

Yayın Geliş Tarihi: 08.02.2011  
Yayına Kabul Tarihi: 14.07.2011  
Online Yayın Tarihi: 26.10.2011

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi  
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi  
Cilt: 13, Sayı: 3, Yıl: 2011, Sayfa: 65-78  
ISSN: 1302-3284 E-ISSN: 1308-0911

## THE ANGEL-WOMAN AND THE EVE-WOMAN AS THE OTHERS IN “WEEKEND” BY FAY WELDON

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### Abstract

*As in all patriarchal societies, in England, women face with the problems stemming from gender inequality. In order to struggle with these problems, women should come together, and say ‘we’. However, due to various reasons, women cannot say ‘we’. This paper aims at discussing that middle class women in England do not say ‘we’ since they have been split up into two groups as the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman, and while the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman are competing for the interest of the man, they regard each other as the other. For this purpose, a short-story by Fay Weldon entitled “Weekend” has been studied.*

*In this short-story, Weldon presents the female characters representing the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman, and displays the conflict between these two estranged groups. At the end of the study, it has been seen that since each group others the rival group, women cannot say ‘we’.*

**Key Words:** *Fay Weldon, “Weekend”, ‘the Angel-woman’, ‘the Eve-woman’, the other.*

## FAY WELDON’IN “WEEKEND” (HAFTA SONU) ADLI ÖYKÜSÜNDE ‘MELEK KADIN’ VE ‘BAŞTAN ÇIKARTICI KADIN’ OLARAK ÖTEKİLEŞMİŞ KADINLAR

### Öz

*Tüm diğer ataerkil toplumlarda olduğu gibi, İngiltere’de de kadınlar cinsiyet eşitsizliğinden kaynaklanan sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadırlar. Bu sorunlarla mücadele edebilmek için, kadınlar bir araya gelip, ‘biz’ diyebilmelidirler. Ancak çeşitli nedenlerle, kadınlar ‘biz’ diyememektedirler. Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngiltere’de orta sınıfa ait kadınların ‘Melek Kadın’ ve ‘Baştan Çıkartıcı Kadın’ olarak ikiye ayrıldıkları, erkeklerin beğenisi kazanmak ya da kaybetmemek için birbirleriyle çatışırken, birbirlerini ötekileştirdiklerini ve bu nedenle ‘biz’ diyemediklerini göstermektir. Bu amaçla, Fay Weldon’un “Weekend”(Haftasonu) adlı kısa öyküsü incelenmiştir.*

*Bu öyküde, Weldon okurlarına melek-kadın ve baştan çıkartıcı kadını temsil eden kadın karakterleri sunar ve birbirlerine yabancılaşmış bu iki kadın grubu arasındaki*

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*çatışmaları sergiler. Bu çalışmanın sonunda, her grubun rakip grubu ötekileştirdiği için 'biz' diyemedikleri görülmüştür.*

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Fay Weldon, "Weekend", Öteki, 'Melek Kadın', 'Baştan Çıkartıcı Kadın'.*

## INTRODUCTION

The female issues in patriarchal societies which have assigned women wife-mother role have been a long-standing concern of social reformers and thinkers. Of these thinkers, Simone De Beauvoir is the first to introduce the concept of the Other to the discussions of female issues stemming from gender inequality. In her revolutionary book entitled *The Second Sex*, De Beauvoir asserts that "He is the subject; he is the Absolute-she is the Other" (De Beauvoir, 1968: xvi). Thus, when we look at the status of women in England throughout history, we see that women isolated from the life outside home did not have such basic civil rights as property right and suffrage for a long time, and they got these rights after long struggles. In other words, for a long time, women were regarded "relative creatures" (Basch, 1974), the other.

