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**Female Identity: Carrie in Book Series**

**“The Carrie Diaries”, “Summer and the City” and “Sex and the City”**

**by Candace Bushnell**

BACHELOR THESIS

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**Moters tapatybė: Kerė Candacės Bushnell knygų serijoje  
„Kerės dienoraščiai“, „Vasara ir miestas“ ir „Seksas ir miestas“**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

**Relevance and novelty of the theme.** Candace Bushnell (b. 1958) is one of the most significant American female writers of the early twenty-first century who popularised *chick lit* genre. A professor Diane Negra notes that Bushnell's novels operate as a "cultural paradigm through which discussions of femininity, singlehood, and urban life are carried out" (Negra 2008, p. 23).

Bushnell is the author of *Four Blondes* (2000), *Trading Up* (2003), *Lipstick Jungles* (2005), *One Fifth Avenue* (2008) and the novels that will be included into our analysis, i.e. *Sex and the City* (1996), *The Carrie Diaries* (2010) and *Summer and the City* (2011).

The fact that *Sex and the City* (1996) and *The Carrie Diaries* (2010) were made into television series, indicates that the books are popular among the readers. According to Negra, Bushnell "captured the country's attention by breaking down the bedroom doors of New York's rich and beautiful and exposing the true story of sex, love and relationships today" (Negra 2008, p. 25).

The novels of Bushnell show women that are typical to the twenty-first century. The author is changing the way female characters are seen in television and books. The heroines are fashion-oriented women, smart and have a good sense of humour. Moreover, they may feel powerful because the personality of women is not denied or constrained.

Considering the above provided information, we may assume that Bushnell is one of the most influential authors of the early twenty-first century who changed the image of writing women. The purpose of the novels written by Candace Bushnell is not only to entertain the readers but also to define the contemporary problems that female face when they seek for self-identity.

It is important to note that the novels of the outstanding author were chosen in order to reveal the image of contemporary women authors and to characterise the identity of a contemporary woman in *chick lit* fiction.

The novelty of the Bachelor's Thesis is based on the conception of contemporary woman's identity. Moreover, with this research we will try to show the development of contemporary woman's identity. Contemporary women's literature: *chick lit* causes much discussion among critics such as Stephanie Harzewski, Rosalind Gill and Elena Herdieckerhoff, Fiachra Gibbons and many others. They try to explore the emergence of the *chick lit* genre in the literary world and share their deep insights about the fascinating phenomenon.

When dealing with the characters in the *chick lit* novels, it is important to understand the problems that these women were going through at a certain period of their lives. The concept of identity has undergone an interesting development through time. A researcher assistant Charlotte Stubben acknowledges that our identity is “a patchwork of identities, a complicated set of similarities and differences in relation to other people” (Stubben 2007, p. 20). Obviously, the word *identity* carries the paradoxical meaning in itself. *Identity* defines sameness and distinctiveness.

Judith Butler (*Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* 1999), Judith Gardiner (*On Female Identity and Writing by Women* 2010), Toril Moi (*Sexual/Textual Politics. Feminist Literary Theory* 1995), Judith Lorber (*Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics* 2010) and many other critics have already researched on the themes such as female writing, inequality of sexes, feminist theories and approaches. However, not many researchers have yet analysed the development of woman’s identity. The relevance of the work is to perform a research from the point of view of the development of woman’s identity.

**The object of the research** is female identity in Candace Bushnell’s book series *The Carrie Diaries, Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City*.

**The sources of the research:** novels *The Carrie Diaries, Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City* by Candace Bushnell.

**The aim of the research** is to analyse the development of woman’s identity in Candace Bushnell’s book series *The Carrie Diaries, Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City*.

The following **objectives** will help us to reach the aim of the research paper:

1. To define Simone de Beauvoir’s conception of woman’s identity;
2. To explore the information related to the beginning of women’s writing;
3. To describe the emergence of *chick lit* genre in the world of literature;
4. To characterise the identity of a contemporary woman in *chick lit* fiction;
5. To analyse the development of woman’s identity in Candace Bushnell’s book series *The Carrie Diaries, Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City*.

**Research methods** used in the analysis include:

1. The feminist research method was grounded on Simone de Beauvoir’s theory on the conception of woman’s identity; the method was used to define the concept of woman’s identity. We will rely on Simone de Beauvoir’s philosophical,

feminist book *The Second Sex* (1953), which examines the author's frank and comprehensive understanding of woman's individual development, the attitude of a society towards woman as well as answers the question why woman is considered the second sex. A professor Claudia Card asserts that de Beauvoir raises the question why "<...> women who, in the twentieth century, really did have the possibilities for economic independence but who instead became complicit in their own [and other women's – inserted by I. Č.] oppression by embracing marriage as a career in forms that presuppose, facilitate, and support male dominance" (Card 2003, p. 20).

2. The postfeminist approach defined by Stephanie Harzewski in her book *Postfeminism and Chick Lit*. (2011); the method was used in order to characterise the identity of a contemporary woman in *chick lit* fiction.

**The structure of the work:** The Bachelor Thesis consists of an introduction, the main part including theoretical and practical parts, conclusions, summaries in the Lithuanian and English languages, a list of references and sources and the annotations.

The introduction presents the writer whose books will be analysed, defines the relevance and the novelty of the theme, the object, the aim, the objectives, research methodology. The main body consists of the theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical survey consists of one chapter "The Conception of Woman's Identity during the Twentieth and Early Twenty-first Centuries". The chapter is divided into two sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter is entitled "Simone de Beauvoir's Conception of Woman's Identity". The second sub-chapter is entitled "Woman's Fiction: from Feminist Fiction to Chick Lit". Furthermore, the practical analysis consists of one chapter – "The Development of Female Identity: Carrie in Book Series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City* by Candace Bushnell". The practical part is divided into three sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter is entitled *The Carrie Diaries* the second – *Summer and the City* and the third – *Sex and the City*. The results of conducted research are generalised in the conclusions.

## II. THE CONCEPTION OF WOMAN'S IDENTITY DURING TWENTIETH AND EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

The chapter deals with Simone de Beauvoir's conception of woman's identity, which is introduced in her philosophical, feminist book *The Second Sex* (1953). Moreover, the chapter explores the information related to the beginning of women's writing as well as describes the emergence of *chick lit* genre in the world of literature. What is more, the identity of a contemporary woman in *chick lit* fiction is characterised in the chapter.

### 2.1. Simone de Beauvoir's Conception of Woman's Identity

As it has been mentioned before, *The Second Sex* was chosen as a part of the theoretical background in order to define the concept of woman's identity. *The Second Sex* was one of the most important philosophical, feminist works of the twentieth century. The book was written by Simone de Beauvoir (1908 – 1986); a well-known French philosopher. She did not consider herself a philosopher, rather an author or a person who supported women's rights (Simons 1995, p. 82). What is more, an associate professor Linda Fisher states that de Beauvoir was not only the philosopher but also a feminist. Her creative works had a huge influence on feminist movement (Fisher 2000, p. 4). De Beauvoir showed frank, comprehensive and broad understanding of woman's individual development and the attitude of a society towards woman. If to come back to the book, it is important to mention that despite the fact that the book first appeared in 1949<sup>1</sup>, it is still relevant these days. In her book, de Beauvoir pays a huge attention to woman's position in society. Therefore, a close reading and sufficient knowledge are needed in order to understand the ideas.

