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I confirm that I have conceived and written the diploma thesis in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the text.

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1. Introduction

Gender is a highly relevant field of discussion in modern times, as our society is still shaped by inequalities, such as the gender pay gap. Additionally, gender stereotypes determine what is perceived as feminine and masculine behaviour. A social belief is that men and women possess different character traits. For instance, women are thought to be more emotional, whereas masculinity is linked with toughness. These assumed differences between the sexes are the reason why, throughout history, women and men have been forced into different gender roles, i.e. traditionally, men have been expected to be the family's breadwinner, while women have been associated with domestic work. Even though several feminist movements achieved improvements of the situation, and today numerous women pursue successful careers, there remain several disadvantages females have to face. Our society is still defined by gender norms and prejudice, which will be outlined in the present thesis.

The thesis should demonstrate the possibility of breaking the barrier of these gender norms by taking Nancy Wake as an example. Nancy Wake, who worked as a spy for the British secret intelligence agency *Special Operations Executive (SOE)*, proved that women can achieve great things, even in male-dominated spheres. Since she grew up in poverty, married a prosperous French industrialist, and significantly changed her life after the outbreak of World War II to become a resistance fighter, her life and character are interesting to analyse from a gender perspective. It is particularly fascinating to explore how Wake's life on her SOE mission in France differed from that of her life as the wealthy lady Madame Fiocca. In the French woods, the so-called *Maquis*, she was surrounded by 7,000 dirty male resistance fighters, the *Maquisards*. In contrast, in her past life in Marseilles she enjoyed her high social status by spending large sums of money on exquisite food and drink, sophisticated dresses and expensive beauty products.

Several pieces of literature dealing with Nancy Wake's life have been published. Selected works belonging to the genres of biography and autobiography as well as biofiction were consulted for the present analysis. The three biographical fictions which, amongst others, served as main sources are Russell Braddon's "Nancy Wake: SOE's greatest heroine" (2009), Lucy Hannah's "Nancy Wake: World War Two secret agent 'The White Mouse'" (2006) and Peter Fitzsimons' "Nancy Wake: The inspiring story of one of the war's greatest heroines" (2002). Furthermore, Nancy Wake's autobiography "The White Mouse" (2011) and Michael Jürgs' biography "Codename Hélène: Churchills Geheimagentin Nancy Wake und ihr Kampf gegen die Gestapo in Frankreich [Code name Hélène: Churchill's secret agent Nancy Wake and her

fight against the Gestapo in France]” (2014) were used to answer the following research questions:

1. What makes Nancy Wake appear different from other women, with respect to gender stereotypes?
2. Did she conform to female stereotypes or did she possess “masculine” traits?
3. How was she perceived by the opposite sex?

One hypothesis is that Nancy Wake cannot be considered a typical woman, as through her activity as a female agent she transcended prevailing gender norms. According to dominant social rules, women are deprived of carrying out combat roles, including fighting and even killing others. Wake resisted the stereotypical picture of a woman who needs a male protector. Furthermore, it is hypothesised that she possessed both, traditional “feminine” as well as “masculine” traits and qualities, whereas her work in war changed her significantly and made her more “masculine”. Turning to the third research question, it is assumed that those men, who Nancy Wake became familiar with during her SOE training, as well as the Maquisards, did not respect her initially, since they might have felt that she as a woman did not have the right to intrude in their “male” territory. It seems obvious that Wake had to fight for her leading position in the Maquis and had to convince the men of her abilities and qualities.

Referring to its structure, in general, the present thesis has several thematic focuses, whereas the research questions are most relevant for the second part, which is the literary analysis of the representation of Nancy Wake as a female spy. Additionally, the first part of the thesis will include a theoretical background on the concept of gender, women in war, the Special Operations Executive as well as the investigated literary genres of biography, biofiction and autobiography.

Part I – theoretical considerations

2. The concept of gender

To investigate the subject of gender, several useful sources were consulted. Jane Pichler and Imelda Whelehan's book "Fifty key concepts in Gender Studies" (2004) served as a main source, since it gives a valuable overview of the most essential topics related to gender. Furthermore, Hilary Lips' "Gender: the basics" (2014) and Linda Lindsey's "Gender roles: a sociological perspective" (1994) were used, as these books deliver interesting insights in the development of feminism and explain gender stereotypes and roles in detail. Additionally, the works written by the two famous feminists Judith Butler and Simone de Beauvoir were taken into account for the theoretical background of the thesis. Butler's "Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity" (1990, 1999) and de Beauvoir's "The second sex" (1972, 1997) were used to explore their approach to the sex/gender distinction. In order to discover how women's position within society in the twentieth century changed, Renate Bridenthal's book "Becoming visible: women in European history" (1987) was consulted.

2.1. The distinction between "gender" and "sex"

The concept of gender, as it is commonly used nowadays, has existed since the early 1970s. The term "gender" came into use in order to distinguish between "biological sex differences and the way these are used to inform behaviours and competences, which are then assigned as either 'masculine' or 'feminine'" (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 56). The adjective "gendered" can be used synonymously with either "masculine" or "feminine". Colours such as pink and blue serve as instances of gendered characteristics. In comparison, "gendering" as a verb form can be understood as "the doing of gender" (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 59). Pichler and Whelehan (2004: 56) argue that the concept of gender was born out of the belief that physical features were mistakenly considered as indicators of men's power. Women on the other hand were wrongly made to believe that they are innately meant to perform domestic duties.

Also Lips (2014) deals with the distinction between the terms "gender" and "sex". According to her, men and women differ from each other in terms of the extent to which they meet "society's ideals of femininity and masculinity" (Lips 2014: 2). Being biologically identified as a man does not automatically mean that the person can be also characterised as

masculine, and the same applies of course for women and the feminine attribute too. Hence, both biological and socio-cultural criteria can serve to describe an individual person (Lips 2014: 2). As Lips (2014: 2) suggests, the term “sex” is used when dealing with an individual’s “biological femaleness and maleness”. Similarly, Lindsey (1994: 3) claims that biological factors such as “chromosomal, anatomical, reproductive, hormonal, and other physiological characteristics” determine a person’s sex. In contrast, “gender” is used to explain “culturally-mediated expectations and roles associated with masculinity and femininity” (Lips 2014: 2). Lindsey (1994: 3) argues that while sex can be defined “as an ascribed status [,] [...] gender is an achieved one”. What needs to be pointed out is that biological features, e.g. the fact that men are by nature physically stronger than women, lead to the establishment of social norms. According to these, men are praised if they improve their body shape. Hence, gender and sex are interrelated and gender on its own comprises multiple dimensions, namely “gender identity”, “sexual orientation” and “gender role” (Lips 2014: 2).

Gender identity entails one’s own sense of belonging to one of the two genders and feeling either male or female (Lips 2014: 2). Following so-called “socialisation” approaches, the identification with either one gender or the other happens in childhood. The surrounding environment, i.e. culture, teachers, parents and peers, teach children the “right” gendered behaviour and the concepts of femininity and masculinity (Lips 2014: 4). The socialisation process, and at the same time the development of gender roles, is initiated by indicating a baby girl’s female gender by covering it with a pink blanket. Boys on the other hand are given blue blankets. The process continues with the choice of toys. Girls typically play with dolls, whereas boys receive gifts such as “miniature tools” and “toy guns and tanks” (Lindsey 1994: 47). As people generally desire to belong to a specific group and possess competence, they conform to the existing social gender norms (Lips 2014: 4). What is particularly interesting is that three-year old children show preferences for their own gender group and demonstrate this by associating “more positive qualities” with the members of their group. Even though the childhood represents a crucial stage for one’s identification with one gender, socialisation is a life-long process (Lips 2014: 12f.). Another dimension of gender, namely sexual orientation, implies an individual’s “attraction to members of [its] own and/or other genders” and gender role, which will be dealt with in more detail at a later stage of the present thesis, refers to behavioural patterns that are viewed as appropriate for women and men in a given cultural context (Lips 2014: 3, cf. Lindsey 1994: 4).

In comparison to Lips’ (2014) and Lindsey’s (1994) considerations outlined above, according to Butler (1990: ix, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 58), who probably has the

most radical viewpoint with regard to the sex/gender distinction, everyone's identity is formed by "[...] institutions, practices [and] discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin". She suggests a "concept of gender as performance". This approach allows people to transcend certain boundaries of gender, such as the traditional cultural norm of heterosexuality (Butler 1990: 6, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 58). Furthermore, Butler (1999: 10) argues that building on the "binary sex", i.e. drawing a line between the "culturally constructed gender" and the "sexed bodies", does not imply that men are only defined by male bodies. Obviously, conversely the same holds true for women who will not "interpret only female bodies". Butler (1999: 11f.) also asks herself the significant questions of where and how gender is constructed and highlights that its construction entails "a certain determinism of gender meanings inscribed on anatomically differentiated bodies". She states that culture provides a "set of laws" for the construction of gender, which can then be seen as "determined and fixed". In contrast to that, Butler (1999: 12) refers to Simone de Beauvoir and her famous claim in "The Second Sex" (1972) that "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one". De Beauvoir's approach to gender is a rather flexible one, as she states that women "choose" to become a woman, "but always under the cultural compulsion to become one". Importantly, she never mentions that it has to be a female person who becomes a woman.

De Beauvoir (1972) also introduces the concept of "the Other". She explains that there is a clear gender hierarchy (de Beauvoir 1972: 295, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 56f.). Masculine features and values are always advantaged, whereas femininity is perceived as the "Other". In contrast to women, men are "the One" and determine "the Other's", namely the women's, position in a patriarchal society. As de Beauvoir (1997: 16), cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 90) puts it, a woman is "defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her [...]". De Beauvoir (1997: 21, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 90) attempts to come up with an explanation for why women are given a lower social status. She lists reasons, such as women's ability to conceive children which men consider as a restriction of female autonomy. Moreover, she is convinced that women are aware of their subordinated role and even accept it. De Beauvoir (1997: 21, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 90) even goes as far as to say that women are "often very pleased with [their] role as the Other". In the following section, women's status in society beginning from the twentieth century will be discussed in order to understand how it could even come to the formation of the term "gender" as a counterpart of "sex" and the rise of feminism.

2.2. Women in the twentieth century

In the twentieth century, with the achievement of women's rights, e.g. the right to vote in several nations, women's social status was enhanced. During the First World War women gained access to numerous new domains of work. By earning their own income, they became more independent from their husbands. One of the struggles women faced was finding enough time for both their family and job. Soon after the war, a lot of women were unemployed again, the few who were not dismissed worked in low-paid jobs (Bridenthal 1987: 473-475).

Similarly to what happened after the First World War, people in Britain and in Europe generally, also started to reshape their lives following the Second World War. It was particularly important to establish a social hierarchy that was based on "social justice and greater equality". Women were provided with more rights than in the past, as everybody, irrespective of their gender, could from now on receive "health care, education, and employment". Feminists claim, however, that the British welfare state was the source of further inequality towards women, because married women could only profit from their husband's social position (Jenson 1987: 535). To clarify, women were only entitled to the welfare benefits, if their husbands made payments to the state and therefore, "the husband was the citizen whose rights were recogni[s]ed". In addition, the financial independence of women was restricted if they became sick or disabled. In this case, they were disadvantaged compared to unmarried female workers or men. Even if they were making their payments to the welfare state themselves, they did not have the right to receive the same welfare benefits as men or unmarried women, on the sole ground that they were married (Jenson 1987: 540).

The second half of the twentieth century was marked by a desire to introduce further social rights. These included state support in form of "pensions", "maternity benefits", "family allowances", "unemployment insurance" and "health care". The extent to which women, in particular married ones, could make use of the new rights is however not clear (Jenson 1987: 536f.). Questions arose as to whether women should be treated as individual citizens with their own rights or whether they should "be considered as part of a family unit, linked to the activities and rights of a male wage earner and treated as minors by the state welfare system because they themselves did not meet the definition of the 'model citizen' [...]" (Jenson 1987: 537). In various countries, such as Great Britain, the women's movement fought for women's liberation. In the late 1960s, British feminists held the welfare state responsible for women's subordinated position in comparison to men and wanted to prove that the state programmes which should originally provide universal rights and equality were in reality nothing more than a sham

(Jenson 1987: 538). At that time, feminism was an influential movement, which led to a crucial change in thinking and, therefore, will be dealt with in detail in the next section.

2.3. Feminism

The word “feminism” is derived from the French term “féminisme”. Its origins lie in the nineteenth century when it came into use in the field of medicine to talk about “the feminisation of a male body” or on the other hand, in the description of “women with masculine traits”. Very soon in its history, feminism was linked to a movement involving women who devoted themselves to stand up for women’s rights. From that time on, feminists have been perceived as people who think that women are the oppressed sex and need to be provided with the same rights by law as men (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 48).

From the 1980s onwards, there has been the trend to use the plural form “feminisms”. That is because even though feminists all together combat women’s subordination, they tackle this issue from several different angles (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 49). For instance, liberal feminism, which is also known under the term egalitarian feminism, takes as its basic principle that, due to the fact that every individual “[is] created equal”, no one should suffer from disadvantages caused by his or her gender (Lindsey 1994: 14). This branch of feminism aims at improving women’s education. Liberal feminists support the idea that women gain a voice in society, if they are educated in the same way as men are (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 49). They similarly claim that women, like men, should also have the opportunity to work outside the domestic sphere (Lindsey 1994: 14f.). According to socialist or Marxist feminism, on the other hand, women’s social situation can only take a turn for the better, if the end of industrial capitalism is ensured, as it is based on a class system and a strict hierarchical order within the family (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 50, Lindsey 1994: 15). Capitalism places the father of the family, who is the main carer, in the highest position, whereas the unpaid mother financially depends on her husband’s support (Lindsey 1994: 15). As a third branch of feminism, radical feminism is often linked to hatred against men. Radical feminists are the creators of the Women’s Liberation Movement (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 50). They are convinced that only the foundation of women-centred institutions can lead to women’s independence from men (Lindsey 1994: 17). Their attitude is shaped by the belief that women need their own space to pursue policies, separately from men. Their “politics of radicalism” favours teamwork without a leader, division of work and a lack of structure. Unfortunately, many followers of the radical

feminist movement have been portrayed as lesbians and man-haters (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 50).

2.3.1. The origins and history of feminism

On the whole, the history of feminism can be divided into several time periods. At some points in history, feminist ideas were widely spread and discussed, whereas at other times, these issues did not seem to concern the people much. This interest and disinterest in feminist ideas and values at various stages of history can be symbolically best described by a “wave” motion. There are three different sub-categories of feminism, which are called “first wave feminism”, “second wave feminism” and “third wave feminism”.

First wave feminism is the period which extends from “at least the mid to late nineteenth century up until about the 1920s”, whereas the period of time starting from the 1960s was marked by second wave feminism (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 52). For the time being, the last stage in the development of feminism is denoted as third wave feminism, which had its beginnings in the 1990s (Denfeld 1995: 263, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 169f.). To give a brief overview, the first movements had the goal to ensure suffrage and educational rights for women. Furthermore, these initial movements wanted to enable women to enter the working world (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 53). Later “reproductive rights movements” and “anti-violence movements” served to give women the right to “make decisions about childbearing” and prevent sexual and domestic abuse (Lips 2014: 44).

2.3.1.1. First wave feminism

Already in the eighteenth century efforts were being made to improve women’s conditions. In particular the French Revolution in 1789 was the first event in history when claims for women’s rights arose. Even though these endeavours existed previously, first wave feminism is most often dated to the period between the 1880s and the 1920s. Its primary objectives were to bring about equality with the male gender and a change for the better with regards to women’s legal situation. In Great Britain, first wave feminism was initiated by the “social and economic changes of industrialisation”. These feminists wanted to achieve that women received a well-founded education and enable them to carry out professions. In addition, feminists demanded the right to vote. At the beginning of the twentieth century, women’s suffrage was also the subject that feminist projects and initiatives were primarily centred on. The First World War

brought about changes for women as they had to replace the men, who were serving their country as soldiers, as labour (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 53f.). However, after the war, hopes that women would be kept as workforce soon faded and they were assigned back to their traditional role as housewives. This anti-feminist attitude was prevalent in Britain in the inter-war years (Kent 1988, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 54). However, in the 1930s, with the so-called “new feminism”, issues concerning the female gender, especially women’s role as mothers, became essential again (Randall 1982 and Lewis 1980, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 55).

2.3.1.2. Second wave feminism

After a period of stagnation, the feminist movement experienced a revival during the 1960s, with second wave feminism. As already mentioned, first wave feminism primarily intended to ensure women’s rights to vote and work. In contrast, second wave feminists were striving to put an end to women’s oppression caused by the patriarchy. They were aware that women’s suffrage alone did not lead to equality, so their concerns were not only public ones. The female body, its biological characteristics and the way it was represented were of particular importance during this stage of feminism. Differences between men and women were stressed and additionally, second wave feminism was characterised by its high hope for social change. To achieve this demanded change, political connections and associations, for example liberal, Marxist or radical ones, were needed. It was common for radical feminists to participate in group demonstrations where they raised awareness of gender inequality and spread a revolutionary spirit. These women were the founders of the so-called “Women’s Liberation Movement”. Although this feminist collective had to deal with harsh criticism by the media, which presented the activists as “women’s libbers”, “bra-burners” and “man haters”, it initially became highly successful in the USA, before gaining popularity in Europe in the late 1960s as well. While the movement was marked by its inclusive character, meaning that any woman could participate, irrelevant of skin colour, sexuality or social class, it was still evident that the group was nevertheless dominated by “white, middle-class, heterosexual women”. Even though it is quite simple to date back the beginnings of the second wave to around 1968, it is rather uncertain whether it has ever come to an end or been followed by a new wave. What is apparent is that the so-called third wave feminism did not really bring about a change of the basic ideas produced within second wave feminism, even though there are of course some differences between these two. While second-wave feminists were mostly interested in women’s private

lives and relationships, the subsequent wave was concerned with the mass media, dealing with its positive potential as well as its downside (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 144-147).

2.3.1.3. Third wave feminism

Third wave feminism is a movement led by younger feminists who appreciate the ideas and values put forth in the course of second wave feminism. However, they also take a critical stance on this preceding period of feminism and stress that it largely excluded people other than white and middle-class. Feminists of the third wave are often women who either have feminist mothers or were otherwise influenced by feminism already at a very young age. Mostly, the women concerned have university education. With the emergence of third wave feminism a rebellious spirit aroused, as one of its core ideas is “the need for the ‘daughter’ to break away from her feminist ‘mother’ in order to define her own agenda”.

Even though third wave feminism has its roots in the academic world, it was also massively influenced by popular culture, such as “music, television, film and literature”. The Riot Grrrl movement, which was initiated around 1991, played an important role in the development of third wave feminism, as it clearly showed that music, in this case especially punk music, can serve as a useful tool to spread political and feminist ideas around the world. Anyone who was a passionate musician was allowed to join and perform. Inclusivity was highly valued by the activists who organised events, played music and released fan magazines. The basic idea behind third wave feminism is that anyone can freely reveal one’s political opinion through the means of mass media and popular culture. This positive attitude towards the media distinguishes the third wave clearly from the second wave. What is furthermore central in this stage of feminism is “the sense of generational conflict – one generation claiming its own space”. Generation X shapes third wave feminism massively, hence the term “generation X feminism” can be used, as age is the crucial factor defining this type of feminism (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 169-171).

2.4. The concept of masculinity

After having discussed feminist issues, including women’s position in the twentieth century and the development of feminism, for the purpose of this thesis it is also significant to explore aspects concerning the male gender. In this context, the term “masculinity” will be dealt with in the present section.

Masculinity can be defined as “a set of social practices and cultural representations associated with being a man”. The plural form “masculinities” can be used too because “ways of being a man and cultural representations of/about men vary, both historically and culturally, between societies and between different groupings of men within any one society”. Various scientific disciplines provide different definitions of masculinity. For example, according to research in the natural sciences, “physiological factors, such as hormones and chromosomes”, are responsible for the existence of masculinity and masculinities. In comparison, the social sciences take a more critical, academic approach. Here, the term “masculinities” refers to a form of power balance, both among men and between men and women. These masculinities are assumed to emerge from the social environments that men are familiar with, “for example, from their positions in the various institutions and organisations of their society and/or in the context of the socially available discourses about gender” (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 82f.).

Connell (1995; 2000, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 83f.) delivers a model of the “gender hierarchy” of modern Western societies, where the so-called “hegemonic masculinity” occupies the most important rank. This kind of masculinity is linked to “authority, physical toughness and strength, heterosexuality and paid work” and is followed by “complicit masculinity” and “subordinated masculinities”, whereas homosexuality makes up the most essential subordinated masculinity. Femininity represents the lowest level of the gender hierarchy. According to Connell (1995; 2000, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 83f.), “the social changes of twentieth century (in the industrialised West)” caused this prevalent hierarchy with hegemonic masculinity on top and femininities at the bottom.

Another model produced by Robert Brannon (1976, cited in Lindsey 1994: 213f.), which focusses on masculine traits, looks as follows:

1. No Sissy Stuff: The stigma of all stereotyped feminine characteristics and qualities, including openness and vulnerability.
2. The Big Wheel: Success, status, and the need to be looked up to.
3. The Sturdy Oak: A manly air of toughness, confidence and self-reliance.
4. Give ‘Em Hell: The aura of aggression, violence, and daring.

Lindsey (1994: 214) completes the model with a fifth characteristic, namely:

5. Macho Man: An emphasis on sexual prowess and sexual conquests.

Referring to what Brannon (1976, cited in Lindsey 1994: 214) summarised under “No Sissy Stuff”, modern society demands from men that they behave in a completely “antifeminine” manner. This may result in a man’s loss of interpersonal skills, since the qualities of opening oneself up and speaking intimately are stereotypically viewed as feminine ones. With regards

to the second characteristic, men are evaluated in regard of their professional success and their (in-)ability to finance the upkeep of their families. Being competent as father and a man's duties within his family are less important. Concerning aspect number three, men are always expected to appear confident and self-assured as well as to overcome every challenge, however difficult it may be. "Give 'Em Hell" as a fourth characteristic implies men's aggressive behaviour and their will to fight until the end. The final trait highlights that nowadays, men often believe that they need to possess the qualities of a "macho man", i.e. being sexually competent instead of impotent (Brannon 1976, cited in Lindsey 1994: 214ff.). Since this model deals with the stereotypical views of men in modern times and which characteristics are expected from them, the following section thoroughly discusses the term "stereotype" and reveals the prevalent existing gender stereotypes.

2.5. Gender stereotypes

The term "stereotype" has been used in a sociological context since 1922. It was then that Lippmann defined a stereotype as the "'typical picture' that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group" (Macrae et al. 1996, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 166). A stereotype serves as a simplification of a wider, more complex concept and is applied on the cognitive level. Its function is to categorise individuals into certain groups. Stereotypes are not images that are exclusively created by individuals, they occur within the collective too. This sharing of "typical pictures" is responsible for the common knowledge of several gender stereotypes, such as women's unpredictability and emotionality as well as men's rationality, instrumentality and interest in sports (Pichler & Welehan 2004: 166f.). Considering the mentioned characteristics, the definition of a gender stereotype reads as follows: "a standardised and often pejorative idea or image held about an individual on the basis of their gender" (Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 167). What is particularly problematic is the fact that people are not aware of stereotypes as being stereotypes, as they consider them as "the way things are" (Lips 2014: 23).

Parsons and Bales (1955, cited in Lips 2014: 24) use the terms "expressiveness" and "instrumentality" to indicate the different character traits of men and women. They point out that women seem to be "more expressive" and attach great importance to "emotion and relationships", whereas men are likely to be considered "more instrumental" and seemingly prefer "action, leadership and accomplishment". However, gender stereotypes cannot only be classified in terms of expressiveness and instrumentality. They also function as descriptions

and prescriptions. Stereotypes describe “what typical men and women are like”, but also prescribe what they “should be like” (Lips 2014: 25).

Even though gender stereotypes undergo changes over time, on the whole, they remain rather stable. Apparently, female stereotypes are more prone to change than male ones. A survey conducted by Twenge (1997, cited in Lips 2014: 24) reveals that in the years between 1973 and 1993, the number of women who attributed stereotypically male characteristics to themselves has increased, whereas male respondents’ attribution of female features to themselves did not show any significant changes. In which direction gender stereotypes develop seemingly depends on “cultural, political and economic changes” (Lips 2014: 24).

Research conducted in the field of gender studies has focussed much of its attention on the occurrence of gender stereotypes in institutions such as family, school and the media. The results show, for example, that by applying stereotypes, parents teach their children how to behave appropriately according to their sex. The outcomes of a study carried out by Riddell (1992, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 167) in secondary schools indicate that teachers described girls stereotypically as being “mature, neat and conscientious”, whereas boys were characterised as being “aggressive and lacking in discipline”. These behavioural patterns caused the teachers to make the boys responsible for disorder in the classroom and therefore to quiet them rather than the girls. With regards to gender research in the field of media, predominant female stereotypes that again are often found are that women are sexual and domestic objects. What is furthermore highly interesting, are the insights gained by the European Commission (1999, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 168) which indicate that the female sex is still less represented on television than the male sex. Additionally, the researchers discovered that the women shown in the media are often married, rather young and do not tend to be presented as a paid employee (European Commission 1999: 12, cited in Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 168). Also Lips (2014: 28) claims that in movies, advertisements and on television, women are likely to be “shown in interpersonal roles in families, friendships, and romance”, whereas “male characters are portrayed more often in work-related roles”. Concerning the representation of gender stereotypes in the media, there is the belief that the media has the enormous power to construct stereotypes as well as to bring about their common acceptance (Lips 2014: 28, Pichler & Whelehan 2004: 168). Closely linked to the concept of stereotype are so-called gender-roles into which men and women are forced.

2.6. Gender roles

Gender roles are constructed as a result of character traits which are expected and desired from the female and male gender. Interestingly, the desirable features differ from country to country. For example, in Japan a women should ideally be “gentle”, “quiet” and internally strong. Also the “perfect man” represents someone who is internally rather than physically strong (Sugihara and Katsurada 1999: 645, cited in Lips 2014: 19). Different attitudes occur even within cultures and ethnicities. Moreover factors like “age, social class, sexual orientation, and ability/disability” lead to the existence of various gender norms, stereotypes and roles (Lips 2014: 19).

