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A Comparative Literary Analysis of Women's Power in Public and Private Life in "the Handmaid's Tale" and "the Awakening"

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Abstract. This paper aims to contrast the novel "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood to the novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin in terms of how women are treated in public and private life. Both novels provide perspectives on women's roles and power dynamics in various historical circumstances. This paper investigates how literature challenges social norms that affect women's independence and identity. In this paper, the researcher uses an intersectional feminist framework developed by Crenshaw in order to compare the two narratives using literary analysis and feminist criticism. It looks at the attempts of the main characters to be independent in an oppressive society. The findings indicate that both novels represent women's universal struggles for autonomy and identity. The themes of resistance, the influence of history and society on women's roles, and the importance of literature as a means of social critique are highlighting in these two novels. This paper emphasizes that writing such stories can help change societies. Finally, it suggests further studies in different cultural contexts and media and shows how intersectional approaches assist in understanding women's experiences and resistance.

Keywords. Women's Autonomy; Intersectional Feminism; Comparative Literary Analysis; Patriarchal Societies; Gender Roles and Resistance

1. Introduction

The Handmaid's Tale is a dystopian future where the former United States has been replaced by the Republic of Gilead. The religious system governs the society and enslave women according to their fertility and past adaptation to the new regime. Offred recounted this story in a way that makes the reader follows her time that she spent serving the Commander and his wife Serena Joy in their attempts to conceive. As a symbol of how society relegates women to biology, worth 060 is only established through her fertility and her job to reproduce a kid for her master-wife owners.

The human qualities that were highlighted in this story are gender dynamics, resistance, and power. In many ways, this novel portrays the culture that uses religion as an excuse to subjugate women and convert them into commodities. Offred's past and present are intertwined, revealing her life before the rise of Gilead, where she had a husband named Luke, and a daughter, contrasting sharply with her current reality. Notwithstanding facing oppression,

Offred recalls her previous memories of life and her encounters with other characters, such as Moira, her rebellious friend, and Nick, the Commander's driver with whom she forms a clandestine relationship, serving as beacons of hope and resistance. "The Handmaid's Tale" behaves as a warning tale against extremism and the erosion of personal freedom. Atwood's novel, which was published in the 1980s, remains to the relevant for its timeless exploration of themes of power, control, and the human spirit's resilience despite oppression.

"The Awakening" is the story about Edna Pontellier, a young woman in the late 19th century who started to inquire her life and the societal norms imposed upon her. As a wife of Léonce Pontellier and a mother of two youngsters, her existence can be recognized by the roles she is predicted to do. The novel took place in New Orleans and alongside the Gulf coast of Louisiana, taking pictures of the essence of Creole society. The story started whilst the Pontellier circle of relatives holidaying in Grand Isle, a summer resort at the Gulf of Mexico. There, Edna meets Robert Lebrun, a fascinating younger guy who spent each summer season with a unique woman guest at the resort. Robert's attentions in Edna evoked an experience of self-focus and a choice for an existence beyond society's expectancies.

Unlike other ladies who observe the traditional responsibilities of dependable spouses and mothers, Edna's awakening motivated her to undertaking those requirements. She sought emotional and imaginative freedom by way of pursuing her interest in painting. Useful self-perception made Edna more distinctive from her peers and reasons war together with her husband, who does no longer understand her want for autonomy. As Edna struggles to reconcile her aspirations with society's necessities, she develops her dating with Robert, generating extra problems. Robert, expertise the impossibility of their connection given societal norms at the time, departs for Mexico, leaving Edna to face her emotions and the repercussions of her movements on my own.

While the novel "The Awakening" was limited to captured, all Edna's coming of age and her struggles are due to social conventions. It seems to be about identity, liberation and the constrictions of society on women's lives. The bitter climax of *The Awakening* is a depressing commentary on male or male freedom and the restrictions placed on women's aspirations during the novel. When "The Awakening" was first published in 1899, it aroused much dissatisfaction with its frank depiction of girl sexuality and challenging of roles. It would go on to be hailed as one of the first feminist works, offering a severe critique of the challenges girls encountered in their struggle for their own freedom and dreams.