Hence, De Beauvoir, in her controversial book, compares the position of women to that of minorities and the proletariat in terms of "the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger" (De Beauvoir, 1968: xviii). Nevertheless, for her, there is an important difference between the above-mentioned groups and the woman. She explains these differences as follows:

Throughout history they [women] have always been subordinated to men, and hence their dependency is not the result of a historical event or a social change – it was not something that *occurred*. The reason why otherness in this case seems to be an absolute is in part that it lacks the contingent or incidental nature of historical facts. A condition brought about at a certain time can be abolished at some other time, as the Negroes of Haiti and others have proved; but it might seem that a natural condition is beyond the possibility of change. In truth, however, the nature of things is no more immutably given, once for all, than is historical reality. If woman seems to be the inessential which never becomes the essential, it is because she herself fails to bring about this change. Proletarians say "We"; Negroes also. Regarding themselves as subjects, they transform the bourgeois, the whites, into "others." But women do not say "We", except at some congress of feminists or similar formal demonstration; men say "women", and women use the same word in referring to themselves. They do not authentically assume a subjective attitude. The proletarians have accomplished the revolution in Russia, the Negroes in Haiti, the Indo-Chinese are battling for it in Indo-China; but the women's effort has never been anything more than a symbolic agitation. They have gained only what men have been willing to

grant; they have taken nothing, they have only received (De Beauvoir, 1968: xviii-xix).

As is seen in the quotation above, De Beauvoir complains that different from minorities and the proletariat, women could not achieve solidarity among themselves, and therefore could not improve their status in society and still are subjugated to men. Although the importance of solidarity and sisterhood was emphasized in the second wave feminism, sisterhood could not be achieved due to several reasons.

Of course, it is impossible to mention a monolithic group of women, for some groups of women, their ethnical or class identities may precede their gender probably because they have already been othered, or may feel themselves othered owing to ethnical reasons or class distinction. This may be an important reason for the failure of the sisterhood. However, when we look at middle class women, we see that they could not accomplish sisterhood either.

This paper, thus, aims at discussing that middle class women could not achieve sisterhood and do not say “We” since middle-class women have been split up into two as the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman, and while the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman are competing for the interest of the man, they regard each other as the other.

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979), in fact, in their book entitled *The Madwoman in the Attic* have pointed out these two opposing images of women in literature, and called them the angel-woman and the monster-woman. However, in our study, we have preferred using the Eve-woman to the monster-woman. Therefore, first of all, we will clarify the reasons behind our preference while trying to explain the conceptions behind the images of the Angel and Eve and to exhibit to what extent these two images influenced the lives of women in England. Then, a short-story by Fay Weldon entitled “Weekend” will be analyzed to illustrate the othering between the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman.

## **THE ANGEL-WOMAN AND THE EVE-WOMAN**

The roots of the ideal of womanhood imposing subordination to men on women go back to the medieval society. St. Paul, in particular, basing his anti-feministic ideas upon the Old and New Testaments, advocated the subordination of the woman as follows: “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (cited in Beauvoir, 1968: 90). Similarly, Joan Perkin mentions that “Christian teaching, too, implied that women were inferior in the story of the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam. Divine providence held that women should be subordinate and resignation to her lot, with true Christian humility, was the only proper

response of a good woman” (Perkin, 1993: 1). In short, the views concerning the subordination of women to men were based on religion.

As well as anti-feministic ideas based on religion, two religion-oriented images of women, Eve and Mary, prevailed Western societies, beginning from the mediaeval period. Thus, England did not know where to place women because of these conflicting images of Eve and Mary. The image of Eve was tempting due to the story of Adam and Eve, while Mary was respected as the mother of Christ. Those considering women to be the descendants of Eve believed that women were “corruptible and corrupting” (Basch, 1974: 4); therefore they should be confined in home. Interestingly, there were women, though few, such as the influential educationalist Elizabeth Sewell (Perkin, 1993: 1) and Mrs John Sandford (Basch, 1974: 3) accepted the inferiority of women. Mrs. Sandford wrote in 1831 that “to protect this creature of instinct (‘weaker vessel’), characterized by vanity, instability and lack of judgement, from herself and to prevent her from coming to harm, by confining her in the home” (cited in Basch, 1974: 3-4). As is seen, Eve image represents tempting women. Since our aim in this study is to illustrate the conflict between the tempting woman, in other words femme fatale, and subordinating woman, here we have preferred using the Eve-woman to the monster-woman. Furthermore, Eve image is far from the ideal of womanhood in patriarchal societies as temptation contradicts with subordination.

