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A Corpus-Stylistic Analysis of Gender and Race in Chopin's *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories*

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyse Kate Chopin's book *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories* with several dimensions to look at the intersectionality of gender and race. It gets deeper into the lexical elements and descriptive strategies that Chopin used to construct identities in her book. The researchers have employed extensive corpus stylistic techniques to investigate the keywords and phrases involving and related to race and gender, supplementing the character description. The corpus was imported into the Sketch Engine software, one of the most popular tools in corpus linguistics, which provides a handful of features to quantify and visualise the data. The quantitative data retrieved from Sketch Engine were further examined manually to identify the lexical and pragmatic patterns. The analysis demonstrates how Chopin's stylistic choices promote the intersectionality of race and gender, bridging feminist and corpus-based research in nineteenth-century studies. The combination of mixed methods approaches stresses the diverse narrative in literature.

1. Introduction

Literature has always flashed a relation with reality. It is considered one of the most potent media for investigating cultural and societal discrimination. The researcher investigated the complexities between race and gender. Kate Chopin's prominent book revealed different characters in alignment with race and gender. This study employs Chopin's linguistic and literary devices through corpus stylistics to examine the diverse representations of gender and race in the story. Since her early Louisiana-set stories were the only ones attributed to her, Kate Chopin was considered a marginalised local colorist for a long time. Local-color fiction was a popular genre in the 1880s and 1890s but declined in the 20th century, drawing readers from across the country.

According to Bowleg (2008) and Nash (2008), intersectionality has recently gained traction in quantitative research across disciplines, including public health and epidemiology, despite being acknowledged for a long time and as an essential theoretical and methodological tool for qualitative studies of identity and marginalisation (Bauer, 2014; Bowleg, 2012). Crossing disciplinary and international boundaries, intersectionality theory has come under fire for being overly focused on social power dynamics and

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structural inequality, or for possibly losing its grounding in Black feminist theory (Carbado, 2013; Cho et al., 2013; May, 2015; Salem, 2016).

This research examines how language influences the social realities of race and gender and applies linguistic critiques of African American literature (Fowler, 1981; Kennedy, 1999; Rahman, 2012) to Kate Chopin's fiction. Although *The Awakening* has long been a focus of feminist interest, her short stories were often overlooked but are now being rediscovered through intersectional readings that consider race and class (Salajová, 2016). Potter (1971) anticipated this shift by highlighting Chopin's critique of womanhood and slavery, although he discussed them separately. Using a corpus stylistic approach, this paper analyses how Chopin's lexical and stylistic choices reflect the intersection of race and gender.

The following objectives give a clear view of the study dynamics.

1. To examine the lexical elements in *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories*.
2. To investigate the pragmatic features portrayed in *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories*.

The following research questions have been aligned according to the study's objectives.

1. What are the lexical elements in *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories*?
2. How are the pragmatic features portrayed in *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories*?

This study is profoundly significant as it applies corpus-stylistic methods to reveal how Kate Chopin's *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories* form discourses of race and gender, an area commonly overlooked in Chopin's academic work. It also advances feminist critique through the application of intersectionality, as it shows how race intersects with gender to produce literary meaning (Crenshaw, 1997; Collins, 2015). The research crosses over into literature and linguistics, providing evidence-based observations beyond critical commentary. It is one part of a larger argument regarding intersectionality and representation in literature, offering examples in detail.

2. Literature Review

The feminist approach was used by the researcher in this study to examine *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories* (2000) by Kate Chopin. The intersections and intersectionality of the social categories such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation influence individuals' experiences of privilege and oppression, and this has been brought out by Crenshaw (1997). Intersectionality has been discussed in literature through analysis of the characters' identity and experience, as well as an examination of how other social categories intersect with the mentioned ones. Underrepresented identities in literature often depict characters with more positive sentiments. The sentiment against women and other racial groups has gradually improved over time, yet they still considerable gaps. The research also discovered a relationship between positive sentiment-oriented book purchases and greater awareness of racial benefits, and decreased anger towards racism (Adukia et al., 2022).

Culler (1975) contends that the reduced focus on linguistic competence in reading literature has undermined the privileged status of language in literature. Ching et al. (1980) highlight that to read a work as literature, an implicit awareness of literary discourse and conventions is necessary, or else the readers will get lost. They emphasize the importance of holistic reading philosophy, and they observe that literary art is based on the creative manipulation of mundane language to generate extraordinary effects (Ching et al., 1980). Language is socially constructed, and the vocabulary and syntactic options inform the discourse functions and goals of texts (Aftab, 2021). Authors use specific constructions and lexical options to shape readers' interpretations. Asante (1991) defines language as a systematized code that is common to a community, encompassing grammar, nuances, and deep structures. According to him, consideration of certain language areas, like the choice of words, reflects how authors' linguistic habits mark their social, cultural, and psychological environments.

Gushchina (2019) examined *Orange Is the New Black*, illustrating the intersection of race, sexuality, and gender via varied characters, as well as the necessity for further research on class and subsequent seasons. Goins-Reed (2019) similarly examined intersections of race, gender, and identity in the work of Nadine Gordimer, presenting resistance and boundaries in oppressive orders. Riad and Jones (2022) addressed intersectionality in organizational studies, condemning its reification and coloniality through the work of Kara Walker and emphasizing the importance of positionality in handling power relations. Nash (2008) further addressed criticisms of intersectionality in the form of methodological ambiguity and reliance on Black women as the "critique of intersectionality," prompting a need for a more sophisticated oppression and identity theory. In books, Moustafa (2022) compared Gordimer's *My Son's Story* and Coetzee's *Disgrace*, noting persistent racial tensions and illegal relations as markers of South Africa's shifting sociopolitical landscape.