With regards to character traits, men are expected to act strongly, dominantly and be able to take over leadership. In contrast, females should be flexible and able to adjust to a given situation instead of taking a leading role. Men often prove their masculinity by wielding power, whereas women tend to behave submissively. Gender roles particularly correlate with the types of job men and women hold. From a stereotypical point of view, women’s “warm and nurturing” character makes them suitable for jobs which require “caretaking and supporting”. Men, on the other hand, are thought to be “achievement-oriented and assertive”, which means that they should be capable of “holding positions that involve taking charge and making decisions”. Gender stereotypes, e.g. women’s empathic character, serve to assign different gender roles to men and women. The stereotypes are self-perpetuating, as individuals’ actions become based on what the specific gender roles demand. Thus, they perform gender stereotypes, whereby both the stereotypes and “the gendered division of labo[u]r” are maintained. Concerning labour, research shows that men have much greater chances than women to achieve career success “in powerful, high-status positions such as corporate, professional, and political leadership”. In comparison, other jobs suitable for helpful and supportive people, for instance “social worker, counsel[l]or, secretary, and nurse”, are carried out mainly by women. As can be seen, gender stereotypes and roles influence individuals’ lives to a great extent. These “expressions of cultural values” determine people’s actions and make sure that hierarchical structures within a society are maintained (Lips 2014: 14f.).

The domination of gender roles is not restricted to the field of labour choice, but is also prevalent in other spheres, such as personal life and relationships. In some cultures it is common that after the father’s death an unmarried woman is under her brother’s control. Traditionally, women share their husband’s name after their wedding. These two examples indicate “male power and female accommodation”. Women are often criticised for their vulnerability and are

thought to seek “protection and guidance from men”. The common gender stereotypes, such as female “warmth and supportiveness” and male “dominance, competitiveness, toughness and leadership”, might imply that showing emotions and empathy plays an important role in friendships between women, whereas friendships between men is marked by assertiveness. While male individuals are likely to build more friendships than women, “women and girls tend to have fewer, [but] more intimate friends” (Lips 2014: 50f.). Concerning family life and marriage, Lindsey (1994: 160) mentions that the traditional patriarchal family structure underlines the dominant position of men. Women can only overcome their subordination by “gain[ing] greater economic power”. It is “the wife, husband, and their dependent children” who make up the so-called “nuclear family”. However, nowadays, this model does not seem to be relevant anymore. The number of women on the labour market, even married ones with little children, has increased over the last thirty years, which has resulted in changes in traditional family patterns (Lindsey 1994: 160f.). Lindsey (1994: 164) suggests that, in the modern era, alternatives to the nuclear family such as single-parent households or families consisting of children and their unmarried parents exist.

Besides women’s stereotypically warm and caring character which is mentioned above, they are often considered to be in need of protection and less aggressive than men. There is a common belief that by nature women do not have the physical abilities to participate in combat actions. Moreover, according to gender stereotypes, they lack toughness and cannot handle the “discomfort and dirt of the battlefield”. Furthermore, in case of war, women are always endangered to be raped by the enemies. Additionally, it is argued that men would jeopardise their own lives for women in case they are in danger, however women would never be able to do the same for men. Women are expected “to be gentle, nurturing, compassionate, caring, accommodating- not tough, aggressive, decisive, or willing to take physical risks”. This common attitude leads to women’s exclusion from combat roles (Lips 2014: 118f.). Nevertheless, throughout history women like Nancy Wake have proven to be well suited for military service and the role of secret agent often taking over important roles in wartime.

2.6.1. Reversed gender roles – women in war

In the contexts of war and violence, men usually take the role as perpetrators and women as the victims (Henry 2014: 529). Rass (2015: 13) claims that violence is associated with masculinity, whereas weakness is defined as a female trait. According to him, it is due to women’s stereotypical vulnerability that one cannot think of them as violent army members (Rass 2015:

14). However, there is no natural barrier between femininity and violence and not everybody is willing to conform to conventional gender roles (cf. Rass 2015: 14). Henry (2014: 541) and Rass (2015: 14) both point out that a small number of women throughout history have taken part in wars, for example “as soldiers, support personnel, strategists, guerrillas, planners and fighters”. In the nineteenth century, women particularly served in war by caring for wounded soldiers.

Although women were used in the army during times of conflict, there had not been any historical writings about them before the 1990s when feminist studies began to deal with the subject. The twentieth century, including the two World Wars, marks a turning point, as now women’s jobs within the army were more respected and covered more areas than their work in military hospitals. For instance, women were assigned to tasks such as the transmission of news and they worked in the military administration. What is of particular importance is that organisations formed by women were institutionalised, such as the “Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps” in Britain, which was introduced in 1916 as a result of the large number of casualties on the Western Front. At the end of the same year, a membership of 57,000 women had been reached (Rass 2015: 21ff., Gordon & Doughan 2013: 157f.). This significant progress resulted in a slow deconstruction of stereotypes and in a strengthening of women’s movement. Especially within the army, the situation of women improved, as from now on, they held higher positions and ranks. In society generally, a continual change in attitudes took place, as no sovereign nation that participated in the First World War allowed women to vote before 1918. Some women who, as exceptions, were permitted to undertake combat missions proved that stereotypes like the protective man and the weak women are far from reality. Sadly after World War I, women were pushed back into traditional roles. Only in the Second World War they were recruited again and their army auxiliary corps was expanded. Women now also worked in new areas, for example as pilots and radar operators. 450,000 women volunteered in Britain’s women’s services. Even though women served in resistance groups and within specific areas of the army, they were again dismissed after war (Rass 2015: 23-26). According to Noakes and Grayzel (2012: 35f.), women also worked on Anti-Aircraft (AA) sites. Their duties were “assist[ing] in the targeting and shooting down of aircraft”. However, they were disadvantaged in comparison with men, as they could never reach a combatant status, received lower wages and only men were allowed to shoot with guns. Bourke and Summerfield (2009: 150) point out that female spies, for instance, were not allowed to kill either. Even though they were trained in killing, they primarily served as “courier[s] [sic] or intelligence gatherer[s]”.

To summarise, there are two different opinions concerning women's status in the army and their role in the war times of the twentieth century. Röger and Leiserowitz (2012: 9) argue that

[a]lthough women were forced to fulfil functions that previously had been in the male domain, the distance to the male roles (which were also changing) remained. The World Wars, then, in a very specific and paradoxical way, led at one and the same time to both progress and stability in gender roles.

According to Rass (2015: 27), one can argue that on the whole, the period of the two World Wars can be seen as a step forward towards equality between men and women, however, in the modern era there are still people who hold the view that women have to adjust to conditions and rules determined by men. Above all, women, or more precisely their ability to bear children and their lower physical fitness are perceived as a threat for the functioning of the army (Rass 2015: 27ff.). Sadly, a widely held opinion is that women should remain in their pacifist role rather than participate in military actions. It is, however, a fact that women are like men equally able to behave violently, and even kill (Rass 2015: 31).

Here, the questions of what makes women act in this aggressive and violent way, or more specifically, what motivates them to participate actively in warfare are particularly interesting. Bourke and Summerfield (2009: 151) name three possible and plausible motivations, namely "family, patriotism and coercion". For example, out of solidarity with their brothers, women decided to go to battle during the two World Wars. With regards to patriotism, women's intention behind participating in warfare was to take "revenge for atrocities perpetrated on fellow countrymen as well as family members" (Bourke & Summerfield 2009: 151). Women were also coerced to take part in wars, for instance by the state, as occurred in Britain and other countries in World War II. The reason behind women's involvement in war and military service was simply a lack of male warriors. Some women's participation in war had feminist causes though (Bourke & Summerfield 2009: 151ff.). As Bourke and Summerfield (2009: 153) put it, "[t]hese women were determined to ensure that their militant labour on the battlefields would serve a function in ensuring the extension of citizenship rights in the post-war world". Unfortunately, they were, compared to men, not equally accepted as warriors. There have always been discussions about the legitimacy of involving women in warfare. That is because society set up a "gender contract" that defines women as nurturers and men as warriors. Without such a contract no one would even doubt women's fighting abilities (Bourke & Summerfield 2009: 153f.).

As already mentioned, the reason why women were used to fight the enemy as well, was that, in fact, female soldiers, spies and nurses were urgently needed by the governments during

wartimes. Women had to nurse and nurture the male soldiers as well as compensate for the shortage of male fighters (Bourke & Summerfield 2009: 153f.). Great Britain had secret organisations that focussed on espionage and also included women in their training programmes, with Nancy Wake being one of them. However, these brave women were treated unfairly, as their “service was [...] less likely than men’s to be rewarded with medals, pensions and commemoration” (Bourke & Summerfield 2009: 153). Women who waged wars demonstrated that they are “tough enough to take on male roles” and that their courageous actions finally “require social acceptance” (Bourke & Summerfield 2009: 154).

3. Historical and cultural context – World War II and the Special Operations Executive

3.1. General introduction to the Special Operations Executive (SOE)

One of Great Britain’s secret organisations that were briefly mentioned above was the so-called “Special Operations Executive”, or in abbreviated form SOE. Its secretive nature is the one of the reasons why researchers have not dealt much with SOE. Foot (1984: 172) stresses the discreteness with which SOE operated across the globe and goes as far as to say that “hardly any trace of it is left in archives open to the public”. As Wheeler (1981: 517) states, there is only “one official history of SOE’s activities to appear, M.R.D. Foot’s *SOE in France* (1966) [...]”. Besides this literature example, it is estimated that a total of less than 200 books that examine SOE’s work have been so far released (Wheeler 1981: 515).

Winston Churchill’s SOE was brought into life on 19 July 1940 after he wrote a memorandum in which he demanded its establishment (Cookridge 1967: 12). A few days later, on 22 July 1940, the foundation of SOE was confirmed by the War Cabinet. Officially, the secret organisation existed until 15 January 1946 (Mackenzie 2000: 715, cited in Seaman 2005: 28). The British intelligence organisation originally undertook its activities in St. Ermin’s Hotel in Caxton Street, though from autumn 1940 onwards, the organisation had its headquarters in Baker Street (Cookridge 1967: 21).

Seaman (2005: 28) names a number of characteristics that make the Special Operations Executive appear special and very different from other secret services in the UK. Firstly, as stated earlier, it existed for a rather short period of time only, namely six years, and was created exclusively for war purposes. In comparison, its sister organisations, the Secret Intelligence

Service (SIS) and the Security Service (MI5) had been formed thirty years before the outbreak of World War II. Another unique feature is the worldwide influence SOE had. Also Foot (1984: 172) emphasises that “[t]here was no continent, there was hardly a country, where it did not do something. Its major efforts, in terms of the number of agents employed, were made in France and Yugoslavia”.

The motto Churchill announced in July 1940 was “Set Europe ablaze!” (Ruby 1990: 19, Cookridge 1969: 15, cf. Beevor 1981: 12). The main tasks of SOE were the conduct of air raids and sabotage acts against the enemy as well as the support of resistance groups across the globe (Cookridge 1967: 12). The trained agents served to transmit messages and secret information as well as to observe the ideological and political situation and act upon it as necessary with the help of resistance groups. The primary aim was the organisation of resistance in those countries affected by the Nazi occupation (Cookridge 1967: 14). According to Beevor (1981: 244), this included for example the “[s]abotage of railways, telecommunications, oil targets, enemy shipping, U-boat maintenance services and industrial installations”. One of the difficulties SOE faced was rivalry between some of the resistance groups and their leaders, which often led to the separation of groups. Churchill gave orders to send secret agents and instructors on mission in the occupied areas. The recruitment and arming of the fighters took several years (Cookridge 1967: 14). What was of vital importance was that SOE maintained its secrecy. Therefore, even high-ranking army representatives were not informed about the existence of the Special Operations Executive (Cookridge 1967: 21).

The first leader of the intelligence agency was the Minister of Economic Warfare, Hugh Dalton, who wanted to wage war in a revolutionary manner (Wylie 2005: 8). Dalton was in charge of the agent training as well as the preparation for SOE’s underground work, which formerly had been part of the Secret Service (Cookridge 1967: 13). Sir Colin Gubbins, a professional soldier, was also a key player within SOE, as he was responsible for the recruitment of fighters with various backgrounds for a secret army (Cookridge 1967: 26). Concerning the number of agents employed, there seem to be discrepancies, as several sources provide different information. According to Wheeler (1981: 514), SOE reached its highest membership count in the autumn of 1944 when about 10,000 people worked for the secret agency, whereas Foot (1984: 62) states that SOE had its highest member number in summer 1944, with “just under 10,000 men and about 3,200 women”.

SOE has been widely criticised and its members have often been belittled as amateurs. Wylie (2005: 11) explains the reason for the negative attitude towards the secret agency, as follows:

Yet the amateurishness for which SOE was routinely maligned had probably as much to do with any innate or institutionalized competence as with the legendary informality of the organization and the self-proclaimed 'revolutionary' nature of the warfare it espoused.

Cookridge (1967: 17) emphasises that the main problem was that the Secret Service was not at all prepared for the Nazi Party's rise to power. Nevertheless, it was SOE which was maligned by the Secret Service's Chiefs of Staff. While the Secret Service only hired trained soldiers and marines, the Special Operations Executive consisted of non-professionals which, among other things, used to be academics, office workers and editors (Cookridge 1967: 17). The number of those SOE members who formerly had jobs as editors or correspondents was particularly high. Their work experience abroad made them suitable for intelligence services. Moreover, other free-lance professionals like authors, film directors, radio presenters and actors were involved in the work of the Special Operations Executive (Cookridge 1967: 27). Foot (1984: 57) interestingly points out that SOE also received help from criminals, mostly "recently released professionals".

3.2. Recruitment and training of agents

When talking about SOE's staff, the question arises of which requirements and criteria a potential secret agent had to meet, what the training of these agents looked like, and of course which preparatory measures had to be implemented first and foremost. First of all, schools where the training would take place and research centres focussing on the production of equipment and weaponry needed to be built (Cookridge 1967: 28). It is a great achievement that already in 1944, sixty of the aforementioned schools existed (Cookridge 1967: 29). Beyond these institutions, forged documents and counterfeit money were urgently needed and examination of the Gestapo and its methods as well as airplane testing were of importance (Cookridge 1967: 28).

As one can imagine, hiring secret agents was a tremendous challenge (Cookridge 1967: 27). According to Cookridge (1967: 28), who names several tasks a secret agent had to fulfil, a candidate was expected to possess unique qualities:

Er mu[ss]te Fachmann in der geheimen Kriegführung werden, die ihn vor viele und mannigfaltige Aufgaben stellte: sein Standquartier einrichten, Helfer und Kuriere zu gewinnen und einzuweisen, den Empfang von neuen Agenten und Nachschub, die von Flugzeugen abgesetzt wurden, zu organisieren. Ferner mu[ss]te er Patrioten rekrutieren und ausbilden, bis sie zu paramilitärischen Einheiten zusammengefa[ss]t werden konnten, er mu[ss]te Sabotageakte planen und

durchführen. Dazu gehörte die Fähigkeit mit Sprengstoff umgehen zu können und es auch anderen beizubringen. In den meisten Fällen erwartete man, da[ss] er einen Sender bedienen konnte, was technische Kenntnisse und Ausbildung im Schlüsseln voraussetzte.

[He had to become an expert in the field of secret warfare which made him face numerous and various tasks: setting up his base, gaining access to helpers and couriers and instructing them, organising the reception of new agents and the receipt of supplies which were dropped from planes. In addition, he had to recruit and train patriots until paramilitary units could be formed, he had to plan and carry out acts of sabotage. This required the ability to handle explosives and to teach that to others too. In most cases he was expected to be able to operate a transmitter which required technical knowledge and training in decoding].

However, the above list cannot be seen as complete. An agent often had to additionally serve as a mediator in times of conflicts between resistance groups, yet the primary focus lied on the conduct of espionage operations including the gathering of information and transmission of messages. In order to remain undercover, the agents' fluent knowledge of the local language was mandatory. Moreover, they were expected to be familiar with the local culture, i.e. they had to know local food and drinks, the names of famous sportsmen or actors. Furthermore, knowledge of customs, religion and landscape characteristics was necessary. Certainly, it was essential to create the agent's own false identity, including home, origins and family. Requirements with regards to the personal qualities and traits that the candidate had to meet were strength of character, leadership ability and the ability of adapting to various situations. The recruiting officers did not choose the future agents according to a fixed set of criteria, but rather following their intuition and personal judgement (Cookridge 1967: 28f.). Occasionally interviews were conducted where the candidates had to prove their foreign language skills, but "[t]he more usual, safest and fastest way of finding recruits was to bring in those who were known already to the original staff" (Foot 1984: 46).

The question therefore arises of how exactly the members of SOE were recruited and which methods were used when choosing them. Selwyn Jepson was "the recruiting officer for F, the independent French section". As such "he conducted hundreds of interviews" and later became an author, delivering interesting insights into those interviews as well as the recruiting methods. The rooms in which the interviews took place consisted of nothing else but "two folding chairs, a naked light bulb and a blackout screen [...]". After a few sentences in English he began to speak in French to test the candidates' foreign language skills and how much they knew about France and its regions. If this part of the interview was passed by the potentially new SOE agent, the recruiting officer would turn to questions of motive and character. In this stage of the interview, the questioner tried to find out which reasons underlay the candidate's

decision to apply for the job as secret agent, e.g. a strong rejection of the Nazi ideology or merely personal reasons requiring a new kind of work. Additionally, the character and personality of each candidate was investigated (Foot 1984: 58). According to Foot (1984: 59), one undesirable character trait was impulsiveness. What SOE needed, were secret agents who were particularly prudent and courageous. If, after all, the candidate seemed to be appropriate and suitable for the secret work of SOE, he or she was invited to a second interview in which Jepson explicitly explained that the job might involve being sent to France and working there under dangerous circumstances. That is why the recruiting officer gave each applicant time to think it over. What was particularly important was that the candidates were not allowed to tell anybody about the interview and they also were obliged to make the decision all alone, without the advice of family members. The candidates then met Jepson for a third time to inform him about whether they would take up the job or not (Foot 1984: 59).

In 1943, SOE introduced a new recruiting system which replaced the interviews. As Foot (1984: 60) states, “[i]nstead, candidates went before a students’ assessment board composed largely of psychologists, with whom they stayed for several days while their characters and capacities were thoroughly probed”. The advantage of this new recruiting system was its scientific and safe character, however, on the downside, it scarcely considered the individuality of each candidate. Once approved as a suitable SOE member, successful candidates could participate in paramilitary training (Foot 1984: 60).

Concerning the training that the prospective secret agents received at school, it can be generally said that they were trained in “the skills of parachuting and silent killing, the habits of reticence and secret ink [...]” Wheeler (1981: 515). Even though the trainees were not allowed to contact their families and leave the school area, parties were occasionally celebrated that slightly relaxed the atmosphere (Cookridge 1967: 30f.). The candidates had to go through several stages of training, which served “to sieve out the unsuitables before they could wreak havoc abroad” (Foot 1984: 63). In the initial phase of the training the agent was tested with regards to self-reliance and reliability. First of all, the instructors were confronted with the question of whether the candidate could deal with particularly difficult circumstances or whether they would collapse under these. This question could only be answered by sending the potential agents to a preparatory training course in one of the schools run by SOE (Cookridge 1967: 30). According to Foot (1984: 63), the first training course a potential agent had to complete lasted for two or three weeks. There the candidate’s physical fitness was tested, “with plenty of cross-country runs and other exercise, elementary map reading, and some training with pistols and sub-machine guns” (Foot 1984: 63).

After the initial training phase, where numerous candidates failed, the successful candidates went on to a three- or four-week course focussing on paramilitary training in Scotland (Foot 1984: 63). In Arisaig, group A was trained in the handling of weapons, more specifically, “German and Italian as well as British and American pistols, rifles, machine guns and sub-machine guns” (Foot 1984: 64). Foot (1984: 64) furthermore mentions that “[s]tudents were expected to know how to strip, reassemble, load, fire and maintain all the weapons they handled”. One officer whose name was Eric Fairbairn was, together with William Sykes, the inventor of the art of so-called “silent killing”, “the extreme version of what less secret bodies called unarmed combat” (Foot 1984: 64, Vigurs 2011: 44). Vigurs (2011: 44) defines silent killing as “a combination of Ju-jitsu, judo, karate, kung fu and tae kwon do”. It was integrated into the syllabus, as, under some circumstances, agents might need to kill an enemy when being unarmed without attracting any attention. It was reported that training this technique triggered negative emotions, such as fear or shock, especially in women (Vigurs 2011: 44f.). Stereotypically, women have always been thought to react in an over-emotional and sensitive manner. This is also why traditionally, women have been forced into non-violent gender roles that do not include the use of weapons or the training of silent killing. However, Basow (1980: 283) stresses that even though women have been historically widely excluded from army organisations, they “can be trained to be equally as cold, aggressive, and deadly as male recruits”. Besides the handling of arms and silent killing, Group A’s training involved “railway sabotage”, “map reading”, “cross-country work”, “basic infantry tactical training”, such as learning “how to storm a house” (Foot 1984: 66). Those students who mastered the training phase in group A went on to group B which was trained round Beaulieu in the New Forest (Foot 1984: 66). This last training stage was intended to finally prepare the SOE agents for their upcoming mission in the Nazi-occupied areas.

In group B the students were trained in defence and informed about the relations between the respective local police and the occupying German police. The fact that many authorities of the occupied nations cooperated with the Germans posed challenges for the future agents. Moreover, the trainees were told how to react and behave in case they were checked by the police (Foot 1984: 66f.). “Brisk, polite and dull” behaviour was advised to them (Foot 1984: 67). In training, “without warning, the students would be woken up in the middle of the night, and marched off for interrogation by men in Gestapo or Abwehr uniform” who, of course, were in reality dressed up SOE men (Foot: 1984: 67). What was of vital importance was that the students learned how to play their new identity. They were actors who had to live one’s cover and who needed to know exactly how their character would behave under certain circumstances

(Foot 1984: 67). A trained agent also should behave in the most inconspicuous way to avoid attention. One “should never offer a stranger more than he (or she) needed to know”, for example when being asked something (Foot 1984: 67). The students’ sleeping habits were also observed, for example if they would speak while sleeping, “and if so in what language [...]” (Foot 1984: 68). After the future agents completed the defensive part of the training in group B it was essential to make them behave naturally aggressive, as if it was their personal temperament. In this context, it is important to note that with regard to gender roles, there is the common belief that men act more aggressively than women. Interestingly, Bandura (1973, cited in Basow 1980: 62) discovered that there are no sex differences with regards to the degree in which aggressive behaviour is learned. Although girls “are more inhibited in performing those behaviours”, they “exhibit the same amount of aggression as boys”, if it fits the given situation (Bandura 1973, cited in Basow 1980: 62f.). Besides training aggressive behaviour, the prospective agents were taught about intelligence gathering, for example how to write messages and how to “compile and condense reports”. Additionally, they received training in “elementary coding” and “were given courses in propaganda methods” (Foot 1984: 68). SOE agents also had to be instructed in parachuting and wireless operators were trained in “[t]he wireless school [...] at Thame Park“ (Foot 1984: 69).

Generally, SOE had several training schools, spread over all England and each of them was “kept up for a different national group” (Foot 1984: 63). In the schools, women working for the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) were responsible for housework duties, such as cleaning, cooking and washing the men’s uniforms. What needs to be considered is that these women were not only maids, doubtlessly some of them were meant to become more than that. Many women worked as secretaries, wireless operators and some of them, like the famous Andrée Borrell, Vera Leigh, Violette Szabo and, of course, Nancy Wake, even became secret agents (Cookridge 1967: 30). But the role of women within SOE will be dealt with in more detail in subsequent sections. Before arriving at these sections, the challenges involved in the agents’ double lives will be discussed.

3.3. The dual life of an SOE agent and the requirements of the job

The job of a secret agent required numerous skills and abilities. The subsequently listed qualities are also relevant for the later analysis of Nancy Wake, since she naturally also had to possess these. An essential quality each successful agent needed to exhibit was bravery, but bravery alone was not sufficient. Foot (1984: 164) suggests that agents should be keen observers

and “capable with their hands [...] as well as with their brains; above all, *aware*”. SOE’s secret agents were constantly under stress, caused by a lack of sleep as well as the fear of getting caught, arrested and tortured. Furthermore, they had to be able to memorise important addresses without copying them, take on several identities and remember “their colleagues’ real and cover identities at any given moment” (Foot 1984: 164f.).

Secret agents had to lead an inconspicuous life, they should not stand out of the population. To do so, it was, among other things, necessary “not to look furtive, not to keep glancing over one’s shoulder to see whether one was being followed [and] not to crouch or lurk in corners [...]” (Foot 1984: 165). In case agents had the sense of being followed, they were advised to stop and bend over to tie their shoelaces. Politeness, even in situations that caused anger or fright, was also vital to remain unnoticed and undercover. Another key element that makes up a competent secret agent is punctuality. Arriving early at meeting points, checking the surroundings and making sure that no enemies are present were tasks that every agent was responsible for. Moreover, since cafés were popular places where SOE agents met other colleagues, there they needed to take special care of potential enemy informers who often worked as waiters. A final crucial ability which needed to be possessed by every SOE undercover agent is the readiness to come up with an alternative plan in case of urgency. For example, a lack of weapons or fellow combatants could lead to problems that agents immediately had to be able to compensate for (Foot 1984: 165ff). As will be evident from the later literary analysis, Nancy Wake was a highly skilled agent and could cope with all of the challenges mentioned. The agents employed by SOE worked for various sections, as the secret intelligence service operated worldwide. One of SOE’s most effective sections was the aforementioned F-section, which significantly contributed to the liberation of France and counted Nancy Wake among its members.

3.4. F Section

France was one of the Nazi-occupied nations which was supported by SOE, or more specifically by its F Section, in its underground work. Immediately after the fall of France, in 1940 SOE was founded and shortly thereafter established its F Section (Foot 1984: 213). For historical background, Marshal Pétain came to power in France in 1940 with the German occupation of the country. Even though SOE was “in principle politically neutral”, it positioned itself against Pétain’s Vichy government which existed as a client state of the Germans (Foot 1984: 213, Foot 1976: 237). Charles de Gaulle, formerly a friend of Pétain, soon became his opponent and called

for resistance via a BBC broadcast on 18 June 1940. The Milice Française was established in 1943 influenced by Hitler's suggestion "that there must be an efficient body of counter-terrorists in France". As their operational area mainly covered their own home districts, they knew many people there and could act strongly against resistance fighters like De Gaulle (Foot 1976: 236f.). However, also de Gaulle's initial call for resistance had made an impact, and many people participated in his Free French movement (Foot 1976: 238). Weitz (1995: 63) refers to resistance in France and notes that in 1943, the French Government implemented the plan of supporting the Nazis by sending French labour to Germany. Once selected, many men hid because they refused to work for the enemies and joined the Maquis. Weitz (1995: 5) defines the Maquis, as follows: "Maquis was the name given to the clandestine paramilitary groups that formed in isolated areas starting in the winter of 1943". The Maquis was also strongly supported by SOE's F Section, as they sent some of their agents, for example Nancy Wake, to the French woods.

