



Women's Subversive Strategies Against Patriarchy in The Modern Thriller Stories *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Owen and *Gone Girl* by Flynn

Aida Hanissa¹, Rahayu Puji Haryanti²

¹²Sastra Inggris, Universitas Negeri Semarang

Corresponding E-Mail: rahayu_ph@mail.unnes.ac.id

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Abstract

Using feminist theory based on Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, this article examines how women subvert patriarchy in the contemporary thriller books *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens and *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn. The study uses a qualitative textual analysis to investigate how different types of female resistance are sparked by patriarchal settings in both novels. In *Gone Girl*, Amy Dunne regains control through language and deceit by manipulating the plot and performing idealized femininity. Kya Clark, on the other hand, creates an identity that defies social norms in *Where the Crawdads Sing* by opposing patriarchy emotional fortitude, independence, and a strong bond with nature. These divergent approaches provide nuanced conflicts that subvert conventional notions of submissive women by presenting female characters as imaginative, strong, and proactive creators of their own narratives. By showing how women's resistance in modern thrillers can take distinctive and occasionally radical forms, this study advances gender dynamics within the genre and reshapes how women are portrayed. Finally, by showing the various ways in which female characters challenge and defy patriarchal power, the article shows how these novels broaden feminist literary discourse.

Keywords: *Feminism, Patriarchy, Subversive Strategy, Thriller.*

Introduction

Thriller novels are literary works created with crime or espionage involved in the story (Tanweer, 2015). Crime fiction usually serves as a mirror of societal issues, particularly in how it portrays the realities of crime and its impact on individuals. As of 2025, Venezuela has the highest crime rate in the world at 81.2%, which includes crimes against women (*Crime Rate by Country 2025*, 2025). Sexual

violence occurs every 68 seconds in America, according to RAINN, and 6.54 million women have been sexually assaulted since the age of 16 (Rape, Sexual Assault and Child Sexual Abuse Statistics). In these cases, about women, various cases that are currently worldwide are featured in various literary works. Literary works such as *The Girls* by Emma Cline and *From Hell* by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell have been influenced by these cases (Pinborough, 2018).

While the thriller genre used to be dominated by male roles, it now features more complex and often mentally unstable female roles (Gulia, 2023). Along with the increasing public awareness of gender issues due to social and political movements over the past ten years (Santoniccolo et al., 2023). The high number of crime violence creates a platform for analyzing works like *Gone Girl* and *Where the Crawdads Sing*. Examples such as *Gone Girl* (2012) and *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2018) are two thrillers with strong female leads. *Where the Crawdads Sing*, set in 1952, tells the story of Kya Clark's life in Barkley Cove, which is full of romance, intrigue, and injustice. In contrast, *Gone Girl* uses a dual-perspective narrative that explores the mystery, betrayal, and romance surrounding Amy's kidnapping in Northeast Missouri in the 2010s. Both books are adapted into films and honored with major awards, these books were chosen for research to provide readers with high-quality literature and diverse interpretations.

These novels also reflect growing public awareness surrounding gender issues, showcasing how characters like Kya Clark and Amy Dunne navigate their environments amid societal pressures. A deeper comprehension of how thriller stories are meant to both entertain and challenge social norms is obtained by placing these stories in the context of rising crime rates and changing gender discourses. This helps to further discussions on victimisation and female agency. The popularity of these books further demonstrates their cultural relevance and demonstrates the strong correlation between crime statistics and the creative representation of women's experiences in literature.

The modern thrillers *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens and *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn have been studied by many researchers before, including in studies that highlight aspects of feminism, violence against women, and psychological and ecocritical analysis. The past research on *Where the Crawdads Sing* has largely focused on the relationship between humans and nature, with studies highlighting aspects of ecocriticism and ecofeminism (Asharuddin, 2024; Bredenbeek, 2023; Calafell, 2023; Kävrestad, 2024; Salisbury, 2023). These studies particularly focus on the discrimination and Kya's struggles in relation to her natural environment (Gustaman & Lolowang, 2022; Lailatussyifa, 2021) alongside studies on Kya's psychological development (Swastika, 2021) and linguistic studies in the novel, contributing to a broader understanding of studies of communication and character dynamics (Asif et al., 2024; Maharani & Refnaldi, 2022).