First of all, the structure of the book should be presented in brief. The book can be divided into two parts. The first two chapters of the book *History* and *Myths* discuss the woman from an objective point of view, i.e. the two chapters show what kind of influence on a development of woman's identity had society and history (de Beauvoir 1953, p. 7). The third chapter *Woman's Life Today* is the attempt to look at the woman from the different side,

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<sup>1</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Paris: Gallimard, 1949. All quotations are taken from the book entitled *The Second Sex*. The book was translated from French into English by Howard Parshley in 1953. Howard Parshley, *The Second Sex*, London: Routledge, 1953.

i.e. the third chapter reveals how the woman sees herself, creates her own life and makes decisions that do not depend on a man (ibid., p. 12).

As a short presentation of the book's structure have been just surveyed, it is important to mention Emily Grosholz's, the author of the book entitled *The Legacy of Simone de Beauvoir* (2004), words: "Beauvoir, analyzing the situation of women – as subjects whose subjectivity is systematically constrained, unrecognized, or denied – with particular clarity, revealed to a whole generation of women that their difficulties were not the result of some personal failing but were rather reflections of a social problem" (Grosholz 2004, p. 13). As we can see, de Beauvoir was a person who really saw the problems of women and tried to explain that women are not fault for the difficulties they face; the attitude of the society towards women has to be changed.

To start with, de Beauvoir claims that woman is treated as the *Other*<sup>2</sup> in the society (de Beauvoir 1953, p. 14). This kind of status is associated with man's attitude towards woman and which, according to de Beauvoir, later on is taken by woman herself. Therefore, the status of the *Other* is sometimes beneficial for the woman (ibid., p. 16). The woman may become a totally different person; she can change her attitude, walk or style. The woman can become the one that a man wishes to see. De Beauvoir writes: "She [the woman – inserted by I. Č.] is all that man desires and all that he does not attain" (ibid., p. 219). The woman is a mystery, and in order to understand her, the man has to put all his efforts. Moreover, the woman symbolises an ambivalence of nature. She represents both idolised object and denied and oppressed personality.

Moreover, de Beauvoir acknowledges that woman who wants to get something has to trample her own principles. The philosopher claims: "Woman, therefore, can take only when she makes herself prey: she must become a passive thing, a promise of submission" (ibid., p. 649). However, such impersonation is considered to be a negative mindset. According to de Beauvoir, the woman is not true to herself; she turns herself into an object and becomes the *Other* (ibid., p. 650). It is worth mentioning that the status of the woman (the *Other*) cannot be equated with her identity. It can only function as a conception that a society has formed; it can only be treated as a stereotype that exists among human beings.

According to de Beauvoir: "The Evil originates not in the perversity of individuals – and bad faith first appears when each blames the *Other* – it originates rather in a situation against which all individual action is powerless" (ibid., p. 680). Yet, such a hazardous situation is the product of many human choices. The action of an individual is powerless.

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<sup>2</sup> *Other* – the word *Other* is written in capitals in Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* (1953).

However, the collective action may have a huge influence on the life of other human beings. In other words, the ambiguity of choices that women face may appear not only in the life of women who fail to join the others who try to resist the oppression but also in the life of women who do resist the oppression.

De Beauvoir firmly believes that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (ibid., p. 273). There is no such discipline that would explain how to be a woman. Environment shapes the personality of a woman. Thus, the society is the instrument that forms the comprehension of the world. Beauvoir states that only “the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as the *Other*” (ibid., p. 273). At the same time, the society enables woman to explore and understand the surrounding world.

The most important question is raised: *What is a real woman?* (ibid., p. 34). This is the question that de Beauvoir raises to herself and the society. Thus, the question becomes the aim – to define woman in every respect. It is interesting that men treat women as objects, because de Beauvoir claims that “<...> the woman does not, in fact, exist as an immense category and that a man and a woman alike should always be defined primarily as humans” (ibid., p. 172). Obviously, both man and woman should be treated equally, they have to have equal rights and complement each other.

Only a free man can reveal and understand the true meaning of the world. All human beings have to gather together in order to create the future. One man cannot build the future. Hence, the possibility to be free and independent for a woman has to be acclaimed by a man. However, the freedom of the man cannot be denied. The relationship between the man and the woman must be maintained. As de Beauvoir points out:

“To emancipate woman is to refuse to confine her to the relations she bears to man, not to deny them to her; let her have her independent existence and she will continue none the less to exist for him also: mutually recognizing each other as subject, each will yet remain for the other an *Other*; the reciprocity of their relations will not do away with the miracles – desire, possessions, love, dream – worked by the division of human beings into two separate categories” (ibid., p. 686).

We are all human beings, the creations of God. It is definitely more important than all the peculiarities which distinguish human beings from one another. Everything depends on a person – all his actions, choices and wishes. The main assumption is that each human is an active segment of the world.

The environment we are living in dynamically changes. The surrounding world without people for a human being will not be enough to realise himself. The feeling of inferiority and loneliness, according to de Beauvoir, will overtake the mind of a person (ibid.,

p. 297). Loneliness is a terrible thing to the man. According to de Beauvoir's recently mentioned words, human beings may feel very lonely without other human beings. People, who surround you, give the possibility to create and develop your own personality. De Beauvoir says, "<...> less he [the person – inserted by I. Č.] exercises his freedom to understand, to grasp and discover the world around him, the less recourses will he find within himself" (ibid., p. 298). The man has to have a strong desire for freedom and self-realisation. The man can fulfil his existence only living among other human beings.

On the other hand, the life of a person is not easy. He cannot realise himself in the environment that surrounds him. The relationship with other human beings causes stress. All life of a person is a huge struggle. But sometimes person has to think not only about himself. He has to understand that if there were no other human beings, the existence of him would be impossible. De Beauvoir remarks: "<...> the *Other* is Evil; but being necessary to the Good, it turns into the Good; through it he [the person – inserted by I. Č.] attains to the Whole, but it also separates him therefrom; it is the gateway to the infinite and the measure of his finite nature" (ibid., p. 163). In other words, we could say that all people serve for good and evil. From good comes evil, from evil comes good. A harmonious balance always exists.

One more significant idea is held by de Beauvoir: "No man would consent to be a woman, but every man wants woman to exist" (ibid., p. 161). The question of men non-existence is not even raised. The author of the book notes that man arrogantly asserts that "his presence in this world is an ineluctable fact and a right, that of woman a mere accident – but a very happy accident" (ibid., p. 162).