Returning to the chronology of F Section's foundation and leadership, the early leadership of Leslie Humphreys and H. R. Marriott was followed in 1941 by that of Maurice Buckmaster, in whose hands F Section became the largest and most important SOE section (Beevor 1981: 150, Cookridge 1967: 41-44, Gleeson 1978: 33). Under Humphreys' leadership, the main goal of the French Section was to open up escape routes for British agents and officers (Cookridge 1967: 41). He particularly concentrated on forming local resistance groups which should collaborate with each other (Cookridge 1967: 41). Later on, he became the head of DF Section which exclusively focussed on the setting up of escape routes (Cookridge 1967: 42, Foot 1984: 214).

The first agents who worked for the F Section were of French nationality (Howarth 1980: 129). There seem to be disagreements over who was the first agent delivered into France. Howarth (1980: 129) states that in May 1941, Georges Bégue was the first who arrived via parachute. However, Beevor (1981: 152) claims that the first agent who arrived on French territory "was Major Gerard Morel, in September 1941".

According to Howarth (1980: 134), "agents sent to France had normally to be accepted as French in speech, in habit and in appearance". After an exclusion of French nationals from F Section, recruitment became much harder. From then on, the French Section attempted to hire British citizens who had stayed in France for a long period of their life, people holding dual citizenship, namely French and British, as well as British overseas territories citizens (Howarth 1980: 134f.). Beevor (1981: 150) states that the staff SOE hired for its French section consisted either of British citizens who were perfectly familiar with the French language or of people who

preferred working for SOE in favour of Charles de Gaulle. In this respect, it is important to mention that not only F Section, but also RF Section, the Gaullists, was responsible for clandestine work in the French territory (Beevor 1981: 150, Foot 1984: 214). It was the Free French, namely “those who had rallied under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle”, which benefitted from the activities undertaken by RF section (Howarth 1980: 120). In contrast to F Section, RF Section recruited exclusively French citizens and that was the reason why the French section had to find alternative ways of hiring staff (Pattinson 2010: 293f.).

After the recruitment of a new F Section member, the aim was to produce a skilful secret agent within a training phase of two or three month, that took its start at Wanborough Manor near Guildford and later on continued in Scotland (Howarth 1980: 137). Even though reports of training schools and psychiatric examinations provided information on the agents’ suitability, it was Maurice Buckmaster who ultimately decided whether an agent should be used to work in France or not (Howarth 1980: 139). Beevor (1981: 160f.) points out that the main achievements of SOE agents in France, or the French Resistance in general, were “delaying the moves of German reinforcements to the Normandy bridgehead, by sabotage of railroads and rolling-stock, derailment of trains, and by ambushes and bridge demolitions in the case of road transport”.

Concerning the number of agents who contributed to SOE’s underground work in France, Cookridge (1967: 183) states that 480 agents worked for F Section and 130 of them were captured. Sadly, only 26 of the prisoners could return from concentration camps and 106 were executed or killed in combat. A total of 24,000 male and female Resistance fighters died (Cookridge 1967: 183). Many women, amongst them Nancy Wake, were members of the French Section. Thirteen out of 39 women who served SOE in France did not survive the war (Foot 1984: 60). The Germans murdered twelve of them and one other girl succumbed to deadly meningitis. Only three survivors returned from concentration camps (Gleeson 1978: 32).

3.5. Women in SOE and its F Section

SOE was an organisation that placed great value on the equal treatment of women and men, in stark contrast to many other contemporary organisations. The Special Operations Executive even held the view that intelligence services sometimes involve duties which are carried out better by women than men, which is of course a highly stereotyped way of thinking (Foot 1984: 60). Most women who later on worked for SOE used to be members of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) or the Women’s Transport Corps (Foot 1984: 60). Nevertheless, only very

few of them were actually permitted to serve in combat roles. According to Foot (1984: 61), “[m]ost of these women worked in the field as couriers- that is, as messengers and liaison officers; some, as wireless operators”. Yvonne Rudellat, “a forty-seven-year-old grandmother”, was the first female agent who worked in France for the F Section (Gleeson 1978: 39). According to Vigurs (2011: 28), except in some rare cases, where women functioned as Maquis leaders, they principally served as couriers and wireless operators. The reason why women merely played a minor role was that they had not worked in the army before and they would not have been acknowledged as leaders (Vigurs 2011: 94).

Vigurs (2011: 28) explains the requirements of the two jobs of a courier and a wireless operator in detail. She states that ideally, a wireless operator should be a mentally strong and independent personality. In order to remain undetected by the Germans, the operators moved around a lot and therefore the transmission of messages should not take longer than 20 minutes. Wireless operators were obliged to remember a remarkable number of different codes because for each transmission new codes were used. Therefore, the quality of possessing a good memory was extremely beneficial for this job. Vigurs (2011: 28) highlights that “wireless operators had the most dangerous job of all agents, as they risked detection whilst transmitting or moving about the country with their wireless sets”. Also Gleeson (1978: 36) stresses that women serving as wireless operators had to bear several hardships. They had to carry huge transmitting devices with a weight of about thirty pounds. On a regular basis they were obliged to code as well as decode messages. The transmission of messages usually happened in “safe houses, barns or other innocent-looking buildings”, however occasionally women also had to work in the wilderness, regardless of the prevailing weather conditions.

In comparison, the job of a courier involved delivering “messages, reports or any other material” (Vigurs 2011: 28). Couriers also arranged that fellow agents could find shelter in safe houses. Usually, they travelled by train or cycled to reach their destination. During their journeys they always needed to be aware of possible German security checks. A further threat to which couriers were exposed was being captured during a meeting with other agents. In emergency cases, they also had to carry out tasks that usually did not belong to their area of responsibility, such as providing assistance with dropped arms and sometimes even conducting acts of sabotage (Vigurs 2011: 28f.).

Gleeson (1978: 37) mentions that women were not only used as couriers and wireless operators, but additionally they fulfilled a teaching function. Often they made use of the knowledge they acquired during their training and held lectures to resistance fighters on how to handle guns and hand-grenades.

The FANY, see above, played a significant supporting role in the preparation and training of those women who later on became wireless operators or couriers. The FANYs' task was to encourage, accompany and cook for the prospective agents during their training. Furthermore, it was their role to wait in Britain for the messages transmitted by the female agents abroad, and they were responsible for coding and decoding these secret messages. Concerning preparatory measures, the FANYs helped the agents with the packing of "forged papers, passports and ration cards" as well as "the actual parachutes used in dropping the agents". Additionally, it was they who "filled the parachute containers with arms, explosives and supplies" (Gleeson 1978: 45).

In this field, a particularly honoured and appreciated character within SOE circles was Vera Atkins. She had direct responsibility for the female agents and their adequate preparation for their mission in France. She precisely controlled whether "the clothing, buttons and threads were correct according to prevailing French conditions [and] supplied the correct documentary evidence [...]" (Gleeson 1978: 33). Atkins furthermore observed the eating habits of the girls in order to make sure they ate according to French standards. For instance, French people "do not put the milk in the tea-cup first" (Gleeson 1978: 34). Gleeson (1978: 34) states that, initially, the recruitment of women was revolutionary. He conducted an interview with Vera Atkins in which she pointed out that women were used as couriers and wireless operators because they were less suspect than men. Moreover she emphasised that "[t]hese women were not seeking adventure and glamour, but rather to help personally and without rancour towards carrying the war to a successful finish" (Gleeson 1978: 35). Another aspect emphasised by Vigurs (2011: 94) that places women in an advantageous position compared to men is their patience; women were expected to deal better with their monotonous jobs as couriers or wireless operators. Certainly, one has to consider that women's inconspicuousness as well as their patience are merely gender stereotypes. These gender stereotypes were responsible for allowing women to work in the aforementioned roles, despite their inaccuracy, since features such as patience are certainly intrinsic to a person.

4. The historical significance of Nancy Wake's life

One of the 39 women sent to France was Nancy Wake. She was involved in the organisation of an escape line, namely the so-called "Pat" line. This escape route was named after its organiser Patrick Albert O' Leary, whose real name actually was Albert-Marie Guérisse. After Guérisse,

a Belgian national, was arrested he claimed to be O'Leary, "an evading Canadian airman" (Foot & Langley 1979: 73).

While Foot and Langley (1979: 79) call Nancy Wake the "terror of the Germans in the Auvergne", Howarth (1980: 148) describes her as "a strong built girl with an exuberance and a zest for living which led some people to wonder whether she could really be equipped for the role of secret agent". Born in New Zealand, Nancy grew up in Australia where she earned her living as a journalist and nurse (Howarth 1980: 148, Pattinson 2010: 295). Even though she had lived in Australia during her childhood, she felt more French than Australian (Weitz 1995: 78). She arrived in Paris 1934 and started to work there as a journalist without any knowledge of the French language (Pattinson 2010: 295). Not only did Nancy work in France, but she also used to travel a lot throughout the country (Weitz 1995: 78). Immediately after the breakout of World War II, when she was aged twenty-two, she married the wealthy businessman Henri Fiocca and moved to live with him in Marseilles (Howarth 1980: 148). Her husband's destiny was to be captured and murdered by the Nazis once they had learned about Nancy's role in the Résistance. As the couple was aware of the dangers of the upcoming war, they started to use their chalet in the mountains as a shelter for anyone in need (Weitz 1995: 78). Before Nancy's work for Guérisse (alias O'Leary), she participated in the French Résistance by driving ambulances and shared her flat with refugees. When the French police captured Wake, her excellent tactical and rhetorical skills helped her to convince the interrogators of her innocence. Later on, SOE's recruiting officers would also be impressed by this performance and therefore did not hesitate to employ Nancy Wake.

Her SOE commitment came about after she had realised that staying in France would be too dangerous (Howarth 1980: 148). She decided to escape from the Germans who were seeking her under the nickname "the White Mouse" and "succeeded in crossing the Spanish frontier at the fifth attempt" (Howarth 1980: 148, Weitz 1995: 79). Wake was serendipitously able to contact the SOE after she observed a man reading an English book in a bar, which was of course not typical in a French setting. She spoke to the British officer and learned that he had been taken prisoner. Through organising his escape, Wake brought herself to the attention of the SOE (Gleeson 1978: 38). Originally, she wished to work for the offices of the Free French when she arrived in London after her escape. After having been rejected there, she was advised to contact SOE and shortly thereafter was invited to an interview. The recruitment officer who interviewed her was already informed about her resistance work in Occupied France and gave her the chance to participate in the SOE training (Vigurs 2011: 35f.).

Gleeson (1978: 37) stresses that Wake was “an attractive rumbustious Australian girl” who managed to cheat occasionally during her training, but nevertheless passed all of her tests. After a dispute with one of the superior officers she was expelled from SOE, but shortly afterwards was readmitted. Nancy Wake’s training took place during 1943 and “she was the only girl in her group”, so she had to undergo the same tough training as the men. The training focussed much on physical skills as well as psychological strength. Exceptions were only made when some other women were present. In these cases, Nancy trained together with them (Vigurs 2011: 41). After her SOE training was accomplished, which, according to Gleeson (1978: 37), she found especially physically challenging, her parachuting into the Auvergne took place in February 1944 and she received the cover name “Andrée” (Howarth 1980: 148f., Ruby 1990: 203).

John Hind-Farmer (“Jean”), who was in charge of their mission, and Wake had to choose a Maquis group in which they saw the potential for development into a powerful force and for this reason most deserved their help. One helper, also employed by SOE, who she developed a particularly friendly relationship with, was Denis Rake. He arrived a month later than Wake and Farmer and Nancy simply called him “Den-Den” (Howarth 1980: 149, Ruby 1990: 203). Rake was responsible for radio transmission and Wake served as supervisor of parachute drops. She made decisions about the distribution of the dropped arms amongst the respective groups. Rake reported that Wake provided the majority of about 12,000 Maquis fighters with arms (Howarth 1980: 149). Like all the other agents, Nancy also had to work with secret codes which were incorporated in stanzas freely chosen by the individual agents. Wake’s stanza was a particularly extraordinary one:

‘She stood right there
In the moonlight fair
And the moon shone through her nightie
It lit right on ...’

(Gleeson 1978: 42)

Probably Nancy Wake’s most admired action was when she killed a German “with her bare hands”, i.e. by means of silent killing, a technique the agents used to learn during their training phase (Gleeson 1978: 38). Another heavy burden she took on was a bicycle ride of nearly two hundred miles through the mountains that she covered within seventy-two hours in order to receive a replacement radio which was urgently needed (Weitz 1995: 79). After the Second

World War, Nancy Wake became politically active and competed in the Australian parliamentary elections. Even though then Deputy Prime Minister Dr Herbert Evatt managed to hold the seat, Wake succeeded in reducing his margin remarkably (Howarth 1980: 149).

Like the lives of other female agents, Nancy Wake's life was repeatedly documented in biographies as well as in her autobiography. Vigurs (2011: 103) states that

[e]ach written biography has constructed the lives of their subject matter from the outset and the reader is able to put the subject into perspective and to view the agent as a person who had a life before and sometimes after SOE. Such books enable the reader to evaluate the subject's motives, actions and relationships.

For the purpose of examining the representation of Nancy Wake in biographical and autobiographical pieces of literature, it is important to provide a theoretical framework and a brief introduction to the subject of the literary genres of biography, autobiography and biofiction beforehand.

5. Nancy Wake and her biographies

5.1. The genres – autobiography, biography and biofiction

The majority of biographies dealing with the life of SOE's women agents were not authored immediately in the aftermath of the Second World War (Vigurs 2011: 104). Vigurs (2011: 104) notes that "their subject matter is one that few have dared to contend", i.e. that the authors have seemingly strived to maintain the characters' heroic status by presenting the agents in "such a way that will ensure that they are looked upon favourably". Even stories about the exploits of women agents, which may indeed be reported in an exaggerated or untruthful way, are neither neglected nor contradicted by the authors, as they contribute to generating particularly positive images and feelings towards the main characters inside the reader's mind. As several biographies, biofictions and one autobiography serve as research sources for the examination of Nancy Wake's representation as a female spy, the following section serves to define the three genres and explain in detail the main differences between them. First of all, an overview of the genres of autobiography and biography is provided.

Concerning the research of the genres, in an Anglo-American context the term "Life Writing" has recently manifested itself. Life Writing is an umbrella term for the formerly strictly distinct genres of autobiography, biography, memoirs, diary, letter etc. However,

Margaretta Jolly in her work *Encyclopedia of Life Writing* also incorporates additional cross-disciplinary aspects, such as gender or psychology and puts them into a relation with Life Writing (Mittermayer 2009: 70).

As an integral part of Life Writing, the genre of autobiography will be dealt with in detail. By definition, the term autobiography is derived from the Greek words *autós*, meaning “self”, *bíos* (“life”) and *gráphein*, which means “to write” (Mittermayer 2009: 71). The Industrial Revolution gave rise to the popularity of this literary genre in Western culture (Osman 2015: 154). According to Osman (2015: 154f.), autobiography is mostly centred on telling the stories of people who gained fame or achieved something extraordinary in their life. In autobiographical writing, the aim is to first collect the different parts of one’s whole life in order to eventually piece these components together. Hence, an autobiographer can be seen as a creator of order, as he or she merges the scattered pieces of his or her life to produce a structured overall narrative (Gusdorf 1989: 130, cited in Mittermayer 2009: 73).

Firstly it is worth clarifying which factors define an autobiography. According to Philippe Lejeune (1994: 25, cited in Mittermayer 2009: 82), an autobiographical piece can only be identified as such, if the names of the author, narrator and main character of the story are identical. Lejeune (1994: 26, cited in Mittermayer 2009: 82) calls this the “autobiographischen Pakt [autobiographical pact]”. As Gusdorf (1989: 131, cited in Mittermayer 2009: 74) stresses, a further unique characteristic that is inherent in an autobiography is its authenticity. As the autobiographer tells his or her own life story, it is evident that the authenticity of the autobiography lies in the inclusion of the author’s very own thoughts. Here, the life writer presents the unaltered truth. Many times, writers use the means of autobiographic writing to clarify aspects of their life which used to be represented in an untruthful or false way (Gusdorf 1989: 131, cited in Mittermayer 2009: 74). Osman (2015: 156) emphasises that memory is the primary source for autobiographical writing. He also points out that a central element of an autobiography is that its writer publishes what is on his or her mind, which Rousseau referred to as “chain of feeling”. Everybody is responsible for their own “chain of feeling” in their lives and only memory serves to create this chain and ensures that it can be extended.

Osman (2015: 154) stresses that sometimes it might be difficult to distinguish an autobiography from other literary genres, such as memoirs. He indicates that autobiography focusses much more on the self than a memoir does. In contrast, memoirs concentrate rather on others than on the self. Also Seidensticker (1999: 46) comments on the differences between an autobiography and a memoir. He states that it is evident that in autobiography, the writer knows everything about his or her protagonist, as it is his or her own life that is described. “A memoir,

[in contrast,] is almost any record of facts”, whereas “an autobiography is a memoir about the life of the writer” (Seidensticker 1999: 46). Concerning another literary genre, namely biography, it is a matter of fact that throughout history, both autobiography and biography were closely intertwined and, as Mittermayer (2009: 75) states, “Lange Zeit wurde die Autobiographie als Subkategorie der Biographie verstanden [...] [autobiography has been considered as a subcategory of biography for a long time [...]]”.

However, as already mentioned, in contrast to a biography, an autobiography focusses much on the representation of the author’s inner world, whereas in a biography, the emphasis is placed much on the plot and action, as well as the public sphere (Mittermayer 2009: 76). Nevertheless, the term “New Biography” indicates again the close relation between the two genres. Here, the biographer does not act as “neutraler, objektiver Registrator der wiederzugebenden Lebensgeschichte [neutral, objective registrar of the life story to be told]” any more. Rather, the distance between the author and the protagonist in the biography has diminished (Mittermayer 2009: 77).

The most significant characteristic that still distinguishes autobiography from biography, is the “doppeldeutige[] Ich-Form [ambiguous first-person]” that occurs in autobiographical compositions, whereas biographical writing uses third person (Šlibar 1995: 392, 394; cited in Mittermayer 2009: 78). In this respect, Klein (2017: 79) similarly points out that in comparison with an autobiography, where the focus lies on an open or fragmented story that is told from a first-person perspective, a biography describes successive actions which are already completed and can be reflected upon from a rather distant point of view. Honan (1979: 112) also stresses completeness as a vital characteristic of biography and suggests that it is a biographer’s duty to depict the entire life of his or her protagonist. It is important to note though that there are no prescriptions concerning the length and the level of detail each time span of the biographee’s life should be treated with, but generally “an account of all years is necessary”.

Using the biography “Life of Johnson” as an example, Honan (1979: 112) furthermore claims that some biographies contain what he calls “a structure of feeling”. This serves to show the character’s emotional and personal side and allows the reader a glimpse of the protagonist’s inner world. Concerning time structure, intrusions on the part of the biographer may happen and “the normal order of events may be reversed”. However, the frequent occurrence of dates indicates that “the biographer is working entirely and scrupulously within the world of historic time and is faithful to the datedness of events” (Honan 1979: 112). Kholikov (2009: 52) too, in his article, mentions chronology and linearity in the narration as key elements of a biography.

Concerning faithfulness in general, Kholikov (2009: 48) claims in his definition of a biography that this genre “reflect[s] life without distortion”. Moreover, he is convinced that a biographer may be even more interested in another person’s life than in his own. One of the challenges a biographer may face is finding valuable source material (Kholikov 2009: 51). Kholikov (2009: 55) suggests that the easiest way to obtain reliable information about the biographee’s life is to interview him or her, but this is sometimes impossible. Hence, biographers often have to gather autobiographical material from “letters, diaries or memoirs” (Kholikov 2009: 55). What is so unique about composing biographies is that biographers act like builders. They can treat their objective material in a way that seems accurate and appropriate to them (Kholikov 2009: 51).

Honan (1979: 114) mentions a feature that determines whether a biography is of high quality. He claims that biographies only work successfully if they have gaps that the readers can fill by means of their own imagination. De Haan (2017: 57) further explains what is significant for a biography to be valued highly. He is convinced that a good biography can form the public world crucially by constructing “critical public opinion(s), starting from its intrinsical personalised perspective, in which a specific strength resides”. Honan (1979: 115) additionally states what the biographer ideally should avoid, namely to create an “advertisement” of his or her subject. On the contrary, a biographer should place the emphasis on his or her “emotional, intellectual, and moral relationship with the biographee”.

In the form described above, biographies and autobiographies both fall under the category of non-fiction, or factual, however that is not necessarily the case for all biographies. Biofiction is a separate style of writing, and what distinguishes factual from fiction is not trivial, nor is the definition of biofiction. Concerning the first point, Schabert (1982: 4) suggests that a clear difference between the two genres lies in the selection of material for the writing process. What might be considered appropriate and suitable for a writer of biofiction might be regarded as unreliable source by biographer. A biographer has the task to verify every single information he or she incorporates in the biography. Hence, the writer always has to provide evidence for his or her claims by referring to sources in footnotes or the written text (Schabert 1982: 5). On the contrary, biofiction aims at “a creative use of evidence”. A writer of biofiction has the freedom to use only material which he or she considers to be crucial for the characterisation of the protagonist (Schabert 1982: 6).

Similarly, Lackey (2016: 7) points out that in a “biographical novel”, the reader has the opportunity to gain insights in “the novelist’s vision of life and the world” and stresses that biofiction is “not an accurate representation of an actual person’s life”. To summarise, even though both genres are concerned with providing as many facts as possible, biofiction might

also include contradictory information that is clearly rejected by biography, which is necessarily exclusively based on facts (Schabert 1982: 4).

Turning to definitions, biofiction is the genre which comprises “biographical fiction” and “fictional biography” (de Haan 2017: 59). Alain Buisine (1991: 7-13, cited in Moulin 2017: 68) summarised these two under the new term “biofiction”. According to Schabert (1982: 4), biofiction might also be labelled as “novel” or “imaginative reconstruction”. Lackey (2016: 4) states that “if a biography contains an undocumented ‘truth’ or a rich style, then it would become a de facto biographical novel”. In comparison, Parini (2016: 23) defines biofiction as follows: “Biographical fiction is, in fact, about the imagination of history”.

Interestingly, the genre of biofiction experienced its zenith in the twentieth century. It was then that novels that feature main characters who are actual historical personalities became extremely popular (de Haan 2017: 59). Georg Lukács (1962, cited in Parini 2016: 21) analyses the genre of biofiction from a critical perspective. He is convinced that the fact that biofiction preferably uses protagonists that actually witnessed historical or social developments leads to a drawback of the genre (Lukács 1962: 320, cited in Parini 2016: 21). Since real people serve as main characters in fictional writing, an inaccurate and untruthful representation of the characters and contemporary states could possibly be created. In this context, ethical and moral questions arise too. For instance, a writer should ask him- or herself whether it is reasonable and fair to the biographee to incorporate invented life events in fictional biographies (Parini 2016: 22). Besides the aforementioned “weaknesses”, another challenge writers of biofiction frequently face is the availability and reliability of their sources. For example, conducting interviews with the people whose lives are portrayed can cause the interviewees fictionalising their lives by themselves because they draw the information they give away solely from their memory. Parini (2016: 25) stresses that the quality of memory cannot be compared to that of a tape recorder or video camera, as people simply cannot remember their entire life experience in detail. Memory functions through selection processes by which some particular events or actions might be emphasised, whereas other ones might be completely neglected. Parini (2016: 25) found apt words to summarise the ideas outlined above: “Anything processed by memory is fiction”.

Even though biographical fiction surely works through deviations from reality, some key aspects of every life story, such as date of birth and death, are not always invented. The reasons why novelists give a distorted view of the facts are diverse, for example to create a sense of drama. Alterations, such as breaking with the chronology of events or changes concerning characterisations might bring about sensational effects (Parini 2016: 23). Which of these

deviations and changes one can recognise as a reader, will be briefly discussed in an analysis of a biofiction that features Nancy Wake as protagonist. Additionally, one of her biographies as well as her autobiography will be used to discuss the theoretical foundations outlined in this chapter in an applied literary analysis.

5.2. An analysis of three examples of autobiography, biography and biofiction dealing with Nancy Wake

Starting with Nancy Wake's autobiography "The White Mouse" (2011), it can be said that it clearly fulfils Lejeune's (1994: 26, cited in Mittermayer 2009: 82) autobiographical pact, as Nancy Wake has three different functions, namely as author, narrator as well as main character. Of course, Nancy Wake's (2011: 90) life story is told from a first-person perspective, as demonstrated by the following excerpt: "I had met some Frenchmen I knew when I was collecting my identity papers". Furthermore, authenticity is achieved because Nancy Wake's inner world is revealed by her thoughts. A chain of feelings (cf. Osman 2015: 156) is created and shows the reader what was on Wake's mind in specific situations. Her memory helped to describe her feelings, for instance when she returned from her honeymoon with her husband to Marseilles. This is indicated by the following example taken from Wake's (2011: 35) autobiography:

I found it hard to settle down when we returned to Marseilles. I had been keyed up for so long, with the declaration of war while I was in London, the trouble getting back to France, the drawn-out-formalities at the Town Hall, the wedding reception, the brief honeymoon. Now I was a French housewife: such a contrast to the giddy life I had been leading. Furthermore, I missed Paris and my friends, and all of our harmless activities.

Moreover, as explained in the previous section of the thesis, by writing their autobiographies the authors often aim at clarifying stories about their life that were not told in a truthful way. Seemingly, also "The White Mouse" was written for this purpose, as Nancy Wake (2011: 160) states that "[o]ver the years I have heard a variety of stories about myself – some were true and others were complete fiction. Many of the stories were true except for one detail: they were about other people and had nothing whatever to do with me". As can be seen, the most essential features of an autobiography that were outlined in the previous chapter were clearly fulfilled by Nancy Wake's autobiography.

