

القيود الأبوية وتحرر النساء في رواية "جين إير" لشارلوت برونتي ورواية "صحوة" لكيت
شوبان

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة، النقد النسوي، الجنس، النظام الأبوي.

كيفية اقتباس البحث

سليمان ، محمد حمد ، القيود الأبوية وتحرر النساء في رواية "جين إير" لشارلوت برونتي ورواية
"صحوة" لكيت شوبان، مجلة مركز بابل للدراسات الانسانية، نيسان 2026، المجلد:16، العدد:4.

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Patriarchal Constraints and Women's Emancipation in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

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Keywords : culture, feminist critique, gender, patriarchy.

How To Cite This Article

Sulaiman, Mohammed Hamad , Patriarchal Constraints and Women's Emancipation in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Journal Of Babylon Center For Humanities Studies, April 2026, Volume:16, Issue 4.

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المخلص:

يتم تحليل الكاتبات النسويات لتأثيرهن على الحركة لتحسين الوضع الاجتماعي التقليدي للنساء. تُركّز هذه التحليل على كاتبتين، شارلوت برونتي بروايتها "جين آير"، وكيت شوبان بروايتها "الاستيقاظ". يُظهرن كيف أن النساء، قبل الزواج، تغلبن على التحديات للحصول على القوّة والاسـتقلال.

تطور بطلة رواية كيت شوبان "الصحوّة" وجهات نظر جديدة حول أدوارها كأم وربة منزل فيكتورية. ترفض أدوارها المخصصة بشكل قاطع. يتم تسليط الضوء على استغلال النساء، ويتم خلق طريق نحو تحرير النساء الذي طال انتظاره والمساواة بين الجنسين فيما يتعلق بحقوقهن الإنسانية الأساسية في الحرية من خلال تحليل التصور العام للكاتبات النسائيات والمفاهيم الشائعة التي استخدمتها شوبان وبرونتي لإظهار ضيق الثقافة الأبوية وغيابها في هذه الروايات. يكشف التحليل عن أوجه التشابه بين تصوير الروايات لحياة العصر الفيكتوري.

Abstract

Feminist writers are examined for their influence on the movement to better women's traditionally subordinate social status. Two female authors, Charlotte Brontë, with *Jane Eyre*, and Kate Chopin, with *The Awakening*, are the focus of this analysis. They illustrate how, prior to marriage, women overcame challenges to gain power and independence. The protagonist of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* develops new perspectives on her roles as a mother and a Victorian housewife. She flat-out declines her allocated roles. Women's exploitation is brought to light, and a path is created toward women's long overdue emancipation and gender equality concerning their fundamental human rights to freedom. This is achieved by analyzing the general perception of women writers and the key concepts employed by Chopin and Brontë to expose the narrowness and pervasiveness of patriarchal culture depicted in their novels. The analysis also reveals parallels between the novels' portrayals of Victorian-era life and the broader societal constrain placed on women.

Introduction

The focus of the research is on the works of two women authors: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin. They illustrate how women overcame obstacles to gain power and independence before marriage. The protagonist of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* develops new perspectives on her roles as both mother and wife in a conventional Victorian marriage. She flat-out declines her allocated roles.

The novels bring attention to the exploitation of women and pave the way for their long overdue emancipation and gender equality concerning their fundamental human rights to freedom. They do so by analyzing the general perception of women writers and the popular concepts used by Chopin and Brontë to demonstrate the narrowness and dominance of patriarchal culture.

This analysis elucidates the ways in which the two novels' depictions of Victorian culture are comparable. In recent decades, the contributions of women to literature have received increased scholarly attention. Women's studies and feminist philosophy have profoundly influenced the literary landscape of the modern age. The French term "*feminisme*," derived from "*feministe*" was first used in the 1880s by Hubertine Auclert, a prominent advocate for women's political rights, to emphasize her role in promoting gender equality. By the 1890s, the term "feminism" began to appear frequently in the names of French women's organization. In English, the word *Feminism* was adopted from the





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French *feminisme* and has become one of the central concepts in the field of cultural and literary studies. (Jackson & Jones, 1998, p. 10)

MacKinnon is an advocate of feminism, a philosophical school of thought that promotes equal rights for women. Feminist theory is an actual, cutting-edge sociological hypothesis that looks at the social place of women and men with the intention of using what it learns to better the lives of women. Feminist theorists criticize categorical differences between women, including those based on race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, place of origin, and chronological age. This worldview centers on empowering women so that they can contribute to society and be heard. (MacKinnon, 1989, p. 3). Inequalities between the genders also reflect the social and cultural inequalities between men and women, which are evident in everyday interactions. Activists for social equality between the genders point to the evolution of ideas about what it means to be a woman and a man as motivation for new forms of participation in society. (Jackson & Jones, 1998, p. 13).

