



FEMALE RESISTANCE AND AGENCY: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURES IN HART'S *WEYWARD*

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Abstract

The current study focuses on the patriarchal power that governs women's bodies, knowledge, sexuality, and autonomy. The novel *Weyward* (2023) by Emilia Hart features the life stories of Altha, Violet, and Kate, from different historical periods: 1619, 1942, and 2019, and reflects gender oppression. Close reading and thematic analysis determine feminist issues such as witchcraft in response to patriarchal violence, family imprisonment, domestic violence, and the internalization of male dominance. This study is a qualitative textual analysis informed by Catharine A. MacKinnon's Radical Feminist Theory. In *Weyward*, Patriarchy manifests in terms of legal, religious, family, and intimate systems that explain gender inequality. In *Weyward*, the female body is presented as a political entity in which control and opposition coexist. The knowledge of women, such as about nature and herbalism, is a challenge for men's power. Women's resistance shows in the form of silence, strategic compliance, memory, and survival-oriented coping mechanisms. Patriarchal power is a political figure that is important with respect to radical feminist theory. The novel also highlights intergenerational trauma and women's solidarity whereby oppressed histories and collective memory shift individual pain into collective feminist awareness. The study concludes that *Weyward* is a modern feminist novel that reshapes resistance into endurance, survival, and reclaiming agency. The experience of women placed in a radical feminist paradigm, the study highlights the contemporary discourse on patriarchy, autonomy, and women's resistance in the literary world.

Keywords: *Female Agency, Female Oppression, Female Subjectivity, Feminism, Male Dominance, Radical Feminism.*

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1. Introduction

Patriarchy, female resistance, and female agency are the terms that depict the status of women in patriarchal society. Patriarchy derives from the Greek word patriarkhēs, which means “rule of the father,” and refers to a social system in which men are dominant in the political, economic, social, and familial realms of power (Walby, 1989, p. 23). The ‘Patriarchy’ is defined by Arienne Rich (1976, p. 3) as a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men, by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labour, determine women's actions, in which the female is under the supervision of males.

According to Hawkesworth (1999), Resistance is not an effort to overthrow established power structures but a reaction to emancipate political goals. Faludi's (1991, p. 67) work popularized the term “resistance” by characterizing it as the “cultural counter-reaction” to feminism. Resistance is socially organized in coordination with identifiable contingencies and discrete phases, constituting a movement of the self. Identity, institutions, and ideologies shape the transition from imposed and internalized marginalization to a more empowered, self-conscious state.

Faludi's (1999, p. 16) defines “resistance” as encompassing all forms of anti-feminist media propaganda. These definitions of “resistance” encompass mechanisms that maintain the existing state of affairs, such as institutional inertia and a lack of support that leads to non-participation, inadequate funding, and insufficient gender training. Neither definition emphasizes the active opposition inherent in resistance. These are general and encompass cultural or structural expressions of gender inequality (Thomas & Plaut, 2008, p. 22). It is challenging to differentiate between opposition to different aspects and broader behaviour perpetuating gender inequalities.

Agency represents an individual's ability to act intentionally and make decisions for themselves. It enables them to engage in self-determination and live according to their wishes, despite oppression. Agency involves rationality, freedom, and ethical power that allows them to determine the path of their life. As defined, it is the ability to perform freely (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffen, 2013, p. 06). Agency provides strength to an individual for their freedom. This research points out the main causes of the oppression of women within patriarchal practices. The study focuses on women's empowerment, independence, and freedom through a radical feminist lens.

Women's agency is the issue of identity as females, which is more a social and historical construct than a biological one. Simone de Beauvoir's claim that “one is not born, but becomes” essentially conveys that gender identity is a cultural byproduct of social expectation and ideological conditioning (de Beauvoir, 1976, p. 283). As Rosemarie Tong (2009, p. 8) observed, “Female identity has historically been fractured by overlapping systems of oppression, economic and cultural, that deny women selfhood”

(Tong, 2014, p. 48). Therefore, an identity struggle transforms into an effort to recover subjectivity and rebuild women's identity beyond the limitations of patriarchy.

Emilia Hart is a contemporary British-Australian author. "Weyward" is the debut novel by Emilia Hart (2023). It has received significant praise for its feminist outlook and multi-generational story. Emilia Hart writes a fusion of historical fiction and magical realism, as well as overtly feminist beliefs about women's strength across various points in history and diverse situations and oppressions. Through Emilia Hart's lyrical writing and vivid metaphorical language, she gives voice to women who have been historically lost and uses those voices to provide insight into their strength as they fought against oppression for their freedom and right to autonomy and agency.

Weyward is a tribute to women's resilience and self-discovery. The three women's stories, although hundreds of years apart, intersect in a common battle for liberation from men and the freedom to be liberated for the sake of personal identity. Hart's poetic prose and symbolic elements in nature support the study's argument that women will find their way back to remembering their origin and reclaiming the power that was theirs all along. Weyward is not just a story of survival; it is a celebration of weak women who, across time, have resisted, healed, and learned to live freely.

2. Literature Review

The literature review situates the current study in the broader context of feminist literary criticism and theories of patriarchy, resistance, and agency. There has been a tradition in feminist studies to highlight literature on cultural production and power relations (Radford & Moi, 1986). The notion that women are the responsibility of men, whether as spouses, daughters, or mothers, is still maintained by traditional local society (Jain, 2014; Sharma, 2017). Women have been deprived of their autonomy and freedom as a result of the rigid and inflexible perception of gender roles that has been cultivated by adhering to this patriarchal ideology (Siddiqi, 2021). Women living in diasporic societies have either consciously or unconsciously preserved their ethno-national identities in relation to traditional conceptions of gender and sex.

Patriarchal societies, with their hierarchies, standards, and ideals, undermine women's autonomy and reinforce gender inequities. The studies addressed that women exhibit remarkable self-determination and grit in protesting those oppressive systems in various societies and periods. Historically, male-dominated societies have kept dominion over society by not only insisting women obey them but also demanding they keep silent in the face of "discrimination, subordination, exploitation, and subjugation" (Sivakumar & Manimekalai, 2021, p. 220).

Radical feminism discusses challenges regarding patriarchy; women usually suffer from sexual assault, domestic violence, and rape. Men claim the right to control women's reproductive power and their sexuality with threats of violence and coercion. Radical

feminism critically elaborates the liberty of male and female bodies; men abuse and exploit women by commanding their bodies and controlling reproduction and sexuality. Jensen, as a radical feminist, finds the primary goal of radical feminism is “the end of patriarchy’s gender system, not merely expanding women’s choices within patriarchy” (p. 04). Bryson defines Radical Feminism in her book *Feminist Political Theory* (2003) as a theory of “by and for women” (p. 163). It addresses the roots of oppression through women’s own experiences and does not compromise with existing political agendas. The oppression of a woman is regarded as a universal form of domination. She suggests that women must end patriarchal oppression through their common interests and must struggle together for their own liberation. The power of men has extended to private life, and traditional concepts of power and politics are instruments of patriarchal domination.

