

**Kate chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women as  
seen in *the awakening***

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**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

**A. Background**

A literary work cannot be separated from its author as its creator. An author, just like any other men, is an individual who cannot be free from his community. His life is influenced by his culture, religion, idea, and convention of his society. Everything he has seen or experienced usually contributes to his process of creativity. It can be his social life or his views and opinions on something or some events in his circumstances. All of them sometimes deeply impress the author and drive or encourage him to express his view in the form of a literary work.

In this case, the author is the key whether the work is approving the spirit of the age, or it is a rebellion on the society's concept, or may be the work shows its own view and solutions on the problem which is happening. Therefore, the work of art always conveys a crucial issue written by the author.

Although the expression of his view is a combination of realities and fiction, he still cannot ignore the realities from which he begins. The relation among the author, his literary work, and his society is stated clearly by Michel Zeraffa, as cited by Susanti in her thesis "... the novelist analyzes the 'data' of a social life, interprets them, and tries to transmit them in writing." (Zeraffa in Susanti, 1997, pp.1-2)

The mutual relationship between literature and society then becomes a basic convention for an author to create a literary work. Through his work, an author expresses his feelings, thought, intention, and attitude towards his life and his world after undergoing an internalization process. For an author it is obvious that there is something which makes him write. There is no literary work which exists by accident.

The emergence of a literary work is also closely related to the author's intention. Basically, intention is related to the author's aim toward his work. It can be the knowledge background, his view on previous, present event, and even the ones that will happen in the future. However fictively the author creates a literary work, he does have an intention.

Intention is a design or plan in the author's mind. Therefore, the term intention has a close meaning with the author's purpose when he writes a literary work and the reason why he should write. Everything in his life, even the simplest one, can become the background or the reason for a story. Even, some writers treat writing as an expression of their experience of life in the society.

It is said that literary work is a representation of life. As representation of life, it describes the way human beings manage their lives through their

complexities. The significance occurs in how the work can imitate and sharpen the problems in human behavior to emerge the new valuable understanding of life. “...., literature represents ‘life’; and ‘life’ is, in large measure, a social reality”. (Wellek and Warren, 1956, p.94).

Literary works have their function in many ways as a media of expression for human beings in facing their life.

A novel as one of literary forms also presents a documentary picture of life. However, literary works do not exist and are not written only to portray human life. It is commonly known that they are created to express the author’s feelings, imagination, experience, knowledge, and outlook. As Coyle states in Susanti’s thesis:

“... that novel looks at people in a society the other major characteristics of the genre is that a novel tells a story. In fact, a novel tends to tell the same few stories time and time again. Novelists frequently focus on the tension between individuals and the society in which they live, presenting characters who are at odds with that society.” (Coyle in Susanti,1998,p.4).

Women’s affair has become a popular issue in our society nowadays since their changing role in the society gives significant meaning to the patriarchal society which value woman as an inferior gender. Women from long time ago have been oppressed by patriarchal society. The dominant male societies suppress woman’s individuality, inhibits her intelligence and talent and forces her to assume standards of appearance and personality that coincide with the masculine ideal of how a woman should behave and look.

They are surrounded by stereotypes, and social norms which restraint them. In a patriarchal society, where everything is constructed based upon man's view, they are labelled as the opposite of man, as the negation of man, as "the other", as the second sex. While men are physically strong, reasonable, capable to learn, steady, independent, women are said to be weaker than men, fragile, less firm, less steady, dependent and less capable to learn. Arnold Bennet states in his essay *Our Women* that women are inferior to men in intellectual power. (Bennet in Woolf, 1996, p55).

In a patriarchal society there are some characteristics of femininity and masculinity which are attached to each sex. Women for example are expected to be gentle, caring, docile, passive, loving etc, while men are expected to be active, rigorous, etc.

Women are expected to get married, once they get married they are expected to spend their life taking care of their children and husband, to put their children and husband above themselves. That way, women do not have identity other than as mother and wife, they cannot be individual who have their own will and decision.

From the early age woman are differentiated from man. Men are prepared to be the head of the family, to be the "bread winner", while women are prepared to be the homemaker, the housewife. Men have privileges including in the education, in the past time only men who went to school, while women stayed at home. Although some women had education at home by a governess, the education received is different from men's. Women were taught to read, and skills such as cooking, sewing, in short every skill that a woman needed for her

role as a wife. Once a girl becomes a wife, they are inclined to stay home to take care of the children and manage family's daily needs. As a result, they cannot develop themselves because of their limited world. Since they are prepared to be a housewife ever since they were young, women in the traditional society have no more objective rather than get married and hold a family.

In family live, they were expected to be subordinate to their husband's wishes. As Simone de Beauvoir suggests in *The Second Sex*, "...humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being", a world in which man is subject and the absolute - Woman is but "Other" (Beauvoir, 1992, p.16). As Beauvoir latter states " In marrying she becomes his vassal. He is the economic head of the joint enterprise, and hence he represents it in the view of society. She takes his name; she belongs to his religion, his class, his circle; she joins his family, she becomes his 'Half,' (Beauvoir, 1992, p. 451). They were merely an appendage of their husband, one of his possessions, required only to entertain, keep house and raise children. They should place their duty of a housewife as their top priority beyond their other wills.

The consequence of the unfair treatment is the establishment of the unjust image of women in society. In fact, in the nineteenth century there was an ideal of female passionlessness, the belief that woman did not have the same sexual desire as man. "The nineteenth-century ideal of female 'passionlessness'-the belief that women did not have the same sexual desire as men-had advantages as well as disadvantages for women. It reinforced the notion that women were the purer and

more spiritual sex, and thus were morally superior than men “(Showalter, 1992, p. xi).

Kate Chopin is an author who often presents characters that odd according to the society. The main character in her last novel entitled *The Awakening*, who is a married woman with two children suddenly feels that she is not happy with her marriage. She falls in love with another man, she refuses her husband's command, and plans to leave her husband to be with another man. Something that is considered to be odds and unwomanly according to the societal norms and standards at that time in which women were expected to be gentle, caring, docile, passive, loving etc.

*The Awakening* begins as the Pontelliers (Leonce, his wife Edna and their two sons) spend their summer holiday in a resort a Grand Isle. There, Edna befriends with Robert Le Brun the son of the cottage owner. Edna spends most of her time hanging around with Robert. Both of them then fall in love with each other. Realizing his position for loving a married woman, Robert then decides to leave for Mexico where he hopes that he could find a better job and living.

Back in her home in Louisiana, Edna acts strangely she ignores her reception day, she likes to wander about the city and returns home late, she also asks to be left alone and she even rejects to come to her sister's wedding. Leonce is getting worried, he sees a psychiatrist to ask his advice. The psychiatrist asks Leonce to leave Edna alone just as she wishes. When Leonce leaves her on a business journey, Edna moves out from her house to a smaller house and holds a party without even discussing the matter with her husband.

Being away from Robert cannot make Edna forget about Robert, and while waiting for Robert's coming, she has a relationship with Alcee Arobin a man with a bad reputation concerning woman. One day while visiting her friend, she meets Robert incidentally. Since then, Edna hopes that she could see him again. Days go by but still Edna could not see him. One day, once again Edna runs into Robert. This time Robert agrees to visit Edna's house. There, both of them confess the feeling they have for each other. Robert, if it is possible, wants to marry her, but Edna does not seem to be interested in the marriage idea. In the middle of the meeting, Edna's servant interrupting by saying that Madame Ratignolle is in great pain and she wants Edna to come over. Edna agrees and leaves Robert after asking him to wait for her. Returning home, Edna could not find Robert anywhere in the house, instead she finds a piece of paper with Robert's hand writing on it saying "Good by-because I love you, good bye."

