

76. Woman and patriarchy: Tales of males and ghosts

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APA: Demir, A. (2022). Women and patriarchy: Tales of males and ghosts. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (31), 1281-1289. DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.1222255.

Abstract

Having its roots in faiths such as Judaism and Christianity, the term 'patriarchy' refers to a system of authority in which males are regarded as superior to females and wield power over them. While some women have submissively internalized the patriarchal system, others have raised their voices and spoken out against it. Short stories written by women writers are one way to examine this system. However, there is a wide disparity in these authors' attitudes toward women. Some depict brave new women who transform and progress as the narrative goes on, while others feature stereotypical female figures who are submissive. The purpose of this paper is to compare the short stories written by Kate Chopin and Rose Tremain to those by Edith Wharton and Clare Boylan in order to determine whether or how much these authors criticize the patriarchal system. It is argued that Chopin and Tremain are the most critical of patriarchy, whereas Wharton and Boylan represent women within a patriarchal framework. Both Chopin and Tremain provide a comprehensive analysis of human nature, regardless of whether they are discussing men or women, with all of their complexity and inner struggles. Authors such as Wharton and Boylan, on the other hand, depict women in patriarchal societies in their natural state, without offering any solutions or suggestions. In their accounts, societal or sexual injustice is motivated by financial considerations.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Kate Chopin, Rose Tremain, Edith Wharton, Clare Boylan

Ataerki ve kadın: Erkeklerin ve hayaletlerin öyküleri

Öz

Kökleri Yahudilik ve Hristiyanlık gibi inançlara dayanan 'ataerki' terimi, erkeklerin kadınlardan üstün görüldüğü ve onlar üzerinde güç sahibi olduğu bir otorite sistemini ifade eder. Bazı kadınlar ataerki sistemi itaatkar biçimde içselleştirirken, bazıları ise bu konuda sesini yükseltmiş ve eleştirmiştir. Kadın yazarlar tarafından yazılan kısa öyküler, bu sistemi incelemenin yollarından biridir. Ancak, bu yazarların kadınlara yönelik tutumları değişkenlik göstermektedir. Bazıları, hikaye ilerledikçe değişime uğrayan cesur, yeni kadınları tasvir ederken, diğerleri ise itaatkar, basmakalıp kadın figürlerini tasvir ediyor. Bu makalenin amacı, Kate Chopin ve Rose Tremain'in kısa öykülerini Edith Wharton ve Clare Boylan'ın öyküleriyle karşılaştırmak ve bu yazarların ataerki sistemi eleştirip eleştirmediklerini veya hangi boyutta eleştirdiklerini belirlemektir. Bu makalede, Chopin ve Tremain'in ataerki sistemi en çok eleştiren yazarlar olduğu, Wharton ve Boylan'ın ise kadınları ataerki bir çerçeve içerisinde temsil ettiği ileri sürülmektedir. Hem Chopin hem de Tremain, tüm karmaşıklıkları ve içsel mücadeleleriyle, erkek veya kadın olduğuna bakılmaksızın, insan doğasının anlaşılabilir derinliklerine inerek onun kapsamlı bir analizini sunar. Öte yandan Wharton ve Boylan gibi yazarlar, ataerki bir toplumda yaşayan kadınları hiçbir çözüm veya öneri sunmadan doğal

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hallerinde resmederler. Wharton ve Boylan'ın hikayelerinden yola çıkınca, toplumsal veya cinsiyet konularındaki adaletsizliğin kaynağı finansal kaygılardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ataerki, Kate Chopin, Rose Tremain, Edith Wharton, Clare Boylan

