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Gender Issues in the Horrors of Ira Levin

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Zásady pro vypracování

Závěrečná bakalářská práce se bude věnovat populárnímu žánru hororu, specificky románům amerického spisovatele Iry Levina. V úvodu práce studentka stručně charakterizuje žánr hororu, nastíní jeho historii a podkategorie a zvoleného autora zařadí do tohoto literárního kontextu. Stručně uvede teoretický rámec (především koncept genderu a příslušné feministické teorie), do něhož svou analýzu zasadí. Jádrem práce bude analýza vybraných hororů, v níž se studentka soustředí především na způsoby zobrazení genderových rolí, rovnoprávnosti, genderových stereotypů, apod. Zamyslí se rovněž nad literárními prostředky, které autor využívá, případně pojedná o filmových verzích děl. Své analýzy bude ilustrovat ukázkami z primárních děl a opírat (či konfrontovat) s kritickými zdroji. Závěrem své analýzy přehledně shrne a vysloví obecnější závěr o využití postupů hororu pro zobrazení genderových otázek v tvorbě Iry Levina.

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ANOTACE

Práce se zabývá genderovou nerovností ve třech vybraných hororech Ira Levina. Podstata a historie hororového žánru je nastíněna. Práce se také věnuje pojmům jako gender či feminismus. Na základě genderových stereotypů jsou analyzovány postavy z vybraných románů. Chování a reakce postav napomohlo autorce určit Levinovo vnímání ženského utlačování. V závěru jsou shrnuty získané poznatky, z nichž autorka vydedukovala roli žen v Levinových dílech.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

horor, gender, feminismus, patriarchát, Ira Levin, stereotypy

ANNOTATION

The thesis depicts the gender inequality in three selected horrors of Ira Levin. The nature and history of the horror genre is outlined. The thesis also deals with concepts such as gender or feminism. Based on gender stereotypes, characters from selected novels are analyzed. The behaviour and reactions of the characters helped the author determine Levin's perception of female oppression. In Conclusion, the acquired insight is summarized, from which the author deduced the role of women in Levin's works.

KEYWORDS

horror, gender, feminism, patriarchy, Ira Levin, stereotypes

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Introduction

Ira Levin permanently won the hearts of millions of devotees of the horror genre. With his refined sense of writing, he was able to draw the reader into the story and required from them to experience it. The weight of Levin's talent was also praised by the labelled King of Horror Stephen King, when he called Levin "the Swiss watchmaker of suspense novels".¹ His repertoire contains seven novel, including *A Kiss Before Dying* (1953), *This Perfect Day* (1970) and *The Boys From Brazil* (1976). However, the author selected three of Levin's most memorable works, namely *Rosemary's Baby* (1967), *Son of Rosemary* (1997) and *The Stepford Wives* (1972). The mentioned novels are connected not only by their fame but also by their shrouded viewpoints on the social problems of that time. In his novels, Levin brilliantly disguises topics such as gender instability and the tyranny of patriarchal society by using horror elements. The aim of the thesis is to scrutinize the changing behaviour of characters under the influence of a gender unbalanced society and the consequences of their decisions.

The theoretical part of the bachelor thesis deals with the development of the horror genre and gender issues. First, the author outlines the development of the history of the horror genre from the Gothic novels to contemporary subgenres. The conclusion of the horror part specifies the concept of an evil child. Since Ira Levin was one of the first authors to use a child as an instrument of evil in *Rosemary's Baby*, the author found it appropriate to draft the development of this phenomenon. Names like Mary Shelley or Edgar Allan Poe are also mentioned. As the thesis addresses gender inequality, the second chapter seeks to explain the concept of gender and how it is linked to the feminist movement. The course and success of feminist movements have caused better positions for women, whether in the vocational or personal life. Levin's most successful work was created during the second wave of feminism thus the chapter briefly summarizes his life. Gender stereotypes are the reason why it is difficult for women to change men's views on them. The author mentions the most notorious stereotypes applied in the literature.

The analytical part focuses on the main characters of selected novels. First, the typical features of the characters and their personal development in the novellas are described. Selected fictions address certain issues of the time. The topics include pregnancy, feminism, and religion. By

¹ Lee Glendinning, "Ira Levin, cult chiller author, dies at 78," *The Guardian*, last modified November 14, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/nov/14/books.booksnews>.

combining the excerpts from the novels and the critical sources, the author tries to depict Levin's attitude and opinion on specified matters through his novels.

As the title of the bachelor's thesis suggests, Levin also associates gender inequality and the power of patriarchal society through his characters. The author uses citations from books to analyse the impact of male domination on oppressed women.

In Conclusion, the author summarizes the data and deduces the position of women based on the analysis of characters.

1. Horror

The horror genre has accompanied human existence for thousands of years. The initial elements of horror appear in ancient literature. Myths and legends about the resurrection, afterlife, even demons have survived to this day. It is precisely because of the feelings they evoke. Horror incites people's feelings of fear, discomfort, and occasionally disgust. In his essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, Howard Phillips Lovecraft claims that he considers fear to be the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind.² Dagmar Mocná came up with a similar definition, emphasizing that horror is a genre of popular literature that evokes a feeling of horror, fear and tension.³

Noël Carroll defines two types of horror. First, he illustrates the natural horror that represents the inevitable evil that is happening in the physical world - wars or ecological disasters. Opposite to the natural horror, Carroll placed art-horror. Art-horror carries elements of horror and people consider the writing irrational.⁴ Roger C. Schlobin construed so-called deep horror, which can be associated to art-horror. Deep horror is supposed to make people experience the worst bone-shaking feelings. Schlobin presents childhood trauma that permeates into adulthood.⁵ The genuine human problems frighten people the most. Deep horror is an example of how a general person can turn into a murderous monster.

² "His Writings: Supernatural Horror in Literature: By H.P. Lovecraft," The H.P. Lovecraft Archive, last modified October 20, 2009, <https://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/essays/shil.aspx>.

³ Dagmar Mocná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, (Praha: Paseka, 2004), 253.

⁴ Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart*, (London: Routledge, 1990. ISBN 0-415-90216-9.), 12.

⁵ Roger C. Schlobin, "Children of a Darker God: A Taxonomy of Deep Horror Fiction and Film and Their Mass Popularity," *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 1, no 1 (1988): 26, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43307979?seq=1>.

Although the horror genre evokes all sorts of disturbing feelings, it is one of the most popular escape experiences. The book industry develops imagination. While the film industry gives perception a visual image. The purpose is to shock the human mind so much that one will subsequently experience nightmares. The popularity of horror video games also has been growing in the last decade. Meaning that horror is popular throughout all generations. The conclusion raises the question of why horror is such an attractive genre. It seems as if people were voluntarily looking for feelings of disgust and terror. Many different interpretations occur. Josef Hrabák claims in his book *Od laciného optimismu k hororu* that the reader feels a certain sense of relief. Either the protagonist endured more than the reader and survived, or the reader clearly feels relieved that something like this has not happened to them.⁶ The readers initially enjoy awareness of fear to feel relieved at the end. Glenn Sparks, PhD came up with a completely different theory. According to him, people recall positive moments more than the eerie ones. The encounter of a horror experience with friends exceeds the negative feelings that the viewer or reader undergoes during horror. Glenn also argues that for some people, horror can be an experience of novelty. A kind of escape from everyday stereotypes.⁷ Horror simply allows people to cry, experience a shock and recover.

1.1 History of horror genre

The origin of horror reverses to ancient civilizations. The myths, folklore, old wives' tales or warnings preceded modern horror. However, horror as we know it here and now arose in the second half of the 18th century. Dagmar Mocná claims that the predecessor of modern horror were books of folk reading and a predominantly Gothic novel.⁸ The Gothic novel combines elements of horror with fantasy and romance. It symbolizes English literature although it also occurs in other national literatures.

The first Gothic novel ever is considered *The Castle of Otranto* by the English writer Horace Walpole, published in 1764. The story takes place during the Crusades. The shabby castle full of strange phenomena is the essential feature of the Gothic novel. Walpole's use of virtuous knights in bizarre horror was to some extent a prototype for other authors. In 1777, Clara Reeve loosely followed Walpole's novel with *The Old English Baron*. Reeve tried to humanize the original characters and increase the credibility of the story. Moreover, Reeve established

⁶ Josef Hrabák, *Od laciného optimismu k hororu*, (Praha: Melantrich, 1989), 199.

⁷ "Why Some People Love Horror Movies While Others Hate Them," PsychCentral, last modified July 8, 2018, <https://psychcentral.com/blog/why-some-people-love-horror-movies-while-others-hate-them/>.

⁸ Mocná and Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 254.

alternative characterizing elements of the Gothic novel, such as the hidden royal origins of the poor man or the motive of a mysterious chamber.

Walpole and Reeve inspired Ann Radcliff to write her two most famous novels: *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Radcliffe connected the gothic atmosphere of the cemetery with a love story and a portrayal of nature. Matthew Gregory Lewis and his novel *The Monk* (1796) caused a great turmoil. He narrates the tragedy of the sexual debauchery of a venerable monk. He introduces the dilemma of a troubled soul and the concept of taboo in a Gothic novel.⁹

Later, Mary Shelley beamed with her novel *Frankenstein*, published 1818. With her concept of artificial man, she created the archetype of a monster. Shelley wrote the novel during the Industrial Revolution. She wondered how responsible people are for their creations. Additionally, the original version of the story was written on holiday with Lord George Gordon Byron, who also wrote a fragment of the short story *The Vampyre*. The whole romance was then published by Byron's friend John William Polidori a year later.¹⁰ As was the case with Radcliffe, Polidori gave the Gothic novel a new archetype of vampire.

According to Dagmar Mocná, horror is distributed by authors who create novels or short stories.¹¹ So far, only novels have been mentioned, except for *The Vampyre*. Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be the most honoured representative of chilling short stories. His writings focus on the psychological state of the main characters. Poe's protagonists are mostly mentally ill individuals, as we could see in *The Fall of the House of Usher* or *The Cask of Amontillado*. However, he lodged in the reader's mind with the short story *The Pit and the Pendulum*. The short story, analyzed and interpreted in various ways, aroused the reader's awe with its detailed description of the environment.

Robert Louis Stevenson has undeniably entered horror history and the present with his novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). The book became an inspiration for future generations and was filmed many times. Present application of the phrase Jekyll and Hyde for an emotionally unbalanced person validates its positive acceptance. It has already been mentioned that the vampire motive was invented by Byron and Polidori. However, the word

⁹ Anissa Sboui, "The Construction Of Horror in The Monk," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 7, no. 6 (2018): 44 -45, [http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol7\(6\)/Version-2/G0706024245.pdf](http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol7(6)/Version-2/G0706024245.pdf).

¹⁰ "The Vampyre by John Polidori," Collection items, accessed May 12, 2021, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-vampyre-by-john-polidori>.

¹¹ Mocná and Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 254.

vampire gained a real power with a Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. Stoker put his story down on paper in an original way. Instead of a unified story, he found a use of the form of newspaper clippings and diary entries. Unlike his predecessors, he combined imaginary and supernatural elements with the actual person that existed in real time.

Speaking of the history of horror, the name Howard Phillips Lovecraft cannot be left out. Lovecraft was considered the successor to E.A. Poe and the pioneer of modern horror. In the publication *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, he defined the horror genre and summarized its current history. He was also among the first to use the term horror literature. His early works, such as *The Call of Cthulhu*, were published in pulp magazines. Pulp magazines became an integral part of the first half of the twentieth century for many authors. Authors, whether new or permanent, thus gained a chance for a cheaper way of getting known. Magazine *Weird Tales* was a kind of sanctuary of horror stories. In addition to Lovecraft, Robert Bloch also published there.

The greatest development of horror genre occurred in the 60s and 70s of the 20th century. Magazines were gradually disappearing, and horror was published in a book form. The most exceptional works of horror literature were shaped in this period. Most of these papers came to the fore by virtue of film adaptations. The most significant includes *Rosemary's Baby* (1962) by Ira Levin, *Psycho* (1959) by Robert Bloch and *The Exorcist* (1971) by William Peter Blatty. The horror genre has become strongly connected in the mind with the film industry.

The 1950s were associated with the fears of a nuclear war between the United States and the SSSR. Therefore, many book and film adaptations are packed with crazy scientists, conspiracies, or alien attacks. The 1960s marked a major step forward for women's emancipation. The doctors have developed oral contraceptives. The conspiracy of possible mutations after taking the wrong drugs created a new element of horror: the devilish child. Purposely, this element was used in the book *Rosemary's Baby*, which will be discussed later, but also in the film *It's Alive*.

Horror progressively became a bestseller, whether in the book or cinema world. Stephen King's appearance on the scene increased the popularity of the horror genre even more. His first novel, *Carrie* (1974), was a huge success, which was immediately used by filmmakers. *Salem's Lot* and *The Shining* also did not escape their attention. Unfortunately, many authors tried to emulate King's success. The phenomena caused the intertwining of different genres and boosted the creation of all sorts of horror sub-genres.