The novels "The Handmaid's Tale" and "The Awakening" go to great pains to explore women's power, both in the public and private spheres, and discover the complexities and limitations of society's imputation of women's autonomy and identity. Through this review, Atwood and Chopin, in the apocalyptic oppression of Gilead and New Orleans conventions in late nineteenth-century, respectively, argue that patriarchal institutions limit the power and agency of women. Comparing these two works this study reveals how these protagonists, Offred and Edna Pontellier, play through and challenge the constraints of their circumstances, demonstrating a wide range of resistance and compliance as indicative of their need to fulfill self-realization and independence. Beyond their historical and societal differences, both works reveal a universal struggle for women's empowerment and the pursuit of a self-defined

The comparative analysis opens ways to explore themes of power and autonomy for women within the narrow limits that communities are forced to live through in "The Handmaid's Tale" and "The Awakening." In the journey of the protagonists, Offred and Edna Pontellier, this paper will endeavor to bring out the several challenges they encounter in claiming their identity and desires against patriarchal dominance. The differences and similarities in the response of

the protagonists toward the societal constraints that they are subjected to is to be pointed out by Comparative analysis. The real implications of these narratives in the feminist literature are also examined.

This research paper is carried out thorough analysis of two selected novels from the perspectives of the historical and social contexts shaping the life of women in these two narratives. The analysis has mostly taken care of characters like Offred and Edna, the personal evolution of these women, their acts of resistance and interactions with other characters. In providing broad areas of autonomy, identity, and resistance, the paper makes an attempt to understand how Atwood and Chopin present themes related to women's power and autonomy. Through the study of symbolism, narrative structure and literary devices, the paper attempts to understand how these two novels present themes of women's power and autonomy. Besides, it brings forward the contributions of these two novels to the genre of feminist literature, highlighting their importance in finding the role, freedom, and societal limitations of women. By comparing these works, the paper aims to enrich the discourse of gender roles and feminist literature, emphasizing the persistent relevance of the characters' quests for autonomy against the backdrop of societal expectations and patriarchal structures.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Intersectional Feminism

Crenshaw (1989) first introduced Intersectional Feminism and articulated the concept with respect to critical legal studies, and the need to go beyond antidiscrimination law to deal with overlapping systems of oppression. Intersectional Feminism is focused on the idea that different systems of oppression are not mutually exclusive, as social stratification and identity categories (for example, race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability) overlap and work together at the same time to affect a person's experience of oppression or privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). It argues that their issues get neglected when feminists and anti-racists focus on single-systems of oppression, failing to recognize the not only the exclusiveness but the ongoing inter-play with other systems of oppression.

Intersectional feminism emphasizes how identities are complex and multifaceted, and how there are many aspects of an individual identity, from race to gender to sexuality to class to others, and how this shapes an individual's position in terms of oppression or privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). It goes into depth about the interlocking systems of oppression (patriarchy, racism, heterosexism, and classism) and how all of these systems interact to affect individuals in multidimensional and compound ways (ibid). Pamela Peeds (2018) defines intersectional feminism as the elevation of diversity and inclusion within feminist discourse and practice, calling into play for women's visibility all women, rather than the most privileged. It strives towards a socially just approach and disparate forms of oppression; thus it aims to building a just and equitable society by actively recognizing and deconstructing intersecting forms of oppression. The analysis is serious in terms of the intersecting feminism, since it is a faith-based way to highlights how the heroes' experiences are inclusive. From this perspective, this paper also analysis the complexity of different contexts of characteristic independence which provides profound insight on theoretical grounding. This is due to the fact that women's power and oppression experiences differ and are shaped by various identities and systems of repression.

2.2 Previous studies

To explore various themes in the novel 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood and the novel 'Awakening' by Kate Chopin, many research projects have been done in this

respect. The power, gender and dynamics of women as well as the feminist discourse are investigated comprehensively in the context of the miserable and historical accounts in these studies. Cali et al. (2020), for example, presented an innovative blend of feminism and evolutionary psychology to analyze 'The Handmaid's Tale', especially what is concerned with sexual and reproductive control within biological frameworks. The main feature of this study is the integration between the biological and social sciences in exploring the mechanisms of control and resistance in miserable societies.

