one, she tries to make Medusa entrepreneurial which in contrast with Stephanie's belief that Medusa should publish feminist texts regardless the financial benefits. Their opinions start to diverge: "Stephanie," said Layla, "all this is getting too incestuous. Friendship is one thing, business is another." (Weldon, 1998, 126)

Whenever the publishing house goes down to red numbers Layla puts her own money into it. And it starts to bother her as well as Stephanie several years' presence at her house. Layla is dissatisfied by her life not only because of financial issues of Medusa and her room-mate Stephanie; a doctor tells her she cannot have children. Her wish for family life is gone and Layla becomes depressed: being barren she thinks she

looses the meaning of her life. But her friend, Stephanie, who has two sons does not understand her pain. She finds the feminism as the meaning of life.

Appearance becomes an issue too: as a feminist Stephanie thinks women should not spend their time to make themselves desirable to men and thus she looses her beauty. But Layla takes care of herself and she is still very attractive. Therefore when she accidentally meets Hamish, ex-husband of Stephanie, he is charmed by her and they start an affair. This is the betrayal Stephanie cannot overcome easily:

“She is unprincipled. Once upon a time I shared a bed with Hamish. I conceived two children in it. I got used to having Duffy in it. But that Layla should then climb into it is unendurable.” (Weldon, 1998, 152)

She moves out of Layla’s house and their relationship grows cold. Their separation lasts for quite long. When Stephanie fails to excommunicate Layla from the sisterhood she decides to establish a new feminist magazine called *Menstra*. She dedicates herself to women’s movement so truly she even becomes a lesbian for a short time. Even though Layla and Stephanie limit their contacts they remain friends: “They would have laid their lives for each other, but not without a one-up remark as each expired.” (Weldon, 1998, 123)

However the discovery of the book by their former friend Zoe Meadows brings them together again. Medusa publishes the book *Lost Women* and make a fortune of it. But the publishing house cannot profit only from a single book so when they have to decide what it will publish next the disagreements between Layla and Stephanie appears once more. Layla believes the time of feminism is over; it accomplished the aim to make women more independent. Thus wants to sell Medusa Publishing and make some money on it. But Stephanie thinks the fight is still going on and hesitates to sell it. “They had been friends for so long, yet now, when each needed the other most, they looked at one another with antagonism.” (Weldon, 1998, 289)

The rising pressure from the magazine *Tiffany* run by Saffron Meadows makes Layla more convinced there is no place for Medusa any more. She takes all necessary steps to realize the deal. She asks her secret lover to transfer all shares of Medusa Publishing he has to her because together with her own shares she would have the majority. But he refuses and instead of transfer them to Layla he passes them to Saffron.

Thus Layla and Saffron get together and sell Medusa to Saffron's boss. Stephanie dedicated her life to Medusa so she cannot forgive Layla this time. She is shocked when she learns that Medusa, the feminist publishing house, was financed by a man for all these years. She finds it a mockery. Her friendship with Layla ends:

“This time the rift can't be healed: it went too deep. It hurts them both; they miss each other dreadfully. They may go to each other's funeral but bet on it. In the meantime they scour the press-cuttings for mention of each other.”  
(Weldon, 1998, 345)

The relationship of Layla and Stephanie is developing during the story. At first they are very good friends; they live and work together, they have similar opinions. But each of them is of very different nature so there are some issues they cannot agree on. The financial situation of Medusa Publishing and the behaviour of a true feminist are some of them. These problems are not so serious and they do not threaten their friendship. But men do.

The first big change in their relation is caused by a man. Hamish, ex-husband of Stephanie, starts an affair with Layla. Even though they are not married and Hamish lives with another woman Stephanie takes it as a betrayal. She is not emotionally connected to him but she cannot stand that attractive Layla who can have any man she wants starts a liaison with the man who once was hers. Layla on the other hand does not see anything inappropriate on it; Stephanie divorced him so she lost all her rights on him. She enjoys the romance and she does not want to end it. Therefore the friendship grows cold and Layla and Stephanie go separated. However they are friends for a long time so they cannot stay without each other forever. The work for Medusa Publishing brings them together again. Layla keeps on seeing Hamish Stephanie accepts it; she does not approve it but her friendship with Layla is more important for her.

The second man who influences their friendship is Layla's secret lover. Stephanie knew about him for long because the affair lasts for many years. But what she did not know is that the lover is a major shareholder of Medusa Publishing. And this she can never forgive. Layla betrays her for the second time, again because of a man but this time it is much worse. She destroyed all her convictions and ideals when she let a man own Medusa. Stephanie left her husband and children because she wanted to prove that women can be independent on men and successful at the same time. She believed that



Medusa was strictly women's company, a model and inspiration for other women. But Layla made her sacrifice a mockery and Stephanie cannot deal with it. Their friendship therefore ends.

