



EXISTENTIAL STRUGGLES AND EMBODIED FEMALE IDENTITY PORTRAYED IN MIEKO KAWAKAMI NOVEL *BREASTS AND EGGS*

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the existential journeys of female characters in *Breasts and Eggs* by Mieko Kawakami, emphasizing the body as a site of identity formation amid cultural and societal constraints. Using a qualitative analytical approach grounded in existential feminist theory, the research uncovers the inner conflicts experienced by women as they confront issues of bodily autonomy, selfhood, and normative expectations. Through the experiences of Makiko, Natsuko, and Midoriko, the novel illustrates how ingrained cultural standards, reproductive expectations, and the internalization of objectification suppress women's agency. These narratives reflect the broader struggle between self-realization and societal limitation within a patriarchal framework. The study contributes to the discourse on existential feminism in the context of Japanese literature, offering nuanced insights into embodied female resistance and the complex interplay between autonomy, identity, and systemic oppression.

Keywords: *Existential Struggle, Feminism, Bodily Autonomy, Female Identity, Breasts and Eggs*

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, women's bodies are frequently treated as objects molded by cultural expectations and capitalist agendas that define beauty ideals and gender roles. These pressures compel women to conform in order to gain social and economic acceptance. In the context of Japan, such demands manifest in societal norms that urge women to maintain an ideal appearance, marry, and bear children within a specific timeframe. Industries such as cosmetics, plastic surgery, and mass media further perpetuate the commodification of women's bodies, reinforcing the notion that a woman's value is closely linked to her physical appearance. This view remains deeply entrenched in various cultural, social, and economic frameworks (Labong, 2022).

On the cultural side, patriarchal norms emphasize that a woman's worth is synonymous with her physical appearance. This is reflected in company policies that require women to wear high heels and ban glasses as unfeminine. The beauty and cosmetic surgery sectors in Japan, like many parts of the world, profit enormously from women's anxieties about aging, body shape, and attractiveness (Khodaria, 2024). Under patriarchal society, idealized images of femininity are constructed and perpetuated through advertising, entertainment, and corporate messaging (Wan, 2025). These ideals are not neutral, they are designed to generate demand for products and services that promise to help women meet impossible beauty

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standards. The beauty, fashion, fitness, and cosmetic surgery sectors thrive on convincing women that they are not enough as they are. At the same time, the female body becomes a tool, objectified, displayed, and modified for profit in everything from marketing campaigns to entertainment industries (Shalini & Aruna, 2022; Veto Mortini et al., 2023; Jaya et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of existential struggle and the search for self-meaning has become a central theme in various modern popular Japanese literary works, especially those highlighting individual alienation, identity crises, and the relationship between body, soul, and society. For example is *Norwegian Wood* (Murakami, 2019), *The Little House* (Nakajima, 2018) and *Convenience Store Woman* (Murata, 2016) The three works show that existentialism in Japanese literature is not only limited to inner silence but also includes the individual's struggle against social norms that shape body, gender, and the meaning of life. A similar phenomenon is also shown in *Breasts and Eggs* (Kawakami, 2020), where the characters, Natsuko, Midoriko, and Makiko, strive to regain control over their bodies and determine the direction of their lives beyond the patriarchal expectations of Japan. Through an intimate and reflective narrative, Kawakami voices women's anxieties towards the social structure that suppress their existential freedom, particularly concerning the body, motherhood, and the meaning of being a woman.

Makiko's desire for breast augmentation and Natsuko's struggle with the idea of motherhood are deeply entwined with social expectations that see women as either sexualized objects or maternal figures. These roles are not simply cultural, they are economically beneficial to capitalist industries that sell beauty, fertility, and domestic perfection as marketable goals (Fitri & Wahyuni, 2024). Makiko's obsession with breast augmentation, driven not by personal health or comfort but by a deep-seated belief that larger breasts will make her more acceptable and successful, demonstrates how women's bodies are shaped by consumerist demands. The idea that modifying one's body equates to self-improvement is shown to be less about empowerment and more about submission to a capitalist system that thrives

on female insecurity. In this context, cosmetic surgery is not an act of liberation, but a transaction, social value in a marketplace that commodifies femininity (Smith, 2023; Gee & Gee, 2020; Fadilah et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Natsuko expresses a strong desire to be a mother despite feeling unable to have sex, but this is a dilemma that arises from a conscious choice rather than a biological necessity.