2.1. Female Resistance in Feminist Theory

Feminine resistance is a central idea in feminist theory that exists in response to patriarchal power structures. Resistance is multifaceted and encompasses a spectrum of activities, including minor acts such as quietness, self-assertion, and normal endurance, to significant actions, such as organizing, mass action, and confrontation (hooks, 1984). The relational and dispersed nature of power, as conceived by Michel Foucault, has been utilized in feminist explanations of resistance, enabling the comprehension of women's struggle with oppressive structures internal to them, rather than being external to them (Foucault, 1978).

2.2. Sexuality in Feminist Theory

Feminist theory has intensely concerned itself with sexuality, as it cuts across the power, control, and subordination of women in a patriarchal society. Feminists like Catharine MacKinnon (1989) are radical feminists who insist that sexuality constitutes the main stage of implementing male dominance, placing heterosexual relations in a context of male superiority and female inferiority. Sexuality, in the case of MacKinnon, is a political space whereby systemic inequalities are created and established as usual instead of personal. Kate Millett (1970) defines sexual politics as the central aspect of patriarchy, whereby the control of men over women is dominant and the representation of sexuality by the culture. Through such frameworks, it has been emphasized that the sexual identities of women have traditionally been framed through male-constructed standards, which change the female bodies and restrain self-assertion (p. 79). The radical feminist standings are later complicated by the work of feminist scholars who analyze the issue of sexuality as the domain of oppression and resistance.

Sexuality is a logical construction by Michel Foucault (1978), as explained by feminist philosophers, such as Butler (1990), who believe that sexuality is performative, which is influenced through repeated acts and norms. In this view, sexual identities are not fixed and natural, and this allows them to be reinterpreted so that women can corrupt

dominant expectations and reclaim sexuality as a generative source. For example, Audre Lorde (1980, p. 339) recognizes the erotic as a source of female power and creativity, reclaiming sexual desire as against the patriarchal etiquette of exploitation. Likewise, Crenshaw (1991, p. 112) establishes the fact that women of color are subjected to distinctive sexual oppression, which was not explained within a one-axis grid of gender.

2.3. Agency in Feminist Discourse

Feminist theory focuses on agency, which is basically the ability of women to act, make decisions, and exercise power despite the limiting social frameworks. Feminist writers claim that agency contests the patriarchal traditions of a passive concept of a woman as a subject and reposition her as an active figure in the construction of her life. The paradox of constraint and freedom often concerns feminist debates about agency. On the other hand, patriarchy restricts women in their autonomy by means of cultural, legislative, and social limitations. On the contrary, women make resistance and empowerment spaces out of these very constraints (Clark & Mahmood, 2008). For example, Mahmood opposed the Western liberal concept of agency as the sole domain of resistance and proceeds to suggest that women across various cultural settings could exercise agency through accommodating, pious, or traditional practices, which also convey some modes of self-determination.

The media and literature are also sources of influence in creating societal perceptions about the plight of women. Studies have pointed out that the range of women in the media is likely to be restricted, and there are few representations of active opposition to the patriarchal system (Singh et al., 2021). Sivakumar and Manimekalai (2021, p. 428) stated that women are generally shown as victims of discrimination and subjugation, and their ability to act and be strong is not widely recognized. Modern feminist fiction is important for changing the way people discuss women's struggles in literature and culture.

2.4. Feminist literary criticism and gender representation

Feminist literary criticism has significantly changed since its beginnings in the late 1700s to the late 1960s, alongside shifts in feminist theory and action. The primary aim is to study the literature that either imposes or is imposed by patriarchal definitions of normal, as much writing tends to silence, or to write women into it, consider women writers, with notions of marginalization, feminist critique has moved from recovery-based programs, to naming and rethinking women writers and their identities who may have been marginalized in the literary tools, to an important and yet much more sophisticated social and literary production for notions of language, subjectivity, power, and representation.

The first wave of feminist literary critique in the 19th and early 20th centuries drew attention to the significant role women played in writing and helped revive the lost history of female authors. Elaine Showalter, especially in her 1977 book "A Literature of Their Own", and other critics helped bring attention to the fact that there is a separate "Female

Literary Subculture". The second phase (1960s–1980s), influenced by radical feminists, defined recovery and challenged the patriarchal concepts prevalent in literature. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's "The Madwoman in the Attic (1979) was an innovative study of female writers of the 19th century. It demonstrated the way women writers employed the veiled methods of resistance to circumvent oppressive gender stereotypes.

This period drew on Freudian and Marxist ideas to explore the depiction of women as submissive, dirty, or even insane in the traditional literature dominated by men. In the early 1990s, a significant time for the third wave of feminism. At that time, critics started to use intersectional methods to analyze how race, class, sexuality, and colonialism are all connected. As Bell Hooks (1984) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988) have pointed out, earlier feminist works often focused on the lives of white, middle-class women.

2.5. Witchcraft, Nature, and the Subversion of Patriarchal Power

Historically, literature represents the connection between witchcraft and feminism. When women emerged from the ground and faced the strong dominance of patriarchal society. The symbol is a witch presented due to raising their voice for their freedom and independence. In her book, *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), Silvia Federici argues that the witch, as presented in early modern Europe, contributed to the establishment of a new social order that required women to adhere to patriarchal conventions, particularly in the areas of family and reproductive responsibilities.

The witch is usually caught in the web of societal injustice, fighting against the oppression of women's rights. In stories and legends, witches are usually portrayed in two contrasting ways, either as fearsome outsiders or as wise women deeply attuned to nature and the ancestral knowledge that guides them. Plumwood et al., (1993), a story of relational ontology, which states that identity is based on connection, not domination. The main protagonists battle patriarchal systems not only by doing things, but also by reviving ways of living centered on remembering their ancestors, harmony, and empathy.

2.6. Trauma, Sexual Violence, and Structural Critique

Radical feminists asserted that sexual assault is neither an isolated incident nor a private event. It is a means for males to exert or maintain power and control over females. Catharine MacKinnon is a seminal figure in radical feminist theory. She contended that sexuality is a gendered social construction that is male-dominated and that sexual violence is one of the primary vehicles for males to continue gender inequality. In her book, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State* (1989), MacKinnon argues that sexual subordination is a fact of life that perpetuates the male-dominated world: "It is in sexuality that we are most thoroughly socialized into gender and into inequality" (MacKinnon, 1989). Therefore, sexual violence, viewed in this way, is not deviant; it is a legitimate part of the gendered order.

This radical feminist theory significantly influences the portrayal of trauma in literature, particularly in novels that feature female protagonists and address issues such as institutional subjugation, coercion, or sexual violence. Feminist scholars have emphasized that the melancholy depicted in literature is both personal and political. Cathy Caruth asserts in her 1996 book *Unclaimed Experience* that trauma literature typically discusses a "wound that cries out". (Hirth, 2018, p. 345). This division within time, narrative, and identity shows that many have survived long histories of persecution and suffering. Women often use these histories to protest the government, resist social norms, reclaim their power, and highlight the alarming rates of violence against women.