Another two studies were carried out by Brooks (2019) and Gundersen (2021). These two studies studied miserable feminist literature; they specifically analyzed 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood and 'The Power' by Naomi Alderman. The focus of these two studies is on how these novels criticize patriarchal oppression through controlling structures. Brooks' study discussed the role of Christian doctrine and sexual norms while Gundersen's study delved into the cultural and social mechanisms that make up the hierarchy of power. Both studies analyzed the social criticism of the origins and continuity of power, but they present different views on the subject.

Begum (2021) provides a historical lens, tracing the political and social events of the 1970s to 1980s, and analyzes "The Handmaid's Tale" in the context of these events, highlighting the oppression of women through Christian beliefs and societal roles. Maryani et al. (2022) utilize Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to explore how "The Handmaid's Tale" depicts the use of consent and coercion by the ruling class to maintain power, offering a political and sociological analysis of the novel. Hellystia (2021) shifts the focus to "The Awakening," applying 19th-century liberal feminism to Edna Pontellier's struggles, thereby examining the gender inequality from a historical and institutional domination perspective. Cooke (2019) critiques feminist dystopian fiction, including "The Handmaid's Tale" and "The Power," for inadvertently reinforcing biological essentialism. This study offers a critical examination of how feminist narratives can sometimes perpetuate the ideologies they seek to challenge.

Al Disugu (2022) expands the discussion to include "Adrift on the Nile" by Naguib Mahfouz alongside "The Handmaid's Tale," exploring the New Woman's role in dystopian fiction through the lens of Foucauldian power concepts. Boutiara (2015) focuses on "The Handmaid's Tale" to analyze the feminist transgressive discourse, emphasizing the novel's critique of the patriarchal system and its impact on women's roles and resistance. Besides, Köylüoğlu (2022) examines "The Handmaid's Tale" and its TV adaptation from ecofeminist and ecofascist perspectives, highlighting the intersection of environmental and feminist issues within dystopian contexts.

It is noticed that most studies discussed above share a common interest in exploring themes of gender, power, and resistance within dystopian and historical contexts. They utilize feminist theories to analyze the portrayal of women's oppression and empowerment, albeit through various lenses such as psychological, sociopolitical, and environmental perspectives. However, the methodologies and theoretical frameworks employed differ significantly. For instance, Calyi et al. (2020) integrate evolutionary psychology with feminist analysis, whereas Maryani et al. (2022) focus on hegemonic power structures. Cooke critiques the reinforcement of biological essentialism in feminist dystopian fiction, contrasting with Köylüoğlu's (2022) focus on ecofeminism and ecofascism. Most importantly, the scope of analysis varies from one research to another, from a single work, "The Handmaid's Tale," to the correlation of this work with other works, like "The Power" or "Adrift on the Nile". The aim of this study is to bridge the gap in existing research by studying the relationship between two influential texts from different periods regarding women's empowerment and oppression in the private and public

fields. This study takes a new trend that it does not focus on specific aspects of feminist subjects in miserable or historical environments as other studies do but it explores how feminist discourse has progressed. New sides regarding the continuity and change in female strength and opposition have been highlighted by comparing 'The Handmaid's Tale' with 'The Awakening'. The sophisticated reaction of social conventions within different cultural and historical settings has been also deemed. Revealing the roles of the difficulties of the liberation of women and the dynamics of gender in literature and providing valuable insights in the fields of feminist and literary works is the intention of the cohesive approach of studying public and private areas of life.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study design

The main methodology of this study is a literary comparative analysis accompanied by a harmonized use of feminist criticism. Such methodology tries to enable logical comparison and contrast of the themes of women's power and independence in 'The Handmaid's Tale' as well as in 'The Awakening' and hence providing a more comprehensive understanding of the themes of power and independence of women as they are portrayed in both books. Besides, it lets an in-depth analysis of how each novel depicts the details of women's lives against the environment of their social, historical and cultural settings.

In fact, this form of analysis is convenient as themes, character development, narrative techniques and the usage of literary device across two or more texts are easy to be compared and contrasted. A detailed examination of the differences in gender imaging, power dynamics and effectiveness in the work of Atwood and Chopin is allowed in this methodology. Focusing on associations of gender, image of women, consciousness and practice of feminist, feminist criticism uses a theoretical outline to study literature. It examines the ignorance of the voices and opinions of women in literature, clarifies the ways by which the two novels assist feminist ideas and shows how women fight for power.