Introduction

Women have been the subject of male gaze throughout history, from holy texts to daily slam words/swearwords. They have been treated as second-rate, prone to serving the males. Men have long believed that they are the centre of the universe, and it appears that everything else supports this belief. Otherwise, they will be a monster, witch or demon such as Lilith, who rejected to be inferior to Adam, left heaven, and was demonised, or Eve, who acted freely and ate the forbidden fruit, causing humanity to be expelled from heaven. According to Clement of Alexandria (c.150 – c.215 AD), a Christian theologian and philosopher, “every woman should be filled with shame by the thought that she is a woman” (cited in Kopp, vii). Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 – 1821) stated that “Nature intended women to be our slaves ... they are our property; we are not theirs. They belong to us, just as a tree that bears fruit belongs to a gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for women! Women are nothing but machines for producing children” (cited in Kopp, vii). This study aims to portray the women and patriarchal order in literature through the short stories of Kate Chopin, Rose Tremain, Edith Wharton and Clare Boylan. It is argued that Chopin and Tremain are the writers who are the most critical of patriarchy by their brave and innovative portrayal of the situation, while Wharton and Boylan represent women through the patriarchal frame in their natural state, without offering any solutions or suggestions.

According to feminist criticism, discrimination against women has its origins in Western civilization. Even in Ancient Greece, for instance, men were considered as superior and women as inferior. Although there were few voices that supported the equality of men and women such as Christine de Pisan in her *Epistre au Dieu D'amours*² (Letter to the God of Love)(1399), it was not until the late 1700s that voices emerged in opposition to patriarchal ideals and statements. The first major published text to address women's struggles for equal rights is regarded as *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797). In it, she argues that women should define for themselves what it means to be a “woman”. Strong feminist critical issues did not, however, emerge until the early 1900s progressive era. During this time, women gained the right to vote and became significant activists in social concerns like health care, education, politics, and literature, but they did not attain parity with men in these fields. During this period, renowned women writers published works addressing the social perception of “woman”. *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf, published in 1929, depicts in graphic detail the unfair treatment of women pursuing education and alternatives to marriage and motherhood; Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), contains a significant section on D.H. Lawrence's portrayal of women; Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1969) argues that gender is constructed by society.

In her “Profession for Women” (1931), Virginia Woolf explains the barriers women face in the writing profession, one of which she refers to as the “Angel in the House”:

I called her after the heroine of a famous poem, The Angel in the House. [...] She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a

² This work is the first literary quarrel set up by a woman to be found in the French language. She defends women by responding to the misogyny in Roman de la rose [The Romance of the Rose] at the palace court (Apolonia, 221).

draught she sat in it--in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all--I need not say it--she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty--her blushes, her great grace. (2)

Woolf argues that in order to become a great writer, it is necessary to kill the angel in the house, and that this is the responsibility of women writers (Woolf, 2). Similar to Woolf, Beauvoir believes that men define what it means to be human, including what it means to be female. Beauvoir argues that because women are not men, they are relegated to the role of the “Other”, whose very existence is mediated through the dominating male (xvi). Authors such as Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, and George Sand all embraced the prevalent social norms that shaped women. Accordingly, these women wrote under male pseudonyms to increase their chances of having them published and consequently recognised for their intellectual and creative accomplishments.

Finally, feminist theorists and women writers who adopt the mission seek to correct erroneous ways of thinking. They assert that women are distinct individuals; they are neither incomplete nor inferior to men. Women need to identify themselves and explain their duties, ambitions, aspirations, and positions in society despite the frequent fictionalisation and stereotyping of females in literature and culture as angels, bar maids, bitches, witches, whores, domestic servants, or old maids.

Part I: Kate Chopin and Rose Tremain; women writers who are the most critical of patriarchal order

Among the women writers who have addressed women's issues, some have used the patriarchy as their backdrop. In their oeuvres, they both take a liberated approach towards women and criticise society's treatment of women as “angel in the house”. Since they used different phraseology, the studies of women writers' oeuvres reveal two prominent ways of criticising the patriarchal order; they either mimic and imitate the condition and oppression of dependent women as they are, who are victims of patriarchy, like Kate Chopin, or they portray more independent women who can create an identity and become self-aware, like Rose Tremain.