However, she finds that notions of the feminine, slavery, and discrimination Feminism is a political, cultural, or economic movement advocating women's rights and legal protection, as defined by Maya Angelou and Madiha Khaled. Feminism is a political and social movement that challenges traditional gender roles and norms, in addition to a movement fighting for women's rights and interests (Miller, 1981, p. 39) through promoting gender equality.

Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel *Jane Eyre* transports readers to the Victorian era, a time when women's roles were largely confined to those of wives, mothers, and domestic workers. Similarly, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, published in 1899 and also situated on the Louisiana Gulf Coast, is about a woman who is compelled by marriage and motherhood norms to have a child. During the nineteenth century, some male writers expressed concerns about the growing prominence of women authors, perceiving them as strong literary competitors. By the turn of century, political, economic, and social reforms gradually allowed women greater access higher education and offered new possibilities for breaking away from traditional gender roles. (O'Reilly, 2010, p. 16)

In addition, many fields have begun to pay more attention to the contributions of women in writing in recent years. Feminism was a social movement that emerged in the 19th century as a response to sexual exploitation and women's subordination. Men controlled the literary scene, relegating women to writing under male pseudonyms or hiding behind anonymity to avoid scathing reviews. Many readers, of both sexes, are drawn to women's literature because of the feminist spirit of





emancipation and freedom it conveys via its treatment of love and desire. Chopin and Brontë brilliantly elucidate the hardship, effort, and defeat that women had to undergo in order to be liberated and equal to men in their works *The Awakening* and *Jane Eyre*.

1. Patriarchy

In the nineteenth century, women were often expected to choose between fulfilling domestic duties as wives and mothers or pursuing personal independence and intellectual ambition. A woman's sole purpose in life is to relax at home with her husband and children once he comes home from work. It was Blackstone who first used the term "separate spheres" to describe the idea that women belonged in the "domestic sphere" and men in the "public sphere," and that the two should never overlap or become mixed. Customs imposed on women in the nineteenth century were rigid and relegated them to the background of society. Women were limited to roles at home and given fewer opportunities than men. (Eisenstein, 2018, p. 59).

Moreover, as scholar Dheyaa Ramadhan Alwan explains in his study "The Predicament of Woman: A Feminist Reading in Selected Victorian Poetry" (2019), the Victorian home style, with its sharp division of the domestic and public spheres, has also compelled women to devote themselves to domestic activities, their "proper domain," and to isolate themselves from involvement in men's hard and rude "masculine" realm of publicity. "A man's power is active, progressive, and defensive," John Ruskin stated. He is the quintessential mover, maker, discoverer, and protector... But a woman's strength lies in her ability to "sweetly order, arrange, and decide" (Ruskin, 2022, p. 59). All things considered, it appears that women were discouraged from voicing their dissatisfaction with traditional gender norms, which in turn hindered their pursuit of intellectual equality. They sought an outlet for their thoughts and found it in written form. Thus, it is clear that literature is the most effective medium for portraying the complex, multifaceted lives of nineteenth-century women.

Notably, "New Woman" was first used by novelist Sarah Grand. It's about a lady who broke free of the constraints placed on women in the Victorian era, when career-minded men and women began to reach the mainstream. The author describes the *New Woman* as a woman who is independent and submissive, strong and intelligent, and masculine and refined. According to Richardson and Willis, Exaggerated, subsexual, or recognized by the same sex, the New Woman was transformed into a mannish Amazon and a woman. She is a supermom of ethnicity or anti-maternal ideology. Any time she fights against or tries to dominate home





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ideals—progressive, socialist, liberal, or authoritarian—she becomes a male-identifiable, manufactured, or self-appointed masculinity hero. (2019, p. 13)

In any work of literature by a woman, however, the authors place a considerably greater emphasis on the New Women's attention on character. Brontë criticized patriarchal Victorian views on women's place in society and the expectations placed on them as a result of their gender. Expectations of sexuality and gender equality (Ibid., xi). Moreover, according to Diniejko, New Woman writing explores sex and marriage and the aspirations of women for equality and satisfaction. Many books by New Women firmly rejected the notion that home is the only domain for women. In addition to the state of marriage that permitted material violence, mandatory or mandated motherhood, and the double expectations of sexual values, women's writers exposed traps of traditional Victorian marriage.

