

Women in "the awakening" essay sample

[Literature](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Women in “ The Awakening” Essay Sample

In “ The Awakening” Kate Chopin intends to illustrate the functions of Creole life. Adele Ratignolle and Edna Pontellier share diverse visions concerning the position of women in Creole society. Adele believes that women should be acquiescent to their husbands and perform their maternal job. She believes that “ a woman who would give her life for her children could do no more than that”(Chopin 47). Edna, however, takes a different standpoint. Adele Ratignolle and Edna Pontellier are the embodiment of the devoted and the insubordinate Creole women, respectively.

Adele Ratignolle stands for the perfect mother. Her thoughts keep on processing for her children is always one of love. Even in her free time, Adele works to accomplish her children’s desires. While at Grand Isle, she “ was busily engaged in sewing upon a diminutive pair of night-drawers . . . designed for winter wear”(Chopin 8). When she should take pleasure in the summer season on the island, Adele’s thoughts look forward to her children’s wishes for the winter season. All the time alert of her motherly position, Adele tries to provide for her children.

Adele’s happiness can be seen in her children. Although “ she [plays] very well, keeping excellent waltz time and infusing an expression into the strains which was indeed inspiring” (Chopin 24), she only tries to keep her children cheerful. She believes that is a central role of her motherly duty to go on her playing to develop the children’s career. Although Adele wants that is excellent for her children, yet she is aware of the fact that she must be accepted by the people and retain an enviable status.

As compare to Adele Ratignolle, Edna Pontellier wants to fulfill her own desires first. She feels affection for her children, but she does not consider that their requirements and wishes should trouble her. One evening, after coming back from Klein's hotel, Leonce informs Edna that their son, Raoul, has a high fever. Edna is "quite sure Raoul [has] no fever. He had gone to bed perfectly well"(Chopin 55). Leonce condemns Edna for ignoring their child. Edna failed to realize that one of her children was sick, even though part of her motherly role is to guarantee the children's fitness and cheerfulness. Edna tells Adele, "I would give my life for my children, but I wouldn't give myself"(Chopin 47). Edna is enthusiastic to die for her sons, but she is not ready to tolerate them to hamper her from accomplishing her imaginings.

Art is one of the favorite hobbies of Edna. She takes pleasure in drawing and painting. She frequently withdraws her atelier to paint and draw.

Mademoiselle Reisz aware of Edna's ability and let her know that, "You are the only one worth playing for"(Chopin 26). Edna places her own dreams prior to the wants of the children. She wishes the best for them, but she needs somebody else to make the sacrifice. Edna is trapped in her husband's defined manner of living and wishes to disaffiliate from this manner of living. (Kearns, 62-88)

Adele and Edna also differ concerning their duties in the homes and their commitments to their husbands. Adele and her husband have an appropriate Creole correlation. They both have the same opinion that Adele's piano playing is imperative to their home. Adele was "keeping up her music on account of the children, she said; because she and her husband both

<https://assignbuster.com/women-in-the-awakening-essay-sample/>

considered it a means of brightening the home and making it more attractive"(Chopin 24). Music offers the environment that they both wish for the children. Adele and her husband are paying special attention to each other's desires, and they are the embodiment of an ideal couple.

Adele shows interest in her husband's life. She listens alertly regarding his day over lunch. Mr. Ratignolle " talked a great deal on various topics His wife was keenly interested in everything he said". (Chopin, 56) Adele values that good communication in marriage is very important. Her function in the marriage is to keep her husband satisfied, and his, is to make available for her and the children. Both epitomize their devotion to each other.

Edna challenges the convention of Creole marriage. One of her probable attitudes engages in waiting at home to entertain guests on Tuesday afternoons. On these days, " there was a constant stream of callers This had been the programmed (sic) which Mrs. Pontellier had religiously followed since her marriage, six years before"(Chopin, 50).

Edna comes to a decision to stop entertaining visitors and has the cards of those visiting collected on a tray. One night at dinner, Edna elucidates to Leonce that she did not invite visitors that day. When he questions her deeds, she answers that she merely wanted to go out. Leonce is annoyed with her. Edna afterward chooses to go into the pigeon house around the corner to strive to attain liberty. Though she may gain freedom, she will never gain independence.

Edna's independence and sexuality is discovered with men such as Alcee and Robert, who gives consent to her to let loose herself from her

<https://assignbuster.com/women-in-the-awakening-essay-sample/>

suppression and look at her enthusiasm for life. At last, the sea, indicating her self-determination, tempts Edna as she perceives an equivalent flanked by the sea and her life. Edna's sexuality sets in motion to be look at, that in a sense is her first awakening, when Robert and she turn out to be progressively more personal in their connection. When Edna finds out Robert is leaving she comes back to her home and takes away her dinner gown for a relaxed, commodious covering. This means Edna tearing away the boundaries of society and rebelling. Robert also has same feelings towards Edna, but is caught in a problem when he thinks ethically immoral to carry out a connection with a married woman.

Edna also rails against the unions of marriage. She wants a great deal to be free from the excruciating restrictions of matrimony. One night, in her room, Edna becomes fuming. She [takes] off her wedding ring [and flings] it upon the carpet, When she [sees] it lying there, she [stamps] her heel upon it, striving to crush it In a sweeping passion, she [seizes] a glass vase from the table and [flings] it upon the tiles of the hearth. She [wants] to destroy something. The crash and clatter [are] what she [wants] to hear. (Chopin 52)

Edna wants to get rid of the errands of her marriage. She wishes to wipe out the symbol of her unpleasant association. Her delusion of freedom can be seen at the pigeon house. She thinks that once she go away from Leonce and the children and the responsibility they place upon her, she can attain the independence she requires.(Malzahn, 31-39)

Edna and Adele equally have hobbies and distractions. Adele's distractions focus on her family. Adele squanders her spare time in stitching and playing

the piano. These actions are part of her maternal role, but they do not saddle her. Mr. Pontellier said, "There's Madame Ratignolle; because she keeps up her music, she doesn't let everything else go to chaos" (Chopin, 57). Though she has her own comfort, they still lead her family.