Another thing that might influence the relationship between Layla and Stephanie is envy. Stephanie envies Layla her independence and a favor of men. She leaves her family to be more like Layla. Later she wants to excommunicate her friend from the sisterhood because she cares about her appearance and beauty; Stephanie finds it non-feminist. On the other hand Layla envies her friend a family she used to have. When a doctor announce her she has no possibility of having a child, gets bitter and she envies Stephanie even more. Therefore when she meets Hamish she is more to open to start an affair with him although she knows it will hurt Stephanie. The envy helps to damage their friendship.

### **4.3 Summary**

Both analyzed relationships have a great impact on lives of the women. Fay Weldon represents friendship as the one of the most important relations in woman's life. It can be close and warm, full of understanding and help but it can also change very quickly. As Walker claims: "[...] loyalty and trust were requisites of all friendships." (1994, 252) It can be observable on both relations; friendship can be easily spoilt by betrayal or distrust and even though the friends are able to forgive, their relation is never the same. Further in both *Big Women* and *Worst Fears* the friendship does not overcome the betrayal and it ends at the end.

Although both analyzed relationships have similar features their development is different as well as factors which influence them. In *Big Women* Weldon introduces Layla, strong and emancipated woman and her close friend Stephanie who had a normal life but rebelled against it. In *Worst Fears* there is a similar pair of women: Alexandra, married but independent and Abbie with ordinary married life. Different life styles of friends are the cause of envy and jealousy which disturb their relations. In the case of Alexandra and Abbie the jealousy is the main reason why their friendship ends. Because Abbie envies Alexandra her perfect life she does not tell her about Ned's affair and even has an indiscretion with him by herself. She breaks the trust Alexandra has to her and irreversibly damages their friendship. In *Big Women* it is Layla who envied Stephanie

so much she starts a liaison with her ex-husband but the consequences are not so ruinous and they remained friends.

The impact of men on the relationships is different too. While Alexandra forgives Abbie her indiscretion with Ned, Stephanie limits contacts with Layla for some time; but later she forgives Layla too. However there is another man who influences Stephanie's relation to her friend: Layla's secret lover. He is the major shareholder of Medusa Publishing and thus Stephanie sees the feminist publishing house as a cheat. She cannot forgive Layla that she allows this; in her eyes it is the worst betrayal ever. Their friendship is thus over.

Whether by the envy or men the friendship as Weldon presents it is easily influencable and very fragile. In both novels the relation ends because the trust between women is broken. Even though it is the most important relationship in their lives the women are able to destroy it and lose a close person and ally because of jealousy or men.

## **5. Conclusion**

Relationships between women in novels *Big Women* and *Worst Fears* reflect the issue of emancipated women in the second half of the twentieth century as Fay Weldon perceives it. The development of the relations is usually caused by an external intervention; her female characters have to face stereotypes which the society approves and deal with the influence of men. Weldon sympathizes with strong women characters who are not scared to live an independent satisfying life, however in her novels they are criticized by the traditionally-minded society.

The novels are set in the time when the society changes its view on women's role and status. All female characters are affected by feminism; they might not be actually feminists, but they certainly are influenced by its ideas. In both novels changes in the women's status meet resistance of the society; emancipated women are seen as greedy and heartless beings. The society perceives their relationships with other women as unbalanced; in its eyes independent women only uses the ordinary ones with acceptable lives because they are not able to establish an emotional bond. The society is not ready to accept the ongoing revolution thus the emancipated women have to face a general misunderstanding and contempt. The most evident example is the relationship between a wife and lover: the society is on the side of the lover because the emancipated wife caused the dissolution of the marriage by her unfeminine behaviour which humiliated her husband. The other analyzed relationships are affected by the society as well; it might not be directly visible but the society is also a cause for women's envy: women who are not strong enough to fight against social stereotypes envy women who are able to do so. Through envy the society influences women's relationships too.

The impact of men on women's relationships is another topic researched in this work. Both novels provide enough examples of the influence men have on the relations between women. Even though the possibility of employment enhances the woman's financial independence on a man she still desires his affection. Female characters in *Big Woman* and *Worst Fears* do not hesitate to sacrifice their friendship for men's love. Weldon sees women as not capable of pure friendship: because of men they forget feminist principles and driven by envy they betray their friends. But apart from women's friendship men can significantly affect a mother-daughter relation too. Usually it is a partner of the daughter who causes most problems in this relationship but it can be

also a father. If he is present he can strongly influence women's attitude to each other. However in the mother-daughter relationship men's impact is usually not as damaging as in friendship because the biological bond ties the dyad together. The relation between a wife and lover is paradoxically least affected by men: they determine the nature of the relationship but they do not interfere it any more.

