

“gryphon” is a short story about women.

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



"Gryphon" is a short story about women. Author showed two types of women. The first type represented by the teacher, and the second type represented by the narrator's mother. The teacher represents women who are free and not restricted by family. She was not married, she traveled in order to explore the world, and she was well educated, while narrator's mother was a typically housewife dependent on her husband and predestined to "full-time mothering at home" (Rich, 1996). In the first paragraph is presented Miss Ferenczi a substitute teacher. Unlike other boring normal substitute teachers, who "provided easeful class day, and nervously covered material" (Baxter, p. 15) into the class came woman they had never seen. "She was no special age but her face had two prominent lines, descending vertically from the sides of her mouth to her chin. I knew where I had seen those lines before: Pinocchio. They were marionette lines" (Baxter, 2010). As she walks to the blackboard, picking up pieces of white and green chalk, she draws a large oak tree on the left side of the blackboard saying the class needs this tree in it. Then she told the class about her royal Hungarian ancestor. She was proud of her mother being a famous pianist who succeeded her first concert in London for "crowned heads. The substitute teacher's behavior and personality surprised her students because she was strange. She was different from their mothers, which were uneducated housewives sitting "silently at the back of the room, doing her knitting." (Baxter, 2010) Narrator's mother "face and hairstyle always reminded other people of Betty Crocker, whose picture was framed inside a gigantic spoon on the side of the Bisquick box" (Baxter, 2010). For him his "mother face just looked white" (Baxter, 2010). She always had

chores to do; she was only interested in cleaning and cooking. She did not participate in the life of her son, she really did not talk to him, she just command. They only have time for talking when “ the father gets home” (Baxter, 2010). Everything has to be prepared before” the Lord's” coming home. For her the most important thing was “ to clean up before dinner” (Baxter, 2010). The diamond is one symbol that helps to convey this theme. According to Miss Ferenczi “ diamond s are magic and this is why women wear them on their fingers, as a sign of the magic womanhood” (Baxter, 2010). Every young girl dreams of a fairy-tale prince and to live happily ever after. In the consciousness of young women is a deeply rooted compulsion to marriage. “ Women have married because it was necessary, in order to survive economically, in order to have children who would not suffer economic deprivation or social ostracism”. (Rich, 1996) In a really life it turns out that marriage is a trap. Men manifest a male power and treat “ the institution of marriage and motherhood as unpaid production” (Rich, 1996). They “ confine women physically and prevent their movement” (Rich, 1996). Also narrator’s mother was in this kind of trap. “ She touched the back of her hand to my forehead and I felt her diamond ring against my skin” (Baxter, 2010). “ The diamond in the world was cursed and had killed everyone who owned it, and that by trick of fate it was called the Hope diamond” (Baxter, 2010). The same as marriage could kill women’s creativeness and their independence. “ Definition of male pursuits as more valuable than female within any culture, so that cultural values become the embodiment of male subjectivity: restriction of female self- fulfillment to marriage and motherhood”. (Rich, 1996) In an attempt to show” the restriction of female

self- fulfillment to marriage and motherhood “ (Rich, 1996) Miss Ferenczi predicted the future of their students using a tarot. Predictions are shown to be different for girls and boys. In the girl’s future she did not see higher education but she saw an early marriage, many children and tasks of housewife life, while in boy’s future: travel, late marriage and “ maybe a good life" (Baxter, 2010). It is a proof that the situation of women is the same for many generations regardless of time, place and culture. In the short story “ Gryphon" were shown two women and two styles of life. A common part for these two women is just sex. The substitute teacher was as the fabulous beast — gryphon — “ with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion" (Baxter, 2010) meanwhile a narrator’s mother was like a most women, who need men as social and economic protectors. Work Cited Charles Baxter. “ Gryphon". Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing. Laurie G. Kirsznner and Stephen R. Mandel (7th Edition). : Boston: Wadsworth, 2010. 242-253. Print. Adriane Rich “ Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence". Feminism and Sexuality. Jackson E. Scott (1996).