Adele presumes other errands that would not generally be hers to do, such as laundry. Although the maid is perfectly capable of performing the job, Adele keeps trying to do it by herself. She is doing the laundry when Edna approaches so "she [summons] a young black woman whom she [instructs], in French, to be very careful in checking off the list which she [hands] her" (Chopin, 55). Adele's well-built sense of responsibility shows the way to her to take initiative and act for herself what others would have taken into service help do.

Edna on the other hand, acquires her hired help away from their jobs and the duties linger undone. Edna takes pleasure in painting and frequently uses the help as matters for her ability. Edna "went up to her atelier . . . For a time she had the whole household enrolled in the service of art." (Chopin, 57). Her recreation of the servants from their duty demonstrates how canopy Edna is to the awareness that duty should come before ambition.

Edna knows how to swim throughout the summer season at Grand Isle. This serves as a sign of attaining freedom from all of the crutches in her life. Erudition to swim also predicts Edna's death. In her investigation to find greater sovereignty, Edna recognizes that she can only be free in the true sense through death. Although a lot of her marriage she was trying to run off them, as she gradually floats out to sea, "she thought of Leonce and the

children”(Chopin 116). In the end, she accomplishes her objective in a discouraging way.

Adele Ratignolle and Edna Pontellier stand for the submissive and the seditious Creole women, correspondingly. Adele and Edna symbolize opposite ends of the motherly gamut. Adele loves her children and typifies the ideal mother. Edna cares for her children, but she sporadically offended by that they rely on her. Adele loves her husband and performs her role in the home. However, Edna stays away from housework and makes an effort to get away from her husband. Adele’s distractions develop her family, but Edna’s diversions fulfill her own wishes. Edna and Adele are both Creole wives, but they choose diverse courses for their lives.

On the other hand Women had a big role in society during the Scarlet Letter era, but Hester Prynne went above and beyond what a normal woman did around this age. She was a very strong person and pretty much handled the letter “ A” which was imprinted on her chest very well. She was not your normal woman though; she could take care of herself, by finding a good way to make money by using her own talents. One of her drawbacks though was Pearl who held her back from things like love or things that would require much change, but she was very different from all the other women during this time. Also she is very different from modern day women in the way she works and her hobbies.

Most women during this time basically stayed home all day, taking care and raising their kids and tending to some household chores like cleaning, cooking, etc. Some of their hobbies were to find a way to keep their children

busy, knitting, reading, etc. For Hester Prynne on the other hand, her housekeeping meant that she had to basically “control” not take care of Pearl who was for most of the time, a very bad child. She had to keep up her house, and make money through designing clothes for people, but even though the clothes were very creative and popular designs, most people would not buy them only for the fact that she had committed adultery. Some of Hester’s hobbies were that she liked to make beautiful dresses for Pearl. (Hawthorne 106)

Today for work, most women have jobs and are in many different fields. One job is a secretary which is extremely woman dominates. Some women still take care of their children in place of work, but they are not expected to have to run the house by themselves while their husbands are at work. Nowadays they have more help around the house, and women have much different hobbies, they like to participate in sports and mainly anything that a man can do also. If Hester Prynne was living today, her work would consist of taking care of Pearl and keeping up her house. She would also be a fashion designer, something big like Vrasachi. If for some reason she didn’t go into the fashion field, she could do just about anything a woman this day and age can do. Her hobbies would not change too much, she would still be into fashion and her taking care of Pearl would consume a large amount of time.

The contrast between Hester Prynne and the women of the Scarlet Letter era is that Hester was really not so scared of the Puritan rule as the other women. She did not respect it like the other women did and wanted to be rebellious. Pearl helped her rebelliousness and also did not help it. She

<https://assignbuster.com/women-in-the-awakening-essay-sample/>

helped it in that she would make fun of her mom, and do weird things like playing games where she tried to hit the letter by throwing things at it. Pearl also did not let her mother become rebellious, it may have been her very nature, but Pearl was more like a help to Hester instead of a thorn in her side. Since Hester could go basically nowhere with Pearl, she could not be rebellious. Hester supported herself by the money she made, and most women had to rely on their husbands for money. These things made her very different from other women of this time, and they really did not like her for that.

Hester is more like the woman of today, she would be stronger and she could take care of herself. She would be different from the woman of today in that she may be more traditional, and she may not take to new things too well, something any woman from that time would have trouble with. Hester would like to be alive more in the modern day than when she was, because the laws have changed, women have more rights, everyone is not so strict, and people are a lot more original, than they used to be, they aren't just robots who do the same thing day in and day out, they actually live lives that aren't very boring.

Works Cited

Chopin, Kate. "The Awakening", New York: Dover Publications, 1993.

Hawthorne Nathaniel, "The Scarlet Letter", Bantam Classics (February 1, 1981)

Kearns, Katherine. "The Nullification of Edna Pontellier" *American Literature* 1 (1991): 62-88.

Malzahn, Manfred. "The Strange Demise of Edna Pontellier" *Southern Literary Journal* 23. 2 (1992): 31-39.