Turning to the analysis of her biography "Codename Hélène: Churchills Geheimagentin Nancy Wake und ihr Kampf gegen die Gestapo in Frankreich [Code name Hélène: Churchill's

secret agent Nancy Wake and her fight against the Gestapo in France]” (2014) written by Michael Jürgs, what immediately can be noticed is that, in comparison to the autobiography, it is obviously a third-person narration. There are no instances where the author depicts the inner thoughts of his protagonist Nancy Wake. However, as already mentioned by Mittermayer (2009: 76), the focus of a biography lies on the plot and action. Klein’s (2017: 79) suggestion that the storyline of a biography consists of successive finished actions and can be observed rather from the distance also holds true for Wake’s biography written by Jürgs (2014). The next example, which describes the situation where Wake murdered an enemy by means of silent killing, demonstrates this quite well (Jürgs 2014: 242):

Sie lauern im Schatten. Der erste Soldat wird hinterrücks niedergeschlagen und sinkt lautlos zu Boden. Nancy hat sich bis auf einen Meter an den anderen herangeschlichen. Bereit zum Handkantenschlag in seinen Nacken, der ihn bewusstlos machen wird – so wie es ihr die Ausbilder beigebracht hatten. Plötzlich dreht sich der Mann zu ihr, öffnet den Mund, um zu schreien, greift nach seinem Gewehr, will es von der Schulter nehmen, aber kommt nicht mehr dazu
[They are lurking in the shadows. The first soldier is knocked down from behind and falls to the ground. Nancy has sneaked up to the other one as close as one meter. Ready for the karate chop to his neck that will make him lose consciousness – like her trainers had taught her. Suddenly the man turns to her, opens his mouth to scream, reaches for his rifle, wants to take it off his shoulder, but is not able to do this anymore].

Besides the aforementioned characteristics, another key feature of a biography is completeness which requires that the protagonists’ whole life from birth to death is dealt with (Honan 1979: 112). Concerning the biography under examination, the narration does not start with the first years of Nancy Wake’s life, but her date of birth is already mentioned on the fifth page of the first chapter. Of course, her life and engagement during the Second World War are treated in more detail than other stages of her life. However, after a thorough examination it can be claimed that the given biography covers the whole life story of Nancy Wake, from her childhood and war activities to her death. Referring to what Honan (1979: 112) calls “a structure of feeling”, it can be said that the biography analysed does not provide insights into the personal thoughts and feelings of Nancy Wake. It rather highlights her life achievements in a distant, and objective way. For instance, Jürgs (2014: 168) does not even reveal how Wake felt immediately after she had been parachuted into France:

Typisch aber für Nancy Wake, dass sie kaum wieder sicher auf den Beinen, unerschrocken alles befolgt, was sie für den Ernstfall trainiert hat. Sie vergräbt ihren Fallschirm, trampelt die Erde fest, legt Äste und Grasbüschel auf die Stelle, um Spuren zu verwischen, und verbirgt sich, Colt 32 Automatic schussbereit in der Hand, am Rande eines leicht ansteigenden Hügels im Schatten eines Baumes

[It is however typical for Nancy Wake that she bravely follows everything that she has trained for emergency situations as soon as she is back on her feet again. She buries her parachute, tramps the ground, places branches and tufts of grass to cover up her track and hides with a Colt 32 Automatic ready to fire in her hand at the edge of a softly rising hill in the shade of a tree].

As a next step, the analysis of the time structure in the biography will be carried out and compared to the one in the autobiography. Generally Michael Jürgs (2014) only made changes on a small scale. For instance, while Wake's autobiography starts with her birth, childhood and youth, the biography written by Jürgs (2014) begins with 9 October 1934, the day after Nancy arrived in Marseilles. Only afterwards, her life in Paris as well as her childhood in New Zealand and Australia are described. This instance, and some others besides, are examples of foreshadowing as a technique favoured by Jürgs (2014) in his biography. For example, Jürgs (2014: 143) also mentions that Nancy Wake killed a German soldier by means of silent killing even before she was parachuted into France where the murder actually happened:

Dass sie diese Methode so lange an einer Strohuppe übt, bis sie die im Schlaf beherrscht, wird Nancy Wake in wenigen Monaten bei einer plötzlichen Begegnung mit einem Wachposten der SS das Leben retten – und seines beenden
[Training this method with a straw doll until she can perfectly master it will save Nancy Wake's life in a few months when she suddenly meets an SS guard – and will end his life].

Even though the biographer undertook some minor changes, basically, the time structure conveys a sense of chronology in both, the autobiography as well as the biography. The linear and chronological order is also a result of the frequent occurrence of important dates, such as “30 [] August 1912”, Nancy's date of birth (Jürgs 2014: 17), “Frühling 1938 [spring 1938]” when she travelled to Vienna with her friends and witnessed the discrimination against Jews (Jürgs 2014: 29), as well as “the night of 29.4.44” when she was parachuted into France (Jürgs 2014: 167).

What is characteristic of biographies too is that the authors provide evidence to substantiate their claims. Furthermore, they inform their readers about their sources, e.g. interviews with the biographee, diaries, memoirs, etc. Some biographies even include footnotes where the biographer refers to his or her sources. Jürgs (2014) does not use any footnotes in his biography about Nancy Wake. However, at the end of the book a list of literature is given. Moreover, in the prologue Jürgs (2014: 12) mentions that he conducted interviews with contemporaries and companions of Nancy Wake and searched for documentary evidence for her war activities:

Bei meinen Reisen in ihre Vergangenheit, auf der Suche nach Akten und Dokumenten oder während Besuchen bei denen, die sie als alte Frau in London noch erlebt haben, musste ich zwangsläufig in die Vergangenheit jener reisen, die sie bekämpft hatte

[During my journeys into her past, in search of files and documents or while I was visiting those who must have still known her as an old woman in London I inevitably had to travel back into the past of those whom she fought against].

In contrast to Jürgs' work, an example of biofictional writing, namely Lucy Hannah's "Nancy Wake: World War Two secret agent 'The White Mouse'" (2006) provides a very different analysis. Even though biofiction is generally based on facts, a creative style and distortion of reality are typical of this genre. These characteristic features can also be identified when analysing Hannah's biofiction.

Starting with those plot elements that are described in an accurate and undistorted way, Hannah (2006) for instance provides accurate information about Wake's family background. In accordance with Jürgs' (2014: 17) biography, Hannah (2006: 14f.) also states that Nancy had a brother called Stan and that one day her father Charles left his wife, Ella, and the children. Even though both authors claim that Nancy was the youngest of the siblings, there seem to be discrepancies about the number of siblings she had. Hannah (2006: 15) refers to five siblings, whereas Jürgs (2014: 17) states that in her curriculum vitae only four siblings are mentioned. In addition, the biofiction reports about her job as a journalist in Paris (Hannah 2006: 19), the fact that Henri Fiocca's father was not amused about their marriage (Hannah 2006: 26), her activities as an ambulance driver, a courier as well as her SOE recruitment (Hannah 2006: 31, 39, 65-68) in a generally truthful manner. In more detail, a fact about Nancy's life that is also included in the biofiction is, for instance, that one day she met a French Army officer at the Hôtel du Louvre et Paix whose name was Commander Busch, code-named Xavier. After this meeting, Nancy started her work as a courier and took an envelope for Commander Busch to Cannes (Hannah 2006: 36ff., Wake 2011: 43f.). Furthermore, it is mentioned, that she was, amongst other things, honoured with the George Medal (Hannah 2006: 99, Jürgs 2014: 281) and the Medal of Freedom after the Second World War (Hannah 2006: 99, Jürgs 2014: 282). Moreover, like in other examples of biofictional writing, real key dates are provided in the biofiction analysed. With regards to Wake's life, Hannah (2006: 16), for instance, refers to 1939 when her wedding with Henri Fiocca took place. However, interestingly, her date of birth is not mentioned explicitly in chapter 1 which deals with her childhood. Only on page 93, Hannah (2006) states that "On August 25th, Nancy's birthday she and DenDen tuned in to the BBC

News to hear that Paris had been liberated by the Allies”. However, Wake’s real birthday is on 30 August 1912.

Turning to additional changes that were undertaken, similarly to the biography analysed above, a non-chronological order is also evident in the biofiction which does not start with Wake’s birth and childhood, but with the chapter “The Jump” which describes her parachuting in “April 1944” (Hannah 2006: 7). What is especially striking is that numerous dialogues are incorporated in the biofiction. These are obviously invented or at least cannot provide an absolutely true reflection of what Nancy and her conversational partners were saying. The example dialogue below indicates a conversation between Nancy Wake and Major Farmer:

‘Apparently they [NB: the Maquis fighters] are very wild and sleep on piles of sticks in the woods,’ said Major Farmer.
‘I shall have to go into Vichy to wash my hair,’ said Nancy.
‘I don’t think you’ll be doing much of that,’ said Major Farmer.
‘Ah, come on,’ said Nancy. ‘A woman can’t work in a forest full of Frenchmen without her hair done’ (Hannah 2006: 74).

Furthermore, certain situations, for example when Nancy met Denis Rake, a radio operator known as “DenDen”, in France, are portrayed differently in the biofiction than in Wake’s autobiography. In the biofiction, it says that “[b]y the time DenDen found them, Nancy was busy identifying the best ‘drop zones’ for the containers from London, which would bring ammunition for Tarvidat’s men” (Hannah 2006: 79). In contrast, Wake (2011: 117) recalls that the group had been waiting for a long time for DenDen before he finally arrived: “Den[D]en arrived by car just as we were beginning to give up hope. He found me sitting on the wall of the local cemetery and wanted to know if I was picking a suitable grave!”

In this context, one might ask him- or herself why the author includes elements that neither reflect the truth nor conform to the chronological order of events. One reason might be that the writer wants to create suspense, for example, by starting the story with the parachuting which is apparently much more interesting and exciting than Nancy Wake’s childhood. The reason why so many dialogues are included might be to allow the reader to dive right into the story and experience it closely. It is however difficult to find out what led the author to change Nancy Wake’s date of birth. It is hard to clarify whether it was simply a lack of research that caused this error or whether the wrong date was intentionally chosen by the author because 25 August 1944 is the day of the French Liberation. In general, during the reading process, the reader gets the sense that in contrast to the biography and autobiography, which are based on objectiveness and factual information, the biofiction is more focussed on triggering emotions, creating certain images in the reader’s mind and impressing the reader by action and excitement.

The author can achieve this, for example, by describing everything in the smallest detail. The frequent use of adjectives is striking, as the following excerpts show: “[i]n the pouch of her overalls was a smart leather hand-bag stuffed full of French francs for emergencies, her favourite Chanel lipstick, and two frilly nighties” (Hannah 2006: 8), “Marseilles, with its many colourful streets and its busy fish and flower markets [...]” (Hannah 2006: 35), “[s]he borrowed a long, white cotton dress [...]” (Hannah 2006: 84), “Nancy moved her Maquis into an abandoned chateau, a large castle-type house, with a neglected garden [...]” (Hannah 2006: 93).

To summarise, while the autobiography as well as the biography only seem to deliver reliable information about Nancy Wake’s life, after a thorough examination, one can clearly recognise that the biofiction written by Hannah (2006), even though generally based on facts, also represents what Schabert (1982: 6) calls a “creative use of evidence”. It differs from the other two pieces of literature especially in terms of narrative style, as it includes numerous dialogues and a far more detailed description of objects which indicates a distorted version of the truth.

After the theoretical discussion about the differences between the three genres analysed, the second part of the thesis will focus on Nancy Wake’s representation in biographical literature.

Part II – literary analysis

6. Analysis of the character and its representation

Nancy Wake challenged prevalent gender norms by conducting dangerous activities as a female spy in World War II. As she possessed both stereotypically masculine and feminine character traits, it is worth analysing her unique personality from a gender perspective. Taking into account factors, such as her social status, private life and family environment in the analysis of the character as well, it should be evident whether features of femininity outweigh those of masculinity, or vice versa.

Before the examination of Nancy Wake’s character traits with regards to her representation in biographical literature, a short overview should be given on her social background including her family origin as well as her married life in France with her husband Henri Fiocca.

6.1.Social status

6.1.1. *Family background – Nancy Wake’s lower-class origins*

Nancy Wake was born in Wellington on 30 August 1912. The midwife called new-born Nancy a “kahu”, which is a Maori word that implies eternal luck for the baby (Fitzsimons 2002: 3). Both, Nancy’s mother and father, were New Zealand citizens. Since New Zealand was a British colony, Wake was an official British citizen. Her loyalty towards the British would later also pave the way for her career as a spy operating for the Special Operations Executive.

Approximately two years after Nancy’s birth, in spring 1914, the family moved to Australia, another British dominion (Wake 2011: 1, Jürigs 2014: 17). Hannah (2006: 14f.) provides insights in the life of a large family consisting of Nancy, her five siblings and her parents Ella and Charles Wake. She describes how Nancy, the “youngest and naughtiest of the children”, spent her days as a six-year-old child in a “small suburban house” in Sydney 1918. Father Charles soon abandoned the family and Ella Wake had to raise “her tomboy daughter” and her five other children alone. Hannah (2006: 14) states that Nancy was a “thin, six-year-old girl in scraggy trousers and a T-shirt too big for her [...]”. This description corroborates assertions by other authors, such as Jürigs (2014: 18), namely that the Wakes were a lower-class family and had to face severe financial problems especially following Charles’ departure. Also Fitzsimons (2002: 7) explains the deterioration of the family’s financial situation after their father had left and refers to the stereotype of the male breadwinner: “Without Nancy’s father there as the breadwinner, things were a lot tighter financially for the whole Wake brood [...]”.

Ella Wake, who always had a bible with her, held a strictly conservative and religious attitude to life (Hannah 2006: 14). She would have never advocated equality between men and women. Nancy soon resisted against this world view and the way she was educated by her mother (Jürigs 2014: 18). Her own bible was “Anne of Green Gables”, which tells the adventurous life of “an orphan who creates her own dream world”. Nancy herself also had a dream, namely to become a Hollywood stunt woman. She seemed to have been a bright, inquisitive child always in search of new adventures. Wake had a will of her own and did not do what her mother wanted her to do. For example she was want to go down to the zoo and beach instead of helping her mother with domestic chores. Her role model was her aunt who she had never gotten to meet personally, but “who’d run off with a whaling captain who was already married”.

Nancy followed her dream of leaving her family too and at the age of sixteen, and moved to Sydney where she worked as a nurse. However, Nancy soon seemed to be bored with her life in Australia and headed for Europe (Hannah 2006: 15f.). There, after a few stopovers, she settled in France, initially in Paris and later on in Marseilles, where she lived as the rich wife of the industrialist Henri Fiocca. Through her marriage, Wake clearly achieved a rise from lower to upper class and led a glamorous life which was in strong contrast with her past life in Australia. In this context, stereotypical images of rich, beautiful and elegantly feminine women immediately come to mind. By presenting the indicators of her upper-class life, it will be discussed below whether Nancy Wake in her role as Henri Fiocca's wife acted in the manner of a stereotypical wealthy woman.

6.1.2. Nancy Wake's new life in privileged circles – the stereotype of the wealthy woman

Generally, in all of the researched pieces of literature, the representation of the adult, married Nancy Wake, in terms of outer appearance, clearly differs from the one of the poor, six-year-old with her wretched clothing. As a married woman, Nancy wore designer clothes, expensive make-up and jewellery, true to the motto "Diamonds are a girl's best friend". Additionally, her luxurious lifestyle is indicated by regular visits in the most exquisite restaurants and beauty salons.

In her autobiography, Wake (2011: 35) explains to have enjoyed the advantages of wealth: "All of my married life with Henri was as beautifully organised. Money has never been important to me for itself, but Henri taught me how pleasant life can be if you have money and enjoy it". Her extravagant wedding with Henri Fiocca was perfectly arranged. She wore a fine black dress from Paris, which was quite extraordinary, and "the wedding feast was served on grand silver plates at the local Hôtel du Louvre et Paix" (Hannah 2006: 26). They ate lamb, since Nancy did not see the point why the Germans should cause her to eat tinned sardines on her wedding day (Hannah 2006: 23).

Jürgs (2014: 33f.) stresses that after her wedding, she slipped into the role of the rich wife and lived her life as expected by society, a life full of partying, shopping and joining her husband in the evening. Braddon (2009: 24) suggests that "[i]t was fashionable at this time for wealthy women to adopt a *filleul de guerre* – a poor soldier to whom food parcels and cigarettes might be sent". Of course, Nancy also followed this trend and additionally began sending parcels to a soldier's family who lived in Marseilles (Braddon 2009: 24). Henri and Nancy resided in a noble apartment where servants cared for their well-being (Braddon 2009: 17).

Often they used to drink exclusive wine or other alcoholic drinks, which is another indicator of their wealth: “They sat up late with a bottle of Henri’s best wine, which he’d saved for emergency moments, to tell each other about their adventures” (Hannah 2006: 32). The fact that Nancy possessed expensive jewellery, for example a “heavy gold bracelet”, which Henri gave to her as a present on her birthday on 30 August 1940 also suggests that she fits the stereotype of the wealthy woman. When she was forced to leave Marseilles and her husband, as she was wanted by the Gestapo, she put her precious presents from Henri in her bag (Hannah 2006: 52), including “[a]n engagement ring, a diamond eternity ring, a diamond watch, a diamond brooch in the shape of a little wire-haired terrier, and some gold bracelets [...]” (Hannah 2006: 57). Before leaving, she had led a double life, on the one hand as rich Madame Fiocca, and on the other hand, as a significant member of the French Résistance. Wake (2011: 35) provides insights into her life as Madame Fiocca, which, amongst other things, consisted of meetings with other women of high society and shopping sprees:

I contented myself by giving our maid the orders for the day, then racing over into town where I would meet my girlfriends and gossip over an aperitif or two. Then I’d return home for an extended midday meal with Henri, and then back to town, where my friends and I would do the rounds of dressmakers, hairdressers and tea salons until it was time for us to meet our respective husbands.

As evident from the quotation above, with respect to her leisure activities, Nancy Wake seemingly conformed to numerous upper class stereotypes. In scholarly works, it is frequently stressed how closely social class and gender are related. Concerning social class, Blau and Duncan (1967, cited in Stuber, Klugman & Daniel 2011: 433) mention that by assuming that occupation serves as the determining factor for social status, women’s social class is defined by their husband’s occupation. Similarly, Lott and Bullock (2010: 422) name signifiers of social class such as “income, occupation, prestige, and education”. They also refer to Langston (1988: 102) who mentions that one’s social class can be defined “in terms of performance”, i.e. one’s actions. It is associated with one’s feelings, look, clothes, appearance, speech, movements. Furthermore, Langston (1988: 102) stresses that factors such as one’s car and friends “as well as what one eats and where one eats” determine a person’s social status.

With regards to gender stereotyping, Nillissen and Young (2007: 1, 3) discovered in their study “that middle/upper class women were rated highest overall in femininity”. Bettie (2003: 34, cited in Stuber, Klugman & Daniel 2011: 434) highlights that “women make the stage as class subjects ... when they represent consumption and leisure, not work”, which also holds true for the young Nancy Wake. Moreover, women indicate their social class by their

“hairstyles, clothing choices, and accessories” (Bettie 2003, Chase 2008, McRobbie 1994, Pomerantz 2008 and Proweller 1998, cited in Stuber, Klugman & Daniel 2011: 434).

6.1.3. *Nancy Wake’s farewell to the high society*

Though Nancy Wake seemed to have enjoyed her upper-class lifestyle up to a point, she apparently became aware through her work as a courier and spy that she did not in fact consider herself as part of the high society, but as a “commoner” (Wake 2011: 103). Wake (2011: 103) herself confirmed that when she worked voluntarily in a canteen in England after her escape from France she was not much pleased by an environment full of upper-class people anymore. Her resistance activities and unwavering will to fight the Germans had changed her and she wanted to lead a more adventurous life: “It was definitely not the place for someone with my background, my down-to earth views and forthright manner”. Also Hannah (2006: 64) states that the other women of high social status disliked Nancy because she was “[a] nomad who [could not] cook”. But Nancy did not care about whether she could cook or not, she simply wanted to take action against the Germans and find a more suitable job for herself.

Although in terms of character, she did not perceive herself as being ladylike and typically upper-class, she chose not to change her outer appearance, as she seemed to have come to like her feminine, stylish and elegant look. This is also evident in the following excerpt which deals with the way she was dressed on the day of her parachuting: “Nancy wore a smart civilian costume, silk stockings and three-quarter heeled shoes” (Braddon 2009: 132). Later on, as will be seen, as the only woman in a male environment she also adapted her clothing to match and wore a uniform. But before the analysis of Nancy’s role as the sole women among 7,000 Maquisards, her role as wife will be dealt with in respect of gender-related aspects (Fitzsimons 2002: 253).

6.2. **Nancy Wake’s married life with Henri Fiocca**

Nancy Wake was married twice. Since her second wedding with Flight Lieutenant John Forward, “a big drinking ex-bomber pilot with a great sense of humour”, took place after the Second World War and her work as a female spy, it is less relevant to the present analysis (Hannah 2006: 100). Nancy Wake’s first husband was Henri Fiocca, and according to Fitzsimons (2002: 71) her first serious boyfriend. They were happily married, always found a reason to laugh and Nancy called Henri her soul-mate (Hannah 2006: 33f., Fitzsimons 2002:

88). When they first met each other, she learned that he was a womanizer, but “Nancy loved a challenge”, so she went to him and directly asked him how it can be that every girl fancies him and goes out with him. After he replied that they all call him, except the one he really fancied, Nancy reacted bluntly and directly as always. “‘If you want to speak to me on the phone, Fiocca,’ she announced finally, ‘you will ring me up!’ He did” [original emphasis] (Braddon 2009: 17). The way in which she approached Henri indicates how bold and confident Wake was.

Before Nancy Wake was married, she still had to get accustomed to her future glamorous living situation. The imagination of living in a fancy apartment with a handsome, enchanting and prosperous man made her feel as if she was in a fantasy world (Hannah 2006: 22). Additionally, she knew she would have to quit her job as journalist if she wanted to marry Henri (Jürgs 2014: 31). Society creates certain gender-related prescriptions, and one of them is that women should quit their job and move to their husband’s home. Meitzen (1986: 150) explains what causes women to leave their job. He states that in most cases founding one’s own family and undertaking household duties are the reasons. In Nancy’s case, her husband’s wealth, his high social status and his role as the breadwinner were the reasons why she gave up her job and former life. Braddon (2009: 17) points out that her life significantly changed after she had met Henri. Before they were engaged, “[m]oney had never been of any importance to her: but now she reali[s]ed that lots of it is more pleasantly unimportant than none” (Braddon 2009: 17). After the wedding her luxurious life began, which included having a long sleep, enjoying a bath in exclusive oils while drinking champagne, being served breakfast by her servant and having lunch with Henri (Hannah 2006: 28f., Braddon 2009: 22f.). Henri showed her the best restaurants and did not mind driving enormous distances to discover a perfect eating place for his wife (Braddon 2009: 17). Afterwards they would visit dress salons, beauty salons, hair salons, restaurants and cinemas (Braddon 2009: 23). Then, “[a]t night she and Henri could dance or go to the cinema or an occasional concert [...]; but for the rest of the day it was just society women and talk of the coming war” (Braddon 2009: 19f.). As Braddon (2009: 23) puts it, Nancy led a “frivolous, extravagant life” with many parties and she “enjoyed every minute of it. [...] A more useless woman there cannot have been in the whole of France”.

Certainly, Henri Fiocca enabled his wife to live a life in the lap of luxury and used to say, “I only want the best for my little Nanny” (Hannah 2006: 24). Generally, she always seemed to stand her ground against him. For example, traditionally it would have been her responsibility to pay for their wedding, but she bluntly told Henri that she would not do that (Wake 2011: 28). Furthermore, Nancy wore a black wedding dress which Henri did not quite like. Nancy Wake

did not allow herself to be forced into a suppressed role within a patriarchal system. As Lindsey (1994: 167) points out, traditionally men are the ones who provide a living and, therefore, exercise dominating power over women, if they are full-time housewives. Wake, in contrast, never served her husband as housewife. A stereotypical view regarding the role of women is that they are normally responsible for domestic duties and child-raising (Lindsey 1994: 167). Cooking is furthermore one of the tasks which women are expected to carry out in the household. Nancy Wake seemingly tried to improve her cooking skills, as a Marseilles chef gave her lessons in cooking (Wake 2011: 36, Fitzsimons 2002: 87). However, after some efforts she soon realised that she did not fit the role as housewife, as Hannah (2006: 30) demonstrates by means of a reconstructed conversation between Nancy and Henri: “‘I can’t follow my heart standing in that kitchen’, said Nancy giving Henri her determined look”. This statement clearly implies that she wanted to be more than a housewife.

Soon Nancy came up with the idea of voluntarily driving an ambulance to help wounded people in the war and asked for Henri’s support, but her husband did not encourage the idea. He subscribed to the gender-stereotyped belief that war is an exclusively male domain. Hannah (2006: 38f.) also reveals that Henri was worried and had the opinion that this kind of work was too dangerous for a woman. Clearly, again, this shows that he supported the stereotypical view that women are too weak to work under war conditions. However, in the end he nevertheless provided Nancy with a truck because she said that she was sick of hearing how he won the First World War as a soldier. This time it should be her turn to win the war (Braddon 2009: 24). Fitzsimons (2002: 89) argues that Henri allowed Nancy to drive the ambulance, as she “got him at a weak moment”. She always knew the best way to make her husband compliant, for instance when Ian Garrow was imprisoned and in need of Nancy’s help: “Although he had not wanted me involved in this affair, once I had made my own decision he always did everything to make my task easier“ (Wake 2011: 60). This statement indicates that it was Nancy’s decision that counted, and Henri would always relent and support her in the end.

