

Kate chopin, the awakening

[Finance](#)



The Awakening by Kate Chopin 1st half: Page 1-60 Plot Summary: Leonce Pontellier and Edna Pontellier take their children to Grand Isle to spend their summer vacation. While on that trip Edna learns how to swim which becomes a huge revelation to her, in a sense of gaining some control over her life. Also Edna makes a great connection with Robert Lebrun, a charming man who pursues to obtain Edna's attention and affections.

As he flees to Mexico, the narrative of the story shifts to Edna's complexed feelings towards Robert and her search for social freedom. With the summer being over and Edna going back to New Orleans with her husband, Edna gradually re-evaluate her priorities and takes a more active role in her own happiness, as she starts to withdraw from some of the duties traditionally associated with motherhood and as a house-wife. Themes: * Self-destruction: The illusion of being able to control oneself, while being controlled by society and other circumstances around you will eventually lead to self-destruction. Edna the protagonist is in search for social liberation, and fundamentally ends up self-destructing herself by taking an action she believes can only be controlled by herself.) * Femininity: The restrictions and expectations put on a woman are purely on stereotypical and repressive images about a societally accepted idea of femininity. (In the era that Edna lived in, the gender roles were set in stone, men would work and women would be set to be home and take care of the kids and house, women like Edna were seen as possessions and trophies. * Identity: Dissatisfaction with the labels put on individuals can result in the loss of identity and the desire for independence outside of society. (The discontent with the labels Edna has as ' wife", " mother" has resulted in the loss of her

true identity, however the desire to gain back her identity leads her to social alienation and many controversies.) Characters: * Edna Pontellier: The protagonist of the novel, was described as “ She was rather handsome than beautiful.

Her face was captivating by reason of a certain frankness of expression and a contradictory subtle play of features. Her manner was engaging" (4). Wife of Leonce and a mother. Is presented as a complex and dynamic characters that develops throughout the story. Edna a very preserved individual who follows the attributes of society, develops quite aggressively from being a conserved young women to an individual who violets all of the morals that were set in her society. Robert Lebrun: A complex character who encounters himself in a love triangle with married woman, he plays a big part in Edna's awakening. As he escapes to Mexico to flee from a relationship that was not allowed to happen, leading the novel to hit the climax of the story. * Leonce Pontellier: is described as “ wore eyeglasses. He was a man of forty, of medium height and rather slender build; he stooped a little. His hair was brown and straight, parted on one side. His beard was neatly and closely trimmed. (1) Edna's husband, Leonce plays a big part in the novel, he is a man who treats women as properties and values, very materialist and spends his time away from home doing business. Setting: * The Awakening is set in the late nineteenth century on Grand Isle, off the coast of Louisiana, where the summers are spent. It continues to New Orleans where Edna and herfamilylive, in a relative luxurious house in the French quarters, “ a very charming home [...] it was a large, double cottage with a broad front veranda, [...] the house was painted a dazzling white. (49) * Society in the

nineteenth century was very repressed, women had to obey their husbands and duties, as Edna become more ‘awakened’ and self-dependent, her society begins to isolate her. Literary Devices: * Children: The imagery and verbal illusion of children are present throughout the novel. Edna is often symbolically seen as a child, her undergoing a form of re-birth as she sees the world from a fresh perspective. * Water: symbolic, water represents re-birth. Edna awakened while swimming where she realized that she could be the only one who can control her own movements. Birds: The caged birds symbolically represent Edna’s entrapment in society, as well as the women in the nineteenth century in general. “A green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage outside.” (1) Other Critical Approaches: * Archetypal Approach (Metamorphosis/change): Edna undergoes a sudden but dramatic transformation, going from a conservative role to an independent woman. (As Edna obeys her husband and follows the rules of society, but transforms into a woman who goes by her own rules, and dismisses every task given to her.)