Intersectionality theory originated in Black feminist thinking and developed from there into a critique of how intersecting systems of oppression work. Bond (2021) provided a background on its origins and highlighted its applicability to international human rights, securing its ability to respond to intergroup and intragroup disparities. Crenshaw's (1994) foundational essay

originally described intersectionality to criticize the ways that feminist legal theory and critical race theory failed to understand the distinct marginalization of women of color. Intersectionality has since developed into a paradigm-shifting concept, albeit one also subject to critique for its boundaries and methodological difficulties. In addition to legal and theoretical spheres, intersectionality has been broadly applied across the disciplines. Veenstra (2011) applied it to explore health disparities in Canada, illustrating the way race, gender, class, and sexuality intersect to produce differences in self-rated health. Forbes et al. (2023) also illustrated its applicability by recording how Asian American women's mental health is affected by intersectional discrimination in the form of fetishization, tokenization, and racialized beauty regimes. In literary analysis, Shi (2020) used Black feminist consciousness to interpret *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, demonstrating that Janie's experience reflects resistance to concurring racial and gendered oppression. Combined, these works demonstrate the theory's utility in divergent contexts as well as its potential to reveal subtle mechanisms of marginalization.

Yet systematic corpus-based uses of intersectionality are still scarce. Although feminist critique has long been applied to Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, researchers like Ammons (1992) and Dyer (2002) have largely considered gender, with race taking a backseat. The lacuna thus speaks to the necessity for corpus-stylistic analyses that can empirically explore how Chopin's pragmatic and linguistic decisions represent the intersections of race and gender. Although numerous scholars have commented on Chopin's work from feminist and historical perspectives, few have used corpus-linguistic approaches to quantify and examine stylistic instantiations of race and gender. This lack explains the necessity for an interdisciplinary framework that combines feminist theory with corpus stylistics. This study fills this gap by applying intersectionality to linguistic evidence.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research unites intersectionality and feminist literary criticism to analyze how Chopin's novels compose intersecting social identities. Intersectionality theory, initially formulated by Crenshaw (1994, 1997), holds that social positions like gender, race, class, and sexuality act at the same time, generating experiences of inequality that cannot be comprehended independently. Emerging out of Black feminist theory (Combahee River Collective, 1977; Collins, 1990), the model defies the study of single-axis oppression and instead focuses on the structural and collective character of marginalization.

While more frequently used in qualitative research, intersectionality is growing in importance for quantitative and mixed-methods analysis. In this study, a corpus-stylistic approach utilizes Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) to spot repeat lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic patterns in *The Awakening* and chosen short stories. By synthesizing corpus analysis with intersectional theory, the framework enables both the measurement of textual patterns and their interpretation within larger sociocultural contexts. In so doing, the research fills a methodological void by showing that intersectionality can be operationalized empirically through linguistic analysis in literary scholarship.

3. Methodology and Materials

The researchers selected the novel *The Awakening* and seven short stories (*Beyond the Bayou*, *Désirée's Baby*, *Ma'ame Pelagie*, *A Respectable Woman*, *The Kiss*, *A Pair of Silk Stockings*, and *The Locket*) from the book, as these are rich in thematic and linguistic race and gender markers that suit the purpose of this study. This selection was relevant for mixed-methods research since it allows researchers to purposefully select data sources that best address the research questions (Creswell, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015). Chopin's writing was chosen due to its explicit treatment of intersecting social identities during nineteenth-century Louisiana, putting into the forefront questions regarding women's roles, racial stratification, and class expectations (Toth, 1999; Collins, 2015). This was to ensure that the corpus contained texts where lexical features such as man, woman, white, black, negro, quadroon, and Valmonde, as well as pragmatic features such as forms of address, dialogue exchanges, and speech acts, were most prominent. The collected corpus consisted of 75,108 tokens, 64,252 words, and 4,314 sentences and had sufficient breadth to support statistical observation as well as interpretative analysis. The analysis employed a corpus-stylistic mixed-methods approach that struck a balance between quantitative precision and qualitative depth. The corpus was uploaded into Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014), a widely used corpus-linguistic software with sophisticated functionalities. The quantitative findings served to guide the second qualitative phase, where close reading was conducted to investigate the character voices and their negotiation of social constraints and resistances. The intersectional theoretical model (Crenshaw, 1994, 1997; Collins, 2015) informed the data selection and analytical process by foregrounding how gendered and racialized identities are linguistically constructed. The corpus was first constructed and uploaded to the Sketch Engine. Then, concordance lines were analyzed to look for meanings that depended on the context. Next came collocational and word-sketch analysis. In the end, results were read qualitatively using intersectional feminist theory as a way of connecting the linguistic findings with the conceptual effects.

The feminist literary-critical approach ensured that corpus-driven patterns were not interpreted in a vacuum but situated within Chopin's narrative constructions of hierarchy, power, and resistance. This involved foregrounding words portraying identity

as nodes of collocational analysis and interpreting their discursive contexts in relation to nineteenth-century Southern social formations. Here, intersectionality therefore served as an interpretive pivot between quantitative Sketch Engine results and qualitative close readings, allowing the research to put feminist theory into practice based on empirical linguistic evidence without loss of focus on historical and cultural contexts. By situating corpus-driven results within an order of literary analysis, the research was able to demonstrate methodological rigor and critical acumen (Biber et al., 1998; Baker, 2006; McEnery & Hardie, 2012).

Ethical note: Racial terms of the past are duplicated exactly in concordances for scholarly purposes, but interpreted contextually and reported sensitively, recognizing their potentially offensive character now.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Lexical Features

Lexical features, including an author's vocabulary choices, reiterated words, and their collocational preferences, provide a vital interface for style analysis. In Chopin's *The Awakening and selected short stories*, vocabulary choices are never neutral: they dramatize emotion, gender, and race through reiterated lexical combinations. Similarly, the gendered nouns "man" and "woman" find meaning in their collocates, situating men in authority and women in delicacy, temporality, or resilience. The lexical patterns are significant in charting the intersectionality of race and gender in Chopin's works.

Figure 1

Word sketch differences between the lemmas 'man' and 'woman' in *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories*.