Her desire to support the French Résistance against her husband’s will suggests that she might have aimed to be independent from him and live her own life besides the one as his rich wife. It is a stereotype that, even though certainly there have been also women who have functioned as main earners among household members, women are economically dependent from their spouses. As Lindsey (1994: 167) suggests, numerous women “who do not work outside the home and find themselves in conflict-ridden, psychologically debilitating marriages see no alternative but to remain where they are. Financial and psychological dependency go hand in hand”. Nancy Wake did not want to be one of these women, but on the other hand, she

and the whole resistance network were completely dependent upon Henri, as they relied on him financially. He helped Nancy by providing money for her activities whenever she needed it. According to Braddon (2009: 39), every day Nancy and her husband were visited by four or five soldiers from the prison Fort St. Jean and gave them food and cigarettes. Ian Garrow, the organiser of an escape route, also came to the flat one day and asked for Nancy's help, and she "did not need much encouragement before she agreed". From now on, Henri supported Garrow and his fellows by financial means and "the Fiocca flat rapidly became a planning centre for the escaping activities of British Prisoners of War". Hence, even though Nancy had a job of her own, she could not have carried it out without her husband's financial support. Therefore, it can be argued that she could not achieve complete independence and conformed to the stereotype of the financially dependent wife.

In contrast, one situation described below serves as an example of reversed gender roles. Here, Nancy clearly fulfils a masculine role: "When Nancy returned home to Marseilles after one of her missions, Picon [NB: Wake's dog], who always slept in the same big leather arm chair, was as relieved as Henri to see her" (Hannah 2006: 46). As a reader, one gets the impression, that on this occasion Nancy acts like the man of the house, as she returns home from work while her partner is already waiting for her. Traditionally, it would be the other way round, namely the woman waiting for her man to return from work. Also the next excerpt shows that Nancy led a different life than other women: "While French women spent most of their day queuing up for food, Nancy would cycle miles to deliver packages [...]" (Hannah 2006: 39). In order to remain inconspicuous she had to maintain her double life. On the one hand, she was known as "L'Australienne de Marseilles" within both Ian Garrow's resistance group as well as the French Resistance. And on the other hand, as information on her activities should not be spread, she "also lived an ostentatiously normal life in Marseilles. She continued to meet all her friends, to entertain, to be seen in restaurants and hotels. Very few of even her most intimate friends knew she led a dual life" (Braddon 2009: 41). Also Escott (2012: 187) refers to Nancy Wake's double life, and explains that she was "by day a sophisticated supportive wife, cultivating Henri's business contacts and important residents, and by night at intervals becoming the 'White Mouse' for whom the Gestapo was searching". When Nancy realised that staying in Marseilles would endanger not only her, but also Henri, with a heavy heart they both decided that it would be best if Nancy left for England and Henri continued running his business in France for the moment before heading to England too (Hannah 2006: 52).

As can already be seen, Nancy Wake did not simply live the carefree life of a rich wife. Instead, she undertook numerous dangerous missions and for this reason, defied several gender

stereotypes. A stereotypical woman of the time primarily acted as housewife and was responsible for domestic tasks and the upbringing of her children, but Nancy did not even have any children. She seemed to focus more on her career and work than on pursuing a “typically female” way of life. In this context, the question emerges of what the reasons for her childless marriage were. Fitzsimons (2002: 88) reveals Nancy’s opinion on the subject: “As to the possibility of children, we didn’t plan to have them but we didn’t try not to have them... they just didn’t come”. As is evident from this citation, she seemingly did not care much about her childlessness. Rich, Taket, Graham and Shelley (2011: 227) stress that childless women are despised in society and are faced with numerous stereotypes. For example, “[v]oluntarily childless women have often been perceived as selfish, self-centred and materialistic, and have experienced being met with shock, pity, criticism and hostility in light of their voluntary childlessness”. In their study on perception of childless women in contemporary Australian society, Rich, Taket, Graham and Shelley (2011: 232f.) discovered that the notions “women” and “mother” were often understood synonymously and that voluntarily childless women were frequently thought to be desperate and sad because of their childlessness.

Turning to Nancy Wake again, even though she did not have any children and might have been stereotyped as selfish for the reason that she preferred a life of danger instead of parenting, she later fulfilled the female gender role of the caring mother in two instances during her engagement in SOE. Firstly, when the Maquis was supported by a young, 19 year old radio operator whose name was Roger, Nancy was particularly fond of him and “felt positively maternal towards him”, as Braddon (2009: 209) emphasises. Secondly, after a few Maquisards had been killed in a hail of German bullets, Nancy washed their corpses and “vertr[at] symbolisch die Mütter, die ihre Söhne verloren ha[tt]en [...] [symbolically represented their mothers who had lost their sons [...]” (Jürgs 2014: 225).

6.3. Nancy Wake’s character traits and special abilities

On some occasions, Nancy acted in accordance with gender stereotypes, such as in the examples above, where she felt the urge to adopt the mother role. Braddon (2009: 15) states, “She’s a rebel, she’s always laughing and she’s very, very feminine – that’s the best way to describe Nancy Wake”. Nevertheless, based on a stereotypical view, many of her character traits could be described as masculine. Especially in her time spent with the Maquisards she showed stereotypically masculine behavioural patterns and traits, which will be demonstrated below.

6.3.1. *Fearless, adventurous and wandering spirit*

Since her childhood, Nancy Wake had been said to be a feisty, lively person always in search of new adventures. The following examples taken from biographies and biofictions dealing with Wake prove her fearless and adventurous character. At the age of twelve, Nancy was a diligent student at a high school. She helped her mother with domestic chores, such as cooking and cleaning, but did not enjoy doing this and therefore ran away from her home twice (Braddon 2009: 15). Finally, at the age of 16, Wake went to Sydney to become a nurse (Hannah 2006: 16). In Hannah's (2006: 16) biofiction, Nancy is presented as a rebellious girl who smoked, wore her hair short, was interested in fashion and seemed to attract men's attention. In 1932, in her insatiable wanderlust, she left Sydney by ship at the age of just 19 (Hannah 2006: 17). When she finally reached London, she immediately followed her interest in journalism and attended a course by which she expected to find a job soon. Hannah (2006: 18) stresses that other English women were busy with domestic work, but Nancy was different from those women and focussed on her career instead.

6.3.2. *Easy-going and optimistic attitude*

Besides her adventurous nature, Nancy Wake never took life too seriously and seemed to be able to cope with every problem. Even in the most distressing situations during war she remained calm and always found a reason to laugh. In her autobiography, Wake (2011: 77) mentions the following: "We never shunned hard work, however disagreeable, but we always had time for a laugh. It does not matter how serious a situation can be, so often there is a funny side". She also states that her life motto was: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die" (Wake 2011: 47). Fitzsimons (2002: 48) points out that "[f]rom the beginning there was something about Nancy's exuberant knockout charm that somehow fitted in well with that same part of the French character that gave rise to the whole notion of *joie de vivre*" [original emphasis]. Her optimistic attitude is, for example, evident in the situation where Nancy was hired by an editor in England, but she was told she would have to move to Paris. Instead of worrying about leaving behind London and her friends to face an uncertain future in a foreign country, Nancy "whoop[ed] with delight" and did not show any negative feelings at all (Hannah 2006: 19).

Even when she weighed the risks of her clandestine activities and the consequences if the police were to arrest her, she remained optimistic and trusted in a midwife's prediction that

nothing bad could ever happen to her: “‘If they caught me, they might stick pins in my breasts,’ said Nancy. ‘They do that to women spies, apparently. But a Maori midwife in New Zealand told my mother I would always be lucky’” (Hannah 2006: 47). She also relied on the luck promised to her, when Jepson, an SOE officer, informed Nancy that she would work under extremely dangerous circumstances and that she would have about a fifty-fifty chance of surviving the war. The mention of this minimal chance of survival did not scare her. She was, as always, optimistic and replied that she was lucky (Hannah 2006: 67). Even more astonishing is the fact that, unlike the stereotypical image of a woman, Nancy Wake (2011: 123) considered fighting as fun. This is demonstrated by the following excerpt from her autobiography: “[...] [T]o my bitter disappointment, I learnt that during my absence the Allies had landed and I had missed all the fun of blowing up our targets”.

Throughout her life, Nancy never lost her easy-going and positive attitude. Even in probably her most difficult and sorrowful time, after her husband’s death, she decided that it would be best to mourn his passing not too long. Concerning gender stereotypes, emotionality in general, and more specifically the emotion of sadness, are clearly linked to femininity instead of masculinity (Birnbaum et al. 1980, Shields 1984, cited in Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux 1999: 108). With regards to grieving, Noakes (2015) points out that in Great Britain after the Second World War, people were expected to face grief with a stoic attitude. She emphasises that “[w]omen in particular, long seen as more inclined towards the outward expression of feelings, were advised to practice rigorous self-management (Noakes 2015: 76).

Also Nancy Wake seemingly managed to overcome her husband’s passing in a self-possessed, outwardly unemotional manner. Henri’s death gave her the opportunity to focus even more on work. That again implies that Nancy Wake was a career woman. While other women in her situation would have probably concentrated on getting married soon again to be financially secure, she did not see a need for it (Braddon 2009: 251). Additionally, what made it easier for her to cope with the loss of Henri, was the joy about the French Liberation, and knowing that she had made an important contribution to it (Wake 2011: 155). Hannah (2006: 97) emphasises that at the end of the Second World War Nancy was aged 33 and felt miserable. During the war Nancy Wake had worked extensively and incredibly hard, but she was also human and vulnerable. The loss of Henri and her friends made her feel depressed, and she had to realise that she could not help everybody. Nevertheless, Wake was determined to keep going, which is so characteristic of her (Hannah 2006: 97).

6.3.3. *Sociable, funny and party-loving Nancy Wake*

Undoubtedly, Nancy Wake had a cheerful disposition. In each and every foreign city to which she travelled, e.g. London or Paris, she always loved exploring the night life (Hannah 2006: 18, 20). What was also typical of her was that finding new friends and making acquaintances never posed a problem for her, as she seemingly was a talkative, communicative and generous person: “Nancy had a flair for talking with anybody and making friends with many of those to whom she talked. All these friends were regularly provided with meals or parcels of food” (Braddon 2009: 28). Her talkativeness can be stereotypically associated with femininity. However, as mentioned by Basow (1992: 58), “[c]ontradicting the ‘talkative female’ stereotype”, Henley (1977) in her study discovered that men are more talkative than women. Women, in fact, are the better listeners.

Wake enjoyed the company of others, which also included drinking alcohol with her friends. For example, with her SOE training group she frequently drank plenty of alcohol: “After dinner, unless a night exercise was arranged, we would gather in our lounge and drink pint after pint of draught bitter beer” (Wake 2011: 110). However she also often drank alone, for example she especially liked brandy, as mentioned by Braddon (2009: 35). Jürs (2014: 14) refers to Nancy Wake’s high tolerance for alcohol:

Sie verträgt so einiges an Alkohol, auch härtere Getränke als Wein, was Nancy Wake zeitlebens im Kreise trinkfester Männer Respekt einbringt [...] [She has a high tolerance for alcohol, for harder drinks than wine too, by which Nancy Wake gains a lifelong respect among hard drinking men [...]].

Braddon (2009: 159) also points out that

[s]uccessively in tents, kitchens, inns, the open air, she consumed huge meals and a stream of brandy [...] She was not a habitual drinker: she had not ‘trained’ to achieve her endurance: she didn’t ever care whether she had a drink or not. But if she did, no amount of alcohol could knock her out.

The Maquisards around Nancy Wake were aware of her drinking ability. The fact that she could consume and tolerate a higher amount of alcohol than the men made her appear somehow stronger than them. During Nancy’s long bicycle trip, the Maquis were worried and wondering what she might be doing at the moment. One of them suggested: ““She’s probably drinking a German under the table somewhere”” (Hannah 2006: 85).

With regards to gender stereotypes, Nancy Wake’s preference and high tolerance for alcoholic drinks are a marker of masculinity. Lips (2017: 403) emphasises that “[a] woman who is drunk is viewed with disgust; a man who is drunk may be viewed more tolerantly”. In this

context, it should be also mentioned that men are indeed more likely than women to drink alcohol, whereas more women than men tend to drink exclusively non-alcoholic beverages or quit drinking alcohol (Wilsnack et al. 2009, cited in Lips 2014: 153). Lips (2014: 153) explains the reasons for these research findings and takes into account the “cultural norms that are more tolerant of male than female intoxication, and that emphasise restraint as a sign of appropriate femininity”. Furthermore, sometimes men’s better financial conditions as well as their “freedom to go out and indulge” may lead to their higher alcohol consumption (Lips 2014: 153).

6.3.4. *Blunt in expressing her opinion and “masculine” behaviour*

Concerning masculine gender roles, it is widely considered as normal and acceptable that men not only drink heavily but also that they occasionally rant, swear as well as insult other people. Women on the other hand are expected not to use harsh language (Prentice & Carranza 2002: 269). Nancy Wake, in contrast, is evidenced to have had an open and blunt personality. Excerpts from her autobiography and biographies exemplify how straightforwardly and insistently Nancy could act. These character traits are significant, as they enabled her to perform a leadership role, especially in a male environment. Seemingly, she had managed to acquire respect from the Maquis men and was accepted as one of them, as she also used a “masculine” way of speaking and behaving. Presumably, traditionally feminine traits, namely “gentle”, “affectionate”, “submissive”, “soft-spoken” and “shy”, would have been suppressed by these men (Lueptow 1984, cited in Lueptow, Garovich & Lueptow 1995: 513; Prentice & Carranza 2002: 269).

One of the Maquisards confirmed that Nancy Wake had a direct personality. When she met the Maquis men after the war and informed them about her recent political engagement in Australia and that the job of a politician did not satisfy her, this man replied that he could not imagine Nancy as a politician for the simple reason that she always said what she really thought (Hannah 2006: 101). An example which clearly indicates that Nancy Wake did not mince her words can be found in the following: After their mission in France, Nancy and her companions came back to England in 1944 where the immigration authorities at first had to contact the SOE headquarters before the arrivals were granted admission. Nancy was impatient and in her autobiography she tells that after an hour of waiting time she “exploded”: “I informed them I was going to London immediately and if they were thinking of detaining me they would be well advised to enlist the assistance of the police” (Wake 2011: 157).

In biofictions Nancy Wake is repeatedly depicted as an enraged woman who ranted like a stereotypical man. She swore especially often at the Germans, for instance calling them “absolute pigs” (Hannah 2006: 47). Furthermore, Nancy ranted “[b]loody Germans” when she recognised that she had lost her bag after she had to jump out of a train checked by the Germans (Hannah 2006: 58). There were many further occasions when Nancy used swearwords, for example she said, “This wine tastes like gnat’s piss” (Hannah 2006: 62) or in a conversation with DenDen she ranted at him and called him a twerp (Braddon 2009: 202). Furthermore, Braddon (2009: 206) mentions that “Nancy was using every foul oath” she had become familiar with during her time in Marseilles and insulted her Maquisards. According to Mills (2005: 273), the use of swearwords is included in what can be stereotypically labelled as masculine speech. Moreover, since swearing is seen as a marker of masculinity, it is also considered as part of a powerful mode of speaking. Additionally, Walsh (2001, cited in Mills 2005: 273) highlights that “[w]hen women have used assertive masculine norms, they may be critici[s]ed for being over-aggressive and unfeminine”. This clearly also applies to Nancy Wake.

Besides her “masculine” way of speaking, i.e. using swearwords and vulgar language, Jürs (2014: 290) refers to Nancy Wake’s appearance and behavioural patterns which caused a great stir in the Australian society, as they were considered inappropriately and too “masculine”. When Wake returned to Australia to run for political elections as candidate of the Liberal Party, people were in particular appalled about her fondness for drinking beer. Furthermore, the Australians complained about her “mannish” manner of sitting. In Australia, stereotypical gender roles were ascribed to women which they were supposed to perform, but Nancy did not obey to the norms and she never cared about other people’s opinions.

6.3.5. *Nancy Wake’s bravery and willingness to take risks*

Bravery is surely a crucial character trait every secret agent needs to possess. According to stereotypical views, women are considered to be unsuitable for this job, simply because it was thought to be too dangerous for them and that they would lack bravery. Lips (2014: 119) confirms that society places women in the role of the vulnerable sex and thinks that “[w]omen are not tough enough to be exposed to the dangers of combat or the rigors, discomfort and dirt of the battlefield”. Concerning masculinity, Bem (1981, cited in McLean & Anderson 2009: 502) argues that “boys may learn that the masculine role involves bravery and purposeful coping behavio[u]r when faced with anxiety-provoking situations”, since acting cowardly and anxiously is unacceptable among males. Regarding gender roles, in dangerous circumstances,

women are associated with anxiety and are therefore in need of a male protector (cf. McLean & Anderson 2009: 502, Lips 2014: 120, Sjoberg 2014: 537). Nancy Wake clearly deviates from the gender stereotype of the anxious woman, and is described as a “gutsy, sensuous woman who had such a will to fight” (Hannah 2006: 66). When she was asked if she had ever been afraid, Nancy replied, “Never ever” (Jürgs 2014: 26).

Numerous examples from literature show that people wondered why Nancy Wake as a woman was not afraid or scared at all and therefore, did not classify her as typically “feminine”. For example, the dispatcher was appalled when he saw that a woman was to be parachuted, as Nancy Wake was the first woman he had ever seen jumping out of the plane. He was convinced that parachuting was not the right thing to do for females. However, despite his sceptical attitude he was impressed by this brave woman and “as a tribute to her femininity” he served her a light meal and coffee (Hannah 2006: 8f., Braddon 2009: 133f.). Even though Nancy tried hard not to show her nervousness, she was indeed afraid in this situation. The dispatcher recalled that her face was pale, but determined and that she screamed, “All I want to do is get out of this bloody plane!” (Hannah 2006: 8, Fitzsimons 2002: 194). Although she relied on a shove given to her by the dispatcher, he was sure that she would not refuse to jump, since she was extremely brave (Fitzsimons 2002: 194). Another instance where Nancy fought against displaying the emotions she felt was after the war when she had already learnt that Henri was dead and nevertheless “put on a brave face to attend yet another celebration party” (Hannah 2006: 96). With regards to stereotypes, it can be argued that the refusal to show negative emotions is a rather masculine pattern. Men are also expected to perform the gender role of the permanently strong character who is unaffected by emotions. This idea is also put forth by Kimmel (2012, cited in Brescoll 2016: 420) who states that in accordance with social norms, men should not present themselves as vulnerable, weak or powerless.

Also the willingness to take risks is associated with masculinity, as Brannon (1976, cited in Lips 2014: 154) claims. Lips (2014: 154) stresses that men’s willingness to take risks and participation in traditionally “masculine” activities often serve as a demonstration of manhood. Nancy Wake undertook several risky actions during her career as a resistance activist and SOE agent. For instance, Jürgs (2014: 201) refers to the fact that Wake covered a distance of 200 kilometres on foot to find a radio operator in the mountains. Of course, the risk of being captured was particularly high, but Nancy was ready to take this risk.

What needs to be emphasised is that most of her risky actions were intended to help others. For example, she visited Ian Garrow in prison, provided him with food and impersonated his cousin even if Henri was against it (Braddon 2009: 49f.). When Garrow had to move from

the prison to a concentration camp, Nancy decided to visit him there regularly too, while the Gestapo was already searching for her under the codename “White Mouse” and frequently checked the trains (Braddon 2009: 56). She came to know that a guard took bribes and managed to attract his attention by regularly carrying parcels to Garrow, whereupon he left a note that he would like to meet Nancy at midnight. Wake took the risk of being arrested unnecessarily, since the man did not appear, which infuriated her (Braddon 2009: 58). However, she met him again in a bistro later on where he demanded five hundred thousand francs from her in exchange for a police uniform. Henri sent her the money and Garrow managed to escape by wearing the uniform (Braddon 2009: 61f.).

The next example further demonstrates that Nancy Wake was always willing to take risks: While she was planning her escape via the Pyrenees, she decided to send on her clothes to Spain. Even though her situation was more than precarious and Henri was aware of the trouble she could get into, she “was still in the mood to take risks”. She was convinced that no one would suspect her under her maiden name Nancy Wake and absolutely did not want to forgo her beautiful clothes. This situation perfectly illustrates on the one hand Nancy’s femininity, as she highly valued her clothes, and on the other hand her “masculine” willingness to take risks even in the most dangerous circumstances (Braddon 2009: 79).

Certainly, Nancy Wake was regarded as a special, unusual or even “masculine” woman, due to her courageous actions and her SOE engagement, which is also suggested by the subsequent quotation: “To a normal person all of this could well have been confusing: but women like Mme Andrée had not been trained by S.O.E. to become normal persons” (Braddon 2009: 136). Obviously, as the examples above indicate, Nancy Wake was not considered as a normal person, and therefore not as a normal woman. She did not conform to prevalent gender stereotypes and was destined for other tasks than “ordinary” women, not domestic ones, but more dangerous ones which she was well prepared for by SOE.

6.3.6. Working under tough and life-threatening conditions

Nancy Wake did not work in the household, but outside in the French woods. She was not a housewife who carried out domestic duties, but was trained by SOE to become a woman in combat. Her husband Henri did not quite understand why Nancy did not like cooking. She replied that she would learn it, but added, ““Just don’t expect me to stay in the kitchen once those Germans arrive”” (Hannah 2006: 29). She clearly did not consider herself a housewife, but as a fighter – and she kept her word, as Nancy soon became a voluntary ambulance driver.

During her work under wartime conditions, she initially had to struggle with constantly seeing blood, “which made her feel sick”, and being confronted with death all the time (Braddon 2009: 25f.). Nevertheless, she carried on helping and afterwards actively worked for two organisations, both the French Resistance and Ian Garrow’s escape network, which made her life increasingly stressful (Braddon 2009: 41). Also Hannah (2006: 44) comments that “[i]t was hard work for Nancy: she often had to wait alone for many hours until the servicemen escaping from Marseilles were handed over to her by another guide”. Her work for Garrow also included courier tasks that she was not fully satisfied with, since it was too boring for her. She strived for a task through which she could actively act against the Germans (Wake 2011: 48). Eventually, SOE offered her the opportunity to do so. Hannah (2006: 68) describes her and her fellows’ training as follows:

It was tough work. They were sent on courses to learn how to break into buildings, how to get out of handcuffs, how to resist interrogation, how to use codes and passwords, and how to parachute. Nancy was given lessons in how to use a revolver, and a Bren gun, and how to handle grenades.

Similarly, Braddon (2009: 122) reports on Nancy’s training period and adds that Nancy was introduced to silent killing, had to learn how to attack other trainees and transmit Morse code messages amongst other things. According to McRae (2016: 36), later “[h]er duties in Auvergne included allocating weapons, equipment and finances. However, she was more combatant than administrator [...]”. Braddon (2009: 162) also mentions that Nancy Wake occupied a combat role and fired guns, as she regularly had to defend herself from hostile attacks. Fitzsimons (2002: 221) emphasises that Wake participated actively in the destruction of bridges, railway lines and roads and that she even enjoyed carrying out such tasks. According to Braddon (2009: 171), her work also required enormous physical strength, as she was responsible for the receipt of air-dropped containers. She had to open and unload the weapons and munitions contained without being distracted by bombs landing close to her.

In respect of gender expectations and roles, all of these tasks are not those that a woman is normally supposed to perform. Societal norms state that men should carry out hard physical work and undertake dangerous activities. Baron (2006: 146) stresses the importance of a “hegemonic masculinity” in today’s society which is defined by “toughness, physical strength, aggressiveness, and risk taking”. Also, considering prevalent gender norms, women need not, or even should not be familiar with the handling of weapons. As Turpin (1998: 3) confirms, warfare is firmly in male hands, while women are seen as peacemakers. She emphasises that

men are traditionally those who are actively involved in fighting, whereas women “do remain invisible in military policy-making”.

6.3.7. *Nancy Wake’s sixth sense - the stereotype of the female intuition*

While on the one hand, Nancy Wake could be regarded as masculine, she also possessed a quality which some call the “female intuition” or the “sixth sense in women”. It is, of course, again a stereotypical thought that only women are intuitive. Concerning intuition, Ornstein (1977: 12, cited in Hayes, Allinson & Armstrong 2004: 404) differentiates between the analytic and holistic mode of consciousness, whereas the former equals “the rational” and the latter “the intuitive sides of a person”. The analytic mode “implies viewing the individual parts of a situation in sequence” and the holistic mode, in contrast, “refers to viewing the whole situation at once”. Similarly, Brenner and Bromer (1981, cited in Hayes, Allison & Armstrong 2004: 403) distinguish between analytical and intuitive types of people and argue that, with regards to gender stereotypes and leadership roles, men are thought to be “more analytical”, whereas women are considered to be “more intuitive”.

With reference to these gender stereotypes, it could be argued that Nancy Wake was a typical woman, as she strongly relied on her instinct. Jürs (2014: 26) remarks the following:

Sie besaß [...] das, was man allgemein einen gesunden Menschenverstand nannte, verbunden mit einem sichtbaren Gespür für Gefahren, einem Instinkt, dem sie vertraute. In Gefahr und Not wählte sie deshalb nie den Mittelweg, sondern entschied sich in Sekundenschnelle, was sie tun musste und was nicht [...] She possessed what was generally called a common sense, combined with an evident awareness of danger, an instinct, which she trusted. In trouble and danger she never opted for a middle way, but decided within a matter of seconds what she had to do and what not].

Furthermore, Jürs (2014: 132) takes reference to a personal evaluation by Claire Wrench, a former SOE trainer, who claimed that Nancy was particularly cautious and deliberate. She reflected upon what could happen in the worst-case scenario and took into account potential dangers before she made a final decision. In numerous situations she clearly followed her intuition, for example, when she was on search of a guide who would lead her and the rest of the escapees through the Pyrenees. Nancy did not know where exactly the guide lived, but in her vague memory she remembered a certain house where O’Leary once went. She took the risk and simply rang at the door, but “[w]ithout the right code word, the plan could go horribly wrong” (Hannah 2006: 59, Jürs 2014: 115). Fitzsimons (2002: 154) states that on this occasion, Nancy bluntly told the man who she was, who she was working for and that she

urgently needed a guide to Spain. In her usual direct manner, she added that he should not give her “any crap”. Another quite different example which proves that Nancy Wake could trust in her intuition is a dream she had about the Gestapo’s killing of her friend’s husband. She had this dream in the middle of October and immediately interpreted it as her own husband’s death (Wake 2011: 101, Braddon 2009: 112). Sadly, what happened proved her right, since 16 October 1943 was actually the day when Henri was murdered by the Gestapo (Braddon 2009: 246). Also under the most dangerous circumstances, Wake relied on her intuition, for instance whilst being pursued by German planes while driving at high speed. The Germans were shooting at her from above. Instinctively she decided to reduce the speed whereby the pilot missed his aim. Here, as in many other situations, her instinct enabled her to escape death (Braddon 2009: 174).