To conclude in her novels *Big Women* and *Worst Fears* Fay Weldon introduces a variety of women's relationships; each one is unique, different from the others. As a female writer she sensitively describes the complex relations between women's characters and their development. Changes in the relations are more or less influenced by men and the society which are not ready to accept an independent woman.

## **6. Resumé**

Předmětem této bakalářské práce je analýza vztahů mezi ženami v tvorbě britské spisovatelky Fay Weldon, konkrétně v románech *Big Women* a *Worst Fears*. Práce se zaměřuje na vztahy mezi matkou a dcerou, manželkou a milenkou jejího muže a na vztah mezi přítelkyněmi, jak je ve vybraných románech představuje Fay Weldon. Všechny tyto vztahy jsou v práci detailně popsány a analyzovány. Autor zkoumá jejich vývoj a snaží se identifikovat vlivy, které na ně působí; především se zaměřuje na vliv mužů na tyto vztahy a také na to, jak je vnímá okolní společnost.

Práce je uvedena stručným představením doby, ve které se děj obou románů odehrává. Po tomto úvodu následuje vlastní analýza vztahů mezi ženami, která je rozčleněna do tří hlavních částí korespondujících se zkoumanými vztahy. Každá z těchto kapitol se sestává z obecného představení daného vztahu, několika podkapitol, které se věnují analýze konkrétních vztahů z obou románů a stručného shrnutí. V závěru této bakalářské práce autor představuje výsledky své analýzy.

Prvním zkoumaný vztah je mezi matkou a dcerou. Tento vztah je představen jako velmi určující pro obě ženy, více ale ovlivňuje životy dcer. Ačkoliv je ve zkoumaných románech těchto vztahů několik, autor této práce se zaměřuje pouze na tři z nich. Důvodem je jejich komplexnost a hlavně význam pro obě ženy.

Vztah mezi matkou a dcerou analyzovaný v první podkapitole je velmi komplikovaný, protože matka spáchala sebevraždu, když bylo dceři teprve pět let. Dcera, která matku miluje i přesto, že ji opustila, si svůj vztah k ní vytváří pomocí hledání viníka její smrti. Když během svého pátrání zjistí, jaký měla její matka život rozhodne se nebýt jako ona; přestože svou matku miluje, dělá vše pro to, aby se jejich životy co nejvíce lišily. A v tomto se jí podaří uspět.

Oproti tomu následující vztah je charakterizován podobností života obou žen. Obě jsou velmi silné a emancipované, a i když se velmi milují, své city si vzájemně neprojevují. Jejich neshody se převážně týkají rodinného života dcery, která svou rodinu brání a matčinu starost chápe jako nemístné vměšování. Jejich vztah prochází výrazným vývojem, ale díky dceřinu pochopení matčina chování končí smířlivě.

Poslední podkapitola zkoumá vztah, který je opakem dvou předešlých. Pouto mezi matkou a dcerou téměř vymizelo i když obě ženy spolu tráví téměř všechnen čas. Matka zde postavila finanční zisk nad loajalitu k dceři. Ta na to reaguje velmi chladným a nadřazeným chováním vůči své matce. Obě ženy se vzájemně mstí a to je důvodem vzájemného odcizení.

Každý z těchto vztahů je velmi odlišný: dva z nich spojuje vzájemná láska mezi matkou a dcerou, která je silnější než jakékoliv neshody; poslední vztah je však narušen do té míry, že citové pouto mezi matkou a dcerou téměř vymizelo. I přes tento závěr je zřejmé, že Fay Weldon vnímá vztah mezi matkou a dcerou jako velmi důležitý, protože trvale a silně ovlivňuje životy obou žen.

Druhá kapitola se věnuje vztahu mezi manželkou a milenkou. Fay Weldon představuje nevěru jako běžný jev a proto je těchto vztahů v jejích románech značné množství. Ovšem pouze dva z nich splňují kritérium manželské nevěry. Oba tyto vztahy samozřejmě velmi silně ovlivňují životy žen, kterých se týkají, ale jinak mezi nimi není žádná podobnost.