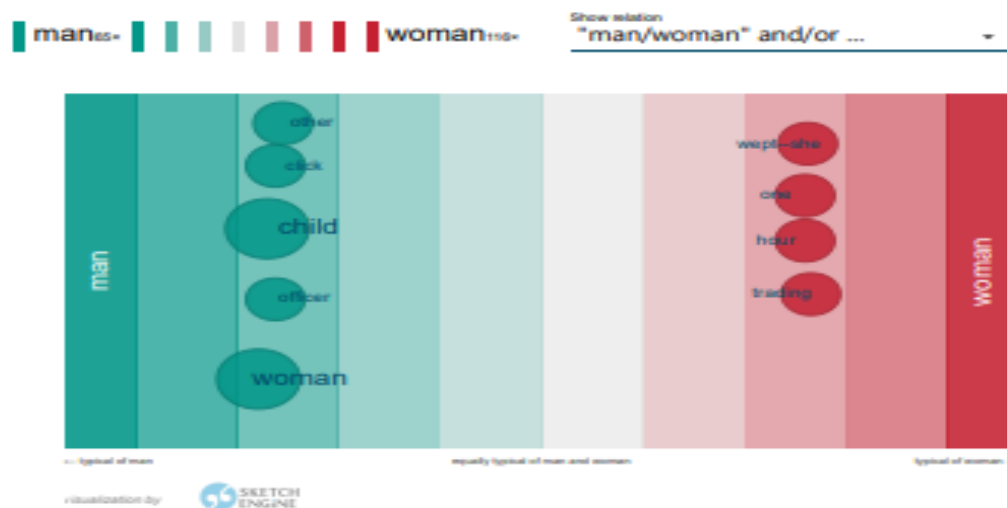


Figure 1 visualizes contrasts between collocations such as *woman* and *man*. *Man* collocates with *child*, *clerk*, and *officer*, marking relationships with authority, care, and work roles. *Woman* collocates with *weep*, *one*, *hour*, and *training*, marking emotion, time, and perseverance. The diagram reveals how the lexical options of Chopin underpin the gendered hierarchies, placing men in public and authoritative positions, and linking women with emotional and temporal burdens.

The lemma *man* itself shows that gendered nouns in Chopin's texts are distributed among various semantic fields. *Man* tends to collocate with words such as *child*, *clerk*, and *officer*, which relate to power, care, and workplace identity. This can be seen in Chopin's descriptions, where men tend to be presented in terms of their societal roles and presence. For instance, Mr. Pontellier is introduced as "a man of forty, of medium height and rather slender build; he stooped a little" (*The Awakening*, p. 4), an image which evokes stability and patriarchal authority. Likewise, in *Beyond the Bayou*, La Folle's work is compared to male productivity: "She had more physical strength than most men and made her patch of cotton and corn and tobacco like the best of them" (p. 126). Men, too, personify the power of the gaze, as in *A Pair of Silk Stockings*, when "a man with keen eyes, who sat opposite to her, seemed to like the study of her small, pale face" (p. 155), positioning the male viewer as judge of female looks.

Comparatively, the lemma *woman* collocates with *weep*, *one*, *hour*, and *training*, evidencing semantic relationships with emotion, temporality, and stamina. Chopin's representations reinforce this lexical pattern by positioning women in terms of aesthetic fragility or social status. In *The Awakening*, a picture is presented that invokes "a dainty young woman who wore an Empire gown, mincing dancing steps as she descended a long avenue between tall hedges" (p. 29), conveying femininity as beautiful and elegant. At the other extreme, *Ma'ame Pelagie* pictures an older woman of dignity: "She was a queenly, white-haired woman of fifty." *Ma'ame Pelagie*, they named her, although not wedded, like her sister Pauline." (p. 136). Here, womanhood is

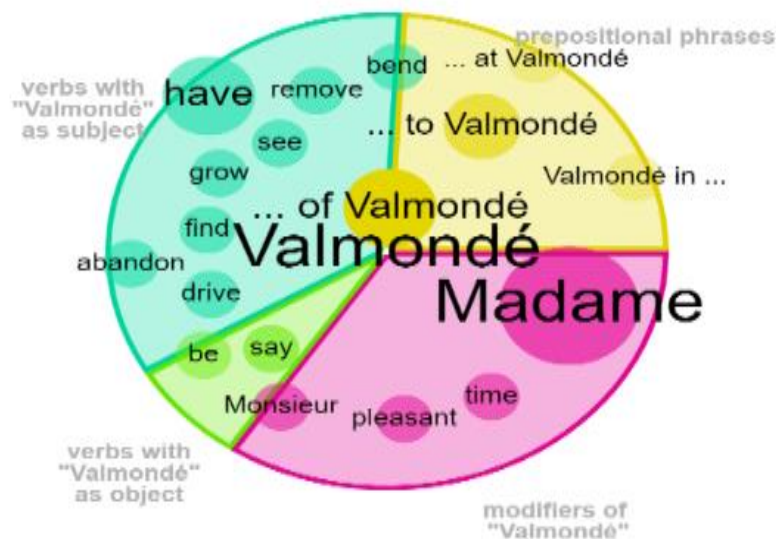
associated with age, respectability, and social acknowledgement, opposing the frailty of the younger women with the power of older figures.

Together, these instances demonstrate that Chopin's lexical fields carry hierarchies of gender at both the collocational and narrative levels. Man is everywhere tied to actions, authority, and judgment, whether as husband, worker, or witness, whereas woman is linked with emotional states, temporal survival, or visual fragility. In addition, womanhood is bifurcated into categories: the delicate young woman by appearance and the queen-like older woman by dignity, according to cultural expectations over the life course. Such delineations demonstrate how Chopin's stylistic practice echoes cultural presumptions regarding gender by casting men as active agents and women as objects of aesthetic judgment or vectors of suffering. Therefore, this lexical mapping becomes especially evident in Chopin's treatment of gendered nouns, where the contrast between "man" and "woman" reveals how vocabulary encodes distinct semantic fields and cultural expectations.