What surely helped her survive too, was that Nancy Wake constantly acted in a security-conscious manner. For instance, she was taught in England that driving during daytime was dangerous and that she should only travel by bicycle, train or on foot. A Frenchman assured her that using these means of transport was safe, but initially she was not convinced of that (Braddon 2009: 143f.). Situations like this show that she was at all times focussed on safety and thought twice before making her decisions. Furthermore, Wake was always questioning and scrutinising the character and reliability of certain people. For example, her instinct correctly told her twice that there were traitors within the O’Leary circuit. Nancy’s remarks in the following conversation reveal her doubts: ““There have been too many arrests [...] The Germans know too much. You know what I think? I think we’ve got a German counter-agent working in our circuit”” (Braddon 2009: 90). The first traitor was Roger, and was involved in the capture of Pat O’Leary, who was arrested in a café where he had gone to meet Roger, allegedly a new member of the “Pat” line who in reality was Gestapo agent number 47. The counter-agent originally intended to meet Nancy Wake too, but fortunately she did not accompany O’Leary to the meeting (Braddon 2009: 90, Wake 2011: 81). Moreover, Jürigs (2014: 75) refers to another traitor called Cole who Wake immediately found unsympathetic. According to Fitzsimons (2002: 122), Nancy Wake herself said that she believed she had never been captured because from the beginning she had not liked Cole’s behaviour, since he had chased her dog away from the chair and he had drunk her whisky.

6.3.8. *Her intelligence, rationality and retentive memory*

Besides her intuition and cautiousness, Nancy Wake's smart acting and excellent memory helped her survive the war. Even though according to dominant cultural beliefs, men are associated with intelligence and logical reasoning, in fact, research confirmed that there are no differences between males and females in terms of their mental capacities (Basow 1992: 39).

Nancy Wake's actions were strategic and well thought out. For instance, before her escape to England via Spain, she left a farewell letter for her husband in which she had announced she would leave him and would move to Paris. Additionally, here, she made use of the female stereotype that women enjoy gossiping and was convinced that her female friends would soon spread the news in town (Jürgs 2014: 102). Apart from this, after her release from the prison in Toulouse she desperately wanted to inform Henri that she was in safety and also wanted to ask him about his well-being. Even though she was tempted to phone Henri, she remained rational and decided that contacting her husband would just put him in greater danger. Nancy was aware that she had to "keep her mind focused on the next step as her need to get across the Pyrenees was as compelling as ever" (Fitzsimons 2002: 143). A strong gender stereotype is that women are led by moods, feelings and emotions, which is also confirmed by Brescoll (2016). She also makes reference to the idea that "emotion detracts from rational thought", which is why women are usually considered to be less rational than men (Brescoll 2016: 418f.). Nancy did not, however, let herself be distracted from her vital task of escaping France. Also in the following example, she managed to keep her emotions under control and acted properly, as the situation required. She had to watch a German soldier slit a pregnant woman's stomach and let her die. Wake mentioned to have been "disgusted, outraged, frustrated" that she could not do anything for the woman in that situation, since she "had to remain disciplined" (Fitzsimons 2002: 216).

Not only did she act cleverly and reasonably, she also possessed a good memory – both of which were required for her job as secret agent. In that respect, it is also essential to note that there is the stereotype that girls "have better social memory than boys", which implies that females find it easier to memorise "people's names and/or faces". However, research has discovered that women and men do not have differing memory abilities (Basow 1992: 39f.). Spies like Wake "had to memorise safe houses, names and addresses of contacts in the field, plus their codenames: Nancy was 'Hélène' to London, and 'Andrée' to the French, and had several other names for emergencies" (Hannah 2006: 73). Braddon (2009: 132) adds the importance of memorising "her targets [...], her dropping point [...] and her cover story [...]".

Wake (2011: 113) remembers that it was difficult to store all of this information in her mind, but she managed it brilliantly.

6.3.9. *Nancy Wake's calmness, acting skills and ability to remain inconspicuous*

Beyond the fact that Nancy Wake's decisions were not based on emotion but justified rationally, she also had the ability to never become nervous and stayed calm even in emergency situations. It can be said that her emotional strength is not "typically feminine". In this context, Brescoll (2016: 417) refers to the cultural belief of women as "the more emotional sex". The emergence of this gender stereotype was caused by the assumption that women "are less able to *control the outward display* of their emotions compared to men" [original emphasis].

Nancy Wake, however, hardly ever had emotional outbursts and did not suffer from nervousness. She had also excellently mastered the ability to talk her way out of difficult situations in which "normal" women, i.e. those who conform to the stereotype of the nervous woman, would have instantly revealed their fear and nervousness. As Fitzsimons (2002: 111) puts it, "[one] advantage she had, and Nancy never understood how it worked, was that even in extreme situations when one wrong answer would likely land her in gaol or worse, she never faltered through fear". For instance, while being on a train with numerous Germans, Wake had her receiving device with her and listened to the BBC to receive a new message (Braddon 2009: 158). She worked under extremely dangerous circumstances, but did not seem to care much about it. Also, when the commandant of the concentration camp where Garrow was imprisoned recognised that she had been provided with plenty of money, which was telegraphed by Henri for Garrow's release, she stayed calm during the conversation and convinced the commandant that nothing was suspicious about receiving such a huge amount of money: "'[P]erhaps, to you, forty thousand francs is a lot of money! I don't know. But to me, I assure you, it is nothing ... pin money in fact'" (Braddon 2009: 62). And she assured him that she simply needed the money for some drinks. Afterwards she went to complain at the post office, since they passed on this information (Braddon 2009: 62f., Wake 2011: 61f.). Wake (2011: 62) states that "[t]his is what an innocent Frenchwoman, wrongly accused, would have done, and I always managed to believe wholeheartedly in the part I was playing".

Nancy Wake early recognised her talent for acting and once explained to her husband Henri that she should have become an actress (Hannah 2006: 39). Jürs (2014: 27) stresses that Wake successfully acted both the role of a woman who flirtingly played with men, since she was aware of the way they perceived her and that she exerted great control over the male sex,

as well as the role of an inconspicuous innocent farmer riding her bicycle (Jürigs 2014: 27). Pattinson (2011: 137) stresses that SOE officers held the stereotypical view that "resourcefulness and composure" were female qualities that were needed in dicey situations. Interestingly, there was the belief that women innately possessed these skills. On numerous occasions, Nancy Wake proved that she could adapt to the current situation and, like an actor, assume various identities.

For example, after she had been arrested in Toulouse and the Vichy police had learned about her identity as Nancy Fiocca, during the interrogation she stated that she had been on a business trip with Henri and did not know where he was because they had had a dispute. She perfectly played her role and assured her interviewers that what she had said was the truth and that she did not care whether they believed her or not. However, the Vichy police suspected her to be a prostitute who had blown up a cinema. They treated her terribly and hit her, as they hoped Nancy would admit her guilt, but of course she did not, even if they kept beating her. Fortunately, one day O'Leary arrived at the prison and brought about her release. In order that Wake could be released, they had to pretend to be a couple (Braddon 2009: 82ff., Wake 2011: 73f.). Fitzsimons (2002: 141) explains the situation in detail. He states that Nancy Wake noticed O'Leary grinning at her. Quickly she turned away, as she initially assumed that O'Leary was also imprisoned. However, soon she discovered that he was simply there to pay her a visit. He went towards her, kissed her cheeks and pointed out that he would release her from prison, if Nancy played his mistress. They acted their part as couple well, as "[w]ithin thirty minutes she was on his arm and walking out of gaol [...]". A few weeks later, when Wake was accompanied by Bernard Gohan, a member of the "Pat" line too, at a railway station, she recognised a policeman from the prison in Toulouse. Nancy, who fortunately was wearing sunglasses, instantly warned Bernard quietly before they started hugging and kissing each other (Wake 2011: 81f.). Wake (2011: 82) recalls this precarious situation as follows: "My heart was in my mouth and afterwards Bernard said he had been scared stiff. However, the acting on our part seemed to work [...]".

Another instance where Nancy Wake had to demonstrate her acting skills was when a gendarme informed her about Ian Garrow's escape from prison, who was her alleged cousin. In this situation, she had to play her role as his cousin and react appropriately and credibly to the news. Nancy performed well and pretended to be at first disbelieving and then delighted (Braddon 2009: 66, Wake 2011: 63). According to Braddon (2009: 66), Wake stated the following: "'I'm delighted! Wouldn't you be if your cousin had just escaped?' This entirely disconcerted the gendarme. 'I suppose I would,' he had to agree". Braddon (2009: 67) also

emphasises that when Nancy Wake had realised that a policeman had been waiting at her door her instinct immediately told her that “the only innocent thing to do was to look delighted and then to ring up her husband to tell him the wonderful news”. So, after the policeman had left her apartment, she called Henri, who also pretended to be surprised. This phone call only served to distract the Gestapo in case they had tapped her phone (Braddon 2009: 66).

As a result of her instinctive reactions as well as her easy-going, fearless and confident appearance, Wake continuously succeeded in staying inconspicuous. Generally, she always took precautions against the risk of getting caught. For example, as Hannah (2006: 55) remarks, “[s]he’d managed to eat an English pound note she’d had in her bag – a memento from one of her escapees [...]”. Moreover, there was an increased chance that the Gestapo took notice of the secret meetings in the Fioccas’ own flat. Hence, Nancy and Henri provided a second apartment for O’Leary’s network and even employed a maid who cleaned and brought food there. Wake only rarely visited the flat because “[a]s Garrow’s ‘cousin’ she was too conspicuous and as a member of the Toulon group she was sometimes not even welcome” (Braddon 2009: 52). Eventually, remaining unnoticed became an incredibly difficult task for Nancy. As the Gestapo was highly present in Marseilles and they were still searching for the “White Mouse”, Nancy “made frequent appearances as the harmless socialite wife of Henri Fiocca” (Braddon 2009: 66). Once she became aware that her phone was being tapped, she decided that the best way to remain inconspicuous was to continue her daily life as usual. However, when Wake made a visit at one of her favourite bistros she was warned that people had been enquiring about her (Braddon 2009: 75). After her escape to England and return to France for SOE, during her legendary 400-kilometre bicycle trip Wake went to a black-market restaurant. There she washed herself while her lunch was being cooked, “conscious as ever of the fact that she must not attract attention at any stage by looking like a woman who had cycled two hundred kilometres” (Braddon 2009: 185). Her ability to stay constantly calm and cautious, and to avoid nervousness are evidence of Nancy Wake’s mental strength, but also her physical strength was enormous. Again, under the consideration of gender stereotypes, mental and physical strength are qualities associated rather with masculinity rather than femininity.

6.3.10. Wake’s mental and physical strength

Jürgs (2014: 134f.) gives insights in the requirements which had to be fulfilled by SOE agents in order to be recruited:

Gesucht waren nicht in erster Linie physisch robuste Männer und Frauen, sondern eher solche mit einer starken Psyche, die selbst unter extremen Bedingungen in der Lage sein würden, kühl Entscheidungen zu treffen, von denen nicht nur ihr eigenes Leben abhing, sondern auch das anderer [It was not physically robust men and women who were primarily sought, but rather such ones with mental strength who even under extreme conditions had the necessary cool to take decisions, on which not only their own life depended, but also the life of others].

As part of the course, every candidate had to pass a psychological examination, which also attested Nancy Wake's mental strength (Fitzsimons 2002: 173). Whilst it was particularly essential that candidates like Wake had a strong psyche, she also reached her physical limits during the 16 weeks of her SOE training (Fitzsimons 2002: 172). Despite Fitzsimons' (2002: 177) claim that Nancy, with a height of 170 cm, could by nature not be physically strong, she proved that she was indeed. Cook and Cusack (2010: 25f.) refer to women's mental and physical weakness as gender stereotypes. Furthermore, Lips (2014: 118) suggests that women have been historically considered to be unsuitable for combat roles, since there is the wide spread belief that they do not satisfy the necessary physical requirements. Nancy challenged the prevailing public opinion that men are the strong sex and proved that also women can be both, mentally and physically strong.

As can be seen from the analysed biographical texts, Nancy Wake succeeded in accomplishing the challenges of an extremely exhausting bicycle ride to Chateauroux, which she would not have been able to do without physical fitness and strength. According to Hannah (2006: 83f.), it was a "400-kilometre round trip – about the same as cycling from London to Dublin". Wake (2011: 135) herself states, "I had pedalled 500 kilometres in seventy-two hours. [...] When I'm asked what I'm most proud of doing during the war, I say 'the bike ride'". Normally, society prescribes that men ought to possess physical strength, whereas women are stereotypically presented as weak. Also some of the Maquis men did not believe that Nancy Wake was capable of pedalling such a long-distance route. But she proved the opposite again, even though she herself did not describe herself as "a lover of exercise" (Fitzsimons 2002: 236, Wake 2011: 6). Braddon (2009: 121) refers to the fact that she initially even did not participate in the physical training during her SOE course and pretended to be sick. Only after it was agreed that the start of the training sessions would be from now on at 09:00 a.m., "she miraculously recovered and joined her comrades in their violent exercising". The "violent exercising" Nancy Wake's training consisted of is in respect of gender roles typically associated with masculinity, which is also mentioned by Lips (2014: 119). She argues that "women are supposed to be gentle,

nurturing, compassionate, caring, accommodating – not tough, aggressive, decisive, or willing to take physical risks”.

Nancy Wake’s hard and physically demanding training made her body strong and fit enough for her mission in France. But she also became tougher and mentally stronger from during this time, as the following excerpt taken from Braddon’s (2009: 210) biographical fiction underlines: “Nancy washed corpses of Maquisards who had died a few days earlier. Two years before that, she was a squeamish girl who could not bear to touch a dead body and nearly had fainted when she had done that”. This clearly indicates that Nancy Wake grew stronger and more resilient during the time she was fighting against the Germans along with the Maquis. Hence, it could be argued that by staying in a male environment she increasingly adopted stereotypically masculine traits. One of these traits is aggression, which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

6.3.11. Her aggressive and violent side

At first, it needs to be stressed that with respect to gender roles and stereotypes, it tends to be men who are expected to behave aggressively and exercise violence, while women are thought to be passive and submissive. Therefore, femininity is closely linked with peace and women are expected to be peace-loving and “pacifist by nature”. In contrast, in many cultures, aggression and violence are considered as markers of masculinity. That is why men are constantly challenged to prove their manhood by displaying aggressive behaviour (Peterson & Runyan 1993: 82f.).

The sources of Nancy Wake’s aggression are her loyalty to Jews and her hatred of the Nazis. Wake (2011: 4) states in her autobiography that she experienced the harsh and inhumane treatment of Jews, who were publicly discriminated in 1934 in Vienna. Hannah (2006: 31) claims that when Nancy became an ambulance driver “[i]t made [her] angry to see these poor refugees homeless and hungry – all because of Hitler’s terrible ideas”. Especially the injustice, which these people suffered from, provoked feelings of anger and rage in her (Hannah 2006: 36). Hannah (2006: 28) additionally remarks that Wake herself thought that she could never harm a human being, not even a cat, but that she never hesitated to hurt a German. Hence, it could be argued that to her, the Germans were not regular human beings.

Other quotations from her autobiography show that Wake (2011: 142) contradicts herself, as she states the following: “There had been nothing violent about my nature before the war yet the years would see a great change. But in spite of my virulent attitude to the enemy I could not

condone torture and brutality on our part [...]”. Hence, on the one hand her negative experiences with the Germans triggered violent and aggressive behaviour, but on the other hand, she condemned the Maquis men sexually abusing three women who had been captured. Braddon (2009: 221) points out that when Nancy saw one of the women, who was in fact a German spy, she was shocked by the way she looked, “naked, wild-eyed and filthy dirty”, and for a moment neglected her duties as a soldier, namely to sentence her to death. She as a woman was simply overwhelmed by compassion with the other woman. Here, it can be argued that Wake drifted from the vigorous, tough soldier to the empathic woman in the space of a moment. In this context, it has to be briefly noted that empathy is a trait stereotypically associated with femininity (cf. Lips 2014: 28, Basow 1992: 63). However, shortly afterwards, “Nancy paused to crush back her own instincts of pity and revulsion” and ordered the Maquis to kill her. Tardivat said that it would be cruel to shoot a woman, but when Nancy, enraged by the men’s cowardice, expressed her willingness to do it herself, they followed her order and killed the woman while she was having her breakfast (Hannah 2006: 90). Wake (2011: 142) explains, “For my part I showed absolutely no emotion as she walked to her death. [...] How had I become so aggressive? It was simple. I remembered Vienna, Berlin and the Jews”.

From a gender point of view, it can be said that in this situation, Nancy’s empathic, and therefore stereotypically feminine, nature was shortly disclosed, before she performed a typically “masculine” behaviour again. Led by her aggression, she cold-heartedly ordered the death of the German spy without any outward display of empathy. The subsequent example highlights again Nancy’s “masculine” side and shows her as a ruthless killer, as she applied her knowledge about silent killing during a raid on a German ammunition depot.

Braddon (2009: 122) states that during her training, “[s]ilent killing and unarmed combat she regarded with some horror as dirty and violent. But when the thought occurred to her that it could easily be a choice between the silent killing of a Nazi or herself in a concentration camp, she studied hard at the dirt”. In this context, Hannah (2006: 91) refers to Wake’s opinion that “[t]he only good German is a dead one”. Thus, Nancy, who killed a German sentry by means of silent killing, was convinced that she had handled the situation correctly and that killing the German was justified. The fact that she as a woman murdered a man, who is normally expected to be stronger than a woman, indicates that here, reversed gender roles are presented. The situation serves as an instance of Nancy Wake’s female strength and violence and the sentry’s male weakness. On another occasion, Nancy Wake used her Bren gun to defend herself and four Maquisards against a German attack. Here, Nancy is described as cold-blooded killer who was not affected by the fact that she had just killed human beings. Her only thought was

that these Germans could have also shot her, and therefore she viewed her action as legitimate (Jürigs 2014: 231).

As Peterson and Runyan (1993: 81f.) point out, the concept of women as killers contradicts the social ideal that reduces women to their role as “life-givers“, while the role of the “life-takers” is ascribed to men. Women are excluded from combat roles, as men are held responsible for the protection of women and children. Women’s tasks as “life-givers” include the mourning of those who died in war, as well as “produc[ing] new lives for the nation to replace its lost members”. While men are seen as “naturally aggressive and competitive, which presumably prepares them to kill or be killed”, women are considered “undesirable partners in combat”. Nancy Wake, however, proved that also women can act as efficient, aggressive and violent fighters in the battlefield. After her “masculine” traits, namely her violent and aggressive characteristics, were presented, the following section will focus on her traditionally feminine traits and how she could make use of them on several occasions.

6.4.Nancy Wake’s stereotypically feminine characteristics

Nancy Wake could clearly benefit from the fact that she was a woman, her femininity and her role as Madame Fiocca. Jürigs (2014: 136), for example, suggests that SOE’s recruiting staff saw several advantages in employing women instead of men. He presents that SOE’s motivations for women’s recruitment were highly stereotypical:

Vorrangig suchen die Anwerber Frauen, die jung, hübsch und tapfer sind. Nancy Fiocca kann alle drei Bedingungen erfüllen. [...] Junge, hübsche Frauen können sich bei gefährlichen Aufgaben im Feindesland besser bewegen: Man setze sie zum Beispiel auf ein Fahrrad, hänge einen Korb ans Lenkrad, und schon sehen sie aus wie irgendeine der vielen jungen, hübschen Französinen, die in Zeiten der Not unterwegs sind auf der Suche nach Lebensmitteln für ihre Familien. Junge Männer dagegen sind auf den ersten Blick verdächtig, weil Milice und SS Jagd machen auf alle, die sich der Verpflichtung zur Zwangsarbeit entzogen hatten und vom Alter her dafür infrage kommen [The recruiters primarily search for women who are young, pretty and brave. Nancy Wake can fulfil all of the three conditions. [...] Young and pretty women can move better in the enemy's country when carrying out dangerous tasks: For example, if they are seated on a bicycle, and a basket is placed on the steering wheel, they immediately look like any of the numerous young, pretty Frenchwomen, who in times of need are on their way to search for food for their families. Young men, however, immediately appear suspicious, as the Milice and SS chase everyone who has circumvented the obligation to perform forced labour and would be eligible, as far as age is concerned].

Buckmaster furthermore encouraged the recruitment of women because men would be softened by their attractiveness (Jürigs 2014: 137). Also Fitzsimons (2002: 111) mentions that physically

fit and healthy men were considered as potential enemies, but beautiful women were not suspected by the “particularly macho German men”. According to Fitzsimons (2002: 111), Wake knew how to attract attention. She simply pretended to be a frivolous Frenchwoman who seemingly was not much concerned about the events of war and occasionally even offered German men a date. Hannah (2006: 37) explains Nancy’s advantageous role as Madame Fiocca. She refers to the first meeting between Nancy Wake and a member of the French Resistance, who was convinced that no one would suspect her as Madame Fiocca, the wife of a wealthy industrialist. The leading members of the Résistance were certain that she as a woman was less likely to be caught than men while delivering secret messages. Before explaining in detail in which situations Wake made use of her femininity, it is helpful to discuss, under the consideration of gender stereotypes, what it was that made her appear feminine. Firstly, her development as a woman will be discussed.

6.4.1. The development of her feminine identity

Fitzsimons (2002: 49) describes Nancy Wake after her arrival in Paris. He stresses that “[t]he gawky girl turned comely young teenager had now developed into a singularly stunning woman, with poise, presence, sexiness, the lot”. Furthermore, he notes that, at that time, she was portrayed as “an elegant yet exuberant woman of refined dress, doubly generous bosom, and open expression”. However, this was not her natural way of appearing. Wake copied the French style, as she admired the French women for their elegance.

In Fitzsimons’ descriptions of Nancy Wake numerous female stereotypes, such as sexiness, elegance, fancy clothing, full bosom etc. occur. In this context, it has to be mentioned that in modern days, women are increasingly regarded as sexual objects. In today’s society, femininity equals being attractive and seductive which has severe consequences already for adolescent girls, as pointed out by Goodin, Van Denburg, Murnen and Smolak (2011). They refer to the so-called “objection theory” which suggests that “repeated exposure to objectifying experiences leads to self-objection, in which girls or women internali[s]e societal messages that sexually objectify them or others – leading them to view their own bodies as objects to be evaluated according to narrow standards of attractiveness” (Frederickson & Roberts 1997, cited in Goodin, Van Denburg, Murnen & Smolak 2011: 2).

With regards to Nancy Wake’s development, she did not only become more feminine over time, i.e. sexually attractive and pretty, but also more self-confident. Wake (2011: 4) herself points out that right after her negative experiences in Vienna, she was wondering what

she as “an inexperienced girl” could do “or hope to achieve when so many brilliant well-informed men had failed to make an impact on the outside world [...]”. From this initially insecure girl who considered herself powerless and placed men in a superior position, she was constantly developing into a self-assured woman who was determined to fight the Germans and also convinced of her ability to do so. Hannah (2006: 61) suggests that Nancy’s leaving of Marseilles marked the beginning of a new stage in her personal development: “Nancy realised that, during the last few months, she had left some of her dizzy, flirty self behind in Marseilles; she had become a rather different, fiercer woman”. In this context, one could argue that she had forfeited her femininity in order to become more “masculine”, as fierceness is believed to be a marker of masculinity (cf. Turner-Bowker 1996: 475).

One of the Maquis leaders, Henri Tardivat, said the following about Nancy: ““She is the most feminine woman I know until the fighting starts. Then she is like five men”” (Escott 2012: 189, Hannah 2006: 78, cf. Braddon 2009: 195). Looking through a stereotypical lens, only when Nancy was fighting she behaved like a man, but her actual identity was feminine. According to Braddon (2009: 200), she was

[...] a young woman who slouched a little to identify herself with her men and to disguise her own quite unmasculine charms, who coped with the roughness of endless male conversation by assuming a mask of amiable vagueness, [...]. Here, unmistakably, was one who lived fully and equally the life of her fighting men but who remained always a woman.

Hence, only for the time being and for the purpose of war, Nancy Wake adapted to her new male environment. Since she wanted to take part in war and fight the Germans, she became a member of a men’s group and got accustomed to male behaviour and manners, but actually she never forfeited her femininity. Only when Nancy became angry did her femininity fade. In such situations she adopted an upright posture, stood with her “feet apart [and] hands on hips”, which is a rather “masculine” body posture (Braddon 2009: 205). Seemingly, Nancy saw herself forced to act in a “masculine” way in order to be accepted by the Maquis, but her features of femininity cannot be disregarded.

6.4.2. *Female weakness as a gender stereotype*

Society normally views women as the emotional, soft and weak sex, whereas men are expected to be tough, strong and fierce (cf. Lips 2014, Turner-Bowker 1996, Prentice & Carranza 2002). Numerous examples show that, even though Nancy Wake of course fulfils masculine gender

roles, she also conforms to the gender stereotype that women are weak. Especially, her love to her husband Henri Fiocca made her vulnerable.

Wake (2011: 28) states that they both were aware that they had met their match and that they simply enjoyed spending time together. When she was forced to leave Henri because she was wanted by the Gestapo, she bitterly “cried all the way to the station” because she had to bid farewell to the most important person in her life (Hannah 2006: 53). After her unsuccessful attempts to escape, she was still in Marseilles and had to pass her flat “where she knew Henri would be at the moment” and burst into tears. But instead of “going soft” and following her emotions, like women are usually expected to do, she remained reasonable and mindful, which are regarded as masculine traits, and did not enter the apartment (Braddon 2009: 91f.). As Hannah (2006: 81) reports, after Wake had successfully escaped to London, she desperately missed her husband and dog. Without them she did not feel at home there (Hannah 2006: 63). Also during her time working for SOE in France she was often thinking about Henri. She preferred being busy so that her work distracted her from the negativity in her life (Hannah 2006: 81). After the war, when Wake was told that her beloved husband had been killed she was devastated and deeply shocked. According to Fitzsimons (2002: 275f.), DenDen, who worked with Nancy, stated the following: “This was the only time I ever saw her, seriously, seriously distressed”. Nancy blamed herself for her husband’s death: “‘They killed him, because they couldn’t find *me*’ [...]” [original emphasis] (Hannah 2006: 95). When she had to put Picon to sleep, Nancy was similarly distressed and burst into tears as she had done upon the occupation of France, the occasion of her dream about Dédée’s husband and being informed about Henri’s execution (Braddon 2009: 263).

