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**The New Prolific and Thriving Business of Female  
Exploitation and Abduction in Roxane Gay's *An Untamed  
State* (2014) and William Faulkner's *Sanctuary* (1931)**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for a **Master degree in Literature and  
Civilization**

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## **Dedication**

To my parents who provided me with all the support to accomplish my studies.

To my siblings and friends who encouraged me to accomplish this work.

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## **Abstract**

This research undertakes a Marxist feminist reading of William Faulkner's *Sanctuary* and Roxane Gay's *An Untamed State*. In the light of the Marxist feminist literary theory, this comparative study examines the fatal damages caused by the capitalist patriarchy. Therefore, this paper analyzes the main origins and effects of the business of kidnapping and exploiting women and also asserts how migration can be the absolute outcome of the trauma of rape. Moreover, it reveals the impact of Faulkner's and Gay's personal beliefs and experiences on the above-cited novels. Most importantly, this work concentrates on how the capitalist patriarchy dehumanizes women and treats them as animals.

**Key Words:** Feminism, Marxism, Capitalist patriarchy, female abduction, exploitation, rape, migration.

## General Introduction

In modern society, literature is more often compared to a candle that sheds light on the most outrageous subjects of all time. Through literature, people not only express their thoughts towards specific subjects, but also denounce inevitable oppression and injustice. Among these subjects, female abduction and exploitation are worth studying. Living in a society that perceives women as being no more than slaves, the capitalist patriarchy abuses women and underestimated their existence. Believing in the constant need for exploitation, women are losing their absolute rights and dignity as well. Nevertheless, nowadays patriarchy paves the way to a new horrific phenomenon that oppresses women from different angles. Female kidnapping and exploitation dehumanize women and leave them helpless. Indeed, this traumatic issue affected many writers and pushed them to expose its overwhelming impact. Among them, the American authors William Faulkner and Roxane Gay. Through their novels, *An Untamed State* and *Sanctuary*, respectively the two authors managed to depict the atrocious conditions of women amidst chaotic surroundings.

The two books have been the object of many critics. Written during very delicate periods, *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* drew the attention of many readers and scholars. Many researchers approached the novel *Sanctuary* laying focus essentially on the degradation of the American South. For instance, the author William B. Stein in his article entitled “The Wake in Faulkner’s *Sanctuary*” describes the novel *Sanctuary* as the birthplace of injustice and evil in the modern world. He further asserts that the upsetting story of Temple Drake took place amidst a chaotic surrounding and “the triumph of the forces of the antichrist” (28). Evil in this novel, the author denounces, is the principal factor that foreshadows “the degradation” of human decency (28).

In his turn, the author David Rampton in his book entitled *William Faulkner: A Literary Life* (2008) qualifies the novel *Sanctuary* as “a succès de scandale” that brought to Faulkner a considerable criticism (2). The novel as Faulkner affirmed was deliberately conceived to appeal to the consumerist market and a new readership (11). Written in a form of a “roman noir”, *Sanctuary* is a mixture of violence and sex with a set of confused characters (58).

Published in 2014, the debut novel, *An Untamed State* was deliberately written to expose the political, economic, and social instability in Haiti. The author Régine Michelle Jean-Charles, in her article entitled “*An untamed State* by Roxane Gay”, considers the novel as a compilation of contemporary problems faced by Haitian Americans living in the diaspora. Unlike the majority of rape narratives, *An Untamed State* functions primarily as an account of the before, during, and aftermath of kidnapping (203). The novel as Jean-Charles attests portrays the thinnest edges between the rich and the poor in Haiti; a country that is mostly drowning in corruption and crime. The author proceeds by saying that Gay described a hideous place that was hard to recognize, simply, “a Haiti of jarring contrasts” (205). In terms of structure, most of the events are recounted as flashbacks, a way that allowed the protagonist, Mireille, to protect herself from all that violence (204). To conclude with her article, the author claims that the novel is “an acknowledgment of global rape culture” and “an intimate portrait” of the embarrassment, suffering, and trauma of sexual violence (206).

From the above-mentioned review of existing literature, we notice that the novel *Sanctuary* has been studied from different perspectives. However, due to its recentness, *An Untamed State* was approached only by few researchers. Moreover, as provided by our investigations, no one has tried to compare these two literary works.



The current work, therefore, attempts to answer the following questions: What is the relationship that can be drawn between *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* on the basis of the Marxist feminist perspective? What are the major origins and effects of the business of kidnapping and exploiting women? How does the trauma of rape impact women's migration? How were the two protagonists of *An Untamed State* and *Sanctuary* described by the two authors?

Accordingly, this research studies *An Untamed State* and *Sanctuary* from a Marxist feminist perspective focusing more on the impact of the capitalist patriarchy. In this regard, we investigate the roots and the outrageous effects of the business of kidnapping and exploiting women. Besides, we explore the aftermath of sexual violence and consider migration as an absolute consequence of trauma. Most importantly, this work depicts the narrator's point of view in the two literary works and understand the different positions of Faulkner and Gay towards patriarchy.

To fulfill the aim of this work, our research paper is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is conceived to explore the political, cultural, and social contexts that influenced the writing of these two literary works. Additionally, we provide the readers with the biographies of Faulkner and Gay and plot overview of the novels. In the same concern, we allow the readers to draw their assumptions about the novels by incorporating selected reviews about *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State*.

The second chapter is devoted to the theoretical and conceptual framework of this research paper. Since our work is based on female abduction and exploitation, we find it more suitable to rely on the Marxist feminist theory. The chapter also provides the readers with a general overview of Marxism, laying focus mainly on its origins and basic principles. It introduces the feminist theory with its principal figures, demands, and waves. Meanwhile, we

incorporate four concepts that are: female exploitation, abduction, migration, and rape. These themes are crucially the basis of this work. At last, we include the Marxist feminist contribution by citing its major requirements and pioneers.

In the third chapter, we analyze the two literary works in the light of the Marxist feminist theory. In this regard, we first introduce the set of characters and display the major roles they occupy in each novel. As such, we select some passages from the novels that expose female oppression, exploitation, and abduction. Moreover, we depict Faulkner's and Gay's beliefs and mindsets that helped in shaping the narrative voice employed in *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State*. In so doing, we will enable the readers to discover the authors' stances regarding patriarchy and rape. Additionally, we study the major themes shared by the two literary works such as: the figure of the powerful and missing father, rape, and migration. At last, we depict the settings and titles of the two literary works and analyze the authors' intention in using animal imagery while describing their female characters.

## **Chapter One**

### **An Insight to Faulkner's and Gay's Life, Literary Influences, and a Historical Background of their Novels *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State***

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first one is devoted to the novel *Sanctuary*, in which we provide the biography of the author William Faulkner and the critical reception of the novel. In the same part, we summarize the plot of this novel and discuss the literary influences that impacted Faulkner's way of writing. We also depict the sociopolitical and cultural background that characterized the Roaring Twenties in America.

In the second part, we introduce the author Roxane Gay by providing a short biography. Then, discuss the most prominent works and authors that helped in shaping her works and ideas. Additionally, we include a synopsis of her novel *An Untamed State* and provide the readers with its critical reception. Therefore, we assume that the discussion of the sociopolitical status in Haiti is an important element in this work.

#### **I-*Sanctuary* by William Faulkner**

##### **I.1. Biography of William Faulkner**

William Cuthbert Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi, on September 25, 1897. He was the first child of Murry Falkner, a third-generation worker for the family railroad, and Maud Butler, who was a member of a prominent Oxford family. The newborn was given the first name of his legendary great-grandfather, The Old Colonel William Clark Falkner, and the middle name of his father. Being a very smart pupil, Faulkner was allowed to skip his second grade, which gave him the opportunity of developing his reading skill. Robert W. Hamblin in

his book entitled *Myself and the World: A Biography of William Faulkner* (2016) states that his mother; a college graduate, assumed the role of his first literary influence by introducing him to her favorite authors such as Shakespeare, Fielding, Poe, Dickens, Balzac, and Conrad.

As Faulkner moved from adolescence to adulthood, he wanted to go to war and become a pilot. However, his height didn't allow him to do so. Therefore, he traveled to New York and decided to join The Canadian branch of The Royal Air Force as a cadet. From then, William Falkner changed the spelling of his last name by adding the letter U, becoming Faulkner. The biographer Frederick Karl states that The Royal Air Force experience was crucial in Faulkner's artistic development. In this way, he states that "The war turned Billy into a storyteller, a fictionalist, which may have been the decisive turnabout of his life" (qtd in Fagnoli, Golay and Hamblin 7).

Faulkner started his artistic career by writing poetry. According to Hamblin, the poem "*l'Après-Midi d'un Faune*" (The Afternoon of a Faun) was his first piece of writing to appear in a national publication. His writings varied in themes but essentially included his great love for Mississippi. Despite being a brilliant poet, Faulkner favored and succeeded in prose. With the publication of his novel *As I Lay Dying* in 1930, the author gained some notoriety. It is worth mentioning that he wrote screenplays, short stories, and worked in Hollywood for film adaptations. In 1929, Faulkner published his fourth novel *The Sound and the Fury*; however, the novel didn't gain much attention and success until the publication of *Sanctuary* (1931). On December, 10th, 1950, Faulkner was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in Stockholm, Sweden. Undoubtedly, this event would completely change his life. Faulkner had a very interesting life, but he didn't have much success with women.

As Hamblin stated, in June 1962, one month before his death, Faulkner published his last novel entitled *The Reivers*. As such, this book was a kind of farewell. During a ride in the

woods, Faulkner had a deadly fall from his horse and to release his pain he started to drink heavily. Suffering from fatal injuries, William Cuthbert Faulkner died on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1962, in Mississippi.

## I.2. Critical Reception of *Sanctuary*

The novel *Sanctuary* was first published in 1931. Faulkner wrote the paradoxical and misleading novel, which is often written as *Introduction to Sanctuary*, only for the sake of money. In this concern, Faulkner states that “this book was written three years ago. To me it is a cheap idea, because it was deliberately conceived to make money” (319-320). Due to this claim, Faulkner was the object of many critics. The author Theresa M. Towner asserts that because of its explicit and horrific content, *Sanctuary* has been the most densely revised work of Faulkner (28).

In his turn, Frederick Keefer, in his article entitled “William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*: A Myth Examined”, states that despite the remarkable style of Faulkner, many critics had been tough toward his novel *Sanctuary*. Nonetheless, according to Keefer, all of these critics were based on superficial and biased investigations. In other words, he asserts that “critics have not looked to the book at all; instead they have simply been repeating a myth that was created many years ago” (97). Despite all the negative reception, this novel succeeded “to survive on its own” (97), becoming a bestseller and attracting the attention of Hollywood.