Kate Chopin (1850-1904) is regarded as a forerunner of feminist writers. She wrote about marriage and the women's conditions, and their struggles to create their own identities in the late nineteenth century American south. In the short story, *Desiree's Baby*³ (1892), Chopin recounts a young lady, Desiree, who has a happy marriage and the life she desires until she gives birth a non-white baby, which causes her husband, Armand, to accuse her of infidelity because Desiree is an adopted daughter of “obscure origin” (Chopin, 2). Desiree was found as a baby sleeping “in the shadow of the big stone pillar” at the gateway of Valmonde family and she was adopted by the same family as God's will for Mrs Valmonde, a wealthy landowner (Chopin, 2). When Desiree marries Armand, her submissive destiny continues. He chooses her as his wife in front of the same stone pillar: “It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Augbigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Augbignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot.” (Chopin, 2). Desiree, as her name implies, is always the one who is chosen and never the one who desires. The first thing to notice here is Desiree and Armand's love story, in which Desiree is the neutral element. The reader merely observes Armand fall in love and make the decision to wed. Throughout the narrative, Desiree demonstrates her love for her husband “desperately”, making it clear that she actually married him for love (Chopin, 4). Chopin informs the reader that Desiree's self-esteem is intimately linked to her husband's happiness: “When he [Armand] frowned she [Desiree]

³ The story was written in 1892, which was 27 years after slavery was abolished, but it took place during the era of slavery.

trembled ... when he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God” (Chopin, 4). Desiree’s inability to see herself as anything other than Armand’s wife ultimately leads to her demise in the story. When she gives birth to a baby-boy she is pleased with the gender because she sees the world through the male-dominated lens: “Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name” (Chopin, 4).

Armand, on the other hand, a young, wealthy, but racist, patriarchal master who owns the slave-holding plantation L’Abri, (a French word means shelter). Chopin uses Armand’s relationships with his slaves on the plantation to emphasise his patriarchal authority. The fact that Armand was at the cabin of one of the female slaves, La Blanch (means white), and Armand’s comment that Desiree’s hands were the same colour of La Blanche’s implies that Armand has sexual relations with her. A white slave owner had the right to have sex with his female slaves in that society and time because they were his property. This is what happens to Desiree when Armand discovers his newborn son is not white. As soon as it is revealed that their child is not white Desiree loses everything, because Armand humiliates her to the level of an animal by ruling over her, much like he rules over the other slaves on his farm, where he is strict and cruel. Precisely at this point, Desiree’s tragic demise as a result of her love for Armand brings to mind a famous quote: “love without intelligence creates slavery; intelligence without love creates dictatorship” as in the case of Desiree and Armand. Desiree’s response to the change in Armand’s manner is to leave her house at his request: “She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds. She disappeared among the reeds and the willows [...] and she did not come back again (Chopin, 7). Her meekly obedient behaviour reveals her lack of a real sense of self, and her happiness is dependent on a male authority figure, her husband. This foregone conclusion alludes to the ironic title of the story; her name means "desired" but she was neither desired when she was born nor when she died.

The story concludes with a rather shocking revelation: Armand’s mother was a slave. She and her husband raised Armand in Paris, where an interracial marriage was socially acceptable in the first half of the nineteenth century. Chopin exacts revenge on the patriarchy with this unexpected ending, reversing the situation with the truth about Armand’s mother. As Jane Le Marquand stated: “Patriarchal literary traditions become tools in the very act of their own subversion, as androcentric means meet resoundingly feminist ends.” (Le Marquand, ii)

Chopin challenges the demands of white male supremacy on the oppressed, particularly females, through the characters of a dominant male and a submissive female. Her treatment of her female character exemplifies patriarchy’s hegemony over women’s lives. She becomes a symbol for many women who have been oppressed by patriarchy. With such a portrayal of character, Chopin wishes that all women who read this story condemn Desiree, who maintains a passive stance throughout the story and accepts oppression rather than asserting her rights. However, there is no actual resolution or change for women in this text. She captures and presents the realities of women’s lives through their perspectives. Chopin also portrayed more courageous female characters⁴ who challenged the expectations of wifehood or motherhood in her literary oeuvre.