3. Methodology

The novel *Weyward* by Emilia Hart (2023) is analyzed by a close reading and drawing upon the Radical Feminist Theory by Catharine A. MacKinnon as a theoretical framework. The analysis of *Weyward* focuses on the representation of patriarchal structures, female characters' resistance, agency against patriarchal structures, and the literary text's upholding and challenging of MacKinnon's theoretical principles. By locating *Weyward* within the context of feminist literary criticism, this study analyzes gendered power relations, oppression, women's resistance, and their survival and empowerment. Female characters are more captivating due to their perspectives on the patriarchal system. The study examines the systems designed to restrict individuals' autonomy and identity. The research demonstrates resistance in various ways, including advocating for oneself for justice, establishing connections with other women, and reestablishing connections to ancestral wisdom and spiritual traditions. The study demonstrates the successes and challenges of these individuals by concentrating on their experiences, emotions, and responses to structural oppression. Emilia Hart's work highlights the enduring effects of patriarchal violence on women by delving into the themes of trauma, transformation, and defiance. The study examines the narrative that undermines male-dominated systems of control, particularly through the portrayal of sexual violence, suppression, and social exclusion. It also references MacKinnon's critique of the power dynamics in gendered experiences.

3.1. Women and patriarchal repression

The theoretical framework draws upon MacKinnon's Radical Feminist Theory. She claims that sexuality and power are the sources of women's oppression. MacKinnon's asserted that male power is systemic, rather than an accidental feature of institutions. These are legal, cultural, and societal concepts to apply a structural feminist framework to understand the patriarchal oppression that is normalized in *Weyward*. It describes how women represent their agency either individually or as a collective resistance against male power. However, the analysis also illustrates the feminist nature of the novel as it embraces concepts like witchcraft, nature, and ancestral memory as components of feminist

resistance, which are not directly incorporated into MacKinnon's theory but cover all concepts of patriarchal repression.

3.2. Witch Trials as organized patriarchal violence

The 17th-century gender issue narrative is patriarchal repression, which is most blatantly reflected in witch trials against Altha Weyward. The legal and religious institutions are the instruments of male power and criminalize women who have knowledge or independence but do not meet the patriarchal standard. Altha sees an understanding of herbal medicine and her denial to be controlled by the male specimen as a threat to a male social order.

In her trial, Altha is defined in Weyward by Emilia Hart (2023):

"Altha Weyward," he began, frowning as though my name might sully his mouth. "You stand accused of practicing the wicked and devilish arts called witchcraft, and by said witchcraft, feloniously causing the death of John Milburn. How do you plead?" I wet my lips. My tongue seemed to have swollen and I worried that I would choke on the words before I got them out. But when I spoke, my voice was clear. (Weyward, p. 20)

This statement is not an act of acknowledgement of evil but rather a protest against patriarchal society. MacKinnon (1989) indicates that in the pursuit of domination, patriarchy creates the concept of female difference as deviance. Altha is turned into a crime due to the fact that it is not regulated by men, which demonstrates that the law is itself a tool of gendered power. The witch trial reveals that patriarchal institutions pass on women by refusing to give them a voice over their own history. Male figures control the legal discourse and speak on behalf of Altha, judge her, and condemn her. This is the criticism that MacKinnon poses of law as a male-constructed institution that justifies violence against women and presents itself as neutral. The oppression of Altha proves that patriarchal oppression is not only a cultural one but an institutionalized power.

3.3. Intimate violence and the modern patriarchy

The most evident form of patriarchal repression in the modern story is the case of intimate partner violence that Kate faced. Kate is a modern character in the story in which equality between the sexes is superficially enforced, but Kate still finds herself being the target of fear, surveillance, and corporeal threat. Her experience is highly consistent with MacKinnon, that claims to be the most profound aspect of sexual and intimate relationship dominance by men.

The fear of Kate is described in her words in Weyward by Emilia Hart:

There have been moments of silence, when she has allowed herself to wonder if Simon has given up waiting for her and left. But then: the menacingly slow progress of his footsteps down the corridor (p. 314).

It shows that always dominating male power in her life is represented by intimidation and the threat of violence. Kate's body turns into a control zone, which

demonstrates that the violence against women is not incidental but structural, as stated by MacKinnon.

3.4. From fear to force: the political causes of patriarchal violence

Weyward is graphical portrays the suppression of women at all ages; it is also an incisive manifestation of the reasons that preserve the dominance of patriarchal rule. Emilia Hart introduces patriarchy not as an ideology but as an apparatus that operates with the fear of women's wisdom, women having control of their bodies and their sexuality, institutional power, and normalized male violence. These reasons are well in line with the argument of Catharine A. MacKinnon, suggesting that the oppression of women is a construct of politics and is manipulated to advance male domination.

Fear of independent knowledge of women is one of the main reasons for the patriarchal oppression in Weyward. The knowledge of herbal medicine and nature in the story of Altha causes her to be outside male authority and poses a risk to the patriarchal order. It makes men furious, which justifies her crimes. When going through the witch trial, Altha's knowledge is viewed as something unnatural and harmful instead of a good one, which supports the concept that women should be intellectually dependent.

Witch, The word slithers from the mouth like a serpent, drips from the tongue as thick and black as tar. We never thought of ourselves as witches, my mother and I. For this was a word invented by men, a word that brings power to those who speak it, not those it describes. A word that builds gallows and pyres, turns breathing women into corpses. (Weyward, p. 152)

This phobia indicates that patriarchy characterizes masculine authority as knowledge and weaves feminine knowledge as illegitimacy, as affirmed by MacKinnon. When the knowledge of females is independent, it challenges the hierarchical dominance of males. Therefore, the intellectual agency of women is blocked by patriarchal systems because they need to control them. The witch hunt cannot be based solely on superstition, but on political unease at the liberty of women. Hart reveals this fear as a repetitive and common reason for women's oppression, and a kind of fear that manifests itself in subtle manners in the subsequent generations.

3.5. Control of women's bodies and sexuality

Another main concept of patriarchal oppression in the novel is the control over the bodies and sexuality of women. In all three stories, women lack physical autonomy either by being legally punished, family suppressed, or abused. According to MacKinnon, sexuality is one of the central places of power of males, and Weyward supports this idea with vivid eloquence.

In the story of Violet, her body is something more to be protected and limited other than belonging to her. Her father tried to confine her, which is a sign of a belief that female bodies need to be locked up to maintain male honor. "Consider it ... a test. If you fail to

conduct yourself appropriately during his visit, then ... I'll have no choice but to send you away. For your own good." (p. 32). In a similar way, the experience of Kate shows the control of the body that turns violent in intimate relationships. The fact that her boyfriend observed her moves and physical location which supports the claim by MacKinnon, who argues that male dominance is exercised through enforcement and fear. So, Kate turns into a contested space through which power is enacted, and this aspect pinpoints the fact that control over female sexuality has always been a source of oppression even in modern times.

Institutional oppression is another type of oppression that is identified by Hart, and it is drawn upon law, religion, and family setups. These organizations justify the dominance of men by making it moral, natural, and necessary. In the case of Altha, the religious rhetoric provided clues to justify legal violence, which depicts patriarchal punishment as divine justice, instead of gendered oppression.

