

Chick Lit as Postfeminist Disintegrated Sisterhood in Jennifer Weiner's In Her Shoes

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ABSTRACT- *This article examines Jennifer Weiner's In Her Shoes as a Chick Lit novel. Chick Lit features are represented in one postfeminist characteristic. i.e., that is the focus on the individual instead of a collective sisterhood. Individual sisterhood illustrates prolific productions in feminist discourses which are multiple, contradictory, and overlap in their femininity consumerism. Some of the post-feminist premises have sometimes been exalted for being pro-feminist, while others for being anti-feminism because of celebrating an indeterminate subjectivity. The focus of this study, therefore, sheds light on the depiction of the devilish female character. Devilishness is an attribute of body appearance used in order to bridge certain psychological gaps, by substituting subjective identity which is exclusionary and perpetuates society's traditional mentality. With an activist postfeminist discourse, the object is (body aspects) centered. To explore those aspects of postfeminists' preoccupation with objective categories of female identity and its perpetual longing to affirm a personal subjectivity, the feeling of constant attrition will be studied. The final obliteration of female identity and its inclusive human aspects permeates the long inherited feminist code concerning women and their archetypal inferiority to men. This article, therefore, scrutinizes the myth of traditional devil women perceived by patriarchal thinking in Weiner's In Her Shoes. Women's devilishness is symbolically highlighted through the novel's postfeminism's proliferate obsession with the extrinsic features of body leading to ironic self-discovery and consequently self-expression to efface women devilish identity. This characteristic is represented in Maggie's devilish character caused by society and the abandonment of sisters.*

Keywords- *Chick Lit, Gender Relations, Identity, Postfeminism, Weiner*

I INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is on the individual sisterhood as a specific postfeminist peculiarity. Jennifer Weiner's In Her Shoes cracks the rigid façade Chick Lit usually codified propriety. The voice of postfeminist needs the ever-resonating lexicon "inequality" with male-stream utters the ebullient interrogation regarding "what is absent rather than what is present, reflecting concern with the silencing and marginalization of women" (Moi, 1999, p.222). Neither was the feminist voice able to compete with the impeded myth of male gender specificity in the linguistic

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and social discourses of patriarchal societies. Yet feminist sweeping formlessness finds its path through the general formulation of women roles and duties in accordance with the traditional cultural peripheries” (Brooks, 1997, p.665). Nevertheless, feminist literature affiliates the opposed traditional female representation with a more dictated feminist impetus which is “effectively perpetuating the pretense and self-delusion of objectivity” (Brooks, 1997, p.668).

In contrast to hyperbical exaltation of male identity, feminist Chick Lit circulates inherently to pattern a language emulating the masculine restrictive imposition. The premise of “such language came from a pre-Oedipal state, from the realm of the ‘semiotic,’ prior to the process of cultural gender formation” (Kristeva, 1980, p.21). Of these numerous achievements is Weiner’s *In Her Shoes* where the voice of “protest” manifests vis-à-vis the ongoing feminist needs. The novel corresponds to the most undertaking and fundamental female literary traditions. Its acknowledging of female circumstances leads inevitably to the most vital search for an equal female identity by “turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity” (Showalter, 1977, p.3).

Perceiving feminist traditions from a “freed” perspective, accordingly, would concrete female symbolic perception as unequal to male. Gender relations, in *In Her Shoes*, overlap and develop according to the social and traditional construction of female or male identities. The vast unifying social systems change into different elaborate classes formed by a series of collapsed events. Such relations, moreover, forge an idealization of oppositional thoughts establishing a unified cultural gender mainstream. Just so, women are an integral component of social milieus because “humanity is not an animal species but a historical reality; and woman’s self-awareness far exceeds her sexuality, reflecting the economic organization of society” (Beauvoir, 1962, p.59).

With Weiner’s *In Her Shoes* we enter into a critical complication. The novel is exceptionally written in an artistic language that appropriates the masculine mainstream that opposes feminist voices. The splendor of the novel’s language is highly considered by critics to reveal the tense relationship between genders. As such, the novel serves as a vehicle of portraying the masculine bias attitude towards women and their possible influential role in society. In this sense, the novel deliberately expose intricate gender complication within social patriarchal milieus via depicting the relationship between women and men. The difficulty is not that the Weinerian prose places too much demand upon the feminist attentiveness. There is no “too much” of this kind that a work of fiction requires of us, or as Virginia Woolf (1948) argues, “to reject both terms of the realist vision of the world” (p.172). *In Her Shoes* requires as more or less of this respect. For all its simplicity of surface, the novel asks that we read with alert attentiveness to its diction.