1.2 Sub-genres of horror literature

As indicated in the previous subchapter, the artists often do not follow the established rules for a specific genre. By combining horror elements with different features, the authors try to attract a wider range of readers and create new sub-genres. Dark fantasy has probably become the most popular sub-genre. It is a combination of horror and fantasy. Nowadays, dark fantasy is often assigned as a synonym for horror, as many authors use elements of the supernatural. Paula Guran, who has edited more than 50 horror novels and produced many publications on the subject, defines dark fantasy as a story that may contain supernatural elements, but is not a typical supernatural fiction involving vampires or werewolves.¹² Consequently, it often happens that dark fantasy is confused with supernatural horror. Unlike dark fantasy, the rules of the normal world do not apply to the supernatural world of horror. How could they, when the main characters include the elves, vampires, mermaids, etc. In the horror genre, these supernatural entities represent mostly negative characters, which they differ from fantasy. For the idea, *The Dark Tower* by Steven King can be classified as dark fantasy, while *The Exorcist* by William Peter Blatty illustrates a typical supernatural horror.

Love stories and erotic scenes must not be missing in any literary or film work. The horror genre is no exception. However, unlike classical romance, erotic horror in most cases ends in death. Either both heroes die, or one kills the other. The subgenre probably evolved from the early Gothic stories. The Gothic novels in many cases had a hidden social context and explored forbidden desires of the people. Dark erotica is often used as an alternative of erotic horror. However, dark erotica refers to a rougher version containing exposure scenes. *The 120 Days of Sodom, or the School of Libertinage* by Marquis de Sade expresses the perfect combination of how erotic foolery can turn into a murderous mania. Notwithstanding, if the reader focuses more on the murders described in detail, the book may be included also in a horror sub-genre called splatterpunk. Dagmar Mocná states that splatterpunk was created due to the influence of horror films on literature. Splatterpunk symbolizes a naturalistic representation of disgust.¹³ The aim is to evoke a subconscious reflex of dread from painful dying.

It may seem that the horror genre is simply about murderous monsters or bloodthirsty vampires. The opposite is true. There is a certain horror element that scares one more than a man with a chainsaw, and that is the perversion of the human mind. Psychological horror gambles with

¹² "Horror Sub-Genres," Fiction Factor, last modified 2008, <http://www.fictionfactor.com/articles/hsubgenres.html>.

¹³ Mocná and Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 255.

every angle of the human mind. The main character is represented by a mentally disturbed individual who experienced severe trauma as a child. Even at first sight, readers do not have to occur an impaired personality. The examined character has misconceptions about the world and thinks that the whole system is against them. Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* fits perfectly into the category. To mention some others significant authors, we can encompass Thomas Harris with *Silence of the Lambs* or Sara Gran with *Come Closer*.

Although science fiction and horror may seem to be two distinctive genres, many authors have become rich by combining them. Noël Carroll even suggested that the two genres are closely linked.¹⁴ Why as well monsters or murderous maniacs could not appear in space or utopian society. Sci-fi horror takes the reader through the world of mutants created by human experiments or alien invasions. It should be noted that sci-fi horror is a rather popular topic for filmmakers. Of the book authors, it is necessary to perceive Steven King with *Dreamcatcher*.

1.3 The Concept of Evil Child in Literature

At the beginning of the chapter it is necessary to define the terms child and evil. For the child, there are two options. Either it is any person under the age of eighteen or the classification depends on the personal feelings of individual people. Some call a person a child until he or she becomes a teenager. Between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, a child loses his innocence and becomes a responsible person. Defining the evil associated with a child is a relatively difficult task. Most people cannot even combine the two words because they contradict each other. In her book *Evil Children in Film and Literature: Notes Toward and Genealogy*, Karen Renner suggests that evil is inherited from generation to generation and that everyone has the presuppositions for cruelty.¹⁵

The concept of the evil child infiltrated literature in the 1950s. The authors were probably inspired by the social situation of the time. Topics such as abortion and unwanted children became more and more discussed. The writers of the initial pieces assumed that evil is rooted in children at birth.¹⁶ Ray Bradbury classifies as one of the first authors to include the concept of the evil child in his book. The short story, *The Small Assassin* (1946), features a newborn named Lucifer who killed his parents in the course of time. Not only did the author exerted generally an innocent baby as an instrument of evil but he also did not give the reader a sense

¹⁴ Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 13.

¹⁵ Karen J. Renner, "Evil Children in Film and Literature: Notes Toward a Genealogy," *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory* 22, no. 2, (June 2011): 84-85, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10436928.2011.572330>.

¹⁶ Renner, "Evil Children in Film," 80.

of satisfaction. The author left the end of the story open in such a way it is not clear whether good triumphed over evil or vice versa. Bradbury similarly introduced evil children in his next short story, *The Veldt* (1950). However, in this case, the blame was on the part of the parents as the children were spoiled by material wealth. In the same year, Richard Matheson's short story *Born of Man and Woman* was published. The deformed child was kept in the basement by their own parents, who abuse it. Since the parents only taught the child violence, it likewise began to respond violently. The child in the book has green blood and more than four limbs. Nevertheless, the author probably referred to the fact that when parents have a disabled child, they are ashamed of it and in many cases give it up for adoption.

William Golding took a different approach with the book *Lord of the Flies* (1954). A group of boys are trying to build a democratic society on a desert island. Be that as it may, over time, innocent children became hunters craving control. Interestingly, most authors put into action boys as tools of unholy matters. The fact stems from the stereotype that boys are born proud and uncontrollable. Boys tend to become superior more than girls. The boy is also born to Rosemary in the book *Rosemary's Baby* by Ira Levin. The woman is unknowingly impregnated by the devil. The motive of a mystical pregnancy also appears in *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957). John Wyndham introduces the village of Midwich, where all fertile women mysteriously became pregnant. The children have supernatural powers, including adult mind control. The children represent evil in the form of something new, undetected, and undesirable for the human population. The idea of a supernatural child appears already in the short story *It's a Good Life* by Jerome Bixby. However, in this story it is uncertain whether three-year-old Anthony is wicked or virtuous. He does not recognize the concept of evil and good in his young mind. People are afraid of him precisely because he does not know that resurrecting dead people or moving parts of the town is bad. Anthony's opposite is Rhoda, the main figure of *The Bad Seed* (1954) by William March. The novel introduces a mother who realized that her eight-year-old daughter was a murderess. Rhoda is aware of her bad deeds still she continues to kill. March points to the inheritance of bad genes. Rhonda's grandmother was evil, that is to say a serial killer.

In the 1960s, the authors focused on the way in which children became evil rather than being born that way.¹⁷ The circumstances also led Merricat from Shirley Jackson's book *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962) to perform bad things. She poisoned her parents because

¹⁷ Renner, "Evil Children in Film," 81.

they gave priorities to her siblings. Jackson suggests that Merricat is mentally unstable considering her parents' final act before their death was that they simply send her to a room. Insufficient parental attention can lead to a negative growth of the child. A similar case is shown by Flannery O'Connor in her short story *The Lame Shall Enter First* (1965). A widower is unable to understand and help his son, Norton, to mourn. Instead, he helps young offenders. One of them convinces Norton that if he kills himself as a child, he will meet his mother in heaven. In this story, the evil one is the young delinquent Rufus. He might not have suggested Norton's death if he hadn't been raised by his cruel grandfather himself.

The writers of the 1970s and 1980s wanted to copy the achievements of previous authors who incorporated the concept of the evil child into their works, such as Ira Levin. There were two types of evil children - the satanic and the psychological deviant.¹⁸ An example of a satanic child is the aforementioned novel *The Exorcist* by William Peter Blatty. Two monks try to drive out a demon of an obsessed girl. *The Other* (1971) by Thomas Tryon acts as an important psychological horror novel. The book was taken as a standard for further research into children's evil predispositions.¹⁹ Tryon created the story of two identical twins, where one has sociopathic characteristics and the other tries to stay sane. In 1976, Anne Rice introduced a new type of evil child, the vampire child. In the novel *Interview with the Vampire*, five-year-old Claudia is transformed into a vampire against her will. At first, she behaves like a normal girl yet over time she begins to realize that even though she is mentally growing, she is physically trapped in the child's body. She then decides to kill her creator. Stephen King also accepts the evil child motive in his books *Children of the Corn* (1977), *Pet Sematary* (1983) or *The Shining* (1977). King holds evil as an inner discord that affects people from outside. He claims that evil is in all people.²⁰

Nowadays, the concept of an evil child has developed more into the concept of an evil teenager. Examples are the book series *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowling, or *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins.

¹⁸ Renner, "Evil Children in Film," 82.

¹⁹ Renner, "Evil Children in Film," 82.

²⁰ Ella Alexander, "Stephen King: 'Evil is Innate'," Independent, last modified October 29, 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/stephen-king-god-is-a-source-of-strength-yet-organised-religion-is-a-dangerous-tool-9826478.html>.

2. Gender and Feminism

At the beginning of the chapter, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms gender and sex. Sex cannot be changed and is assigned to people in the mother's womb while gender is determined by societal norms.

The word gender has earned many definitions due to its complexity, whether from an expert or common people, who try to define the term as precisely as possible. Collins dictionary defines gender as the is the state of being male or female in relation to the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women.²¹ Straightforwardly, gender depicts socially created principles of behavior between a woman and a man. At present, women are considered equal to men in most countries. As expected, there are also nationalities where a woman stands behind a man or children on the social scale. However, the time when women had basically no rights is not so far away. After all, women did not acquire voting rights until the beginning of the last century. Throughout history, they had no right to get involved in politics. In her book *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir was the first to describe the position of women in society. According to Beauvoir, the historically inferior status of women was associated with the emergence of personal property and blood relatives. The woman is relegated to the level of nursing and maid. The sovereignty of the father, who transfers rights, is exercised.²² However, gender inequality extends to the *Bible* itself. After all, the man was created first, and from him a woman arose.

Gender is very closely associated with feminism. It is known fact that feminism was the basis for today's gender theories and research. At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, so-called women's movements emerged. Women showed their resentment with social stereotypes, which required from them to take care of children and act as an amiable adornment of their husbands. At that time, the first publication focusing on women's rights was published, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Mary Wollstonecraft criticized men's views on women's status. At the end of her work, she emphasized that if a woman is completely dependent on a man, a man cannot expect love from her because emotions cannot be bought.²³ Feminism gained

²¹ "Gender," Collins Dictionary, accessed 2021, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/gender>.

²² Simone Beauvoirová, *Druhé pohlaví*, (Praha: Orbis, 1967), 30.

²³ "Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797): Obhajoba práv žen (1792)," Databáze pramenů, last modified July 22, 2002, https://prameny.historie.upol.cz/artkey/dbt_00F_0001_34_Mary_Wollstonecraft_Obhajoba_prav_zen_1792.php.

crucial importance at the beginning of the 20th century. It spread into three waves. The author will discuss the waves in more detail later.

With the beginning of feminist movements, definitions also began to formulate. Pam Morris approached the connection between feminism and literature. Her entire book, *Literature and Feminism*, is based on assumption that feminism is a political perspective that reflects two basic hypotheses. First, sex differences are at the heart of the structural inequalities between women and men that cause social injustice to women. Secondly, inequality is not caused by biological givenness but arises due to cultural interpretation of sex dissimilarities.²⁴

The feminist and gender movements address the equality of women and men at every level of society. The question therefore arises as to whether feminism is an ongoing matter. Some may argue that a woman can apply for any job and position. Every citizen has the opportunity to study. According to Morris, women work four times more part-time than men. What is more, in some cases men earn up to twice as much money. In conformity with statistics, a child becomes the most important factor determining job opportunities. The child has no influence on a man's career.²⁵ Therefore, when some experts call women's emancipation complete, they are not entirely right. Contemporary society also offers many opportunities to improve the position of women in terms of work and social environment.

Gender inequality has also affected the literary world. Female authors often invented male pseudonyms. They knew that society would accept their concept better and more amiably when they pretended to be men. The Brontë sisters are a shining precedent of this injustice. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* challenged Victorian values. The critics described the book as cruel and ungodly. Although the book opposed social rules, it was accepted as the work of a male author. To mention the time being, the famous author of *Harry Potter* J.K. Rowling began her career with a male pseudonym. However, in this case, the female author received the opposite response. Starting with the pseudonym Robert Galbraith, Rowling wrote the detective novel *The Cuckoo's Calling*. The book did not receive general acceptance. However, after uncovering the authentic publisher, the book was a huge success. The detective genre is no longer just the domain of male authors. J.K. Rowling obtained the title of the richest female author in the world. Regrettably, she is one of the few exceptions. Researchers at the University of Cambridge have found that books by female writers cost on average 45% less than books by

²⁴ Pam Morrisová, *Literatura a feminismus*, (Brno: Host, 2000), 11.

²⁵ Morrisová, *Literatura a feminismus*, 13.

their male counterparts.²⁶ Female authors produce romantic stories that are mostly bought by women. In their novels, they present the type of dominant woman in which the female readers see themselves. Therefore, male readers turn to the section of horror, thrillers, or detective stories, which are also bought by a large number of women. However, researchers detected inequality, even when they examined male and female representation in the same genre. Female writers receive on average 9% less for their books.²⁷

Women have been trying to reverse gender inequality for centuries. Nevertheless, even though it is the 21st century, women are considered secondary beings in certain sectors. Not only do women receive lower salaries, they also hold lower posts. The management of large companies is based on male dominance. Resources are unevenly distributed and more controlled by men. Recent theories deal with biological and evolutionary differences between the sexes. Women and men possess diverse bodies, which causes social inequality. Based on evolutionary theory, distinctness has been encoded in human DNA since prehistoric times. Men were evolved as hunters and acquired a competitive nature while women were programmed to take care of others.²⁸

At the end of the chapter, it should be noted that women are not only discriminated on the basis of sex. Women of different skin, diverse nationalities or divergent religions are oppressed much more than white women. Current feminist theories do not cover all of the mentioned aspects. However, conceive a common denominator featuring all facets is extremely challenging.