Another aspect is the normalization of male violence in Weyward, which involves accepting male violence as ordinary, justified, and even justified (Faral, 2015). Violence towards women is not portrayed as a rare occurrence but is a normal reaction to disobedience among women. Altha is subjected to execution, Violet is subjected to emotional suffocation, and Kate is subjected to physical and psychological abuse. These actions vary in their shapes, but they are all the same; imposed submission. "You thought you could leave with my child?" The poker clatters to the floor, and then his hand is around her neck, squeezing, crushing, like a vise. Horror settles into her stomach, cold and hard. (p. 331). An example of this normalization is the fear of Kate, who explains that violence becomes predictable and no longer shocking. She is followed by fear like a shadow in different situations, from her father to her partner.

Kate has the same nightmare that haunted her throughout her childhood—her father's large hand over her small one; the dark shadow of the crow in the trees. Wings thrashing the air; the shriek of rubber on tarmac. The wet thump of her father's body hitting the ground. (Weyward, p. 128)

According to MacKinnon, male violence is a structural aspect of patriarchy that is applied to sustain dominance as opposed to the punishment of wrongdoing. This is validated in the story by Hart as it is through these mechanisms that violence is allowed, downplayed, or even overlooked by the social systems around. Through the depiction of violence as commonplace and not something extraordinary, Weyward reveals the way patriarchy maintains itself by intimidation. Women are taught to change their behavior in order to live, and this perpetuates the domination cycle.

3.6. Inherited Silence: intergenerational trauma and the suppression of women's history

The most memorable feminist intervention in Weyward depicts patriarchy as an intergenerational system and not an isolated phenomenon in history. Emilia Hart creates a story where the women of the centuries bear various forms of the same repressive reasoning. Even though the social conditions of Altha, Violet, and Kate are different, their lives demonstrate the prevalence of male dominance, control, and silencing in a continuous form. This continuity is in line with the claim of Catharine A. MacKinnon that the patriarchy is not an isolated episode but rather institutionalized, enshrined in social institutions whose operation further reproduces gender inequality in the past, present, and future.

3.7. Lineage trauma and repressed female history

Weyward has a strong relationship between silenced histories and intergenerational oppression. The persecution of Altha as a witch which is not written down as injustice but is swept away and twisted into being shameful and a secret. The voice is suppressed in the social record and becomes an indicator of the oppressive nature of patriarchal systems that oppress the voices of women to affirm their power.

As Altha's story is described in Weyward by Emilia Hart (2023):

To tell the story, as it really happened, I must put things down on this page that my mother would not have wanted me to. Things that she told me were not to be spoken of, with anyone, or they would risk our exposure. I must speak of the promise I made, and how I broke it. (Weyward, p. 305)

This silence turns to hereditary trauma. Violet is raised without knowing anything about the past of her mother, and she is not even allowed to mention her name. The imposed lack of motherly background makes Violet lost and lonely. MacKinnon cites that the way to keep patriarchy intact is to withhold collective memory from women so they will not be able to build solidarity and resistance. Hart explains this process by demonstrating the lack of knowledge concerning her origins that makes Violet weaker in terms of herself and strengthens the control of her father. The trauma is conveyed by omission as well as violence. It remains unspoken, thus a weapon of oppression as it ties women to patriarchal power by cutting them off to their roots.

The novels originate in different centuries, but have extremely similar patterns of control; Altha, Violet, and Kate are separated by centuries. Altha is in prison under the influence of religion and law, Violet with the help of her family, and Kate as a victim of an intimate partner. All the forms remind a different institutional aspects of patriarchy. They all accomplish the same goals of restricting the freedom of women. Violet being locked up in the house of her father reminds one of Altha being in her cage, and this shows

that patriarchal logic changes to be more of a punishment of the people and not of the individual.

Violet notes that even her movements are controlled all the time, which strengthens the notion that the bodies of women are also controlled by males. “Father had taken the front door key with him, she remembered. She had heard it turn in the lock” (p. 249). MacKinnon pinpoints it as a characteristic of patriarchy where domination is not exerted by extraordinary powers but ordinary ones. The repetition is further confirmed by the modern experience that Kate goes through. She is also an easy target of male domination, even though she lives in a modern society that boasts of gender equality. Her fear is reflective of her ancestors, implying that nothing in the course of time brings about the break down of patriarchal power. Weyward by Emilia Hart (2023) expresses that the male body is the constant location where patriarchal authority is engraved. The bodies of women are controlled, polygraphed, and raped across generations. The body of Altha is stamped as deviant, Violet is viewed as property, and Kate is a possession victim. This continuation is indicative of the argument by MacKinnon to realize that the bodies of women are politicized and manipulated to perpetuate male dominance.

These are the worst moments, when the fear recedes only to close its cold fist around her heart again. But as Kate turns the fragile pages of Altha’s manuscript, as she reads a story that is centuries old but echoes her own life so closely, rage unfurls inside her (Weyward, p. 314).

This is a form of memory that unites the three women, promoting the fact that trauma cuts across time. Therefore, Hart constructs the female body as a place of pain and a place of historical consciousness. In this respect, the patriarchy turns into experience instead of a theory that defines the identity of women between generations.

Weyward also brings out matrilineal connection as a matrimonial lineage despite the oppressive heredity. Women reclaim silenced histories by the discovery of journals, letters, and shared knowledge. The fact that Violet can access the writings of Altha and Kate uncovers the stories of both women, which interferes with the patriarchal process of burying. MacKinnon points out that resistance starts when the women understand the oppression as a collective issue, not an individual issue. This recognition in the Hart narrative connects the women with blood, memory, and place. Weyward Cottage turns out to be a place of feminine salvation, where half-buried truths are reinstated.

This solidarity between generations turns the trauma into awareness. It helps women to rethink their suffering as not a failure of the system but as a form of injustice. Although Weyward focuses on continuity, it also brings out transformation. Every generation carries along the oppression, but it reacts in a different way depending on the historical background. Altha, Violet, and Kate's stories belong to women's oppression, but

their differences indicate that as long as patriarchy exists, women have to be more conscious and struggle.

4. Enduring Power: Feminist Coping, Resistance, and Survival under Patriarchy

Patriarchal oppression expressed in Weyward cuts across generations; Emilia Hart creates a picture of women as proactive, who devise ways to survive, fight, and repossess their power. The story underlines that the reaction of women is never the same; it depends on the historical background, personal abilities and resources. According to the Radical Feminist approach by Catharine A. MacKinnon, these tactics are based on personal strength and social awareness, demonstrating that the opposition to male dominance may be embodied, social, and intellectual.

4.1.1. Personality resistance and clandestine disobedience

The case of Altha going against the witch trials is an illustration of a person who opposes institutionalized violence. She questions the legal and religious discourse that attempts to criminalize her knowledge by publicly stating that she is a witch. This assertive act turns an instrument of oppression into an agency space and proves that resistance may be performative and cognitive. Hart demonstrates that women can defy the patriarchal power even when it is risky by means of subtle forms of resistance, including ideas of holding on to personal beliefs when faced with imposed narratives. “We were on the road that runs alongside the beck. My eyes were still weak, and the beck was just a blur of sunlight and water. But I could hear its music and smell its clean, iron scent” (p. 18). The strategies that Violet uses vary depending on her environment. Although she can do nothing directly with her father, she develops little independence, including reading alone, visiting the house later without being noticed, and reflecting on herself. These subdued forms of resistance echo the assertion by MacKinnon that agency in most cases can take the everyday practices that bypass male domination. The survival in the limits allows Violet to save her identity and prepares her to be liberated eventually.