The same idea is presented in the questions of human origin. It is said that Adam was created by God but Eve was not created by Him, she was "taken from the flank of the first man [Adam – inserted by I. Č.]" (ibid., p. 162). Moreover, it is said that Eve "was destined by Him for man; it was to rescue Adam from loneliness that He gave her to him, in her mate was her origin and her purpose" (ibid., p. 163). It is obvious that if there was no Adam, there would be no Eve.

The theme of man and his body is inseparable from the theme of the *Other*. Although, the traditional philosophy focuses on the consciousness, de Beauvoir, according to the professor Claudia Card, breaks the tradition of philosophy (Card 2003, p. 28). The consciousness is mentioned as a part of the human body. The human has to unify his body and mind in order to achieve the harmony of the body and mind. De Beauvoir claims: "The body is never the cause of subjective experience, since it is, under its objective shape [the figure – inserted by I. Č.], the subject himself" (de Beauvoir 1953, p. 682). However, the body of the woman is not accepted as a natural thing in the society.

There are a huge number of beauty industries that suggest the services of plastic surgery, cosmetic and beauty accessories. Consequently, the woman becomes dependent on the world of beauty. De Beauvoir states that “<...> she is led to make an object of her whole self, to set up herself as the *Other*” (ibid., p. 74). The philosopher explains that the woman denies and loses the nature of the real self. Moreover, de Beauvoir asserts: “To make herself a carnal object, the prey of another, is in contradiction to self-worship: it seems to her that embraces blight and sully her body or degrade her soul” (ibid., p. 613). The woman becomes a temptress; she tries to seduce a man in order to get all his attention and become noticeable. Obviously, because of her behaviour, the woman becomes an object – beautiful but unhappy.

Moreover, it is important to mention that even in childhood the body of a young girl is seen and understood differently than the body of a young boy. The boy is encouraged to climb trees and play rough games. The girl is encouraged to treat her whole person as a doll. De Beauvoir says that the young girl is seen as “<...> a passive object, an inert given object” (de Beauvoir 1953, p. 289). The young girl also learns the need to please others. We can say that here is the beginning of the way in which the life of the woman is treated. Not only the life of the woman is considered useless but also the body of the woman is turned into a thing, i.e. the body of the woman is treated as an object, as a progressive construction for human gaze.

Summing up the main ideas presented in the chapter, we can briefly characterise de Beauvoir’s general outlook. Her overall philosophical standpoint, as well as the structure of the book, is based upon the development of woman’s identity. The main themes such as the attitude of a society towards woman, the woman’s comprehension of herself as well as the conception of woman’s status (the *Other*) are discussed in this book. Although, de Beauvoir does not consider herself a philosopher, rather a writer, however, she reveals her philosophical outlook to the most complicated problems that a woman faces during her life. The individuality of woman is denied, constrained and unrecognised. This is not the result of personal failing but rather a reflection of a social problem. Moreover, the philosopher states that a man cannot live without other man; loneliness brings emptiness. A man sees a woman as the *Other* but without the woman, the man would not survive and realise himself. What is more, the man and the woman have to treat each other equally only then harmonious balance will exist. De Beauvoir was one of the most influential writes, philosophers and feminist figures of the twentieth century. She lived what she believed in and promulgated the ideas to others.

## 2.2. Women's Fiction: from Feminist Fiction to Chick Lit

In order to talk about women's literature it is important to emphasise why it exists as such. A feminist critic Toril Moi contends that "<...> in a patriarchal society which discriminates women writers just because they are women, it is easy enough to justify a discussion of them as a separate group" (Moi 1995, p. 82). Therefore, we may assume that the quotation shows the appalling situation of women writers. The situation of women, esp. of writers, is totally different from the situation of men writers. Men are able to express their thoughts freely, without any restrictions. To be more precise, men have a higher status in society and, according to a feminist Sherry Ortner, are defined as "a part of culture as well as a part of social life"<sup>3</sup> (Ortner 1995, p. 306). However, the role of women is constrained in society because they are seen only as devoted and loving mothers and housewives, not as independent and confident writers.

One of the earliest feminists, the advocate of women's rights John Stuart Mill asserted:

"<...> all women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others. All the moralities tell them that it is their nature to live for others" (Mill 2009, p. 28).

Therefore, the quotation above highlights the situation of women in the society where becoming an independent woman is a huge struggle. The freedom of the woman is constrained by duty. To be more precise, the destiny of the woman is unchangeable; she has to sacrifice her life for others. What is more, the affections about which Mill is talking also do not depend on the woman. They are meant the only ones, according to Mill, she is allowed to have, i.e. those to the man with whom the woman is connected (ibid., p. 30).

On the other hand, it is also important to mention Judith Kegan Gardiner's, the author of the book *On Female Identity and Writing by Women* (1981), words: "The writing by women is an abiding commitment to discover what, if anything, makes women's writing different from men's" (Gardiner 1981, p. 348). The life experience of men differs from the life experience of women. Obviously, the writing of male and female authors differs as well. Men authors are not able to write conscientiously from the perspective of women as well as to present the ideas of women writers because men do not have the right experience of life, i.e. men have not experienced life as women, they are not able to empathize into the life

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<sup>3</sup> Translated from Lithuanian into English by Ieva Černiauskaitė.

of oppressed and denied personality. A famous feminist figure, philosopher Simone de Beauvoir argues that “a man would never set out to write a book on a peculiar situation of the human male” (de Beauvoir 1953, p. 14). Considering the above provided information, we may assume that some significant differences really exist.

One of the most significant features of women’s writing is the quest for *self-identity*. The notion of *identity* is a multifaceted and does not really have a particular definition. However, the concept is crucial in women’s literature. *Identity* does not stand as an independent concept. It is important to mention that the concept of *identity* actually comes along with “its even vaguer terminological twin, the *self*” (Gardiner 1981, p. 347). The pursuit of the real self is triggered by the wish to emancipate the soul of woman from tyrannical male oppression. If woman, her place and role in the society are identified only by man then, according to de Beauvoir, woman is “losing her way and woman is lost” (de Beauvoir 1953, p. 14).

Furthermore, de Beauvoir annotates: “The woman, who may choose to reason, to express herself, in accordance with masculine techniques, will be bent on stifling an originality that she has cause to mistrust” (ibid., p. 678). Woman is considered an unwelcome interloper in the men’s sphere. The tradition of writing always belonged to men but despite the oppression, women have always opposed it and worked hard in order to reach their goals. The social and cultural isolation of women’s creativity led to the idiosyncratic style of their writing.

One of the most influential feminists Virginia Woolf supports and defends the writing of women in her masterpiece *A Room of One’s Own* (1929): “Indeed, since freedom and fullness of expression are of the essence of the art, such a lack of tradition, such a scarcity and inadequacy of tools, must have told enormously upon the writing of woman” (Woolf 1977, p. 84). It can be stated that woman did not have an example how she should write. Consequently, woman author was trying to find the right way how to write about her life, experience; the words came from the heart of woman. Her sincerity and devotion were irreplaceable.