Weiner offers more sinuous human paths than ideology, paths that demand more of concentration inasmuch as they may be marked only by suspicion or attenuation of the track of gender relations, where she would set up crusty substantives for the mind’s grasp to help it around corners. Being so, the women propriety triggers the orientation of female as being inferior or unequal to males. Nevertheless, defiant or accepted refusal of female “proper identity” gets into hampered convenience. In essence, there is an obvious “propriety of woman,” says Hélène Cixous (1991), genuinely refers to the gender “capacity to deappropriate unselfishly: body without end If she is a whole, it’s a whole composed of parts that are wholes,” as discerned from the masculine sexual peculiarities including the power

of masculine centrality “under the dictatorship of its parts” (p.293). The potential disorientation of gender relations pertains to “everything we will be calls us to the unlagging, intoxicating, unappeasable search for love. In one another we will never be lacking” (p.297).

And, indeed, it seems to be precisely where Weiner offers the toughest generic ambivalence of feminist identity that we enjoy her the most. This is true at least of *In Her Shoes*. Curiously, our very sense of a virtue of excrescence, even fine excrescence, feminist depiction must be related to something else in the work to which it seems to be perilously appended-just as building ornament is appraised as excrescent only as we see it in relation to the gender relations which are of “even greater benefits to women than men” (Christian, 1985, p. 422).

At this point, Weiner’s weakened position in her fictional state only leads to an inclusive acquiesce of female identity by neglecting well-established social traditions. As the novel goes on and its position weakens still farther, she continues her progression from victory and joyful portrayal of females in demonized characterization, through upset and neglect, to anxious defeat and retrieval. One source of the anxiety stems from the traditional rivalry within society; the other comes from beyond the individual’s psychological dilemmas. In fact, the anxiety posed by female characters has not yet been eradicated, only temporarily curbed. Shortly after the clash and disintegration in the course of events, harmony is brought under control.

In focusing on gender relations, there are several feminist regards that make women subordinate to the masculine power. Consequently, women have a meticulous view depicted in literary works. Therefore, women are perceived in a passive literary modes in order to unravel the masculine discrimination against them through cultural stereotypical incarnation of female “autonomy” perceived as obviously remarked basic layers of mental consciousness. As Kate Millett (2001) points out, “a progression from misogynistic homo-eroticism” (p.24) takes place. Interestingly enough, after each outburst of anxiety, Weiner engages her characters in profound self-abasement, and thus autonomy, for them, becomes “scanning the sea of departing bodies” that renders her continuously apprehensive and anxious. The anxiety produced by the coexistence of psychological turbulence and insecurity becomes unbearable; loneliness and melancholy becomes the characters” (p.62).

These feminist patterns apparent in psychological natural response includes fright, sorrow, anger, pleasure, eagerness among other psychic emotional normal states. Therefore, they typically emerge when female individuals tends to get rid of frustration cause by outer masculine domination. As such, the outer masculine influences are described as the inevitable stimulation of women’s plights and frustration. Accordingly, they begin to liberate themselves form this frustration when masculine domination occurs. At this point, frustrated women begin to pursue their self-autonomy, and so, the “challenge to the centre is not new, but in feminist analysis and criticism it is ideologically motivated, intent on seeing the concept of difference” (Walker, 1983, p.19). Here, the genuine difference between men and women depends on the way they perceive each other on the grounds of gender discrepancies. Consequently, they seem to be controlled by the masculine discrimination caused by men’s biased view of women in society, which determines and shapes the precise view of feminist image and how it should be considered by men.