The image of Eve prevailing society until the seventeenth century weakened during the Victorian period since England experienced a radical transformation from an agricultural society to an industrial society. The result of this transformation was the accumulation of money and prosperity for middle class, which affected the role of women in society, even indirectly. The middle class families enjoying a great prosperity were able to keep a number of servants. “In *The Book of Household Management* (1862), on whose front page a non-exhaustive list of sixteen categories of servants was drawn up, Mrs Beeton explicitly connected the new role of the mistress of the house – ‘commander of an army’ or ‘leader of any enterprise’-with her moral responsibilities towards this community” (Basch, 1974: 6). This new lifestyle provided leisure time for middle-class women. Nevertheless, women having more leisure time could not work outside home due to the prevailing assumptions about the intellectual capacity of women; for instance, in 1865 John Ruskin asserted that: “the woman’s power is for rule, not for battle- and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet orderings, arrangements, and decision” (Ruskin, 2007: 38). Since the intellectual and physical abilities of women were despised, the new role of the woman was spiritual and moral guidance for her family. Due to the above-mentioned changes in society, the image of Mary prevailed over the image of Eve. Nevertheless, though more polished, the image of Mary served the same purpose: to confine the woman in home. De Beauvoir, thus, analysed the image of Mary as follows:

If Mary's status as spouse be denied her, it is for the purpose of exalting the Woman Mother more purely in her. But she will be glorified only in accepting the subordinate role assigned to her. "I am the servant of the Lord." For the first time in human history the mother kneels before her son; she freely accepts her inferiority. This is the supreme masculine victory, consummated in the cult of the Virgin-it is the rehabilitation of woman through the accomplishment of her defeat (De Beauvoir, 1968: 159-160).

As was commented by De Beauvoir, the image of Mary did not rehabilitate the position of women; on the contrary, it disregarded her sexual instincts, and confirmed the subordination of the woman to the man.

In accordance with the image of Mary, the new role of women in society was described by various writers; for example, for Charles Kingsley, the woman is "the natural, and therefore divine, guide, purifier, inspirer of the man" (cited in Basch, 1974: 5-6); according to John Ruskin, "A true wife, in her husband's house, is his servant; it is in his heart that she is queen, ..." (cited in Basch, 1974: 6). Beside the descriptions above, there were some phrases used for women. The woman was called 'the Angel in the House' by Coventry Patmore, 'a Madonna' by Ruskin, 'the Virgin Mary' by Sarah Ellis (Basch, 1974: 6). As is seen, the phrases and the descriptions above have something in common: they denied the sexual instinct of woman, and emphasized chastity, humility, delicacy and self-sacrifice, which reflect the ideal of perfect woman in Victorian middle-class society. Of these phrases, 'Angel in the House' became popular.

The mother-wife ideal, void of all sexual instincts, represented by 'the Angel in the House' dominated both society and literature in the early twentieth century as well. Thus, Virginia Woolf, one of the eminent feminists in the first wave of the women's liberation movement, advises women desiring to emancipate themselves to kill 'Angel in the House'. In her essay titled "Professions for Women", she mentions the phantom of 'Angel in the House' tormenting her while she is writing. She declares that she killed her at last (Woolf, 1970: 237), and defends her imaginary murder as follows: "Had I not killed her she would kill me" (Woolf, 1970: 238). Nevertheless, she admits that "It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality" (Woolf, 1970: 238). It is difficult to kill a phantom since it is the image in the minds of individuals constituting society. Unless we cannot change the image in the minds of individuals, it is impossible to achieve the equality between the sexes.