This research examines the existential This study investigates the lived experiences of female characters in *Breasts and Eggs* by Mieko Kawakami, emphasizing how the female body becomes a site for identity formation amidst cultural and social constraints. Applying Simone de Beauvoir's existential feminist lens, the research delves into how women navigate meaning, autonomy, and bodily existence within a patriarchal capitalist framework. The study offers both theoretical insight and practical relevance by merging existential feminist thought with contemporary Japanese literature. It sheds light on how narratives such as Kawakami's serve as powerful vehicles for articulating existential conflicts particularly those tied to identity, agency, and corporeality. Through a close reading of Natsuko, Midoriko, and Makiko's internal conflicts and bodily experiences, the research reveals the complex interplay between societal expectations and personal freedom. Ultimately, this study affirms literature's capacity not only to mirror societal realities, but also to provide a transformative space for existential reflection and the articulation of women's subjective experiences in modern society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have explored various themes in Kawakami's work, such as compulsory conformity, asexuality, and the critique of traditional gender roles. Preethi and Bhuvana (2024) examined how Kawakami presents the struggles of her female characters against societal expectations, particularly regarding body image and motherhood. The research focuses on three main characters: Natsuko, Makiko, and Midoriko, each representing different facets of women's experiences in contemporary Japan. Natsuko, as the narrator of the novel, fights with her

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identity as an aspiring writer while reflecting on her asexual identity but wants to have her own children. Midoriko, who struggles with the pressures of femininity and societal norms. Meanwhile Munawar and Chaudhary (2022) analyzed the alienation and the search for authenticity by using capitalism theory that applies in *Breasts and Eggs*.

Lenge et al. (2023) using the beauty myth theory by Naomi Wolf found that beauty standards such physical, mental, and skill, create double pressures, forcing women to remain materially and psychologically poor, exhausted, and isolated. Makiko tries to use her body as an economic asset, but this actually reinforces patriarchal and capitalist structures. A study by Shalini and Aruna (2022) examines the body narrative in *Breasts and Eggs*, particularly through three female characters (Natsuko, Makiko, Midoriko). They emphasize that the body is a site of contestation, a place where women experience trauma due to body shaming, social stigma, and culture. Women's identities are shaped by cultural constructs, but body narratives can also serve as a medium for resistance and self-awareness.

Another study conducted by Nadia Mohammad (2023) using the concept of fractured femininity that is how women's bodies in the novel *Breasts and Eggs* suffer from fragmented identities due to social and cultural pressures. Each character represents resilience: Makiko and Midoriko reject the constraining feminine construct, meanwhile Natsuko struggles to find her own version of herself. This novel critiques the construction of femininity as something socially constructed, not natural. However, these previous studies on *Breasts and Eggs* have widely examined in themes such as body image, gender roles, asexuality, alienation, and the beauty myth, none of the existing study has approached the novel through the lens of existentialist theory.

The definition of existentialism is a philosophical movement that emphasizes freedom, responsibility, and the meaning of human existence as individuals shaped by their choices (Munawar & Chaudhary, 2022). Simone de Beauvoir in her work, *The Second Sex* Marcus (2021) became an important

foundation in combining existentialism with gender analysis, criticizing the social constructs that place women as "the Other" in patriarchal society. Beauvoir developed her thoughts based on Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, particularly the concept of existence precedes essence, which states that humans first exist and then define themselves through actions and choices (Maya, 2023; Silverio, 2019; Aho, 2023).

In *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, human freedom is ambiguous, free but also constrained by social and historical situations (Marcus, 2021). Beauvoir's existentialism builds on Sartre's assertion that existence lead to essence arguing that women are not born but rather become feminine through socialization (Marcus, 2021). Scholars such as Kirkpatrick (2019), also highlight how Beauvoir's philosophy rejects biological determinism, emphasizing instead that women's oppression stems from historical and cultural structures that position them as the Other. This framework is essential for analyzing how female characters in literature negotiate their identities within patriarchal context.