Meanwhile, *Gone Girl* focuses more on the psychological analysis of Amy Dunne's character (Ahmed, 2021; Elfryda et al., 2018), as well as explorations of characters' lying strategies (Merzah & Abbas, 2020), and the representation of women and Amy's radical actions (Seibert Desjarlais, 2018). Furthermore, critiques of the fetishization of female victims through Amy's narrative (Burke, 2018). These previous studies have focused more on the psychological and ecocritical aspects of the novels without thoroughly analyzing how women drive narratives and challenge gender norms in the thriller genre. By offering a comprehensive feminist analysis of how women use narrative strategies to rewrite and challenge patriarchy, this article aims to bridge this gap.

This article analyzes two modern thriller novels, *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl*, through the feminist theory proposed by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. This foundational work argues that feminism functions as a form of literary criticism and intellectual movement aimed at celebrating the voices of marginalized women, challenging patriarchal structures, and facilitating women's self-expression in literature (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979). Through narrative ingenuity and manipulation, the female protagonists in both novels reclaim control over their identities and life stories. This comparison offers a new perspective on the role of women in modern thrillers while exploring fundamental social issues of gender and power.

Gilbert and Gubar's exploration of female characters often depicts subversive strategies against patriarchal roles, which they frame through concepts such as "Angel in the House" and "Madwoman in the Attic." "Angel in the House" symbolizes the traditional ideal of motherhood, embodying obedience and self-sacrifice, meanwhile "Madwoman in the Attic" represents the repressed and rebellious aspects of female identity. Together, these archetypes illuminate women's struggles to assert their narratives within a male-dominated literary tradition. In summary, Gilbert and Gubar's framework highlights women's collective desire to redefine their literary legacy and assert autonomy through creative storytelling, thereby challenging the limitations imposed by patriarchal narratives (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979).

To fully understand the feminist critique embedded in the novels, it is essential to understand the pervasive influence of patriarchy, the social system that limits women both in society and literature. In literal terms, patriarchy itself means "rule of the father," which originally refers to a type of family that is dominated by men and all family members are under male rule (Bhasin, 1993). In the book *Theorising Patriarchy*, patriarchy is explained as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Walby, 1989). Nowadays, the term is commonly used to describe male dominance in society, with an ideology that considers men superior to women. Clearly patriarchy shapes social norms and practices that limit women's roles and freedoms. Not only in real life, patriarchy also limits women's expression and voice in literary narratives,

forcing them to conform to images that have been determined by male norms. Therefore, this article invites readers to understand how female characters in both novels function as critics of social norms that limit women, as well as how their narratives challenge and reconstruct gender perceptions shaped by patriarchal culture, in addition to highlighting the subversive strategies used by women in modern thriller narratives to challenge patriarchy.

Method

This article uses qualitative methods to discover women's subversive strategies to challenge patriarchy in the modern thrillers *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl*. Qualitative research emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of the subjects studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This means exploring how the female characters in both novels challenge the existing patriarchy with their own subversive strategies. This article approach uses feminist theory that refers to the book *The Madwoman in the Attic* by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. The "Angel in the House" and the "Madwoman in the Attic" are two archetypes that appear in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* to represent the socially constructed ideals of womanhood. The "Angel in the House" stands for a romanticized version of womanhood that is defined by purity, selflessness, and submission.

This archetype reflects the social norms that limit women's independence and agency by exhibiting expectations for women to be nurturing, obedient, and fully committed to family and domesticity (Christensen, 2020). On the other hand, the "Madwoman in the Attic" represents the suppressed and rebellious aspects of femininity, which are frequently seen as unreasonable or even harmful. This persona represents those who oppose forced silence and compliance, symbolizing the internal struggles women have against patriarchal limitations (Christensen, 2020).

In addition to pointing out how these contemporary thrillers mirror Gilbert and Gubar's framework, the article aims to advance the conversation on feminism in literature by exposing the ways in which the female characters use their stories to challenge and reshape patriarchal expectations. Crucial textual components such as dialogue, narrative structure, character development, and key scenes that reveal the protagonist's resistance strategies will be the focus of data collection. In this regard, this study will analyze how internal monologues and character interactions—both those that challenge and those that uphold patriarchal norms—function, as well as how subversive strategies are enabled through narrative devices such as unexpected narratives or shifting perspectives.