David Minter, in his article entitled “The Self's Own Lamp”, believes that “it is probably fair to say that *Sanctuary* was written less out of injury than anger, and more for money than for itself; and it is certainly fair to say that it is one of Faulkner's bleakest, bitterest, and most brutal novels” (79). The despair of Temple and the bitter childhood of Popeye are only examples of Faulkner's damaged soul. These contradictory stories are undoubtedly considered the most scandalous and shocking work of Faulkner. However, it is noteworthy to mention that

in 1951, Faulkner wrote a sequel to *Sanctuary* entitled *Requiem for a Nun*, which was deliberately conceived to pacify the offended readers.

### **I.3. Plot Overview of *Sanctuary***

*Sanctuary* is the story of a young seventeen-year-old college girl named Temple Drake; the daughter of a well-known judge from Jackson. Faulkner introduced Temple's upsetting story when she dropped out of school to go on a date with an alcoholic young man called Gowan Stevens. However, their date didn't go well. On their way to a college baseball game the two had a car accident. After the accident, the drunken man decides to buy bootlegged liquor from a well-known bootlegger called Lee Goodwin. As a matter of fact, Temple finds herself in an old plantation house called "the Old Frenchman Place". In the next following days, Gowan quits the place leaving Temple all alone with bootleggers. Temple was horrified by these criminals; to protect herself, the girl decides to hide in a corn crib. However, a criminal called Popeye succeeds to unlock the door by killing the man who was trying to protect the girl. Temple was horrified, she knew what was going to happen. As such, after killing Tommy, Popeye succeeds to violate the young girl.

After the outrageous experience of rape, Temple was kidnapped by Popeye who drove her to a Memphis brothel, run by Mrs. Reba. During her stay at the brothel, Popeye introduces her to another criminal called Red and decides to engage her in sexual intercourses with him. However, when he realized that Temple planned to escape with Red, Popeye decided to kill him. Meanwhile, during Temple's stay in the brothel, Lee Goodwin was charged with Tommy's murder and Temple's rape. Believing in his innocence, Horace Benbow decides to defend him. The attorney tracks Temple and expects her to testify on Goodwin's behalf by denouncing Popeye, but the opposite occurs. Temple testifies against Goodwin and accuses him of murdering Tommy and rapping her.

Consequently, Goodwin was killed for a crime he never committed, and on a visit to his mother, Popeye got arrested for the murder of a police officer in a small Alabama town. Ironically, Popeye was hanged for a crime he never committed too, but undoubtedly the gangster deserved the penalty. At the end of the story, Temple finds sanctuary at the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris.

#### **I.4. Faulkner's Literary Influences**

When Faulkner left school and failed in everything, mainly with people, he found refuge in literature. During his adolescence, he developed eagerness for literature and started to write poetry. Indeed, Faulkner's works and style of writing were mostly shaped by some prominent authors. During his third grade, Faulkner asserts in front of his classmates what follows: "I want to be a writer like my Great-granddaddy" (qtd in Hamblin). Accordingly, the biographer Robert Hamblin assumes that William Clark Falkner was one of the reasons that pushed Faulkner to become a writer. The Old Colonel was a greatly influential figure who succeeded in prose and poetry (Towner 1).

At the age of seventeen, Faulkner met the successful college student Philip Stone, who introduced him to the most popular authors as T.S Eliot and Ezra Pound (Hamblin). In 1925, Faulkner moved to New Orleans and befriended the American novelist and short-story writer Sherwood Anderson who greatly encouraged Faulkner to write fiction. Faulkner was very attracted by Anderson's style at the extent of admitting that Anderson's *I am a Fool* (1923) was the best American short story. It is worth mentioning that Anderson also assumed the role of a mentor for Faulkner (Richardson 304). Thomas L. McHaney, in his article entitled "Anderson, Hemingway, and Faulkner's *The Wild Palms*", asserts that William Faulkner's novel *The Wild Palms* (1939) includes some important allusions to Anderson's and Ernest Hemingway's works. (466). Furthermore, he argues that some scholars compared Faulkner's *The Wild Palms*

to Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). In so doing, they claimed that both novels have many common themes such as runaway lovers (468).

### **I.5. Contextual Framework and Historical Background**

The nineteenth century was an era of technological development and rustic changes in different spheres. During that time, America witnessed an extreme shift in both the socioeconomic and political fields. This great change gave birth to the so-called term Roaring Twenties.

#### **The Roaring Twenties**

The years from 1920 to 1929 marked the beginning of a new era of intense change in the American society. As America moved from the outrageous effects of World War I and the bitter clash between “The Puritan” and “Victorian” beliefs, people felt overwhelmed by these old-fashioned traditions. They wanted to free themselves by breaking with the past. America was often described as the land of opportunities. That is to say, the expression “Roaring Twenties” suggests the idea of a flourishing economy, “uncontrolled fun” and entertainment (Atkinson 3).

This new era was defined by new trends of prohibition, bootlegging, jazz music, and the Lost Generation, marking the breakdown of morality and ethical values. Moreover, with modern technology, everything appeared to be possible. As such, the consumerist culture increased with the commercialization of automobiles, and mass culture exploded with the invention of new means of communication such as the radio (Carlisle 71). Concerning the political arena, America noted a great reform. For instance, in 1919, women's suffrage in America paved the way to the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, which gave women the right to vote in most democratic states (“Nineteenth Amendment”). On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment passed and was ratified by several states, declaring an era of prohibition. Louise



Chipley Slavicek in her book entitled *The Prohibition Era: Temperance in The United States* (2009), asserts that “At 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1920, the United States of America became a dry nation. For the next 12 years, 10 months, and 18 days until its repeal on December 5, 1933, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution prohibited Americans from manufacturing, selling, or transporting alcoholic beverages” (1). This amendment marked the beginning of one of the darkest periods in America.

According to the Volstead Act, it was illegal to sell, make, or transport alcoholic drinks in the U.S.A. In other words, many “dry lawmakers” believed that alcohol was the major source of violence, divorce, and the cause of many health issues. With its prohibition, people expected a “bright new era” in American societies which was characterized by peace and enhanced productivity (Slavicek 2). However, Slavicek noted that it was quite hard to get rid of alcohol, American people viewed it as a necessity rather than leisure (6).

Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin in their book entitled *Drinking in America* (1987) argue that alcohol was crucial to maintain good health. In this way, they state that “a stiff drink warmed a person on cold nights and kept off chills and fevers; a few glasses made hard work easier to bear, aided digestion, and in general helped sustain the constitution” (2). Prohibition led directly to bootlegging and was the major source of organized crime. In addition to that, capitalism reached its peak, and bribery became a way of doing business.

As it was previously discussed, bootlegging was the direct outcome of the Volstead Act. Instead of improving American society, this act worsened the situation and gave way to the new dangerous and illegal trend. According to *Britannica*, the word Bootlegging means what follows:

In U.S. history, illegal traffic in liquor in violation of legislative restrictions on its manufacture, sale, or transportation. The word came into general use in the

Midwest in the 1880s to denote the practice of concealing flasks of illicit liquor in boot tops when going to trade with Native Americans. The term entered into the wider American vocabulary when the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution effected the national prohibition of alcohol from 1920 until its repeal in 1933. (“Bootlegging”)

The frustration of millions of Americans during the Prohibition Era created “a large and lucrative market for bootleggers” (Slavicek 65). Common people started to produce their own liquor, beer, and wine at their homes. Consequently, urban nightlife became a challenge for American social norms. Night clubs and illegal speakeasies became a haven for young people. Doctors, businessmen, and lawyers all run to these places to have fun with college girls, prostitutes, or what is so-called “flapper girls” (Carlisle 71).

The term “flapper” emerged before World War I. The word was used to compare independent women with young birds flapping their wings to be free. During the 1920s, the term “Flapper” was often associated with a new modern lifestyle. Women were more independent in their way of clothing and behaving. Furthermore, they started to adopt some occupations that were exclusively reserved for men. For instance, smoking and drinking alcohol became part of their everyday life (Carlisle 54). Moreover, they were allowed to attend college alongside young men. According to Rodney P. Carlisle, “the new personal freedoms also increased the opportunities for the sexes to mix in cars, parties, and clubs, raising sexual impulses. Old taboos were challenged and more public displays were possible” (71). As a matter of fact, these careless behaviors evoked sexual encounters, or what is so-called “barney-mugging” (71).

## **II- *An Untamed State* by Roxane Gay**

### **II.1. Biography of Roxane Gay**

Born on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1974, in Omaha, Nebraska, and from Haitian ancestors, Roxane Gay is an American writer, professor, and editor. After completing high school in New Hampshire, Gay started her college studies at Yale University. However, after a few semesters, she decided to drop out of school to pursue a relationship in Arizona. Later on, she resumed her studies and got her degree at Norwich University (Gay).

In 2010, Gay received a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Technical Communication from Michigan Technological University. After completing her studies, she started her professional career as a professor of English at Eastern Illinois University. Besides teaching, Gay worked as an editor for *Bluestem* magazine and this is what allowed her to publish her writings. The author is mainly known for her feminist beliefs. As such, her writings are truly devoted to the feminine issue. Her novels explore the themes of race, gender, sexual violence, trauma, and diaspora. Her artistic career started with the publication of her short story collection entitled *Ayiti* in 2011. Then, she proceeded with two books in 2014, *An Untamed State* and the essay collection *Bad Feminist* (2014).

In 2017, Roxane publishes a compelling autobiographical novel entitled *Hunger: A Memoir of My Body* in which she assumes her obesity and mainly her skin-color. According to her, this book was the most agonizing and challenging task in her writing career (2). The fact of being overweight and a colored woman was a great challenge for Gay, mainly during her adolescence. When she was twelve-years-old, with less knowledge about sexuality, Gay was raped by a group of teenage boys at school. At this age, the girl did not tell her parents. Indeed, because she wasn't aware of the impact of this assault. She believed that it was all her fault. In this concern, the author asserts what follows: "I wish I had known I could talk to my parents

and get help, and turn to something other than food. I wish I had known that my violation was not my fault” (Gay 6). This outrageous experience had a great impact on her life and writings as well. After her rape, she started to hate herself and her body, and food became her new shelter.

## II.2. Roxane Gay's Literary Influences

After her upsetting experience, Gay needed someone who could console her and help her to overcome the trauma of rape. Therefore, reading became her new shelter. In this concern, the author states what follows: “I often say that reading and writing saved my life. I mean that quite literally” (Gay 12).

From the above-mentioned quote, one can deduce that reading was a kind of escape for Gay. She read almost everything she could get her hands on (Gay 10). In her early childhood, Gay was mainly influenced by the series of American children's novels entitled *The Little House on The Prairie Books*. These extraordinary stories were mainly the kind of life she always dreamed of while she was a kid (Gay 10). As she moved from childhood to adolescence, the author became a fan of the American writer Judy Bloom. It is noteworthy that Louisa May Alcott's *Little Woman* contributed to the rise of her feminist ideologies. The latter is an American novelist and short-story writer who known for her feminist and abolitionist beliefs. In an article entitled “The Books That Made Me Who I am: I’m the Product of Endless Books”, Gay shared a list of the ten most influencing books in her life including Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, and most importantly Alice Walker’s resilient novels.