Figure 2
Concordance of the lemma 'Valmonde' as seen in *Desiree's Baby*

Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
① doc#0	</s>"DÉSIRÉE'S BABY As the day was pleasant, Madame	Valmondé	drove over to L'Abri to see Désirée and the baby.</s></s>It made her
① doc#0	than a baby herself, when Monsieur in riding through the gateway of	Valmondé	had found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar.</s></s>
① doc#0	it Coton Mais kept, just below the plantation.</s></s>In time Madame	Valmondé	abandoned every speculation but the one that Désirée had been sent
① doc#0	l grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere,—the idol of	Valmondé	."</s></s>"It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stor
① doc#0	anything that drives headlong over all obstacles."</s></s>"Monsieur	Valmondé	grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's ob
① doc#0	he could until it arrived; then they were married."</s></s>"Madame	Valmondé	had not seen Désirée and the baby for four weeks.</s></s>When she
① doc#0	r nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself.</s></s>Madame	Valmondé	bent her portly figure over Désirée and kissed her, holding her an inst
① doc#0	laimed, in startled tones.</s></s>French was the language spoken at	Valmondé	in those days.</s></s>"I knew you would be astonished," laughed Dés
① doc#0	n the other day as far away as La Blanche's cabin."</s></s>"Madame	Valmondé	had never removed her eyes from the child.</s></s>She lifted it and w
① doc#0	ields.</s></s>"Yes, the child has grown, has changed," said Madame	Valmondé	, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother.</s></s>"What does Arm
① doc#0	at to please me.</s></s>And mamma," she added, drawing Madame	Valmondé's	head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, "he hasn't punished on
① doc#0	s>The answer that came was brief: "My own Désirée: Come home to	Valmondé	."</s></s>"My mother, they tell me I am not white.</s></s>Armand has
① doc#0	s> not take the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of	Valmondé	."</s></s>She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruis

Figure 3
Word sketch of lemma Valmondé



The term *Valmonde* appeared 14 times in the short story *Desiree's Baby*. Valmonde has been associated with a comfort zone for Desiree. She finds herself in that place when she is upset. Valmonde signifies the location where Desiree was brought up.

"Come Valmonde loves you" (Desiree's Baby, p. 143).

The above line from the short story showcases the symbolic meaning of a haven.

In addition, Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the concordance and word sketch of the word *Valmondé*, as well as its usage in context. The word *Valmondé* also implies an indication of the property of land. *Valmonde* depicts a sense of identity and self at a threshold

of intermingling, as Desiree's racial identity is purely linked to and confirms her origin. Similarly, a sense of longing evokes fond memories of Desiree's being brought up as a baby at *Valmonde*. Furthermore, it initiates and triggers the story to move ahead when Armand does not accept Desiree. It acts as a climax for the story. In contrast to *L'Abri*, the plantation site portrays a challenging scenario where the enslaved people had forgotten how to be happy/gay.

Figure 4
Concordance of the lemma 'negro' in *The Awakening* and Selected Short Stories.

Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	doc#0 he lady in black, never overtaking her.</s><s>The little	negro	girl who worked Madame Lebrun's sewing-machine wa
2	doc#0 ng Aubigny's rule was a strict one, too, and under it his	negroes	had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during t
3	doc#0 ie sun was just sinking.</s><s>Out in the still fields the	negroes	were picking cotton.</s><s>Desiree had not changed t
4	doc#0 i spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen	negroes	the material which kept this fire ablaze.</s><s>A grace
5	doc#0 in whom there might yet linger a spark of life.</s><s>A	negro	accompanied him, bearing a bucket of water and a flas
6	doc#0 was ringing half a mile away.</s><s>The priest and the	negro	kneelt and murmured together the evening benediction a

The derogatory term *N-word*, as seen in Figure 4, was much more common until the late nineteenth Century. However, this word is hardly used or spoken anymore. This shows the intricacies of that time, reflecting higher discrimination, leaving the marginalized people with no authority.

To accurately portray a society, some linguistic choices are more common and preferable than others. Additionally, they reveal a more nuanced side of the writers' conscious and unconscious social lives. The *N-word* is typically used as a derogatory label to mock and minimize a person's or a group's capacity for reason. The finest potential social lives of the characters and the culture in which the literature is set are reflected in the use of the *N-word*. It also reflects the life and experiences of the writer. Particularly in American culture, the associative and connotative implications of the *N-word* are powerfully racially charged and deemed to be highly offensive. In fiction, nevertheless, its use varies according to the context - who says it, to whom, and for what reason (Aftab, 2021).

Figure 5
Word sketch of the lemma 'Quadroon' and its collocates from *The Awakening* and Selected Short Stories.