Women's writing finally exposes the media to the true situation of patriarchal society and the hopes and views of most women. But they were too shy to say anything out loud. In the marriage and love constitution, the topics of uniqueness and sexuality were extremely appealing and desirable to all readers who required daily more and more news. Female authors have become incredibly well-known and successful, far above anyone's wildest dreams, thanks to the public's insatiable need for female-authored fiction. There is some evidence to suggest that female writers boosted output, and male authors felt threatened as a result, fearing that female authors would appropriate their ideas and take their female readers. Sponsored male reviewers, who believed that only males were capable of writing fiction with skill, quickly rated and capped the number of books authored by women. (Levy, 1995, p. 59).

As a result of the identity-focused criticism leveled at women's fiction, many women authors now utilize or write under male pseudonyms. Currer Bell was a pen name Brontë employed when *Jane Eyre* was released to shield herself from the sexist remarks of reviewers who did not believe women were capable of creating works of equal quality to those written by men. Because of this, neither her femininity nor the text's intellectual worth can be her primary focus. Readers were upset and amazed by "the presentation of female sexuality and human passion," as she puts it. Currer Bell's gender was never discussed, but if she was female, nobody could guess what she was like. (Tuchman & Fortin, 2012, p. 180)



It's interesting to note that in the eighteenth century, women's writing was considered naive and uncreative. It was often held that women writers could not produce works of literary significance. Thankfully, women were encouraged to highlight dynamic political, social, and marriage traps in writing, leading to some of the most nuanced works of literature and, more importantly, prompting society to make necessary modifications to gender equality. The writing profession has traditionally been seen as male-dominated.

Women took advantage of the growing demand for literature by writing novels that highlighted the significance of women in Victorian society. However, many male writers and critics who held patriarchal views tended to dismiss women's literary contributions, believing that serious literature was a male domain and that woman's writing lacked intellectual depth. In the nineteenth century, women were the principal subjects of literary writing and received little criticism for playing heroic characters that relegated them to second place to males. Brontë addresses the aforementioned topics in her novel *Jane Eyre* which tells the story of a plain girl named Jane, to highlight the inequality of women's rights. (Levy, 1995, p. 65).

The author forms a strong and formidable woman who wants true love and freedom in this book. At that moment, *Jane Eyre* is different from any other girl. She fights for her survival and, in challenging circumstances, maintains her destiny. The picture of *Jane Eyre* contrasted strongly with a man-dominated society during the Victorian era. She portrays a young woman whose freedom and love are the target of her war.

By analyzing Jane's inner development as she fights for independence and respect in the patriarchal culture of Victorian this quote demonstrates that *Jane Eyre* is an instructive work. Jane, an orphan with nowhere to call home and friends who don't look out for her, wants to be loved and accepted, but she won't give up her independence to do so. Anderson (2011, 6) argues that because "she has a strong sense of justice and she questions too much," these characteristics are inappropriate for a young Victorian girl who is merely expected to be an ornament. Men are crucial in exposing the inequality that exists between men and women. John Reed was an example of the unfairness and rigidity of Victorian society. It was clear that he was superior to Jane, even though she claimed to be "always loyal" to him (Bronte, 2021, p. 10). The writer utilizes John's character to show how intelligent women were in the more unbelievable male-dominant culture that aimed to limit women's access to positions of power and education and considered it unacceptable for them to fight for





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equality and fair treatment. If John physically assaulted Jane but only Jane was penalized, this injustice would be further emphasized.

“My head still ached and bled with the blow and fall I had received,” writes Charlotte Brontë. “No one had reproved John for wantonly striking me; and because I had turned against him to avert further irrational violence, I was loaded with general opprobrium” (Bronte, 2021, p. 16). After spending the night in the terrifying red chamber as part of her penance, Jane recognized that she craved independence and freedom since she could never forget that she was “poor, without money,” and “she tried to beg and not live here with the gentleman’s children” (Ibid., 11). Jane went from a child to an adult overnight in the red room prison. She learned that no matter how much she attempted to change the way young women behaved, they would never accept her as being on par with the norm (Anderson, 2011, p. 7). For the first time, Jane questioned how much longer she had until the pain and shame of her situation finally broke her. Brontë’s early feminism and the need for necessary societal reforms may be reflected in her inquiries.