To identify subversive strategies, the research approach includes systematic close reading, thematic analysis, and classification of important texts. Feedback will also be used to minimize subjective bias, and interpretations will be matched with secondary sources and current feminist literary criticism to ensure validity.

The *Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl*, with their diverse and unique female characters that both represent and challenge traditional gender roles, and their critical acclaim and popular success, stand out as significant works for feminist analysis. Although this article is limited in that it may not fully capture the range of subversive feminist strategies employed in modern thriller novels due to the subjective nature of literary interpretation and the study's focus on only two novels, it nevertheless hopes to enrich the conversation about feminism in literature by offering a comprehensive view of how modern female protagonists subvert and challenge patriarchy through their stories.

Results

The analysis shows that patriarchy, as depicted in *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl*, acts as a trigger for various subversive strategies used by female protagonists to resist oppression. In *Where the Crawdads Sing*, the female protagonist Kya Clark uses subtle forms of rebellion such as isolation and self-reliance, forging an independent identity outside of society's judgment. She rejects the social norms of Barkley Cove by living in isolation and refusing to conform to common expectations of femininity and modesty. This can be seen in Kya's refusal to go back to school, which can be seen in the following quotation.

Kya never went back to school a day in her life. She returned to heron watching and shell collecting, where she reckoned she could learn something. "I can already coo like a dove," she told herself. "And lots better than them. Even with all them fine shoes." (Owens, 2018: 26)

Her connection with nature and her refusal to conform to traditional female roles illustrate a quiet yet powerful resistance to patriarchal control. Kya's resistance is also seen in her pursuit of knowledge and independence. She is self-taught, studying the natural world, and eventually becomes a successful published author. When accused of Chase Andrews' murder, Kya's silence and resilience in the face of public scrutiny illustrate her refusal to be victimized or defined by others. In *Gone Girl*, Amy Elliot Dunne's subversive strategies are characterized by manipulation, psychological warfare, and calculated performances of gender roles.

Amy's rebellion actively capitalizes on the expectations placed on her as a woman. It can be said that Amy utilizes the persona of "The Angel in the House" in her adopted persona of "Cool Girl" in the novel. Amy's awareness of these gender expectations and her deliberate exploitation of them become her tool of subversion. She directs her own disappearance to frame her husband for murder, turning the narrative of the perfect wife into a weapon. This can be seen in the following quotation.

So I may have gone a bit mad. I do know that framing your husband for your murder is beyond the pale of what an average woman might do. But it's so very necessary. Nick must be taught a lesson. He's never been taught a lesson! He glides through life with that charming-Nicky grin, his beloved-child

entitlement, his fibs and shirkings, his shortcomings and selfishness, and no one calls him on anything. I think this experience will make him a better person. Or at least a sorrier one. Fucker. (Flynn, 2012: 274)

Through her actions, Amy exposes the hypocrisy and danger of patriarchal ideology, using society's own scenarios against her. Her methods are extreme and morally ambiguous, but force the characters and readers to confront the destructive power of gender expectations.

Although both novels depict women resisting patriarchal oppression, the nature of their resistance is different. Amy's resistance is aggressive and confrontational, exposing the violence and unreasonableness of gender expectations through extreme actions. Kya's resistance, on the other hand, is characterized by resilience, self-preservation, and a slow assertion of self-power. However, both approaches challenge traditional representations of women in literature: Amy turns "Angel in the House" into "Madwoman in the Attic," while Kya quietly redefines what it means to survive and succeed as a woman in a hostile world.

These layered narratives, with their intense plot twists and psychological complexities, show that women's resistance to patriarchy can be expressed in diverse—and sometimes extreme—ways. Ultimately, both novels position their female protagonists as empowered agents, reshaping the image of women in modern thrillers and expanding the possibilities of female agency in contemporary literature.