Twentieth century women’s literature is an expression of women’s life, inner thoughts, feelings and imagination. Moreover, the literature of women can be understood as resistance against the dominance of men. The associate professor Judith Kegan Gardiner underlines the most significant features of the twentieth century women’s writing:

“Twentieth-century women writers express the experience of their own identity in what and how they write, often with a sense of urgency and excitement in the communication of truths just understood. Often they communicate a consciousness of their identity through paradoxes of sameness and difference – from men; and from social injunctions for what women should be, including those inscribed in the literary canon” (Gardiner 1981, p. 355).

The women authors of the twentieth century finally apprehended that the biggest strength of a woman is her writing. Writing gives the opportunity to escape from confinement, humiliation and incomprehension. What is more, through writing woman is able to express her secretive desires, deepest feelings which enable her to disclose her inner world. The world, full of sentimental feelings, is a perfect place for a woman author.

After some explorations of the beginning of women’s writing, it is necessary to take into consideration the phenomenon of contemporary women’s writing: *chick lit*. Besides ordinary writing, women wanted to have something particular for themselves. Literary critics Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young affirm that *chick lit* is “a new woman’s fiction; a form of popular literature [largely – inserted by I. Č.] written by women for a female audience” (Ferriss, Young 2006, p. 12). The contemporary women’s literature seems to be sending the message that women are free from the restrictions which men and the society have created. *Chick lit* gives women voice and allows them to express and share their desires and feelings. Hence, *chick lit* suggests the opportunity to escape from the lonesome world and submerge in a new world which is created for woman: “It is hip. It is smart. It is all about you!” (ibid., p. 2)

The term *chick lit* appeared in print<sup>4</sup> when Chris Mazza and Jeffrey DeShell used the term in their groundbreaking anthology *Chick Lit: Postfeminist Fiction* (1995). The title of the anthology was unrelated to the term we know today. The authors asserted that it was only “the ironic intention of our title: not to embrace an old frivolous or coquettish image of women but to take responsibility for our part in the demanding, lingering stereotype” (Mazza, DeShell 2006, p. 19). Mazza and DeShell admitted that the term *chick lit* was used in an ironical way but they also emphasized the importance of the *chick lit* to the literary industry. According to the authors, contemporary women’s literature shows that women are viewed as “<...> independent and confident, but not lacking in their share of human weakness <...>” (ibid., p. 21).

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<sup>4</sup> The term *chick lit* was first used in English-speaking circles by Princeton University students as a dismissive tag for Elaine Showalter’s *Female Literary Tradition* course (Harzewski 2011, p. 44).

*Chick lit* is defined as a representative of the Third Wave Feminism, meaning that the emphasis on the woman's life has changed so much that the woman of the twenty-first century cannot be equated with the earlier woman. The contemporary woman has different priorities and opportunities in her life than the woman of the earlier feminist movements. Patricia Waugh in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature* (2004) writes about the earlier feminist movements: "<...> power of symbolic representation and cultural embodiment in constructing and containing identities and subjectivities" (Waugh 2004, p. 600). Today, the woman is fighting for other things which are important for her, for instance, the choice of profession and family, if she wants to pursue both or neither.

*Chick lit* as a genre was introduced and gained its popularity in the late 1990s with the phenomenal books of splendid authors – Helena Fielding (*Bridget Jones's Diary* 1996) and Candace Bushnell (*Sex and the City* 1996) (Ferriss, Young 2006, p. 4). As a genre, *chick lit* is written for women and it has a huge importance for the life of women. The literary critics Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young claim that women readers want to see "their own lives in all the messy detail, reflected in fiction" (ibid., p. 3). The awareness for a woman reader that she is not the only one unsatisfied with her role and position in the society helps to identify with woman character whose life experience is the same as the readers of the book.

As *chick lit* books are written for women, it is important to turn our attention to female characters of the contemporary women's literature. One of the fundamental themes of *chick lit*, related to women, is singlehood. According to Mazza and DeShell, *chick lit* refers to "modern literature for women – that is written about late twenty and thirty-something singles as they search for the perfect partner <...>" (Mazza, DeShell 2006, p. 24). All female characters in *chick lit* book are single; they have neither children nor family. However, at their age, according to the social norm, they have to be devoted mothers and housewives. *Chick lit* encourages women to follow an independent life, both personally and economically, otherwise the dependence on men as well as the attachment to men will lower women's self-esteem.

What is more, *chick lit*, according to a critical analyst Irena Ragaišienė, "is marketed more broadly, to both the typical romance lady and the urban single woman with a disposable income" (Ragaišienė 2008, p. 73). We may assume that readers, esp. women are fond of reading contemporary women's literature because it depicts characters who are merely ordinary women. Thus, women readers can compare themselves with female characters of *chick lit* books. The heroines of contemporary women's literature share the same life experience as the readers of *chick lit*, i.e. the heroines are looking for self-fulfilment through work, love, friendship and relationships.

The female characters of contemporary women's literature experience the dilemma of identity. According to Stephanie Genz, the confusion arises because women want to *have it all* (Genz 2009, p. 109). To be more precise, women want both independence from men and experience pure feeling, i.e. love. Consequently, it is of high importance to distinguish differences between the female character of *chick lit* and the heroines of romance in order to understand why women cannot *have it all*. According to professor Diane Negra, feminist movement is "responsible for the sad plight of millions of unhappy and unsatisfied women who, thinking they could *have it all*, have clearly gone too far and jeopardized their chances at achieving their dreams" (Negra 2008, p. 21).

*Chick lit* itself as well as the female characters of the genre are very different from the standard romance novel and its heroines (Mazza, DeShell 2006, p. 24). *Chick lit* female characters highly differ from the heroines of earlier romance novels in the choices and opportunities which are given to them. The ambition to seek a perfect career is stronger to the female characters of *chick lit*, while the heroines of the romance do not demand from life a perfect career, they yearn for true love and long-lasting relationships. Gill and Herdieckerhoff explain:

"In traditional romantic novels, heroines are not normally seen as particularly career driven despite their spirited nature and intelligence. Rather, they see advancement and power through romantic alliance with a man. In this respect, the female characters in *chick lit* novels seem markedly different, as they are invariably portrayed as employed and committed to the idea of career" (Gill, Herdieckerhoff 2000, p. 487).

As it is seen from the above provided quotation, *chick lit* genre perfectly portrays the ideals of empowered femininity. It is a heroine-centred genre as it depicts single, urban, career woman. Moreover, the heroines of *chick lit* can be described as *quirky* or *creative* as well as they immerse in adventures and this gives them the opportunity of self-improvement. Meanwhile, the heroines of romance are ordinary women but who, according to Harzewki, often possess "acute intelligence and feisty disposition" (Harzewski 2011, p. 29).