Jane had completed her formal education and was eager to proceed with her quest for independence and equality. She committed herself to learning so that she may win the heart of a certain girl she called “Lowood institution.” Jane’s decision to leave Lowood marked the beginning of her journey toward freedom and democracy. As opposed to this, Bronte (1990, p. 40) writes, “Ever I had finished this reply, my soul began to expand, to rejoice, and with the strangest sense of liberation, of triumph, I ever felt. It was as if some unseen tie had snapped and I had fought my way to a freedom I could never have imagined. The author tries to convey her sense of pride and success in life. She describes her fight for independence in the face of societal pressure. Jane’s outburst reveals her fiery vigor, her commitment to social justice, and her awareness of her own need for love. When Jane finally breaks free from her family, she also breaks free emotionally.

Mr. Brocklehurst, another man present, tried to have her removed and her behavior altered so that she conformed to the stereotypical Victorian woman. Anderson (2011) writes that they “teach girls to recognize their place in society and to destroy their dignity and culture” through religious indoctrination.

Jane had overcome the stigma of her terrible background and established her position in her community. She was portrayed as impassioned and defiant. Jane, though, made up her mind to go after her own interests. Jane received the training she needed from her time at Lowood Institution, but that was not her ultimate objective. She kept on trying to



find independence and love. Jane decided to leave school after several years, work as a governess, and finally strike out on her own without anyone telling her what to do. She took a job as Miss Adele's governess after relocating to Thornfield. The home's owner, Mr. Rochester, shared her feelings and appreciated her greatly. Because she lacked complete self-assurance and fairness, Jane passed up an opportunity at a better life with a man who truly loved her. (Levy, 1995, p. 49). She didn't want to marry Rochester so she could be his social and financial equal; she wanted to be his equal.

"You say I am soulless and heartless because I am weak, dark, simple, and small. You think wrong! You think wrong! — I have the spirit as well as you have, and the heart full of it! Moreover, I should have made it as impossible for you, if God had given me the beauty and much money, to leave me as it has been for me to leave you now" (Bronte, 2021, p. 279).

The preceding quote demonstrates that Rochester was just another male in Jane's life who aspired to establish his supremacy over her and the masculine culture as a whole. As she began to consider Rochester a viable option, he unexpectedly assumed the role of her supervisor, jeopardizing the search for Jane. His power over Jane is demonstrated by the fact that she felt "compelled" to accompany him on the "harassing" visit to the Milcote Warehouse. Rochester was completely condescending and unappreciative of Jane's feelings and wishes as he exerted control over her. Bronte adds, "I told him in a new series of whispers that he might as well buy me a gold gown and a silver bonnet at once: I should certainly never venture to wear his choice." I had to convince him to trade for some thick black satin and some pearl-grey silk, and it was quite tough since he was as stubborn as a rock. She persisted on her mission, even though Rochester prevented her from becoming more formidable. I shall not be your English Celine Varens, "Bronte adds. My continued service as Adele's governess will provide me with room and board plus an additional thirty pounds a year in compensation. With that money, I'll buy clothes, and in return, all I ask for is your respect" (Bronte, 2021, p. 295-297).

Jane's decision to leave Rochester marked the final pivot moment in her journey toward genuine independence and liberation. By walking out of Thornfield into the cold, dark night to face hardship alone, she rejects dependence on a man and asserts her moral and emotional autonomy. This episode illustrates how women in patriarchal societies are often rendered devalued, invisible, and powerless. Moreover, Jane's desire to





shake things up serves as powerful test of her ability to subvert the rigid stereotypes of Victorian womanhood. (Macpherson, 2024, p. 73)

“I found him very patient, very forbearing, and yet an exacting master: he expected me to do a great deal, and when I fulfilled his expectations, he, in his own way, fully testified his approbation. By degrees, he acquired a certain influence over me that took away my liberty of mind: his praise and notice were more restraining than his indifference... When he said “go,” I went! “Come,” I came; “do this,” I did it. But I did not love my servitude: I wished, many a time, he had continued to neglect me” (Bronte, 2021, p. 404).