⁴ In *Athenaise* (1897), a newly married woman, dissatisfied with marital life, accepts help from her brother to flee from her husband. Now, for her, marriage turns into “a trap set for the feet of unwary and unsuspecting girls” (21). She is limited by the opportunities afforded to her by society. In addition, the main problem with the institution of marriage is that she cannot be loyal to herself while also satisfying her husband’s every whim. She explains, “No, I don’t hate him [Cazeau]...it’s just being married that I detest an’ despise. I hate being Mrs. Cazeau, an’ would want to be Athenaise Miche again. I can’t stan’ to live with a man; to have him always there” (16). Here, Athenaise becomes the mouthpiece of Chopin and highlights the writer’s attitude towards women which is highly liberated in comparison with the conventional attitude. In accordance

Another writer who has deconstructed the gender stereotype is Rose Tremain (1943-) with her book *The Kite Flyer* (1987). Tremain's writing, however, differs from that of the previous author, Kate Chopin, in that it shows a more independent woman who can forge an identity and achieve self-awareness. The story depicts the social institution of marriage, male-female relationships, male superiority, and female suppression. The main characters are an aging couple, Mr. And Mrs. Kingswell. The woman, Olivia, is an illiterate, submissive, and economically dependent housewife who lacks any religious convictions or ideologies. Her husband Anthony, on the other hand, is a powerful, intelligent, and educated Vicar. While Olivia is a passive receiver/listener, Anthony is an orator. This equilibrium between husband and wife that sounds highly patriarchal shifts gradually when Olivia discovers that "her life lacked purpose" right after she admits that "though she was a conscientious vicar's wife [...] Olivia had never been very curious about faith. She saw it as something Anthony possessed and always would, and which she didn't and never would, like a penis. It neither worried her, nor made her envious" (Tremain, 3). This expression shows how brave Tremain is. She attributes the religion to the masculinity, and positions the female on the reversed side which is education.

A transformation and self-awareness process for Olivia begins when she identifies with Anna of Didsmill, a historical figure who lived in in Didsmill approximately three hundred years ago, after reading a book about her. While Olivia finds "a new direction of her life through her discovery of Anna of Didsmill" (Tremain, 6), Anthony begins to lose his faith and blames his wife for it because "it was Olivia who was responsible for God's withdrawal from him, [...] by seeking to change the natural order of things with her wretched Martyr of Didsmill, was deflecting God away from him and towards herself" (Tremain, 12). Anthony believes that "she is becoming a man" when she informs him that she makes a trip to Greenham Common, without seeking permission (Tremain, 10). This freedom/independence frightens Anthony because, as a husband and vicar, he was the patriarch in the house and in society. In addition, he cannot accept the freedom of women, which is reserved for men, and he asserts that "a vicar's wife simply must not take part in [...] political antic" (Tremain, 10). He is unable to tolerate the changes on her wife since reading helps her construct her individuality and discover her strength as a person, which reminds Virginia Woolf's critique of "angel in the house" type women who are never required to have a mind or a wish of her own (Woolf, 357). Instead, she realises her "self" through reading, and she declares her economic freedom through writing an article for which she earns a small amount of money. She intends to use the money to write and publish her own book, which was the spark that set off the chain of events. Anthony gathered the paper sheets from her article (which she did not duplicate) and made a kite to fly, but in the sky "the kite began to break up [...] and came flying down to

with her new perspective on marriage, she escapes to New Orleans with the aid of her brother, where she meets another gentleman. Athenaise seemed to have found the happiness in this new place until she unexpectedly discovers she is pregnant. She then returns to her spouse, whom she now loves. She feels she must return to home, for now she is not only Cazeau's wife but also the mother of his child. The end of the story, therefore, shows her being trapped in a male-dominated society. It is ironic that she can neither leave her home, nor stay away from it without the help of a male figure. In addition, Athenaise is also confined to her husband through marital sex is because she can only satisfy her nature within the marriage. At the end of the story, she does not discover her true self, she simply places herself in another category based upon her relationship with her husband. She can merely identify herself as "Mrs. Cazeau" and then as the mother of his kid after her marriage.