Her novel *An Untamed State* was mostly inspired by her personal experience and by the novel *Perfect Victim* (1989). This book is written by Christine McGuire and Carla Norton, and is based on a true story which is called “Kidnapping of Colleen Stan.” According to Gay,

reading the book was all except a pleasure. Nonetheless, this horrifying story taught her how to be a strong and resilient woman. To proceed with the article “The Books That Made Me Who I Am: I’m the Product of Endless Books”, the author states that she found comfort in knowing that the feminine body and mind are, particularly conceived to endure endless pain and suffering. As a matter of fact, we can say that most of the influential people in Gay's life are female writers. These feminine figures are the ultimate origin of her feminist beliefs and activism.

### **II.3. Plot Overview of *An Untamed State***

Published in 2014, *An Untamed State* is a fictional novel based on the kidnapping of Mireille Duval. It is important to note that the novel is divided into two parts. The before, where Mireille lived a perfect life with her adoring husband and child. Then, the after, when Mireille lost hope after her kidnapping. Mireille Duval Jameson is the youngest daughter of a Haitian business-man, Sebastien Duval. After completing her high school studies, Mireille moved to the United States where she became a successful lawyer. Once in Miami, Mireille met Michael with whom she got married later. Mireille and Michael shared a very strong relationship, and after a year of marriage, Mireille gave birth to a boy called Christophe. As it was stated in the book Mireille lives a perfect “fairytale” with her family. Every summer Mireille goes to stay on her father's residence in Port-au-Prince where she could enjoy her vacations. However, soon her fairytale turns into a nightmare. During her vacation, she got kidnapped by cruel Haitian gangsters who were asking for one million dollars ransom. Paying the ransom was something that Mireille's father refused to do, and without reaching an agreement, Mireille was suffering more. Held for thirteen days inside a cage, Mireille was tortured, beaten, burnt, and eventually raped.

After her release, Mireille was horrified and scared of everyone who tried to touch her. The victim felt wretched and wanted to remove all the traces of her abductors. Besides, she was no longer able to forgive her father who was ready to sacrifice her for money. After many therapies, Mireille started to feel free again, and even tried to have a second child. However, after her upsetting experience of rape, her body was no longer able to carry a child. Instead, with her husband, they sought a surrogate who carried their second child.

In 2010, a terrible earthquake struck the Republic of Haiti, the capital Port-au-Prince split open, only Sebastien's buildings remained intact. Mireille and Michael decided to go back to Haiti. However, Mireille couldn't do so; the memories were too fresh for her. Instead, they sent money, and as Mireille stated in the book, it was then she felt like a "true American" (Gay 345). Five years later, Mireille was still fragile and broken. She lost too much weight and became numb with the number of drugs she was taking to forget her pain. The last time Mireille saw the commander, was in a restaurant in Miami, where he became a simple busboy. Life can sometimes be so astonishing; the world may seem the smallest of all places. Mireille decided to face him and tell him what she couldn't say during her kidnapping. However, the only thing she uttered was, "You should have killed me" (Gay 359).

#### **II.4. Critical Reception of *An Untamed State***

The debut novel *An Untamed State* was originally published on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, by Grove Atlantic, and soon drew the attention of many readers and critics in the United States. Ron Charles in his article entitled "An Untamed State," by Roxane Gay", asserts that the novel was the most heartbreaking and nerve-racking material he ever read. Additionally, he qualifies *An Untamed State* as a "smart" and "searing novel."

In his turn, Chris Daley in his article entitled "Review: Roxane Gay's 'An Untamed State' gives torture survivor a voice", claims that Roxane Gay knew how to give a voice to the

excessive violence against women, and indeed, the aftermath of a kidnapping. In other words, he states that the protagonist Mireille Duval reveals the power of the feminine body which can survive an unlimited number of sufferings. Furthermore, the novel *An Untamed State* has been nominated for the 46th Annual NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Image Awards in Outstanding Literary Work in nonfiction and fiction (“46<sup>th</sup> NAACP Image Awards”).

## **II.5. Historical Background of the Novel *An Untamed State***

### **The Republic of Haiti and Its Racial Conflicts**

Mireille Duval Jameson was kidnapped in July 2008 in her native city Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The Republic of Haiti, Haiti, or what is called Ayiti, is a country located on the island of Hispaniola in the Greater Antilles archipelago of the Caribbean Sea (MacLeod et al.) Port-au-Prince is the capital and the most populous city in Haiti. This city was first introduced by the French colonial government in 1749. The official languages of the country are: French and Haitian Creole. In addition to that, most of the Haitian citizens are black (95%). It is true that the country is mostly set up by the black community and despite its high occupancy, the Mulatto bourgeoisie is the most privileged race in this country (Watkins, Silicon, and Alley). In fact, in Haiti, foreigners are usually called “blan”, and the natives often refer to each other as “nèg”, which seems a little bit racist. However, in Haiti, the word “nèg” simply means “man” or “hey, you!” (Lundahl 19). Skin color is a serious problem in the Haitian society and this multiracial state created a huge “social gap” in the country. The Haitian upper class is often controlled by the white rich people and “the masses are poor”. As a result, these socioeconomic and racial differences created great hatred and conflicts between the two races (Lundahl 24).

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Haiti became the world's first “black-led” independent republic that has abolished slavery and threw off the French regime. In 1791, a group of slaves,

led by Toussaint-Louverture, declared a rebellion against French colonialism. In so doing, the slave rebellion, and the French Revolution paved the way for the independence of Haiti in 1804 (MacLeod et al.).

The nation of Creoles and African descendent remains the least-developed country in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. Haiti's economic “stagnation” is due to political instability, natural disasters, and the migration of the well-educated population. In this way, Stephen Voice in his book entitled *Poetic Community: Avant-Garde Activism and Cold War Culture* (2013) asserts that Haiti's intentional underdevelopment is due to the direct legacy of colonialism that exploited the country and maintained the oppression even after the independence.

Mats Lundahl in his book entitled *Poverty in Haiti* (2010), asserts that the primary factor of poverty in the country was its government which is often ruled by “kleptocrats” (xi). Moreover, he asserts that the absence of “adequate health facilities” is among the factors that caused the death of many people (27). Haiti never reached stability in both the economic and educational fields, and this goes back to constant natural disasters. The country is frequently hit by hurricanes and earthquakes. On January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck the Republic of Haiti. The natural disaster caused the death of more than 300,000 people and the destruction of the majority of buildings (DesRoches et al. 1).

The capital city of Port-au-Prince was destroyed. Millions of people became homeless with no family to rely on. In this concern, the protagonist Mireille Duval in *An Untamed State* states what follows: “Haiti split open and all that remained were gray piles of rubble and hundreds of thousands of people with nothing to hold them to the world, living in tents hungry, hungering and somehow, still faithful, holding their hands to the sky, praising God for their salvation” (Gay 344).



The miserable living conditions of the country pushed its people to leave for a better place where they can afford a better life. The Haitian diaspora living abroad is estimated at one million individuals. Migrant people leave generally to the U.S.A, Canada, the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, and other Caribbean neighbors. French colonialism has created what Haitians refer to as “the Eleventh Department or the Diaspora” (Garvey 213). In addition to that, many Haitian wealthy families left the country because of the new phenomenon of Kidnapping for ransom.

Roxane Gay argues in her novel *An Untamed State* that it was not easy to be a child of immigrants (32). These latter face many obstacles in their hosting lands. To explain more, Philippe Zacaïr in his book entitled *Haiti and the Haitian Diaspora in the Wider Caribbean: New World Diasporas* (2010) states that “As Haitian migrants coexist with host societies, they are often stigmatized, despised, and assigned to the lowest level of the social hierarchy” (5). Despite the harsh conditions, Haitian immigrants managed to sustain their union in foreign countries. Many Haitian migrants wished to return to their motherland believing that things will get better. However, in most times reality may seem dismaying and the deadly living conditions in the Haitian territory made their return impossible, for, Haiti is no longer a safe land for them.

Women are always a delicate subject in Haiti. Being weak and submissive, they are often mistreated, marginalized, and dehumanized by patriarchy. Besides female oppression, human trafficking and kidnapping for ransom became a very common and prospering business in Haiti. In his article entitled “The Business of Kidnap for Ransom”, Everard Phillips suggests that in certain specific regions of the world, some environmental and social factors, such as poverty and illiteracy may be the reason that helps the emergence of criminal gangs which later on might become a ‘profit-making business’. Additionally, some scholars suggest that this “thriving trade” can simply be the easiest way to gain money (190). In most times, victims who

are held as hostages suffer for a long time. Abused, mistreated, and dehumanized, these women are eventually raped and more often driven into prostitution and suicide. Actually, political instability was the major cause of female oppression and kidnapping in Haiti, many sexual assaults and massacres were originally reported during the military dictatorship of Raoul Cédras (“Women in Haiti”).

The author Steeve Coupeau in his book entitled *The History of Haiti* (2008) states that many Haitian refugees, including women and children, reported stories of their kidnapping, abuse, and sexual violence by military people (155). Furthermore, Benedetta Faedi Duramy in her article entitled “From Violence against Women to Women's Violence in Haiti”, asserts that in 2006, A UN Security Council study reported 35,000 sexual assaults against women and girls between 2004 and 2006. The study has reported that half of the women who were living in the slums of the city Port-au-Prince had been raped (1045).

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we introduced the life of the two authors including the works and writers that influenced them. In addition to that, we provided the readers with a plot summary of the two novels *An Untamed State* and *Sanctuary*. Then, we moved to the critical reception of the novels to inform the readers about their significance. Furthermore, we have explored the socio-political contexts that pushed the two authors to write their novels. In the following chapter, we will introduce the readers to the Marxist-feminist theory through which we explain the basic principles and origins of these literary theories. We also try to define some significant concepts that are related to our theme such as: female abduction, exploitation, rape, and migration according to which we analyze both novels.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Insight to the Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

#### **Introduction**

Now that we introduced the historical background of the two novels, it is time to shape our theoretical framework. Since our theme is based on female abduction and exploitation, we think that it is more suitable to rely on The Marxist-Feminist theory. However, to understand the basic principles and origins of this literary theory, one must make a brief survey of the two as independent theories or movements. Therefore, this chapter will be divided into three parts in which we will provide a general insight into Marxism, Feminism, and the Marxist Feminist theory. Besides these literary theories, we will explore four concepts that are: female exploitation, abduction, migration, and rape which are crucial to the analyses.