Discussion

Patriarchal Conditions in the Novels

The term "patriarchy" refers to a variety of interconnected yet independent structures, including patriarchal modes of production (division of labor in the household), relationships in paid work, the state, violence against men, sexuality, and cultural institutions (e.g. religion, media, education) (Walby, 1989). In Flynn's *Gone Girl* and Owen's *Where the Crawdads Sing*, patriarchy is the primary basis for gender interactions and societal dynamics. Patriarchy is presented in both novels as a force that restricts and represses women.

In *Where the Crawdads Sing*, patriarchy is evident, especially in the experiences of the main character, Kya Clark, as a woman growing up in a disadvantaged, poor and very remote environment in North Carolina in the mid-20th century. From the first chapter of the novel, Kya's father is portrayed as abusive, angry, and often verbally and physically abusive towards his wife and children. This can be seen in the following excerpt from part one.

Pa not there. He had two settings: silence and shouting. So it was just fine when he slept through, or didn't come home at all. But this morning, Ma had been quiet; her smile lost, her eyes red. She'd tied a white scarf pirate style, low across her forehead, but the purple and yellow edges of a bruise

spilled out. Right after breakfast, even before the dishes were washed, Ma had put a few personals in the train case and walked down the road. (Owens, 2018: 5).

The quotation above explains that Kya's mother is described as a victim of domestic violence who finally decides to leave to protect herself. On page eight, it is also explained that her siblings left home one by one as a result of the father's violence and intimidation. This shows how women in Kya's family have no power or space to resist male power. After all her family left and left her with her father, Kya learned to live alone with her violent father as described on page 11. On page 11, it is described how Kya learned to live with her father from her family before they left. She always avoided her father, did not appear in front of him, left the house before he got up, and returned when he was asleep.

After her family left her, Kya stood up for herself in the patriarchal and conservative country. Known as the "Marsh Girl," she is subjected to prejudice and ridicule, mainly because she lives alone without a man to defend her. When Kya tried to go to school, she was embarrassed and eventually gave up. Even as a teenager, she is objectified by the men around her, as can be seen in chapter 17, where it is described how Kya becomes a sex object for men as they compete over who will take her virginity. Men like Chase Andrews also objectify her and take advantage of her flaws and even use physical force when Kya refuses to have sex with him. This is explained on page 247, where Chase tries to force himself on Kya, who has clearly refused. Kya has to fight for her own life in this patriarchal structure of society. Despite the lack of support for women's rights, Kya grew stronger and more independent over time, and her writings on marsh life and the animals in it helped her become a successful writer and scientist.

In *Gone Girl*, patriarchy is depicted as a social framework that defines and controls gender roles with strict cultural expectations, stereotypes, and norms, trapping men and women in complicated and often destructive power dynamics. The narrative critically analyzes how women are forced to conform to the idealized image created by a patriarchal society while showing how women can exploit this system for subversive resistance.

One of the most prominent examples of patriarchy in this book is the idea of the "Cool Girl", as portrayed through the character Amy Dunne. Amy takes issue with the way women are forced to project an image of perfection and pleasure to meet the demands of society and men. One of the demands of men here can be seen on page 117 where Amy complies with her husband Nick's wishes by returning to Missouri and leaving their jobs and lives in New York. What Amy does illustrate how women are forced to be submissive and sacrificial wives for the sake of the man's survival. The idea of the "Cool Girl" also highlights how patriarchy forces women to hide who they really are and live according to oppressive standards, which ultimately leads to dishonesty and tension in gender roles. This can be seen in Amy's monologue section about "Cool Girl" on page 260.

That night at the Brooklyn party, I was playing the girl who was in style, the girl a man like Nick wants: The Cool Girl. Men always say that as *the* defining compliment, don't they? *She's a cool girl*. Being the Cool Girl means I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games, drinks cheap beer, loves threesomes and anal sex, and jams hot dogs and hamburgers into her mouth like she's hosting the world's biggest culinary gang bang while somehow maintaining a size 2, because Cool Girls are above all hot. Hot and understanding. Cool Girls never get angry; they only smile in chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want. *Go ahead, shit on me, I don't mind, I'm the Cool Girl*. (Flynn, 2012: 260)

Gone Girl also shows how patriarchy affects power relationships in marriage, as men and women attempt to control and manipulate each other. Using societal conventions and traditional roles as tools of control and excuses for their actions, the husband and wife characters struggle for dominance in a patriarchal society. By reversing the roles of victim and perpetrator, Amy uses patriarchal institutions and gender stereotypes found in the media to sway public opinion in her own favor. This shows how patriarchy not only limits women, but also allows them to participate in complex and multi-layered resistance, although in a divisive and misleading way.