Thus, not only personal affairs, e.g. Henri’s and Picon’s death, made Nancy Wake weep. Braddon (2009: 26) refers to the fall of Paris on 13 June 1940 which made her cry all day long because “she felt wholly French”. Wake (2011: 38) herself recalls that she was in tears for days after she had taken up her job in “a small voluntary ambulance unit” because she could not bear witnessing the distress experienced by refugees. In particular she was horrified by the bodies of the children. In this context, a common gender stereotype is that women are permanently empathic, especially with regards to children, as, in contrast to men, they are thought to possess an innate maternal instinct. In this respect, Basow (1992: 234) lists several “myths of motherhood”. She explains that there is the common belief that women in general are meant to be mothers. Unless they bear children and without the responsibility of maternal duties, they will not be able to lead a happy and satisfying life. A second widely held myth suggests that it

is women's natural purpose to be mothers and that motherhood "is women's most fulfilling and transcend[en]t relationship".

Besides the stereotype that women are motherly and caring, they are thought of as being more emotional, more sensitive, sadder and more fearful than men, which can be also detected in the subsequent examples. Hannah (2006: 45) takes reference to Nancy's support of families who sought to escape. She wanted to avoid getting emotionally involved in the problems of these families, which often was inevitable, since "[b]eneath the tough exterior, Nancy was soft as they come". Also when Nancy arrived at Chateauroux, "[f]or the first time in her work for the Resistance she felt scared and very alone" (Hannah 2006: 86). Furthermore, after she had killed the German sentry at the factory, she faced serious mental issues. She isolated herself from the Maquis and wanted to be left alone in her bus for days (Jürs 2014: 243). This behaviour clearly indicates that Nancy Wake was not the cold-blooded, gruff and cruel killer that she outwardly appeared. After having discussed Nancy Wake's personality with regards to her emotionality, which society considers to be a typically feminine characteristic, in the subsequent section another female stereotype will be dealt with.

6.4.3. *The importance of fashion, style, slimness and body care*

According to gender stereotypes, another female weakness, besides women's hypersensitivity and emotionality, is the exaggerated importance they place on their appearance and body figure. By means of stereotyping, society puts women under the pressure of being constantly perfectly styled and dressed as well as having a well-shaped and flawless body. Gervais, Vescio, Förster, Maass and Suitner (2012: 743) take reference to the negative psychological effects for women caused by societal expectations. They state that by reducing women to their outer appearance women might develop body image concerns. Lips (2014: 26) mentions that nowadays, "it is considered more important for women than for men to be physically attractive [...]". Similarly, McNeill (2018: 86), who focusses on fashion as a means of self-expression, states that fashion is closely connected with the "emotional well-being of women" and is therefore an indispensable part of their lives (cf. Rafferty 2011, Jantzen et al. 2006). Roux and Korchia (2006, cited in McNeill 2018: 86) emphasise that it is not just women's personal preferences that are crucial for their fashion choices. Additionally, a large influence is felt by whichever style is socially accepted in their cultural environment.

Seemingly, also Nancy Wake strived to meet social demands concerning female attractiveness, as she was highly interested in fashion and invested considerable effort on her

looks. Surely, she matched the ideal of beauty which is also confirmed by Jürs (2014: 21) who describes how Nancy looked in 1933 in London:

Nancy war jung und attraktiv, 1,76 Meter groß, trug liebend gern High Heels und auffällig große Hüte, hatte leuchtend blaue Augen, dunkelbraunes Haar und unendlich lange Beine [Nancy was young and attractive, 1.76 metres tall, loved wearing high heels and strikingly large hats, had bright blue eyes, dark brown hair and endlessly long legs].

Here, she is depicted like a model with stunning beauty and great charisma. With the qualities she possessed, she could be said to be a stereotypical dream girl for every man. Wake (2011: 2) claims to have loved staying in Paris, which she calls a “woman’s city”. There she enjoyed window-shopping in the boulevards and discovering new clothes as well as jewellery. Later on, when she already worked as a courier, on her train trips she would always read “a French magazine in her most expensive clothes” (Hannah 2006: 39). Two examples taken from biographical novels dealing with Nancy Wake’s life also show that she wore sophisticated clothes and paid attention to well-groomed appearance. For example, Braddon (2009: 88) stresses how she looked before leaving France:

Nancy was dressed as smartly as ever, determined to attract no unwelcome attention by looking hunted. She wore silk stockings, Cuban-heeled shoes, a smart navy blue costume, a camel-hair coat and no hat. Her nails were well tended and polished. Over her shoulder she carried her large handbag: in it some espadrilles walking shoes and also a smaller leather purse containing all her jewels.

Also Hannah (2006: 63) refers to Wake’s elegant look. She explains that Nancy considered the way English women were styled after she had successfully escaped to England:

Nancy would put on her best French frock, smear gravy browning on her legs in place of stockings – which were hard to find during the war – and go to see *Gone with the Wind* at the cinema. English women were urged to dress well, and wear make up (even though cosmetics were rationed) to keep morale high.

Throughout her life, she had always kept her great sense of style and fashion, but on the day of her parachuting to France, she covered her femininity by military equipment and overalls which is symbolic for her transformation. She was to become accustomed to her new, more “masculine” role as a British spy. Wake (2011: vi) mentions that “[o]ver civilian clothes, silk-stockinged and high-heeled, [she] wore overalls, carried revolvers in the pockets, and topped the lot with a bulky camel-haired coat, webbing harness, parachute and tin hat”. Still, she wore two elegant nightdresses at night and stressed the following: “However mannish I looked by day, I always slept in satin” (Wake 2011: 141). Also Braddon (2009: 169) emphasises that

“[h]owever masculine her garb might be whilst she walked or fought, she slept like a proper lady!” (Braddon 2009: 169).

The following scene further indicates that Nancy Wake was concerned about her look and appearance. When the Swiss Ambassador invited her to a cocktail party she replied that she could not attend the party, solely on the grounds that she did not have any clothes except from her military uniform and boots. Shortly thereafter Nancy spotted two fashionably dressed women who were taunting her about her looks, inspecting her “from her boots to her dishevelled hair”. Their gossip could be easily heard, and despite Major Farmer, codenamed Hubert, encouraging Nancy to attend the party, she initially hesitated because she felt the women were right. Soon afterwards, however, she went to the hairdresser, bought some new clothes and shoes and attended the cocktail party perfectly styled (Braddon 2009: 243).

Shortly after the end of war, she went to a posh Marseilles shop to buy herself “a black dress, high-heeled shoes and a small flowered hat”. Seemingly she had missed wearing her feminine clothes and living a ladylike life. Here, her new clothes could be interpreted as a symbol of the return to her old, “feminine” life. The Maquis men saw her wearing her new dress in the evening and were impressed: “This woman with the fashionably covered head and the slender silken ankles and neat waist had no bearing on the comrade they had been expecting”. She immediately received an invitation to dinner with Alsop, one of the American Maquisards (Braddon 2009: 249f.).

Not only did Nancy Wake value elegant fashion, but also her jewels, especially those pieces Henri gave to her. Once when the Germans controlled a train and Nancy was forced to flee, she lost her precious jewellery while running. It is commonly believed that women in particular love jewellery. According to Dittmar, Beattie and Fries (1996: 189, 191), jewellery, like clothes, serves to reflect one’s self-image and belongs to a category of goods with symbolic and emotional associations, which is why in particular women like buying it. Also Wake (2011: 79) seemed to love her diamonds, including her engagement ring, “a flawless three-carat solitaire diamond”, as well as “a diamond eternity ring, a diamond watch, a diamond brooch in the shape of a little wire-haired terrier, another like a spray of flowers with diamond and ruby-studded buds. [Additionally,] [t]here were gold bracelets and some dress rings”. She remembered every piece of jewellery she had possessed. Hence her jewellery must have meant a lot to her, which Wake (2011: 79) also admits, stating, “I had been fond of my jewellery”.

With respect to gender and body image, it is a fact that women, in comparison to men, are more concerned about their weight and body shape. Already female adolescents aim at reaching or maintaining the culturally accepted body weight (Heatherton 2001: 1282). Lips

(2014: 26) refers to thinness as “one key aspect of attractiveness in Western cultures” and claims that being overweight is regarded as unappealing and unattractive. Wake did not seem to be satisfied with her figure, as she went to England before her wedding with Henri and planned to attend a three-week slimming course. Wake (2011: 29) stresses that “[a]ll the most chic French women were doing it”.

According to prevalent gender roles, not only smart dresses, precious jewellery and a flawless body lead to a woman’s perfect look, but also glamorous make-up, creams and other personal care products. Maurice Buckmaster, who was the chief of the F Section, knew that Nancy Wake was a woman who loved using exquisite make-up and thus, handed her a silver powder compact as a gift before she was parachuted (Hannah 2006: 76). During her time in France, with a container carrying the label “PERSONAL FOR HELENE” Nancy received special goods from SOE once in a month. These included “her favourite Elizabeth Arden face cream, Brook Bond tea, and chocolates – none of which you could get in France during the Occupation” (Hannah 2006: 80, cf. Wake 2011: 119). During her activities as a spy Nancy barely had any opportunities to take care of her body and wash herself. For example, while she was on a train to Madrid, she tidied herself up by washing herself, cleaning her teeth, applying some make up, combing her hair, spraying herself with perfume and putting on her new clothes she had bought in Barcelona (Wake 2011: 91). Nancy Wake was not only concerned about her own look, but she also placed a lot of value on the well-groomed appearance of other people.

For example, at her first encounter with the Maquis fighters, their haggard looks struck her immediately. The men looked “unwashed, underfed, bedraggled, bellicose and slightly hunted [...]” (Fitzsimons 2002: 199). As a reader one gets the impression that Nancy was probably slightly disgusted in this situation. Also the following scene shows that Wake attaches high importance to hygiene and personal care: “In the company of fifty surly and suspicious-looking Maquis, whose personal dirtiness was only exceeded by that of their table manners, Nancy ate an uncomfortable meal” (Braddon 2009: 146). This quotation underlines that women are often thought to be easily disgusted, since they are clean, neat and value a well-groomed appearance and table manners. Schubart (2018: 174), who puts disgust in relation with gender, draws attention to the fact that women indeed feel disgust more easily than men, however “[t]here is no innate reason for this difference”. Some people presume that women’s higher level of emotionality might be the reason for their easily aroused disgust.

6.4.4. *Attractiveness and sexual charisma as female stereotypes*

Nancy Wake is described not only as a beautiful and cultivated lady. Jürigs (2014: 17), for instance, refers to Wake's autobiography where she reveals that she was a kind of "playgirl", which is again a female stereotype and directly linked to her sexual attractiveness. Neuman (2001: 160) clearly highlights that the messages conveyed by the media define the public opinion of what is considered as attractive, namely "to be young, tan, prepubescently thin with a large chest (whether man or woman), and sensuously dressed, with a blinding set of teeth [...]". Also Wykes and Gunter (2004, cited in Marsh & Melville 2009: 79) refer to the media's crucial role in creating socially dominant ideas of attractiveness. Similarly, they argue that the female stereotypes include features like being "forever slim, youthful, feminine and heterosexual".

When discussing Wake's personality, Jürigs (2014: 25) mentions her attractive and wild character and moreover stresses that she was frequently described as being "lurid" and "sultry", since she constantly was in the centre of men's attention. Furthermore Jürigs (2014: 10) emphasises that "sie war jung und hatte eine besondere erotische Ausstrahlung [...] [she was young and had a special erotic charisma]". Also Francis Cammaerts, a former agent, admired Wake's sexual attraction: "Nancy Wake, the sexiest woman it has ever been my privilege and pleasure to know" (Escott 2012: 185).

6.4.5. *Instances where Nancy Wake took advantage of her femininity*

Undoubtedly, Nancy Wake was aware of the impact she had on men. She knew she could perfectly perform femininity and took advantage of various female stereotypes. Jürigs (2014: 70) refers to frequent train checks and to the fact that a young woman who additionally was attractive would not arouse much suspicion. He is convinced that "[f]ranzösische Gendarmen [...] eher auf ihren Busen und auf ihre Beine achten [würden] als auf einen Ausweis [...] [French gendarmes would rather pay attention to her bosom and her legs than on her identity card [...]". During her SOE training course she experienced a rather different advantage. The prospective agents were trained in handling and producing explosives. What was most significant regarding the production of explosives was the precise weighing of the ingredients. In an interview with Fitzsimons (2002: 182f.) Nancy recalled, "As women we always had an advantage over the men because of our common background in cooking. We were a lot more

used to weighing out ingredients than they were”. This quotation obviously includes the highly stereotypical notion that women are experts in cooking and cook more than men.

Numerous further instances where Nancy Wake made use of her femininity can be encountered when analysing biographies dealing with her life. Hannah (2006: 39), for instance, points out that “[i]f the Vichy police searched the train, [Nancy] would flutter her eyelashes and flirt with them [...]”. She also mentions that Nancy Wake suggested a policeman to go on a date with her, only to distract him (Hannah 2006: 40). On some occasions she successfully played the role of a mistress, for example when she was imprisoned in Toulouse. Wake could escape with O’Leary’s help, as he told that she would be his mistress and they kissed each other (Hannah 2006: 55). Another situation where she successfully played the role of the mistress was during a train check. Once a meticulous ticket inspector was checking Nancy’s identity card and asking her for example “how it was that a humble doctor’s secretary on such a very low wage, as she undoubtedly was, nevertheless, to judge from the cut of her dress and her recent travelling record, seemed to travel far and wide in the very best of style?”. This time, the task of immediately coming up with a credible answer proved to be somewhat difficult, but Nancy Wake managed it brilliantly. “Blushing demurely, she told the official that he had to understand that as secretaries went, she was a very private kind of secretary... if Monsieur le Gendarme could, ahem, understand that” (Fitzsimons 2002: 110f.).

Another instance which shows how Nancy Wake succeeded in exerting control over men is the following: Nancy was on a train with a black-market pork in her suitcase and “four men she had helped escape”, while still being searched for as the mysterious “White Mouse”. When a German, seemingly a Gestapo man, entered the train she began to reflect upon what an innocent woman would do in such a situation. “First, look completely disinterested in the young gentleman opposite: second, never even think of whether he might be Gestapo or not since, to a legitimate traveller, it could not matter one way or the other: third, forget the danger of Marseilles’ curfew”. Hence, she just stared outside the window and by “her calm good looks” the German became attracted to her. He initiated a conversation by asking whether she also felt cold in the train, whereupon Nancy, clever as she was, “decided to test him by her answer” because she was not sure yet whether he was a German or French. “‘Well, we French people don’t have the fuel any longer to heat our trains like you do yours in Germany,’ she stated mildly”. As he did not contradict her she was certain that he was a German. They smiled at each other and after a while of flirting with each other they fixed a date when they would meet each other again. Having arrived in Marseilles where the station was full of policemen, the German helped Nancy carry her luggage. Nancy wisely ordered the man to carry her heavy bag in an

inconspicuous way: “‘The way you are carrying my bag the police will think it’s full of black-market stuff [...] You’ll get me into trouble. *Faites comme ça*. Swing it like this,’ she ordered ... and mimed for him someone carrying the lightest of handbags” [original emphasis]. Since he was a member of the Gestapo, the suitcase was not checked and the “White Mouse” successfully made use of her femininity again (Braddon 2009: 68ff.).

As a woman, Nancy Wake also had several advantages during her long bicycle trip to Chateauroux. Jürge (2014: 208) and Hannah (2006: 84) both make reference to Wake’s outfit which she had borrowed for the trip. As she pretended to be a French housewife, she wore “ein[en] alte[n] Rock, eine Bluse, eine Haube, ein paar feste Schuhe [an old skirt, a blouse, a bonnet and a pair of sturdy shoes]” and “her femininity was to be her only weapon on this trip [...]”. Hannah (2006: 85) and Fitzsimons (2002: 239) mention that Nancy Wake had to pass several checkpoints, but fluttering her eyelashes and flirting with the Germans enabled her to continue her trip unchecked. She perfectly played the role of a housewife and considered every detail, for example also the stereotype that women as housewives are expected to carry out tasks such as shopping. Hence, on her trip she stopped by at markets to buy some vegetables (Fitzsimons 2002: 239).

In her book “Behind enemy lines: gender, passing and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War” (2011), Juliette Pattinson deals in detail with strategies applied by female agents to remain undetected by the Gestapo. She refers to several female stereotypes, such as women’s “greater capacity for cool and lonely courage than men” and their ability to inconspicuously move on French territory. Selwyn Jepson, a leading member of SOE who was responsible for women’s recruitment, held the view that these stereotypical qualities would make women more suitable for clandestine work (Pattinson 2011: 26). Moreover, it was assumed that females were better than males in coming up with excuses and inventing “cover stories to extract them from dangerous situations”. Female presence in France was also less suspicious than male, since young French men were forced by law to work in Germany. Furthermore, German soldiers were influenced by an ideological belief that women should remain in an exclusively domestic environment. Therefore, women were hardly ever suspected to play an active part in resistance groups and could “make use of the gender tags of childcare and shopping to cover their clandestine activities”, like, for instance, Nancy Wake did (Pattinson 2011: 137-140). Moreover, women like Nancy Wake, as can be read above, repeatedly made use of female stereotypes, such as physical weakness and asked German men to help them carry their suitcase. This strategy was frequently successfully applied due to its naturalness (Pattinson 2011: 147). Pattinson (2011) also stresses the importance of appearance

for female spies. She points out that, in some settings, glamorous outfits enabled agents to perform femininity. By attracting attention they succeeded in initiating flirtatious conversations with German soldiers and Gestapo members. On other occasions, playing the opposite role of the inconspicuous peasant girl was considered more meaningful and appropriate (Pattinson 2011: 141-143, 146).

6.5. Nancy Wake's relationship with men

As a next step of the analysis, insights into Nancy Wake's relationship with men will be provided. She was married twice, had many male friends over the course of her life and a particularly close relationship with the Maquisards with whom she worked. Ian Garrow, Pat O'Leary, Henri Tardivat and the other Maquisards count among her male friends, but she also had a few female ones, e.g. Stephanie, who she mentions in her autobiography, and Violette Szabo, a fellow female SOE agent. Concerning her professional career, two of her superiors were Pat O'Leary, who led the organisation of escape lines, and Maurice Buckmaster, the head of the Special Operations Executive.

With regards to O'Leary, Hannah (2009: 49) mentions that Nancy Wake respected him because of his successful work, but she also described him as "a bit too bossy". O'Leary on the other hand, also had the highest respect for Nancy, but according to Hannah (2009: 56) did not show it: "Secretly, O'Leary was impressed by Nancy but he never let it show". Perhaps, the reason why he did not reveal his respect for her was that it would make him as a man appear weak, if he was impressed by a strong woman. One situation which underlines the generally accepted belief, or even expectation, that women are less gutsy and weaker than men is the following: When Nancy was imprisoned in Toulouse, O'Leary was afraid that she would be handed on to the Gestapo. He believed that even men could not cope with their interrogation techniques, not to mention women (Jürs 2014: 107).

Turning to Buckmaster, when having been asked about his fondness for Wake, he replied that "[s]he's different" (Hannah 2006: 84). In the aftermath of the war, in his memoirs Buckmaster claims to have been outraged because from various sides it was considered inappropriate to send women on mission, since they would lack physical abilities. It was also thought that their temperament would make them unsuitable for tasks conducted by SOE agents. According to Buckmaster, questioning the women agents' abilities and neglecting their bravery and willingness to fight was a dishonour, especially towards the dead agents (Jürs 2014: 254f.).

He clearly defended his female agents against gender stereotypes and appreciated their commitment.

6.5.1. *Nancy Wake and the Maquis*

6.5.1.1. *Men's attitude towards her as a female fighter*

Not only Buckmaster and O'Leary were highly impressed by her and respected her for her engagement and devotedness, but also Wake's Maquis men admired her for her bravery. Initially both some SOE officers and Maquisards tended to be rather sceptical however and believed that warfare and clandestine work are too dangerous for her as a woman. She therefore still had to prove herself and convince them that she was an indispensable part of the resistance fighters.

Nancy was often confronted with prejudices on the part of SOE officers. Their attitude was that a woman who bore the burden of being the only female trainee in a group of men "must be a veritable old dragon". However, when they first met her, "[t]hey were pleasantly surprised" (Braddon 2009: 121). Furthermore, when Nancy was to be parachuted into France and said goodbye, the other male SOE trainees deeply regretted her departure because "[t]hey hated seeing women go to what they knew lay ahead" (Braddon 2009: 132). Laurent, a Maquis leader, was also prejudiced against women fighters. Braddon (2009: 144) explains that, when he first met Nancy who arrived together with agent Hubert, Laurent "looked secretly amused as he noticed that one of [the Britons] was a woman". Another Maquis leader, who was not convinced of Wake's qualities at the beginning of her mission in France, was Gaspard. Due to the fact that she was a woman Gaspard expressively warned her, "'I hope you're not going to be a nuisance'" (Hannah 2006: 79).

Jürgs (2014: 187) refers to the Maquis' generally negative attitude towards women. He mentions that they held the same views as the hostile Pétainists, and encouraged gender inequality. Thus, Wake had to work hard to be regarded as an equal by her Maquis men, to which end she was successful. However, Jürgs (2014: 138) points out that Wake was still faced with social injustice caused by the gender wage gap. She received 300 pounds annually, which is about two thirds of what men earned in the same job.

Wake strived for equality of treatment and from time to time her relationship with the Maquisards changed. Fitzsimons (2002: 208) highlights that even though Nancy got on well with the men, she realised early the need of common rules. Since on one occasion, the men had

watched her peeing in the bushes, one of these rules was that Nancy as a woman “needed to be able to go to the toilet in peace and privacy [...]”. Not only this set of rules helped Nancy gain respect, but, as Jürigs (2014: 251) suggests, the Maquisards later on respected her as an equal member because they viewed her “unsentimentales hartes Auftreten [unsentimental tough appearance]” as typically masculine. Hannah (2006: 71) additionally mentions that John Farmer, alias agent Hubert, “found Nancy rather vulgar on occasions [...]”. These perceptions are obviously shaped by gender stereotypes which define men as tough, callous and vulgar people (cf. Matsumoto 2001: 206, Mills 2005: 273, Lips 2014: 14, 29).

Eventually, even key leaders, such as Gaspard had to confess that they had underestimated Nancy’s relevance for the Maquis. Hannah (2006: 81) describes the situation when Gaspard finally recognised her potential: “Nancy’s organisation of ‘drops’ became so efficient, that even surly Gaspard swallowed his pride, and asked Nancy if she would get his group ammunition from England”. Additionally, Wake (2011: 130) refers to the moment when she realised that Gaspard finally fully accepted her:

I will always remember this meeting with him [NB: Gaspard]. He looked at me and said, ‘Alors, Andrée’, took my arm and walked the rest of the way with me and Bazooka. I do not know what he was thinking at the moment but for my part it was something special, as if from then on we would understand each other. He was a man of few words, and I knew from those two that he respected me as a comrade-in-arms.

Henri Tardivat, another Maquis member, who was regarded by Nancy as her “favourite Frenchman, apart from Henri of course”, seemingly also did not treat Nancy on an equal footing right from the beginning. She had to convince him of her qualities as a fighter and after some time he allowed her to take actively part in attacks against the Germans with the men (Hannah 2006: 91, Braddon 2009: 194). Once Tardivat received a message from Nancy telling him that a German attack was taking place, whereupon he mobilised his men, who were eating their lunch, by screaming, “Come quickly, Madame Andrée is in trouble”. They made an exception for her and stopped eating, which baffled her: ““Frenchmen stopped eating?”” (Braddon 2009: 208). This example indicates that the men highly regarded Nancy. Tardivat even referred to her as “Madame”. Moreover, as a sign of appreciation, he named his daughter “Nancy” and chose Nancy Wake as her godmother (Hannah 2006: 102, Braddon 2009: 268).

In comparison to Tardivat and Gaspard, the two Americans Reeve Schley and John Aslop, who arrived in France to support the Maquis, were immediately aware of Nancy Wake’s abilities. As Braddon (2009: 199) puts it, Nancy, who was nicknamed “Gertie”, “seemed self-

possessed and confident, so they left themselves in her hands”. Later on, they referred to her as a “remarkable girl” and admired her “remarkable temper” (Braddon 2009: 209).

6.5.1.2. Wake's dominance over the Maquisards and her leadership

From an initially reserved woman, Nancy Wake developed to an accepted and even dominant female Maquis leader. Brescoll (2016: 416) mentions that the stereotypical belief that women are too emotional prevents them from access to positions of leadership. It is additionally assumed that they are “more communal (i.e., warm, kind, nurturing, etc.) but less agentic (i.e., aggressive, ambitious, dominant, independent, etc.)” than men, which makes them less suitable for leadership roles. Furthermore, within society, men have the privilege to be ascribed to dominant gender roles, whereas women are expected to be submissive, or are even thought to be naturally submissive. As Nancy Wake succeed in taking a leading role within the Maquis, she transcended these gender barriers. Subsequently, it will be discussed how she could achieve an equal or even higher status than the men in the Maquis and how she exercised her leadership role.

Braddon (2009: 195) provides insights into Nancy Wake's inner world and shows that she was reflecting upon how she could gain respect: “‘If I am to keep the respect of these camps, [...] I've got to keep up with them. I mustn't panic and I must seem as game as they are. And when you're with a man like Tardivat, that isn't easy. After all, he is a man and I am a woman'”. Here, Wake had the sense that she as a women had to fight for her position in the group, while men are advantaged and naturally regarded with more respect than women. While working with the Maquis, she experienced that men and women do not meet on the same level. However, after some time, Nancy ensured her dominance over the Maquis men by winning drinking competitions. Braddon (2009: 159) remarks the following:

To the Maquis, drinking was what duelling used to be to German students – a point of honour! Outwitted on all other scores, in their conferences with her, they relied on this last weapon to preserve their male superiority. Placidly she sat down with them to join battle and implacably she drank them all under the table. And it was as vital to her authority that she did this to the Maquis as it was that she improved their security.