2.1 Waves of Feminism

As mentioned in the previous chapter, minor women's movements were to some extent a precursor to feminism. In Europe, the French Revolution generated an immense commotion in female society. In 1789, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* was published. The Declaration attributed the basic human rights of the whole society, according to which everyone is equal and has the same opportunities. However, in French, the word person is identical to the word man. This made it seem that a woman had nothing to do with a human being.²⁹ The ideas accompanying the formulation of the declaration and the course of the

²⁶ "Genderová nerovnost v literatuře. Studie ukázala, že spisovatelky za knihy dostávají méně," Lidovky.cz, last modified May 3, 2018, https://www.lidovky.cz/kultura/genderova-nerovnost-v-literature-studie-ukazala-ze-spisovatelky-za-knihy-dostavaji-mene.A180502_104258_In_kultura_jto.

²⁷ Lidovky.cz, "Genderová nerovnost v literatuře. Studie ukázala, že spisovatelky za knihy dostávají méně."

²⁸ Adriana Wyrobková, *Reprezentace a hodnocení genderových kategorií*, Brno, 2007, disertační práce, Masarykova Univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií, 37.

²⁹ "Olympe de Gouges," Masarykova Univerzita, accessed April 25, 2021, https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2004/GEN102/um/Olympe_de_Gouges.pdf.

revolution appealed to many women and aroused a keen interest in equality. Olympe de Gouges, who wrote *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen* in response to the original document, was one of the biggest fighters for women's rights. De Gouges demanded women's autonomy and called for equal rights in all sectors of life. She was executed in 1793 for her acute criticism. Subsequently, an edict was issued banning women from any political involvement. More than 70 years have passed since the women filed a petition signed by over 1,500, in which they demanded full voting rights.³⁰ After the petition was rejected, the women formed the National Society for Women's Suffrage, which became the basis for the suffrage movement.

In America, the first wave of feminism began to develop after the American Revolutionary War. Women were able to take part in the main events during the war but after the war they were expected to return to their usual duties. The feminist wave in the United States was actively related to the abolitionist movement. Be that as it may, these women did not only want to abolish slavery. The indispensable part of their lives was also an effort to enforce social reforms in the area of health prevention and hygiene, voting rights and the expansion of education.³¹ Black women and men were oppressed and deprived of human rights. Women from both working and upper classes demanded pay and social equality. They failed to gain salary fairness. Under other conditions, the first half of the twentieth century meant vote equality for generality in most European countries. The first wave of feminism ceased during the 1920s and 1930s. The reason is simple, an achievement of at least partial goals of the women's movement.

The renaissance of feminism dates back to the 1960s and mainly concerns the United States. While the first wave of feminism addressed the legal issues of equality, the second wave debated more with personal control over one's own body. It can be said that the second wave of feminism was initiated by a book *Feminine mystique* by Betty Friedan. In the book, the author criticizes the 1950s and the dissatisfaction of women chained to the roles of mothers and wives. These women locked in suburban homes, which Friedan calls comfortable concentration camps, realized how limited their opportunities for personal growth were and suffered from a sense of emptiness.³² During World War II, women served in men's jobs yet after the war they were expected to return to the household. Women could graduate from any university still it

³⁰ "Stručná historie feminizmu," *feminismus.cz*, accessed April 25, 2021, <https://web.feminismus.cz/historie.shtml>.

³¹ Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, *Ženy, muži a společnost*, (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 39.

³² Renzetti and Curran, *Ženy, muži a společnost*, 44.

was impossible for many to apply the qualification. The obstacle has given rise to manifold student organizations and movements. Over time, the Free Speech Movement emerged, which allowed students to express their assumptions on campus.

The ideas of the second wave of feminism were deepened by several fundamental works. In addition to Betty Friedan, the already mentioned Simone de Beauvoir expressed her opinion on women's position in society as well. She explored the reason why women are considered the opposite sex. Male superiority represents the social norm, while women serve as erroneous figure. De Beauvoir emphasizes the concept of otherness. Precisely because women are considered fragile, emotional, and spontaneous, men can be defined by positive qualities.³³ The year 1968 brought feminists the book *Thinking about Women* by Mary Ellmann, which reconsiders the reader's view of writer's literary works. In selected books, she demonstrated hidden sexual discrimination. Morris portrayed the women writers as bearers of all that is foreign to men.³⁴ A year later, a similar book, *Sexual Politics* by Kate Millet, was published and became a bestseller. Unlike Ellmann, who used a readable and humorous form, Millet sharply criticized the literary works of influential writers. She focused mainly on work by D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer. She accuses them of an obsessive depiction of sexual relations. According to Millet, patriarchal power is maintained through male dominance in the relationship. In many works by the male author, the woman represents the form of evil and betrayal. To give an example, *The Faerie Queene* by poem Edmund Spenser presents two types of women, virtuous or utterly perverted. *The Female Eunuch* by Germaine Greer must not be overlooked when it comes to feminism. Greer described the separation of women from her libido, her sexuality. She suggested that women have separated themselves from what makes them women. Greer also criticized Sigmund Freud and his theory of gender identity.

At a time when women are criticizing male writers and the male population as such, Ira Levin reaped the rewards of success. An expert at the suspense thriller which contained elements of gothic horror and fantasy.³⁵ The quotation comes from Steven Powell, a leading scholar of American crime fiction and member of the Crime Writer's Association. The fact that almost all of Levin's most famous works such as *The Stepford Wives* (1972), *Rosemary's Baby* (1967) or *This Perfect Day* (1970), for which he was awarded a Prometheus Award in 1992, containing elements of supernatural and creepiness were received beyond expectations by the public.

³³ Morrisová, *Literatura a feminismus*, 26–27.

³⁴ Morrisová, *Literatura a feminismus*, 28.

³⁵ Steven Powell, *100 American Crime Writers*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 204.

However, Ira Levin was not only an excellent novelist but also a playwright and songwriter. In 1950, he graduated in English and philosophy at New York University. A year later, he sold his first screenplay to NBC. People could see his Leda's Portrait on the network show, Lights Out. However, the time he gained a reputation came two years later. His debut novel, *A Kiss Before Dying*, became a bestseller. In fact, he won the Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best First Novel for this horror classic. The inspiration for writing his most famous work, *Rosemary's Baby*, came from his first wife. She was expecting their third child and Levin would never let her walk to a laundry room alone. Maybe it was this story of Satans's child that caused their subsequent divorce.³⁶ Not long after, he published his third novel, *This Perfect Day*, where the world is controlled by a central computer called UniComp. His next book, *The Stepford Wives*, is in a similar vein. Imperfect wives are replaced by the flawless robots. The proof that Ira Levin is a master of his field is also confirmed by the fact that all his novels, including *The Boys from Brazil* and *Sliver*, were filmed. Although he wrote only seven novels and ten plays in his lifetime, he will be forever remembered by all lovers of horror and thriller. After all, the King of Horror himself, claimed that Levin makes what the rest of us do look like five-dollar watches you can buy in the discount drugstores.³⁷

The second wave of feminism also popularized consciousness raising. It is the intention of a smaller group of people, in this case women, to make more people interested in a specific problem. The women met in groups to discuss social or political issues. This phenomenon was also used by Ira Levin in the book *The Stepford Wives*. Although the group that founded the consciousness rising, the New York Radical Women, has only existed for two years, their tradition continues to this day. Women among themselves raised awareness of women's illnesses or war conflicts. However, although it may seem that every woman had the right to express her opinion in association, the opposite is true. Lesbian and black women were pushed out of the groups due to public image. Betty Friedan spoke of the participation of lesbian women in feminist organizations as a lavender menace.³⁸ As president of the National Organization for Women, she distanced herself from lesbian groups because she feared society's reaction to these manlike lesbians. Friedan certainly earned a lot of criticism with this point of view. After all, Ivy Bottini, who designed the logo for the Organization, was a lesbian herself. Friedan was also one of those who defined the purpose of the Organization. The purpose of NOW is to take

³⁶ Christopher Hawtree, "Ira Levin," *The Guardian*, last modified November 15, 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/nov/15/guardianobituaries.booksobituaries>.

³⁷ Glendinning, "Ira Levin, cult chiller author, dies at 78."

³⁸ "Stručná historie feminizmu," *feminismus.cz*, <https://web.feminismus.cz/historie.shtml>.

action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.³⁹ By the distance from women other than heterosexuals, Friedan suggested that these women did not deserve the same rights.

The end of the second wave of feminism dates back to the late 1970s and early 1980s. Despite some controversial impressions, the second wave was a success for women. People agreed with the thesis that everything personal is political. The belief combined private life with public life. Men realized that the dissatisfaction of housewives is a social problem that must be addressed in a political way. In 1960, contraception was allowed, which also addressed the illegal sterilization of women of colors. Women who have been sexually assaulted or discriminated in the workplace have also been brought to justice. In 1968, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established to ensure equality in the workplace and the possibility of reporting a boss for sexual harassment.

The third wave of feminism has been discussed since the 1990s and is still addressed nowadays. However, some experts believe that the third wave cannot exist if the second wave has not ended.⁴⁰ While the first and second waves of feminism dealt with political or social equality, the third wave addresses mostly gender. The feminists focused on the sexual status of women and the differences between men and women. Any difference from men is discriminatory for women. However, Linda Sokáčová, Director of Gender Studies, disagrees with this opinion. “Feminism is wrongly often referred to as a direction against men, or at best as a problem that only affects women. Most feminisms claim that there are differences between men and women, but any difference cannot be the basis for discrimination. Feminism is also a matter for men, because fixed, gender-based roles limit not only women but also men. Just remember the discrimination of fathers after divorce.”⁴¹ Everyone could determine their individual gender identity. Women ceased to be seen as weak and passive yet as powerful and in control of their body and unique sexuality. The breakthrough has spread even to pop culture. Madonna, an independent and fearless woman, has become a muse to millions of people. Animated cartoons for children increasingly featured capable female heroines. Being able to publish theories,

³⁹ “National Organization for Women (N.O.W) Statement of Purpose, 1966,” web.archive.org, accessed May 10, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150117134328/http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst306/documents/nowstate.html>.

⁴⁰ “Stručná historie feminizmu,” feminismus.cz, <https://web.feminismus.cz/historie.shtml>.

⁴¹ Dominika Jírová, “Feminismus není sprosté slovo,” Vitalia.cz, last modified August 19, 2010, <https://www.vitalia.cz/clanky/feminismus-neni-sproste-slovo/>.

articles or videos on the Internet has raised people's awareness of gender. The third wave of feminism is also associated with violence against women and reproductive rights. Women should not be afraid to talk about their feelings, their sexuality, childbirth, period, or rape. The third wave is closely fused with the fourth wave of feminism. Mentioned disputes emerged as even more visible due to social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

2.2 Gender Stereotypes

Stereotype means preconceived, fictional judgement about a certain group of people. A character has a misconception about another individual or group based on previous atrocious experience or social habits. Within the gender stereotype, women and men are characterized on the basis of general roles and qualities. Stereotypes of female and male behavior are passed on from generation to generation through education and society. Gender stereotyping becomes a problem when it actively interferes with an individual's life. Such controversy is most common in the professional sector. Stereotypes about women reach back into the past. Ingrained attitudes and norms give men the right to look down on women. However, stereotypes become illegal if they violate human rights. Examples include the inability to prosecute a husband for the rape of his wife on the basis of women's social perception as a man's sexual property, or the inability to punish the sexual assault of women due to the stereotype that women should protect themselves from rape by modest behaviour and decorous clothing.⁴²

As expected, gender stereotypes appear in the literature as well. A hint or a direct stereotype occur in every book. Moreover, the writers design fiction based on the stereotyping of characters. The readers expect a certain way of behaving in characters and writers try to satisfy them. Nevertheless, with the expected behaviour comes the expected end of the story. Many readers do not want to read books when they know how the story will end. That is why writers have to come up with such an unusual story that even if the reader assumes a certain ending, they will gladly read the book. Authors apply the conventional characteristics of women and men. Men are characterized as dominant, independent, courageous, confident, aggressive, strong, etc. On the other hand, women are emotional, passive, weak, helpless, dependent, cheeky, etc. The horror genre is a fair instance of gender stereotypes. Women are seen as weak creatures that cannot defend themselves or that someone must save them. The women in most cases stand on the sharp side of the knife or at the barrel of the pistol. Unlike men, who are calm and confident, women express emotions by yelling or screaming. Whether it is a tense

⁴² "Gender stereotyping," United Nations Human Rights, accessed May 11 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/wrgs/pages/genderstereotypes.aspx>.

conversation or a situation where a woman is being physically or mentally injured, women are always the loud ones. In addition, naturally, they show their weakness with tears. Men must never cry otherwise they would lose their superior position. Not only are women portrayed as completely incapable of anything except giving up, they are scantily clad, too. The stereotype is more effectively applied in horror movies as some men get off on seeing all but naked women die. However, gender stereotypes apply not only to women but also to men. Men are portrayed as murderous, stalking monsters. With these evil prejudices, men must live in real life. Women are more careful about getting to know men, reading everywhere how a good boy becomes someone who kills them in their sleep. Although a man is a symbol of power, it is a woman who attracts the reader or the viewer. Young, beautiful, skinny women on posters or on the main page of book attract people. However, this erroneous stereotype sabotages average women who are not appealing or slender. The authors of the horror genre utilize a certain stereotypical depiction of women and men.