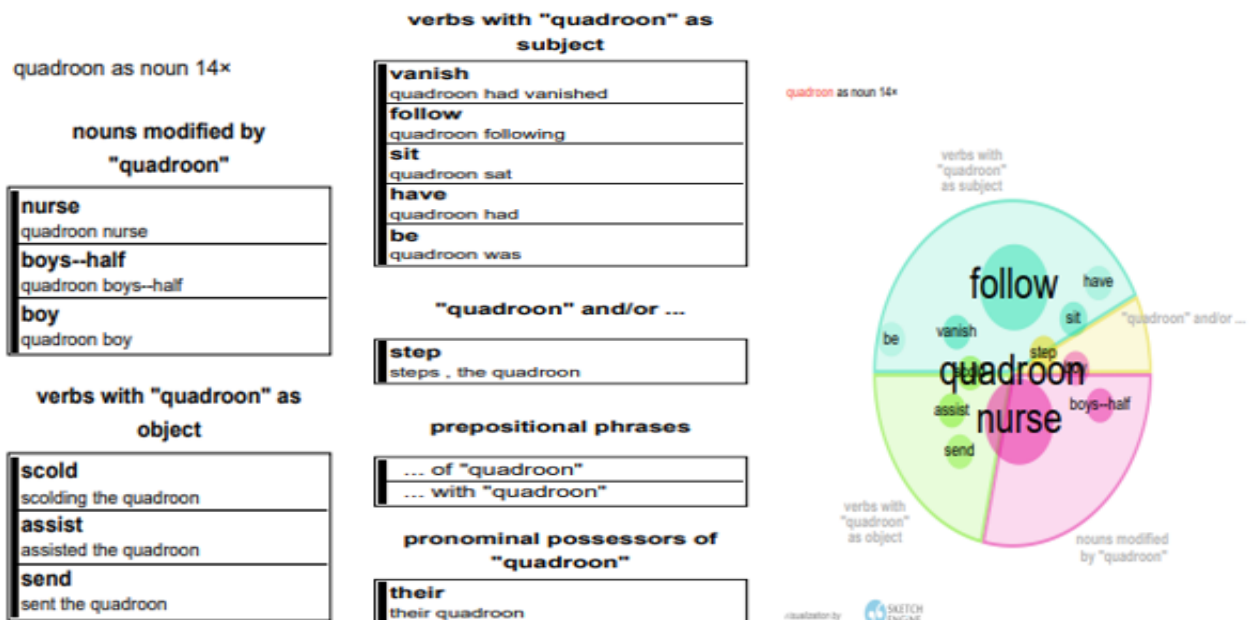
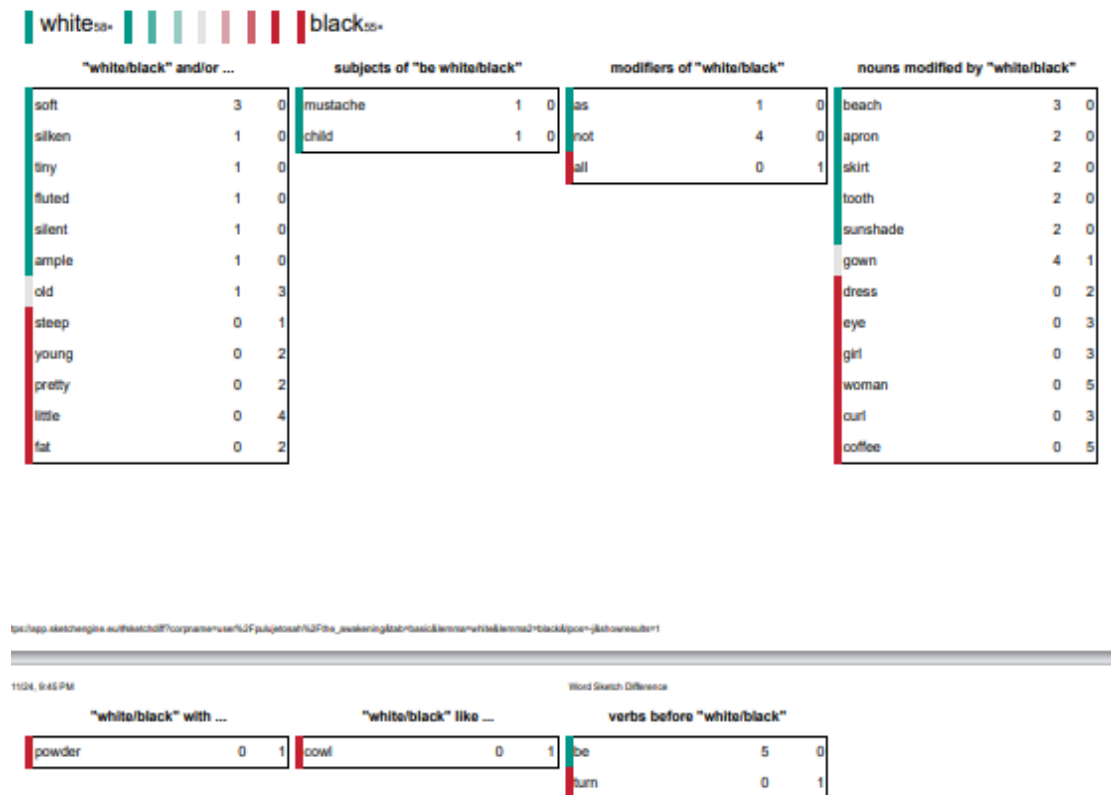


Figure 6 displays the word sketches of the lemmas "white" and "black," illustrating how Chopin's vocabulary apports racial and gendered meaning. The collocates of white (58 occurrences) cluster around objects, garments, and natural imagery (gown, apron, muslin, sunshade, tooth, blossom), reinforcing associations of purity, refinement, and delicate femininity. For example, Edna appears in "a white muslin gown" and is surrounded by imagery of "sunshades," linking whiteness to leisure and social acceptance. The collocates of *white* also include phrases like "white foam." However, in *Beyond the Bayou*, this imagery is displaced from nature to the racialized body: Her eyes were bloodshot, and the saliva had gathered in a white foam on her black lip' (*Beyond the Bayou*, p. 128). This unsettling juxtaposition demonstrates how Chopin's use of whiteness is not always idyllic but sometimes used to highlight physical abnormality against Blackness. Similarly, in *Désirée's Baby*, Chopin furthermore destabilizes this purity when Armand declares: 'It means,' he answered lightly, 'that the child is not white; it means that you are not white' (p. 142). The phrase not white redefines Désirée's identity, transforming her husband's demeanour from gentle to hostile and precipitating her eventual suicide (p. 143). In contrast, black (55 occurrences) co-occurs with human referents and body parts (woman, girl, mammy, lips, eye, curl), marking Black characters as embodied and racialized rather than aestheticized. In *The Awakening*, a "little black girl" is forced to power Madame Lebrun's sewing machine with her hands, while in *Beyond the Bayou*, La Folle is introduced as 'a large, gaunt black woman' (p. 126), her body continually marked by race. These examples confirm the word sketch: whiteness is naturalized through garments and nature, while blackness is inscribed on bodies, servitude, and pathology.