To put it briefly, *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl* portrays patriarchy as a system in societal structures that oppresses women by way of a web of interconnected institutions. In *Where the Crawdads Sing*, the main character, Kya Clark grows up in a poor and isolated town, she endures cruelty and discrimination before becoming independent with hard labor and education. On the other hand, *Gone Girl* portrays for subversive resistance despite their capacity, women like Amy Dunne are forced to adhere to patriarchal norms in marriage. Together, these two novels shows how patriarchy at the same time limits and enables women to protect themselves from social pressures.

Subversive Strategies of Female Characters in Both Novels

Subversive strategy can also be defined as an effort to overthrow, weaken, or undermine a structure or order. In this article, female protagonist in both novels use subversive strategies to challenge patriarchy. In both novels *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl*, the subversive strategies can be seen differently, showing how the two women in the novels resist, divert, or overturn the oppressive patriarchal power that suppresses them. Both women characters in these novels represent women's subversive strategies as a response to the patriarchal oppression, that not only overturns the existing order but also opens up new possibilities for women to rethink their identities and positions within the society.

In *Where the Crawdads Sing*, the life experience of the main character, Kya Clark shows how women fight oppression. Kya Clark chooses to rely on her intelligence, independence, and closeness to nature to survive and realize her potential free from the limitations of patriarchy, despite of how poor and isolated she was growing up. She was able to create a better life for herself amidst a challenging and judgmental environment through her resilience, independence, intelligence. Through Kya, the book illustrates women's subversive strategies in challenging patriarchy and social isolation. Her survival strategy, relying on her intelligence and emotional strength, directly challenges the patriarchal expectation of women as passive and dependent. This resistance aligns with Gilbert and Gubar's concept of the "Madwoman in the Attic," which symbolizes the repressed and rebellious aspects of the female identity that resist the "Angel in the House" ideal of self-sacrificing, obedient womanhood.

Women were also depicted in *Where the Crawdads Sing* as defying the societal mores that formerly made them reliant on men. As seen by Kya on page 200 of chapter 31, who makes a good living from her book, *The Sea Shells of the Eastern Seaboard*. By breaking free from patriarchal restrictions and being financially independent, Kya demonstrates that women can be creators rather than objects. This accomplishment supports a crucial feminist claim: women can achieve success outside of the limitations imposed by male-dominated societal structures.

Kya's choice to resist Chase's emotional and physical abuse, including an attempted sexual assault, on pages 246-247 in *Where the Crawdads Sing* demonstrates her rejection to be defined or subjugated by patriarchal violence. This act of self-defense and survival speaks to the archetype of the "Madwoman in the Attic," representing the spirit of rebellion that defies submission and silence. In addition to overt conflict, Kya's resistance challenges the idea of women as helpless victims by strategically withdrawing and taking decisive action to defend her autonomy.

In *Gone Girl*, Amy Dunne's character embodies a radical form of female resistance that openly challenges patriarchal dominance and societal expectations of women. Her subversive strategies are not subtle, they represent a deliberate and provocative overturning of traditional gender roles. Amy's resistance can be understood through Gilbert and Gubar's framework, where she simultaneously performs and disrupts the "Angel in the House" archetype, the idealized, self sacrificing woman, and reveals the "Madwoman in the Attic," the repressed, rebellious female identity that refuses submission.