II Postfeminism and the Concept of Individual Sisterhood

In *Her Shoes* recounts the story of two sisters, Rose and Maggie, who are very different from each other but share the same shoe size. Rose is the eldest and takes care of Maggie after their mother Caroline dies in an accident. Both girls are brought up by their father and stepmother Sydelle. Rose becomes a successful lawyer and Maggie could not continue her study due to dyslexia and learning difficulties, and therefore gets resentful to Rose's academic achievements. In the course of the story, Maggie suffers academic failure and stays at home, taken care of by Rose. When the two sisters grow up, they sense a vacuum in their lives which they could not fill. Maggie runs away to Princeton University and enjoys reading and attending poetry classes. She is discovered a robber of the other students properties at the university; and accordingly leaves the university to date Simon Stein. Rose and Maggie are finally reconciled by Ella who previously tracked the sisters via the Internet.

In *Her Shoes* presents a postfeminist characteristic in terms of individual sisterhood. It is a cultural phenomenon which broadly seeks for feminist considerations of women position in their societies. Furthermore, the novel depicts various feminist matters that must be tackled through authentic feminist critiques. Being so, the most influential feminist token presented in the novel is the premise of individual sisterhood, which undergoes vital cultural transformation concerning the achievement of women's subjectivity. In essence, it is a critical and cultural approach feasible among the entire cultural feminist norms; and it is considered a social site for masculine "power ... [which] is remade at various junctures within everyday life" (Sinfield, 1994, p.76). Yet the most vital postfeminist posit is the "body" and the feminist indications it carries out. This is evident in the following quote from the novel, when Rose contemplates the "departing bodies" referring to body merits in gender relations:

"Oh, thanks," Rose said, taking the cup, still scanning the sea of departing bodies for Jim's. She caught up with him by the receptionist's desk. "What in God's name was that about?" she asked. "Why don't you come into my office, and we can discuss it," he said, for the benefit of anyone within earshot, smiling a wicked smile, for her benefit alone. He closed the door and whirled her into his arms. (p.5)

More specifically, postfeminism, as a critical trend, deals specifically with the new and non-inherited consideration of women subjectivity and the possible ways to achieve it. In this respect, women play an effective role in proving their social status by pursuing their ability to be equal to men. The result is that they could be autonomous in a proper way as they do not accept the masculine social norms and traditions imposed on them by the social inherited views of women. Women, consequently, would be able to emulate men while they interact with other people in the same society. In doing so, they neglect and disregard any form of masculine discrimination and bias. In this way, they begin to initiate their possible position as being equal to men. In this sense, postfeminism involves "house life in effect" which radically "facilitates a certain mode of feminist inquiry, but we were at the time inattentive to the partial and exclusive nature of this couplet" (Sinfield, 1994, p.90). The sequential effect of house life implies a power relation. This relation begins at home. In *In Her Shoes*, this concept is fairly attainable as

Maggie and Rose resist the “taunting” cries fired against them by other girls. The sense of taunt and its detrimental effects on the sisters’ relations haunts their psychological stability:

She was safe, Maggie thought fiercely, as Rose wiped her face, gathered her books, and, ignoring the taunts and laughter and the singsonged catcalls of “Hol-ly! Hobbie!” that a few of the fifth-grade girls had already taken up, walked slowly back into the school. Maggie’d never make the mistake of wandering through a dodgeball game and she’d certainly never wear cartoon-character underwear. She was safe, she thought, as Rose pushed through the double glass doors and headed inside to the principal’s office, no doubt. “Do you think she’s okay?” Kim had asked, and Maggie had tossed her head scornfully. “I think she’s adopted,” she’d said, and Kim and Marissa had giggled, and Maggie had laughed, too, even though the laughter felt like gravel in her chest. (p.15)

Here again, the wider critical circulation of female position is a cultural matter. Postfeminism accentuates the necessity of female subjectivity as there should be specific orientation of their role as being effective as their male counterparts. Consequently, postfeminism looks at women in a distinctive cultural perspective that provokes male discriminatory bias against women. Furthermore, the appreciation of women as being effective results in “women’s movement and its consequent concepts like domestic violence, equal pay, workplace harassment, were now addressed to a vast readership” (Hunter, 1998, p.85). Maggie’s academic failure, for example, is the suggestive initiation of her true personality. Her subjectivity gets whimsical as she repeats her failures in the course of the story. She finally does not get into terms with stable subjectivity, and being not enough reprimanded by paternal care foregrounds her weakened position. The possibility of her forthcoming social loss is charged with the care of others; like Mrs. Fried for a short while. From a relevance of appeals, short-span care does not satisfy her growing maturity. In an overt manner, Weiner furnishes Maggie with a compendious symbol of all the ways; whereby Maggie has “Nothing to worry about!” (p.48).