The modifiers also diverge: *white* is described as *soft, silken, smooth, tiny*, embedding femininity within discourses of purity and delicacy, while *black* is qualified by *little, old, young*, encoding age hierarchies that are either child-like or care takers Black women e.g., "little black girl," p. 24; "old black mammy," (p. 129). In this sense, Figure 7 highlights the parallelism between white and black, providing an in-depth examination while capturing the essence of Chopin's work.

Figure 7
Word Sketch Difference of Lemmas White and Black



4.2 Collocation/Phraseology and Syntactic Patterns

Chopin's lexicon reveals habitual collocational and syntactic preferences that reinforce her thematic focus on race, gender, emotion, and social rank. One such habitual preference is her frequent use of adjective + noun collocations to foreground markers of identity. Descriptions such as "little black girl" (*The Awakening*, p. 24) and "old black mammy" (p. 129) habitually link Black characters with domains of work, servitude, or mothering. In contrast, collocations like "soft white handkerchief" and "white muslin gown" (pp. 141, 160) connect whiteness with refinement, purity, and delicacy. These habitual colour + noun

collocations write intersectional hierarchies, racializing Black women as functional and embodied and idealizing white women as aesthetic and fragile.

Besides race and gender, Chopin's collocational choices also reflect emotional and psychological states. She tends to join feeling and action verbs with descriptive adverbs or adjectives, e.g., "thoroughly awake," "laughed hysterically," "stone image silent," "cried despairingly," and "unwonted courage." The phraseology not only intensifies the imagery but also reflects the increased psychological realism of her characters. In the same way, collocations involving social class and material possessions, e.g., "silk gowns," "corbeille," and the sighting of the child on "a great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne, with its satin-lined half-canopy" (*Désirée's Baby*, p. 142), express themes of stratification and the cultural emphasis upon appearances and social status.

Syntactically, Chopin depends heavily on copular constructions ("she was," "it was") to establish identities in fixed, essentialized descriptions, such as "She was now a large, gaunt black woman" (*Beyond the Bayou*, p. 126) or "She was not a mother-woman" (*The Awakening*, p. 51). These constructions establish crisp categorical distinctions, with minimal tolerance for nuance. She also favors binary parallelisms in which the same verb sets off contrasting symbolic values: "the world... suddenly turned black" (*Beyond the Bayou*, p. 128) and "her face turned white" (*The Awakening*, p. 77). These grammatical echoes highlight the symbolic opposition of whiteness as fragility and blackness as disturbance or injury.

Moreover, the change can be specifically seen in Edna's struggle against sleep: while Mr. Pontellier easily succumbs to sleep, Edna remains restless, "Mrs. Pontellier ... awake" (*The Awakening*, p. 9). The contrasting structure emphasizes the asymmetry of fault and emotional cost in their union. In a similar fashion, Chopin uses parallel structures to create rhythmic effect and thematic emphasis. For instance, "When the baby ..., Désirée awoke one ... her peace" (*Désirée's Baby*, p. 141) uses balanced construction to mark turning points in the narrative. Chopin's use of syntax and collocations decorates the narrative writing: they repeatedly construct meaning by introducing race, gender, class, and emotion into repeated linguistic frameworks. Using repetition, contrast, and rhythm, her compositional choices draw attention to the intersectional dynamics of her characters' lives, ratifying social hierarchies as well as the psychological richness of her characters' interior lives.

4.3 Metaphorical Language

Chopin uses metaphors and similes throughout to enhance her descriptions and to incorporate symbolic meaning into her stories. For instance, in *Désirée's Baby*, the baby is said to have "the brown, soft cheeks" of a "little quadroon," a description that highlights racial identity as well as social expectation (*Désirée's Baby*, p. 141). These metaphors do more than describe physical appearance; they reflect the racialized perspective from which characters are seen.

Figure 8
Word Sketch of the lemma 'Brown'

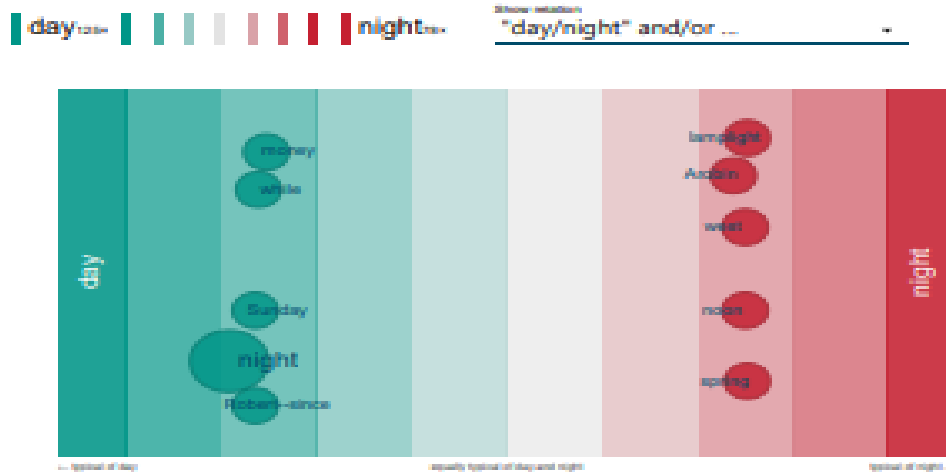


Figure 8, the word sketch of the lemma brown (12 times throughout the corpus), identifies its metaphorical force. As the term adjectives usually apply to objects like "hair," "loaf," and "toe," its application also reaches symbolically in order to communicate earthiness, solidity, and organic connection. In *Désirée's Baby*, the metaphorical connection of brown with the color of the child's skin delineates the point of contact between nature and racial identification, highlighting the ways physical features come to be loaded with social signification.