The most prominent female stereotype is a woman subordinate to a man. A woman represents an object that is under the domination of a man. If a woman does not listen to the man, she is mentally and physically abused. What is striking, however, is the fact that most of the other characters, including the women, have come to terms with the subordination of the woman and nothing is being done about the problem. As already mentioned, women are emotional creatures. They need to hear that they are loved, and if that does not happen, they will start to speak out. Men usually like obedient women thus they make up various lies. When it comes to sex life, women are passive in a relationship, whether it is voluntary or forced. Women are tied up and drugged. However, in the horror genre, it is customary to wait for a woman to wake up to know who is hurting her and to fight a man. It should also be mentioned that if women were portrayed as sexually active, they were abducted or killed. The stereotype of a man as a sexual predator is preceded by the stereotype of a murderer. Unlike a woman, who attracts a man's attention with her unsuitable appearance, men are in most cases shabby. The male killers are dirty, smelly and wear torn clothes. However, there are also those who hide their murderous side behind an elegant look.

Another typical female stereotype is a role of a housewife. The wife is to take care of her husband, household and children. Her hobbies must not interfere with the running of the household. An example of this stereotype is the book *The Stepford Wives*, where men created artificial obedient women. The opposite of the housewife is a man as the head of the family. By acquiring this function, he becomes a superior member of the household. In his free time, he

can do whatever he wants. Nothing and no one restrict him. The fact that he provides income to the family also gives him a lot. The woman does not have time to go to work. And if so, the man will not let her because he loses control of what happens with her when she is not home.

What must not be overlooked is the stereotype of the damsel in distress. It is still the same pattern where a woman cannot take care of herself and needs a rescue. A man proves to be the savior of a woman who acts as a weaker sex. In the story, a male savior and a male aggressor usually stand against each other. Although he is a positive figure, his actions are speculative. It is just him, the man, who can save her. He acts rationally and prudently. Negative or emotionally disinterested men usually appear in higher working position. This is another assumption that rich men are cold to callous to their surroundings.

At the end of the chapter, the author wants to highlight some writers and directors who have decided to break gender stereotypes. A demon-possessed woman has become a popular topic. Even though the woman is a negative character, the audience sympathize with her. Examples include *Carrie* by Stephen King or *The Exorcist* by W. P. Blatty. Both novels were filmed. Another narrative that became famous for its filming is *The Silence of the Lambs* by Thomas Harris. The leading type represents a female FBI agent, searching for the killer. Paul W. S. Anderson's *Resident Evil* film series boosted the female character to the higher realms. Not only is the protagonist fighting patriarchy, but she is not afraid to exploit violence. Also, worth mentioning is the film adaptation of the book *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer or the television show *True Blood* by Alan Ball. All these examples and many more are confirmations that people have begun to realize the urgency of some gender stereotypes.

3. Rosemary's Baby

The story of *Rosemary's Baby* takes place in 1960s America. Women and homosexuals are still fighting for equality. Feminist movements raise the issue of abortion and unwanted pregnancy. People demonstrate against the Vietnam War. The governments, police and parents are losing respect from the oncoming generation. It was at this time that Ira Levin wrote his most famous achievement. A work full of paranoia, the manipulation and birth of the antichrist.

3.1 Characteristics of Rosemary Woodhouse

Rosemary comes from a Catholic family. Therefore, she was raised in the belief that a woman should be devoted to her husband and fulfill his every wish. She is the youngest of six siblings. Unlike her, they all have children and live close to their parents. Thus, it can be said that Rosemary is the black sheep of the family. Rosemary and her husband Guy moved to the small town of Bramford, New York. Their friend Hutch warned them of the haunting history of the house. Cannibalistic sisters eating children or a summoner of black magic, Adrian Marcato. Despite all this, Rosemary showed her balanced nature and did not believe the superstitions. After all, there is no room for magical irrationality in the Catholic faith. However, most people would dwell on a friend's warning of valid events. Rosemary makes up excuses and shows off her naive side. "Maybe there are good houses too," she said; "houses where people keep falling in love and getting married and having babies."⁴³

She befriends former junkie, Terry. Although Terry seemed happy, she committed suicide a few days later. Rosemary has nightmares about Terry's dead face and her mind takes her to the past. At this point, the reader learns about Sister Agnes, who did not treat Rosemary nicely when she attended a Catholic school. "I told you not to tell her anything in advance," Sister Agnes continued lower, piggy-eyes glinting hatefully at Rosemary. "I told you she wouldn't be open-minded. Time enough later to let her in on it."⁴⁴ It is clear, then, that Rosemary had innocent naivety from a young age, as the success won by trickery was not fair to her. However, although Rosemary remained slightly naive during adulthood, her moral values shifted. She wanted a child at all costs even if it meant outsmarting her husband. "So her plan was to get pregnant by 'accident'; the pills gave her headaches, she said, and rubber gadgets were repulsive."⁴⁵ Terry's death brought Woodhouse closer to their neighbors, The Castevets. Although the Castevets were intrusive and sometimes too friendly, Rosemary had no reason to think they wanted to hurt her in any way. Mrs. Castevet gave Rosemary the same pendant that Terry had and told her that inside lies a lucky tanis root. Rosemary accepted the pendant as a good neighbor yet later hid it due to its foul odor. Although the Castevets were an elderly couple, they often held odd meetings. "The same flat unmusical singing she had heard the last

⁴³ Ira Levin, *Rosemary's Baby: With an Introduction by Chuck Palahniuk* (London: Constable and Robinson Ltd, 2011), 18, Kindle.

⁴⁴ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 42-43.

⁴⁵ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 64.

time, almost like religious chanting, and the same flute or clarinet weaving in and around and underneath it.”⁴⁶

As mentioned, Rosemary was trying to get pregnant even though her husband wanted to wait. Consequently, she didn't find it strange that he changed his mind out of nowhere and wanted to have a baby as soon as possible. She shone with happiness. “How nice it is, Rosemary thought, that the whole city is happy on a day when I’m so happy.”⁴⁷ Getting pregnant has become her main goal. She didn't even have time to go see the pope even though her parents planned to fly to New York just to see him. Levin gradually strengthens the reader's view that Rosemary is not as a staunch Catholic as her family. A conversation with her sister suggested that Rosemary's family blamed Guy for her corruption. “I guess that’s inevitable,” and Rosemary heard, unspoken, when you’re married to a Protestant.”⁴⁸ The turning point in the story came when Rosemary got sick after dinner. She had visions of people and different places. Worst of all, it seemed to her that something was raping her. “This is no dream, she thought. This is real, this is happening. Protest woke in her eyes, and throat, but something covered her face, smothering her in a sweet stench. The hugeness kept driving in her, the leathery body banging itself against her again and again and again.”⁴⁹ Even as she faced the truth and the memories, she let Guy convince her that she had a nightmare. However, the assurance did not change the fact that he had sex with her without her consent. Along with any woman, the thought of having a child without her awareness was unacceptable. “She was unhappy – whether or not it was silly to be so. Guy had taken her without her knowledge, had made love to her as mindless body.”⁵⁰ Although she tried to regain her sense of independence and self-sufficiency by going to the cottage for a few days, she ended up again making excuses for why Guy did what he did.

She got what she longed for, a baby. However, it would not be Rosemary if she would not let the Casteverts persuade her to change the doctor. She would rather go to a strange doctor than to a one her friend had recommended. The pregnancy did not go without aftermath. She lost weight and was in great pain. “Until now it had been inside her; now she was inside it; pain was the weather around her, was time, was the entire world.”⁵¹ However, even though her pregnancy seemed strange to her, her overly trusting side showed. She trusted the doctor that such great

⁴⁶ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 72.

⁴⁷ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 77.

⁴⁸ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 79.

⁴⁹ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 89.

⁵⁰ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 92.

⁵¹ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 141.

pains were normal. She did not read any pregnancy books and ate raw meat. She trusted Mrs. Castevet and her miraculous tannis root and the cocktail she had to drink every day. She trusted Guy to be on her side. At least until she found out that Roman Castevet was in fact the son of Adrian Marcato, who allegedly summoned Satan. Rosemary was isolated from all sides. Guy, the Castevets, and the doctor Sapirstein all conspired against her and the baby. She therefore turned to the only person outside the close circle of her acquaintances. In her perennial optimism and naivety, she believed that Dr Hill would believe her. However, the doctor believed that Rosemary was prenatal depressed rather than cock-and-bull story about the conspiracy of Satan's supporters.

After giving birth, they tried to convince her that the baby has died. Rosemary did not believe a word they said anymore. A good, naive girl has become a confident mother who was not afraid to poison anyone to get to her child. Rosemary also changed her approach to God. In the first half of the book, Levin seemed to convince the reader that Rosemary was not an exemplary Catholic. However, as the plot progressed, Rosemary increasingly turned to God and asked for advices and forgiveness. "Oh Father in heaven, forgive me for doubting! Forgive me for turning from you, Merciful Father, and help me, help me in my hour of need! Oh Jesus, dear Jesus, help me save my innocent baby!"⁵² Although she found out that her child was a crossbreed, she believed that the church could handle him. At the end of the book, Rosemary returned to her original role as a naive girl. She came up with various reasons why the child could not be bad. "He couldn't be all bad, he just couldn't. Even if he was half Satan, wasn't he half her as well, half decent, ordinary, sensible, human being?"⁵³ The hope of the future, when everything will turn out well, made her be a real mother yet also to put her conviction in Satan.

3.2 Characteristics of Guy Woodhouse

The book *Rosemary's Baby* is told from Rosemary's perspective. Thus, the author demonstrates all possible motives and thoughts of Guy Woodhouse on excerpts from the text.

Guy Woodhouse is a young budding actor. He played smaller roles in movies and commercials. He speaks of himself as a flop actor expecting Rosemary to correct him and praise him. He plays a negative character in the story. From the beginning, he seemed like a supportive husband who wanted to provide his wife with the housing she dreamed of. As in Rosemary's case, Guy transformed after meeting the Castevets. Mr. Castevet probably informed Guy of his plans

⁵² Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 228.

⁵³ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 243.

during the second reunion. “Guy came back at eleven, quiet and oddly self-contained.”⁵⁴ The transformation is evidenced by the fact that he tried to persuade Rosemary to wear a tanas necklace even though he had never forced her to do anything before. “If you took it, you ought to wear it.”⁵⁵ Guy has been in conflict ever since. He did not know if he should believe neighbor’s wild imagination. “For days Guy had been distant and preoccupied, wrapped in something he would neither put aside nor share.”⁵⁶ After his acting rival became blind, he realized that witchcraft existed. He was absent-minded and stunned. However, immediately after discovering the tragedy, he allegedly decided to walk outside. But instead of going out, he went to the neighbors. He certainly agreed on an exchange with them. Guy becomes a famous actor and Rosemary the mother of the antichrist. The proof is Guy's immediate change of mind about the child he didn't want before. Yet, at that moment, Guy's characterlessness and audacity became apparent. He came up with the idea of having a baby as if he were doing Rosemary a favor, imagining himself on billboards. “I have been so busy tearing my hair out over my career that I haven’t given thought one to yours. Let’s have a baby, okay? Let’s have three, one at time.”⁵⁷ From a passive participant in the conspiracy, he became active the moment he deliberately forgot to buy a dessert. Coincidentally, Mrs. Castevet was making a chocolate mousse. It is clear that the dessert contained hallucinogenic drugs as it was the night Rosemary was raped. During the ceremony, he noticed that Rosemary's eyes were open. Levin did not suggest that Guy was feeling guilty at the time or trying to stop the ceremony. Apparently, he was blinded by desirable greed. In addition, he had the audacity to say that he did not want to miss the night of fertilization. He was not bothered at all by the fact that his wife felt raped. What is more, he was upset by the accusation. Levin probably did not want to portray Guy as a complete monster as he made the reader feel that Guy was ashamed of his actions. “Guy seemed never to be looking at her, always at a script or TV or at someone else. He was in bed and asleep before she was.”⁵⁸

As the story goes, Guy is increasingly obsessed with his accomplishments and is not interested in Rosemary's deteriorating condition. “Her face grew pinched and wan and shadowed; she looked awful. But Guy insisted otherwise. “What are you talking about?” he said. “You look great. It’s that haircut that looks awful.”⁵⁹ Guy became alike a servant of the Castevets. When

⁵⁴ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 68.

⁵⁵ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 69-70.

⁵⁶ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 71.

⁵⁷ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 75.

⁵⁸ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 94.

⁵⁹ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 119.