#### **1- General Insight to the Marxist Literary Theory**

Marxist literary theory has its origins back in the nineteenth century with the writings of the German social critic and philosopher Karl Heinrich Marx. This philosopher is widely known for his great concern about the working class that endured the throes of class struggle. The disparities and inequalities which were stemmed from the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were deemed to be among the main topics discussed by Marx.

From an early age, Marx had a critical view towards his society which later on was developed into his compelling critical theories about society, economics, and politics. These theories were referred to as Marxism. The latter, as a political theory emerged with the writings of Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, more precisely after the publication of the political document entitled *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Marx's text *Das Kapital* (1867).

The above-mentioned works have marked the beginning of a remarkable revolution in human history. In fact, *The Manifesto* (1848) has left a great impact on the world and still serves as the foundation stone for numerous political and economic beliefs. The text consists of the abolition of the capitalist system that renders people submissive and weak. Moreover, it insists on the suppression of all private properties. In so doing, Marx and Engels claimed that it was high time they established new rules that call for an equal obligation to work. Accordingly, in the light of *The Manifesto*, Marxism argues that Capitalism is the source of ‘power structure’ (Daly 38). That is to say, this system believes in the exploitation of the working class; usually known as ‘the proletariat’ whose members are forced to sell their labor in exchange for a wage. Marx attests that capitalism is a pure mode of production that emerged from a serious class struggle between the ruling class (the bourgeoisie) that owns the means of production, and the working class (the proletariat) that is exploited to produce enormous profits.

As such, it is the doctrine of Capitalism that deteriorated the living conditions of the working class. For this reason, many theorists including Marx disdained and opposed the capitalist constraints and aimed to its absolute eradication. In this way, the two authors Marx and Engels claims that this system “has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades” ( qtd in Daly 35). In fact, the capitalist system left a great impact on humanity.

More often, these workers are dehumanized and belittled. They work in outrageous circumstances and live amid chaos and discrimination. These workers in factories are left with miserable salaries and deplorable conditions. They usually produce ‘surplus value’. This latter becomes the exclusive source of income for the capitalists (Daly 38). Marx’s main belief is that modern economy is purely based on ‘human construction’. He claims that this system has

always relied on ‘class antagonism’, and without this struggle between the classes of society there would be no capitalism (39). However, Marx did not only reject the capitalist system but went further to suggest a proper alternative which is Communism. As it was stated in *The Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory* (2013), “Communism represents the supreme epoch of human existence where no further social transformation will take place” (Daly 39-40). Actually, under communism, there would be no inequities or antagonisms that can generate a social change within the society.

Marxism emerged amid a chaotic world and political instability. It aims at offering better opportunities for the oppressed voices which are, indeed, the working class. It promised them a better economic situation that would change their lives. It described society from many angles and called for a revolution. These ideas became the basis of what is known nowadays as Socialism and Communism (Bressler 166).

The second text *Das Kapital* (1867), written by Marx, states that history and people’s beliefs and actions are purely determined by economic conditions. In addition to that, Marx introduced the concept of ‘ideology’ which he borrowed from the French rationalist philosopher Destutt de Tracy. Ideology, as Destutt defined it, is the science of ideas. However, Marx in his turn used it in a very negative way describing the bourgeoisie’s ruling ideas, customs, and traditions. According to Marx, the ruling class has always imposed its ideology on the proletariat, who in their turn obey blindly. In other words, Marx called it ‘false consciousness’ (Bressler 168). Marx assumes that in capitalist societies such ideologies may lead people into fragmentation and alienation, mainly the proletariat. These “wage slaves” as Marx called them, become purely separated from their activities, themselves, and human nature in general. Nevertheless, to avoid this issue, Marx suggested that in order to protect people from

exploitation and oppression, government should provide a plan of action. This plan consists of taking control of the economic production by owning all industries (Bressler 169).

Marx pointed out a serious problem in capitalist societies, which is poverty. According to him, in such societies, governments will never succeed to eradicate this issue. As Richard D. Wolff states in his book entitled *Understanding Marxism* (2011), “capitalism’s operations and reproduction were as “efficient” in producing wealth as in producing poverty. Poverty has proved to be a continuing “problem” for capitalism”. As in all the oppressing economic systems that exploit people, poverty is an unavoidable issue. This problem has always been considered as the dark side of capitalism.

Undoubtedly, no one can study Marxism without referring to Friederich Engels’s book entitled *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Published in 1884, one year after Karl Marx’s death, this book is based on Marx’s notes and Lewis H. Morgan’s book *Ancient Society* (1877). After gathering enough material on the history of ancient primitive societies, Engels comes with the idea that primitive human societies were merely based on a communal system in which men believed owning women as in possessing land rights. In addition to that, he suggests the idea that class antagonism and oppression emerged within the family. To support his claim, Engels explains that “the first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male” (35).

In fact, Marx and Engels claim that modern system of class division originated from household inequities. In so doing, Engels states that, “The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children” (30-31). In this regard, Engels argued that women

never had a real place in society, they were simply treated as machines belonging to patriarchy. Indeed, Engels's analyses were welcomed with open arms by the feminists. The *Origin of The Family, Private Property and State*, exposed sexism and was a kind of hope for all the exploited and oppressed women.

## **2-General Insight to the Feminist Literary Theory**

Women have been fighting for their rights at least for centuries trying to abolish their economic and legitimate subordination to men. Feminism as a concept was conceived by the French socialist philosopher Charles Fourier. The word "Féminisme" as it was written in Fourier's book *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales* (1808) called for women's emancipation and patriarchy's eradication (Offen 45).

The feminist movement aimed to achieve legal, economic, political, and social equality between the two sexes. These activists called for the end of sexism and female oppression. However, it is important to note that contemporary feminism differs from what it was at its beginnings. In fact, women's rights were the absolute demand of the first wave and its central quest was equality in legal and political rights. These women sought the opportunity to vote and have access to education. The feminist author Mary Wollstonecraft was the one who paved the way to modern feminism. Her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was a great revolution during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Published in 1792, amidst a political and economic instability, Wollstonecraft knew how to create a smooth change in the English patriarchal society. She claimed that it was high time they educated young girls. Besides, she called for the necessity to raise new rational and independent women ready to face the world's misogyny. In other words, she saw education as a liberation that would "give them freedom and dignity, rather than the ability to fascinate potential husbands" (Sanders 16). First wave feminism lasted until 1920. By that time, most western countries had granted women the right to vote. Thus,

most of the feminist figures thought that their quest was accomplished and their activism ceased with winning the right to vote. In this concern, Betty Friedan states that “The fact is that to women born after 1920, feminism was dead history. It ended as a vital movement in America with the winning of that final right: the vote” (93). Accordingly, and in the light of the quote, Betty Friedan called for the necessity of a second wave.

Unlike the first one, which was individual and liberal, women’s liberation was “collective and revolutionary” (Thornham 25). This new phase in women’s history started with protests against Miss Americana Pageant in Atlantic City in 1968. Feminists believed that this kind of contests disdained women and reduced them to objects of beauty that are solely conceived to satisfy men (Thornham 26).

The second wave emerged amidst many other social movements that were dominant and powerful during that time, consequently, it was marginalized and less effective. Feeling threatened, this incident encouraged feminists to form “women-only” organizations under a universal motto called “sisterhood is powerful” (Rampton). The women’s liberation movement examined the roots of female oppression and sought the right to legal abortion. (DK). It contributed to raising consciousness within society and mainly erasing distorted mindsets that left women helpless and baffled. In the 1960s and 1970s, women’s liberation movement joined many social groups of that time. It supported the Civil Rights Movement and promoted amendments to laws that would give them equal rights in employment and income (Blake et al.). However, by the end of the 1980s, the movement started to decrease and gave way to black feminism or what is so-called “womanism”. This movement embraced diversity and tried to break the barriers faced by colored women (DK). In fact, women of color felt marginalized by “mainstream feminism” that had neglected racial differences. According to Angela Davis in her book entitled *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), the roots of oppression were deeper than racism



that generated unemployment, illiteracy, and inadequate health care. Feminism should embrace diversity in the way that black women need to enjoy the same privileges as whites.

These ideas were shared by Roxane Gay who fought hard against patriarchy and racism. In a recently published book entitled *Feminism is...* (2019), prefaced by her, she states that feminism is more than a simple idea that existed for more than a hundred years. She proceeds with the importance of the female liberation movement. For that, she claims that “feminism should be a default characteristic of humanity”. Women of the second wave helped to raise consciousness mainly about some marginalized issues such as domestic violence and sexual harassment.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century times changed and so did feminism. It needed new reconstructions to adapt to these changes which were all embodied in the third wave or what is known as post-feminism. In 1992, the feminist writer Rebecca Walker, daughter of the Feminist author Alice Walker, responded to the exculpation of a supposed rapist in the USA by writing an article entitled “Becoming the Third Wave”. In this article Walker expressed the need for a third wave, claiming that women still needed liberation and that was no longer a matter of equality, but rather a matter of safety. The third wave covered diverse and controversial subjects, but above all, it comprised public attitudes towards “raunch culture” (*DK*). This term is mostly used to describe a culture that dehumanizes women and treats them as sexual objects. Third wave activists worked hard to disclaim rape and sexual gratification. In her book entitled *Against Our Will: Men, Woman and Rape* (1975), the author Susan Brownmiller argues that rape was always a conscious process of intimidation in which men abuse their power to control women. To support her claim, she states what follows:

Rape became not only a male prerogative, but man's basic weapon of force against woman, the principal agent of his will and her fear. His forcible entry

into her body, despite her physical protestations and struggle, became the vehicle of his victorious conquest over her being, the ultimate test of his superior strength, the triumph of his manhood. (14)

Rape became a source of power that justifies men's virility. The best example to give is the case of our two protagonists, Temple Drake and Mireille Duval, who were tortured and dehumanized by their abductors. Despite their vulnerability and agony, these men kept torturing and abusing them. Patriarchy became a grievous problem that authorities tend to repress. Sexual assault became a threat for every young woman ready to face a misogynistic society. Brownmiller proclaims that authorities should take serious measures to condemn these outrageous acts (255).

In her turn, the author Adrienne D. Davis in her article entitled "Slavery and the Roots of Sexual Harassment" attests that U.S slavery has always functioned as a system of "gender supremacy" that engendered female oppression as well as racism (457). She states that in most times white masters use rape as a vital weapon to frighten black women. She proceeds with the idea of "sexual economy", claiming that black women supported the white southern economy by producing generations of enslaved people who are often conceived by rape (458).

However, it is noteworthy that society is the first institution to promote this culture. Patriarchy believes that these absurd attitudes are the absolute aspects of virility. As such, Brownmiller proclaims that authorities must condemn the culture that advocates distorted ideologies which encourage men to commit sexual assaults "*without awareness*" (391). In other words, she introduces the term of "the myth of the heroic rapist" (283), describing the glorification of rape culture.