Tired of always being someone's possession, Edna once again returns to Grand Isle where she spends her previous summer, she swims far to the sea and drown herself.

Kate Chopin (1850-1904) is known for her depictions of culture in New Orleans, Louisiana, and of women's struggles for freedom. *The Awakening* (1899), the novel is now considered her masterpiece, attracted a storm of negative criticism for its lyrical depiction of a woman's developing independence and sensuality.

Published in 1899, *The Awakening* created a scandal because of its portrayal of a strong, unconventional woman involved in an adulterous affair. It is not hard to imagine why this book was banished for decades not long after its

initial publication in 1899. At that time in history, women did just what they were expected to do. They were expected to be good daughters, good wives, and good mothers. A woman was expected to move from the protection of her father's roof to the protection of her husband's. Chopin's stories often deal with marriage and present an unconventional perspective on the theme. Her characters face choices between society's expectation of them and what they really desire, and they usually decide to follow their own path, not society's. In her fiction, Chopin explores the special problems and dilemmas that women face and is unafraid to suggest that sometimes women want sex, or even independence. All of these themes appear in Kate Chopin's second and final novel, *The Awakening*.

Women author tended not to think of themselves as artist or justify themselves in the language of art until 1870s and after. They conceptualised authorship as a profession rather than a calling. The mid-nineteenth century code of values growing out women' culture, which Mary Ryan calls the empire of the mother.

The empire of the mother', was also sustained by sermons, child-rearing manuals, and sentimental fiction. Women writers advocated motherly influence – 'gentle nurture', 'sweet control', and 'educating power' – as an effective solution to such social problems as alcoholism, crime, slavery, and war (Showalter, 1992, p. xii)

Women wrote not for aesthetic purpose but for moral teaching as explained further by Showalter.

Women motives were moral rather aesthetic whose ambitions were to teach and influence rather than to create. Women's fiction variously described as "literary domesticity", celebrates matriarchal institution. "Their most intense representation of female sexual pleasure was not in terms of heterosexual romance, but rather the holding or suckling of a baby. *The Awakening* broke the ground. Chopin went boldly beyond the work of her precursors in writing about women (Showalter, 1992, p. xiii)

The parallels between the experiences of Edna Pontellier as she breaks away from conventional feminine roles as a mother and wife, and Kate Chopin as she breaks away from conventions of literary domesticity, suggest that Edna's story may be read as parable of Chopin's literary awakening. By the time she published *The Awakening* in 1899, she was a popular and well-established writer. People around the country who were familiar with her work could hardly wait for it to be published. When it was, the subject matter was considered so shocking that the book was widely denounced and banned from bookstores and libraries everywhere. Subsequently, her editors suspended publication of her third collection of stories, *A Vocation and a Voice*. The collection was not published until 1991. Kate Chopin, herself, was surprised at the viciousness of the reviews and the attacks on both *The Awakening* and herself as an author. As a result of the negative criticism and social ostracism that followed *The Awakening*, Chopin produced few additional writings, and over the next half-century her work became obscure.

She stopped writing completely and died a few years later of a stroke. *The Awakening*, however, survives, and gives her an important place in the annals of American literature. It was rediscovered in the 1960s. Today, *The Awakening* is among the five most read American novels in colleges and universities and is considered an early example of American realism.

When reading the novel, the researcher found an interesting fact that Edna behaves in such an uncommon way compares to the way women in common at that time. Therefore, the researcher is interested in making a further research to find out how the relationship is built between the social life of the writer and her

work during the creation process of the novel, her different way of thinking with the social condition at that time, and eventually producing the novel.

### **B. Problem statement**

Based on the explanation above, the researcher formulates problem as follows:

1. What is Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women as seen in *The Awakening*?
2. How does *The Awakening* reflect Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women?

### **C. Scope of Study**

To limit the scope of the study and to avoid the deviation in this thesis, the study of the research focuses on the analysis of Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women mainly through the characters, plot, and theme. The study will involve the author's life and the society where the author lives since a literary work is closely related to the phenomenon developing in the society where its author lives.

#### **D. Objectives of the Research**

Based on the problem statements formulated above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To mention what criticism Kate Chopin expresses on society's expectation toward women seen in *The Awakening*.
2. To explain how *The Awakening* reflects Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women.

#### **E. Benefit of the Research**

1. To give the readers more understanding about *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin.
2. To give the next researcher additional information if she/he wants to conduct a research on the same subject.

#### **F. Research Methodology**

This thesis applies the library research technique because it uses books and other writings that support the subject matter of the research as the material. Also the thesis uses descriptive qualitative method to describe Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women.

##### **1. Data and The Source of Data**

The data in this research is classified into two groups, they are the primary and the secondary data.

The primary data are taken from the novel *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin, published in 1992 by David Champbell's Publisher Ltd, London. It includes words, phrases, and sentences that are related to the subject being analyzed, while the secondary data are taken from other resources, references, and criticism that support the research.

## 2. Technique of Processing Data

First of all, the researcher thoroughly read the novel, observed it to uncover the clue of theme and story its writer intended. Next, the researcher studied the social background where the author belongs to. The last, the social and historical background which plays a great role in the novel creation was analyzed. Eventually, the researcher will find the writer's vision du monde based on three significant points above.

## 3. Approach

This research employs Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structural approach. Genetic structuralism is a theory of literature which views a literary work by referring back to the life of its author and to the life outside of the author as well. Further, the life outside of the author is obviously referred to the cultural group in which the author gets involved in socio-historical relation. That is to say that a literary work is closely related to the phenomenon developing in the society where its author lives. The essence of the approach is to explore the history of literary work's creation process by means of correlating both literary work and its writer and his social background. This technique firstly analyzes the structure of the novel then correlates it with the socio-cultural life condition at that time where the author lives.

### **G. Thesis Organization:**

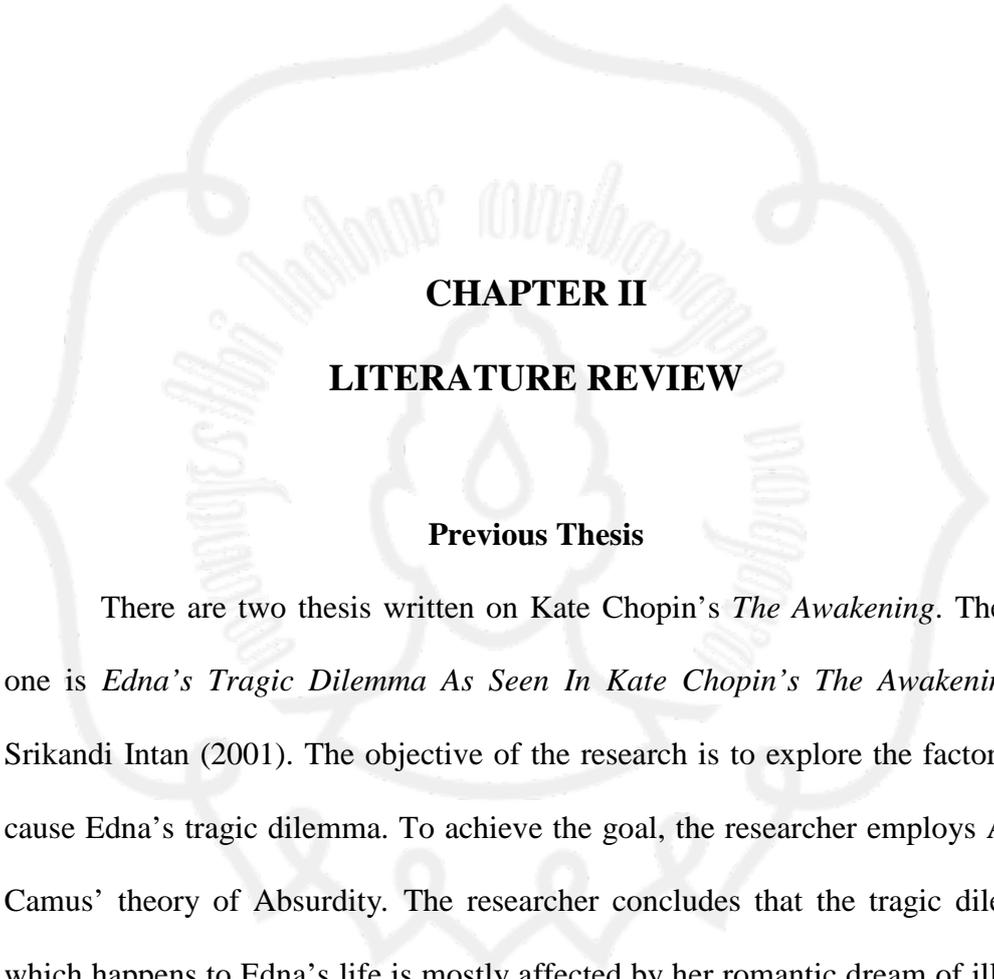
The structure of the thesis is arranged as follows:

Chapter I : Introduction consists of Background, Problem Statements, Scope of Study, Objectives of the study, Benefit of the study, Research Methodology, Thesis Organization

Chapter II : Literature Review: Previous Thesis, Genetic Structuralism, Structure of the novel, Kate Chopin's Biography, American Women Social Condition in 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Chapter III : Analysis of Chopin's criticism using genetic structural approach by analyzing the structure of the novel then correlating it with the socio-cultural life condition at that time where the author lives.

Chapter IV : Conclusion and Suggestion



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Previous Thesis**

There are two thesis written on Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. The first one is *Edna's Tragic Dilemma As Seen In Kate Chopin's The Awakening* by Srikandi Intan (2001). The objective of the research is to explore the factors that cause Edna's tragic dilemma. To achieve the goal, the researcher employs Albert Camus' theory of Absurdity. The researcher concludes that the tragic dilemma which happens to Edna's life is mostly affected by her romantic dream of illusion that makes her unprepared to face the real world.

The second one is *A Strike For Freedom As Reflected In Kate Chopin's The Awakening* by Eva Fatmawati (2001). The objectives of the research are to describe why Edna wants to strike for freedom and how Edna strikes for freedom. To achieve the goal, the researcher employs Gordon Bigelow's Existentialism.

The researcher draws a conclusion that Edna's reason to strike for freedom is connected with the existentialism aspects and her need to get her freedom as it also means to get her self-existence. Her struggle to get freedom takes the form of actions that are also related to existentialism aspects, and her real action to get a complete freedom is by getting herself drawn at the depth of the sea.

## **Kate Chopin's Biography**

### **1 Kate Chopin's Life**

Kate Chopin was born as Katherine O'Flaherty on February 8, 1850, in St. Louis, Missouri. Her father, Thomas O'Flaherty was an Irish immigrant and her mother, Eliza Faris was a Creole (the descendants of French or Spanish, born in Louisiana). In 1855, Kate went to a school for girls the Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis. In November of the same year, her father who was a successful merchant and real estate investor was killed in a train accident. He left behind a family of four generations of women all living in the same house, all of them were widow. Kate Chopin grew up surrounded by smart and independent single women. Kate was very close to her maternal great-grandmother, Madame Victoria Charleville, who first introduced her to the world of storytelling. "She supervised Kate's education and taught her French, music and she told Kate the gossip on St Louis women of the past" ([http://www.gradesaver.com/ClassicNotes/Authors/about\\_kate\\_chopin.html](http://www.gradesaver.com/ClassicNotes/Authors/about_kate_chopin.html)).

It is said that her upbringing by the strong and independent women influenced her as a writer.

There were young aunts and uncles, cousins, and four slaves in the household, but the strongest individuals were the widows. However,

in this happy domestic scene, one begins to get a glimpse of what would ultimately so greatly influence Kate Chopin as a writer – the lack of male role models and means as central figures in her life as she matured. This lack would also prevent her from experiencing what was basically a fundamental social concept of her time – the tradition of submission of women to men in all social spheres, but especially that of marriage (<http://empirezine.com/spotlight/chopin/chopin1.htm>)

At a young age, Kate Chopin had experienced a loss of family members.

When she was eleven, her great grandmother died, and her half-brother George was killed while fighting in the Civil War for the Confederate side. When she was 24 year old, she lost all of her brothers and sisters, so she became the only child.

When she graduated from the Academy of the Sacred Heart (1968) she was known as a brilliant storyteller, an honor student, a youthful cynic, an accomplished pianist and one of the acknowledged belles of St. Louis. As a young girl, she would have been preparing for her expected role of wife and mother. Yet, her upbringing in a household of women and her education by nuns in a school for girls may not have prepared her to completely accept the social limitation of such a role. While she would have been instructed in the basic duties of being both a wife and a mother, and also taught subordination of the self to a higher masculine authority, her primary role models, both at home and at school, were women. Therefore, Kate would have been quite accustomed to seeing women in positions of autonomy and authority. “It is often speculated that this, the inconsistency between training and experience in her life, contributed to the later development of her strong female characters, many of whom are stifled by their marital relationships”(<http://empirezine.com/spotlight/chopin/chopin1.html>).

On June 1870, she married Oscar Chopin, a twenty five year old cotton broker from Louisiana. The couple settled down in New Orleans. Oscar tolerated Kate's unconventional ways, even though his relatives warned him not to.

Perhaps because of his painful memories of his father's abuse of his mother, Oscar was a more indulgent husband than was customary by the rigid and controlling standards of the time. He treated Kate as an intellectual equal and didn't seem to mind that she smoked, drank, and behaved as her own person ([http://occawonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy\\_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html](http://occawonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html))

Chopin herself was a person who committed to personal freedom and defied social convention in a number of ways, including smoking cigarettes and wandering in the city alone. “Her diary records that she met one of the Claflin sisters while on her honeymoon and assure her that she would not fall into the useless degrading life of most married ladies” (Seyersted in Culley, 1976, p.117).

Kate gave birth to five sons and a daughter. When Oscar's business failed in 1879, they moved to his family's plantation in Cloutierville. “It was then that Kate became acquainted with the Creole community that became such an important focus of her writing” (<http://www.angelfire.com/nv/English243/Chopin.htm>).

In 1882, Oscar Chopin died of malaria and left Kate a widow with six children. Kate remained in Cloutierville for a year and a half, managing her husband's store and plantation. There was a rumor that she had an affair with a married plantation owner named Albert Sampite, who would be the prototype for a series of dashing and sensual men in her fiction. After her husband's estate had been settled in early 1884, she returned to St. Louis to live with her mother.

Chopin's mother died on June 28, 1885, leaving Kate and her children with no close relatives. Kate, emotionally burned from the losses in her life, got comfort from a family physician, Frederick Kolbenheyer. He suggested that she should start writing as a way of expressing her anger and disappointment with life.

It was at his prompting that she began to write seriously in 1887. He had been impressed by the vividness and skill of the letters she had written him during her time in Louisiana--a period of her life that had obviously had a great effect on her, since most of her fiction would be drawn from her experiences and observations of those years ([http://www.ocawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy\\_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html](http://www.ocawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html)).

On August 20, 1904, exhausted after visiting the St. Louis World's Fair and complained of a severe headache, she collapsed, and died of a brain hemorrhage on August 22, 1904 at the age of fifty four.