První zkoumaný vztah mezi manželkou a milenkou je nepřátelský a soupeřivý. Manželka se o poměru svého muže dozvídá až po jeho předčasné smrti a je jím velmi zaskočena. Žila v iluzi, že její manželství je dokonalé a proto ji manželova nevěra se starší a méně atraktivní ženou ponižuje. Chování milenky ji popouzí a uráží. Ta se nejprve snaží o navázání přátelství, po odmítnutí se ale rozhodne vdově znepríjemnit život různými pomluvami, které více a více rozdmýchávají vzájemnou nenávisť.

Vztah, kterému je věnována druhá podkapitola je opakem toho předešlého. Manželka je se svým mužem nespokojená a již jí k němu vážou pouze děti. Protože je její manžel velmi atraktivní, jeho nevěra pro ni není žádným překvapením. Díky tomu se s ní lépe vypořádává a bere ji jako impuls k tomu, aby mohla začít nový život. Vztah manželky a milenky je sice chladný, ale plný vzájemného respektu. Když se manžel zamiluje do další ženy, manželka nabídne milence pomocnou ruku a ta ji s vděkem přijme.

V románech Fay Weldon jsou vztahy mezi manželkou a milenkou velmi odlišné. Rozhodující se zdá být očekávání nevěry manželkou: v prvním případě manželka o věrnosti svého muže nepochybovala a proto brala milenku jako svůdkyni a soka; druhý

vztah je klidnější, protože manželka rozpad svého manželství očekávala. I přes tento zásadní rozdíl oba vztahy končí podobně: milenka sice získá muže, ale manželka odchází silnější a s chutí začít nový život.

Poslední část se věnuje přátelství mezi ženami. Fay Weldon vnímá tento vztah jako jeden z nejvíce určujících pro ženy. Oba romány poskytují značné množství příkladů ženského přátelství, ale v této práci jsou rozebrány pouze dva nejvýznamnější. Oba mají rozhodující vliv na život obou přítelkyň.

První z nich je přátelství mezi slavnou divadelní herečkou a majitelkou malé internátní školy. Jejich vztah se musí vypořádat se smrtí manžela jedné z žen a následným odhalením jeho nevěry. Pro vdovu představuje přátelství oporu a pochopení. Jejich vztah se ale změní díky pomluvám a nečekaným odhalením, které přátelství ukončí. Další analyzovaný vztah je velmi podobný tomu prvnímu: blízké přítelkyně a spolupracovnice díky neshodám, nepochopení a zradě svůj vztah ukončí.

V obou románech je přátelství vnímáno jako významný, ale křehký vztah, který se může velmi rychle změnit. Fay Weldon představuje ženy jako téměř neschopné trvalého přátelství; kvůli různým pohnutkám zrazují důvěru svých přítelkyň a ničí vzájemné vztahy.

V každé kapitole je kromě samotného vztahu analyzován také vliv muže na tyto vztahy. Fay Weldon je považována za feministickou spisovatelku a proto by se dalo předpokládat, že muži budou mít pouze minimální vliv na ženské vztahy. Opak je ale pravdou. Každý zkoumaný vztah je více či méně muži ovlivňován. Přítelkyně zrazují svou důvěru kvůli mužům, z milostných či obchodních důvodů. Vztah matky a dcery je ovlivňován především dceřiným manželem, ale i otec, pokud je přítomen, může tento vztah výrazně změnit. Ve vztahu manželky a milenky mají muži paradoxně vliv nejmenší; pouze určují jeho povahu, ale dále do něj nezasahují. Ačkoliv Fay Weldon ve svých románech představuje silné a emancipované ženy, jejich životy i vztahy jsou muži zásadně ovlivňovány, protože i silné ženy touží po mužské náklonnosti.

Další jev, který je zkoumán ve všech kapitolách je postoj a vliv společnosti na vztahy mezi ženami. Protože Fay Weldon zasadila své romány do druhé poloviny



dvacátého století, která je charakterizována rostoucí ženskou emancipací a vlivem feminismu, postoje společnosti se odráží ve všech ženských vztazích s výjimkou vztahu mezi matkou a dcerou. Nejvíce je postoj společnosti patrný ve vztahu manželky a milenky. Společnost stojí jednoznačně na straně milenky, protože pracující manželka se nemůže plně věnovat manželovi a dětem, kteří její emancipací tudíž trpí. Fay Weldon sympatizuje se svými silnými ženskými postavami, ale nechává je čelit kritice společnosti, která není připravena je přijmout.

Na závěr této bakalářské práce autor shrnuje výsledky své analýzy ze všech tří kapitol. Z výsledku je zřejmé, že Fay Weldon velmi citlivě a komplexně popisuje vztahy mezi ženami, jejich vývoj. Změny v těchto vztazích jsou velkou měrou zapříčiněny muži a okolní společností, kteří nejsou schopni vyrovnat se s nezávislými ženami.

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