Nature in Weyward is more of a home and the vehicle of psychological fortitude. Altha practices of herbs makes her related to ecological knowledge and a place of independence that does not involve male control. Violet seeks peace in the strolls in the house and silent gazing in gardens, which she uses to shield herself against the oppression at home. Kate also needs natural places to recline and compose when subjected to emotional and physical violence. The examples of these interactions with nature are illustrative of self-care, empowerment, and creative coping strategies. Hart describes the surrounding world as both physical and figurative- a location where women are allowed to come into being, develop some talent, and temporarily slip out of the patriarchal fray.

In this sense, coping processes are not apolitical survival strategies but resistance practices that are entrenched in the daily existence of survival. “Kate puts her hand to her mouth, tasting blood. Below her, the floorboards creak as Simon stalks through the cottage.

“Kate?” he calls. “I know you’re in here. Come on, Kate, you can’t hide from me.” (p. 301). In his argument, MacKinnon claims that women tend to oppose domination in limited means since patriarchy restricts the means of resistance. This limitation is revealed in Weyward between generations, in which even being alive is political in nature. Hart explains that coping with patriarchy can be silent, invisible, and submissive, but it serves as an essential mechanism of saving identity and agency. This is a moment when the unequal power structures that MacKinnon presents as the key features of patriarchal sexuality and violence become evident. The voice of Simon is not searching only; it is possessive and commanding. The fact that he says this, you can not hide from me, is a masculine presumption of a kind of patriarchal control over Kate and her space. She is already marked with the violence on her body by being wounded, as the body shows by tasting blood that physical injury and psycho-terror are synonymous. The fact that Kate is silent and hiding at this point must not be misunderstood as passivity but it is simply an essential survival mode in a world where male authority is practiced by coercion and intimacy.

And she won’t let him anywhere near her child.

The footsteps start again. She hears him walk into the sitting room.

There’s a faint creak as he settles onto the sofa. She can picture him, staring at the window, waiting for her to come home.

Kate shifts position, slowly and carefully. She looks at her phone: the reception bar flickers. She needs to get help—she should have dialed 999 as soon as she saw those messages, but her mind was too blurred by panic, by the need to hide. And now it’s too late for her to call. He’ll hear her, and discover her hiding spot. (Weyward, p. 302)

In this case, Hart develops the fear as a control of the environment. The idea of being under surveillance is transferred onto domestic space when Simon is present in the house, making the home become more of a place of control and not a haven. MacKinnon says that patriarchy is best served when women internalize the male presence even when they are not present. The internalized domination depicted in Kate in imagining Simon waiting is whereby fear controls her actions without necessarily having to face him. This mental prison is comparable to some previous generational versions of the confinement in the novel, implying that the logic of the domination of patriarchy may change, but its means stays the same.

This text is vital in explaining resistance in the Radical Feminist perspective. MacKinnon questions liberal speculation that access to the law or emergency services can ensure the safety of women. Although Kate has to live within the framework of the modern legal system, at the time of crisis, she cannot find institutional assistance safely. The fact that she was afraid to speak out also supports the point that MacKinnon is trying to make that the power of the patriarchal system often makes formal rights practically useless. The

fact that Kate does not call out to be helped can not be a judgment failure but a logical reaction to a system that does not respond promptly to women against male violence.

This resistance on the part of Kate is strategic, silent, and embodied. She maintains control of her movements, regulation of her breath, and has found agency in the constraint of prioritizing concealment; by doing so, she establishes agency in constraint. According to MacKinnon, it is crucial to the feminist analysis to see such acts as resistance to see the circumstances under which women are compelled to survive. The image of escape created by Hart rejects any attempt to romanticize it; rather, the very idea of survival is itself rebellious in a system that attempts to annul female autonomy. Notably, Kate is backlashed by her insistence to save her unborn child thus making her resistance more political. The fact that she does not want Simon anywhere near her child is indicative of an end and the point at which endurance is starting to change into resolve. This motherhood aspect corresponds to the Radical Feminist perspective in underlining the ideas of bodily autonomy and the protection of reproduction as the primary feminist interests. The body of Kate is no longer merely a location of wounding, but also a point of resistance towards the future.

Hart reveals that it is not a simple and uniform coping in patriarchy through the experience of Kate. It is conditioned through dread, silence, calculation, and survival. Such tactics are also similar to those of Altha and Violet in previous centuries, which supports the statement of MacKinnon that patriarchy is a transhistorical system, which does not kill out, but evolves. Kate's secret resistance, therefore, closes the feminist circle of the novel and demonstrates that even nowadays, women have to deal with survival in the highly established systems of male domination.

4.1.2. Feminism and Solidarity of Women

The novel underlines the significance of female solidarity as the means of struggling against systemic oppression. The relationships that exist between Altha, Violet, and Kate are empathetic, understanding, and emotionally supportive due to the multi-generational relationship. The interaction between Violet and the oppressed story of her mother, the bond between Kate and the two foremothers shows that the collective consciousness helps the individuals to be stronger. "The memory turned in me like a knife. My last thought before I drifted into darkness was that I was glad Jenet Weyward did not live to see her daughter thus" (p. 19). "Mrs. Kirkby made a noncommittal noise before continuing. "He was very taken with her, I'll say that much. At first, anyway. A rare beauty, she was. And so much like the young lady, not just in look". (p. 16) MacKinnon highlights the political power of solidarity, and she believed women need to sense a common oppression in order to confront structural inequalities. Hart achieves this principle in Weyward by teaching knowledge, maintaining female memory, and establishing intergenerational relationships. These links make the trauma bi-directional, turning it into

collective empowerment, and make the idea of survival and resistance inseparable and dependent on community and shared identity. Lastly, gender strategies in *Weyward* among women are adaptive, and they negotiate power without confrontation. The ways of Violet familial authority and Kate chooses to approach social and legal organizations can be seen as an example of strategic compliance as resistance. These strategies allow women to stay safe, retain autonomy, and build agency over time. Hart introduces these strategies as smart and strategic, and it is important to point out that to endure under the oppression, one may have to be flexible, observe, and act wisely. “Violet was on her best behavior” (p. 46). In such multiple coping strategies as defiance, knowledge reclaiming, connection to nature, female solidarity, and strategic bargaining, *Weyward* can prove women to be not passive victims. Instead, they are tough players that keep on negotiating, opposing, and re-creating agency within systems aimed to restrain them. The picture provided by Hart is in line with the Radical Feminist theory because it demonstrates that the survival and empowerment of women are not only political but personal and are influenced by history, environment, and social connection.