## 2 Literary Career

Kate Chopin wrote many different things in her short career as a writer. Beside short stories and novel, she also wrote poetry, reviews and criticism. She also produced sketches. Her first work was a piano polka written for her daughter called *Lilia's Polka*. She began her writing career in 1889 by publishing her first poem entitled *If It Might Be*, in a Chicago periodical called *America*.

In the same year, Chopin published her first two short stories *Wiser Than a God* and *A Point At Issue*. From the beginning, the subjects of her short stories were unconventional women. In *Wiser Than a God*, the protagonist, Paula Von Stoltz rejected her suitor's offer of marriage because, she said, "it doesn't enter into the purpose of my life." In 1890 she published her first novel *At Fault*. The

book was privately published and paid for by Chopin herself. It received many negative reviews since it involved women alcoholism and affairs. Its settings are St. Louis and the Louisiana bayou. Louisiana's Creole and Cajuns then became the subject of her stories. "For more than a decade, Chopin wrote about the manners, customs, speech, and surroundings of Louisiana's Creole and Cajun residents, which established her reputation as a local-color." (<http://empirezine.com/spotlight/chopin/chopin1.htm>). In the same year, Kate tried to publish another novel entitled *The Young Dr. Grosse*. Unfortunately, the novel was rejected many times by publishers and she finally destroyed the manuscript.

In 1893, Kate Chopin published one of her most famous short stories, *Desiree's Baby*, in *Vogue* magazine. In March 1894 *Bayou Folk*, Chopin's first collection of short stories was published. Her latter works began to be more daring in presenting women's passion and need for independence.

As her later stories, such as *The Story of an Hour* (1897), began to emphasize women's need for independence and capacity for passion, editors became less receptive to her work. In *The Story of an Hour*, a woman, informed of her husband's sudden death, sobs hysterically in public. The moment she finds herself alone, she sings out, "Free at last!" (<http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-chopin-kate.asp>)

In 1897 her second collection of short stories entitled *A Night in Acadie* was published. The stories in *A Night in Acadie* portrayed even more directly than the earlier ones the sensual natures of their female protagonists. Both works (*Bayou Folk* and *A Night at Acadie*) were well received. In 1898 she wrote *The Storm* a story of two lovers' (both of them were married) brief affair during a thunderstorm. " *The Storm* (1898) showed Chopin's interest in passion and infidelity. It is not surprising that she never published this work: in the context of

the time in which it was written, its sexual directness and complete lack of moralizing are nothing less than astonishing”([http://occawonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy\\_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html](http://occawonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html)).

In 1899 she published *The Awakening* which became her masterpiece as well as her last novel. *The Awakening* is a story of a married young woman’s gradual awakening to her own sexual and individual being, and longing for an independence that society of her time would not permit.

It is the fullest and the finest treatment of many of Chopin's recurring themes, among them the dilemma of an individual's conflicting responsibilities to others and to herself, a wife's impatience and frustration with the constraints of marriage (especially in terms of her husband's expectations of her), and a woman's frank acknowledgement and indulgence of her sexual urges ([http://occawonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy\\_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html](http://occawonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/kennedy_awl/chapter6/objectives/deluxe-content.html)).

However, the 1899 American were not ready for either Edna’s daring action or Kate Chopin, who had the boldness to write about a woman’s emotional and sexual needs at a time when neither subject was acknowledged. “It received a storm of negative reviews, condemned as “immoral”, “morbid” and said as “overworked of sexual theme”. (Cristina Ker, <http://empirezine.com/spotlight/Chopin/chopin1.htm>). Beaten by the negative criticism of her work, Chopin stopped writing.

### **Genetic Structuralism**

This research applies Genetic Structural approach by Lucien Goldmann. The essence of the approach is to explore the history of literary work's creation process. An author does not create his work out of nothing. He, just like any other

human being, is a member of society. In a society, there are phenomenon that emerge and there are always responses to the phenomenon. When phenomenon emerges in the society, it creates a certain condition in which the society's members must face, that forces the individual to respond for the solution of the condition. The responses may be different between one member and another. Goldmann states " genetic structuralism sets out from the hypothesis that all human behavior is an attempt to give a meaningful response to a particular situation and tends, therefore, to create a balance between the subject of action and the object on which it bears, the environment" (Goldmann, 1975, p. 156).

Goldman set up a series of categories that relates to one and another that construct his theory: human fact, collective subject, structure, world view, and dialectic method.

Human fact are the responses from collective or individual subject,. It is a construction of an effort to modify a situation in order to suit the subject's aspiration. In other word human facts are the result of human's effort in achieving an equilibrium in their relation with the world around them.

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Collective subject is the subject of the human fact. Social, political, economical revolution and great cultural works are social fact which means that they are the result of the activity of trans-individual or collective subject. As Goldmann states " subjek yang demikianlah yang juga menjadi subjek karya sastra yang besar sebab karya sastra semacam itu merupakan hasil aktivitas yang

objeknya sekaligus alam semesta dan sekelompok manusia” (Goldmann in Faruk, 1994, p. 15). Trans-individual or collective subject is a unity, a collectivity of individuals, which overcome individual, in which individual is only a part of it.

Since a literary work is born from an author who is a member of a society and it is used as a medium to express his response toward the phenomenon that emerge in his society, thus it can be said that a literary work has a social context. Therefore, it is important to comprehend the social group in which the author develops. As stated by Goldmann

When it tries to grasp the work in its cultural (literary, philosophical, artistic) specificity, the study that confines its attention solely or primarily to the author may, in the present state of empirical studies, account, *at best*, for its internal unity and the relation between the whole and its parts; but it cannot establish in a positive way a relation *of the same type* between this work and the man who created it (Goldmann, 1975, p. 157).

Goldmann believed in the homology between the structure of a literary work and the structure of society. “...its basic hypothesis being precisely that the collective character of literary creation derives from the fact that the structures of the world of the work are homogenous with the mental structure of certain social groups or in intelligible with them,....” (Goldmann, 1975, p. 159). Yet, the connection between them is not a direct one. It is mediated by what is called as world view or ideology. Pandangan dunia merupakan istilah yang cocok bagi kompleks menyeluruh dari gagasan-gagasan, aspirasi-aspirasi, dan perasaan-perasaan, yang menghubungkan secara bersama-sama anggota-anggota suatu kelompok sosial tertentu dan yang mempertentangkannya dengan kelompok sosial yang lain. (Goldmann in Faruk, 1994, p. 16). As a collective consciousness, world view is developed as the result of certain social and economical situation faced by the collective subject.

Goldmann states two general conceptions on literary works. First, literary work is an imaginary expression of world view. Second, in his effort to express the world view, the author create a universe of characters, objects and relations in imaginary way. Goldmann has a thematic concept of structure. The center of his attention is the relation between the characters, and between character and the surrounding object.

Goldmann sees a literary work as a product of world view which is structured so that a literary work tends to have a coherent structure. As a coherent structure, a literary work is constructed by smaller elements. To understand a literary work, it can be done by “whole-part” and “comprehension-explanation” concept. Every fact or individual’s idea have its meaning only if the fact or the idea is placed in the bigger structure. In the other hand, the whole structure cannot be understood only by more knowledge on the element that constructs the structure. “Comprehension” means effort to describe the object’s structures which is being studied. Meanwhile, explanation means as effort to combine this description to the bigger structure.

All human behavior is a tendency. That is to say that human behavior is a response of the problem faced by men. According to Goldmann, there are three fundamental characteristics of human actions that are basic to all positive research into literary creation:

1. The tendency towards adapting to the realities of the environment and toward making its existence significant.
2. The tendency towards overall consistency and towards creating structural forms.

3. Its dynamic nature, i.e the tendency towards modifying and developing the structure of which it forms part (Goldmann in Burns, 1973, p. 119).