By applying cross-feminism to literary comparative analysis and criticism, this methodological approach deepens on how the different aspects of the identity and repressive systems of heroic experiences are shaped, revealing the complications of their fights and durability. This analytical method offers a more inclusive screening of experiences of women which allows for a thorough analysis of the features of community and personalities contexts. It employs extensive comparative analysis, feminist perspectives, and comprehensive cross-consensus to obtain a precise grasp of the ways in which books contribute to feminist literature and philosophy.

3.2 Procedures of Data Analysis

The analytical method which aims to identify the challenges encountered by women of power and independence as shown in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Awakening*. Such an approach presents a thorough analysis of the feminist ideas in such texts. It employs a precise technique which blends thematic comparison, textual analysis, intersectional examination and critical engagement with secondary literature.

a. Textual Analysis:

Textual analysis involves the analysis of both selected novels to find out the primary themes, character progression, and narrative techniques that demonstrate the empowerment of women and their independence.

b. Thematic Comparison:

After conducting the textual analysis, the components recognized in both texts are compared and contrasted. The aim of this comparison is to know how the authors picture feminist themes. It also examines how they use different methods to narrate their stories.

c. Intersectional Examination:

In this stage, different characteristics of identity that influence the characters are clarified. It also looks at how the characters' experiences are shaped by society.

d. Critical Engagement: Further research on the novels can enhance the analysis. This engagement situates the findings within the framework of feminist literary discourse, allowing for a conversation between the main texts and extant scholarship.

This scientific approach to data analysis provides useful insights into feminist literary studies.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Analysis of "The Handmaid's Tale"

This section presents an analysis of women's power, key characters, and themes in "The Handmaid's Tale" are presented.

4.1.1 Analysis of Women's Power

Exploring the women's power in Gilead's dystopian society in *The Handmaid's Tale* revealed that women have no power. They cannot work, own property, or even read. This lack of power stems from Gilead's male-centric power structure. In Gilead, theocratic laws prohibit women from holding positions of leadership. This disenfranchisement oppresses women by erasing their identity and agency. It commercializes women's bodies and work. One example of public control is the salvaging in which persons who have deceived the state are killed. The show is intended to shock viewers and to demonstrate how the government controls life, death, and morality, in other words, how the state oppresses people's lives.

In contrast, the Commander's households and settings show that the domestic sphere is free from public oppression. It reflects and makes these issues worse at home. Handmaids are monitored, coerced and sexually abused under the pretext of ceremony, showing that they lack consent and autonomy in their most personal interactions. Offred's description of the Ceremony shows how the state intrudes on the private domain, taking away her bodily autonomy and reducing her reproductive capability. Applying this analysis shows how different women in Gilead experience things differently. Gender and racial oppression intersect. This is shown by the racial purges and the exclusion of women from reproductive roles. This shows how different aspects of identity affect women's experiences of power and oppression. The novel *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood reveals how men have power over women. The significance of defiance, solidarity and taking back control are also presented in this novel.

Employing an intersectional feminist perception shows the criticism of novel of unfairness in gender. This proves how women are resilience to overpass these conditions. The importance of studying many types of individuality and subjugation to entire understanding of the subtleties of influence and fight in the life of women are also stressed in this view.

4.1.2 Key characters

Strength and subjugation in an awful society are manifested in the novel 'the Handmaid's Tale'. The hero 'Offred' who is an enslaved Gileadian woman is an example. She is recognized as monarch by the name 'Offred'. Offred has brilliant mind which leads her to confrontation to rule of Gilead as well as her wish for freedom. She finds means to fight as evoking her past life, reading forbidden books and maintaining her friendship with Nick despite

constraints imposed upon her. This is clear evidence that she is eager to be free and proves her skill to make her own decisions.