The main target of *chick lit* is female readers because all *chick lit* books are about single women who look for a husband. *Chick lit* represents women who are satisfied being single and need men only to fulfil their desires (Whelehan 2005, p. 208). However, the heroines of romance are oppressed by men, who are characterized as "the heroes, as men of the world, sardonic, and wealthy, in contrast to the heroines in their early twenties, virgin and with few protective relations" (Harzewski 2011, p. 27). Hence, it can be indicated that *chick lit* provides more realistic picture of women's life as it presents their "personal, social as well as work worlds" (ibid., p. 30). What is more, Whelehan emphasizes that "<...> women make

choices to improve their own life but in such way that the cost to themselves is minimal” (Whelehan 2005, p. 166). Evidently, it is one of the crucial consequences that contemporary women become greedy after they get what they needed to have. Then they start to seek for what they want to have instead of what they need to have. It can be considered as greediness and seeking for a luxurious life, neglecting simple joys.

To sum up, the situation of women writers is different from the situation of men authors. The women are seen as devoted mothers and housewives but not as independent and confident writers. But women authors share very deep insights because for a long time women were oppressed by men; their personality was denied, unrecognized and constrained. Moreover, it is important to mention that one of the significant features of women’s writing is the quest for self-identity. The pursuit of the real self is triggered by the wish to emancipate the soul of woman from tyrannical male oppression. Thus, the women authors of the twentieth century finally apprehended that the biggest strength of a woman is her writing. Writing gives the opportunity to escape from confinement, humiliation and incomprehension. Besides ordinary writing, women wanted to have something particular for themselves. *Chick lit* is written by women for women. The contemporary women’s literature seems to be sending the message that women are free; free from the restrictions which men and the society have created. As *chick lit* is written for women it is important to mention that *chick lit* characterises heroines who are pictured from different aspects, in detailed and sometimes ironic way. Contemporary women’s literature deals with the essential concerns related to women’s lives (femininity, family life and work).

### **III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMAN'S IDENTITY: CARRIE IN BOOK SERIES *THE CARRIE DIARIES*, *SUMMER AND THE CITY* AND *SEX AND THE CITY* BY CANDACE BUSHNELL**

The chapter focuses on the development of woman's identity through Candace Bushnell's book series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City*. The first sub-chapter *The Carrie Diaries* helps to characterise the identity of a young woman, the second – *Summer and the City* reveals the first changes of woman's identity when the woman changes the residence and the third – *Sex and the City* – defines what significant changes the woman makes in order to find the real self.

#### **3. 1. *The Carrie Diaries***

*The Carrie Diaries* is a novel written by an outstanding author Candace Bushnell. The novel depicts the life of a young lady Carrie Bradshaw. She begins the senior year in public school in a small town called Castlebury and dreams of New York – the city of opportunities.

The novel is composed in a diary form. The young lady writes her secret desires and intentions in the diary. Consequently, the direct observation of Carrie's life, self-expression and thoughts is presented in the diary.

To start with, seventeen-year-old Carrie Bradshaw is just beginning the senior year in high school. Carrie is disappointed because it is the "<...> first day of senior year, and as far as I can tell, I'm exactly the same as I was last year" (Candace Bushnell, *The Carrie Diaries*, 2010, p. 120)<sup>5</sup>. Carrie begins the senior year with her best friend Lali. The friend of Carrie is an ordinary young lady but she is also the person who encourages Carrie to seek her dreams. Lali always has new ideas and never gets upset if something goes wrong: "Don't forget, Bradley, we have to get boyfriends this year" (*TCD*, p. 13). They supposed to get boyfriends last year but they did not.

A new guy appears in the high school. Sebastian Kydd is a tall, handsome man who becomes the most popular guy in the high school overnight. Carrie falls in love with him instantly: "My heart pounds in my throat; if I open my mouth, I'm afraid it will jump out"

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<sup>5</sup> Further the quotation from this source will be indicated as an abbreviation (*TCD*) with indication of page number.

(*TCD*, p. 14). Carrie remembers him as he was her childhood friend. She recalls their first date. She had deep feelings for him. Now, when Carrie sees him standing near her, she understands that she still loves him: “I try to squeeze the memory of my one-and-only encounter with Sebastian Kydd out of my head but it sneaks in anyway” (*TCD*, p. 19).

After a while, Carrie and Sebastian becomes couple. All popular girls in the high school envy Carrie success. They do not understand why Carrie is so lucky and try to make her life harder than it needs to be. Carrie jokes: “What if I’m a princess on another planet? And no one on this planet knows it?” (*TCD*, p. 26)

Soon, Carrie realizes that Sebastian is not so perfect. He pressures Carrie to have an intimate relationship with him or he will leave her. Sebastian says: “But you can’t expect me to wait much longer” (*TCD*, p. 27). Moreover, one day a girl tells Carrie that her boyfriend was unfaithful with her best friend Lali. Carrie admits that there are no perfect men in the world but she believed that a true friendship is everlasting. She is disappointed:

“In life, there are only four kinds of girls: The girl who played with fire. The girl who opened Pandora’s Box. The girl who gave Adam the apple. And the girl whose best friend stole her boyfriend” (*TCD*, p. 56).

Sebastian was Carrie’s first and only love. She thought that love symbolizes eternity. Carrie understood that she has to forgive and move on. Carrie has a strong personality. Even young lady burned painfully she has a spark that gives the strength to fulfil the cherished dream of becoming the writer. She thinks optimistically: “If you smile, even if you’re feeling bad, the action of the muscles will trick your brain into thinking you’re happy” (*TCD*, p. 59).

Furthermore, Carrie speaks frank about her mother’s death. She calls her mother feminist, though she was a loving mother, had family. Feminists reject the idea that women have to create family; they believe that family constrains the life of woman. The woman is not able to realize her dreams, reveal and develop her personality. Family life brings only disappointment because woman does not have voice; she is oppressed by man. Carrie, as her mother, also is a feminist: “Oh I don’t plan on getting married. It’s a legalized form of prostitution” (*TCD*, p. 57).

Carrie thinks that men are fault for all the difficulties women face: “Sometimes I think all the trouble in the world are caused by men. If there were no men, women would always be happy” (*TCD*, p. 62). She is concerned about the situation of women. Carrie tries to ascertain why men considers women weaker sex.

Carrie reveals her feminist philosophy in her short stories and the older she gets, the more she looks like her mother. The young lady raises questions related to woman's life, the independence of woman as well as what has to be changed in order to improve woman's life:

“If a woman could take care of herself, would she still need a man? Would she even want one? And if she didn't want a man, what kind of woman would she be? Would she even be a woman? Because it seemed if you were a woman, the only thing you were really supposed to want was a man.” (*TCD*, p. 73)

Therefore, the quotation above shows that women are seen only as devoted housewives. The only thing they are supposed to want is a man. They cannot have dreams, ambitions. The personality of a woman is denied and constrained. She is considered unwelcome trespasser in men's world.