Another vital issue that was worth studying for feminists is female abduction. For decades, women have been denouncing sexism and more specifically the world's lack of safety.

Undoubtedly, this issue was the major trigger for the fourth wave feminism. Launched in 2012, this new wave aimed at condemning sexual harassment, rape culture, as well as female abduction. However, this time social media played a very important role, it helped to spread these concerns and sharing experiences (“The Fourth Wave of Feminism”). It all started with an online forum where feminists initiated a hashtag termed #BringBackOurGirls, asking the release of schoolgirls in Northern Nigeria, kidnapped by the terrorist organization called Boko Haram (DK).

As it was stated in the book entitled *Women, Migration, and Conflict* (2009), women and girls tend to be more exposed to trafficking and kidnapping by criminal gangs. Sometimes these women are captured and exploited for money, but during times of conflict, these latter are mostly held for sexual enslavement or “enforced military prostitution” (Leaning, Bartels, and Mowafi 49). These victims endure pain, cruelty, and shame. According to MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières), rape survivors are in most times rejected and abhorred by their families (Leaning, Bartels, and Mowafi 190). Left with unwanted pregnancies, resulting from rape, these women suffer from deadly diseases and are sometimes driven to suicide. Feeling confused, betrayed, and unsafe, these women often seek solace from their motherland; a place where they could feel home again. However, how could someone feel safe in a land he fled to when their homeland chased him away?

Generally, some social and environmental factors can be the major causes that contribute to people’s migration. They seldom leave their countries to seek a better life. However, before diving into the analysis, one should define the concept of “diaspora”. As it was defined by Kenny Kevin in his book *Diaspora a Very Short Introduction* (2013), the word basically referred to the exile of Jews. However, as time passes, the meaning has gradually changed and by the twentieth century, the word “diaspora” covered the dispersal of other

populations of the world (Kenny). It is usually known that people's migration depends on their social status. As it was mentioned in *Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies* (2019) "sometimes, it may be the privileged who can leave while the less endowed are forced to stay" (Van Hear 129). In order to leave the motherland, someone should mobilize a certain amount of money and indeed the working class is rarely concerned. Nevertheless, before studying emigration, scholars start by analyzing its roots. Therefore, emigration is often related to economic, political as well as racial problems. Additionally, safety tends to be a major factor that incites people to search for a better location. On the one hand, it can be a matter of discrimination, these people feel persecuted due to their race, religion, or social status. On the other hand, it can be the result of other explicit factors such as war and gang activity (*Justice for Immigrants*). Consequently, women, in this case, tend to be the major victims of these instabilities.

### **3-Marxists Feminists Contributions**

Marxist feminists came to revise some distorted and received ideas about Women's oppression. Obviously, Marxist feminist thinking emerged from Marxism. However, Marxist feminist leaders emphasized the importance of gender equality. These latter felt marginalized by Marxist criticism. Nevertheless, scholars believe that implicitly Marx gave a voice to feminism. His analysis of the capitalist exploitation of labor and conception of history were the key elements in his indirect contribution. In so doing, feminists believed that no one could eliminate gender oppression without changing the society from its roots. As a matter of fact, Marx's social and political theories were the basic tools of Marxist feminist thinking. Hence, the Marxist Feminist question dealt with women's position within society and sought equal rights in serving this organization. These activists explored the finest manners in which they would organize society to abolish oppression, misogyny, exploitation, and poverty.

Early attempts to female socialism go back to the early twentieth century with the publication of August Bebel's book *Woman and Socialism* (1910). According to him, in ancient times before the development of the family, women were already the property of the tribe or horde. Being powerless, these women often had no right of refusal. Bebel examined the position of women in ancient and modern society and came with the idea that patriarchy and capitalism became "a double yoke to bear" for the female sex. He argued that women suffered from their dependence on men in both the financial and physical states (6).

In her turn, the author Michèle Barrett in her book entitled *Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis* (1986), argues that the Marxist feminist theory was practically driven by important political motivations. Women's liberation group analyzed at which extent women's oppression was related to the chaotic historical division of social relations (38). Barrett states that Marxist Feminist criticism relied on three fundamental concepts which are: patriarchy, reproduction, and ideology. In the same concern, She claims that there should be no "clear separation between the economic and ideological relations of production" (40). Marxists feminists did not only study female workers' exploitation but went further in including minorities, such as Black emigrant women (40). Besides, Barrett believes that the concept of "reproduction" has been used wrongly. According to her, women were not only the source of material reproduction but also a "biological reproduction of the species" (19-20).

Raising consciousness was the central quest of the Marxist Feminists. Moving from "personal" to "collective" issues, these activists analyzed the position of women in terms of individual, social, economic, political, and sexual problems. These problems were all linked to class struggle, which in its turn was an exhausting barrier to the liberation of women (Gimenez 48-49).

Another crucial subject that is worth studying in female socialism is sexuality. It is obvious that women are treated as sexual objects since their conception. They are much considered as “progenitors” or “producers”. The capitalist system which was often led by masculine domination did nothing to help these women. Sadly enough, all it did was retaining and maintaining the economic mode of production (Mitchell 24). The feminist scholar Luce Irigaray in her book entitled *The Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), argues that patriarchy works definitely as Capitalism. These two oppressing systems seek to gain maximum wealth through exploiting women. In such societies, women are often considered as products or commodities. Since they are men’s properties, these objects have no right of allegation or refusal. Their sexualized bodies are merely conceived for reproduction and profit-making (84).

Women’s politics is vital in a “phallographic” society, and Irigaray argues that change must be radical to achieve a decent transformation in political life. So, women must change “the power structure” rather than “the distribution of power”, without this, they would simply be “resubjecting” themselves (Irigaray 81). According to the women’s right group “Sekirankai” which means Red Wave Society in Japanese, founded in 1921, the capitalist system should be abolished in order to achieve a classless-socialist society. For that, they claimed that the capitalist system rendered women slaves and prostitutes (Mackie 102).

Clearly, feminists have come so far but still have far to go. Women still need liberation and contemporary capitalist societies are no longer a safe place for them. Since the evolution of the business of kidnapping for ransom, women became defenseless. In most times victims have no choice but to pay for their freedom. Kidnapping for ransom also referred to as “economic kidnapping”, is a grievous crime generating not only financial losses but agony and suffering as well. This business is more often carried out by criminal organizations. After long investigations, analyses of “the market” and the most profitable opportunities, these criminals

move into action. For instance, in Italy, kidnapping became an absolute source of income, these profits are much used in the development of drug business (Vannini, Detotto, and McCannon 2). The two protagonists of our work were brutally kidnapped into some deserted and sordid places where it was quite hard to communicate with their families. This kind of kidnapping is called “Virtual kidnapping”. Nowadays, kidnapping became a prospering industry, according to the Control Risks Group; an international risk consulting firm, each year economic kidnapers gain more than \$500 million (Vannini, Detotto, and McCannon 4).

If we look closely we can deduce that all the above-mentioned problems are, undoubtedly, all connected to the capitalist patriarchy. In this case, money plays a primordial role, the value of women is now measured by their wealth. The social institution is being destroyed by the love of money and monopoly. That is to say, money has become more important than people’s lives.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, we explored the theoretical framework in which we have introduced the Marxist Feminist literary theory and presented its principal demands. Nevertheless, it was crucial to first examine the two theories independently, and then study them as a whole. Meanwhile, we incorporated the concepts of female exploitation, abduction, migration, and rape. These concepts will be the key elements of the analytical part. In the following chapter, we will introduce the major characters of *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State*. Then, we will examine the settings where our two protagonists were held hostages. Additionally, we will explore the common themes in both *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State*. To conclude with the third chapter, we will analyze the narrators’ point of view to confirm our hypotheses.

## Chapter Three

### A Marxist Feminist Analysis of *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State*: A Depiction of Characters, Settings, and Shared Themes

#### Introduction

At the heart of every great narrative lies an effective set of characters. Through a bunch of contradictory matters and figures, Faulkner and Gay succeeded to convey their stories. The study of the two novels is shaped by their parallel affinities. The two authors explored oppression, violence, and exploitation from different perspectives. Therefore, the struggle between the feminine and masculine discourse as we shall see is a prevailing element in this analysis.

#### 1-A Marxist-Feminist Analysis of Characters: The Struggle between the Feminine and Masculine Voices

Throughout the characters' analysis of *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* we will attempt at demonstrating that the feminine characters are victims of a materialistic patriarchy in a society that is often controlled by money and power structure. In the light of this assumption, the protagonist Temple Drake is one of Faulkner's feminine characters who is wrecked by the capitalist misogynistic society. Temple is a young seventeen-year-old college girl, the daughter of a well-known judge. According to Faulkner's description, Temple is a long-legged blonde, "thin armed, with high small buttocks—a small childish figure no longer quite a child, not yet quite a woman" (89). The depiction of her bold painted mouth and way of clothing, suggests that she is a loose young woman with a quite lousy reputation. Ironically, the girl seems delicate, fragile, and unexpectedly the embodiment of youth and purity.



Sometimes, readers might feel confused by the characterization of Temple Drake. This character is mysterious and passive at the same time. Readers witnessed her confusion, panic, brutal rape, kidnapping, and captivity. Faulkner introduced her at her most vulnerable, troublesome, and paradoxical phases. At first sight, we may believe that Temple is an adult with “muscle and tissue of more than seventeen” (Faulkner 69). But as the story progresses, we get to know that she is only a lost adolescent who is still learning about life, a typical seventeen flapper girl ruined by lust.

An important detail that is worth analyzing is Faulkner’s use of “animal imagery” while describing the protagonist Temple Drake. For instance, he writes: “Temple sprang to her feet” (70) instead of moving. In addition to that, he uses the word “paw” in “she sprang at the door and pawed at the bolt” (230). He went further on considering her as “wild as a young mare” (258). Being young and vulnerable, this animal imagery perfectly fits Temple’s fragile body which is exposed to extreme danger. To explain more, we should note that during her stay at the plantation house called the Old Frenchman place, Temple experienced frequent encounters that traumatized her and left her helpless. Nevertheless, we must assume that Faulkner belittled the young woman through using this animal imagery. As Betty Friedan attests in her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), patriarchy underestimated the power of women, she denounces the fact that they are belittled by a society that limited their abilities, or at least only considered them in terms that can be “manipulated”. That is to say, women's human agility and strength do not suit these adjustments (223).