Another character is Serena Joy who is the wife of the leader. She is fallen into a trap made by her own creation. After being one of the defenders of traditional gender roles, she recently gets involved in the ethics which she had developed. By doing so, she confirms limited rules supported by the irony and unintended consequences. Her relationship with Offred is evidence of how a woman is abused by another woman. Showing how women can employ authority to abuse others, Aunt Lydia keeps Gileadian rule and educates the Handmaids their tasks. In fact, the ways of utilizing power and leading folks to fight Aunt Lydia follows are clearly investigated by Atwood. Not only this but Aunt Lydia also embeds terror and obedience in individuals and stimulates them to think of methods to fight again. It can be said that the matters of existence and liability in tyrannical regimes are revealed in the character of Aunt Lydia.

4.1.3 Themes

Regarding the themes in 'The Handmaid's Tale', the procedures of control and tyranny in Gilead is the main theme surveyed by Atwood. To put it another way, Atwood depicts how state practiced control over women and their characteristics. Atwood also investigates the complications of tyranny from public performances on 'The Wall' to private infringements of the Ceremony by the use of the individuals and their relations. Doing so, he highlights the occurrence of male's control. In brief, the themes of struggle and the search of independence are the main themes this novel center on in spite of the pervasive tyranny. One of the themes in this novel is the acts of disobedience by Offred show her firm spirit of confrontation. Those acts were represented in preserving her internal soliloquy or spoiling in prohibited relations. The novel argues that the desire for self-rule and self-determination cannot be totally repressed even among the most obstructive conditions.

To investigate the complicated interaction between involvement and victimhood within tyrannical systems, Atwood employs characters such as Serena Joy and Aunt Lydia. That is, the inquiry of this novel is in what manner women support male-controlled customs and undergo the same systems, provoking a nuanced thought of authority dynamics and moral duty. The lives of Offred, Serena Joy and Aunt Lydia present a deep comment on women's authority, independence, tyranny and verbalized through in this novel. Atwood constructs a story that challenges male-controlled tyranny by incorporating themes of control, fighting and connivance. He also clarifies how individuals are able to endure despotic circumstances. Using an Intersectional Feminist Lens, the novel illustrates the challenges of coping with authority and personality within an extremely unfair society by introducing a variety of characters and ideas.

4.2 Analysis of "The Awakening"

The power and independence of women will be studied in this section.

4.2.1 Analysis of Women's Power and Autonomy

Edna Pontellier embarks on a voyage of self discovery that encounter society. At first, Edna is regarded as a mother and lovely wife. However at Grand Isle, she wants more happiness and freedom. She desire to be an artist, have intercourse without being restricted, and do whatever she wishes for. Edna queries the patriarchal systems of the late nineteenth century. She does not wish to be a wife or mother. This demonstrates that she likes to do what she wants. Her experiences with Alcée Arobin and Robert Lebrun demonstrate that she desires sexual freedom. The novel's emphasis on Edna's struggle for autonomy is significant, but it is also

necessary to acknowledge the novel's shortcomings through an intersectional lens. The novel focuses on Edna's perspective as a wealthy, white woman, rather than that of women from various backgrounds. Characters such as Mademoiselle Reisz and the quadroon nurse are less thoroughly developed than others, indicating that the story focuses on a specific group of women. Edna's awakening is linked with themes of isolation and confinement, which reflect larger cultural restraints on women. The physical places she inhabits, ranging from the Pontellier mansion to her tiny pigeon hole, represent the many levels of her liberty and the societal expectations that limit her. One gloomy announcement of self-rule that run against social limitations is the choice to grasp her living. Other significances of denying morals of community are Edna's engagement in art, her unaccompanied swims in the ocean, her ambition for self- representation and getting rid of strained tasks. However, her struggle highlights the limited opportunities for women to assert their autonomy in a repressive environment.

" The Awakening investigates women's power and autonomy at the turn of the twentieth century through Edna Pontellier's journey. The novel critiques patriarchal restrictions and the challenges of gaining personal independence in a constrained society. Edna's tale exemplifies how women have always strived for freedom and made sacrifices to attain it.

4.2.2 Key characters

"The Awakening explores Edna Pontellier's relationship with her freedom, identity, and societal expectations. Edna is Chopin's major character, and she represents how people desire to be autonomous while their lives clash with what society expects. Investigating independence and individuality in this novel is established by Edna's consciousness of her own desires, aims and distinctiveness. Edna's connections and her passion for painting allow her to explore herself. But her journey is also lonely, demonstrating how difficult it is to be different.