This quotation indicates that Nancy Wake challenged the stereotype that only men are able to drink enormous amounts of alcohol. The men themselves considered their drinking abilities as a “last weapon to preserve their male superiority”, but Nancy won the competition against the men and thus, they began to accept her as a member of them. From that moment on, Nancy

Wake increasingly took responsibility for her male group and performed a leadership role. Braddon (2009: 215) goes as far as to say that “[h]ers was the sole responsibility: but hers also was all the power and authority attached to that responsibility”. The fact that she was regarded as powerful implies again that she does not conform to female stereotypes, since power is traditionally associated with masculinity (Lips 2014: 29). According to Basow (1992: 311), men tend to wield more structural power than women and are usually judged to be more dominant in leadership positions (cf. Brescoll 2016: 416, Lips 2014: 14f.).

There are numerous literary examples which depict Nancy Wake in her role as leader. When Nancy was on mission together with Major Farmer and Denis Rake, she, and not Rake, was chosen to take the leadership in case anything should happen to Major Farmer. This was exceptional, since normally women were not permitted to act as the group leader. However, Maurice Buckmaster and Vera Atkins trusted in Wake’s abilities and agreed that her strength, stubbornness, determination and courage made her suitable for leadership roles (Jürs 2014: 170). On one occasion, she led her men in an ambush on a German-occupied refinery in Mauriac. Jürs (2014: 241) emphasises that the Maquis would not have obeyed the commands of a woman a few weeks earlier. He claims that one of the reasons for the men’s higher respect towards Nancy was her bicycle ride to Chateauroux. She also saved her men’s lives after an unsuccessful attempt to attack a military truck. Concerning gender stereotypes, men are usually seen as protectors and life savers (Lips 2014: 118f., cf. Sjöberg 2014).

Braddon (2009: 157) also explains how Nancy gained her leading position within the Maquis. He mentions that she was the “chef du parachutage” and

would arm [the Maquis] only if they conformed to her concepts of military preparedness. [...] This, plus Gaspard’s humbling, plus the control she exercised over supplies of money and arms, plus the fact that she and the incapacitated Hubert alone knew all the plans for all the groups on D-Day, now established Nancy securely, if not legally, in the Maquis d’Auvergne as a leader, so that, in little more than a month, she had grown from a seemingly useless female agent, with a handbag full of coveted money, into probably the most powerful individual among seven thousand fighting men.

The next situation described by both Hannah (2006: 93) and Braddon (2009: 234f.) underlines Nancy’s role as a leader: When she ordered a change in the location of the headquarters, the men followed her command and together they found shelter in the vacant Château de Fragne. Braddon (2009: 235) states, “Nancy the guerrilla chieftain, the second they entered their new abode, suddenly became Nancy the house-proud hostess of the château. She set everyone, officers and all, to polishing the brass, sweeping out the dust of thirty years, scrubbing the floors and preparing the rooms”. As shown by this quotation, when the group moved into the castle,

domestic tasks were carried out by the men because Nancy ordered them to do them. From a gender perspective, in this scene, Nancy acted like a dominant male, whereas the submissive men performed the feminine gender role of cleaning the castle. Also Jürge (2014: 250) takes reference to the reversed gender roles evident in this situation. He points out that Nancy was surprised that the men refused her offer to help them, since “[d]as passt[e] nicht zum Macho-Wesen der Maquisards [that did not fit the Maquisards’ macho character]”. Neuliep (2009: 94) mentions that the macho-man stereotype originally concerns especially Hispanic men and is derived from the concept of “machismo”. Macho men are stereotypically described as being aggressive, violent, dominant, superior to women, infidel and insensitive. Even though this stereotype implies male dominance and female submissiveness, the Maquisards followed Nancy’s order to clean.

The fact that the Maquisards consistently obeyed Nancy’s commands is also evident from an extract from the George Medal recommendation given 17.07.45: “The Maquis troops most of them rough and difficult to handle, accepted orders from her and treated her as one of their own male officers” (Escott 2012: 185). A scene in which she remarkably performed her role as a leader who gave orders is described by Braddon (2009: 155f.). Roger, a Gestapo agent, was held hostage by the Maquis and Nancy ordered the men, ““For God’s sake, shoot the poor devil””, which they did. Generally, Wake clearly told the Maquisards what needed to be done and gave them commands, which can also be seen from the following situation: ““I want floodlights I can switch on. Much better than bonfires. Den – you’re good with electricity! How about fixing it up for me?”” (Braddon 2009: 236).

On many occasions the men even asked Wake what she wanted them to do and she undertook the distribution of the responsibilities: ““Bazooka, you’ll have to take over while we’re away. And Den, probably your codes and radio will come then too. If they do, you’ll have to receive the parachutage yourself”” (Braddon 2009: 193). The Maquisards also asked her for advice, for instance when an old French woman, who was a traitor, had been caught. When this woman managed to escape and climbed up a tree, the men were bewildered and helpless. Hence, they consulted Nancy, who “shrieking with laughter” gave them advice, and “[t]he Maquisards did what she said” (Braddon 2009: 238). This example demonstrates the deconstruction of the gender stereotype that women are dull and seek men’s advice in insecure and difficult circumstances. In the above-described example it was the reverse case. Also, the question arises whether Nancy laughed at the Maquis because they were not able to come up with a solution themselves. The fact that Nancy was asked for help in a difficult situation and that the men obeyed her orders implies that she enjoyed a special status in the Maquis.

6.5.1.3. Wake's special position within the Maquis

Numerous examples taken from literature indicate that Nancy Wake held a special position within the group, or had an even higher status than the men. For example, Braddon (2009: 194) and Fitzsimons (2002: 247) point out that fifty Maquisards provided a bus for Nancy by blocking the traffic and waiting for the perfect bus to arrive in order to steal it afterwards. Nancy then would sleep and live in this bus, whereas the men had to sleep outside in the woods. Moreover, her special status is evident from the next situation: A member of Buckmaster's staff informed him that Nancy had contacted London and had asked for a new radio. Hurriedly, Buckmaster asked him what he was waiting for. Additionally, he ordered the man to send her some perfume as well (Hannah 2006: 88). This scene clearly shows that the men did everything Nancy Wake wished.

How much they respected and appreciated her can be seen from the description of her birthday celebration. On Nancy's thirty-second birthday on 30 August 1944, five days after the liberation of France, the Maquis men went past her and saluted her (Braddon 2009: 240f., Fitzsimons 2002: 272). Braddon (2009: 240f.) describes the situation as follows: "Apparently tens of thousands of men marched proudly past their Madame Andrée. Bare-headed, clutching her flowers, wholly feminine, smiling broadly, she accepted the tribute that was being paid her". Here, she clearly displayed her femininity, and the men paid respect to her as a woman under whose leadership they had achieved great things together.

6.5.2. Are men weaker than Nancy Wake?

Nancy Wake asserted herself not only as a strong woman within the Maquis. Generally, she frequently stood her ground against men, which makes them appear weaker than her in numerous situations depicted in the autobiography, biography and biofictions analysed. For instance, on one occasion, during her SOE training course in Ringway, an American sergeant dared to expose Nancy by handing her a "present", which turned out to be a box including three condoms. To his surprise, Nancy was completely unimpressed and unembarrassed. So she started reading out the instructions. Immediately the American turned red and left the room (Thomas & Lewis 2016: 222, Wake 2011: 106f.). Probably he wanted to ridicule her because she was a woman in a male environment, and supposed to be inferior to the men, but she was not daunted and on the contrary, took revenge and embarrassed the man.

Another example that presents the supposedly strong male sex as the weaker is taken from Hannah's (2006) biographical fiction. She refers to the fact that when male and female SOE agents were parachuted, it was always the woman who had to jump first. This was also the case when Nancy and Hubert were parachuted and gives the impression that the men were too anxious to jump first instead wanting to ensure that the women landed safely before they were brave enough to jump themselves.

When comparing Nancy to her husband Henri, who never actively participated in the resistance and was deeply concerned about his wife, it is clear that she was far more fearless and enthusiastic about fighting the Germans. It can be argued that in Nancy's and Henri's life as a couple, the distribution of gender roles was reversed. Moreover, Henri was constantly softened by Nancy, considered her desires and in the end always let her have what she wanted, for example the black wedding dress, the ambulance and his financial support for the Résistance.

Besides Henri Fiocca, the Maquis men also often shared worries about Nancy Wake. A scene in which they are depicted as worried and sensitive, whereas Nancy is portrayed as a brave and gutsy woman is described by Braddon (2009: 184). When Wake left for Chateauroux, the men felt extremely anxious because they were concerned that anything could happen to Nancy. She, on the other hand, seemed to be less nervous and afraid than her men (Braddon 2009: 184). According to Braddon (2009: 234f.), in another scene, Denis Rake was worried that the chateau, from which the group had been operating from August 1944 onwards, was too closely located to the Germans. Nancy remained calm and told him not to be concerned about the Germans because she was convinced that they would have to worry about other issues, and would not care about the Maquis at the moment. Here, gender stereotypes are deconstructed and reversed, as normally, men are expected to be emotionally controlled and calm, while women are frequently presented as the overly emotional sex (Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux 1999: 107, cf. Lips 2014: 24).

The traditional gender roles are also reversed in a number of other examples. On one occasion, after Nancy had chosen twenty men to accompany her in an armed confrontation with the Germans, seven of them were killed by German bullets. The remaining Maquisards had watched their comrades dying, whereupon they suddenly lost their nerves and tried to withdraw. However, they were instantly stopped by Nancy who "sprang to her feet at once, infuriated by this display of cowardice, and bellowed after them" (Braddon 2009: 205). As Braddon (2009: 205) claims, "rage had an extraordinary effect upon her" and in this situation, nothing of her femininity was visible. Apparently, she was braver and less anxious than the cowardly men and

therefore, the prevailing gender stereotype of women as the emotional and vulnerable sex does not apply to Nancy Wake. This is also demonstrated by Fitzsimons (2002: 255) who mentions that when the Maquis had caught three women to abuse them sexually, Nancy ordered to kill one of them, as she was a German spy. Initially, the men did not execute her order, but when Nancy told them that she would kill the woman herself, the Maquis were “[s]hamed at the possibility that a woman was prepared to do something they weren’t– even shoot another women [...]” and relented. Here, the Maquisards wanted to prove their manliness and dauntlessness. Even though, they respected Nancy Wake as a leader, she was nevertheless a woman who needed to be convinced that men are not weak and cowardly.

6.5.3. *Wake’s confident, fearless, and even disrespectful behaviour towards men*

Nancy Wake did not accept the social norm that men are more highly regarded than women. She did not let herself be forced into an inferior, subordinated position and constantly acted in a self-assertive way, especially when being directly confronted by men. Traditionally, Nancy Wake’s assertiveness is perceived as a masculine trait, while females, on the contrary, are thought to act more passively than men (cf. Lips 2014: 28, Basow 1992: 70). Basow (1992: 70) additionally draws attention to the fact that “women [like Wake] who act assertively may be seen as violating sex-role norms and may experience social disapproval for assertive behavior[s]”.

Nevertheless, Nancy always stood her ground and was not even afraid to express disrespect towards men, if the situation required it. For instance, once she slapped a waiter because “he preferred the Germans any day to the rotten English”. Wake (2011: 160) points out that in her anger she gave him a tongue-lashing before punching him on his jaw which made him lose consciousness. Fitzsimons (2002: 278) mentions that she also slapped her father-in-law who accused her of having caused his son’s death. In reaction to this, he was ready to retaliate, but was stopped by his companion who called it “an imbecilic thing” to strike back (Fitzsimons 2002: 278).

Another incident where Nancy lost her temper happened during her work for the O’Leary network. Some men, who Wake helped to escape the country, had a second flat provided by the Fioccas. They used the lavatory too often in the night, which was heard by a neighbour. Attracting attention was of course dangerous and, for this reason, Nancy was in rage:

‘How often have I told you lot not to pull the chain unless it’s absolutely necessary?’ she demanded. [...] [W]ith considerable authority she concluded: ‘You should

know as well as I do that we're all in too deep to draw attention to ourselves. In future, more security and less lavatory flushing' (Braddon 2009: 53).

Wake was so confident that she did not even fear men working for the Gestapo. For example, when Nancy, her husband and two friends were returning home on foot, Nancy spotted a Mercedes Benz which belonged to Gestapo officers. She complained to them that she could not travel by car, thanks to the wartime petrol shortage: "All you lucky men in that lovely car, and I'm walking". Thereupon, the Gestapo officers offered her to bring her home, which, of course, she did not refuse. With horrified looks, Henri and their friends watched the car driving away. When they met Nancy again she was laughing and admitting: "Much quicker than walking [...] [...] [e]asier too!". She was also amused about their horrified faces (Braddon 2009: 71). This example indicates how witty, funny and venturesome Nancy was, but more importantly, also how fearless she acted when being confronted with men.

During her SOE training, she also knew how to confidently deal with men. After Selwyn Jepson, an officer, had been informed by another woman that Nancy had been drinking alcohol, he pointed out to Wake that SOE disapproved of women drinking. However, Nancy did not show any regret and her cheeky behaviour enraged the officer so that he even dismissed her from SOE (Braddon 2009: 120, Fitzsimons 2002: 175). Wake (2011: 104) gives her view on her firing, as follows: "I told him what he could do and where he could put it, and he fired me on the spot". Shortly afterwards, she was enlisted again because Garrow "explained her extraordinary volatility, her passionate loyalty to anyone who had actually served in the field and her fierce courage when people questioned her convictions" (Braddon 2009: 120). Her behaviour in this situation shows, on the one hand, how direct and blunt she was and, on the other hand, that she successfully stood her ground even in a male-dominated environment. In one of Nancy's parachuting trainings, she again revealed her blunt character and spoke in a disrespectful tone to a man. In the situation referred to, Nancy became unsettled because she was not adept at jumping by parachute. Thus, a trainer tried to calm and distract her by stating "Do all Australian girls have such lovely pearly teeth?", whereupon Nancy, in rage, told him to shut up (Braddon 2009: 125). Nancy also loved to spend her time playing jokes on men together with her friend Violette Szabo, but often the men attacked them too:

Being women both found the kitchen technique of home-made explosives much easier than the men so that a strong spirit of rivalry developed in the old manor house between the males and the females of the bomb-making species. Practical jokes grew daily more numerous- and Nancy and Violette, more often than not, were the target of these pranks (Braddon 2009: 128).

Several stereotypical notions, such as the idea that women are better cooks than men, are included in the quotation above. Furthermore, there is the stereotype that men are competitive and always aim to win, in particular against women, since their superiority is expected by society. However, Nancy and Violette were not women who accepted their subordinate role and did not surrender. They attacked their instructor and made him fall on the floor to present his trousers as a sign of their victory to the whole group afterwards (Braddon 2009: 129).

Later, on one of her first days in the Maquis, Wake overheard that a Maquisard wanted to steal her money and kill her. Clever as she was, she began to seduce him and asked him whether he was interested to sleep with her. After he did not deny his interest she responded indignantly, “I have no desire at all to be murdered in my sleep and then to have all my money stolen”. He had to acknowledge Nancy’s victory. Here, the woman appears to be stronger and more dominant than the man. Nancy Wake outplayed the man by means of her intellect and acted self-confidently and undauntedly (Braddon 2009: 147f.). Another example that perfectly demonstrates Wake’s self-assured appearance, is the following one: One day a stranger arrived, alleged that he was a colonel and wanted to take the lead by giving commands to the group. Nancy asserted her authority by announcing that she was the “chef du parachutage” for that Maquis and that he would get nothing from her. Despite the fact that everyone shared doubts concerning the man’s identity and status, “no one had so far dared to challenge a person of his alleged exalted rank” (Braddon 2009: 192). This example highlights again that Nancy Wake never feared a man, regardless of his status.

7. Discussion of findings: elements of femininity vs. elements of masculinity

As a fitting summary of the previously discussed incidents, in a personal statement Nancy Wake explained why she as a woman had been motivated to undertake dangerous resistance activities and clandestine operations: “‘I’m glad I was there. I’m glad I did what I did. I hate wars and violence but, if they come, then I don’t see why we women should just wave our men a proud good-bye and then knit them balaclavas’” (Braddon 2009: 273).

Peterson and Runyan (1993: 82) stress that society believes that women in general “have a natural revulsion against war [...]”. Therefore, one could argue that Nancy Wake’s detestation of war and violence are linked to her feminine nature and that she was, therefore, a stereotypical woman. However, what makes her appear unique and revolutionary is that she advocated and represented feminist ideas in times when it was not common for women to think in a way she did. Nancy Wake did not see a reason why the fact that she was a woman could prevent her from fighting. She had a very feminine personality and valued beauty, fashion and a glamorous lifestyle, but her willingness to take action against the Germans was more important to her than living a luxurious, ladylike life. Since her childhood she had always been rebellious, stood her ground and fought for her dreams. She defied gender stereotypes and proved that women can also be strong, tough and militant, sometimes even more so than men. Above all, the fact that she became the leader of a troop that consisted exclusively of men who did not only fully accept her as such, but deeply admired and highly regarded her for her courage and her unbroken will to fight, implies that she achieved equality between women and men at a time that was generally still marked by great inequalities between the two sexes.

In terms of her balance between masculine and feminine elements, Nancy Wake clearly fulfilled female gender stereotypes when she lived the life of a rich wife in Marseilles. The time she had spent in Paris was also marked by shopping sprees and cheerful chatting with her female friends. She clearly adapted her life to that of a typical wealthy woman, bought her clothes from the most exclusive shops, spent hours in beauty salons and had dinner in the most expensive restaurants. Even though she early stood her ground against her husband and, for example, did not cook for him like other women did for their spouses, one could call her lifestyle a feminine one. However, after the Germans had gained power and Wake had witnessed their cruelty in Vienna and Berlin, she took the decision to change her life. At the beginning of her career in the French Resistance, she led a double life - the life of Madame Fiocca, and the dangerous life of a courier and agent. At this stage of her life, on the one hand she continued her superficial “feminine” life and performed gender roles associated with femininity, such as shopping.

However, her hidden life as an agent included hazardous tasks and missions that were not expected to be carried out by women. With her increased involvement in the French Resistance and her new job as an SOE spy she dismantled gender stereotypes. Especially after her parachuting into France and her integration into the Maquis, she was influenced by her male environment and adopted male characteristics. What is obvious following the literary analysis is that Wake had to sacrifice her femininity and assume stereotypically masculine roles in order that the Maquisards accepted her as a female agent and their leader, which they subsequently did. She took advantage of markers of masculinity, such as the stereotype that men are able to drink more alcohol than women, and proved her superiority in drinking competitions for example.

Even though one could argue that Nancy Wake put on a mask under which her femininity vanished, on a few rare occasions her stereotypically feminine traits, i.e. her emotionality and vulnerability, were visible. Mostly, she experienced her “feminine weakness” in situations that are linked with her husband Henri, for example their inevitable separation before Nancy’s escape to Great Britain or his death. When carrying out her clandestine activities she frequently made use of gender stereotypes to remain inconspicuous and undetected by the Germans. For instance, she playfully used her sexual attractiveness to impress Gestapo members and flirt with them. Furthermore, during her 400-kilometre bicycle trip she pretended to be a rural housewife who is merely on the way to go shopping on one of the local markets. One of Nancy’s character traits that can be described as “feminine” is her intuition which she highly relied on, especially in dangerous situations. However, in terms of her logical and strategic thinking, as well as her intelligence, she conforms to masculine stereotypes.

In general, concerning the representation of Nancy Wake as a female spy in literature, the “masculine” traits clearly outweigh the “feminine” ones. It can be claimed that her aggressive behaviour and her violent exercising are associated with masculinity. Nancy Wake is often depicted as a vulgar and enraged person who frequently used swearwords. For example, she ranted at the Maquis men and expressed her anger when they refused her order to kill a German female spy. Furthermore, she even killed a German sentry on her own. Her role as a killer contradicts the traditional role of women as “life-givers” and conforms to the masculine role of the “life-taker” (Peterson & Runyan 1993: 81). The fact that she did not fear other men and even aggressively confronted them is evident in numerous literary examples. For instance, she slapped her father-in-law as well as a waiter who made an inappropriate comment about the Germans. Markers of masculinity associated with Nancy Wake are also her bravery and risk-taking behaviour. Wake worked under highly dangerous circumstances and led ambushes

against the Germans. Traditionally, women were not allowed to actively contribute to warfare, as society was shaped by the stereotypical belief that women would be too anxious to fulfil combat roles. Coping with the life on the battlefield and firing weapons at the enemy were seen as male tasks, but Wake proved that she as a woman could act as a great warrior too. What characterised her further was her mental and physical strength, which are both again typically “masculine” qualities. Wake constantly remained calm; even in those situations where her identity was likely to be revealed and she had to convey her cover story in the most credible way, she did not show any inappropriate emotions, such as nervousness. The ability to fully control her emotions is linked with masculinity, as gender stereotypes imply that men are the less emotional sex. The fact that Nancy Wake accomplished the physically demanding trip to Chateauroux also indicates that she was trained and fit. Also during her preparatory SOE training for her mission in France she did strenuous physical exercise. In her training group as well as in the Maquis she was the only woman. Her leadership over the Maquisards signifies again the deconstruction of gender stereotypes, since males are normally expected to take leadership responsibilities. It is a dominant cultural belief that men possess the ideal qualities to take leadership roles, whereas women are thought to be too emotional and submissive by nature, which of course does not apply to Nancy Wake (cf. Brescoll 2016, Lips 2014).

Concerning Wake’s relationship with men, she was generally deeply admired by them, both within SOE circles and the Maquis. In times of war, her Maquis men and the SOE officers respected Nancy for her leadership qualities and her unbroken will to fight. After the war, Nancy’s femininity re-emerged and especially her appearance and beautiful clothing were symbolic for her transformation. The Maquisards were impressed by elegantly dressed Nancy and nearly did not recognise their former comrade without her uniform. The idea that Nancy Wake was the most feminine woman, but the most masculine one when she was fighting was put forth by Henri Tardivat and can be confirmed after the in-depth-analysis of her representation as a female agent in World War II in biographical works.

8. Conclusion

Nancy Wake clearly led a life different from that of other women of her time. She ignored traditional gender roles prescribed to women, such as the roles of housewife and mother. Nancy Wake was a childless woman who would not have accepted being forced into patriarchal structures. Wake refused social norms and defied stereotypes, since she did not feel responsible for domestic tasks, but, on the contrary, focussed on her career as a secret agent and decided to live a stereotypically “masculine” life and defend her second home, France.

Even though she possessed some female-gendered traits, during her resistance activities and her SOE mission in the French Auvergne these were all nearly replaced by traits traditionally viewed as masculine. Although it should be also mentioned that Nancy Wake could make use of her femininity too and perform female gender roles, for instance to pass through German checkpoints, amongst other things, her bravery, aggressiveness and violence are stereotypically associated with masculinity rather than femininity. Her excellent abilities, intelligence and fearlessness helped her survive the Second World War.

Unlike other female spies, the “White Mouse” was never trapped and successfully overcame every challenge and her life did not end until 2011:

“When Wake died in 2011, age ninety-eight, her ashes were scattered in the forests near Montluçon where she had proved herself among the bravest of the brave during 1944.”

(Thomas & Lewis 2016: 271)

What remains after Nancy Wake’s death are the astonishing achievements of an extremely courageous woman, a heroine of World War II. Sadly, until now, not much has been known about Wake and her essential contributions to the Resistance. Hence, it is only fitting that women like her receive more attention. Certainly, her life and the lives of other female agents should be further researched, especially with regards to gender-relevant aspects. Today’s society is still shaped by inequality and gender-related disadvantages. Women as well as men should be empowered to eliminate prevalent gender stereotypes, following in the footsteps of Nancy Wake.

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10. Abstracts

10.1. English abstract

The central aim of the present thesis is to examine the representation of Nancy Wake in biographical literature with regards to existing gender norms and stereotypes.

For this purpose, it is necessary to explore theoretical aspects related to the concept of *gender*, as well as to provide a historical outline of *feminism*. The positive impact of this movement made it possible that women like Nancy Wake have been able to participate actively in warfare. Nancy Wake worked as a spy for the English secret intelligence organisation *Special Operations Executive* in World War II. She was the sole woman in her training group and, despite of gender-based prejudice, successfully accomplished her SOE training, after which she started her operation in the French *Maquis*.

After the research of works belonging to the genres of *biographical fiction*, *biography* and *autobiography*, several literary examples will be used to analyse Nancy Wake, among other things, with regards to her social status, her character traits, her femininity and her relationship to men. By means of these parameters it was found that Nancy Wake conformed to some female stereotypes in her past life as Madame Fiocca. However, when she took up her activities in the French Resistance, a new life in a male environment began, in which she increasingly resisted to the female gender roles prescribed by society.

10.2. German abstract/deutsche Zusammenfassung

Das zentrale Hauptanliegen der vorliegenden Diplomarbeit besteht darin, Nancy Wakes Darstellung in biographischen Werken in Hinblick auf existierende gesellschaftliche Genderrollenzuschreibungen und Stereotypen zu untersuchen.

Dazu ist es notwendig, die mit dem Begriff *Gender* zusammenhängenden theoretischen Aspekte zu erforschen sowie die Geschichte des *Feminismus* darzustellen. Durch den positiven Einfluss dieser Bewegung ist es überhaupt erst möglich geworden, dass sich Frauen wie Nancy Wake aktiv an der Kriegsführung beteiligen konnten. Nancy Wake war als Spionin für die englische Geheimorganisation *Special Operations Executive* im Zweiten Weltkrieg tätig. Sie war die einzige Frau in ihrer Trainingsgruppe und beendete trotz bestehender geschlechtsbezogener Vorurteile erfolgreich ihre SOE-Ausbildung, nach der sie ihre Tätigkeit im *Maquis* in Frankreich aufnahm.

Nach der Untersuchung verschiedenster Werke, die den Genres *Biofiktion*, *Autobiographie* und *Biographie* zuzuordnen sind, werden literarische Beispiele herangezogen, um Nancy Wake unter anderem in Hinblick auf ihren sozialen Status, ihre charakterlichen Eigenschaften, ihre Weiblichkeit und ihre Beziehung zu Männern zu analysieren. Anhand dieser Parameter wurde festgestellt, dass Nancy Wake in ihrem früheren Leben als Madame Fiocca manchen weiblichen Stereotypen entsprach. Mit ihrem Einsatz im französischen Widerstand begann allerdings ein Leben in einem männlichen Umfeld, in dem sie sich zunehmend dem gesellschaftlichen Stereotypenbild der Frau widersetzte.