Temple felt like a prey amidst predator males who were ready to hunt her down at any time. Among these men, we should cite Lee Goodwin and Van. Goodwin is the owner of the Old Frenchman place where bootlegged liquor was conceived. He was an ex-convict who killed a fellow soldier during his military service in the Philippines. His common-law wife, the mother

of his child, Ruby Lamar, was the one who paid his lawyer by prostituting herself. Despite her sacrifice, Goodwin was still unfaithful to her. The Saturday night where Temple was terrorized by him and Van, attests the fact. After this nightmare, Temple was completely devastated, the horrific experience led her to state what follows: “Now I can stand anything... I can just stand anything” (89). Feminist scholars assert that patriarchy became a threat for women, hence these oppressing societies are no longer a safe place for them. These bootleggers dehumanized Temple and treated her as a sexual object despite her precautious sexuality. As Brownmiller argues in her book *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (1975), sexual assaults were in a way a process of intimidation through which men terrorize women and keep them in a state of fear and resignation (15).

Temple was not only traumatized by these bootleggers but also brutally raped by the impotent criminal called Popeye. Popeye Vitelli is a well-known gangster from Memphis who sells bootlegged liquor in bars and speakeasies. While Faulkner described him as being undersized, Temple has always referred to him as “that black man” (Faulkner 49), and Horace Benbow considers Popeye’s presence as a “black and nameless threat” (Faulkner 121). Despite all these descriptions, Faulkner in his proceeding works attests that Popeye was a white man. In this case, the word “black” reviled Popeye’s devilish and corrupted soul. This gangster suffered from a physical disability which was impotence. Still, this illness didn’t prevent him from violating the adolescent girl.

It all started when Temple was hiding from Lee Goodwin in the corn barn. The girl succeeded to escape from Goodwin, but Popeye, true to his devilish nature slips in the back door and finishes what Goodwin has already started. Indeed, the scene of the rape was not fully described, but readers understood it through the following expression: “I’m still bleeding. I’m still bleeding” (137). Popeye's act was irrational and horrific, while analyzing this character we

may understand that he has always something to prove. Violating Temple with a corn cob was an act that justified his virility. The feminist writer Alka Kurian in her article entitled “Feminism and the Developing World” claims that rape is an eventual form of violence in which men exhibit their power and authority over those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. According to her, “women tend to be victimized more than men” (59). That is to say, in a society that supports patriarchy, women are always considered as second-class citizens.

Besides physical torture, Popeye destroyed Temple’s mental health when he kidnapped and put her in a brothel. The gangster kept her captive in one of Mrs. Reba’s brothel rooms. He did not only transform Temple into an instrument that served his purposes but went further on engaging her in sexual intercourses with another criminal called Red. The following extract from the novel attests Temple’s captivity and exploitation:

Miss Reba said. “Then watch them... Every morning for four days that was going on, then they didn’t come back. For a week Popeye didn’t show up at all, and that girl wild as a young mare. I thought he was out of town on business maybe until Minnie told me he wasn’t and that he give her five dollars a day not to let that girl out of the house nor use the telephone. And me trying to get word to him to come and take her out of my house because I didn’t want nuttin like that going on in it. Yes, Sir, Minnie said the two of them would be nekkid as two snakes, and Popeye hanging over the foot of the bed without even his hat off, making a kind of whinnying sound.” (258)

The Marxist feminist writer Paola Monzini in her book entitled *Sex Traffic: Prostitution Crime and Exploitation* (2005), discusses female exploitation and argues that this business is ultimately similar to other prospering industries that exploit workers. In other words, we may say that this system works as Capitalism. She argues that scholars should go beyond

the “victim/ master” conflict and must consider its principal roots. Based on her long investigations, the business of female exploitation is mostly linked to the organized crime, international migration, gender problems, and raunch culture (3).

The author Richard Marius in his book entitled *Reading Faulkner: Introduction to the First Thirteen Novels* (2007) provided his readers with an appealing interpretation of the novel *Sanctuary*. The author compared Temple’s assaults by the moonshiners with the Marxist class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In other words, the bootlegger's success to frighten and violate Temple demonstrates their ability to break the social barrier that separated the two opposing classes (79).

Besides Temple Drake, we should consider the feminine character Ruby Lamar, called in the novel Mrs. Goodwin. Ruby is a former prostitute from Memphis and a devoted common-law wife of Lee Goodwin. She was portrayed as the ideal housewife who cooks and cleans the house. As it was discussed in Engel’s book *Origin of The Family, Private Property and State* (1884), this woman was “reduced to servitude” and became a mere instrument of production and reproduction (30). In addition to household inequities, Ruby was forced to sell her body to free her companion. In the text, the act was designated by the word "jazzing" (59). Even though Ruby sacrificed her body, youth, and dignity for Goodwin, the man didn’t show a glance of gratitude. All he did was mistreating and abusing her. This following passage displays how Ruby was oppressed and abused by her companion Lee Goodwin:

He caught her wrist. She began to struggle. He plucked the child from her and laid it on the table and caught her other hand as it flicked at his face, and holding both wrists in one hand, he slapped her. It made a dry, flat sound. He slapped her again, first on one cheek, then the other, rocking her head from side to side.

“That’s what I do to them,” he said, slapping her. “See?” He released her.  
(Faulkner 95)

Marxist feminist leaders denounce that female oppression resulted from old misogynistic traditions and domestic violence. They claimed that capitalist patriarchy rendered women enslaved and passive (DK). Luce Irigaray attests that this oppressing system inflicted roles on women, and reduced them to be only a “Mother, virgin, and prostitute” (186).

A close look is sufficient to deduce that money is the vital cause of female abduction. To support this claim, we should consider the novel *An Untamed State*. The protagonist Mireille Duval Jameson; the daughter of a Haitian businessman, was brutally kidnapped by a Haitian criminal gang. These men were asking for a one million dollar ransom.

Mireille is a strong, independent colored woman who established a successful career after she graduated from law school. The Duval family left their motherland to seek better opportunities and mainly to escape from Haiti’s deadly living conditions. Mireille in the book recounts how her parents suffered and survived during their childhood. In this way, she states what follows: “There is this truth. I know very little of my parents’ lives as children. They are not prone to confession. My mother and father are both from Port-au-Prince. They grew up poor. There were too many children and not enough of anything. They were often hungry. They walked to school barefoot and were teased for having dirty feet” (Gay 15). People suffered from misery and starved to death in Haiti, poverty in this land did everything to forsake its children at the extent of chasing them far away.

Living in a society that considered colored women no more than slaves, Mireille had to work harder than the others. When she was young her classmates bullied her and called her “Don King” (Gay 155). As her father explains in the novel, “As Haitians in America we would always be fighting; Americans wouldn’t understand we came from free people. He said they

would always see us as slaves so we had to work harder, we had to be better, we had to be strong” (Gay 155). As it was already discussed in the second chapter, racial and gender discrimination became a double yoke for colored women. The author Angela Davis in her book entitled *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), argues that the capitalist system in America took profit from black workers and obliged them to work even harder than the whites.

During her summer holidays in Port-au-Prince, the life of Mireille got destroyed. The gangsters did not only kidnap her but also torture and abuse her. As Mireille states in the novel, it was not personal, these criminals were simply making money. According to her, kidnapping was only a “business of transaction” that generates enormous profits (Gay 24).

While analyzing the novel, we assumed that poverty was the principal factor that formed these gangs in Haiti. The miserable living conditions and political instability inflicted on them criminality and incited them to kidnap women. Undoubtedly, these issues are principally linked to class struggle which, in turn, left women enslaved and passive. Simone de Beauvoir in her book entitled *The Second Sex* (1949) presumed that Capitalism rendered women submissive and only a socialist revolution would emancipate them. However, we should note that patriarchy must accept its share of responsibility. These criminals dehumanized Mireille and perceived her as an object. Among these men, Laurent Charles, or as he called himself “the Commander”. As described by Mireille, the Commander was a cruel man who was mainly characterized by a “thickly braided scar” below his left eye (Gay 28). Mireille was deemed to be a pure commodity that would generate one million dollars for the gang. To support this idea, this following extract from the novel attests the fact:

The call to make arrangements for the ransom came the next morning at 10 a.m., as promised. Sebastien answered the phone and the negotiator picked up a second receiver, started the recording equipment. “We have your daughter. The

price is one million dollars U.S. We are ready to make arrangements for the delivery of the money and the return of your daughter.” (Gay 47)

We should mention that the criminal TiePierre considered Mireille as his property when he said “I bought you for myself” (Gay 120). This man gave his part of his share of ransom to free the women from the rest of the gang. Therefore, Marxist feminists condemn this act and consider it as being sexist and irrational.

The author Robyn Pharoah in her article entitled “An Unknown Quantity: Kidnapping for Ransom in South Africa” attests that economic kidnapping became a thriving industry that established huge benefits. These gains are estimated for more than a hundred million dollars per year. She proceeds by explaining that in most Latin American countries, kidnapping has prospered to become a vastly elaborate money-making business (25).

Proceeding with the analyses of *An Untamed State*, it is important to note that Mireille was not only considered as a money-making product, but also treated as a sexual object. The commander and his henchman TiePierre were purely responsible for her agony. The following extract shows how these criminals mistreated and abused her:

He climbed on top of me. He bit my chin. I moaned, turned away from him. He told me to open my eyes, to see him. I refused. He bristled, said, “As you wish.” He said, “You shall not know kindness from me.” I planted my hands against his chest to hold him off, to save some piece of myself. He was a sharp blade. I was a tender wound. I couldn’t keep count. (Gay 85)

The feminist scholar Susan Brownmiller denounced this culture that glorified sexual violence and empowered men. She attributed this act the name of “the myth of the heroic rapist” (283). In most times, women are abused against their will, and according to her investigations,

gang rape has always worked as a “control mechanism” that forced women into submission (285).

## **2- An Analysis of the Narrator’s Point of View in *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State***

The novel *Sanctuary* is written in the third person omniscient point of view. Faulkner used this technic of narration to give an overall look at the novel. So, he allows the readers to draw their own assumptions about the setting, the characters’ motives and their thoughts. More often these characters are portrayed as being evil, irrational, and wasted. It is true that the third person omniscient point of view is basically used to reach objectivity. However, we should note that Faulkner failed in achieving his aim. The character Temple Drake was not only described as being a careless young woman, but critics went further on disdaining her reputation. For instance, she was said to be a “man-devouring nymphomaniac”, a liar, and a masochist who loved suffering (Cox 301). Undoubtedly, these critics didn’t look closely at her story, they were simply been repeating a myth that was created many years ago.

The author Dianne Luce Cox in her article entitled “A Measure of Innocence: "Sanctuary's" Temple Drake” explains that Temple’s bad reputation was only a manifestation of Faulkner’s hatred of women. To explain more, it is worth mentioning that the writer William Faulkner had gruesome history with women. This bitter experience was reflected in the characterization of Temple Drake. While analyzing this character we may notice that she was passive during some fateful situations. Among them, we can mention her imprisonment in the brothel. Critics condemn her for staying and not escaping from that place. Moreover, they claimed that she enjoyed violence and captivity (301).