When motherhood comes into question, Chopin's *A Pair of Silk Stockings* (1896) serves as a reminder. In this story, Mrs. Sommers, who inherits fifteen dollars, spends the money on herself rather than her children's necessities, purchasing a pair of silk stockings and a pair of gloves. Her actions are inconsistent with the traditional definition of motherhood. Through this extraordinary mother figure, Chopin illustrates what a mother is through the image of Mrs. Sommers, and she implies that a mother is simply a human being with desires. On the other hand, her purchases of a pair of gloves, silk stockings, and a high praise magazine reveal that she is also a victim of the patriarchal society's imposition of a motherly role and female beauty. In other words, while carrying out the responsibilities of a wife and mother, Mrs. Sommers does not want to give up on her unique identity.

earth like a scatter of leaves". He attempts to undermine her power, so that he can re-establish his authority over her.

Anthony's reactions to his wife's change start with verbal abuse and progress to physical abuse; he argues with her, breaks her dinner service, then tears her articles by using them to make a kite, and finally murders Olivia in an effort to suppress her power and identity as a woman, and reconstruct his own patriarchy over her. Besides losing his faith, Anthony loses his language, as well. At the beginning, he was an orator who preached to the people. He later counsels one of his friends as a receiver, and he, like his wife, becomes powerless, submissive, and a receiver. Olivia, on the other hand, goes through a transformation from a weak, reliant wife to a stronger, more independent woman. The author attributes to women all of the positive characteristics associated with men.

Through her story, Tremain depicts a traditional woman in a patriarchal culture before showing how this woman evolves and how her husband responds to her transformation. In this way, she illustrates how patriarchal society strives to preserve itself and argues that patriarchy prevents women from establishing independent identities. Tremain challenges the demands of wifedom in a patriarchal culture by presenting the heroine's quest for freedom, and a new self and identity. Olivia becomes a victim of patriarchy at the end of the narrative, when Antony murders her and is sentenced to six years in prison as a punishment (!). This conclusion mirrors the central theme of Tremain's ideas, since she finished her story with a critic of society and the legal system who quickly forgot the trail and the reason why Antony murdered his wife. By doing so, Tremain criticises the patriarchal order and institutions such as marriage, religion, law, as well as society as a whole. Moreover, Tremain eliminates the function of the men and presents them as feeble figures. On the other hand, she unveils the ignored potential of women. Tremain targets a woman who is more intellectual and independent, and by doing so, she underlines the importance of education. She achieves considerable success through educating herself and earns her own money without the assistance of a man. As the mouthpiece of the author, Olivia states "we are the 'new Amazons'. We're middle-aged, middle class, pampered and ignorant. But we're strong. We're strong because we've understood. We'll fight to the death" (Tremain, 21). Nevertheless, with her unexpected death in the hands of her husband with the same kite string, the story concludes that there is no real emancipation for women; whether educated or not, submissive or rebellious.

Part II: Edith Wharton and Clare Boylan; women writers who are the least concerned with the patriarchal order

Although having lived in different times and followed different ways, Edith Wharton (1862-1937) and Clare Boylan (1948-2006) both examined the role and status of women from the perspective of women. The primary distinction between these authors and the previous ones is their treatment of women, as the women in their stories are either selfless and cunning, or passive and clichéd. The male figures in their stories are invisible and far from patriarchy. Thus, these authors create stereotypical female characters without depth.