After the heartbreak, Carrie submerges herself in writing. Writing is her passion, the most essential thing in her life. She has a few short stories written but she keeps them deep in the closet: “I don't want to be a writer so I can write about my life. I want to be a writer to escape from it” (*TCD*, p. 169). Writing helps Carrie to escape from reality and emancipate her soul from all the difficulties. What is more, through writing Carrie is able to express her secretive desires, deepest feelings that enable her to disclose her inner world. The world, full of sentimental feelings, is a perfect place for a young author.

All in all, the novel discloses how Carrie learns important lessons along her life. She learns how to be a good writer, what it means to be a loyal friend, girlfriend and the most important lesson how to be a feminist. Moreover, Carrie is seen as a persistent person who seeks her dreams and has many ambitions. The novel is composed in a diary form. The direct observation of main heroine's thoughts, feelings and dreams gives a closer association with the female character.

### 3. 2. *Summer and the City*

*Summer and the City* is the sequel to *The Carrie Diaries*. The book is about Carrie's life in a big city. Finally Carrie's dream comes true. She arrives in New York. Carrie is poised to take writing classes before college. The book helps to discover what opportunities wait in the big city and how the big city can change person.

Carrie arrives just in time for writing classes and long expected summer. She has so many plans for summer and cannot wait to start her new, full of opportunities, life. The first acquaintance with the city is unexpected. She immediately gets mugged. The purse is taken from her and the only thing which left is her cell phone. Carrie is an optimist, so she says to herself: "Sometimes the best thing to do is to pretend it didn't happen" (Candace Bushnell, *Summer and the City*, 2011, p. 10)<sup>6</sup>. She calls her friend's cousin who takes her from the station.

Samantha Jones, the cousin, takes Carrie to her apartment. She is the person who shows Carrie totally different world from the one she is used to live. Carrie soon indulges into magical life she always dreamed of: new friends, crazy parties, cocktails. Samantha is the person who shapes Carrie's personality. She is like her mother; always gives piece of advice, learns how to live and shares the secrets about men. She even encourages Carrie to change her outfit: "She spins around and eyes my outfit—a navy blue gabardine jacket with matching culottes that I'd actually considered chic a few hours ago. Is that all you've got?" (*SATC*, p. 12) Samantha thinks that Carrie is too childish and naive for the city so she promises to be her older sister. Samantha acknowledges that she is not a perfect woman but she is not ashamed of anything: "Shame is a useless emotion" (*SATC*, p. 15).

The city plays a significant role in the novel. New York is an auspicious city. The idea of using an urban location indicates that the big city gives opportunities which the small town cannot afford. But on the other hand, the big city is a dangerous place. People who live in New York get what they want and when they want. Youngsters drink, and even smoke marijuana. True love and commitment are created for small towns not for New York. New York is the city of entertainment: "You choose the end of the summer to fall in love with this guy because secretly, you don't want it to last" (*SATC*, p. 203).

The main theme of the novel, related to Carrie, is writing. Again, Carrie discusses different aspects of feminism. She understands that men did not change: "All men are

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<sup>6</sup> Further the quotation from this source will be indicated as an abbreviation (*SATC*) with indication of page number.

disappointment, no matter what anyone says” (*SATC*, p. 233). They are all the same; they all break the heart of woman: “Men do suck” (*SATC*, p. 234).

Writing leads her not only to self-realization but also helps to cover the issues of contemporary woman’s life matters:

“Maybe mistakes are what make our fate... without them what would shape our lives? Maybe if we had never veered off course we wouldn’t fall in love, have babies, or be who we are” (*SATC*, p. 25).

Some women find the other half of their heart. Other women are career-oriented; they do not want to become housewives or create a family. The equal opportunity to create the life you want to have has to be divided equally; women have to have the equal right with men.

Once, Carrie gets invitation to read her play in front of a huge audience. But the end is not as she expected to be. Nobody seems to be impressed with her writing talent. Carrie is disappointed but is not ready to quit: “I don’t consider my work a job. I consider it a career. And you don’t quit a career” (*SATC*, p. 302).

Carrie faces the cruel world. Big city brings more restrictions of woman’s rights. The stereotype that is created by society is the same everywhere. New York is contemporary city; there are a huge number of beauty industries that suggest the services of plastic surgery, cosmetic and beauty accessories. Consequently, the woman becomes dependent on the world of beauty:

“Why magazines do this to women? It’s all about creating insecurity. Trying women feel like they’re not good enough. And when women don’t feel like they’re good enough, guess what? Men win. That’s how they keep us down” (*SATC*, p. 304).

Therefore, the quotation above shows the complicated reality of the situation in which the women are trapped. The woman is not allowed or encouraged to create her own meaning of the world, or the meaning that others might accept as their own perception of the world. Moreover, the quotation above exposes how woman justifies her position in the society where she is not accepted and understood. The situation is given to Carrie in order to persuade that she is strong enough to bear it.

To sum up, Carrie’s personality and life have changed. She is now more confident than she was in high school. She has a friend who helps her to shape her individuality. She is witty, smart and fashion-oriented.

### 3.3. *Sex and the City*

*Sex and the City* is the novel which caused various gossips and was negatively evaluated by critics because the book consists of dialogs related to frank speech about sexual themes. It is worth mentioning that the novel is based on Candace Bushnell's autobiographical facts. The autobiographical facts of the author are reflected through the heroine of the book – Carrie Bradshaw.

To start with, Carrie Bradshaw is not only a fashion icon but also sex and relationship columnist in New York. Carrie discusses the themes related to sex and relationships with men in her column. Women are able to talk loud about the relationships with men as well as the love affairs. Carrie is confident woman who writes explicitly about love affairs as well as explores the concept of love at first sight. Once she offered men to answer some questions about love. The most striking answer was: "Love at first sight is too flaky for New York. Here women want to see a blood test before they'll talk to you" (Candace Bushnell, *Sex and the City*, 2001, p. 28). In other words, men condemn shallow women.

Carrie lives in one-bedroom apartment. Here she can write without any restrictions. She writes from home and does not collaborate with other people; she writes alone. The apartment serves as a miniature world where she can realise her dreams. Writing is a passion of Carrie's life. Writing leads her not only to self-realization but also helps to cover the issues of contemporary woman's life matters.

Furthermore, Carrie is a determined person. She started out as a smoker but later on she ended up kicking the harmful habit. Carrie claimed: "I think I'm turning into a man" (*SATC*, p. 42)<sup>7</sup>. Carrie had a few slips but finally she overcame the inner evil that triggered the situations when she was not able to live without cigarettes. The situation shows the determination and strength of the woman. She is a strong-willed woman and always gets what she wants as well as does not let life get to her.