While the Angel was dominating image both in society and literature in the Victorian period, beginning with the mid-Victorian period, the image of Eve, or femme fatale characters appeared in the novel as well. Jennifer Hedgecock in her book titled *The Femme Fatale in Victorian Literature: the danger and the sexual threat* mentions the prevalence of the femme fatale in the mid-Victorian fiction and names Becky Sharp, Lady Audley, Rosa Dartle, Valerie Marneffe, or Cousin Bette

as “prominent Victorian femme fatale characters” (Hedgecock, 2008: 2). From the mid-Victorian period to the present, the images of the Angel and Eve have prevailed literature, though the second wave of the women’s liberation movement criticized mother-wife ideal of male-dominated society as well as condemning the widespread use of women as sex objects by popular culture.

Thus, Fay Weldon in her short story entitled “Weekend” presents her readers with two female characters, Martha and Katie, representing the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman respectively.

### THE ANALYSIS OF “WEEKEND”

“Weekend”, published in *Watching Me, Watching You* in 1981, is about an ordinary weekend in the life of Martha who is married with three children. In the title of the short-story, Weldon has not used ‘the’, most probably to emphasize that this short-story exhibits an ordinary weekend in the life of Martha. Therefore, it gives a deep sight into her life and her relationship with her husband, Martin.

In this short story, Weldon depicts Martha as a modern example of the Victorian Angel in the House. At the very beginning of the work, Martha comes out as a self-sacrificing woman. Although Martha is a career woman, a market researcher, she left job for five years while the children were small. When she was back to work, she has lost seniority. In other words, she sacrifices her career for her family. As we have mentioned above, self-sacrifice is one of the features of the Angel woman. Concerning her losing seniority, she thinks that “If you have children, mother, that is your reward. It lies not in the world” (Weldon, 1981: 192). As is seen, she does not care for losing her senior position since she considers her children as the rewards. Thus this quotation illustrates that for Martha, her family takes precedence over her career.

Though a career woman, Martha tries to be a perfect housewife and mother like the Angel-woman. The short-story, thus, is full of the examples illustrating how hard she tries to be a perfect wife and mother. Even during weekend holidays, she is busy with satisfying the needs of her family. On Fridays, they go to their cottage in country. She arrives home at six-twelve and by seven-thirty, they are ready to leave home. The following quotation exhibits what she achieves during this short period:

On Fridays Martha would get home on the bus at six-twelve and prepare tea and sandwiches for the family: then she would strip four beds and put the sheets and quilt covers in the washing machine for Monday: take the country bedding from the airing basket, plus the books and the games, plus the weekend food – acquired at intervals throughout the week, to lessen the load – plus her own folder of work from the office, plus Martin’s drawing materials ... plus hairbrushes, jeans, spare T-shirts, Jolyon’s antibiotics....,

Jenny's recorder, Jasper's cassette player and so on – ah, the so on!- and would pack them all, skilfully and quickly, into the boot... Then Martha would run round the house tidying and wiping, doing this and that, finding the cat at one neighbour's and delivering it to another, while the others ate their tea; and would usually, proudly, have everything finished by the time they had eaten their fill (Weldon, 1981: 189-190).

As is seen, when she comes home, she never takes a rest. Martha's rush is supported by Fay Weldon's style as well. Weldon has not used a full stop, while describing Martha's preparation. In a sense, the reader reads Martha's breathless rush breathlessly. As has been mentioned above, Martha, like the Angel-woman in the Victorian period, thinks the prosperity of her family. Thus, during weekend holidays, Martha is busy with either domestic works including entertaining the guests or taking care of the children. However, different from the Angel-woman of the previous century, she works outside home as well. Therefore, her effort to be a perfect housewife is exhausting. So, we think that the exclamation "ah, the so on!" in the quotation above displays Martha's exhaustion.