Furthermore, an author will create a set of certain structures within his work as the attempt to transform the real world into the artificial world existed within his work. This is a part of his effort to do something as a response toward the phenomenon faced by him and other members of the society. In relation with literature, author tends to adapt from the environment a certain condition in his structural form of work of art and modify it in order to reveal his intention. "...its basic hypothesis being precisely that the collective character of literary creation derives from the fact that the structures of the world of the work are homogenous with the mental structures of certain social groups or in intelligible with them,..." (Goldman, 1975, p.159).

Genetic Structuralism firstly analyze the structure of the novel then correlate it with the socio-cultural life condition at that time where the author lives. That way, the genetic or the origin of a literary work can be found, since the writer who creates the work is a member of a particular social group and its specific environment.

### **Structure of the Novel**

#### 1. Plot

Plot in fiction, not simply mean the events recounted in the story but the author's arrangement of those events according to their causal relationship (Kenney, 1966, pp.13-14).

#### 2. Characters

Characters are, in a brief, people in the fiction. E.M Forster divides characters of fiction into "flat" and "round" characters. The flat (simple) character is less the representation of a human personality than the embodiment of a single

attitude or obsession in a character. Forster calls this kind of character flat because we see only one side of him. The round (complex) character is obviously more lifelike than the simple, because in life people are not simply embodiment of simple attitudes. It is called round by Forster because we see all sides of him (Kenney, pp.28-29)

### 3. Setting

Element of fiction which reveals to us the where and when of events we call setting. In other words, the term “setting” refers to the point in time and space at which the events of the plot occur. (Kenney, 1956, p. 38).

### 4. Theme

Theme is the meaning of the story releases; it may be the meaning the story discovers. (Kenney, 1966, p.91). Theme is the ultimate unifying element in fiction. It is in response to the pressures of theme that the author shapes plot and brings character into being, and it is theme, whether consciously stated or not, that provides the writer with his most important principle of selection (Kenney, 1966, p. 100).

## **19<sup>th</sup> Century American Women’s Social Condition**

The nineteenth century was the time when traditional husband-wife relations were glorified. There were description of behaviors and characteristic that women should possess in order to be ideal women. The famous one was what Barbara Welter spoke of as Cult of True Womanhood.

The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtue-piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Put them all together and they spell mother, daughter, sister, wife-woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With

them she was promised happiness and power” (Welter in Gordon, 1973,p.82).

There was segregation between men and women’s sphere. While the world outside home was believed to be men’s sphere, home was believed to be women’s sphere. Along the separation of sphere, there was division of labor, of responsibility between the two sexes. Men were responsible for earning the money, while women were responsible for keeping the home. “That *home* is her appropriate and appointed sphere of action there cannot be a shadow of doubt; for the dictates of nature are plain and imperative on this subject, and the injunctions given in Scripture no less explicit.” (Graves in Weissman and Hymowitz, 1981, p.67).

Eliot as quoted in Gordon states that “The great current of society is created by those thousand little streams, which are pure or impure according to the character of their homes. To purify them, or to keep them pure, is chiefly woman’s work; and if truly done, the current would roll on pure as a mountain stream, to the eternal ocean” (1978, p.206). Jeffrey in Gordon stated “According to this image, a woman’s time was to be spent in making the home a comfortable retreat” (Jeffrey in Gordon, 1978, p.206).

Every woman needed to hold on to the Cult of the true womanhood in order to be respected by her society, otherwise she would be despised, and would be considered as unwomanly.

Implicit in the sphere theory was a kind of bargain-so long as a woman acted the part of piety, purity, submission, and domesticity, she was guaranteed the respect of her society. The bargain, however, contained a threat. If she stepped out of her sphere and sought a place for herself in the world, she was despised as an “unsexed” woman” (Weissman & Hymowitz, 1981, p.67).

Since making money was considered to be men's duty, when men felt that they had done the duty, they left the rest to their wives. "...her husband expects her to assume all authority and management of the home and family. He does not want to be bothered about it. When he makes the money he feels he has done his whole duty, and he leaves the rest to her" (Dix in Culley, 1976, pp.129-130). Beside the domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, etc, the matter of socialized was left to women.

To her, too, he leaves the matter of society. She dominates it, and runs it, and an American married man's social position depends entirely on his wife. They (mother and daughter) must attend to the intricate social machinery, that he admits is a necessity, and is perfectly willing to support with anything but his own presence." (Dix in Culley, 1976, p.130).

Submissiveness means woman is supposed to live in a kind of perpetual childhood, passively responding to the actions and decision of man. "...men were the movers, the doers, the actors. Women were the passive, submissive responders. In *The Ladies Companion* a young wife was quoted approvingly as saying that she did not think woman should "feel and act for herself" (Davis & Woodman, 1984, p. 250). Caroline Gilman as quoted in Woodman stated that "To be perfect wives, women have to realize the three golden threads with which domestic happiness is woven: to repress a harsh answer, to confess a fault and to stop (right or wrong) in the midst of self-defense in gentle submission (Davis & Wodman, 1984, p. 250).

Women were also expected to be unselfish, and to sacrifice herself, to put everything-even herself-before her family, all for the sake of her family, no matter what she felt and should not complain.

From time immemorial, it has been the custom of woman to sacrifice herself whenever she got a chance,.....” “Unselfishness with her has been a cult. She has accounted it unto herself for righteousness to do those things she did not wish to do, and to leave undone those things she was dying to do. A woman thinks she is good when she is uncomfortable. It is a theory of the perfectly unselfish woman that she must bear everything without complaint.” (Dix in Culley, 1976, pp.127-128).

When it came to the children, once again it was assumed to be women’s responsibility. Children’s well being, education and necessity, all were under the care of women.

What is notable in the nineteenth-century marital literature is how little space is devoted to the husband’s role as father. While to some extent this may be a result of the fact that the literature studied was focused more on marriage than on parenthood, it may also indicate that parenthood was seen largely as the mother’s responsibility (Gordon, 1978, p. 208).

In another word, women were considered as the first person to be responsible for the children. “The American father is generally a devoted parents, but he wants his wife to do the managing and disciplining. She is responsible for their mental and physical well-being” (Dix in Culley, 1976, p. 130).

Since men tend to demand and give command, while women were expected to give in to men’s demand and command, women should let themselves to be bent according to their husband’s will.

Women’s whole life is one long lesson in patience and submission. She must always give in. Men feel that they are born to command, to force circumstances to their will. “.....the oppressor is generally of her own household and is blissfully unconscious of being a tyrant. “....we keep giving in, and giving in, to their demands and whims and caprices until some fine day we find out that we have not a vestige of personal liberty left, and are nothing more than bond slaves to the tyrant on our hearth.” (Dix in Culley, 1976, pp.131-132)

Not only to their husband that women should give in, but also to the children.

Chief and foremost among these oppressors are children. In her desire to be a good mother and to do everything possible for her child's welfare the average mother permits herself to be made a martyr before she realizes it. There are plenty of women who never draw a single breath of freedom after their first child is born." (Dix in Culley, 1976, p. 132)

At such time when women's purity was considered to be ideal, women's sexuality was not acknowledged. It is supposed that American woman is pure of heart, mind, and of course body, not engaging in sexual intercourse until marriage and even not enjoying it. Women were thought to be creatures who lacked sexual desire, they were considered as did not feel them. If they had such a desire, it was expressed in a much less indulgent form than in men. "Woman, as is well known, in a natural state...seldom if ever makes any of those advances, which clearly indicate sexual desire and for this reason, that she does not feel them." (Alcott in Weissman & Hymowitz, 1981, p.71).

The industrialization era in 19<sup>th</sup> century brought changes to American ways of life. Women, especially those from the upper class began to attend colleges, enroll professions previously prohibited for them, joined women's organizations. Nevertheless, in spite of the social and political advances, and for the majority of people, home was still considered to be the most appropriate place for women.