Amy's "Cool Girl" monologue is a pivotal moment that exposes the performative nature of femininity under patriarchy. She articulates the pressure to embody the "Angel in the House" ideal, being gentle, obliging and endlessly accommodating to male desires, while masking her true self. By her "Cool Girl" monologue, it shows how Amy is very much aware of how women are coerced into

self-erasure to fit male fantasies, a dynamic that aligns with Gilbert and Gubar's notion of the "Angel" as a constraining social ideal. However, Amy's subversion lies in her refusal to remain confined by this role. Instead, she weaponizes the "Angel" image by feigning helplessness and victimhood, orchestrating an elaborate scheme to frame her husband, Nick Dunne, for her disappearance. For example, she fabricates a diary that portrays herself as a victim and Nick as an abusive husband, manipulating public perception and law enforcement:

I wrote her very carefully, Diary Amy. She is designed to appeal to the cops, to appeal to the public portions be released. They have to read this diary like it's some sort of Gothic tragedy. A wonderful, good-hearted woman – *Whole life ahead of her, everything going for her*, whatever else they say about women who die – chooses the wrong mate and *pays the ultimate price*. They have to like me. Her. (Flynn, 2012: 278)

When Amy's independence is under danger, her resistance intensifies, leading to her drastic tactic involving her ex-boyfriend Desi Collings. Amy pretends to kidnap Desi after becoming trapped in a risky scenario in order to reclaim control. The chapter "The Night of the Return" (p. 435) describes this brutal act of self-liberation, which highlights the extent to which women will go in order to claim their independence. This episode also challenges the image of feminine passivity and highlights the complexity of female agency in oppressive systems by demonstrating how women can use deliberate violence and manipulation as rebellious tactics.

Gone Girl and *Where the Crawdads Sing* together show female heroines that use a variety of intricate tactics to challenge and undermine patriarchal standards. The survivalist revolt of the "Madwoman in the Attic" archetype against the "Angel in the House" ideal of subservient femininity is reflected in Kya Clark's quiet determination and independence in *Where the Crawdads Sing*. In contrast, a more aggressive kind of subversion that both performs and deconstructs the "Angel" stereotype is dramatised by Amy Dunne's overt manipulation and psychological warfare in *Gone Girl*. The bravery of women in challenging and redefining constrictive social conventions is symbolised by both characters. Their experiences demonstrate that patriarchal resistance is not a single, typical approach, but rather a range of strategies, from modest perseverance to radical disruption. Kya and Amy challenge readers to reevaluate the potential for women's empowerment both within and outside of patriarchal limits by expanding the representation of female agency in modern literature through their unique embodiments of these feminist icons.

The Impact of Subversive Strategies of Female Characters in Both Novels

The subversive strategies that the female characters use in *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl* have been discussed, showing how resistance to male domination affects the social setting as well as the main characters' identities and

agency. In this sub-theme, it will be discussed how these subversive strategies influence the plot of both novels.

In *Where the Crawdads Sing*, Kya, the main character used several subversive strategies that have such a deep and complex impact on the plot and the meaning of women in this novel. Kya, who has lived alone since her childhood in difficult circumstances, struggles to survive and fight against the patriarchy that seeks to oppress and degrade women like her. The impact of these subversive strategies is clear in the plot, especially when Kya faces murder charges for the death of Chase Andrews, as described on page 237, which shows her arrest by the police. The society that had previously excluded and avoided her suddenly judges and criminalizes Kya. However her resilience and intelligence empower her to confront the situation and escape the law. This is the climax of a story that tests Kya's resilience in the face of pressure from society and the law, and shows how marginalized women can take charge of the narrative and erase the stigma that has been attached to them. Thus, Kya uses subversive strategies not only to save herself, but also to fight the patriarchy that oppresses women like her.

The novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* also presents women as powerful agents of change against patriarchy in a new and complex way by combining the elements of mystery and drama. In a general novel, women are usually portrayed as obedient, submissive, and shackled by traditional social norms. In general thriller novels, women are usually portrayed as weak or victimized characters in the story (Mawa, 2021). But in *Where the Crawdads Sing*, women are portrayed as figures who shape the plot and generate the tension. Women in this novel also have the freedom and ability to shape their own lives, not just as victims or objects.

Characters like Kya in *Where the Crawdads Sing* add a new perspective that can enhance the plot and suspense, combined with a complex story with strategies of self-reliance, intelligence and connection to nature. The story in this novel is also infused with social, psychological and physical resistance. These themes can create intense narratives and keep the readers engaged in the pursuit of justice and truth within the story. As a whole, this novel has a significant influence on the development of thriller stories that highlight women's struggles against patriarchy and social stereotypes (Mawa, 2021).

