

The role of women in the awakening essay



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The Role Of Women in The Awakening The role of women is one of the major themes of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. The three main female characters of the story help to show the views of women to society, with Madame Ratignolle showing the example of the perfect woman, Mademoiselle Reisz representing the opposite of a proper woman of the time, and Edna representing the changing views of women and their roles. The roles portrayed by these women make the role of women a main focus throughout the novel.

Madame Ratignolle is the perfect example of the societies view of the perfect women in the early 1900's. She was describes as " The embodiment of every womanly grace and Charm"(21). She also took her role as a mother seriously putting her children before all else, as well as bringing a new child into the world every two years or so. She was subtle with delicate conversation matters even referring to her pregnancy as " Her Condition" (22).

Also showing here Subtle traits when talking to Edna during Childbirth telling Edna, " Think of the Children" (152), telling Edna she knew of her adoration for Robert. Madame Ratignolle is portrayed as an example of both the perfect mother-woman and the perfect example of a woman who fits into the role of women. The exact opposite of Madame Ratignolle would be Mademoiselle Reisz, representing one who forsook the role of a woman. Said to be a cruel uncaring woman throughout the novel. She was also the opposite of a mother-woman.

Never marrying a husband whom she could adore, and never having children. Although she wasn't an example of the role of women she helped

Edna see a new side to women and helped change her view. With her music helping awaken the true Edna, inspiring Edna to seek enjoyment in her own arts. As her time was spent with Edna she shows the compassion and love she could of given but chose not to. Showing that although she was not viewed as a fit for the role of women, in a special way she was an inspiration for a new type of women.

The Final example is that of Edna, and how the Role of women evolves with her. Before finding herself Edna was a decent, but not perfect fit for the role of women. She cared for her children as a mother should, but preferred to let the quadroon take care of them. She was also a good wife, attending to her husband, and visitors of his business partners in their house on Tuesdays. However after her new self-realization, she changed to a new woman. Instead of staying home on Tuesdays to take visitors, she says, “ she just felt like going out, and went out”(74).

She also began to make strange and rash decisions that a woman was not expected to make like buying a smaller house down the street from the one she lived in after her husband left for New York. Edna is a good example of the set roles of women and how they began to change over time. The Role of Women throughout the novel was important to Kate Chopin because it showed the changing views of women during the time she wrote the novel. It showed the views of society towards women changing for the better. As well as showing that if the view of women could make small changes then it would be able to make larger changes in the future.