Mr. Castevet suspected that Hutch, Rosemary's friend, was asking too many questions, he sent Guy to take his glove. Not surprisingly, Hutch became acutely ill the next day. The readers can see how Guy's callousness increased with his growing popularity. There is a difference in harming the enemy or the respected friend. Guy's task was to guard Rosemary at every turn. When she decided to go to another doctor, he got upset. Guy had not shouted at Rosemary before, therefore it was a fear-induced reaction. He was probably horrified by what a real doctor would find in Rosemary's womb. The fact that Rosemary was expecting the devil's baby was uncomfortable to him. He did not even want to touch her belly when the baby started kicking. "He jerked his hand away, pale. "Yes," said. "Yes. I felt it."⁶⁰

When Rosemary found out the truth, Guy couldn't look her in the eye. In a way, he still loved her even though he sold her for fame. "You'll be all right, honey, I swear to God you will! I swear to God you're going to be perfectly all right! Don't go on fighting like this, Ro, please don't! I give you my absolute word of honor you're going to be perfectly all right!"⁶¹ After giving birth, he tried to convince Rosemary that the baby had died and that there was no conspiracy. Maybe he thought they would move out and start new life. However, now he was a famous actor, not a young man at starting point. "They promised me you wouldn't be hurt," he said. "And you haven't been, really. I mean, suppose you'd had a baby and lost it; wouldn't it be the same? And we're getting so much in return, Ro. She put the handkerchief on the table and looked at him. As hard as she could she spat at him. He flushed and turned away."⁶² He actually thought that a mother would just pass the death of her child. What is more, rape, lying, childbirth is nothing to him compared to the benefits he gained. After all, he has nothing to be ashamed of. He thought of their common future.

3.3 Parturiency, Stereotypes, Patriarchy

3.3.1 Parturiency and Evil Child

In the second half of the twentieth century, pregnancy and motherhood became a popular topic in commercials or magazine covers. The pregnancy guides associated pregnant women with beauty and charm along with calling the motherhood the most wonderful, best experience in life.⁶³ On the other hand, bookmakers or filmmakers in many cases likened childbirth to a horrific moment in a woman's life. Leina Hsu talks about the binary nature of womanhood. She

⁶⁰ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 161.

⁶¹ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 215-216.

⁶² Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 240.

⁶³ Lucy Fisher, "Birth Traumas: Parturition and Horror in *Rosemary's Baby*," *Cinema Journal* 31, no. 3 (Spring, 1992): 3, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1225505?seq=1>.

compares the ideal of a pure woman with male deviant thinking. A woman's corruption increases even more with the conception of a child.⁶⁴ Binary pregnancy also occurred in the case of Rosemary. At the beginning, Rosemary was a pure obedient, intermittently Christian. After a violent involuntary conception, she lost the indicated purity and her body was deprived of sovereignty. Prior to the discrepancy, purity was elevated above the impurity of a woman. Terry, a former drug addicted, was sacrificed for a more desirable, chaste replacement. In the novel, purity is associated with fertility. Rosemary was fit to conceive the Antichrist while Terry mislaid the possibility to have a child.⁶⁵ In addition to losing purity, Rosemary also struggled with misconceptions about the course of her pregnancy. "She looked at herself in the side of the toaster, where her moving reflection had caught her eye, and then looked at her hand, at the part of the heart she hadn't yet eaten held in red-dripping fingers."⁶⁶ According to Leina Hsu, women have immensely romantic visions of pregnancy to a degree that they are unpleasantly surprised by the terrible transformation of their body, which behaves as if it was not even their own.⁶⁷ In the end, Rosemary repudiated the binary and accepted the fate of the mother of the devil's creature. Lucy Fisher parallels the previously mentioned importance to Rosemary walking through the door that originated her pregnancy yet at last it was the step to regain the autonomy of her body and, naturally, her son.⁶⁸

While Rosemary portrayed a woman torn between her faith and deviancy, her son Andy represented the consequences of an unconventional pregnancy. As already mentioned, there are two types of evil children, satanic and psychological deviant. Andy definitely depicts the satanic type as who is more evil than the son of Satan. Charles Hicks labels the relationship between Rosemary and her son as masochistic. He makes further comment that in maternal masochism it is rather the child who is considered to be a tormentor than a mother though is clothed by her.⁶⁹ Levin aims to the perception of motherhood and the fact that the child is already formed in the mother's womb to the image of the father. "Even if he was half Satan, wasn't he half her as well, half decent, ordinary, sensible, human being? If she worked against them, exerted a

⁶⁴ Leina Hsu, "The Sanctity and Disgust of the Female Body in Rosemary's Baby," *Inquiries Journal* 12, no. 10 (2020), <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1810/the-sanctity-and-disgust-of-the-female-body-in-rosemarys-baby>.

⁶⁵ Hsu, "The Sanctity and Disgust of the Female Body in Rosemary's Baby."

⁶⁶ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 145.

⁶⁷ Hsu, "The Sanctity and Disgust of the Female Body in Rosemary's Baby."

⁶⁸ Fisher, "Birth Traumas: Parturition and Horror in Rosemary's Baby", 14.

⁶⁹ Charles Hicks, "The Perverse Mother: Maternal Masochism in Ira Levin's Rosemary's Baby," *Hypatia Journal* 32, no 2 (Spring 2017): 306.

good influence to counteract their bad one.”⁷⁰ By accepting the child, despite the terrible resemblance to the demoniac father, Rosemary diminishes the father's statute and transforms the child into her image. As the giver of his life, Rosemary veils the father and the child takes on the characteristics and identity of the mother despite the external resemblance to the father.⁷¹

3.3.2 Gender Stereotypes

Rosemary's character embodies assorted standards of stereotypical behavior of married woman. Rosemary represents a virtuous, happily married woman ready for motherhood. Her very name suggests a connection with the purest woman, the Virgin Mary. Accompanying the association, Levin calls attention to the fact that married women should model and represent ethical Mary as a model of womanhood. However, the resemblance to the holiest woman ends when Rosemary is impregnated by the devil. Rosemary's husband ridicules rape and blames Rosemary for drinking too much. “I thought you would have wanted me to.”⁷² In this section, Levin encounters the sexual position of a woman, whether single or married. Lucy Fisher claims that the fact that Rosemary was unconscious during the act mocks a woman's passive and effortless position during precreation. Fisher further likens Rosemary's final acceptance of guilt for all the bad things that happened to her to Original Sin.⁷³ Not only should a woman be passive during sexual intercourse but also in marriage itself. Rosemary subsists as a nice addition to her husband. She encourages him in his career, accompanies him to parties, switches conversations to him, cooks for him and cleans up. She acts simply as the ideal wife. Rosemary's opposite in the book is Terry. Terry is a former heroin addict who stole food or money. Unlike Rosemary's purity, Terry is tainted by weaknesses. Her unsuitability for marriage and pregnancy ends in death. Levin suggests that any debased woman has no right to rebirth and therefore no right to be a suitable wife.

While Rosemary performs as the perfect wife, Guy profits from the present stereotype. As a money-maker, he exploits his dominant position in marriage. However, as a man, a superior position in a relationship is not enough for him yet he is greedy for greater power. Greed and power present images of typical qualities of men, and Levin takes these aspects to the next level. Guy is enthusiastic to take advantage of his wife's naivety and bargains her to a devil's conspiracy for the hope of glory. By mocking the uncomfortable feelings of his wife, who felt

⁷⁰ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 243.

⁷¹ Hicks, “The Perverse Mother: Maternal Masochism in Ira Levin’s *Rosemary’s Baby*”, 307.

⁷² Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 92.

⁷³ Fisher, “Birth Traumas: Parturition and Horror in *Rosemary's Baby*”, 9.

abused, Guy strengthens his dominant rights. Levin aims to the sexual abuse of the wife, which could not be proven or punished. At that moment, a woman represented an inanimate object on which a man exempted his sexual privilege.

3.3.3 Patriarchy

Rosemary represents all women oppressed by misogynistic society. The substantial evil in the book is the satanic coven led by the Castevets. The members of the society, together with Rosemary's husband, gradually control all aspects of her life. By interfering with the course of pregnancy, choosing a doctor, or supporting coven vitamins, the coven controls Rosemary's body and life. While Roman Castevet and Guy may seem to be the main villains in the patriarchal suppression of femininity, it is Minnie Castevet who has guaranteed a successful outcome to the clan. Although Minnie is a woman, she is also a shadow figure of the patriarchy. It was she who baked the cake that sedated Rosemary, she transferred Rosemary to the coven doctor, she gave Rosemary a cocktail full of disgusting ingredients for the proper nutrition of an inhuman child. However, she betrayed Rosemary the most by allowing herself to be dominated by male sway and by violating female communality. Considerable is also Rosemary's initial reluctance to fight the patriarchy. She willingly accepted the advices and gifts of the coven, and on the advice of her friends to visit another gynecologist, she hysterically replied that she would not have an abortion. By placing the child above her own health, she unconsciously confirms the possibility of sacrificing herself for patriarchal evil.⁷⁴ However, at the end of the book, Rosemary realizes a conspiracy against her and seeks the help of a single, unintended man, Dr Hill. "But I haven't flipped, Doctor, I swear by all the saints I haven't. Now and then there are plots against people, aren't there?"⁷⁵ At that moment, Rosemary impersonated every woman who felt mentally defeated by the endless oppression of sexist society. By the deception of both doctors, Levin implies to the female critique of institutional medicine, traditionally the male profession. The manipulative and characterless Dr Sapirstein contributed to Rosemary's doom, as did the moral Dr Hill with his professional disinterest.⁷⁶ Rosemary's acceptance of the child as the fruit of a patriarchal conspiracy confirms the effectiveness of male domination.

⁷⁴ Noah Berlatsky, "Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby*: Patriarchy Without Feminism Is Hell," *Tor.com*, last modified August 11, 2020, <https://www.tor.com/2020/08/11/ira-levins-rosemarys-baby-patriarchy-without-feminism-is-hell/>.

⁷⁵ Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, 205.

⁷⁶ Karyn Valerius, "'Rosemary's Baby', Gothic Pregnancy, and Fetal Subjects," *College Literature* 32, no. 3 (Summer, 2005): 126, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25115290?seq=1>.

4. Son of Rosemary

Son of Rosemary is the long-awaited sequel to the novel *Rosemary's Baby*. Levin resolved to write the sequel after thirty years following the head manuscript. Unfortunately, the book did not bring as much success as it did in the case of the first output. Prior to drafting the novel, Levin was inspired by Mia Farrow whom he dedicated the writing. Mia Farrow impersonated Rosemary in the first film adaptation of *Rosemary's Baby*, which launched the fiction into the consciousness of the millions of people. Numerous people reproached Levin's style of writing which could be said to be more careless than the opening handwriting. The readers blamed the hasty or sometimes meaningless story to the fact that Levin had no plans to write the sequel at all. However, the negative response to the book may be related to the fact that the sequel came out after such a time or to the unexpected end of the fiction.

4.1 Characteristics of Rosemary Reilly

At the beginning, Levin's sequel reveals what happened to Rosemary after she acknowledged her satanic son. As a proper mother, she cared for him for six years and for effect allowed the association to perform rituals with him. Meanwhile, she divorced Guy, who, as the reader gradually finds out, did not become a famous actor as promised. She even decided to run away from her morally unlucky future with her son. It becomes apparent that Rosemary's personality has evolved considerably since the opening of the book. She was no longer a naive young wife who fulfilled every whim of her husband and did not stand up for her feelings, impressions, and expectations. She hardened and took matters into her own hands. She did not allow Satanists to dictate her how to live her life. Dismally, the coven discovered the planned escape route and put her to sleep. She slept for twenty-seven long years until the last member of the coven died.

Rosemary's Baby reaped the reward not only by dealing with the worriment at the time but also by writing style. Rosemary's genuine sense of unusual situations connected her with readers on a mental level. The authenticity and similarity of the characters' feelings towards physical people is what is missing in the sequel. The behavior of the characters seems somehow artificial. For instance, Rosemary's reaction when she woke up almost thirty years in a coma. Most people would have a hysterical or panic attack. Instead of fear of the unknown and panic, Rosemary simply asked for a mirror. The lack of emotion does not pull the readers into the story, rather as if they were looking at the character from a bubble. The absence of believable feelings appears in all the essential events in the novel. The meeting of mother and son after decades is no exception. "After hugs and kisses, sighs and strokes, tears and handkerchiefs, Andy wrapped

the champagne in a napkin, removed the wire cap from the stopper, and opened the bottle — all with the skill of an experienced waiter.”⁷⁷ Levin simplified and quickened the feelings as if he did not even care what the characters were going through. He set the heartbreaking meeting on the level of opening champagne. Not only was the meeting hastened but the future inappropriate mother-son relationship began. “They leaned in, touching their lips.”⁷⁸ Kissing on lips didn't come strange to Rosemary, at least until Andy became aggressive. “He turned her around and kissed her on the mouth, pulled her head and waist close to him, pressed against her, stuck his tongue into her mouth. She twisted around him, pulled away - the tiger's eyes faded in hazelnut – he released her, breathing hard.”⁷⁹ A mother's intimate relationship with her son is not a phenomenon associated with horror. It was as if Levin had deviated from the original idea of a horror novel. Rosemary was shocked by Andy's nature, of course, still the reader did not learn of her true hidden thoughts. “She backed away from the window and shook her head, her hand outstretched by the palm in front of her. "Sorry, Andy," she said.” I understand you, I love you, but- “She shook her head and backed a little more.”⁸⁰ It is debatable what exactly Rosemary understands considering such behavior is inappropriate or even disgusting.