This idea is further explored by Petterson (2020) who applies a phenomenological lens to de Beauvoir's work, explaining that women often experience their bodies as foreign or other because they are constantly viewed through the male gaze. Society teaches women to see themselves as objects to be judged rather than as free, self-defining individuals. This objectification limits their autonomy, as they are pressured to conform to external expectations of beauty, motherhood, and femininity. However, Beauvoir also suggests that the female body can be a source of empowerment if women reclaim their subjectivity. Edward (2023) expands on this by examining Beauvoir's concept of ambiguity, the idea that human existence is neither purely free nor entirely determined. For women, this means that while their bodies may be socially constrained, they are not biologically destined for subjugation. Instead, they can resist oppression by asserting agency over their own physical and existential experiences. This tension between constraint and liberation is crucial for understanding female identity in literature, such as in Mieko Kawakami's *Breasts and Eggs*, where female

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characters navigate societal pressures while seeking bodily autonomy.

A study conducted by Lanyu Bi (2023) also using Beauvoir's Existential Feminist Theory to examine the gender consciousness of the character Eveline. Bi explains that Eveline experiences an awakening of her feminine consciousness emerges due to environmental pressure, but it does not fully succeed, as that consciousness is not strong enough to reject traditional roles that is weak female consciousness. This emphasizes that Beauvoir focuses on how women become aware of their status as subjects through existential conflict, rather than merely accepting social norms. Similar with that, Ward (2019) explains that Beauvoir did not see the body merely as a biological object, but rather as a situation, a real environment that shapes but does not determine individual existence. The body serves as a medium of action that allows women to design meaning and express their existential freedom. A study conducted by Khadafi (2021) in the novel *The Story of an Hour* using a same approach, finds that the character of Louise's freedom emerges from her self-awareness as a subject, despite being constrained by the patriarchal social structure. This demonstrates the consistency of applying Beauvoir's theory in the context of feminist literature.

Although Mieko Kawakami's *Breasts and Eggs* has attracted the attention of several researchers in the context of feminism and social criticism, most studies still focus on themes of the objectification of women's bodies, social pressure regarding gender roles, and criticism of the patriarchal system and Japanese capitalism. These studies tend to focus on women's suffering or structural criticism, but have not yet deeply explored the aspects of individual women's existential struggles in negotiating their bodies and identities as an existential project. Furthermore, Simone de Beauvoir is one of the most influential figures in the study of existential feminism and embodied identity, there has yet to be research that explicitly integrates Beauvoir's framework into an in-depth analysis of the female characters in *Breasts and Eggs*. The concept of the body as a situation proposed by Beauvoir opens up space

to understand the female body not merely as a biological or social object, but as a field of experience and meaning that is consciously and existentially constructed by the female subject herself. Thus, this research occupies an important gap in feminist and existential literary studies by offering a new approach that combines the perspectives of embodied identity and Beauvoir's existentialism to analyze the struggles of identity, freedom in *Breasts and Eggs*.

3. METHODS

This research employs qualitative data. Qualitative research is a methodological approach that seeks to understand human behavior, experiences, and social phenomena through non-numerical data. It focuses on exploring the meanings, perspectives, and contexts of individuals or groups, often using methods such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2020; Tisdell et al., 2025). The data of this research are gathered from the novel as well as any other sources that are relevant to the research.

The primary data are obtained from *Breasts and Eggs* novel, a 339-page novel that originally published in Japanese as *Natsu Monogatari* in 2019 and was translated in English by Sam Bett and David Boyd in 2020, which are analyzed by the use of Simone de Beauvoir Existential Feminism theory. The secondary data are obtained from previous research that still has a relationship with this research, in the form of books, articles, or journals. The data are categorized to answer the research questions set up for this research (Susanto et al., 2023; Anufia, 2019). The research focuses on close textual analysis of the novel, paying particular attention to how female characters negotiate their bodily autonomy, confront societal expectations, and assert their subjectivity in a patriarchal world. The analysis will be guided by de Beauvoir's key concepts idea that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," the notion of woman as the "Other," and the existential tension between freedom and constraint.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight how the novel *Breasts and Eggs* reveals existential struggles rooted in embodied female experiences, where the body becomes a site of tension between cultural expectations and personal freedom. This leads to complex identity negotiations by the female characters under the pressure of social norms. These existential experiences are reflected through: 1) The Body as the Site of Existential Struggles, 2) Freedom, Ambiguity, and the Construction of Female Identity, 3) Cultural and Social Pressures as Existential Boundaries.