The theme of sisterhood is significant in the novel: "Maybe our girlfriends are our soulmates and guys are just people to have fun with" (*SATC*, p. 22). Carrie is always accompanied by three friends: Miranda, Samantha and Charlotte. When women life is in turmoil, they always go shopping as it is an ideal way for relaxation. Then, they always end up at an exclusive club. All women have to look perfectly. They are surrounded by wealthy and fashionable people. Moreover, women gossip about one night affair and do not believe in

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<sup>7</sup> Further the quotation from this source will be indicated as an abbreviation (*SATC*) with indication of page number.

love because it is impossible to find a perfect man in the New York as the city is not created for love just for entertainment:

“I don’t know how anyone makes relationships work in this town. It’s really hard. All the temptations. Drinks. Other people. You want to have fun. And if you’re a couple, what are you going to do? Sit in your little box of an apartment and stare at each other? When you’re alone, it’s easier. You can do what you want, you don’t have to go home” (*SATC*, p. 17).

Women always get what they want: “Man may have discovered fire, but women discovered how to play with it” (*SATC*, p. 23). Usually beauty and the opportunity to seduce a man prove this. Tough, men are considered the stronger sex, they are controlled by women. Men fall in love through the eyes that is why they need beautiful women: “Everyone has to fall in love, and when he does, it will be with a woman who’s beautiful and smart. But then those beautiful and smart women came and went. And he still hadn’t fallen in love” (*SATC*, p. 12). Sometimes it is not enough to be just beautiful. Woman has to have not only the external beauty but also beautiful inner world.

Sometimes Carrie, like romantic heroine, appears credulous and optimistic about what life has to offer her. When she feels upset, she tries to see the surrounding world through child’s eyes: “Look. Grass. Trees. Breathe in the aroma of freshly mown grass <...>” (*SATC*, p. 82). Carrie understands that there are more good things than bad in the world. Only then she feels better.

Carrie is also an individualist. She rejects traditional domestic activities of woman. Carrie asserts: “The only thing I’ve ever successfully made in the kitchen is mess” (*SATC*, p. 34). The words support feminism; feminists argue that woman has to be career-oriented rather than immerse in the life of housewife.

What is more, Carrie is a fashion-oriented woman. She is obsessed with shoes and shopping: “I like my money right where I can see it...hanging in my closet” (*SATC*, p. 29). Her wish to buy shoes and clothes is excessive but according to Carrie, fashion helps her to reveal her individuality. She does not pay attention to the price; the designer is more important. She does not buy or even like ordinary clothes. Carrie buys colourful clothes. This shows the desire to be in the centre of attention. The woman has a lot of pairs of shoes but this is not enough for her. Carrie impulsively buys shoes and clothes without thinking if later she will need them.

Shopping becomes an important factor of everyday life. Carrie says that she shops because she is worth it (*SATC*, p. 38). The words define the contemporary society as well as contemporary woman. Shopping gives the possibility to figure who woman is and fit in the developing world.

Moreover, the theme of singlehood is essential in the novel. Carrie is thirty-something, single female. However, according to social norms, woman has to be married or at least have a man at this age. Woman of child-bearing years is more attractive for men. Woman “who’s older, forty maybe, it’s going to be harder because you’re not going to feel that strong, initial attraction” (*SATC*, p. 22). Carrie asserts that women are single because they want to be (*SATC*, p. 24). All choices depend on woman, not on her age or biology.

Furthermore, Carrie searches a man not to create a family or to get married but just for entertainment. She asserts: “I love men but sometimes I need a break from them” (*SATC*, p. 78). Carrie does not want to sacrifice her career and self-identity for the man. She worked hard to be a well-known columnist. And now, when she has successes in her hands, she does not want to give up her career and lifestyle just to be with a man. Carrie needs a man only to fulfil her desires without any commitments. The woman says: “Better alone than badly accompanied” (*SATC*, p. 23). Carrie understands that there are no ideal men in the world.

On the other hand, Carrie is a dreamer. Sometimes she thinks about wedding and wishes to have a big, beautiful family. Even Carrie’s friends do not know about her secret. She longs for true love and consequently falls in love too quickly. Therefore, she suffers heartbreaks often. Once, Carrie fell in love with Mr. Big. Love, which for Mr. Big was only a commitment, ended as soon as started. Mr. Big told Carrie that after one unsuccessful marriage, he does not want to get married again. Carrie’s dreams shattered. She understood that “all men end up disappointing you. After a while, you don’t even want to have feelings anymore. You just want to get on with your life.” (*SATC*, p. 157)

Men think negatively about single women. They think that there is something wrong with woman if she is not married. Carrie believes that this is not a personal failing but rather the reflection of a social problem: “The idea of women not being able to get married... If you want to get the guys, you have to shut up. You have to sit there and shut up and agree with everything they say” (*SATC*, p. 158). Women, equally with men, have the same rights and possibilities; men and women should be treated equally.

Mr. Big does not have feeling for Carrie. He cheated on her twice. When Carrie is with Mr. Big, she puts herself last. It is evident that the commitment to a man takes her independence. Mr. Big buys her expensive clothes, shoes. They spend all the evenings in

exclusive restaurants but this does not fulfil Carrie's broken heart. Even Carrie's friends say that money cannot buy everything:

"It's not about money. Maybe you can help each other financially, but maybe you can't help each other through something else. Emotions don't cost anything. You have someone in your life." (*SATC*, p. 42)

Carrie has an artistic spirit. She loves writing. Through writing she can liberate her soul from all the difficulties she faces in life. Mr. Big controls Carrie's life, carrier and soon she becomes too confused inside: "Love means having to align yourself with another person, and what if that person turns out to be a liability?" (*SATC*, p. 32)

The epilogue of the book ends with "Mr. Big is happily married. Carrie is happily single." (*SATC*, p. 242) The woman does not have to get married in order to be happy. The woman has to understand that she is strong enough to take care of herself.

To conclude, Carrie Bradshaw represents a confident contemporary woman who writes explicitly about love affairs as well as explores the concept of love at first sight. Writing is a passion of Carrie's life as it leads her not only to self-realization but also helps to cover the issues of contemporary woman's life matters. The heroine represents what women endeavour to become: wealthy, stylish and famous.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

After the analysis of Candace Bushnell's book series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City* the following conclusions were drawn:

1. According to Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory displayed in her book *The Second Sex* (1953), the following concepts define woman's identity: the attitude of a society towards woman, the woman's comprehension of herself, the conception of woman's status (the *Other*).
2. The situation of women writers is different from the situation of men authors. The women are seen as devoted mothers and housewives but not as independent and confident writers. The tradition of writing always belonged to men but despite the oppression, women have always opposed it and worked hard in order to reach their goals. Women authors share very deep insights because for a long time women were oppressed by men; their personality was denied, unrecognized and constrained. The women authors of the twentieth century finally apprehended that the biggest strength of a woman is her writing.
3. Besides ordinary writing, women wanted to have something particular for themselves. The emergence of *chick lit* in the world of literature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was the answer. *Chick lit* is a form of contemporary women's literature. *Chick lit* is written by women for women and sends the message that women are free; free from the restrictions which men and the society have created. Moreover, contemporary women's literature deals with the essential concerns related to women's lives (femininity, family life and career).
4. As *chick lit* is written for women, *chick lit* characterises heroines who are pictured from different aspects, in detailed and sometimes ironic way. All female characters in *chick lit* books are single; they have neither children nor family. However, at their age, according to the social norm, they have to be devoted mothers and housewives, i.e. they have to have family and children. *Chick lit* encourages women to follow an independent life, both personally and economically, otherwise the dependence on men as well as the attachment to men will lower women's self-esteem.
5. Furthermore, the female of contemporary women's literature experience the dilemma of identity. The confusion arises because women want to *have it all*. To

be more precise, women want both independence from men and experience pure feeling, i.e. love.