5. Data Analysis

The novel *Weyward* by Emilia Hart (2023) was analyzed by a close reading and drawing upon the Radical Feminist Theory by Catharine A. MacKinnon as a theoretical framework. The analysis of *Weyward* focuses on the representation of patriarchal structures, female characters' resistance, agency against patriarchal structures, and the literary text's upholding and challenging of MacKinnon's theoretical principles. By locating *Weyward* within the context of feminist literary criticism, this study analyzes gendered power relations, oppression, women's resistance, and their survival and empowerment. Female characters are more captivating due to their perspectives on the patriarchal system. The study examines the systems designed to restrict individuals' autonomy and identity. The research demonstrates resistance in various ways, including advocating for oneself for justice, establishing connections with other women, and reestablishing connections to ancestral wisdom and spiritual traditions. The study demonstrates the successes and challenges of these individuals by concentrating on their experiences, emotions, and responses to structural oppression. Emilia Hart's work highlights the enduring effects of patriarchal violence on women by delving into the themes of trauma, transformation, and defiance. The study examines the narrative that undermines male-dominated systems of control, particularly through the portrayal of sexual violence, suppression, and social exclusion. It also references MacKinnon's critique of the power dynamics in gendered experiences.

5.1. Women and patriarchal repression

The theoretical framework draws upon MacKinnon's Radical Feminist Theory. She claims that sexuality and power are the sources of women's oppression. MacKinnon's

asserted that male power is systemic, rather than an accidental feature of institutions. These are legal, cultural, and societal concepts to apply a structural feminist framework to understand the patriarchal oppression that is a normalized act in Weyward. It describes how women represent their agency either individually or as a collective resistance against male power. However, the analysis also illustrates the feminist nature of the novel as it embraces concepts like witchcraft, nature, and ancestral memory as components of feminist resistance, which are not directly incorporated into MacKinnon's theory but cover all concepts of patriarchal repression.

5.2. Witch Trials as organized patriarchal violence

The 17th-century gender issue narrative is patriarchal repression, which is most blatantly reflected in the witch trials against Altha Weyward. The legal and religious institutions are the instruments of manpower and criminalize women who have knowledge or independence but do not meet the patriarchal standard. Altha sees an understanding of herbal medicine and her denial to be controlled by the male specimen as a threat to the male social order.

In her trial, Altha is defined in Weyward by Emilia Hart (2023):

"Altha Weyward," he began, frowning as though my name might sully his mouth. "You stand accused of practicing the wicked and devilish arts called witchcraft, and by said witchcraft, feloniously causing the death of John Milburn. How do you plead?" I wet my lips. My tongue seemed to have swollen, and I worried that I would choke on the words before I got them out. But when I spoke, my voice was clear. (Weyward, p. 20)

This statement is not an act of acknowledgement of evil but rather a protest against patriarchal society. MacKinnon (1989) indicates that in the pursuit of domination, patriarchy creates the concept of female difference as deviance. Altha is turned into a crime due to the fact that it is not regulated by men, which demonstrates that the law is itself a tool of gendered power. The witch trial reveals that the patriarchal institutions pass on women by refusing to give them a voice over their own history. Male figures control the legal discourse and speak on behalf of Altha, judge her, and condemn her. This is the criticism that MacKinnon poses of law as a male-constructed institution that justifies violence against women and presents itself as appearing neutral. The oppression of Altha proves that patriarchal oppression is not only a cultural one but an institutionalized power.

5.3. Intimate violence and the modern patriarchy

The most evident form of patriarchal repression in the modern story is the case of intimate partner violence that Kate faced. Kate is a modern character of the story in which equality between the sexes is superficially enforced, but Kate still finds herself being the target of fear, surveillance, and corporeal threat. Her experience is highly consistent with MacKinnon's claim that it is the most profound aspect of sexual and intimate relationship dominance by men.

The fear of Kate is described in her words in *Weyward* by Emilia Hart:

There have been moments of silence when she has allowed herself to wonder if Simon has given up waiting for her and left. But then: the menacingly slow progress of his footsteps down the corridor (p. 314).

It shows always dominating male power in her life is represented by intimidation and the threat of violence. The body of Kate turns into a control zone, which demonstrates that the violence against women is not incidental but structural, as stated by MacKinnon.

5.4. From fear to force: the political causes of patriarchal violence

Weyward is graphical portrays the women suppression in all ages, it is also an incisive manifestation of the reasons that preserve the dominance of the patriarchal rule. Emilia Hart introduces patriarchy not as an ideology but as an apparatus that operates with the fear of women's wisdom, women having control of their bodies and their sexuality, institutional power, and normalized male violence. These reasons are well in line with the argument of Catharine A. MacKinnon, suggesting that the oppression of women is a construct of politics and manipulated to advance male domination.

Fear of independent knowledge of women is one of the main reasons for the patriarchal oppression in *Weyward*. The knowledge of herbal medicine and nature in the story of Altha causes her to be outside the male authority and poses a risk to the patriarchal order. It makes men furious, which justifies her crimes. When going through the witch trial, the knowledge of Altha is viewed as something unnatural and harmful instead of a good one, which supports the concept that women should be intellectually dependent.

Witch, the word slithers from the mouth like a serpent, drips from the tongue as thick and black as tar. We never thought of ourselves as witches, my mother and I. For this was a word invented by men, a word that brings power to those who speak it, not those it describes. A word that builds gallows and pyres, turns breathing women into corpses. (Weyward, p. 152)

This phobia indicates that patriarchy characterizes masculine authority as knowledge and weaves feminine knowledge into illegitimacy, as affirmed by MacKinnon. When the knowledge of females is independent, it challenges the hierarchical dominance of males. Therefore, the intellectual agency of women is blocked by the patriarchal systems because they need to control them. The witch hunt cannot be based solely on superstition, but on political unease at the liberty of women. Hart reveals this fear as a repetitive and common reason for women's oppression, and a kind of fear that manifests itself in subtle manners in the subsequent generations.

5.5. Control of women's bodies and sexuality

Another main concept of patriarchal oppression in the novel is the control over the bodies and sexuality of women. In all three stories, women lack physical autonomy either by being legally punished, family suppressed or abused. According to MacKinnon,

sexuality is one of the central places of power of males, and Weyward supports this idea with vivid eloquence.

In the story of Violet, her body is something more to be protected and limited, other than belonging to her. Her father tried to confine her, which is a sign of a belief that female bodies need to be locked up to maintain male honor. “Consider it ... a test. If you fail to conduct yourself appropriately during his visit, then ... I’ll have no choice but to send you away. For your own good.” (p. 32). In a similar way, the experience of Kate shows the control of the body that turns violent in intimate relationships. The fact that her boyfriend observed her moves and physical location which supports the claim by MacKinnon, who argues that male dominance is exercised through enforcement and fear. So, Kate turns into a contested space through which power is enacted, and this aspect pinpoints the fact that control over the female sexuality has always been a source of oppression even in modern times.

Institutional oppression is another type of oppression that is identified by Hart, and it is drawn upon law, religion, and family setups. These organizations justify the dominance of men by making it moral, natural, and necessary. In the case of Altha, the religious rhetoric provided clues to justify legal violence, which depicts patriarchal punishment as divine justice instead of gendered oppression.

Another aspect is the normalization of male violence in Weyward, which involves accepting male violence as ordinary, justified, and even justified (Faral, 2015). Violence towards women is not portrayed as a rare occurrence but as a normal reaction to disobedience among women. Altha is subjected to execution, Violet is subjected to emotional suffocation, and Kate is subjected to physical and psychological abuse. These actions vary in their shapes, but they are all the same: imposed submission. “You thought you could leave with my child?” The poker clatters to the floor, and then his hand is around her neck, squeezing, crushing, like a vise. Horror settles into her stomach, cold and hard. (p. 331). An example of this normalization is the fear of Kate, who explains that violence becomes predictable and no longer shocking. She was followed by a fear-like shadow in different situations, from her father to her partner.