The Body as the Site of Existential Struggles

Existential struggle according to Marcus (2021) is the individual's effort, especially women, to overcome their situation of facticity and achieve authentic freedom through conscious, reflective, and creative actions in a world that oppresses or limits their existence. This is the struggle to become a "subject" not an object shaped by patriarchal society, but a human being who freely determines the meaning and direction of their own life. Beauvoir saw that humans, including women, are not born as something, but become something:

“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.”

With this, she emphasizes that identity and existence are not something predetermined, but rather the result of an active process and continuous struggle. However, women have historically been constructed as "the Other" by men, and this limits women's capacity to become full existential subjects. Therefore, the existential struggle of women is to transcend the status of "the Other" and realize their own freedom and autonomy.

According to Marcus (2021), the definition of body site means the body is not merely a biological entity, but rather the primary site of existential struggle in which individuals, especially women, attempt to overcome the situation of truth and achieve authentic freedom through conscious, reflective, and creative action. In a society that

oppresses or limits their existence, the body becomes a battleground to become a subject, not an object formed by patriarchal society, but a human being who freely determines the meaning and direction of her life. Beauvoir explains that women are not born as something fixed, but become through an active process. This statement emphasizes that women's identity and existence are not destiny, but the result of social construction and continuous struggle.

In the novel *Breast and Eggs*, Makiko becomes a symbol of the victim of patriarchal beauty standards that view women's bodies as commodities. This aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's argument that women's bodies are constructed as the male gaze, where women's value is determined by the extent to which they fulfill masculine fantasies and standards. This concept is reinforced by Mulvey (2018), which explains how media and culture position women as "satisfiers of the male visual desire." as Makiko describes the transformation of her breast:

“And don't even get me started on how big they are. Even the doctor said ‘I'm not sure your baby will be able to fit her mouth around these.’ No joke. And this is an expert. Do you know how many thousands of boobs this guy's seen? Then there's the fact that they're flat as pancakes. Or the plastic baggies they put goldfish in at festivals. Know how they're only half full? Like that. They're deflated..” (Kawakami, 2020, p.42)

The above excerpt show Makiko's obsession with the idea of breast augmentation, clearly reflects how she has internalized the male gaze seeing her own body through a patriarchal lens that emphasizes objectification and inadequacy. This idea explains a conflict between transcendence and immanence, where women are taught to see themselves not as independent subjects but as objects for male desire. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir famously writes that a woman is “*not born, but rather becomes*” the other. Makiko's desire to surgery option of her breasts in order to meet masculine ideals of beauty shows how deeply this process can shape a woman's identity. Her harsh descriptions, comparing her breasts to “*deflated*” plastic bags, reveal the alienating

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effect of the male gaze, which splits a woman's identity between how she sees herself and how she imagines others see her. This kind of internalized objectification is what calls a flight from freedom, where a woman gives up her freedom in exchange for acceptance within a system that devalues her. Makiko hopes that changing her body will bring her power or success, but instead it deepens her sense of disconnection from her true self.

In the novel, Makiko is depicted as a hostess worker in a Japanese nightclub. With that profession, Makiko perceives her body as a tool for survival as a direct consequence of a patriarchal system that reduces women's worth to their biological and aesthetic utility. She explicitly critiques this reduction, arguing that patriarchy confines women to a state of "immanence" (passive, static existence) by tying their economic viability to their ability to conform to male-defined standards of beauty and desirability. Therefore, Makiko's obsession with breast augmentation driven by her belief that enhanced physical appeal will secure her livelihood, exemplifies this oppressive cycle. Her predicament shows Beauvoir's assertion that women under patriarchy are often forced to market themselves as objects to access financial stability, thereby perpetuating their own objectification.