In the story, Mademoiselle Reisz is portrayed as an independent lady. As a musician and single lady, she demonstrates that women can live varied lives. Her support for Edna's creative and personal development demonstrates the importance of women supporting one another, as well as the power of art.

Adèle Ratignolle is the "ideal" lady of her time—a wife and mother. Her character differs from Edna's. She is expected to be a responsible wife and mother. Adèle enjoys her life, but she does not understand why Edna is sad. This demonstrates that women are expected to adhere to social norms, even if it means being unhappy.

4.2.3 Themes

The novel is about independence. Edna wants to be herself, but society expects women to be different. Edna rejects her traditional roles as wife and mother and pursues her own desires, showing the possibilities and limitations of women's independence.

Edna tries to reconcile her desires and expectations. Her "awakening" entails discovering and confronting the norms. Chopin also examines how women are expected to act. She uses Edna and Adèle to demonstrate how people may be both independent and conformist, with desires and responsibilities. The story explores whether women can be truly independent in a culture that primarily regards them as husbands and mothers.

The Awakening investigates how society affects people and how individuals affect society. Chopin depicts how women are constrained by society and how they battle for their liberties. The novel is a significant study of women's lives and their desire for self-fulfillment.

4.3 Comparative Analysis of the two novels

The two novels approach the issue of women's power in distinct ways. They examine how women are treated in public and private, as well as how they might reject it. Both works demonstrate how women are confined in their civilizations. In the Handmaid's Tale, Gilead's

theocratic rule limits women's duties and autonomy. Women in "The Awakening" were expected to be brides and mothers in the late nineteenth-century American South. So, this is the reason that presents difficulty for Edna to be innovative and liberated.

By showing how individuals can disobey the rules of the society, Edna and Offred find their direction. In other words, they try to express themselves in two different ways: Edna practises the art painting and Offred demonstrate herself by rebellion. What distinguish public from private in the two novels is a source of authority. Evidence of this is the difference between Gilead's public and private lives in Edna. That is, there are clashes between her public character as a mother and wife and her private motivations for creative fineness and passionate affection.

It is safe to assume that the two novels are different. One difference between them is the time in which they take place. Describing how women lose their liberty in both public and private settings, 'the Handmaid's Tale' is set in a frightful future when the state have power over women's bodies. On other hand, 'the Awakening' is set in the late nineteenth century and deals with women's fight against community, showing that her complaint was about society, not politics. Another difference between the two novels is visibility of characters and themes. Due to being essential for existence in a cruel system, fighting in 'The Handmaid's Tale' is often mysterious. On contrary, Edna's opposition in 'The Awakening' is obvious. Besides that, Offred guards her private self and memories whereas Edna search for to live her life on her conditions.

One marked difference between the two novels lies in the styles women had. This is clear in the demise of the characters. While the fate of Edna was suicide due to her discontent with conventions of society, no one know the fate of Offred which remained mysterious. It has been suggested that she may have fled or may have been taken prisoner. This is a proof of the clash between submission and disagreement. Though she seems as being lied under obedience, Edna's choice is upsetting and it proves that she is in control. On other hand, outlook of freedom affected the life of Offred.

Though difference in terms of location, fighting and what happens to the major heroes, women fight for rule and self-sufficiency in obstructive societies were represented in two novels. Beside adding to the present argument over women's tasks in both private and public areas, these differences and resemblances are helpful aid to gender, individuality and confrontation.

4.4 Analysis of social and historical contexts

The power of women in distinctive historical and social conditions occurs because the two narratives were issued in the different times. Using Intersectional Feminism and an approach that blends Comparative Literary Analysis with Feminist Criticism, it is possible to investigate how the distinct social and historical circumstances of each impact the portrayal of women's power and autonomy.