Kate has the same nightmare that haunted her throughout her childhood—her father’s large hand over her small one; the dark shadow of the crow in the trees. Wings thrashing the air; the shriek of rubber on tarmac. The wet thump of her father’s body hitting the ground. (Weyward, p. 128)

According to MacKinnon, male violence is a structural aspect of patriarchy that is applied to sustain dominance as opposed to the punishment of wrongdoing. This is validated in the story by Hart as it is through these mechanisms that violence is allowed, downplayed, or even overlooked by the social systems around. Through the depiction of violence as commonplace and not something extraordinary, Weyward reveals the way

patriarchy maintains itself by intimidation. Women are taught to change their behavior in order to live, and this perpetuates the domination cycle.

5.6. Inherited Silence: intergenerational trauma and the suppression of women's history

The most memorable feminist intervention in Weyward depicts patriarchy as an intergenerational system and not an isolated phenomenon in history. Emilia Hart creates a story where the women of the centuries bear various forms of the same repressive reasoning. Even though the social conditions of Altha, Violet, and Kate are different, their lives demonstrate the prevalence of male dominance, control, and silencing in a continuous form. This continuity is in line with the claim of Catharine A. MacKinnon that the patriarchy is not an isolated episode but rather institutionalized, enshrined in social institutions whose operation further reproduces gender inequality in the past, present, and future.

5.6.1. Lineage trauma and repressed female history

Weyward has a strong relationship between silenced histories and intergenerational oppression. The persecution of Altha as a witch, which is not written down as injustice, but is swept away and twisted into being shameful and a secret. The voice is suppressed in the social record, and becomes an indicator of the oppressive nature of patriarchal systems that oppress the voices of women to affirm their power.

As Altha's story described in Weyward by Emilia Hart (2023):

To tell the story, as it really happened, I must put things down on this page that my mother would not have wanted me to. Things that she told me were not to be spoken of with anyone, or they would risk our exposure. I must speak of the promise I made and how I broke it. (Weyward, p. 305)

This silence turns to hereditary trauma. Violet is raised without knowing anything about the past of her mother, and she is not even allowed to mention her name. The imposed lack of a motherly background makes Violet feel lost and lonely. MacKinnon cites that the way to keep patriarchy intact is to withhold collective memory from women so they will not be able to build solidarity and resistance. Hart explains this process by demonstrating the lack of knowledge concerning her origins that makes Violet weaker in terms of herself and strengthens the control of her father. The trauma is conveyed by omission as well as violence. It remains unspoken, thus a weapon of oppression as it ties women to the patriarchal power by cutting them off from their roots.

The novel stories are originating in different centuries, but have extremely similar patterns of control. Altha, Violet, and Kate are separated by centuries. Altha is in prison under the influence of religion and law, Violet with the help of her family, and Kate as a victim of an intimate partner. All the forms remind a different institutional aspect of patriarchy. They all are accomplish the same goals of restricting the freedom of women.

Violet being locked up in the house of her father reminds that Altha being in her cage, and this shows the patriarchal logic changes to be more of a punishment of the people and not of the individual.

Violet notes that even her movements are controlled all the time, which strengthens the notion that the bodies of women are also controlled by males. “Father had taken the front door key with him, she remembered. She had heard it turn in the lock” (p. 249). MacKinnon pinpoints it as a characteristic of patriarchy where domination is not exerted by extraordinary powers but ordinary ones. The repetition is further confirmed by the modern experience that Kate goes through. She is also an easy target of male domination, even though she lives in a modern society that boasts of gender equality. Her fear is reflective of her ancestors, implying that nothing in the course of time brings about the break down of patriarchal power. Weyward by Emilia Hart (2023) expresses that the male body is the constant location where the patriarchal authority is engraved. The bodies of women are controlled, polygraphed and raped across generations. The body of Altha is stamped deviant, Violet is viewed as property, and Kate is a possession victim. This continuation is indicative of the argument by MacKinnon to realize that the bodies of women are politicized and manipulated to perpetuate male dominance.

These are the worst moments, when the fear recedes only to close its cold fist around her heart again. But as Kate turns the fragile pages of Altha’s manuscript, as she reads a story that is centuries old but echoes her own life so closely, rage unfurls inside her (Weyward, p. 314).

This is a form of memory that unites the three women, promoting the fact that trauma cuts across time. Therefore, Hart constructs the female body as a place of pain and a place of historical consciousness. In this respect, the patriarchy turns into experience instead of a theory that defines the identity of women between generations.

Weyward also brings out the matrilineal connection as a matrimonial lineage despite the oppressive heredity. Women reclaim silenced histories through the discovery of journals, letters, and shared knowledge. The fact that Violet can access the writings of Altha and Kate uncovers the stories of both women, who interferes with the patriarchal process of burying. MacKinnon points out that resistance starts when the women understand the oppression as a collective issue, not an individual issue. This recognition in the Hart narrative connects the women with blood, memory, and place. Weyward Cottage turns out to be a place of feminine salvation, where half-buried truths are reinstated.

This solidarity between generations turns the trauma into awareness. It helps women to rethink their suffering as not a failure of the system but as a form of injustice. Although Weyward focuses on continuity, it also brings out transformation. Every generation carries along the oppression, but it reacts in a different way depending on the

historical background. Altha, Violet, and Kate's stories belong to women's oppression, but their differences indicate that as long as patriarchy exists, women have to be more conscious and struggle.

5.7. Enduring Power: Feminist Coping, Resistance, and Survival under Patriarchy

Patriarchal oppression expressed in Weyward and cuts across generations, Emilia Hart creates a picture of women as proactive, who devise ways to survive, fight, and repossess their power. The story underlines that the reaction of women is never the same; it depends on the historical background, personal abilities, and resources. According to the Radical Feminist approach by Catharine A. MacKinnon, these tactics are based on personal strength and social awareness, demonstrating that the opposition to male dominance may be embodied, social, and intellectual.

5.7.1. Personality resistance and clandestine disobedience

The case of Altha going against the witch trials is an illustration of a person who opposes institutionalized violence. She questions the legal and religious discourse that attempts to criminalize her knowledge by publicly stating that she is a witch. This assertion activity turns an instrument of oppression into an agency space and proves that resistance may be performative and cognitive. Hart demonstrates that women can defy the patriarchal power even when it is risky by means of subtle forms of resistance, including ideas of holding on to personal beliefs when faced with imposed narratives. "We were on the road that runs alongside the beck. My eyes were still weak, and the beck was just a blur of sunlight and water. But I could hear its music and smell its clean, iron scent" (p. 18). The strategies that Violet uses vary depending on her environment. Although she can do nothing directly with her father, she develops little independence, including reading alone, visiting the house later without being noticed, and reflecting on herself. These subdued forms of resistance echo the assertion by MacKinnon that agency in most cases can take the everyday practices that bypass male domination. The survival in the limits makes Violet save her identity and prepares to be liberated eventually.