Incorporating the element of indifference in Maggie’s personality evades all charitable responsibility held by society. Maggie shrinks inwardly and transforms from a protector in her family to the weak and infirm, and from optimistic to destitute. Her psychological enhancement comes from other mitigated, and, at the same time, persistent encouragement. For example, Mrs. Fried’s “cheerful voice” intensely urges Maggie to do well in her exams. This is quite illustrative when Fried attempts to raise the spirits of Maggie in pep talks. In fact, Fried tries to make her free of any social restrictions imposed on her by the male-dominated surroundings. Therefore, Fried keeps encouraging her with the phrase “You’ll do fine!” (p.48) in order to make her feel autonomous and able to achieve her goals like men. The interlocution between Fried and Maggie is constructed on the basis of gender considerations as there is obvious textual hints to Fried’s ambition for feminist emancipation when he soothes Maggie.

In this context, the representational characterization of Maggie undergoes the inevitable problems of fancy and imagination when she needs freedom. As a matter of fact, she seeks for her equality in order to get rid repressed feelings of infertility cause by men around her. In doing so, she seeks for her peaceful feminist traits mark her

presence or even social relations longevity. What is meant is that women truly feel inferiority complex. They search of renunciation of male domination when they choose their path independent of men's control. In postfeminist studies, this is commonly considered a form of "social change" that ultimately leads to women empowerment (Hunter, 1998, P.87). These postfeminist notions are evident in the course of the novel when the characters interact with each other and reveal their gender attitudes. The excerpt below, from the novel, circulates around this argument:

"Maggie," their father had said, "nobody's saying you're stupid...." "That test said I was stupid," said Maggie. "And you know what? I don't even care. And why'd you have to tell her?" she demanded, pointing her finger at Sydelle. "And her?" Maggie continued, pointing at Rose. "It's none of her business!" "We all want to help," Michael Feller had said, and Maggie had ranted that she didn't need help, she didn't care what the dumb test said, she was smart just like Mrs. Fried had always said. No, she didn't need a tutor, no she didn't want to go to private school, she had friends, unlike some people she could name, she had friends and she wasn't stupid no matter what the test said, and plus even if she was stupid, she'd rather be stupid than ugly like four-eyes in the corner, even if she was stupid, that was okay, it was no biggie, she'd be fine. (p.48)

The patriarchal world is characterized by a male mainstream; whereby male supersede and dominate society rather than females. For this reason, the play highlights the life episodes of the novel's heroine who embodies this feminist stance. The representation of patriarchy in the novel goes through the image of God-the-father. Males is the source of Maggie's suppression and predicament. Male, who incarnates the notion of patriarchy, imposes harsh life upon her. Such father image is an integral notion of postfeminist patriarchy which decenters female autonomy and makes it devoid of any human sense (Percy, 1995, p.210). In *In Her Shoes*, the female protagonist, Maggie suffers from this patriarchal issue since she does the same work done by men: "Maggie figured it out fast the worst teachers got the worst kids as punishment, for being bad teachers. The worst kids got the worst teachers as punishment for being poor or dumb. Which in this fancy town were often interpreted as the same thing" (p.49).

Postfeminism employs erudite depiction of female heroines as being stout and determinant to endure their life's hardships is what signifies the position of females in male-dominated circumferences. This depiction is conducted via experimental utilization of fictional scenes and psychological fragments in the course of literary works' plot. In essence, postfeminism approaches the position of women in a different style. It delves into the profound meaning of female character in contrast to the contemporary trend of female issues that are treated superficially in feminist literary works which are apparent "products of new realms of injury and injustice" (Percy, 1995, p.218). Consequently, notions of "injury" and "injustice" are connected to the cultural harm received by women at the hands of unjust masculine bias.

Such normal truth of female individuals and their relative human traits are typically split through genuine social encounters since the common "human values can be viewed as a neutral discourse shared among humanity" (Humm, 1986, p.171); as the case of Rose when she succeeds in her examinations. The same experiences are sensed by

Maggie who failed academically and socially. In *Her Shoes* illustrates the demon initiation of Maggie's behavioral qualities at this notch. These tentative potentials divulge the eminent transformation of her personality. Her change begins when she imitates Madonna domestic feminine styles: "Lipstick, nail polish, enough eye shadow to paint a small wall with, an armful of black rubber bracelets, and big, floppy fabric bows in her hair. She took her cues from Madonna, whom she idolized, Madonna, who was just starting to have her videos played on MTV" (p.50).