The eagerness with which Rosemary came to terms with popularity is also admirable. In the first novel of this two-part series, Rosemary appeared as a shy girl who prefers to spend time at home. Within a month, she had grown accustomed to luxury and worldwide popularity. She even started planning her own show and designing new commercials. The naive and superficial wife became a brave, confident, and relatively independent woman. She was not as a matter of fact afraid to go into a new relationship. She left connection with the name Woodhouse in the past and accepted the future of self-sufficient Reilly. This new Rosemary had also learned from the past. When something did not fit and someone was acting suspiciously, she did not invent comfortable scenarios though decided to act. Levin exploited the same motives in the book as in *Rosemary's Baby*. The murder of a friend, an anagram to decipher, the revelation of a satanic gathering and a meeting with the devil. However, in this occurrence, Rosemary is not driven into a corner and is not mad with panic on account of knowing that everything can be true. Contrasting rationale represents Rosemary who exchanged faith in God for faith in the antichrist, too. Although she prays to God, she eventually chooses her son. Levin indicates that

⁷⁷ Ira Levin, *Rosemary a její syn* (Praha: Rybka Publishers, 1997), 36-37.

⁷⁸ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 39.

⁷⁹ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 61-62.

⁸⁰ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 62.

Rosemary is not a morally based Christian when she promised incest. "Say it and we can jump to bed right now."⁸¹ Rosemary Woodhouse was a sensitive, naive wife, while Rosemary Reilly is a heartless harlot, at least that is how Levin introduced her. The whole world and her son were dying, and she chose an infinitely young life with the devil.

The end of Rosemary's story can be interpreted in two ways. Either it was all a nightmare or Rosemary exists in a terrible dream. Most people believe it was just a dream. However, the mention of the anagram and the resemblance of the house in Dakota to Bramford suggest to some readers that it was either a clairvoyant dream or that the devil had taken her to hell. "It kept going on and on, I slept, and it started again, and it kept going ..."⁸² Rosemary lives in hell in an endless loop of lies, rape, son's death and the end of the world.

4.2 Characteristics of Andy Woodhouse/Castevet

In Rosemary's Baby Andy represented an invisible evil. He was the reason for Rosemary's unbearable pain and covenant intrigue. Within six years, his mother raised him with the Satanists. After that, he was still under the influence of the Castevets until they died. Levin portrays him as Jesus. Everyone in the world knows him and almost everyone professes his faith. Although he calls himself a unifier of nations, Andy is a nefarious liar. He convinced everyone in the world even his mother that he wanted to start the new millennium with peace. In the shadows, however, he plotted with the devil. His mother's absence during growing up simply forced Andy into the clutches of his father, Satan. He tried to convince Rosemary of his self-discipline and of struggling to free himself from his father's coat. "He's furious. We are facing each other. But while I'm here, he can't do anything, he can't stop me."⁸³ Later, the reader learns about the untruthfulness of aforementioned sentence and Andy's treachery. He knew all along that Rosemary's new boyfriend Joe was, in fact, a reincarnated devil. What is more, Andy was the one who offered her to meet him. "Joe will pick you up."⁸⁴

His corporation Children of God is run by ambitious people in high positions. According to Andy, they do not know about his proper identity and the original intention of the company. However, Rosemary later reveals a meeting of the coven. Andy, as a shining symbol of humanity, convinces her that it is just distraction from stressful everyday life. "What is

⁸¹ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 203.

⁸² Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 240.

⁸³ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 40.

⁸⁴ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 48.

happening here is not Satanism. I don't confess it, believe me.”⁸⁵ He convinced her to attend the party. In this part, Levin returns to Rosemary's Baby by explaining the origin of tanis. “The incense is made from the leaves of an Egyptian plant related to Indian hemp, and it is made into hashish.”⁸⁶At the same time, however, it is an explanation that does not make much sense. Rosemary had never had such feelings before, so either the production of tanis changed or Levin completely neglected the earlier behaviour of his main character. It is clear that Andy is slowly trying to lead his mother on the wrong path. He is not afraid to use drugs or the mother's love for the child. Furthermore, he attempts to turn motherly love into something perverted. He first made excuses for her absence in the interim of adolescence. “You weren't here when I was learning to know women, and when I was a teenager and all, so now, even though there is such a huge bond between us, you are also a woman who came into my life out of nowhere.”⁸⁷ He also makes excuses that she is the only woman who knows his true form. However, this is not true given the fact that the main members of the organization knew about the satanic plan.

Andy represents the limit to which one can go for the pursuit of power. He passively participated in the horrific murder of his ex-girlfriend to prevent the disclosure of his secret. He has persuaded billions of people to light candles, which will result in the end of humanity. He tried to please his father but in the end he got used to his human side, for which he was nailed to the wall like a real Jesus. Although he killed humanity, he eventually tried to save at least his mother. “Go,” he repeated. “Trust me, you should do it. It will be OK.”⁸⁸It is not explicitly stated whether Andy acts as indeed cruel that he sent his mother into the grip of the devil or he possibly saw signs of the future. “He smiled. Would I lie?”⁸⁹ It is possible that he predicted that the mother could still redeem mankind. Nonetheless, by summoning the antichrist, the Casteverts brought their plan from the grave to a meritorious end.

⁸⁵ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 180.

⁸⁶ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 194-195.

⁸⁷ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 61.

⁸⁸ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 238.

⁸⁹ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 238.

4.3 Religion, Stereotypes, Patriarchy

4.3.1 Religion and Overpopulation

While *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Stepford Wives* comment on the suppression of women's emancipation, *Son of Rosemary* calls attention to the problems of the general public. The 1990s recorded a decline in Americans professing a religion. According to Christian Smith, the decrease may have been the consequence of the Cold War and the association of the Republican Party with the Christian right.⁹⁰ Rosemary was raised a Christian, and although she put her moral qualities aside in extreme situations she turned to God for advice when she was at rock bottom. Rosemary's fear of rejection by God after the birth of the antichrist reflects the fear of common people. Levin portrays the Children of God as a religion superior to all. "Enough to attract Christians," he continued with a smile, "but not enough to discourage Muslims, Buddhists and Jews."⁹¹ The organization brings together billions of people of different religions. However, in this case, people do not profess a divine entity yet a devilish being. As in the real world, the theology is opposed by atheists in the story as well. By adding a paranoid atheist, Levin wanted to reduce their credibility. By lighting explosive candles, the devil wants to exterminate humanity and take revenge on his father. With this radical solution, Levin probably wanted to point out the growing problem of overcrowding. Since the 1960s, the population has increased every 10 to 20 years by a billion. Rosemary's behaviour at the end of the book can be compared to the Original Sin of Eve. Looking at the dying world, she was seduced by the devil and accepted the forbidden fruit in the form of eternal youth. The book was perhaps designed as a warning for the coming millennium.

4.3.2 Gender Stereotypes

After taking on the role of antichrist mother and divorcing Guy, Rosemary is no longer a role model for a virtuous wife. However, what remains for her is her never-ending naivete. She changed from a naive wife to a naive mother. Mothers are biologically programmed to believe and do everything for their children. Unless, of course, their child is a devil's offspring. Levin copies Rosemary's behaviour from the previous novel. At first, she blindly believes everything that is happening and later, with the help of clues, she comes to the truth. However, Rosemary's behaviour suggests that she has completely forgotten about the previous events that led to

⁹⁰ Derek Thompson, "Three Decades Ago, America Lost Its Religion. Why?," *The Atlantic*, last modified September 26, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/09/atheism-fastest-growing-religion-us/598843/>.

⁹¹ Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 38.

Andy's conception and immediately believed all his fabrications. Levin also focuses on the typical mother-son relationship that is supposed to be absolutely asexual. Andy is an adult child with deprivation syndrome. "You weren't here when I taught to know women, and when I was a teenager, so now, even though there is such a huge bond between us, you are also a woman who came into my life out of nowhere."⁹² The mother's absence during the upbringing damaged Andy on a mental level, where he does not know what is appropriate and what is shameless. It's debatable what Levin wanted to say with this plot. One alternative may be a better option of abortion than putting an unwanted child in an orphanage, where he or she may never receive the mother's love. Another possibility is the connection with sexual deviants. Most of these men experienced poor childhood or ill-treatment by their mothers. Rosemary endures conflict. She does not know whether to succumb to such an unscrupulous act or to stand up for herself. The stereotype consists in evidence that this practise is more associated with mothers as with weak, emotionally involved women. The father represents a solid, indomitable rock, which would not allow such immoral development. In essence, Andy's father nailed him to the wall for his cowardly attitude.

A thought-provoking character is Andy's ex-girlfriend Judy S. Karijat. She was sent by paranoid atheists as a spy. As it is the case with all emotionally or sexually oriented pursuits, the main role portrays the woman. In recent years, the role of the emotionally based woman has changed to sexually conquering woman. The value of a female character to seduce a man to subsequently obtain information has become a popular theme in many books or motion pictures. Even in the present plot, Levin could not avoid comparing the characters to biblical betrayal. While Andy represented Jesus, Judy served as Judas. Judas Iscariot comes out of her name when it is read in quick succession. However, unlike Judas, who betrayed Jesus for money, Judy tried to uncover Andy's secret and salvage the world. Levin, whether consciously or unconsciously, suggests that a woman's justified betrayal beside a man's deception is forgivable.

4.3.3 Patriarchy

The most dominant character in the story is the Devil himself, who manipulates Andy to destroy the world. Equally as the Castevets had Rosemary and the child constantly under scrutiny, just so the Devil disguised himself as her boyfriend in order that he could watch her influence on Andy. Unbeknownst to Rosemary, as in previous events, she was gradually oppressed and driven into a corner by male domination, except that this time it was a conspiracy of father and

⁹² Levin, *Rosemary a její syn*, 61.

son. Andy's organization Children of God acts as a kind of shadow eminence in the story. The consortium pretends to be holy and wants only the best for the world. However, as usual, the organization is made up of calculated capitalists who want to make the most of the money invested plus are not afraid to kill for power. The multibillion-dollar companies are often associated with the oppression of women, whether in work or personal sphere.

As it was in the case of Rosemary's Baby, so in this part Andy forces Rosemary to choose between evil and good. However, the good element in this case is death, along with all the people in the world. Throughout everything she went through, Rosemary returned to her moral principles by deciding to stay with her son. Unfortunately, the present narrative is not about a woman who stands up for her opinion and will not be broken by male preeminence. Rosemary is persuaded to cowardly betray humanity for which she is punished by endless torment. Male supremacy does not tolerate and does not forgive mistakes. Levin brilliantly reveals the ubiquitous influence of patriarchal society. As a consequence of its trust and reluctance to fight, humanity will be doomed.

5. The Stepford Wives

As it was already mentioned, the 1960s and 1970s represented the second wave of feminisms in America. Unlike the first wave, where women sought voting rights, this one dealt with equality and social rights. The story of *The Stepford Wives* is set in the indicated period and is considered to be the iconic popular feminist text of the decade.⁹³ The whole book reflects the then shift in society. Through metaphors in the novel, Ira Levin points to the feminist movement, gender instability, and continuous male oppression. Levin's story had such an impact on society that the term Stepford Wife infiltrated the contemporary speech. The term Stepford Wife symbolizes a married woman who submits to her husband's will and is preoccupied by domestic concerns and her own personal appearance.⁹⁴

5.1 Characteristics of Joanna Eberhart

The story begins with the arrival of Eberhart's family in Stepford. The family longs for change as they move from bustling New York to the quiet small town of Stepford. The book does not

⁹³ Jane Elliott, "Stepford U.S.A.: Second-Wave Feminism, Domestic Labor, and the Representation of National Time," *Cultural Critique*, no 70 (Fall, 2008), 33, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25475486?seq=1>.

⁹⁴ "Stepford wife," Collins Dictionary, accessed 2021, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/stepford-wife>.

say whether it was Joanna's or Walter's decision to move. However, Levin's introductory pages suggest that it was a common decision, as the spouses are equal in the relationship. They take turns washing dishes, taking care of children or cooking. "It was Walter's turn to do dishes"⁹⁵. Joanna gradually shows that she doesn't like housework and would like to return to work as a professional photographer. She would like to promote her views at a local club but is surprised to find that it is strictly for men. She is upset to find out that her husband Walter has joined the Male Association as they call themselves. Namely Joanna is a staunch feminist who has taken part in demonstrations for women's rights in the past. Thus, she is convinced that every institution can be changed only from the outside by petitions or demonstrations, not from the inside as Walter thinks. However, he assures her that he will try to reverse the rule of no woman. "Hold off a little while. If it's not open to women in six months, I'll quit and we'll march together. Shoulder to shoulder. Sex, yes; sexism, no."⁹⁶ Joanna considerably differs from the other women in Stepford. She represents ordinary not always perfect women who have good and bad days and are not regularly in the mood to put make up perfectly or to dress defiantly. She appreciates her spare time when she takes photos of unusual places and compelling people. Leisure activities are something the Stepford wives do not know because they do not have free time. They clean all day long, take care of the children and throughout they can look perfect. Their perfection is a bee in Joanna's bonnet since her arrival. Always perfectly made up, chaste, polite, the Stepford wives are simply without defects.