The nature in Weyward is more of a home and the vehicle of psychological fortitude. Altha practices of herbs makes her related to the ecological knowledge and a place of independence that does not involve male control. Violet seeks peace in the strolls in the house and silent gazing in gardens, which she uses to shield herself against the oppression at home. Kate also needs natural places to recline and compose when subjected to emotional and physical violence. The examples of these interactions with nature are illustrative of the self-care, empowerment, and creativity coping strategy. Hart describes the surrounding world as both physical and figurative- a location where women are allowed to come into being, develop some talent, and temporarily slip out of the patriarchal fray.

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6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study argues that *Weyward* provides an effective and sustained literary expression of Radical Feminist ideas by representing patriarchy as a highly institutionalized and yet flexible system of control. Through the interrelated stories of Altha, Violet, and Kate, Emilia Hart shows that, though the expressions of oppression in history have changed over the centuries, the logic of male power remains strikingly the same. Be it by law, persecution, domestic incarceration, or intimate partner violence, patriarchy in *Weyward* never fails to do its work to control the bodies, voices, and knowledge of women, exposing its ability to redefine itself without giving up its power.

Using the Radical Feminist Theory by Catharine A. MacKinnon, this work determines that the oppression of women in *Weyward* is not only cultural but also institutionalized through law, family, sexuality, and institutionalization of male violence. These institutions also pose as neutral or protective, but instead they work to justify inequality and punish female autonomy. With this, the novel supports the point established by MacKinnon that gendered power relations are not just political incidents, but also situated in the common social settings on a daily basis.

Meanwhile, *Weyward* does not want to introduce women as mere victims of male power. Rather, the novel foreshadows survival, perseverance, and resistance as politically vital means of opposition. Silences, hiding, emotional endurance, reaction to nature, and

tactical obedience appear as inevitable reactions in the circumstances where one encounter is dangerous or impossible. These resistance strategies restate the argument made by MacKinnon in that women's agency is frequently founded on the constraints that male power puts upon it, and that survival itself is a radical assertion of selfhood in a patriarchal constrained space.

Moreover, the novel emphasizes the need to recover feminine knowledge, restore repressed history, and promote intergenerational solidarity as key feminist practices. Weyward confronts a patriarchally erased history of women by enabling time travel between women through memory, manuscripts, and shared spaces to reclaim the collective feminist awareness of the inherited trauma. This continuity helps women to see that their oppression is not personal but systemic, thus making them stronger by understanding and a sense of community. This concludes that Weyward is indeed a feminist act of radical feminism in terms of gendered power as well as a re-definition of resistance as a continuous and developing act based on memory, embodiment, and social consciousness. The novel insinuates that feminist resistance is not a one-day event of disobedience but rather a long-term survival, memory, and resistance to be forgotten. In turn, Weyward is an important contribution to modern feminist literature, providing a critical understanding of the debates about women and their autonomy, agency, and survival in the patriarchal world, and reestablishing the relevance of Radical Feminist theory in the study of literature and culture.

7. Findings

The current analysis has provided a number of important conclusions based on the Radical Feminist Theory of Catharine A. MacKinnon that show that Weyward (2023) provides a continuous analysis of the concept of male domination as a systematic, institutionalized, and long-term system of oppression and not a series of individual or random acts of male aggression. The discussion supports the fact that patriarchy is practiced with the support of socially structured sanctions that seem to be valid and protective, but, in reality, exist to control and oppress women. Throughout both periods of historical time in the novel, women are oppressed by the law (witch trials), family (domestic confinement), and intimate relationships (coercive control and violence). This observation goes straight to the argument of MacKinnon that male dominance is institutionalized in institutions that profess to be neutral but which nonetheless uphold the gender hierarchy.

The second significant research implication of the study is the identification of the female body as the site of political and ideological dominance of patriarchal control. Weyward builds women's bodies as bodies of control, correction, and supervision. Altha, Violet, and Kate are criminalized and demonized as deviant by law and religion, chained and kept in check by the domestic space in the name of protection and propriety. It put

under surveillance, terror, and physical abuse in a sexual relationship. These images go a long way to support the argument presented by McKinnon that patriarchy is self-reinforcing because it asserts its control over the body and sexuality of women, the embodiment of the conflict space where power is exercised. Therefore, the research shows that the body in the novel is oppressed not by chance but in a systematic and political manner. Third, it is revealed in the study that the fear of feminine knowledge, autonomy, and independence is a long-term oppressive force in Weyward. The fact that Altha has such knowledge of the herb and has such closeness to nature makes her beyond the male dominion and even beyond the institutional domination, and so she is a threat to the patriarchal order. This anxiety about female intellectual and corporeal knowledge continues to be the same throughout the generations, as the same fear is manifested in the limitations of Violet and her education and Kate and her independence. The study ratifies the fact that the knowledge of females is always posed as threatening or disruptive, which supports the argument of MacKinnon, who claims that the agency of women should be suppressed actively in order to maintain male dominance. It is not superstitions and personal cruelty that lead to patriarchal violence in the novel, but rather political apprehension that women are free.

The fourth significant discovery is that the opposition in Weyward is multidimensional, dynamic, and context-dependent instead of confrontational. The study exposes the resistance manifestations of women as usually silent, tactical compliance, disguise, emotional sustenance, memory, and harmony with nature. These modes of resistance illustrate liberal feminist notions that define resistance as a significant political force. Rather, as per the frames of MacKinnon, the novel shows that resistance often exists within the frames that patriarchy sets itself. Survival, secrecy, and self-preservation acts are depicted as politically important reactions in an environment where one would face violence or oblivion by openly opposing them.

Lastly, the paper highlights the revolutionary nature of intergenerational memory and feminine solidarity to change personal pain into the mass awareness of feminism. By rebuilding their suppressed past, manuscripts, and mother stories, women in Weyward learn to identify their oppression as institutional but not individual or coincidental. This acceptance leads to unity between generations and inherited trauma is re-read as common experience and political education. The collective consciousness of the women as stressed by MacKinnon, resistance is enhanced as women realize that their oppression is structural and collective. Intergenerational connection in Weyward is therefore an important tool in re-taking agency and reinforcing the voices suppressed, as well as feminist resistance in the long run.

8. Recommendations

This research offers several recommendations for future scholarly research studies. Further research can use alternative theoretical frameworks such as Marxist Feminism, Ecofeminism, Postcolonial Feminism, or Intersectional Feminism to expand the horizons of feminist literary criticism. Moreover, Weyward can be compared with other feminist novels of that time to analyse analogous representations of patriarchal violence, female agency, and resistance. The connection between women and nature, especially the capacity of natural and ecological spaces as a source of healing, empowerment, and resistance. The other themes to be explored are linked with intergenerational trauma and transmitted silence in the stories of women, which can be discussed within the framework of Trauma Theory, Psychoanalytic Criticism, or Memory Studies to comprehend the long-term impact of women's oppression. Further, study the themes of surveillance, fear, and patriarchal control, especially as they apply to the creation of domestic spaces as places of both containment and resistance. Researchers can also analyze the psyche of intimate partner violence, represented in modern fiction, with special attention to silence, fear, and survival as feminist survival mechanisms. Lastly, future studies can focus on feminist consciousness and emphasize the historical persistence of the patriarchal system by analyzing more literary works and novels.

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