They belonged to innumerable women's organizations: social, political, and philanthropic. Lower-class women came together to work long hours for low wages, and what organizing they did was into unions to combat the working conditions in the textile mills and other factories where they employed. Despite the social and political advances, women in the 1890s still encountered disadvantages in almost every aspect of their lives, and a majority of the populace still believed that a woman's most sacred duty was to be "angel in the house (Culley, 1976, pp.117-119).

### CHAPTER III

#### ANALYSIS

This chapter is going to discuss and reveal Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women seen in *The Awakening*. The analysis of *The Awakening* employs the framework of genetic structuralism. It means that the analysis is based on the concept of the correspondence between a literary work and its origin. To find the genetic or the origin of a literary work, firstly the structure of the novel is analyzed, then it is correlated with the socio-cultural life condition at that time where the author lives. Yet, the writing process in this chapter will not mention the structure of the novel technically. It flows in accordance with the flows of the story in the novel.

To answer the problem statements mentioned in the previous chapter, this chapter will be divided into two sub chapters. The first sub chapter will explore society's expectation toward women expressed in *The Awakening*. The second sub chapter will explain how *The Awakening* reflects Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women.

### A. Society's Expectation Toward Women expressed in *The Awakening*

Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is a story that took place in Louisiana, New Orleans, Southern America. The story centered on a woman name Edna Pontellier, a married woman, and a mother of two sons, coming from the upper class society. The story takes place in 19<sup>th</sup> century America, which was the heyday of the cult of true womanhood. There were some ideas of womanhood that women had to follow, these ideas are represented in the magazines' articles and literature. Womanhood was characterized by: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. They must obtain sexual purity, raise the children and perform household chores, and let men took charge and ran their lives. Only by following the convention and norms prescribed by society on womanhood could a woman be considered as a true woman and accepted in the society.

Most of the married women at that time were considered as the possession of their husband, as stated by Neal Wyatt:

Under the Louisiana Code, patterned after the Napoleonic code of France, a woman belonged to her husband. Article 1388 established the absolute control of the male over the family. Middle and upper-class women were still expected to stay at home as idle, decorative symbols of their husband's wealth. Wives were possession, cared for and displayed (<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/katetime.htm>)

At the beginning of the novel, when Leonce, Edna's husband noticed her sunburn after taking a bath in the afternoon at the beach, he got annoyed "What folly! To bathe at such an hour in such heat!" "You are burnt beyond recognition," he added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property, which has suffered some damage" (Chopin, 1992,p. 3). The way Leonce looked at Edna that Chopin described "as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property" indicated that he considered Edna merely as a personal property. The rude way

Leonce scorned his wife shows that it was not her personal discomfort that matters to him, but her appearance, which, for him, look like a valuable possession that suffered some damage, and it seems that he did not like it when his valuable possession suffered some damages. To Leonce the appearance of his wife that was damaged by the sunburn was more important than her personal discomfort that the sunburn might bring.

The Industrial Revolution brought some changes to some aspect of living, one of them was major economic transition. The workplace and the home, which had previously been the same, now began to separate. As the workplace moved outside the home, male and female spheres of activity also separated. While men were assigned to job that enable them to come out from the home and got into the public sphere, women were assigned to the private, or domestic sphere with marriage and family as their jobs that made it impossible for them to get into the public sphere. The home became women's proper sphere. This was the place to which the man returned after enduring the hardness of the outside world. Woman was the comforter and it was here that she created a shelter for her husband. When Leonce returned home from his club late at night, cheerful and talkative, he found Edna already asleep. He talked to her, telling her anecdotes, news and gossips that he gathered during the day at the club and expected her to respond to him. When Edna did not respond to him as he expected her to, Leonce became irritated: "He thought it very discouraging that his wife who was the sole object of his existence, evinced so little interest in things which concerned him, and valued so little his conversation" (Chopin, 1992, p. 9). His behavior shows Leonce's perception of his wife as a devoted listener. The part where Leonce awake his wife who was asleep only to listen to his gossips and anecdotes, something which is not so urgent to be told to someone who is already asleep, shows how selfish Leonce is

since he know that his wife was asleep but still he awake her. His reaction as his wife did not respond to him illustrates how Leonce demand his wife to be a devoted listener, someone who is willing to listen to him, whenever and whatever he said, no matter what.

The husband-wife had a traditional relation, in which the husband became the head of the family, the breadwinner, while the wife became her husband's subordinate who played the role as the primary caretakers of the children. Since making money was considered to be men's duty, when they made the money they felt that they had done their entire duty, and they left the rest to their wives. While men were given the responsibility to earn money, women were given the responsibility to take care of their children's mental and physical well being. Checking on their two sons who were sleeping, Leonce informed Edna that one of the children, Raoul, had a fever and asked her to check on the boy. When Edna said that she was quite sure that Raoul did not seem to have a fever because he gave no sign of sickness until he went to bed, Léonce accused her of neglecting their children:

He approached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself had his hands full with his brokerage business. He could not be in two places at once; making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell them. He talked in a monotonous, insistent way (Chopin, 1992,p. 10).

The quotation above shows that commonly the 19<sup>th</sup> century upper-middle class family had a strict labor division between a husband and a wife. Leonce feels that his duty is to make a living for his family, and he leave the family matters, in this case, their children's well being to Edna. Leonce strongly believes that it is a mother place to look after the children. Since he has already done his duty as a husband and father, now it is Edna's turn to do her duty as a wife.

Leonce himself after informing Edna that one of the children was having a fever, “lit a cigar and went and sat near the open door to smoke it” (Chopin, 1992, p. 10). Leonce’s action above also indicates his belief in women’s role, for instead of checking on his son once again with Edna, he comes out to smoke, and forces Edna to check on their son herself. Leonce himself does not seem to worry about his son, shown by his action after informing his wife on their son’s condition. Edna then checked her son, and soon returned to her bed, refusing to answer her husband. When her husband slept, she thoroughly awake, she went onto the porch, sat there and cried, thinking: “Such experiences as the foregoing were not uncommon in her married life “ (Chopin, 1992, p.11). This shows that it is not the first time Mr. Pontellier reproaches his wife in that rude way, this also reveals that Leonce expects and insists Edna to play the role as the submissive and devoted wife who pays much attention to her husband and children just like any other women.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century America society had a doctrine of the ideal woman, the perfect woman: the loving wife, the caring mother. In her role as a wife and a mother, she was expected to put her family above anything else, even herself. Chopin called them as “mother-woman” and describes them as follows: “They were women who idolized their children, worshipped their husband, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels. (Chopin, 1992, pp.14-15) The idolized women at that time were women who if they had married, idolize their children, worship their husband, and always put their husband and children above anything else, even above themselves. The word “idolized their children and worship their husband”, indicates that women are expected to love their children and husband to an excessive level. They even consider it as an honor, a holly privilege, to sacrifice their own personal needs, expression, and even their individuality to play the role as a ministering angel. The idea and the role of mother-woman required women to

sacrifice themselves. They even took it as an honor and a holly privilege to efface themselves as individual. Since it was expected of them to put aside themselves in serving their children and husband, they did not have any more self-interest and denied their personal needs. Thus, women's individuality were not acknowledged, their identity were solely as a mother and wife. They cannot be individual who had their own will and decision.

To take care of children's need was considered to be a woman's responsibility, a woman was expected to pay much attention to her children's need, at any time, even in the middle of a vacation. Like Madame Ratignolle who made a winter outfit for her children her in the middle of her summer vacation. And she taught Edna as well to make children's winter outfit.