Joanna's only soulmate is Bobbie Markowov. Together they try to find out the secret of Stepford. They even try to start an organization for women. Unfortunately, the only one who joins, just for being bored, is Charmaine Wimperis. She loves playing tennis and despises her husband, describes him as sex fiend and a real weirdo.⁹⁷ The character of Charmaine leads to one of the most noteworthy scenes in the book. Charmaine destroys her beloved tennis court with the purpose that the laborers can lay a lawn there for her husband, who plays golf. The moment and the sudden change of opinion of Charmaine's husband confirms to Joanna that something dishonest is happening in the town. "He's a wonderful guy and I'm a lucky woman who ought to be grateful to him."⁹⁸

An article, which confirms that in Stepford used to be a women's association, does not give Joanna peace of mind either. Joanna learns that all women used to attend the Women's Club

⁹⁵ Ira Levin, *The Stepford Wives* (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2002), 177, Kindle.

⁹⁶ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 178.

⁹⁷ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 202.

⁹⁸ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 218.

and were interested in a process of the feminist movement. What strikes Joanna the most is the fact that none of the women mentioned the club. When she confronts her neighbour Kit, she is surprised by the indifference that Kit talks about the club and compares her to an actress in a commercial. "That's what she was, Joanna felt suddenly. That's what they all were, all the Stepford wives: actresses in commercials, pleased with detergents and floor wax, with cleansers, shampoos, and deodorants. Pretty actresses, big in the bosom but small in the talent, playing suburban housewives unconvincingly, too nicey-nice to be real."⁹⁹ Kit's behaviour arouses compassion and concern in Joanna. She does not understand how Kit can be happy as a mindless wife. The men founded the Men's Association the same year the Women's Club was dissolved. The women apparently lost interest in associating and stayed at home, while the men began to decide on the running of the town. Bobbie tries to convince Joanna that there are powerful drugs in the city that turn strong women into obedient slaves. Joanna finds the theory unbelievable, however possible, given that there must be a reason why emancipated women have become hobby-free home birds. Joanna understands that Bobbie wants to move out. She thinks about moving a lot likewise yet gives the town another chance. With this decision, Joanna shows her practical and fierce nature. Although she is not happy in the town and something strange is happening within reach, the family is already inhabited, and the children would have to transfer to another school again. The turning point comes when Bobbie appears after a weekend with her husband as exchanged. At first, Joanna does not want to admit that her only ally has fallen victim to a Stepford conspiracy. She blames the change in Bobbie's behaviour to an argument with her husband. However, a perfectly polished house and a flawlessly made-up Bobbie proves the absurd truth.

Joanna begins to panic. She hysterically calls on her husband that they must move away immediately. At that moment, Walter was Joanna's only safe haven. However, a few pages later, Joanna connects the facts and accuses Walter of knowing what is going on in Stepford before they moved. Although Joanna is an emancipated woman, she is also a mother. Thus, when Walter raises the children's question, Joanne begins to doubt her assumptions. He convinces her to visit a psychiatrist. Even though she known the psychiatrist probably will not believe her, she still confides in her. She needs to release the pressure and make sure another woman understands her. During the session, she discovers that one member of the association, Dale Coba, worked at Disneyland, where he made wax figures. Horrified by the truth, Joanna runs home to pick up the children and leave town. She is surprised and imprisoned by her husband.

⁹⁹ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 42.

Many would panic in such situation yet Joanna remains calm and thoughtfully thinks about next plan. During the escape, she hears Walter on the phone and is convinced that Walter is part of a male treason. Even though Joanna knows the truth about men and their wives, she lets them persuade her again. Not following her conclusion is one of Joanna's biggest shortcomings. Not wanting to face the terrible truth, she blames herself. She spent a lot of time photographing and not noticing the physical changes in her husband. "His face had grown fuller; why hadn't she noticed it before today? Had she been too busy taking pictures, working in the darkroom? She would call Dr Fancher on Monday, would go and lie on the brown leather couch; would cry a little maybe, and try to become happy."¹⁰⁰ She would rather try to be happy than be really happy. Levin encounters physical women who, in the face of unpleasant truth, seldom make a change and who prefer to return to an unhappy marriage.

At the end of the book, Joanna looks better than ever. Unknowingly, she puts all the goods neatly in the basket as the perfect Stepford wife.

5.2 Characteristics of Walter Eberhart

Alike Rosemary's baby, the story of *The Stepford's Wives* is narrated by a female heroine. Therefore, the author regards all of Walter's feelings and thoughts from the conversations.

At the beginning of the book, it is evident that Walter supports his wife and does not want to change anything about her. He even encourages women's movements although in many ways they condemn male existence. By joining the Men's Association, he wants to refute men's impressions on obedient wives. At least until he finds out the truth about the Stepford wives. Apparently, he liked the idea of a lifeless, perfect wife because he started masturbating when he got home. He chose to masturbate rather than make love to his own wife. Perhaps he felt guilty for imagining an improved wife who looked like the one sleeping next to him. "Gee whiz, you don't have to do that," she said. "I just didn't want to wake you," he said. "You were sound asleep."¹⁰¹ Although he was thrilled by the idea of a robotic wife, he probably had no plans to change his wife at first. He bothered to get Joanna into a meeting of the Association. It can be seen in this part of the book that Walter shares his wife's opinions and takes her as self-equal. "No, listen," he said, "stay upstairs with us and get into the conversation. A couple of them are die-hard men-only's; it won't do them any harm to hear a woman make intelligent comments. I'm assuming you will."¹⁰² Under other conditions, the reader may think that Walter joined the

¹⁰⁰ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 97.

¹⁰¹ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 22.

¹⁰² Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 29.

scheme from the beginning. At the mentioned meeting, the illustrator of the Association painted a portrait of Joanna.

When Joanna discovered the existence of the women's club, Walter tried to preclude her from knowing more. Either he did not know about the club at all or he wanted to convince Joanna of its insignificance. Just as the question of the move arose, Walter supported Joanna. In this part, Levin portrays Walter as a venerable husband who wants nothing more than his wife's happiness. However, attentive readers will notice that Walter did not propose to move immediately yet after the end of the school year. "But we could do it next summer. I don't think we'd lose anything, except the time and the moving and closing costs."¹⁰³ It is possible that he already knew that at that time Joanna's opinion would not matter as she would be replaced. Walter's dilemma also affected their intimate lives. A woman always knows when a man does not like fornication, and the same applies for Joanna. She sensed something was wrong and accused him of infidelity. As a typical man, Walter makes excuses for fatigue. „Maybe I've been a little tired lately because of the commuting." He kissed her cheek. "Go to sleep," he said."¹⁰⁴

The exchange of wives has so far been just a fantasy. Nevertheless, that changed after the visit of the improved Bobbie. As she was leaving, Walter hesitated to kiss her cheek. „Bobbie moved to Walter at the door and offered her cheek. He hesitated—Joanna wondered why—and pecked it."¹⁰⁵ Standing against reality is more terrifying than hidden thoughts and dreams. The initial fright, however, was replaced by reassurance. When Joanna suggested a weekend without children, Walter immediately agreed adding after the holidays. At that time, he will be certainly enjoying all-loving wife. "That'd be great," he said. "Right after the holidays."¹⁰⁶

It must be admitted that Walter plays the role of a helping husband convincingly. He continues to try to help Joanna with the household, even though he no longer has to bother. "Walter did the dishes and then went to the Men's Association."¹⁰⁷

When Joanna panicked and wanted to move immediately, Walter tried to tell her all sorts of justifications for not leaving. He turned her insecurity against her.

¹⁰³ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 55.

¹⁰⁴ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 62.

¹⁰⁵ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 68.

¹⁰⁶ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 68.

¹⁰⁷ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 69.

Over time, and under the influence of men from the Male Association, he realized that Joanna could take more care of herself. “If Bobbie’s taking an interest in her appearance, it’s about time. It wouldn’t hurt you to look in a mirror once in a while. She looked at him, and he looked away, flushing, and looked back at her. “I mean it,” he said. “You’re a very pretty woman and you don’t do a damn thing with yourself anymore unless there’s a party or something.”¹⁰⁸ At that moment, Joanna asked him if she should change. With his negative answer, he proved his manipulateness, ruthlessness and cowardice. He could tell he wasn't happy and wanted a change. He preferred to come to terms with the idea that Joanna would not change and so forth he would simply replace her with a superior version. He aimed to keep her in the town at all costs and did not shy away from using her mother's love for children. To reassure her, he even promised to pay a deposit for a new house.

When Joanna did not return from the psychiatrist for a long time, Walter rather gave the children to the neighbours on account of expecting trouble. Until the last end, he threw dust in Joanna’s eyes about the goals of the Men's Association. Walter's participation in the story ends with a call for reinforcements at Joanna. However, in the end he got what he wanted, the sophisticated fabricated maid-wife.

5.3 Feminism, Stereotypes, Patriarchy

5.3.1 Feminism

As already mentioned, *The Stepford Wives* came into being at the heart of the second wave of feminism. Levin makes it clear from the first pages that the book responds to the social dilemma of the time. “And I’m interested in politics and in the Women’s Liberation movement. Very much so in that. And so is my husband.”¹⁰⁹ Joanna is not like the quietly hidden feminists at home but is actively involved in demonstrations and petitions. “Organizations can be changed from the outside,” she said. “You get up petitions, you picket—”¹¹⁰ “I’ll think up slogans for placards. I’ll have plenty of time when school starts.”¹¹¹ Levin consolidates Joanna's character as a resolute emancipated woman by mentioning that she is a member of the National Organization for Women, which was the most prominent group fighting sexual discrimination. Joanna and Bobbie try to address other women by forming a consciousness-raising group.

¹⁰⁸ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 75.

¹⁰⁹ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 13.

¹¹⁰ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 15.

¹¹¹ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 16.

These groups occurred as the usual practice to raise women's awareness of the political situation or gender instability in the 1960s. Furthermore, Levin embodies feminism with Betty Friedan, author of the guidebook of feminist movement *The Feminine Mystique*. “Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique*, addressed members of the Stepford Women’s Club Tuesday evening in the Fairview Lane home of Mrs. Herbert Sundersen, the Club’s President. Over fifty women applauded Mrs. Friedan as she cited the inequities and frustrations besetting the modern-day housewife.”¹¹² At that moment, Joanna discovered that Stepford used to be a crucial venue for feminist meetings, as it was noticed by such a preeminent writer. Later, Levin revealed that the Women's Club ended in the same year as the Men's Association emerged. Friedan symbolized the masculine panic of female liberation, respectively.

5.3.2 Gender Stereotypes

The Stepford Wives personate an illustrious model of how men think women should behave and look like. Submissive, large-breasted, obedient, putting on make-up women caring only for children and the household. Joanna herself compares them to actresses in commercials. How could she not if they behave as if they had a predetermined scenario. The characters in the book personify various stereotypes in the physical world. While the Stepford wives serve as a typical female stereotype of behaviour, Joanna breaks the stereotype of a woman manually incompetent. She does not need a man to tell her what to do or a male individual in general. “As a matter of principle, she wasn’t going to do any housework. Not that there wasn’t plenty to do, God knows, and some that she actually wanted to do, like getting the living-room bookshelves squared away—but not tonight, no sir. It could darn well wait. She wasn’t Carol Van Sant and she wasn’t Mary Ann Stavros—pushing a vacuum cleaner past a downstairs window when she went to lower Pete’s shade.”¹¹³ Levin created the character of Joanna based on the feminine ambitions of the feminist movement. She is an emancipated woman who is not afraid to have other hobbies than caring for children. Plus, the absurdity that a woman cannot construct furniture is just another masculine manner to make sure of their dominance. Charmaine symbolizes a woman miserable in marriage. In the case of Charmaine, it is either the children or the money that holds her in marriage. She admitted that she did not get along with her husband in this degree it was probably the money that made Charmaine marry the man she despised. “He had this rubber suit made for me, at God knows what cost, in England. I ask you, rubber? ‘Put it on one of your secretaries,’ I said, ‘you’re not going to get me into it.’”

¹¹² Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 38.

¹¹³ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 20.

Zipper and padlocks all over.”¹¹⁴ In this part, Levin hints an intimate life in marriage. Charmaine reached the breaking point in marriage considering she preferred her husband to have a mistress rather than touch her directly. Many women are cornered by false stereotypes. No woman wants to be sexually active when society dictates her how to function. What is more, if women do not play an accustomed role, they become useless. „Joanna said, “Were the Women’s Club meetings more boring than housework?” Kit frowned. “No,” she said, “but they weren’t as useful as housework.”¹¹⁵ From women not having time for hobbies or going to work only benefit men. The men gain benefits in the form of more time to socialize in pubs or clubs. meaning. The role of the household presented an extreme aspect in women's lives. Friedan says that no matter how much a woman shopping, cooks or cleans her work is still not done. "The more a woman is deprived of function in society at the level of her own ability," Friedan writes, "the more her housework, mother-work, wife-work, will expand - and the more she will resist finishing her housework or mother-work, and being without any function at all.”¹¹⁶

5.3.3 Patriarchy

The Stepford men from the Men’s Association depict the corruption of male domination. They confirm their supremacy by transforming living, demanding wives into submissive robotic companions. Levin does not explain how the men of Stepford decided to replace their wives with the perfect copies. However, the tone of the book suggests that they suffered from the startling fear of the ever-increasing second wave of feminism. Women successfully fought for equal rights at both professional and student levels thus threatening men's status as the dominant group.¹¹⁷ The location of the Association's clubhouse itself points to the higher position of men toward to women, too. “But the Men’s Association house, up on the hill, had a surprisingly comic look to it: a square old nineteenth-century house, solid and symmetrical, tipsily parasolled by a glistening TV antenna. The four tall upstairs windows were vividly alight, their sashes raised. Figures moved inside.”¹¹⁸ Anna Silver likens the house to a Victorian home with its separate-spheres ideology, in which men work in the public sector while women remain at home, creating a safe domestic haven for their families.¹¹⁹ However, Levin points to the male

¹¹⁴ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 36.