Jane's persistence and zeal forced her to assert herself and prevented her from expressing her superiority in gender relations when she came into conflict with both St. John and Rochester. She also relocated to Rochester after receiving a substantial sum of money from her long-lost father. The woman was entirely self-sufficient in terms of money and social standing. Her dreams came true when she was accepted as a valued part of a caring household. Jane devoted her entire existence to breaking free. She, like many others in the 19th century, fought bravely against discrimination and made a substantial stride toward expanding women's participation in public life and achieving gender parity. The racial divide, the subject of much debate since the Victorian era, was particularly pronounced at the time. The Victorians saw the world as divided into the “domestic sphere,” where women belonged, and the “public sphere,” where men belonged. The “home sphere” typically entailed activities like cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the kids, as well as those that had to do with providing for the family and making sure everyone was healthy at home. Men were expected to control the “public sphere” of their lives, which included participating in civic life, working to make ends meet, and acquiring these other skills. (Alhaj, 2015, p. 11)

2. Women's Desire for Freedom

The ideal Victorian lady was a doting mother who was respectful and pleasant but ultimately submissive to her husband. She was predestined from the start to gravitate toward the “domestic sphere,” doing all the duties of a proper Victorian housewife. Coventry, a poet from the Victorian era, came up with the name. Patmore's “The Angel in the House” is the best depiction of a Victorian woman. Women were viewed as nurturing, submissive, and defenseless while they were confined to the house. They would be safe from the world outside their houses, allowing them to maintain their purity and serve as examples of virtue to their husbands. The truth is that they were useless. Aside from their homes and husbands, there was an entire world out there. (Langland, 1989, p. 24)

Some women haven't adapted to the expected social convention that marriage should be a woman's sole primary goal in life. Edna Pontellier, Chopin's protagonist, was one of those women who failed to act in the conventional manner of a dedicated housewife who prioritizes her family over herself. While Chopin claims you could always tell when one of these parents was protecting its young from harm by the way they flapped their wings in the air. Having their children and moms wiped away was a sacred blessing for these women, who viewed it as a stepping stone to becoming ministerial angels. (1982, p. 12)

Edna did not resemble these "mother women," as Chopin called them. But she plays her gender role as expected, oblivious to her own desires. After convincing the audience that "her marriage to Leonce Pontellier was a mistake" and that her children were not gone, she admitted to herself that she was relieved by their absence. It appeared to relieve her of a burden she had assumed blithely but for which she was not destined" (Chopin, 1982, pp. 22–23). The author uses Edna, who at first seems to be the model Victorian housewife, to show her scorn for traditional gender roles and societal mores. Her book was the catalyst for the feminist movement and influenced debates about women in the future.

She also expanded on Adelle's character Ratignolle, emphasizing the gulf between career-oriented women and those whose whole objective in life has been to build and maintain a happy home life. Throughout the book, the author draws parallels between two different types of women and criticizes both. Adelle took great pleasure in her new roles as mother and wife, but Edna gradually came to terms with the fact that she needed to break free of societal constraints. According to Edna, "she wouldn't give (herself)," despite the fact that she "would give up the unnecessary; would give (her) money... would give (her) life for (her) children" (Chopin, 1982, p. 52). She gave up her salary as a symbol of the tension between the traditional role of women and the new mindset that sought independence.

"After returning, Edna felt sad instead of calmed. She was given no remorse, no yearning because of the brief snapshot of marital peace. It was not a living state because she could see through it, just a terrifying, bleak ennui. For Mime Ratignolle, she was moved by a kind of sympathy, a sympathy for this colorless world, which never elevated her host beyond the land of pure joy, where her life never saw a moment of agony" (Chopin, 1982, p. 61).

The given citation demonstrates how the novel challenged common assumptions. Edna's unwillingness to comply with her parents' demands was her first revolutionary deed. He urged her to get some rest, but her





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annoyance and frustration prevented her from complying. Women were expected to serve their husbands without asking for or expecting anything in return. Her awareness emerged gradually, and she felt as if she were emerging from a nightmare. As said by Chopin:

“She knew her will had blazed away, stubborn and aggressive. At the time, she could not do anything more than reject it and fight it. She asked if her husband had ever spoken with her like that and if she agreed to his request. She had; of course, she realized she had. However, her behaving as she did then could not grasp why or how she might have yielded” (Chopin, 1982, p. 36).