Away from these offending reviews, we must point out that Temple was only seventeen-year-old when she got kidnapped. The girl was still learning about life, and indeed this outrageous experience was not in her favor. Unlike Mireille who was mature and cautious, Temple was not aware of the dangers. The young girl experienced the most heinous betrayals



and assaults in the course of the story. The only mistake she committed was trusting the drunk man Gowan Stevens who drove her to the Old Frenchman place and left her there.

Temple recognized evil, she feared it, and even tried to escape from it; however, she couldn't face her abductor. In this sense, this act can be explained by her social background. The girl was raised by a noble family, her father was a judge, and had four brothers who threatened to beat her if they found out she's dating a drunken man. Moreover, she never had a feminine figure who would warn her. The girl was deprived of affection and didn't learn how to face sexism. After her assault, Temple became completely numb. As it was discussed in Sabine Sielke's book entitled *Reading Rape: The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in American Literature and Culture, 1790–1990* (2002), William Faulkner projects Temple's rape "through images of silence, blindness, and deafness" (76). Temple's fate was already settled in the opening chapters, the author did nothing to change that. His way of describing the girl attests as if she deserved her agony. These following expressions: "her mouth boldly scarlet" (Faulkner 36), "and the fleet revelation of flank and thigh as she got into his car" (Faulkner 30), were deliberately used to justify Temple's irresponsibility and to foreshadow her sexual assault.

All in all, we can conclude that Temple was a victim of her naivety and society. Besides, it is important to show that the author also has his share of responsibility because he is the master of his story. Faulkner who was true to his patriarchal beliefs restrained and belittled Temple by not taking her rape too seriously.

Besides sexism, Faulkner was accused of racial discrimination in his novels. The use of the word "nigger" and expressions such as: "monkey niggers" (190), "negro murderer" (114), and "those nigger women" (59) exposed him to a set of extremely harsh criticism and condemned him of being a racist. Faulkner described black women in a stereotypical style that was part of southern literature during the Roaring Twenties (Marius 45).

Unlike *Sanctuary*, the novel *An Untamed State* was written in the first narrator's point of view. This technic of narration is generally used to show the author's commitment to her novel. The protagonist Mireille Duval was the one who recounted her upsetting story. In this way, Gay denounced racial discrimination and sexism. She succeeded to give a voice to all the oppressed women. Narrating the story from the first-person point of view did not only allow the readers to explore abduction and its aftermath, but also condemned sexism and sexual violence.

Through the protagonist Mireille Duval, Gay expressed her deepest thoughts about patriarchy and the capitalist society as well. Her novel was a testimony against all the despotic systems that suffocated women. The narrator addressed her readers and made them see what she saw, feel what she felt, and more specifically draw their own assumptions about patriarchy. As such, the following extract from the novel displays how Gay denounced violence against women by saying: "Girl children are not safe in a world where there are men. They need to learn to be strong" (344). The protagonist Mireille taught women how to be invincible and brave during the most agonizing times.

### **3-The Figure of the Powerful Missing Father in *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* in a Marxist Feminist Perspective**

Generally, fathers are considered as shelters where children can feel safe from the dangers of the world. In the following section, we will analyze these powerful figures and try to reveal their impact on the life of their daughters. Furthermore, we will attempt to show how the androcentric societies are being controlled by money value, and how women are belittled and marginalized by the materialistic patriarchy.

The two protagonists of *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* were raised by two powerful and rich fathers. Temple's father in *Sanctuary* was a judge from Jackson who was mostly absent

all along the story. Temple always thought that her father would protect her from danger. In the opening chapter of the novel, the young girl's first expression was "my father's a judge" (Faulkner 30). When Temple left the Letter Club dances with Gowan Stevens, she got insulted by a group of college boys who called her "bitch" (Faulkner 30). The girl felt endangered, thus the only way she could protect herself was by replying "my father's a judge" (Faulkner 30). In the present chapter, this expression will be considered as Temple's defense mechanism. Temple couldn't accept the fact she was in danger. During her stay at the Old Frenchman place, the girl couldn't believe that the world could bear such a dark place. While she was talking to Ruby about the moonshiners, the naïve young woman expressed her deepest thoughts by saying:

"I'm not afraid," Temple said. "Things like that dont happen. Do they? They're just like other people. You're just like other people. With a little baby. And besides, my father's a ju-judge. The gu-governor comes to our house to e-eat- What a cute little bu-ba-a-by," she wailed, lifting the child to her face; "if bad mans hurts Temple, us'll tell the governor's soldiers, won't us?" (Faulkner 56)

Temple believed that her father's notoriety would prevent her from tragedy. She thought that the governor's soldiers would protect her from these criminals. However, the girl was left alone amidst chaotic surroundings. Temple felt abandoned by her father, brothers, and justice. Judge Drake of Jackson was nothing but a ghost that kept haunting her during her captivity. This following extract from the novel shows how Temple was terrified and wished her father was there to protect her:

She drew the box out and drew it before her. Her hand touched the child's face, then she flung her arms around the box, clutching it, staring across it at the pale door and trying to pray. But she could not think of a single designation for the heavenly father, so she began to say "My father's a judge; my father's a judge"

over and over until Goodwin ran lightly into the room. He struck a match and held it overhead and looked down at her until the flame reached his fingers. (Faulkner 51)

Temple felt forsaken at the extent of praying for her father; a man who failed in protecting her. She thought that power and money were the keys to her escape when she proposed money for Ruby. However, in such societies, money and power are merely the absolute source of corruption and misery. The figure of the powerful and missing father is a significant imagery in the novel. To our mind, this imagery represents the capitalist system that oppressed people and failed in protecting them. This system was the one who engendered crime with the problem of class antagonism. The fact that Temple prayed for her father shows how the proletariats were worshiping Capitalism. This system has never kept its promises. These workers worked in miserable conditions because Capitalism exploited and ruined their lives.

This theme is also prominent in the novel *An Untamed State* Mireille's father, Sebastien Duval, was a successful businessman. According to Mireille, her father was a civil engineer who owned several towers in Port-au-Prince. Undoubtedly, Sebastien Duval was among the richest men in Haiti. Nevertheless, his money did not save Mireille from the gang. Sebastien refused to pay the million dollars ransom and preferred leaving his youngest daughter with those criminals. This man believed in the hardworking ethic and for him money should be earned with hardworking. In fact, as Mireille states in the novel, Sebastien was always paying small ransoms in Haiti, which was a way of doing business there. However, this time it was such "a breathtaking amount of money" (Gay 145). These criminals did not deserve this money that cost a lifetime fortune.

Held a prisoner for thirteen days, Mireille felt betrayed by her dearest person on earth. Her father abandoned her and exposed her to extreme danger. After her release, Mireille could

not forgive her father, she had to lie rather than telling the truth. Her father was doomed to live with the burden of his bad decisions. Normally, a father must protect his children at any rate and even if it requires him a huge amount of money. However, Sebastien Duval failed in protecting his daughter because for him money was much more important than Mireille's life.

Accordingly, we can affirm that Mireille was a victim of her society that believed in a system where money is a vital issue. Sebastien sacrificed his daughter who admired and cherished him the most over money. Nowadays, Capitalism and globalization reshaped the world and gave way to modern materialistic society. This latter is often controlled by money value which obsessed people. Certainly, materialistic people would prefer money over their own family, dignity, and safety.

The Marxist feminist definition of materialistic patriarchy aims at describing how class and patriarchy control the means of production at the expense of the most vulnerable ones. In other words, it highlights the fatal injuries caused by the capitalist patriarchy that exploited and sacrificed women to produce and maintain wealth.

During Capitalism's triumphant period the status of women became completely deteriorated. Debra Efroymsen in her report entitled *Women, Work, and Money: Studying the Economic Value of Women's Unpaid Work and Using the Results for Advocacy* (2010) proclaims that in most capitalist societies women are deemed to be worthless creatures. To be more specific, she states that patriarchy perceives women as "a net loss in terms of the money that is needed to feed, clothe, and shelter them" (4). As a matter of fact, she presumes that women's oppression and belittlement might be explained by their non-economic contributions. Similarly, Sebastien Duvall viewed Mireille as "a net loss" (Efroymsen 4) regarding the money that was required to pay the ransom. He preferred losing his daughter rather than his wealth.

Temple Drake and Mireille Duval were abandoned by their materialistic fathers who believed that money was more important than their daughter's life and safety. These men failed in protecting their daughters. Their irresponsibility left these women shattered.

#### **4- The Trauma of Rape and Migration in *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State***

After the outrageous kidnapping, Temple Drake and Mireille Duval were desperately shattered. Those criminals tortured and broke them into pieces. Besides the physical suffering, these two victims were left with severe depression that forced them to leave their motherland.

On the one hand, Popeye transformed Temple Drake into a completely damaged and bewildered creature. During her stay at Mrs. Reba's brothel, the young girl developed a kind of addiction to alcohol. This destructive behavior caused her severe damages, and more specifically hallucinations. In fact, when the attorney Horace Benbow came to the brothel to seek a witness, Temple was in a state of delirium where she imagined herself being a boy, a bride in a coffin, and a bearded man. The author Elisabeth Muhlenfeld in her article entitled "Bewildered Witness: Temple Drake in "Sanctuary", argues that Temple could not deal with the overwhelming reality, the hideous experience of rape in the Old Frenchman place left her in a state of hyper-reality where she couldn't distinguish between the real and unreal (52-53).

In her turn, the author Patricia A. Resick in her article entitled "The Trauma of Rape and the Criminal Justice System", attests that the victims more often behave in an unfamiliar way. Their fear can be manifested through hallucinations or a state of hyper-reality. Moreover, Resick observed that these victims also experience a kind of "depersonalization" (56) in which they feel alienated from their bodies. The author affirms that these manifestations are natural and are considered as a defense mechanism in which the mind manages to control these intense emotions (56).

On the other hand, after her kidnapping, Mireille hated herself and felt overwhelmed with her body. She developed a kind of obsessive-compulsive disorder, in which she could not stop washing her body. In this way, she states what follows:

In the cramped bathroom I stared at the stranger in the mirror. I was taken aback by the weight I had lost. My clothes hung from my body like they belonged to a woman twice my size. The wide streak of silver seemed even brighter. I filled the small metal sink with water and washed my face and my hands. I wanted to wash my entire body again. I was never going to get clean. I tried to count the number of hours between that moment and when I could take a shower in my own bathroom. (Gay 252)

The above-mentioned passage exhibits absolute signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. Mireille endured a horrifying experience that caused her serious damages where she could barely eat or speak. This traumatic event left her motionless and mainly detached from her family. As it was explained by Patricia A. Resick, the initial reactions of rape victims tend to be tough. More often these victims feel “clinically distressed on measures of fear, anxiety, paranoia, depression, confusion, interpersonal sensitivity, self-esteem, and social adjustment” (53). After her release, Mireille needed several therapies to face her society again. Nevertheless, she has never recovered from trauma. As her doctor attests, Mireille will never get better after all the things she endured (Gay 443).