American novelist Edith Wharton, the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize, has written a number of books in both fiction and non-fiction that address a variety of topics, including social snobbery based on economic status, the lower middle class, expatriates, the World War I, intergenerational differences, literary aesthetics, etc. In Wharton's short story, *The Letters* (1910) the central focus is on the letters two characters write to one another; Lizzie, a young teacher, and Mr Vincent Deering, her student's father, the distinguished American artist. Lizzie is a 25-year-old naive and romantic young girl who has to climb

the hill in all weathers in order to see her pupil Juliet for the lesson; “sometimes with her umbrella bent against a driving rain, sometimes with her frail cotton parasol unfurled beneath a fiery sun, sometimes with the snow soaking through her patched boots or a bitter wind piercing her thin jacket” (Wharton, 1). The house on the hill and Lizzie’s patched boots represent the class/economic distinction which will be reversed at the end.

She quickly develops affections for the married Mr Deering. Mrs Deering seems indifferent to her daughter, Juliet. She “lay on her lounge up-stairs, reading greasy relays of dog-eared novels, the choice of which she left to the cook and the nurse, who were always fetching them for her from the _cabinet de lecture;_ and it was understood in the house that she was not to be “bothered” about Juliet.” (Wharton 2). His attention to Juliet was “fitful rather than consecutive”, but “one had always to apply to Mr Deering if there was anything to be said about the lessons” (Wharton 2). The portrayal of the mother figure as indifferent and insufficient elevates the status of the father figure, even if his concern for his daughter is motivated by his interest in the young teacher:

If little Juliet was as she was, it was because of the mother up-stairs--the mother who had given her child her futile impulses, and grudged her the care that might have guided them. The wretched case so obviously revolved in its own vicious circle that when Mr Deering had murmured, "Of course if my wife were not an invalid," they both turned with a simultaneous spring to the flagrant "bad example" of Celeste and Suzanne, fastening on that with a mutual insistence that ended in his crying out, "All the more, then, how can you leave her to them?" (Wharton, 3)

The conversation ends with kissing each other. As readers, we feel pity for Mr Deering and tolerate their love affair. Following his wife’s sudden death, Mr Deering has to move to America in search of the property inherited from his wife and during these years Lizzie and Mr Deering keep exchanging letters. It is stated that the letters he wrote to Lizzie caused “sensations more complex and delicate than Deering’s actual presence had ever produced” (Wharton, 18). Clearly, Mr Deering’s letters to Lizzie are what keep their connection alive.

Mr Deering ceased writing after three letters, and Lizzie, who was extremely destitute, received some inheritance from a distant cousin. With that money she “had hoped great things from the opportunity to rest, to travel, to look about her, above all, in various artful feminine ways, to be ‘nice’ to the companions of her less privileged state” (Wharton, 27). That is, she intends to use the inheritance for her own wishes. Then, once more crossing their way, they get married and have a child. This time the economic situations of the two reversed, and Lizzie is financially supporting her husband. All of a sudden, she discovers the letters she wrote to Mr Deering when they were apart. When she realises that all of the letters remain unopened, Lizzie is extremely upset. She believes he has been deceiving her since he has not read her letters, which are the primary reason she has decided to reintegrate him into her life. Despite knowing this, Lizzie chooses to act unaware and carries on with her marriage.

The end of the story reveals that Lizzie was deceived and humiliated by her husband, Mr Deering since all those times she believed she had influenced him with her letters and that he had valued what she had written to him. They developed a special bond due to her letters, which meant a great deal to him. On the other hand, it demonstrates how she has evolved from the naive and idealistic young girl to a more insightful and realistic wife, whose delusions about her husband and their relationship has been replaced with a clearer perspective of both. Unlike other women writers who critique the patriarchal order and portray women as its victims, it is evident that Wharton approaches women differently. In this instance, Wharton adopts a different perspective and positions her female protagonist on an equal plane with her male character. The author glorifies Lizzie and her attitude toward marriage because her

decision is not emotional. Instead of experiencing despair at the conclusion of the story, Lizzie learns a new viewpoint. Although Lizzie has lost faith in her husband, she recognises that she is content with the majority of her life and marriage. As a result, her awareness has not destroyed her happiness.