Even though Martha has her economic independence, she is not able to change the Victorian ideal of good woman in her mind, as we have tried to exhibit above. Colette Dowling explains this case as follows: "We have only one real shot at "liberation", and that is to emancipate ourselves from within" (Dowling, 1982: 21). Since Martha could not kill the Angel within herself, she could not really emancipate herself. In fact, it is not easy to kill the Angel since it is the sign of "hidden dependency" "deeply buried" (Dowling, 1982: 20) within ourselves. Dowling points out that this hidden dependency causes problems not only for the housewife, but also for the career woman (Dowling, 1982: 20). It causes problems since it hinders the real emancipation of women. Moreover, Dowling asserts that "The woman who devotes her entire life to keeping her husband straight and children "protected" is not a saint, she is a clinger. Rather than experience the terrors of being cut loose, of having to find and secure her own moorings, she will hang on in the face of unbelievable adversity" (Dowling, 1982: 156). In Martha's case, the dependency is not hidden, but overt. Throughout the story, Martha's fear of losing Martin is reflected. The narrator points out Martin's importance for Martha as follows: "Martin standing between her and hostility of the world-popular, easy, funny Martin, beckoning the rest of the world into earshot" (Weldon, 1981: 191). In a sense, Martin is a shelter for Martha protecting her against the world outside home. Since she is afraid of losing Martin, she does her best to be a perfect housewife and to meet the wishes of Martin.

The reason behind Martha's fear of losing Martin is her awareness of the Eve-woman or femme fatale in society. Martha regards 'the Eve-woman' as a threat for her shelter. For Martha, Martin's secretary is a threat, though there is nothing showing that Martin has a relationship with her secretary. Martha herself

accepts that it is a “vulgar suspicion”, “a fit of paranoiacs” (Weldon, 1981: 194). For Martha, the secretary here, most probably, represents the Eve-woman ready to tempt her husband.

What is striking here is that a woman conceives another group of women as a threat, as an enemy. In a society where a group of women regard another group of women as enemies, it is impossible to mention sisterhood. This is because the terms, “threat” and “enemy” remind us of the other, instead of sister.

As we have mentioned above, Martin does not have an extramarital affair. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that Martha’s fear is groundless since she has witnessed that Colin, one of the close friends of Martin, divorced his wife, Janet and cohabits with Katie. Thus, Martha, regarding Martin’s secretary as a threat, identifies herself with Janet, Colin’s earlier wife. Janet is a quiet, unattractive woman with large feet, but a perfect mother and wife keeping a comfortable home for her family. Moreover, Katie tells Martha that she resembles Janet (Weldon, 1981: 202). So, Janet is the embodiment of the Angel-woman like Martha.

Besides trying to be perfect housewives and mothers, Martha and Janet have something in common: they are non-assertive women. When Colin and Janet came to the cottage for weekend holidays, she always helped Martha, but did not participate in the conversation and jokes between the men. While the men were talking she “stared into space as if grateful for the rest, quite happy” (Weldon, 1981: 196). To us, this quotation displays that Janet does not have enough self-confidence to participate in the conversation between the men. Instead of participating in the conversation, she behaves as if she were not her husband’s equal, but a person whose mission is to provide a peaceful atmosphere for her husband so that he can enjoy his weekend holiday. Similarly throughout the story, it is impossible to see Martha conversing or joking with the men; instead Martha is busy with housework so that her husband and her husband’s guests enjoy their weekend holidays. Unlike Martha and Janet, Katie enjoys “talking with the men and went for walks with the men” (Weldon, 1981: 196). Furthermore, Katie does not care for housework. For her, housework was boring, and “anyone who bothered with that kind of thing was a fool. Like Martha. Ash should be allowed to stay where it was, even if it was in the butter, and conversations should never be interrupted” (Weldon, 1981: 196-197). Katie considers herself not as a ‘relative creature’ whose duty is to keep a comfortable house for her family, but as an individual whose intellectual capacity is equal to men. Different from Martha and Janet representing the Angel-woman, Katie is an assertive woman. While Martha and Janet are dependent on their husbands, Katie can easily tell Colin to go when they have a problem.

