
The Awakening: The Embodiment Of Ideal Femininity

The story *The Awakening* was written by Kate Chopin around 1899 in New Orleans. The main characters in the story are Edna Pontellier, her husband Leonce Pontellier, their two kids, and Robert Lebrun. Edna and her family went on a vacation to Cheniere Caminada Island on a Creole resort. Unlike every other woman of that time she would take care of the kids, be submissive to her husband, and be a homemaker. She began to sort for freedom after she met Robert an entertainer for married wives and was willing to put her own independence and individualism before her kids and marriage. Edna was a feminist (someone who support feminism) and she go against societal norms and expectations. Edna is an example of how most women of today's society are, they don't take orders from their husband's and they don't care what society thinks and say about them, they believe inequality.

Edna was 28 years of age. She was a young American woman with small infusion of French. The novel annals her transformation of a housewife to a person of freethinking. Edna husband Leonce sees her as something he owns. "You are burnt beyond recognition, he added looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage" (Pg5, Para3). After her return from the beach one morning her husband starts to complain that she burnt herself in the sun. He wasn't worried about if she has any discomfort he was mainly concerned about her outer appearances which he wants to keep safe and undamaged. He doesn't see his wife as a person with an independent mind and will he sees her as an object and something that he controls. Society sees Edna as a slave to her kids and husband. At an early stage of life a young lady is thought how she should treat her husband, her kids and how to run a house and her family. "Are women Growing Selfish?" (Pg162-163, Para3-4) According to Dorothy Dix women as becoming to realize that they situate everything and everyone before themselves, "A woman sacrifices herself in a thousand needless ways little way which do no one any good, but when a man makes a sacrifice it is big with heroism" (Pg162, Para3). She saying that it doesn't matter what a woman does it won't benefit anyone but the woman because she thinks that she is doing what is right even if it makes her uncomfortable. She says a woman never get credit for anything they do, but as soon as a man does something it get published. We see this with Edna in "The Awakening" when Mr. Ponetiller went to New Orleans and send a box with friandises, fruits pates, a rear bottle or two, delicious syrup, and bonbons everyone thinks she have the best husband, and Edna agree with them, she did it even though she didn't want to, but she was doing it because that's what society expects her to.

Like every woman in today society no one want to be controlled by anyone, everyone want to be independent and make decisions for themselves. In *The Awakening*, we see where Edna finds the bravery to make the differences she see necessary in her life and starts to sort for freedom. In the beginning of the story we see where Chopin uses the ocean and the bird to describe Edna's transition. Edna wanted to be relinquished from the way she living her life as a mother and a wife. "A green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage outside the door" (Pg1, Para1). The bird symbolize how Edna feels trapped in life. If Edna wants freedom she would have to the bravery within herself and go against the rules of humanity which she did. John Glending "Evolution, Narcissism, and Maladaptation in Kate Chopin's" explain that Edna chooses Robert because of the natural female birds sense for specific males. "Why Robert?"

Darwin writes about the attraction female birds feel for particular males, and it is worth speculating about any particular attraction he exercises on Edna. On the surface it is easy to understand why Edna takes to him. She has grown tired of her husband, and Robert is younger and more attractive than the stoop-shouldered Léonce, belying Darwin's idea that women are particularly attracted to older men with status.²¹ He is also a very personable young man who pays her flattering attention. But Edna's background and character make Robert's appearance of special significance in the allure he exercises: "In coloring he was not unlike [Edna]. A clean-shaved face made the resemblance more pronounced than it would otherwise have been." Edna choose Robert because he was there when she needed someone to talk to and he also teaches how to swim things her husband never seems interested in. Lewis Leary "Kate Chopin and Walt Whitman" also believes that the bird was a symbol Edna of Edna lifestyle. "Some may find it significant that this narrative of self-discovery begins with the voice of an impertinent parrot and with a mocking bird" (Pg233, Para2).

In the Novel we see where Chopin describes Edna not to be a "mother woman" because she does not idolized her kid and worships her husband. "The mother-woman seemed to prevaile that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them. Fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood. They were women who idolized their husbands" (Pg11 Para1). If any of kids were ever injured they wouldn't run to her they would comfort each other. Chopin use Adele Ragitonelle as an example of a good woman. She represent the embodiment of ideal femininity. She was beautiful, she made clothes for her kids, and she got pregnant every two year.