Mieko Kawakami amplifies this critique by highlighting the brutal pragmatism of Makiko's choice: her agency is illusory, as her survival depends on complying with a system that denies her existential freedom. This aligns with Beauvoir's broader argument that economic oppression is inseparable from existential oppression for women, as both constrain their ability to transcend means to pursue self-determined projects beyond biological or sexual roles. By framing Makiko's body as both a commodity and a prison, Kawakami exposes the paradox of choice under patriarchal capitalism: what appears as autonomy is often mere adaptation to systemic oppression. Thus, Makiko's story serves as a natural critique of the structures, especially Japanese patriarchal system that Beauvoir stated condemn women to the realm of the flesh while impersonate as neutral economic realities.

Another form of existential struggle also found in the rejection of puberty. It can be understood as a form of existential struggle, especially when puberty is experienced not merely as a biological change, but as the starting point of alienation of body and identity within the patriarchal system. Women from puberty are forced into social roles that transform them from subjects into objects, from agents into the seen. This is a shift from transcendence to immanence, a condition where women's existential freedom is limited by gender norms and male perspectives. Marcus (2021) also states that puberty marks the beginning of women's alienation from their bodies. This means that since puberty, women often feel their bodies are no longer personal but have become objects of external gaze and judgment, especially from men. This can be seen in Midoriko's diary:

"It feels like I'm trapped inside my body. It decides when I get hungry, and when I'll get my period...Life is hard enough with just one body. Why would anyone ever want to make another one? Once you get your period, that means your body can fertilize sperm. And that means you can get pregnant. And then we get more people, thinking and eating and filling up the world. It's overwhelming. I get a little depressed just thinking about it. I'll never do it. I'll never have childer. Ever." (Kawakami, 2020, p.31)

This excerpt shows how Midoriko, a teenage girl, experiences deep anxiety about her bodily changes and refuses to talk to her mother, expressing her feelings only through her diary. She mentions her fear of menstruation, pregnancy, and becoming a "real woman." Midoriko's rejection of puberty is not merely a symptom of adolescence, but a form of rejection of the social constructs that limit her existence as a subject. In this case, the rejection reflects the struggle to maintain autonomy and existential integrity. According to Marcus (2021) the female experience is often shaped by the imposition of meaning from the outside rather than arising from personal freedom and choice. Midoriko's discomfort with the biological and social expectations placed upon her body can be interpreted as resistance to becoming the "Other" as defined by patriarchal structures.

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She senses that entering womanhood is not a neutral transition but one laden with roles, responsibilities, and surveillance that constrain her freedom. Thus, the rejection of puberty in this context is not an escape, but rather can be seen as a form of existential resistance against the social structure that seeks to unilaterally define women's identity. In line with the concept of "flight from freedom", Midoriko has not succumbed to that escape she fights to maintain her freedom in the face of the pressure to become female as defined by patriarchal norms. Her silence becomes a form of existential assertion, a refusal to passively accept the meanings imposed upon her changing body.

Freedom, Ambiguity, and the Construction of Female Identity

Marcus (2021) in *The Second Sex* challenges the notion that femininity is a natural or inevitable condition. Instead, she argues that female identity is imposed through socialization, where women are taught to see themselves as the Other, defined in relation to male subjectivity. This means Beauvoir rejects biological essentialism, the idea that being a woman automatically means being a wife and mother. On the contrary, she argues that women's identities are shaped by social, cultural, and historical processes, not merely by biological functions such as menstruation, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

In *Breasts and Eggs*, Natsuko explicitly rejects the idea of being a biological mother. She is interested in raising her own child, but without engaging in sexual relations or marriage, and even doubts the fundamental value of motherhood itself. Her rejection is not merely personal, but a critique of the reproductive norms imposed on women in patriarchal Japanese and global society. As show in excerpt below:

"These days there were all kind of ways to have a kid without actually having sex. Was that a possibility for me?" (Kawakami, 2020, p. 139)

Natsuko's insistence on having a child on her own terms, Beauvoir's idea by rejecting the equation of femininity with reproductive

function. For her, being a woman does not automatically mean being a mother. Meanwhile the system, Japan's sperm bank policies rejecting unmarried women expose how institutions enforce patriarchal control. Her circumvention of these rules via informal donations mirrors Beauvoir's call to invent new paths when existing structures deny autonomy. Her choice to live alone and question the system that links a woman's value to her ability or desire to become a mother is a concrete example of transcendence, the effort to become a free and independent subject, not the Other as constructed by patriarchal society.