On the other hand, Irish author Clare Boylan (1948–2006), wrote about women in Irish society. She portrays women as childbearers, domestic helpers, sexual objects, etc. She attempts to explain various representations of women, but she is unable to come up with an answer. Throughout her fiction, the relationship with her mother, which dominated her life, also turns into "the substance and motivation" of her writing, which in one way or another, concern mothers and daughters. (McDonnell, 2006). In her 1989 short story *A Model Daughter*, Boylan discusses many types of women in Irish society who are unaware of the realities of the world and lack a sense of actual responsibility. In the story, a woman invents an imaginary daughter after her divorce in order to receive payments from the father without his knowledge in order to solve her financial problems because she was "too lethargic to work" (Boylan, 3). Six months after getting married, Victor desires a break, moves to the United States, and falls in love with another woman. After their divorce, his wife, Barbara, lies about being pregnant and requests for money for the baby. Victor, who is now a famous actor, is generous to send a card "offering congratulations, and a decent-sized cheque" for the baby he never wishes to meet (Boylan, 3). For the father figure, sending a generous cheque is the easiest way to escape his parental responsibilities. The mother figure, on the other hand, finds the easiest way to maintain a luxurious life, without giving effort: "from time to time, when I badly needed bit of extra money (for a furry coat in a really dreadful winter; for a Greek cruise) [...] I would say that Hester [so-called child] had a little illness or needed her teeth straightened" (Boylan, 3). Hester, her imaginary daughter, became her source of income. However, Barbara also enjoys having an imaginary daughter, dreaming her playing at the park, or going to school. It sounds easy to imagine a child and then believe it than to raise one.

Though both of them are not ideal parents, Boylan portrays the mother as a parasite who fails to fulfil the expectations of motherhood, but the father is shown as an innocent. Victor only remembers her daughter when he breaks up with his second wife. He desires to visit her, but she compensates by sending him a photo of a child in the park posing as Hester. When the father eventually requests to meet his daughter years later, the mother must hire a model to play the role. She is certain that Victor's "passions are burning but brief. Once he had met his daughter, he could peacefully forget all about her" (Boylan, 7).

The story concludes with a sort of utopic contentment in which the father is given the opportunity of having a teenage daughter, the girl is given the chance to perform in her alleged father's movie, and the woman finds satisfaction in her newly-acquired financial security and a newborn baby, a real Hester. Boylan represents a starry-eyed woman who only considers a life without financial difficulties and establishes a financial resource for herself. The author criticises women who consider their children as a source of income in order to support themselves while parasitically living off men. They take advantage of their claimed vulnerability and need protection in society. Consequently, rather than a resistance to male dominance, we observe a female figure supporting the current power relations and patriarchal system. Boylan also criticises males because the father figure in this story just provides for the child's material requirements, and is otherwise glad to be away from his child. Though Boylan explored these subjects insistently, she approached the issues from varying angles, but she is unable to offer a solution; instead she merely describes the situation.

Conclusion

Chopin and Tremain, two of the female authors listed in this article, are advocates for liberated women. They appear to work with largely married women who are under patriarchal pressure, but they are able to change the dynamic. They are brave and innovative and realistic in their portrayal of women. With all its intricacies and inner conflicts, human nature—whether it be that of a man or a woman—is thoroughly examined by Chopin and Tremain. Writers like Wharton and Boylan, in contrast, don't provide any suggestions or solutions; instead, they just show women in patriarchal society as they are. In their stories, social or sexual injustice is economic in nature. Their viewpoint on women is more stereotypical and traditional. However, the representation of women in all stories lacks a full revelation of a woman's true self. The patriarchal nature of the social order reinforces and rewards the compliance of women.

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