Atwood's dystopian novel is set in a near-future New England, where a regime called the Republic of Gilead has formed in response to both a fertility crisis and environmental collapse. That scenario embodies fears of the 1980s: anti-feminism, the rise of religion and worries about reproductive rights and the environment. Gilead's theocracy and rigid gender structures subvert patriarchal power and repression. They fear unchecked social trends will wreak havoc on society. In Gilead, women's bodies are a political battleground. Their strength is relative to their reproductive capacity. Then there is Gilead's social system, designed to make women reliant on the state. Which shows why we need to be watching how women's rights are impacted.

The Awakening takes place in the late nineteenth-century American South. It relates to the restrictions of the Victorian age, which was quite strict about gender, and it addresses the

more modern limits.” I think the story interrogates expectations for women in Creole society in Louisiana. Edna Pontellier’s quest for independence challenges the accepted norms of her time. The novel portrays how women were limited in their options for expressing dissatisfaction with their roles. In Pauline Chopin's writing, Edna's experiences serve as a critique of the normal social, cultural constructs of women. The novel was published at the turn of the twentieth century when many new feminist movements emerged. “We believe it was an important book because it showed what is possible as far as women have come.”

This problem discussed in these two works is in accordance with the social and historical background of themselves, and the data analysis has confirmed this. “The Handmaid’s Tale” explores the repercussions of contemporary society, and “The Awakening” shows a woman’s challenges in her time. Each novel is reflective of the times. Atwood’s concerns the backward shift of women’s rights; Chopin’s, the forward thrust of feminism. In both, the power of women is shaped by their environments. Gilead’s destiny is a fable of caution, and Edna’s Louisiana reviews tradition. Both authors use their stories to challenge the limits of women’s rights. Both works explore women’s power through the lens of society and history. The books also illustrate how women’s freedom is conditioned by society and history. They speak to larger concerns of gender, power and resistance.

4.5 Intersections and divergences in themes and character developments

The two novels examine issues such as autonomy, identity, and resistance, as well as character development. Both works center on women's quest for emancipation from cultural constraints. Edna and Offred challenge the boundaries of their identities. Edna's pursuit of independence in "The Awakening" is analogous to Offred's longing for seclusion and the ability to live her life as she sees fit in "The Handmaid's Tale." Each character's journey demonstrates how society attempts to destroy people's identities, and how everyone fights for independence and control over their own life.

Edna and Offred's stories are about identification and self-discovery. Edna and Offred both desire more from life than their jobs as spouses and mothers permit. Both characters struggle with losing their identities. Furthermore, Chopin and Atwood's characters defy society. Edna commits herself, and Offred joins the underground Mayday resistance movement to demonstrate their willingness to go to any length to achieve freedom. These deeds demonstrate how desperate people are to be free.

The two novels have different themes and character developments. While both Edna and Offred rebel against their societies, they are oppressed in different ways. The time of Edna's fight in the late 19th century took place in a fairly open community. Even though this fight was not public and lonely, it followed scandalous style. As other people who severely penalized when dispute and where scrutiny is faithful, Offred brought up in dictatorial country of Gilead. This is one factor that has effects on the defiance of people and on the events those people encountered.

What happened for Edna and Offred is not the same due to different opinions they held towards the rights of women. The bad end of suicide committed by Edna reveals that it is awkward thing for women to be unrestricted in this community. The vague end of Offred indicates the possibility that she could flee or the possibility that she was fallen in capture. This casts doubts about her successfulness in her battle.

While Edna has no one with her on her tour, moments of commonality and assistance accompanied the character of Offred, such as her alliance with Moira and her contribution to the Mayday conflict. This is evidence of importance of collaboration in fighting despots.

Holding the same themes of self-rule, personality and fighting, the two novels vary in environment, result and the development of individuals. Those distinctions display the way in which the complex connection between gender, community and specific adoption are investigated in literature looks.

4.6 Comparative analysis of literary devices

Symbols and some literary procedures can determine methodologies used in the two novels by the authors to criticize gender roles and the limitations imposed on women, to transfer the existing hidden meanings and evaluations. For example, some of these symbols would be the red colour of the Handmaids and the blue colour of the Wives in the film series 'The Handmaid's Tale'. This means women's independence and freedom loss. Serena Joy's Garden supports the psychology that women are appealing along with subservient but hold the secret wish to be freed.