¹¹⁵ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 43.

¹¹⁶ Anna Krugovoy Silver, “The Cyborg Mystique: “The Stepford Wives” and Second Wave Feminism,” *Women’s Studies, Quarterly* 30, no. ½ (Spring – Summer, 2002): 64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40004637?seq=1>.

¹¹⁷ Megan Hess, “Second and Third-Wave Feminist Values and Culture in “The Stepford Wives”,” *Cinemablography*, last modified November 11, 2016, <http://www.cinemablography.org/blog/second-and-third-wave-feminist-values-and-culture-in-the-stepford-wives>.

¹¹⁸ Levin, *The Stepford Wives*, 44.

¹¹⁹ Silver, “The Cyborg Mystique: “The Stepford Wives” and Second Wave Feminism,” 67.

dominance by their ubiquitous existence. When Joanna got too close to the clubhouse, a police officer held her back until the blinds in the house closed. Charmaine had her expensive clay court demolished provided that her husband could build a golf court. The successful transformation of the wife into a robotic copy is associated with purity in the book. When a woman does not have a completely sterile kitchen, she is still a living thinking person. Florynce Kennedy calls these women dirt searchers.¹²⁰ Cleaning is main duty of a properly housebroken wife as well as caring for children. The robot wives are programmed to take care of children although they have no feelings for them. Men strengthen their dominance by depriving their wives of their biological right to have children. Levin portrays the fathers as monsters who killed the mothers of their children and thus prevented the conception of unwanted children.

While it may seem that Levin created *The Stepford Wives* to point to the repression of only women, some male readers may not agree. Improved copies of wives have the perfect figure, appearance, behaviour and will fulfil the husband's every sexual desire. However, even though the men have perfect sex robots, Levin does not indicate at all that they spend much time with them. On the other hand, the members of the Association meet practically every day. The 1960s are not only the cradle of the feminist movement but also of the homosexual rights movement. Robotic wives can act as receivers of their husbands' gay fantasies. The inability of artificial beings to express emotions leads men to always seek male society as there are no conscious women in Stepford.

At the end of the book, the patriarchy representing the Men's Association won. Joanna looks better than ever. Unknowingly, she puts all the goods neatly in the basket. Finishing the book, Levin confirms that the circle of replacing wives will continue time and again.

6. Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to analyze gender inequality in three selected novels by Ira Levin. With the assistance of critical sources, quotations from the novels as well as her own insight, the author inspected the thinking and behaviour influenced by the environment in which the main characters lived.

The first part of the bachelor thesis summarizes the development of the horror genre. Horror as it is perceived today originated in the 18th century with the beginning of Gothic novels. The

¹²⁰ Silver, "The Cyborg Mystique: "The Stepford Wives" and Second Wave Feminism", 66.

Gothic mania initiated with Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto*. Over time, more and more fantasy elements became involved in horror, examples being Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Currently, there are many varieties of subgenres that have attracted new viewers. The most popular types cover supernatural horror, sci-fi horror, and psychological horror.

The issue of gender together with feminism is also depicted in detail. The early feminist movements were a kind of springboard for the three waves of feminism and the issue of gender inequality. The greatest emphasis is put on the second wave of feminism, as Levin wrote *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Stepford Wives* at the time, which had just been influenced by the growing dissatisfaction of women in society. The loudest activist was Betty Friedan, who with her book *Feminine mystique* encouraged women locked up in the house. The development of society created gender stereotypes, which caused the view of women as subordinate to men. Stereotypes such as a woman in the role of a housewife, a woman in trouble or simply a weak emotional flower that has to rely on men appear in many literary works. Feminist movements, along with fundamental rights for women, have also raised the right to abortion. The child conceived during rape probably influenced the motive of evil child in the literature. The writers looked for solution whether children inherited bad qualities from their parents or gradually acquire them through upbringing.

While the theoretical part introduces a broader view of selected topics to the reader, the analytical part uses the findings to analyze the characters. Many characters appearing in the novels suffer from the injustice of society, however, the greatest emphasis was placed on the two main female heroines Rosemary and Joanna and the three male characters Guy, Andy, and Walter. Although both heroines are oppressed by male domination, they each approach the situation differently. Levin created the character of Rosemary as an example of a proper wife. Rosemary is an obedient housewife and mother who naively trusts her husband and son and did the be-all and end-all for them. Joanna, on the other hand, is an active feminist who fights against women like Rosemary. Both women are fighting oppression by their husbands and friends. Whether the satanic coven or the Men's Association, both represent a misogynistic social standard. Levin draws attention to the fact that if a woman gets married, she unknowingly becomes the property of the husband. By adding horror elements to such severe subjects, Levin allures readers into the story, increasing their apprehension from existing unequal situation.

To sum up, the female characters in Levin's horror novels play the role of victims of the male desire for power. It does not matter if she is an obedient wife taking care of the household or an avid feminist who is not afraid to intervene, both types of women will be overthrown by the male sovereignty. The reason why Levin's novels are still so popular is the fact that topics such as gender equality are still discussed today. Even in the present moment, after more than 100 years when women had acquired the rights, they have to deal with discrimination and sexual harassment in their professional lives. Women are evaluated on the basis of their unsatisfactory gender. The Men's Association can be compared to modern billion-dollar companies, where women usually hold lower positions as secretaries or cleaners. Levin brilliantly created characters that reflected the true unfair essence of society. Moreover, with his abiding writing and perspective, he is one of the authors whose work will be discussed in the distant future.

Resumé

Cílem bakalářské práce je analyzovat genderovou nerovnováhu v hororech Ira Levina. Levin za svůj život napsal sedm románů včetně *Rosemary má děťátko*, *Rosemary a její syn* a *Stepfordské paničky*. Tyto tři knihy byly vybrány na základě stejného motivu, který je spojuje. Jedná se o nezdravou moc patriarchální společnosti, která nutí ženy skrývat své pravé emoce a nutí je se chovat podle předem daných norem. Hrdinky knih *Rosemary* a *Joanna* jsou postupně zbaveny osobní svobody a zároveň zrazeny vlastními manželi, kteří je zaprodali pro větší moc a pohodlí.

Jelikož se díla zařazují do hororového žánru, tak začátek práce je věnován vývoji hororu. Všichni autoři se shodují v tom, že horor evokuje pocity strachu a znepokojení. Nicméně důvody, proč se lidé chtějí dobrovolně podrobit těmto pocitům jsou ošemetné. Může se jednat o následný pocit úlevy nebo únik od každodenní rutiny. Horor, jak ho známe dnes se začal vyvíjet v druhé polovině 18. století z gotických novel. Postupem času se do něj začlenily prvky fantasy. Autorům hororového žánru vděčíme za archetypy monstra, vlkodlaka, upíra či člověka s rozdvojenou osobností. Se zvyšující se oblibou hororu začaly vznikat subžánry. Mezi neoblíbenější se zařazuje právě nadpřirozený horor, psychologický horor či spojení vědeckofantastického žánru s hororovými prvky.

Zvláštním subžánrem jsou i horory představující děti jakožto záporné postavy. Tento koncept se do literatury dostal v padesátých letech minulého století. Mezi první autory se řadí Ray Radbury s postavou nemluvněte, které zabilo své rodiče či právě Ira Levin se synem d'ábla. Autoři nejdříve pracovali s představou, že zlo je v dítěti zakořeněno již při narození nicméně později přikročili ke špatné výchově. Podobným příběhem jako *Rosemary má děťátko*, kde je Rosemary nedobrovolně oplodněna Satanem je i román *Midwichské kukačky* od Johna Wyndhama, kde všechny ženy ve vesnici záhadně otěhotněly. Mystické těhotenství spojeno s nechtěným dítětem je pravděpodobně spojeno s tehdejší nespokojeností ohledně názorů na potraty či odložení dítěte k adopci.

Druhý úsek teoretické části se zabývá pojmem gender a feministickými hnutími. Termín gender se dá vykládat různými způsoby. Zjednodušeně se jedná o společenskou roli ženy a muže, která jim udává, jak se mají chovat. Počáteční feministická hnutí byla jakýmsi předchůdci dnešních genderových teorií. Ženy byly nespokojeny s jejich předem danými rolmi matek a manželek závislých na manželech. Ženské spisovatelky mnohdy vystupovaly pod mužskými pseudonymy, aby vůbec měly možnost něco publikovat. Ženská nespokojenost s misogynií

společností se objevila ve třech vlnách feministických hnutí. Zatímco první vlna se zabývala volebním právem žen, druhá a třetí řešila nespokojenost žen v osobním, profesním či společenském životě. Jelikož Ira Levin napsal svá největší díla během druhé vlny feminismu, je tudíž na ní kladen větší důraz. Nejhlásitější aktivistkou té doby byla Betty Friedan, která svojí knihou *Feminine mystique* probudila ženy uvězněné v domácnosti. Ženy si svojí kuráží vybojovaly antikoncepci, zákaz diskriminace na pracovišti či možnost nahlášení sexuálního obtěžování ze strany šéfa. Nicméně důvody, proč byly ženy brány tak dlouhou jakožto slabší pohlaví jsou přisuzovány genderovým stereotypům. Vždyť stereotyp ženy starající se o domácnost a děti sahá až do samého pravěku. Mnoho genderových stereotypů je použito i v hororovém žánru. Žena je ve většině případech vydána na milost mužovým nevhodným myšlenkám či touhám. Je to právě ženská postava, která je zabita či naopak musí být zachráněna mužem, jelikož se nedokáže zachránit sama. Avšak existují i autoři, kteří chtějí zlomit tyto stereotypy. Oblíbeným tématem se stala FBI agentka pátrající po vrahovi.

Analytická část práce se již zabývá hlavními postavami třech vybraných děl. Postavy jsou charakterizovány na základě jejich osobního vývoje v knihách. Jejich chování a myšlenky ovlivněné prostředím jsou ilustrovány na úryvcích z děl. Vždycky proti sobě stojí ženská a mužská postava. V případě *Rosemary má dítě* a *Stepfordské paničky* je to manžel proti manželce, v *Rosemary a její syn* stojí matka proti synovi. Na závěr každé knihy jsou analyzovány motivy použité v knihách. Jedná se o individuální problematiku knihy, poté genderové stereotypy a moc patriarchátu. Tento vzorec se objevuje u všech tří děl. Kritické zdroje a primární literatura posloužili k podložení faktů jednotlivých aspektů. Jako první byl analyzován pár Rosemary a Guye. Rosemary byla zaprodána satanistickému kultu a posloužila jako nádoba pro syna Satana. Svou důvěřivou a naivní stránkou dovolila manželovi a kultu, aby ovládli každý aspekt jejího života. Následovala charakteristika Rosemary jakožto matky a jejího syna Andyho. Andy měl představovat novodobého Ježíše, který dovede lidstvo do nového tisíciletí v míru. Coby syn nejslavnějšího falešníka dokázal přesvědčit skoro celý svět včetně své matky, aby na nový rok rozsvítili svíčky, které měly následně způsobit zkázu lidstva. Posledními postavami byli Joanna a Walter. Joanna neobstála v roli dobré manželky, tudíž byla nahrazena vylepšenou, bezchybnou, umělou verzí.

Levin ve svých románech nastiňuje tehdejší problematiku doby a vytváří postavy podle nelichotivých stereotypů. Rosemary představuje typickou, poslušnou manželku, která je jen jakousi ozdobou pro manžela, který prosperuje z její naivity. Naopak Joanna reprezentuje soběstačnou ženu, která má i jiné koníčky než starání se o domácnost. Levin ve svých knihách

poukazuje na nespokojenost žen s řešením problémů jako je nechtěné těhotenství či negativní postoj vůči sebevědomím ženám. V *Rosemary a její syn* dokonce soustředí pozornost na možnou falešnost náboženských organizací a rostoucí přelidněnost. Těmito bravurně schovanými náznaky chtěl Levin upozornit na nevyzpytatelnost nadcházejícího tisíciletí.

Po důkladném rozboru postav je zřejmé, že ženy ve vybraných dílech hrají roli oběti, zatímco muži představují zlo nasměřované proti slabšímu pohlaví. Patriarchát, ať už ve formě satanistického kultu, náboženské organizace či Mužské asociace utlačuje ženy a obírá je o vlastní názory, myšlenky a zdravý rozum. Levinovo pojetí mužských a ženských postav by nebyl takový problém, kdyby se tato stereotypizace neobjevovala ve skutečném světě. Ženy se i dnes ve 21. století berou jako slabší pohlaví, a to zejména v profesní sféře. Nadnárodní společnosti představují jakousi domnělou mužskou dominanci, která hlídá každý krok lidské populace, jak to bylo podobně v případě *Rosemary a Joanny*. A co více, Levin zvyšuje vnímání této nespravedlnosti použitím hororových prvků. Vidina oplodnění d'áblem či výměny za robotickou verzi zmnohonásobila cítění žen, které byly znásilněné či byly nešťastné v manželství. Všechny postavy, ženské i mužské, ztratily pomyslnou nevinnost v honbě za svými cíli, která se jim již nikdy nevrátí.

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