As is seen, Katie is quite different from Martha and Janet belonging to a group of women called the Angel-woman. Katie is young, beautiful and elegant, and she knows how to use her body to tempt Colin as is exemplified in the



following quotation: "... she yawned and stretched her lean, childless body and smiled at Colin with her inviting, naughty little girl eyes..." (Weldon, 1981: 203). As is illustrated in the quotation, Katie is the quite opposite of the Angel void of her sexual instincts. Thus, in this story, Katie stands for the Eve-woman as she has tempted Colin.

So, here Martha representing the Angel-woman and Katie representing the Eve-woman appear to be the others. They are the others in the sense that "...the other is other because its substance, its center of consciousness, its ethical claim on me, or some such facts about it is wholly beyond my grasp, absolutely foreign to me and to my experience" (Attridge, 1999: 23). The experiences and attitudes of Katie are absolutely foreign to Martha. "Martha marvelled at how someone could arrive in their mid-thirties with nothing at all to their name, neither husband, nor children, nor property and not mind" (Weldon, 1981: 199). Similarly, Martha's devotion her life to her family is nonsense for Katie.

Moreover, Katie behaves as if Martha were not her equal, but her inferior as exemplified in the following quotation:

... Katie had appeared out of the bathroom. 'I say,' said Katie, holding out a damp towel with evident distaste, 'I can only find this. No hope of a dry one?' And Martha had run to fetch a dry towel and amazingly found one, and handed it to Katie who flashed her a brilliant smile and said, 'I can't bear damp towels. Anything in the world but damp towels' as if speaking to a servant in a time of shortage of staff, and took all the water so there was none left for Martha to wash up (Weldon, 1981: 198).

This quotation exhibits that Katie thinks herself superior to Martha. For Katie, Martha is the other. The quotation given above is not the only example illustrating Katie's othering the Angel woman. While watching sleeping Beryl who does not look after herself Katie speaks to herself as follows: "I love women ...They look so wonderful asleep" (Weldon, 1981:207). These statements of Katie illustrate once more Katie's attitudes to the Angel-woman: Here the word 'women' most probably refers to the Angel-woman. Katie speaks of the Angel woman as if she herself were not of the same sex with those women; she speaks as if they were the strangers. Furthermore, she uses 'they', instead of 'we'. For us, these are significant evidences supporting our opinion that Katie does not identify herself with the Angel-woman; instead, the Angel-woman is othered by Katie.

Sandra M. Gilbert and Suzan Gubar point out the conflict between the Angel-woman and the monster-woman in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, and call the monster-woman as "a kind of antithetical mirror image of an angel" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 28). They maintain the idea that the woman has only one self. Therefore, while discussing the conflict between the queen and Snow White, they claim that the conflict is between "mother and daughter, woman and woman, self

and self” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 37). In short, they advocated wholeness of the woman’s self, and they see the Angel-woman and the monster -woman as the two elements of this unified self of the woman. Thus, Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* criticizes Gilbert and Gubar for this point as follows:

The emphasis here [in Gilbert and Gubar’s feminist aesthetic] is on wholeness –on the gathering of the Sibyl’s leaves (but nobody asks why the Sibyl of the myth chose to scatter her wisdom in the first place): women’s writing can only come into existence as a structured and objectified whole. Parallel to the wholeness of the text is the wholeness of the woman’s self; the integrated humanist individual is the essence of creativity. A fragmented conception of self or consciousness would seem to Gilbert and Gubar the same as a sick or dis-eased self (Moi, 2002: 65).