6. Carrie Bradshaw learns important lessons along her life. She learns how to be a good writer, what it means to be a loyal friend, girlfriend and the most important lesson how to be a feminist. Moreover, Carrie is seen as a persistent person who seeks her dreams and has many ambitions.
7. Carrie's personality and life have changed. She is now more confident than she was in high school. She has a friend who helps her to shape her individuality. Carrie is witty, smart and fashion-oriented.
8. Carrie represents a confident contemporary woman who writes explicitly about love affairs as well as explores the concept of love at first sight.
9. All in all, writing is a passion of Carrie's life as it leads her not only to self-realization but also helps to cover the issues of contemporary woman's life matters. The heroine represents what women endeavour to become: wealthy, stylish and famous.

## V. SUMMARY

### **Female Identity: Carrie in Book Series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City* by Candace Bushnell**

**Key words:** Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, the identity of woman, female author, *chick lit*, Candace Bushnell, *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City*, *Sex and the City*.

The object of the research is female identity in Candace Bushnell's book series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City*.

The sources of the research: novels *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City* by Candace Bushnell.

The aim of the research is to analyse the development of woman's identity in Candace Bushnell's book series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City*.

In order to achieve the aim the following objectives have been set:

1. To define Simone de Beauvoir's conception of woman's identity;
2. To explore the information related to the beginning of women's writing;
3. To describe the emergence of *chick lit* genre in the world of contemporary literature;
4. To characterise the identity of a contemporary woman in *chick lit* fiction;
5. To analyse the development of woman's identity in Candace Bushnell's book series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City*.

Research methods:

1. The feminist research method was grounded on Simone de Beauvoir's theory on the conception of woman's identity and applied in order to define the concept of woman's identity. We will rely on Simone de Beauvoir's philosophical, feminist book *The Second Sex* (1953), which examines the author's frank and comprehensive understanding of woman's individual development, the attitude of a society towards woman as well as answers the question why woman is considered the second sex.
2. The postfeminist approach defined by Stephanie Harzewski in her book *Postfeminism and Chick Lit* (2011) helped characterising the identity of a contemporary woman in *chick lit* fiction.

The novels written by Candace Bushnell reveal the problems of identity of a contemporary woman. The female character of the novels, Carrie Bradshaw, represents an independent woman who is satisfied being single and needs a man only to fulfil her desires. Moreover, Carrie is a fashion-oriented female; through fashion, she shows her individuality.

Contemporary women's literature has the goal not only to entertain its readers but also to define the contemporary problems that female face when they seek for self-identity.

## VI. SANTRAUKA

**Moters tapatybė: Kerė Candacės Bushnell knygų serijoje „Kerės dienoraščiai“, „Vasara ir miestas“ ir „Seksas ir miestas“**

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** Simone de Beauvoir, *Antroji lytis*, moters tapatybė, moteris rašytoja, *chick lit*, Candacė Bushnell, *Kerės dienoraščiai*, *Vasara ir miestas*, *Seksas ir miestas*.

Tyrimo objektas – moters tapatybė Candacės Bushnell knygų serijoje *Kerės dienoraščiai*, *Vasara ir miestas* ir *Seksas ir miestas*.

Tyrimo šaltiniai: Candacės Bushnell knygų serija *Kerės dienoraščiai*, *Vasara ir miestas* ir *Seksas ir miestas*.

Tyrimo tikslas yra išanalizuoti moters tapatybės vystymąsi Candacės Bushnell knygų serijoje *Kerės dienoraščiai*, *Vasara ir miestas* ir *Seksas ir miestas*.

Tikslui pasiekti buvo iškelti šie uždaviniai:

1. Apibrėžti Simonos de Beauvoir moters tapatybės koncepciją;
2. Išstudijuoti informaciją, susijusią su moterų literatūrinės kūrybos pradžia;
3. Aprašyti *chick lit* žanro atsiradimą šiuolaikinėje literatūroje;
4. Apibūdinti šiuolaikinės moters tapatybę grožinėje literatūroje *chick lit*.
5. Išanalizuoti moters tapatybės vystymąsi Candacės Bushnell knygų serijoje *Kerės dienoraščiai*, *Vasara ir miestas* ir *Seksas ir miestas*.

Tyrimo metodai:

1. Feministinis metodas, paremtas Simone de Beauvoir teorija apie moters tapatybės koncepciją, yra naudojamas moters tapatybės sąvokos apibrėžimui. Remiamasi Simone de Beauvoir filosofine, feministine knyga *Antroji lytis* (1953), nagrinėjančia atvirą ir visapusišką autorės supratimą apie asmeninį moters tobulėjimą, visuomenės požiūrį į moterį, taip pat atsakančia į klausimą kodėl moteris yra laikoma silpnąja lytimi.
2. Postfeministinės kritikos metodas, apibrėžtas Stephanie Harzewski knygoje *Postfeminizmas ir Chick Lit* (2011), yra taikomas šiuolaikinės moters tapatybės charakterizavimui grožinėje literatūroje *chick lit*.

Candacės Bushnell romanai atskleidžia šiuolaikinės moters tapatybės problemas. Romanų veikėja Kerė Bradšo atspindi nepriklausomą, savo vienišumu patenkiną moterį, kuriai vyras reikalingas tik tam, kad pildytų jos užgaidas. Be to, Kerė yra moteris, kuriai mada padeda atskleisti jos asmenybę.

Šiuolaikinė moterų literatūra turi tikslą ne tik suteikti savo skaitytojams gerų emocijų, bet ir apibrėžti šiuolaikines moterų, ieškančių savosios asmenybės, problemas.

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## VIII. ANNOTATION

Ieva Černiauskaitė, Female Identity: Carrie in Book Series *The Carrie Diaries*, *Summer and the City* and *Sex and the City* by Candace Bushnell. *Bachelor Thesis*, research adviser Assist. Monika Gruslytė, Šiauliai University, Department of History and Theory of Literature, 2013, 35 p.

## IX. ANOTACIJA

Ieva Černiauskaitė, Moters tapatybė: Kerė Candacės Bushnell knygų serijoje „Kerės dienoraščiai“, „Vasara ir miestas“ ir „Seksas ir miestas“. *Bakalauro darbas*, darbo vadovė asist. Monika Gruslytė, Šiaulių universitetas, Literatūros istorijos ir teorijos katedra, 2013, 35 p.