As previously explained in the second chapter, the lack of safety incites people to leave their motherland. In other words, criminality and gang activity force them to seek a safer place. After her release, Mireille had to leave her motherland, she could no longer stay in a place where she couldn't feel home. This following extract from the novel attests how Mireille felt about her native land by saying: “I still love this place but my roots don't reach here, not

anymore. It can never be home again. I hate that he took that from me” (Gay 355). In this case, we can consider migration as the absolute outcome of a traumatic experience.

The theme of migration is also shared in the novel *Sanctuary*. After the trial where Temple testified against Lee Goodwin, her father took her away from that unhealthy environment. As it was stated in the last page of the novel, Temple and her father fled to Paris; where the young woman could finally find a sanctuary in the Luxembourg Gardens.

We can assume that after an upsetting experience women tend to leave their countries seeking a better place where they could feel at home again. Still, no one can escape from misogyny and oppression. These latter are rooted in every specific society.

### **5-An Analysis of the Titles and Setting of *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State***

It is generally known that titles convey more than the story itself. A title can be considered as the very first element that attracts the readers. It usually conveys a theme, context, idea, or message that can be manifested openly or implicitly. As a matter of fact, the following section will analyze the titles of our primary sources and try to relate them to their content and setting.

While reading the title of the novel *Sanctuary*, readers might feel appealed. However, once they start trying to link it with the events of the novel they may feel confused and surprised by this paradoxical title. According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, a sanctuary is a sacred place where people can worship God. In addition to that, we can consider it as a place where people are sheltered from danger. Nevertheless, while reading the upsetting story of Temple Drake, we can assume that Faulkner used this title to mislead his readers. That is to say, we should consider the setting of the novel. Faulkner depicted the most degrading places of Mississippi, and as we already know, Mrs. Reba’s brothel and the Old Frenchman place are all but sacred places. Temple found herself in the most dangerous and devilish places on earth. Certainly, the title *Sanctuary* does not suit the events of the novel. This latter was written during



the era of prohibition, and set in Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi in May/June 1929. The author himself referred to Yoknapatawpha County as his "apocryphal" place (qtd in Oklopčić). The fact of being a fictional place gave Faulkner more freedom in his writings. Yoknapatawpha County was usually characterized by corruption and immorality. Simply, we can consider it as a place where everything was permitted. We may also say that this county was a kind of an outlet for Faulkner.

Besides, it is important to note that Yoknapatawpha's social structure is merely based on patriarchal authority. Women of this place are considered inferior to men, and most importantly occupy limited roles. Therefore, this can be illustrated by the imposed roles of *Sanctuary's* female characters. These latter were reduced to being, a mother, housewife, and prostitute. To proceed with the explanation of the title *Sanctuary*, it is worth mentioning Faulkner's use of animal imagery while describing Temple. The author Joseph R. Urgo in his article entitled "Temple Drake's Truthful Perjury: Rethinking Faulkner's Sanctuary", claims that the word "sanctuary" is an important concept in Faulkner's works. In so doing, he states that before the trial Temple managed to reach a "psychological state of sanctuary" where nothing could bother her anymore (443). To make it simpler, we must refer to Faulkner's last works, such as his novel *The Town* (1957). In this novel, the character Uncle Gavin Stevens sums the meaning of the title *Sanctuary* in this following sentence: "a sanctuary, a rationality of perspective, which animals, humans too, not merely reach but earn by passing through unbearable emotional states like furious rage or furious fear" (Faulkner 27). Similarly, Temple passed through outraging experiences that destroyed her emotional and psychological state. The young girl craved salvation which was found in the most unexpected places. Accordingly, we can relate the title of the novel to Temple's finale state. The protagonist managed to build her sanctuary in the Luxembourg Gardens after enduring the stormiest tempests in the course of the story.

We may explain the title of the novel *An Untamed State* by the different states Mireille went through during her kidnapping. Similarly to Faulkner, Gay uses animal imagery while describing the disastrous conditions of Mireille's kidnapping. To analyze the title, we should first deal with the analyses of the setting. Mireille was held captive in a cage where it was quite hard to breathe. We should note that the gangsters dehumanized her and treated her like an animal. The young woman endured unbearable emotional states that left her enraged or as the title suggests "untamed". The word untamed, as it is explained by *Cambridge Dictionary* means a natural or wild state. Therefore, we may say that these gangsters transformed Mireille into a wild creature. To support this idea, we should refer to the novel; when Mireille was asking her husband to forget about her. In this way, the woman states: "I am not fit to be around other people. I am an animal. Just forget me, Michael" (Gay 269). In the light of the quote, we may assume that the title summarizes the whole essence of the story. Mireille endured the most brutal and barbaric kidnappings. This woman felt forsaken, she sought salvation in the most unexpected places. Feeling helpless and trapped, Mireille surrendered herself to an untamed state.

In the light of the above-mentioned analysis, we can say that the capitalist patriarchy dehumanized women and considered them as being no more than animals. In this concern, Kelsey Brown in her article entitled "A Feminist Analysis of Human and Animal Oppression: Intersectionality among Species" argues that the greedy capitalist American society took profit from the marginalized groups. In a system of "institutionalized oppression", animal and women's oppression can be considered as an interrelated issue. To support her claim, she displays the different ways in which women and animals are subject to similar treatment. In so doing, she compares hunting animals to kidnapping women. In the same way, the author Brian Luke in his book entitled *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals* (2007) went further in comparing hunting to rape culture. In fact, he assumes that the way these men pursue women

is equally critical as hunting animals. Similarly to animals, women are viewed as preys that must be captured and controlled (87). Comparably, this can be explained by Mireille's abductors who considered her as an animal that must be tamed or as in the case of Temple Drake who craved for a sanctuary to hide from her predators.

So, we come to confirm that the thriving business of female abduction and exploitation dehumanized women, took profit from their vulnerability, and essentially generated huge amounts of money. However, it is worth mentioning that women and girls are not "inherently" vulnerable. This oppression can be justified by their economic subordination and gender inequality (Vucci). Therefore, Capitalism as Marx suggested is the origin of the major contemporary problems.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this last chapter, we explored the analytical part of our research. We first analyzed the major characters of *An Untamed State* and *Sanctuary* in the light of the Marxist feminist theory. Then, examined the narrating voice of the two novels by defining the different influences that shaped the authors' point of view. Moreover, we explored the major themes that the two literary works have in common such as rape, female abduction, and exploitation. Meanwhile, we tried to divide this chapter into different sections in which we discussed some crucial points. For instance, we considered migration as the absolute outcome of a traumatic experience and attempted to analyze the figure of the missing father in both of the novel *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State*. In the same concern, we depicted the meaning of the titles and tried to relate them to the settings of the novels. For that, we assumed that the titles of *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* were crucial to the theoretical analysis.

## General Conclusion

This current research examined the affinities between *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* in the light of the Marxist feminist theory. In this respect, it explored the way the materialistic patriarchy deemed women to be mere instruments of production and sexual entertainment. Besides, it aimed at showing how criminality can be one of the main reasons of women's migration.

The first chapter depicted the socio-historical and political background that contributed to the writing of the two novels. In other words, we assumed that the Prohibition Era in America and political instability in Haiti were the basic roots of criminality and female abduction. In addition to the historical background, the authors' beliefs, early childhood, and personal experiences were crucial in the study of the two novels.

The second chapter explored the theoretical framework by making a brief survey of Marxism and feminism as two independent movements. More specifically, we depicted the major principles of Marxism which consist of eradicating Capitalism that exploited people and turned them submissive. Equally to Capitalism, we presumed that patriarchy was among the major oppressing systems that abused and mistreated women. In this way, we introduced the feminist literary theory and its fundamental demands that were conveyed through four different waves. Meanwhile, we explored our conceptual framework by introducing four concepts including female abduction, exploitation, rape, and migration. At last, we displayed the contribution of Marxist feminist scholars by citing the major figures of this movement such as August Bebel, Michèle Barrett, Martha Gimenez, and Luce Irigaray.

The third chapter came to complete the essence of this work by analyzing *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* in the light of the Marxist feminist theory. We first studied the struggle between the feminine and masculine characters by providing a brief physical and psychological

description. Then, we assumed that there was a real problem with the capitalist patriarchy. The oppressing institution objectified women and believed that they were mere instruments that sustained their thriving business. In this respect, we incorporated some selected passages from *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State* that highlight the abduction, exploitation, and rape of the protagonists. Besides, as demonstrated in the analytical part, criminality is the crucial factor that forces women to leave their motherland. That is to say, the overwhelming trauma of rape and the horrific experience of abduction were the main causes of migration. By analyzing the narrator's point of view in *Sanctuary* and *An Untamed State*, we revealed the authors' beliefs and convictions towards patriarchy. Nonetheless, without studying Faulkner's and Gay's personal experiences in the first chapter, we would never have been able to uncover their true intentions. That is to say, the despair of Temple Drake was only a manifestation of Faulkner's hatred of women. Furthermore, Gay's painful experience of rape and feminist beliefs were also reflected in her novel *An Untamed State* through the protagonist Mireille Duval. An important detail that is worth mentioning is Gay's and Faulkner's use of animal imagery in their novels. Through the analysis of the titles, we concluded that women are perceived as preys that must be captured and tamed.

In a nutshell, our research has demonstrated that the materialistic patriarchy abused women and chased them away from their motherland. The political instability in Haiti and the Prohibition Era in America were the starting point of criminal gangs. The latter, dehumanized women through kidnapping, abusing, and exploiting them. Nevertheless, due to time constraints, this work couldn't cover further details. Thus, it will be interesting for future research to compare the novel *Sanctuary* with its sequel *Requiem for a Nun* and attempt to study Temple's characterization in both novels. Concerning the novel *An Untamed State*, we noticed that it would be appealing to examine it from a sociopolitical perspective relying more on diaspora studies.

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### **Abstract in French (Résumé)**

Ce travail de recherche entreprend une lecture féministe marxiste du roman *Sanctuary* de William Faulkner et de *An Untamed State* de Roxane Gay. À la lumière de la théorie littéraire féministe marxiste, cette étude comparative examine les dommages mortels causés par le patriarcat capitaliste. Par conséquent, ce travail analyse les principales origines et les effets du kidnapping et d'exploitation des femmes et affirme également que la migration peut être le résultat absolu du traumatisme du viol. En outre, il révèle l'impact des expériences et des croyances personnelles de Faulkner et Gay sur les romans cités ci-dessus. Plus important encore, ce travail de recherche affirme également comment le patriarcat capitaliste déshumanise les femmes et les considère comme des animaux.

**Mots clés:** Féminisme, marxisme, patriarcat capitaliste, kidnapping des femmes, exploitation, viol, migration.