For us, it is true that in patriarchal societies, women have been othered. Nevertheless, as we have mentioned in the introduction of this study, there is no one unified group of women. In this sense, there are selves. Furthermore, a group of women regarding themselves the self for one reason or another do not identify themselves with another group of women. As we have discussed above, the Angel-woman does not identify herself with the Eve-woman; does not think that the Eve-woman is a part of her self. On the contrary, the Angel-woman perceives the Eve-woman as an enemy, as a threat. Therefore, agreeing with Moi, we think that the self of the woman has been fragmented, and there are different selves of the woman. Moreover, since these selves are estranged from each other, one self regards the other self a stranger, an enemy, the other.

Besides, there is a conflict, a war between Janet, the Angel-woman and Katie, the Eve-woman in this story. Colin has abandoned Janet for Katie. However, it is not enough for Katie. Katie wants to ruin Janet. The house where Janet and the children lived was sold and they have moved to a small flat. Katie tries to persuade Colin to pay Janet less (Weldon, 1981: 199). Katie, in a sense, wants to kill Janet, the Angel-woman since she still regards Janet as a threat to herself as is illustrated in the following quotation: “...Katie was crying. Colin, she’d discovered, kept a photograph of Janet and her children in his wallet. ‘He’s not free of her. He pretends he is, but he isn’t. She has him by a stranglehold. It is the kids. His bloody kids... It’s all he thinks about. I’m nobody”” (Weldon, 1981: 205). As is seen, Katie thinks that the relation between Janet and Colin is stronger than the one between herself and Colin because of the children; therefore, for Katie, Janet is an enemy to be destroyed. Thus, Colin burns the photo to console her. So, once more Katie emerged victorious in the war with Janet.

Martha, witnessing that one of her in-group members was defeated by an out-group member, is aware of the fact that being a perfect housewife is not enough to protect her marriage against the attacks of the enemy. This is because

Martha observes that Katie, having none of the qualities the Angel-woman has, is held in high esteem by Colin and Martin. Colin, divorcing his wife representing the Angel-woman, wants “to marry her [Katie] more than anything in the world” (Weldon, 1981: 208), though Katie is determined not to get married. Therefore, Martha as a woman determined to protect her marriage, her shelter against the other decides to have the qualifications the Eve-woman has. In a sense, she desires to fortify her shelter against the attacks of the other. However, this decision will cause her to turn into a superwoman.

Martha witnesses that physical beauty gives woman superiority in the competition for man. Thus, Colin preferred attractive Katie to unattractive Janet. Therefore, she wants to be a desirable woman by her husband: “Martin likes slim ladies. Diet. Martin rather likes his secretary. Diet. Martin admires slim legs and big bosoms. How to achieve them both? Impossible. But try, oh try, to be what you ought to be, not what you are” (Weldon, 1981: 193). She realizes as well that she should not repress her sexual instincts since she is competing with the Eve-woman. Hence, during the sexual intercourse, she tries to please Martin: “Sex! Ah sex. Orgasm, please. Martin requires it. Well, so do you. And you don’t want his secretary providing a passion you neglected to develop” (Weldon, 1981: 194). Martha tries to satisfy Martin’s passion in order to keep him away from his secretary.

By doing so, Martha imitates the Eve-woman. However, imitation is quite different from identification. The psychoanalyst Annie Reich describes the difference between imitation and identification as follows: “It is imitation...when the child holds the newspaper *like* his father. It is the identification when the child learns to read” (cited in Bhabha, 1994: 61). Martha wants to have a slim body and develop orgasm like the Eve-woman, not for herself, but for her husband. Martha wants to be a desirable woman as she has caught Martin looking at Katie with admiration (Weldon, 1981: 203). However, it is clear that she cannot internalize being a tempting woman, and she does not look after herself; for instance, she forgets to wear perfumes although Martin desires her to put on. Thus, concerning Martha’s attempts to be a desirable woman, the narrator comments that “she ought to do more to charm him” (Weldon, 1981: 200). Therefore, we think that she imitates the Eve-woman in order to fortify her shelter against the attacks of the Eve-woman.