According to the source above, her husband divorced her because she didn't care about his daughters, which he couldn't understand because he thought it was her duty to revere and care for her son. It was his practice to “reproach his wife with her inattention,” Chopin (1982, p. 10) says. Who else on Earth could be expected to take care of little ones if not mothers? The narrator also demonstrated how inflexible and limiting societal expectations of women actually are. The protagonist always fought for her freedom from predetermined roles. Also, Chopin employs symbols to portray the gendered norms, frustrations, and liberation strategies of the time. Twins dressed as nuns singing a hymn is a symbol of chastity, a virtue that has traditionally been expected of women in rich societies. Women's ambitions for wastefulness and purity were reflected in the outfits they wore and the music they performed to. A caged parrot was another emblem created to represent women. It was a striking depiction of the social constraints placed on women. Once again, the author uses the word “parrot” to represent women in the nineteenth century, when their voices and actions were not tolerated. They had no choice but to follow the predetermined roles and social norms assigned to them. Edna's inability to dive and the ocean itself are significant symbols. One interpretation is that it means “a delirium of life,” or the desire to seize every possible chance to learn about and express oneself.

In addition, “the voice of the sea speaks to the soul, and the touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace,” as Chopin (1982, p. 18) puts it. In describing the ocean as “seductive,” the author alludes to Edna's desire. Experience the allure and growth potential of independence. She couldn't pull herself away from the calm sea of new information and understanding. She began developing as an individual when she lost the ability to take showers. To break through the social norms, she didn't need to muster up any special resolve or bravery. She had to break free from her typecasting. The experience of learning to swim, however, altered her forever. Moreover, Carole Stone agrees with

that; Chopin uses the sea as a symbol of Edna's new existence in these first marine scenes.

At the end of her narrative, she anticipates having learned to swim independently and finding her way back into the ocean. She is shielded from the sun by the connection between grass and water. The sea is a symbol of both creation and destruction in *The Awakening*. (Stone, 1986, p. 23-32). This last reluctance to follow the typical female role is illustrated by her decision to abandon the role of wife and relocate to a different home, or "Pigeon House," as she called it. For her, conventional preconceptions and rigid social institutions were intolerable, but the "pigeonhole" freed her from such constraints. Moreover, the home's dissatisfaction with its social standing will persist. In actuality, it made it happy and fulfilled by showing it the vast opportunities available in life.

The returned bird had satisfied her needs. She felt like she'd descended to the level of the audience, and her faith had matured along with it. Everything that could be done to free them from their obligations was done to increase their power and size. (Chopin, 1982, p. 99). Edna obviously wanted to break free of her social constraints when she relocated. She had accepted the fact that she would never truly desire to leave her role as a wife and mother. The pressures of society were too great, however, and she could not be effectively managed. Suicide was the only way out, she realized. She'll meet an untimely end if she tries to play the part of a conventional woman.

The fundamental goal of most 19th-century women was marriage, as was noted earlier. All women, from the time they were young, were expected to devote their lives to being obedient wives and loving mothers. The ideal Victorian woman was capable in the kitchen and at the loom. According to Cynthia Wolff, "this is a tale about not speaking, about disjunction—about denials, oversights, prohibitions, exclusions, and absences" in reference to *The Awakening*. There are "stories that cannot be told and things that can be neither thought nor spoken because they do not have a name" (Wolff, 1996, p. 3), but these are not just about things that are never named. One such expectation was that they would have settled down with a spouse and had a family by the time they turned twenty-five. These two roles—wife and mother—were the only ones that mattered in the eyes of society.

Both Edna and Jane were products of Victorian society, where marriage was seen as the fruit of a woman's labor. Chopin and Bronte held rather opposing views on the institution of marriage. Edna was thrown from the jail window during her defiant struggle against Chopin's protagonist. She has been slowly making her way into the union with her partner and her





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single friends, and she finds that she is limited to publicly discussing the protagonist Jane from Edna Brontë's novels. Their notion of marriage was frequently at odds with theirs. Edna, a member of the well-to-do bourgeoisie, observed the fake marriage from a privileged outsider's vantage point. The typical outcome of a Victorian marriage was a shared commitment to one another. Her union with Leonce Pontellier was coincidental, like so many others that pass themselves off as Fate's will, as Chopin puts it. (1982, p. 22)

She met him in the midst of her deepest, darkest desire. At the commencement of her existence, she learned that marriage was not a given. We were made to feel joy and pursue our passions. She knew that, despite her feelings, she was expected to marry someone with those desirable traits. The author also demonstrates that the protagonist "felt she would take her place with a certain dignity in the world of reality, closing the portals forever behind her upon the realm of romance and dreams" (Chopin, 1982, p. 22). As an orphan, Jane did not want to marry until she truly loved her partner.

