

## The Fight for Flight:

Avian Imagery in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and a Selection of Poems by Emily Dickinson

Nineteenth-century America was a tumultuous place, especially for women. Two female American authors of this time, Kate Chopin and Emily Dickinson, encountered gender bias and injustice, and incorporated it into their works. In Kate Chopin's renowned American novel, *The Awakening*, and a variety of Emily Dickinson's poems, avian imagery is used to represent the societal expectations and stereotypes of the modern American woman. Literary scholars, including Barbra Welter and Emily Toth, recount the plight of the nineteenth century American woman, and scholars such as Stanley Plumly, begin making associations between the women and birds. This article identifies and compares each author's incorporation of the plight of being a woman in a misogynistic society, by likening themselves to a bird to represent female oppression, social captivity and degradation, as well as freedom, liberation, and strength.

**Keywords:** Emily Dickinson, Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, Nineteenth-Century America, Women, Birds, Avian Imagery