Cultural and Social Pressures as Existential Boundaries

Japanese society imposes rigid expectations on women to conform to traditional roles as mothers, objects of beauty, and submissive figures, norms that fundamentally restrict their ability to exist as being-for-itself, as defined by. Instead, women are systematically constructed through the lens of male desire and social utility, reduced to being-in-itself, static objects defined by patriarchal demands. This cultural conditioning denies women the autonomy to shape their own identities, instead positioning them as secondary to male subjectivity.

Despite the strong structural pressures, liberation is possible through critical consciousness and solidarity among women. Women must refuse to accept the definitions imposed by patriarchal society and actively create their own meaning of existence. This process requires the courage to face the discomfort and risks that come with challenging social norms. However, through education, dialogue, and collective movement, women can transform themselves from the Other into sovereign subjects, individuals who determine their own destiny outside of imposed constraints. Thus, women's existential struggle is not an isolated path, but rather a social movement that requires collective support and action.

In *Breasts and Eggs*, Mieko Kawakami exposes these pressures through the

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lived experiences of her female characters, particularly Midoriko, whose adolescent struggles highlight the oppressive weight of gendered norms. Midoriko wrote in her diary about her friend Jun, who aspires to inherit his family's temple priesthood reveals her dawning awareness of institutionalized misogyny:

“Even when a woman dies, she can't become a Buddha. Because women are supposedly dirty. A long time ago, all these important people wrote about how dirty women are, and why that's bad. So, basically, to become a Buddha, you have to be reborn as a man first.” (Kawakami, 2020, p. 62)

This excerpt shows how religious and cultural doctrines enforce female subjugation. Midoriko also underscores her confrontation with a system that denies women spiritual agency, mirroring Beauvoir's argument that patriarchy relegates women to a state of inherent “otherness.” The Buddhist notion of female impurity, a construct perpetuated by male authorities, exemplifies how ideology naturalizes gender hierarchies, rendering women's exclusion from power invisible and immutable.

Midoriko's silent rebellion by refusal to speak, becomes a metaphor for the suffocating pressure to conform. Her mutism reflects both the impossibility of articulating dissent in a society that equates femininity with docility and her nascent resistance to being defined by male-centric norms. Unlike Makiko, who internalizes patriarchal beauty standards, or Natsuko, who negotiates motherhood on her own terms, Midoriko represents a generation beginning to question the very foundations of these constraints yet she remains trapped in their grip. This aligns with Marcus (2021) assertion that women's existential struggle is doubly oppressive: they must combat both universal absurdity and gendered determinism.

5. CONCLUSION

In *Breasts and Eggs*, the female characters' identity crises are intricately linked to their lived, embodied experiences within patriarchal constraints. The narrative reveals

how the body operates as a central arena where women confront and resist societal norms, often resulting in internal tension and estrangement. Makiko's fixation on cosmetic enhancement, Natsuko's existential dilemma over motherhood, and Midoriko's resistance to the onset of puberty exemplify deeply personal efforts to assert autonomy in a society that persistently defines women through superficial roles and physical appearances.

These depictions align with the existential feminist notion that femininity is not an innate condition but a socially constructed and contested process. The characters' experiences illuminate the ongoing negotiation between individual agency and structural limitations, showing how identity and freedom are forged through both bodily and psychological confrontation. Kawakami's work underscores that female subjectivity is not static but is shaped through a continuous dialectic of resistance, adaptation, and self-reflection within oppressive social frameworks.

The novel ultimately presents the female body as a contested space a vessel of meaning, resistance, and transformation rather than a mere biological given. It demonstrates how women navigate the dual burden of asserting themselves as autonomous beings while being persistently objectified and constrained by cultural narratives. This tension echoes existential feminist concerns, emphasizing that liberation is never absolute but embedded in layered systems of power, tradition, and perception.

Future research could extend this analysis by examining embodied experiences of women in other literary traditions or media, especially across non-Western and intergenerational contexts. Comparative studies involving literature, film, or autobiographical narratives can further enrich our understanding of how different cultural and temporal settings shape women's negotiations with identity, autonomy, and embodiment. Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate sociological, psychological, and philosophical perspectives may offer a more nuanced exploration of how female subjectivity is continuously reconstructed in response to evolving social pressures.

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