She had possession of the rocker, and she was busily engaged in sewing upon a diminutive pair of night-drawers. She had brought the pattern of the drawers for Mrs. Pontellier to cut out – a marvel of construction, fashioned to enclose a baby's body so effectually that only two small eyes might look out from the garment, like an Eskimo's. They were designed for winter wear, when treacherous drafts came down chimneys and insidious currents of deadly cold found their way through keyholes. (Chopin, 1992, p.16).

While Leonce and the other men could anticipate on Sunday the upcoming lively week on Carondelet Street, Edna and the other women like Madame Ratignolle remain staying on Grand Isle. The men could have the time for themselves in the city, free to do whatever they wish to do, without their family beside them, since they came and stay at the resort on Grand Isle only on weekend. On the contrary, Edna and the other women who stayed in the island were limited to the few activities available for children and the other mothers. They remain performing their duties: watching for their children, managing the children's necessity, just like the ordinary day, they were even expected to anticipate winter's need for their children on their summer vacation like Madame Ratignolle who "busily engaged in sewing upon a diminutive pair of night-drawers".

Since giving a birth is women's destiny, it was expected of them to have the maternity character. Maternity also considered to be the source of a woman's satisfaction, and only through having a child, a woman's life can be said as complete. "It was in maternity that woman fulfills her physiological destiny; it was her "natural calling", since her whole organic structure is adapted for the perpetuation of the species" (De Beauvoir, 1992, p. 509). Hence, a woman in general invest all of their creative and procreative drives to their maternal drive to get pregnant, to deliver baby, to take care of children and to love them. To satisfy her strong maternal instinct, it was assumed that a woman should by all means have children to complete a family. even though women had to risk their life in delivering their children. The character that represents this notion is Adele Ratignolle. "Madame Ratignolle had been married seven years. About every two years she had a baby. At that time she had three babies, and was beginning to think of a fourth one." (Chopin, 1992, p.16). Adele Ratignolle seems to be excited in having children.

A woman was expected to take care of their homes, husbands, and children. They played music, sing, or draw to strengthen the charm of their homes and to reflect well on their husbands, in short a woman was expected to be family oriented. Madame Ratignolle is a piano player and she is said to be a good player " she played very well, keeping excellent waltz time and infusing an expression into the strains which was indeed inspiring." (Chopin, 1992, p. 56). Yet despite the fact that she played very well the reason she kept up her music is not herself. "She was keeping up her music on account of the children, she said, because she and her husband both considered it a means of brightening the home and making

it attractive “(Chopin, 1992, p.46). Madame Ratignolle kept up her music not because she likes it, but because she as well as her husband considers music as a means of brightening and making their home attractive. This thought represents the common believe at that time that to take care and to make a home looks attractive was women’s duty.

Obedience was strongly demanded in woman. It was certain that in whatever situation of life a woman was, from her cradle to her grave, obedience and submission were required of her. Since men were considered to be active, while women were expected to be passive and submissive, men tend to demand and give command, while women were expected to give in to men’s demand and command. One night after swimming in the sea, Edna sat outside in the hammock waiting for her husband, but when Leonce came, she stayed outside. When Leonce got in to the house he thought that Edna will soon follow him, but she was not, he got impatience. ‘You will take cold out here,’ he said irritably. ‘What folly is this? Why don’t you come in?’ (Chopin, 1992, p. 58). Leonce showed how a husband dictated her wife gave order and how once again she expected his wife’s submissiveness.

When she did not come in instantly, he became impatience. “She heard him moving about the room; every sound indicating impatience and irritation. (Chopin, 1992, p.58). Leonce then asked his wife tenderly if she was coming in fsoon, when Edna refused to come in to their cottage, Leonce lost his patience once more. ‘This is more than folly,’ he blurted out. ‘ I can’t permit you to stay out there all night. You must come in the house instantly.’ (Chopin, 1992, P. 60). The words “I can’t permit you to stay out there..” shows how Leonce feels that he

has power over his wife, and it also shows that he treats Edna as a child who always needs to be permitted or to be forbidden in doing something.

Submissiveness required a woman to accept their positions in life willingly and obediently, and she strongly believed that God had appointed them to that special position. One day, Edna and Madame Ratignolle had a chat, and when Edna said that she would give her money, her life but not her self to her children, Madame Ratignolle answered ‘... but a woman who would give her life for her children could do no more than that-your Bible tells you so. I’m sure I couldn’t do more than that. (Chopin, 1992, pp.90-91). The role that women played as a mother also required self sacrifice since she was also expected to give her life for her children. The role as a mother demanded a big sacrifice of woman, since in becoming the ministering angel she is willingly and proudly effacing their feeling, need, wishes and individuality, they were also expected to give her life for her children. It means that women almost have nothing, since everything that they own must be put aside, for they were less important compared to her family.

Included in women’s duties as a wife was socializing. In the hand of his wife, a husband leaves the matter of socializing with their colleagues, which also means keeping the husband’s social position within the society circle. A husband pays for the house in the fashionable neighborhood of her choice, and for her entertainment, but he left all the rest to mother and the girls. They must attend to the intricate social machinery, that the husbands admitted it was a necessity, and were perfectly willing to support with anything but they own presence. According to the local custom, a woman coming from upper middle class should have a “reception day”, once in a week in which a woman is demanded to stay at home receiving social callers. “This had been the programme which Mrs Pontellier had religiously followed since her marriage, six years before.” (Chopin, 1992, p. 95). The narration above depicts that Mrs. Pontellier as a wife of an

upper-middle class piously follows the convention ever since she got married to keep the social position of her husband in the society. This is also reinforces the notion that middle and upper class women are still expected to stay at home as decorative symbols of their husband's wealth.

Women were weak and foolish by nature, and therefore they should not be trusted with authority except for one thing: domestic chores. In a marriage, a man places his domestic comforts in the power of his wife, and resigned all command and management of domestic chores to her. She must supervise the baking, manage her kitchen and the pantry and her servants' discipline. She must endeavor for her house to be the best arranged; her servants the best, and the meal is the best. One night as Leonce and Edna were having dinner, Leonce found that the meals being served were disappointing: "This soup is really impossible; it's strange that woman hasn't learned yet to make a decent soup. (Chopin, 1992, pp.96-97). The fish was burned, the roast in some way did not suite his preference, and he did not like the way the vegetables were served. "It seems to me, he said, 'we spend money enough in this house to procure at least one meal a day which a man could eat and retain his self respect.'" (Chopin, 1992, p. 98). When in reply Edna said that he used to think the cook was a treasure, Leonce said, "Perhaps she was when she first came; but cooks are only human. They need looking after, like any other class of persons that you employ. Suppose I didn't look after the clerks in my office, just let them run things their own way; they'd soon make a nice mess of me and my business.'" (Chopin, 1992, p. 98). Leonce by saying those statements wants to remind Edna that despite they have a cook, it does not mean that the matter of cooking could be hand over entirely to the cook. Nevertheless the cook needs to be supervised to make sure that the cook perform

her duties well and in a satisfactory manner. Most of all, by saying those remark, it seems that Leonce wants to remind Edna that it is Edna's duty as a wife to manage the domestic chore, in this case supervising the cook.

Women's time was better spent to take care of her family. Marriage was the proper sphere for women, in which she could fulfill her duties assigned to them.

Marriage was the proper sphere for women where, according to Rev. Samuel Miller (1808), she could fulfill her divinely ordained mission: How interesting and important are the duties devolved on females as WIVES...the counsellor and friend of the husband; who makes it her daily study to lighten his cares, to soothe his sorrows, and augment his joys; who, like a guardian angel, watches over his interests, warns him against dangers, comforts him under trials; and by her pious, assiduous, and attractive deportment, constantly endeavors to render him more virtuous, more useful, more honorable, and more happy ([www.connerprairie.org/historyonline/womrole.html](http://www.connerprairie.org/historyonline/womrole.html)).