Despite the choices Maggie has, there is also a number of risks of which she regularly encounters; especially when she meets guys whom she never met before: "Maggie took another gulp. "Delicious," she said. "Now, pay attention. Watch and learn. On this show, *Battle Bots*, there are these guys who build robots ..." (p.108). The risk that she might let the right paths slip, so she must always be on the lookout, prioritizing this over success in the workplace; the risk that not catching a domestic behavior at the right time might mean she misses the chance of having a perilous experience. A true change, consequently, occurs inwards. There is also the risk that, without complimentary encouragement she will be isolated; as Irigaray (1985) argues "compliments are triggered by speakers upon positively valuing or admiring a certain 'object or quality' in the addressee" (p.1005). Marginalized individuality, thus, forms the world of family match couples in "postfeminism vision of individual sisterhood" (Rosenberg, 1998, p.820). Maggie's devilishness egresses from Rose's increasing propensity to individual autonomy when she is "exotic, and mysterious, and sexy, even when she opened her mouth and her thick, unreconstructed Jersey-girl accent came out. Amy always had at least half a dozen boyfriends, former boyfriends, and would-be boyfriends lining up for the privilege music in America" (p.87).

The myth of devilishness, thence, comes into being with the burden of self-management so illusive. Hoy et al (1990) fantasizes the "gender forms" by which very traditional forms of feminist happiness and self-fulfillment maturate even in terms of negative, or devil, progress which puts down "feminine identities and adopts a masculine style of leadership" (p.38). Kidding with Amy during break-hours, Rose prepares herself to persuade Amy to admire Jim. The postfeminism interferes here in the form of restrains that "these kinds of conventional desires" (Rosenberg, 1998, p.832). This is rather true to *In Her Shoes*'s twisted progression in Rose's independent character which plays a pivotal role in affecting Maggie's personality: "I'm worried that you're more into it than he is. I don't want you to get hurt." Rose opened her mouth, and then shut it fast. How could she convince Amy that Jim was just as into it as she was when he wasn't even here? And there was something else" (p.88). Symbols of Rose's independence, furthermore, go along with "something catching at the corner of her mind, something about the night he'd showed up late, with his arms full of flowers, and how he'd smelled of scotch, and rose blossoms, and, faintly, of something else. Perfume? she'd thought, and then stopped the thought in its tracks and built a wall around it, a wall composed largely of the word no" (p.88).

But it is surely a relief to escape this censorious social constrains imposed indirectly on both characters' lives. They strictly enjoy limited liberty which has been disapproved of, and this is what the novel not only allows but absolutely encourages and enjoys. As Such, social inherited rules do not comply to feminist development, or as Price (1999) puts it "individualism the regulations of tribal morals are actual and some of their modifications are fixed in

laws” (p.98). Feminism, during early phases, was anti-oppression and this can now be shown to be a great defect. However, postfeminism is invoked, in order to be relegated to the past. But this is not simply a return to the past, there are, of course, quite dramatic differences between the various female characters of current popular cultures (Rossi, 1982, p.61). In a pertinent manner, there are different representational cultural implications in *In Her Shoes*. Maggie’s contemplation of the box of gold holds her back. She is brought into a universe never inhabited before; whereby her peaceful childish life acclimates to robbery which has never been of her behavior: “she’d considered pocketing the bracelets, but had decided not to. Maybe her father looked at these things, and would notice if they were gone, and Maggie didn’t like the thought of him reaching for the jewelry box and finding nothing there” (p.130).

There is a strong sense in Maggie’s changing character. There is a blatant transformation in her female subjectivity. She wants to reclaim her good life that is deformed by abnormal treatment in the masculine society. Accordingly, she needs to be involved in several social interlocutions; and “the indoctrination of such stereotyping can degrade the dignity of one group (usually women) and thus impede the advancement of this group in education, politics, and society” (Murfin, 2000, p.54). Weiner, being a sensitive feminist, bestows these young girls a desire to have pleasure and ensure a good life. In reality, women do not have that privilege since they suffer from deprivation and marginalization; and this marginalization is the essence of female underprivileged social status.