In Martha’s turning into a superwoman, Martin’s share cannot be disregarded. Martha tries to be a perfect housewife, mother and a desirable woman as Martin wants to have both the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman at once. Although Martha is a career woman, for Martin, first and foremost she is a housewife as is illustrated in the quotation below:

Mrs Hodder came in twice a week to clean...Martha paid her out of her out of her own wages: well, the running of the house was Martha’s concern. If

Martha chose to go out to work – as was her perfect right, Martin allowed, even though it wasn't the best thing for the children, but that must be Martha's moral responsibility- Martha must surely pay her domestic stand-in. An evident truth, heard loud and clear and frequent in Martin's mouth and Martha's heart (Weldon, 1981: 190).

Besides exhibiting the harmony between Martha's heart and Martin's thoughts, the quotation above illustrates as well that Martin does not really approve of Martha's working outside home. Although he seems to approve of her decision, he, in fact, desires her to change her mind, appealing to her heart. As is seen, Martin is not able to kill "the Angel in the House" in his mind. On the other hand, he admires Katie. Furthermore, Martin mentions the relationship between Colin and Katie as if Colin found "some treasure. Discovered; something exciting and wonderful, in the dreary world of established spouses" (Weldon, 1981: 200). Martha, witnessing her husband's admiration for Katie does her best to be a desirable woman too. Kate Millett in her book entitled *Sexual Politics* discusses this matter as follows:

One of the chief effects of class within patriarchy is to set one woman against another, in the past creating a lively antagonism between whore and matron, and in the present between career woman and housewife. One envies the other her "security" and prestige, while the envied yearns beyond the confines of respectability for what she takes to be the other's freedom, adventure, and contact with the great world. Through the multiple advantages of the double standard, the male participates in both worlds, empowered by his superior social and economic resources to play the estranged women against each other as rivals (Millett, 1970: 38).

The rivalry pointed out by Millet has been observed in "Weekend" as well. Although the rivalry in this story seems to be between two career women, throughout our discussion we have tried to exhibit that Martha is not able to kill the Angel in house in her mind, so she cannot really emancipate herself. Furthermore, we think that what is between these two groups of women is not a petty rivalry since the Eve-woman, as we discussed above, tries to defeat the Angel-woman. Consistent with Millett's comment, Martin has benefited from the conflict between the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman since Martha tries to be a desirable wife, friend, perfect mother, and a successful career woman to protect her self and her shelter against the attacks of the Eve-woman. Therefore, she turns into a superwoman, a modified form of 'the Angel in the House'.

The ending of the story is of great importance in illustrating the effects of the conflict between these two groups of estranged women on Martha, the Angel-woman. At the end of the story, Martha cries when her daughter, Jenny, menstruates for the first time. After learning this, Martha cries since she thinks "Her daughter Jenny: wife, mother, friend" (Weldon, 1981: 208). To us, Martha's

cry upon her daughter's first menstruation is symbolic since it exhibits that becoming a superwoman against the attacks of the other is a great burden to Martha, and Jenny will have all the difficulties Martha has, as long as one group of women are othered by another group of women.

## CONCLUSION

In "Weekend", what Fay Weldon presents her readers with the representatives of two estranged groups of women, the Angel-woman and the Eve-woman. By doing so, Weldon exhibits the conflict between these two groups. Martha, regarding the Eve-woman as a threat for her self, turns into a superwoman since she thinks that she will be defeated by the Eve-woman like Janet. When a woman thinks another group of women as threats, as enemies, she, of course, cannot identify herself with this group. On the other hand, Katie, representing the Eve-woman, thinks herself superior to the Angle-woman, and cannot identify herself with the Angel-woman; thus, she uses 'they', instead of 'we', while talking about the Angel-woman. While these two groups of women are competing for the interest of men, they have been split into two groups; each is othered by the rival group, and therefore, middle-class women cannot say 'we'. Weldon writing such a story may want to display the results of othering among women, and to emphasize the importance of sisterhood since those benefiting from this conflict are not women but men.

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