Moreover, the following excerpt has been taken from *Desiree's Baby*

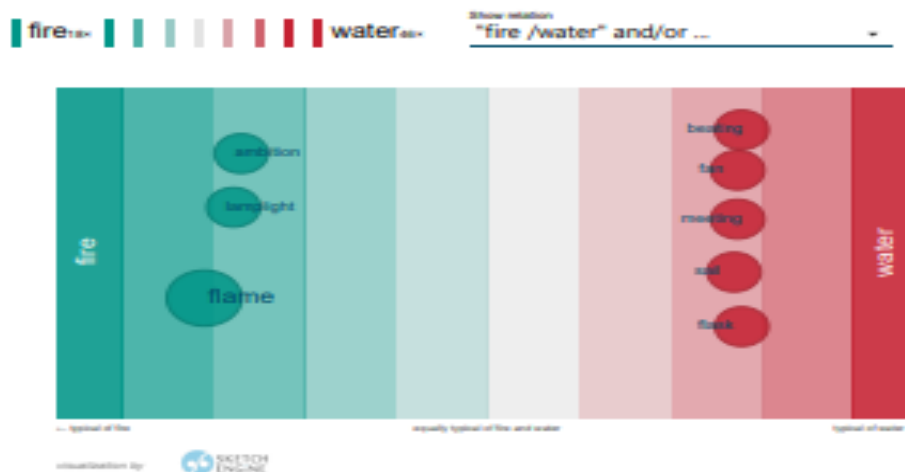
"The passion that awoke in himover all obstacles" (Metaphorical language and vivid imagery) (p. 140).

Figure 9
 Word Sketch difference between the first lemma 'day' and the second lemma 'night'



The graphic representation in Figure 9 of 'day' and 'night' with scores of 125x and 78x, respectively, is illustrated as contrasting symbols within the narrative. The significance of these two metaphorical symbols is uniquely depicted across the narrative. It portrays the rigid norms of society and their subtle, yet profound, messages. 'Day' is employed with truth and commitments, and the duties of people in society. However, night presents a different reality, marked by moments of self-realization, longing, and freedom. Chopin's characters penetrate intimate emotions during the night, whether it is Mrs. Baroda's veiled objectives in *A Respectable Woman* or Edna's realization in *The Awakening*. In essence, the night provided comfort, space, and the ability to think outside the box, tackle issues, and make daring choices that they could not during the day.

Figure 10
 Word sketch difference between the first lemma 'fire' and the second lemma 'water'



In the above Figure 10 of the word sketch difference, the first lemma 'fire' is shown to have appeared 18 times in the entire narrative. However, 'water', on the other hand, appeared 46x. The figure displays not only contrast but also how both terms have been linked together in Chopin's stories. Both terms have been frequently applied, as they reflect the concepts of craving, liberty, death, and emotional change. Fire is also connected to the excitement, desire, and deadly force of uncontrollable love, while water is not only associated with autonomy and optimism but also with defeat and the end. The imagery of fire and destruction is used metaphorically throughout the story, symbolizing the devastating consequences in Desiree's Baby, particularly in the aftermath of Desiree's discovery and its impact on her life. "When he frowned, she trembled but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God" (Metaphor of trembling and smiling to express Desiree's feelings) (p. 141).

4.4 Pragmatic Features

In addition to pragmatic factors and linguistic decisions, the intersectionality and placement of race and gender may also have a long-term impact on the connection and intentions of the speaker. Many examples can be drawn from the story of “*The Awakening and Selected Short Stories*” to indicate the intersectionality of race and gender within the pragmatic features. The dialogue in the story reflects the power dynamics and social interactions that are present.

“He reproached On earth” (The Awakening, p. 9).

In a similar stance,

“It wouldto define his wife failed in her duty toward their children” (The Awakening, p. 12).

These examples provide solid evidence that Mr. Pontellier was not happy with Edna’s attitude toward their children, as, according to him, it was the mother’s sole responsibility to care for them. This confirms the gender role of being identified as a wife and a mother. These sentences in the novel outline a picture where there is little room for Edna's freedom. Additionally, it states that gender roles are instilled through the authority of marriage. In terms of race, the dominant influence is usually seen through social hierarchy and also through the omission of politeness markers within the narrative. The servants who were of the colored race had no autonomy and were not due any respect. Holding the trappings of oppression, as represented by the LA Folle and Desirée characters, emphasizes the pragmatic decisions of the medium that influence the dialogues in the story. Chopin's improvisation in including pragmatic elements indicates how it creates and forms the presentation of characters in society during the late 19th century.

The congruence of LA Folle's character in *Beyond the Bayou* translates the switch of pragmatic features into a vivid and distinct strategic plan of silence, code-switching, and power relations. It also throws more light on LA Folle's identity as a resilient black woman and her capacity to navigate stringent societal demands. *Desiree's Baby* also exhibits profound insight into stringent and dominant social hierarchies. Armand and Desiree's interactions are indicative of Armand's authoritative position, as his dialogue often dominates or shuts up Desiree. The pronoun use, like Armand calling Desiree "you," is emphasized in the narrative, and its effect on the gender role of "woman" emphasizes his place of power and indicates the gender dynamics during that period.

“She turned away ...and walked slowly. . . hoping ...her back” (Desiree's Baby, p. 143).

The past continuous (hoping) is combined with the past tense (turned, walked) to transfer the reader to a former time and reveal Désirée’s emotions at that time.

The speech within the story of *Ma'ame Pelagie* serves as a symbol of pragmatic features, which, in turn, reflects the Creole background combined with African and French roots. Mrs. Pelagie’s subtle use of a formal tone reflects her status as an elderly Creole woman. The intricacy of race can be dominantly viewed where the pragmatic layer intersects with the characters’ communication. Furthermore, Mrs. Baroda’s speech highlights politeness strategies, as well as indirect speech, in the story *A Respectable Woman*. The pragmatic features in the story “*The Kiss*” illustrate Nathalie’s devious and flattering language towards Brantain, which aims to secure her financial future. However, with Harvy, it was more of an indirect speech. Mrs. Sommers’s pragmatic style reflects a temporary shift in her identity, influencing speech acts on a societal level in the story *A Pair of Silk Stockings*. In the story *The Locket*, Octivie’s use of politeness reflects Romanticism. The gendered expression dictates that women of the 19th century were expected to balance their emotions with societal expectations and to be passive and decorous.