This is obviously similar to feminist pleasures that relate the ideal position of women in society that must be “so obvious” (Rossi, 1982, p.72). Maggie’s new friendship gender relation echoes this argument: “If Maggie had been a regular roommate, the telephone bill would have been the beginning and the end of it, the straw that broke the camel’s back. But Maggie was no regular roommate, Rose reminded herself” (p.151). The stereotypical presence of roommate is rather prohibited or abhorred in Maggie’s conventional social periphery, yet she commits these taboos driven by an intrinsic passive impetus; leading consequently to her devilishness caused by her society’s mentality. Now the individual sisterhood is saturated by a complete separation from her sister as well as being thrown into new psychological experience stirred by her bodily needs.

The cultural references and textual irony in these particular bodily stimuli are up-to-the moment, women now get objectified. They cannot feel the joyous sense of entire liberty as they have subjective relations among each other. This does not completely offer a privilege for women to proceed the “objectification of woman as idol, made silent and ‘stupid, allows no possibility for female agency or subjectivity” (Jacobus, 1982, p.25). However, gender relations are very significant since they appear in the form of enjoyment and relaxation that come from the abandonment of sisterhood stout ties, which is the essence of disintegrated sisterhood per se.

In Her Shoes celebrates the label of women at youth. Consequently, the author provides a conspicuous image of women in their quest for social and cultural independence. Such independence is the core of feminist “entanglement” that make women equal to men (Rupp, 1988, p.53). This Chick Lit iconicity is discernible when Rose insists on Maggie to leave her house: “She has to get out of my house,” Rose said to Amy. They were sitting in a corner of Amy’s favorite cafe, sipping iced tea and waiting for their lunches to arrive” (p.160).

For the grisly aspect Maggie non-favored accompany and interaction with others, the novel normalizes post-feminist gender anxieties. Hence psyche is ordered, eventually, to bring from the feminist traditional abyss of patriarchal world ambits “which carefully define the parameters of what constitutes livable lives for young women without the occasion of re-invented feminism” (Rupp, 1988, p.55). Generic Chick Lit hints, thereupon, are attainable in Maggie’s body content rather than human virtuous rectitude; and her previous life becomes a myth when she gives up on normal life with her sister. The pinnacle of her individual sisterhood bourgeons profoundly and she goes astray to satisfy her bodily desires: “the dorm room was a tiny rectangle, littered with books and sneakers and tufts of unfolded laundry, smelling like sweat socks and old pizza. “Be it ever so humble,” Josh said, giving her a sharp, appraising look, and flung himself onto the bed, shoving a chemistry book, a water bottle, a ten-pound barbell, and what Maggie thought was a fossilized half-eaten hoagie, to the floor” (p.219).

Feminist Chick Lit ideologies are wholly or partially fettered on women’s side. The female is centrally depicted in the image of the part; and for this reason, she bitterly undergoes that misleading cultural path. Such path forces her to be self-dependent, unable to get by her life. Consequently, her search for autonomy and independence begins to take a subjective shape; the narrator describes her life in these lines: “remaining funny and social heresy throughout, without being equal or too critical of males, without foregoing her femininity. Female social living requires desires for love and motherhood, her sense of distinguished privilege, and her appealing vulnerability” (Stacey, 1987, p.13). In *In Her Shoes*, Weiner asserts this ironic ideological manner which has been “no more” attainable in patriarchal societies castigated fictionally by Maggie’s words: “No more, she thought. No more. She’d been afraid for twenty years longer even, if you counted all of those terrible nights when Caroline was out and she didn’t know where but she didn’t want to be afraid here. Not now” (p.310).

Although Maggie constantly construes her character that tends to become prone to alienation and become psychically anxious since she suffers from the sequences of cultural crises of the time. These cultural factors left their apparent impacts upon her feminist individuality. She does not find any outlet for her psychic complications. Therefore, she tends to be alienated as an indication of her psychic problems. In fact, she undergoes severe masculine discrimination that influences the whole cultural affairs around her. As a sequence, she begins to formulate her subjective despite the surrounding feelings of alienation because “feminist Chick Lit peaks over human equality” (Stacey, 1987, p.26). Further illumination of this argument is found in Maggie inexperience to do house affairs: “It took Maggie less than four hours to do everything Corinne had asked. She wasn’t an experienced housekeeper, because Sydelle had never trusted the girls to do anything right and had employed an anonymous army of housekeepers to maintain the pristine state of her glass-and-metal-filled rooms” (p.313).