In Flynn's *Gone Girl*, with the main character Amy Dunne, the subversive strategies she used also have a major and complex impact on the narrative and the meaning of women in this novel. Amy, through her manipulation of narrative, intelligence, deception, is able to reverse the power dynamics between herself and her husband, Nick Dunne. Her subversive strategy shows how women can fight patriarchy using language, narrative, and even manipulation in this case.

Gone Girl is a novel that filled with tension and plot twist, revolving around the manipulation and power games mastered by Amy. As Amy's devious plans begin to unfold in the story, the dynamics of the marital relationship between Nick and Amy change drastically, from Nick leading the relationship to Amy controlling

everything within their relationship. This shows women not as the passive victims anymore, but as the active agents who is capable of controlling their own narratives and destinies. With this, *Gone Girl* challenges the stereotype of women in thriller stories, who are often portrayed as weak characters and victims, by depicting Amy as a complex, powerful, and dangerous character.

The novel *Gone Girl* also breaks the stereotype of women as weak, submissive, and limited in their social roles. This proved by showing women who are able to use intelligence, manipulation, and even violence to maintain freedom and power, the novel breaks traditional stereotypes about women. The character, Amy shows that women can also be the main character who drive the conflitv and tension in the story. In this novel, the role of women also emerges as a psychological exploration of women's power, identity and freedom.

Gone Girl also has a layered narrative full of plot twist built that are built through the manipulation of perspectives and information presented to the reader by the female protagonist, creating an intense psychological tension and stimulating curiosity. Amy uses false narratives and role-playing as the victim to blur the line between victim and perpetrator, making the reader constantly question the truth and motives of each character. Pittard notes that psychological thrillers concern themselves more with the prsychological basis for transgression, facilitating a complex interplay of character motivations that enriches the narrative (Pittard, 2012). Therefore, the subversive strategies used by the female character in this novel not only enrich the story but also add psychological depth and moral complexity to the narrative.

The female character in the novel *Gone Girl* brings excitement and dynamics through the manipulative, mysterious, and unpredictable character of Amy. Women are portrayed as being brave enough to fight back, even through some unjustifiable extreme actions, creating captivating tension and making the story even more intriguing. The psychological conflicts and power games mastered by the female protagonist make this novel not only a story about the disappearance of a girl, but also about an intense and dangerous fights against patriarchy. Overall, *Gone Girl* presents narrative tension, character development, and a profound moral message about power, freedom, and female identity in this patriarchal world.

In summary, in the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Gone Girl*, subversive strategies impact the narrative and shape the tension in the novels. Subversive strategies also impact the meaning of women, transforming women from passive figures into strong, complex, powerful, and even dangerous active agents. Both novels show that women's resistance to patriarchy can be manifested in variouos unique and even extreme ways. Although there are some actions, such as the killings committed by the characters in both novels, cannot be justified, these actions add depth and dynamism to the thriller genre by introducing a more complex gender perspective.

Conclusion

The subversive strategies used by female characters in *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owen and *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn can be seen as a response to the patriarchy that oppresses women. In *Where the Crawdads Sing*, Kya Clark, the main character who is isolated and stigmatized, uses her independence and connection with nature to build an identity outside of social norms. Meanwhile, in *Gone Girl*, Amy Dunne challenges patriarchy through narrative manipulation and the exploitation of the idealized image of women, trapping her husband, Nick Dunne, in criminal accusations. Both novels create complex tension and conflict, with Kya challenging the stereotype of the passive woman, while Amy transforms the psychological thriller into a battlefield of gender power dynamics.

The women in both novels are not weak figures but active ones who use subversive strategies to resist and overturn the dominancy of patriarchy. Although their strategies are different, the women in both novels demonstrate that women can resist patriarchy in their own ways. The complexity of the female characters and their ability to control the narrative also make readers more engaged and curious with the stories. With layered stories, tense plot twists, and psychological conflicts, both novels demonstrate that women's resistance to patriarchy can be expressed in diverse and even unjustifiable extreme ways, transforming the image of women in modern literature and positioning them as empowered agents in the fight against patriarchy.

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