Likewise, the novel 'The Awakening' uses the symbols. The sea, for example, is symbolically representative of Edna's individual desire to break free of social constructs of the community. Birds are a symbol for all women restricted to social roles as they find their own freedom, he says. These techniques and features is helpful to provide precise ideas about the characters in the novels and their outlook to the society. The analysis dealt primarily with themes and character development. Through these symbols along with the interpretations between literature used by Atwood and Chopin we are able to see a clear understanding of women when it comes to power and autonomy in each of their novels.

5. Discussion

The two novels reflect how women's power, autonomy and roles in society are still evolving. This considers similarities and differences between the two novels. It also examines ways in which gender-based oppression and resistance differ and have persisted across societies and eras. The novels have been talked about as sharing themes about women striving for independence, searching for their identity, resisting the way they are treated. Edna Pontellier, Offred: Their struggles are ours, now. They reflect women's desire to be in control of their own lives, to be themselves.

It compares the fate of women in late nineteenth-century America as depicted in "The Awakening" with that in "The Handmaid's Tale." Women's bodies will be the battlefield for control of society. This is due to the loss of rights and power of women in traditional societies. This method of considering women's experiences from multiple angles shows how women could be oppressed in different ways. There are two novels which describe white middle-class women yet many characters may also challenge someone to question how women struggle to be free and for an identity. Combat structures can get assistance by harmony and cooperative act. Comparing Edna with Offred, Edna lives alone whereas moments of relationship and confrontation were available to Offred that proves the effectiveness of cooperative efforts. It also proves that supporting each other is valuable for women and other aggrieved individuals. What can be elicited from the data is that unfairness is still practiced over women which enables to think of how rights and personalities of women can be protected. Women's rights and a more rightful community are needed to be endlessly called for.

To conclude, based on Intersectional Feminism and a nuanced viewpoint, the analysis revealed that great efforts were exerted by women to attain control, self-rule and freedom to choose their positions. The analysis also showed different ways of female behaviors, possible ways of cooperation as well as the ways of understanding and inquiring the systems of society given by Feminism.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

What is demonstrated by the two novels is the ways followed by women to be liberated and strong as well as the ways of limiting the capabilities of women formed by society. Both works characterize how women attempt to be independent. Offred and Edna Pontellier, the protagonists, struggle and fight to define themselves in the face of patriarchal norms. Their rejection to conform to the expectations of society demonstrates how women have long pushed for self-determination.

This paper compares the power of women in private and public life. This text by two different authors deals with women's issues from different historical perspectives. The first is by Margaret Atwood, who says women have no role in society. The second is by Kate Chopin, who says that being a woman in a time when feminism was just accepted but not yet powerful meant being able to change things.

The settings of a dystopian future and late nineteenth-century America demonstrate how society and history influence women's roles and struggles for liberation. Furthermore, the study encourages thinking about how different groups of women are oppressed in different ways. This broadens the thesis' coverage of women's problems across identities. The study also demonstrates how literature reflects and influences society. Books by Edna and Offred can inspire others to discuss and act on women's rights and autonomy. This investigation demonstrates how difficult it is for women to be independent and define themselves in a society where men are in authority. It also demonstrates how books may help women transform their lives. It demonstrates that the struggle for women's liberation has been told in literature and society for a long time.

Furthermore, this study helps us better comprehend women's power and autonomy in literature. It also paves the way for future research in this area. Future studies could benefit from focusing on women from diverse backgrounds. The global fight by women to obtain their rights can be known through studies of non-Western novels and literature carried by various scholars. The enhancement and decline of women's rights can be also identified by investigating the development of the roles of women during different times. Thus, this leads to appreciate the status of women in literature.

Future study can be done to comprehend the indication and influence of different narrative means on gender roles by studying various kinds and media like poetry, drama, science fiction, film, television and digital platforms. Investigating the effect of feminist movements on literature is another study that may be carried out to revealed the development of society and how literature suggests this. Knowing the influence of stories on people and societies may be understood by employing sociological theories to analyze literature. At the end, analyzing literary texts through digital technologies can present images that lead to know the ways in which women are portrayed in novels. Taking these principles into accounts, scholars will deeply comprehend the influence of gender, authority and independence on literature and community. Thus, the roles of women in society and the arts will be topics of discussions and debates.

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