One ultimate remark on postfeminism’s conception of individual sisterhood is the biological stature of women. Indeed, inspecting feminist physical appearance aggregates the ultimate kind of “social content across all socio-cultural norms. Women’s bodies are evaluated, scrutinized and dissected by women as well as men, and are always at risk of failing” (Walker, 1995, p.83). This is the notion of gender relations that obviously appears in the cultural considerations of women bodily characteristics. Therefore, the appearance of women in society is very significant

since it determines the way by which women are perceived. Depending on this male-centred perception, women begin to suffer from other types of masculine domination (Walker, 1995, p.85). This biological view is implicitly embodied through the concept of marriage in *In Her Shoes*. Rose decisively begrudges Maggie's disintegrated life when she is asked by Cannie about her marriage: "If you say so," said Cannie. "So how about you? Are you married?" "No!" said Rose emphatically... My sister . . . anyhow. Long story." She looked down at her hands, then at Petunia, curled at her feet, then over at Joy and Nifkin, who were playing fetch with a red mitten, then over at half a dozen dogs standing in the middle of a triangle of grass" (p.319).

III Conclusion

In Weiner's *In Her Shoes*, the bulk of feminist implications consists of statements which verify the paradoxical nature female identity. They are not the kind of things which can be verified in abstract feminist discourses. The natural, as well as the thematic, generality or vagueness of reference we see through the incarnation of devilish traits of the novel's characters. Another reason is the postfeminist references which occur in the novel; and there are several hints to the scarce presence of postfeminist attitudes that indict the male domination and its influence over females. The novel presents obvious textual references to postfeminism as an approach utilized for liberating women from their inferior complex. As such, the analysis depended on the depiction of female inferiority to a great extent to delve deep into the lurking motivation of male gender oppressive bias.

The fact is the cultural construction of female identity underscores the human potential which women can achieve. Weiner presents considerable difficulty. The difficulty is the tense unpronounceable suppression of feminist voices by which "oppression comes not simply with the obvious patriarchal structures; it can also come with the psychological and social formation of gendered subjects, who can be disabled as objects by controlling, dominant, but often unconscious, gendered interests" (Kelly-Gadol, 1976, p.67). The peculiar characteristic of *In Her Shoes* expounds the fictional discourses in search for an independent female identity.

Weiner's close observation of society exemplifies the position of women in society (Halliday, 1978: 117). Consequently, what she does, therefore, is to privilege the status of female through a rather whimsical ambivalence; that is, the function which she determines the text as fiction expressing the need in paradox. As a consequence, she privileges the characters this paradox which draws upon demonizing female picture in a text aspiring to confer stable identity upon femininity, or as Abdalhadi Nimer Abdalqader Abu Jweid (2016) puts it simply, the characters; including women, prove the existence through identity (p. 534). The analysis of this representation relates primarily to "the only gender oppression that exercises itself, although to different degrees and in different forms" (Hill Collins, 1991, p.2363). Additionally, the feminist connotation carries out the inimical ramifications of sisterhood in *In Her Shoes*. These ramifications but are institutionally, and therefore, ideologically determined by appropriating postfeminist disparity to a cogent fictional astute.

The study also applies the concept of postfeminism to treat this matter in the novel. It mainly depended on feminist arguments about female subjectivity and how it negatively affects the women's personalities. Accordingly, the study focused on the female characters' anxious feelings and behaviors in the novel. The scrutiny of their feminist personalities was further elaborated by applying other feminist concepts for the sake of analytic clarification. They were utilized to accentuate process of alienation and anxiety in the novel from different feminist perspectives. These concepts have been rarely applied to explicate the notions of female subjectivity. Consequently, female subjectivity was applied to analyze as the main cause of gender bias. The concept of female subjectivity was also applied to analyze female characters' abnormal behaviors due to masculine discrimination. Such behaviors were meticulously interpreted as feminist factors of female alienation that leads gradually to depression and exclusion from society. The female abnormal behaviors come in the form of emotional disorders that have been hardly applied to analyze the novel's female characters.

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