A corpus stylistic analysis can offer greater insights into Kate Chopin’s writing style, thematic concerns, and the distinctive stylistic choices she makes in her work by analyzing these linguistic traits and patterns within *The Awakening and Selected Short Stories* and contrasting them with other texts in a Kate Chopin corpus.

Table 1

Personal pronouns with frequency wordlist from sketch engine

Personal pronouns	Frequency
her	58
his	25
him	16
she	53
he	41
it	42
they	4
I	14
me	7
my	6
our	3
you	7
them	5
their	4
its	4
your	2
yours	1

Table 2
Pronouns with frequency wordlist from sketch engine

Pronoun	Frequency
her	1,632
she	1,563
he	865
it	790
i	618
his	585
you	577
him	314
they	243
me	207
them	194
their	138
herself	116
my	95
its	69
your	65
himself	60
we	56
themselves	18
one	16
us	15
myself	15
itself	14
yourself	12
our	8
hers	4
yours	3
ours	1

4.4.1 Personal Pronouns

Table 1 shows the variations in the frequency distribution among the genders of personal pronouns through the wordlist in *Desiree's Baby*. Here, the highest measured frequency detected is 'her' with a count of 58 times in the story, followed by 'she' with a count of 53. The lowest frequency was detected by "our" and "your", with frequencies measured at just 3 and 2, respectively. However, the frequency of 'yours' was detected only once. It illustrates how gender has been excessively portrayed through the use of these personal pronouns. In comparison to Table 2, which shows the frequency of the pronouns present in the entire narrative, it highlights the gender disparity and deepens the exploration of racial identity.

The results verify that Chopin's lexical and pragmatic organization resonates with the racialized and gendered hierarchies of nineteenth-century Louisiana. However, in irony and repetition, she also reveals their instability. Therefore, by linking corpus findings to intersectional theory, the argument places Chopin as a writer who linguistically enacts both complicity and resistance in patriarchal and racial discourse.

4.5 Discussions

The findings of the research illustrate how Kate Chopin's narratives employ linguistic and stylistic elements to reveal the intersection of gender and race. Corpus-stylistic analysis determined that stereotypical lexis and pragmatic structures were reproduced and subverted in nineteenth-century Louisiana's cultural discourses. This is the first research objective, which had already established how lexical features construct meaning in *The Awakening and in the short stories*, and the second one, which investigated pragmatic features that affect character interactions and power dynamics.

An examination of *Beyond the Bayou* illustrates this dualism. The story begins in medias res, with Jacqueline's trauma underpinning her nightmares and eventual strength. The repetitive structure of the story mirrors what Ammons (1992) noted as the repetition tropes used by Chopin. Rather than simply reinforcing the stereotypes, however, the story uncovers the psychological cost of racialized and gendered marginalization. The inability of plantation women to achieve solidarity confirms Collins's (2015) argument that intersectional power arrangements tend to fragment collective agency, as well as supporting Dyer's (2002) belief that Chopin's stereotypes unveil rather than conceal systemic oppression.

Désirée's Baby also highlights the delicate negotiation of gender and racial identities within Creole society. The crisis of identity that Désirée experiences because she cannot be sure of her racial origins is patterned on racial and patriarchal codes. Armand Aubigny expresses dominance through both the sexual exploitation of Désirée and her rejection, showing how damaging it can be to cross hierarchies of race and gender. The manuscript has already provided evidence, by marked iterative references to racial markers accompanied by a gendered language of dependency, that identity is constructed textually based on exclusion. This validates Crenshaw's (1997) argument that the axes of race and gender do not function separately but intersect as systems for the organization of weakness.

In effect, these results affirm that Chopin's style is not merely echoing cultural bias but is purposefully evoking lexical and pragmatic patterns to highlight the instabilities of women's positions in cases of intersecting race and gender. Her use of circularity, return tropes, and identity markers repeats but disavows cultural discourses in her time. This verifies the applicability

of combining corpus-stylistic methods with intersectional theory (Cho et al., 2013; Collins, 2015), since it positions micro-level linguistic options and macro-level social signification. This comes after placing this research in conformity with the current literature that proves how literature remains a contributing factor to our comprehension of race and gender representation across genres and eras (Adukia et al., 2022; Forbes et al., 2023). Stepping away from the study questions and goals widens feminist criticisms of Chopin. It provides a more sensitive understanding of the way in which her writing responds to concerns of race and gender in American literature during the nineteenth century.

Instead of merely listing frequency results, the analysis interprets lexical oppositions as signals of social order. Therefore, whereas 'white' is likely to be used to characterize things of beauty or refinement, 'black' will signify labour or servitude. Such asymmetry is viewed as to signify nineteenth-century ideologies where race and gender were intertwined signs of power and visibility.

5. Conclusion

This research illustrates that Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and a number of her short stories trace complex intersections of race and gender, where linguistic and stylistic variables build richly textured social realities. By combining corpus-stylistic methods with intersectional theory, this research shows how language evidence can be used to inform claims about gender and race in literary texts. The method enhances feminist literary theory by including empirical receptivity in thematic interpretation. Larger corpora of nineteenth-century novels can be tested with the combined model in future studies to establish patterns of representation across genres and writers. Analysis shows how Chopin both reflects and comments on the cultural norms of her era, specifically in her portrayal of power relations influenced by masculinity, racial identity, and female vulnerability. In addition, through the application of corpus-stylistic and intersectional approach, the study enriches intersectionality and feminist scholarship and thus extends their reach to late nineteenth-century American literature. Findings also imply that literary works can be a critical site for the study of how race and gender discourses shape social attitudes and that these results are still applicable to current debates surrounding inclusivity and representation. Future studies should take this method to a broader corpus of Chopin's work and other writers, taking historical context and authorial intention into account, to help us understand the representation of intersectional realities in literature more broadly.

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