"The agreement is then necessary with his request: just one thing, a bad object. He is asking me to be his wife, and for me, there is nothing more of a hen heart than the frowning giant of a rock; the river's throat is dripping hard. He awards me a strong arm as a military person, and that is all. Moreover, that is it; may I bear in mind that any effort he gives is a primary sacrifice? No. That is a monstrous martyrdom" (Brontë, 2021, p. 445).

When it came to money issues and how much they relied on their spouses, the two protagonists couldn't have been more different. Edna conformed unquestioningly to this societal expectation. In fact, the better they got to know the husband, the more he improved as a spouse. Jane, on the other hand, was prepared to take care of herself monetarily. Her job as a tutor did not pay well, but that did not stop her from constantly looking for new opportunities to learn and grow. This is how she felt, and the idea that she had become a victim due to her husband's sexist views on women made her feel even worse.

Chopin had grown to feel that the true artist was one who defied tradition, rejecting the norms of acceptable behavior as well as the tried-and-true methods for achieving literary greatness. The novel's narrator intended to show this by arguing that women should experience a sense of vitality even if it is expected of them to put the needs of their families and homes first. Chopin, according to Harold Bloom, "would never have written the books she did without a tradition to admire and oppose." (Bloom, 2011, p. 9)

When Bloom mentions the Creole customs that accompanied Edna throughout the book, he is referring to those elements. Chopin also presented his audience with the disturbing but popular belief of the nineteenth century that all women who aspire to live outside the bounds of their marriage are mentally sick and should thus be treated medically. When Edna stopped taking care of their marriage, her husband promptly sought medical attention. As said by Chopin, she's terrible at keeping up with housework. She seems to have an idea in her brain about women's rights. (Chopin, 1982, p. 71).

Brontë's treatment of marriage is not as harsh as Chopin's, but she nevertheless reveals the pitfalls of the Victorian institution through Bertha Mason. It has been argued that Bertha was an independent, passionate woman who rejected patriarchal submission and downplayed the importance of women's roles in the home. Some people think Bertha's repulsive sexuality is just a reflection of Jane's. (Macpherson, 2024, p. 69) Because of Baldellou's emphasis on *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Mason takes on a dual role: either as the heroine's suppressed desire, confirming that Jane is capable of experiencing sexual pleasure, or as her dark side, indicating that Jane is actively working to deny her sexuality. Like Edna, Jane was brought up in a devout and spiritual environment where it was frowned upon to discuss one's sexuality openly. But she nevertheless hid it, as was expected of her by the culture of the day. Bronte has opted for a happy ending, demonstrating that women will find loving marriages on their own terms. Although Chopin's and Brontë's perspectives on marriage and sexuality differed at the time their novels were written, independence, equality, and sexual emancipation were common themes.

Conclusion

The novels *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin were chosen because they shed light on the role of women in early Victorian society. The analysis shows that both authors used their works to criticize patriarchal society and to propose a different, more creative order by calling attention to the limited influence of women in the Victorian era and by challenging modern concepts of womanhood like the perfect female and the fallen woman. While Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* focuses on the protagonist's development from absolute imprisonment to relative absolute freedom, culminating in marriage, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* explores gender relations in marriage and marriage in general through the lens of the novel's second narrator and other characters.





Patriarchal Constraints and Women's Emancipation in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

Female protagonists are portrayed as more morally advanced than male ones, in keeping with Victorian standards. Even though they are good people, they break many of their cultural norms. Both of them seem to be on the verge of becoming immoral ladies rather than the trapped angels in the house that were formerly expected of them. By taking a stand against both of these ideas, the authors made clear their rejection of the status quo and gave birth to a woman who strives for and achieves life as a free, willful individual. Both authors conclude their works by achieving justice, which needs the characters to be rewarded or punished according to their virtues and vices and their willingness or reluctance to reform. All of the male protagonists are punished in some way for their history of domination and attempts to exert control over the heroes. However, as their stories develop, both heroines reap the benefits of their tenacity and moral fortitude.

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