When Edna spent most of her time to paint, Leonce became angry. 'It seems to me the utmost folly for a woman at the head of a household, and the mother of the children, to spend in an atelier days which would be better employed contriving for the comfort of her family.' (Chopin, 1992, p.108) The line above shows that Edna as a woman who is expected to assume the role as the caretaker of a household must give emphasis to her family, to focus on her family, to give up things that she wants to do over her family. She has to watch her family's welfare, to see if they are content. To Leonce, it is something foolish for a woman as a mother of the children to spend her time painting. And for Leonce, the time spent by Edna on painting is better spent for taking care of her family, to manage their welfare. The passage above strengthens the notion that marriage and family becomes a woman's job.

Women were also expected to be unselfish, and to sacrifice herself, to put everything before her family no matter what she felt and should not complain. “Unselfishness with her has been a cult. She has accounted it unto herself for righteousness to do those things she did not wish to do, and to leave undone those things she was dying to do.” (Dix in Culley, 1976, pp.127-128). When Edna insisted staying on painting by saying that she felt like painting, Leonce answered to her irritably “Then in God’s name paint! ”. (Chopin, 1992, p. 108). Leonce’s answer shows that he allows Edna to paint not because he really allows and could understand her wish to do something that she likes, but it is more because he gets impatient and he does not want to argue with her any longer. Furthermore, Leonce said: “But don’t let the family go to the devil”. (Chopin, 1992, p. 108). Leonce’s statement above shows that however he still wants Edna to put her family first above anything else, to use her time to manage her family welfare.

The existence of marriage as the union between man and woman demanded love, fidelity and sacrifice from both parties. In the reality, however, it was expected that the woman as a wife could totally give complete love, fidelity and sacrifice. It can be said that woman should be more devoted to her husband than a man is devoted to his wife. One evening as Dr. Mandelet having dinner at the Pontelliers he told a story of a woman who looked for another love, but in the end, she returned to her husband. “He told the old, ever new and curious story of the waning of a woman’s love, seeking strange, new channels, only to return to its legitimate source after days of fierce unrest. (Chopin, 1992, p.133). The story that is told by Dr. Mandelet about a woman, who after seeking an extra marital love,

finally return to her husband, reveals the message of fidelity that is expected of any woman at that time.

Besides submissiveness, obedience, maternity, domesticity and fidelity, affectionate was one characteristic expected of a woman. When Edna refused to go to her sister's wedding, "The Colonel reproached his daughter for her lack of filial kindness and respect, her want of sisterly affection and womanly consideration." (Chopin, 1992, p.135). The passage above shows that Edna is expected to have sisterly affection and kindness.

#### **B. The Awakening as A Reflection of Kate Chopin's Criticism on Society's Expectation Toward Women**

Besides writing, to support her family after the death of her husband, Chopin did some translation work. The author whose works she translated as well as admired was a French realist Guy de Maupassant. It was said that Maupassant's work had influenced her. "...she translated into English sexually suggestive stories by French author Guy de Maupassant, whose work she admired. This experience may have influenced her to write controversial texts of her own such as *The Awakening* and *The Storm* (1898)." (Charlotte Rich, [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa4074/is\\_200304/ai\\_n9196845/pg\\_6](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4074/is_200304/ai_n9196845/pg_6)). Charlotte Rich further states that "Many of the short stories by de Maupassant that she translated into English contain topics or themes she was to return to with great effect in *The Awakening*; marital unhappiness, adultery, isolation, suicide, and sexuality" (Charlotte Rich, [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa4074/is\\_200304/ai\\_n9196845/pg\\_6](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4074/is_200304/ai_n9196845/pg_6)). Showalter stated "what impressed her

most about Maupassant was that he had escaped from tradition and authority...had entered into himself and looked out upon life through this own being and with his own eyes.' (Showalter in *The Awakening*, 1992, p. xi). Furthermore, Chopin herself admitted Maupassant's influence upon her. "In particular, she associated her own literary and psychological awakening with Maupassant, 'Here was life, not fiction,' she wrote of his influence on her; 'for where the plots, the old fashioned mechanism, and stage trapping that in a vague, unthinking way I had fancied were essential to the art of story making.' (Showalter in *The Awakening*, 1992, pp. xvii-xviii). In the beginning of her career, not only Chopin took as her models the local colorists but also she tried to follow the convention of literary success, only to find that it leads to imagination stagnation. "In the early stages of her career, Chopin had tried to follow the literary advice and example of others and had learned that such dutiful efforts led only to imaginative stagnation" (Showalter in *The Awakening*, 1992, p. xi).

While in the beginning of her career Chopin followed the tradition, convention, and formulas of literary success, when she wrote *The Awakening*, she "had come to believe that the true artist was one who defied tradition, who rejected both the 'convenances' of respectable morality and the conventions and formulas of literary success. (Showalter in *The Awakening*, 1992, p. xi). Thus it can be said that Edna's awakening is parallel to Chopin's literary awakening. "The parallel between the experiences of Edna Pontellier, as she breaks away from the conventional feminine roles of wife and mother, and Kate Chopin, as she breaks away from conventions of literary domesticity, suggest that Edna's story

may also be read as a parable of Chopin's literary awakening. (Showalter in Chopin, 1992, 1992, pp. x-xi)

The main character of *The Awakening* is Edna Pontellier a charming woman of 27 and a mother of 2 children. The Pontelliers lived in New Orleans, Louisiana, in which the majority of people who lived there were Creoles. Leonce Pontellier, Edna's husband came from Iberville and he was a Creole, while Edna came from Kentucky and she was not a Creole. In Grand Isle, where the Pontelliers spent their summer vacation, there were only Creoles there. Because of the different background, Edna felt like a stranger among the Creole society, as Chopin illustrates "Mrs. Pontellier, though she had married a Creole, was not thoroughly at home in the society of Creole; never before had she been thrown so intimately among them" (Chopin, 1992, p. 17). One thing that differentiated Edna from her Creoles companion was their freedom of speech "A characteristic which distinguished them and which impressed Mrs Pontellier most forcibly was their entire absence of prudery. "(Chopin, 1992, p. 17). The Creoles as stated by Larzer Ziff had "frankness of speech on sexual matters, a mature ease among men, and a frank and unguilty pleasure in sensual indulgence" (Ziff in Culley, 1976, p. 175). The Creoles' freedom of speech shock her and embarrass her "Never would Edna Pontellier forget the shock with which she heard Madame Ratignolle relating to old Monsieur Farival the harrowing story of one of her *accouchements*, withholding no intimate detail. She was growing accustomed to like shocks, but she could not keep the mounting color back from her cheeks" (Chopin, 1992, pp. 17-18). It shows that Edna was not a woman who was accustomed to freedom of speech, she believed that certain things were improper to be expressed to others freely. There was a book that passed around the cottage (the book is presumably a book that contains sexual matters), when it was Edna's turn to read it she read the book in privacy, although the others did otherwise. "She felt moved to read the book in secret and solitude, though none of the others had done so-to hide it from view at the sound of approaching footsteps. It was openly criticised and freely discussed at table"(Chopin, 1992, p. 18). Edna's choice to read the book in private

indicates that Edna was a woman with a sense of prudery. At that time a woman should avoid reading and mentioning any material containing sexual terms. “Just as the clothing they wore restrained women’s bodies, so did prudish ideas about language restrain conversation. Nineteenth –century Americans had a mania for avoiding even the most oblique references to sex and sexuality” (Weissman, 1981, p 70). This shows that Edna was a woman who followed the convention.

Edna was a reserved person as stated as follows “she was not accustomed to an outward and spoken expression of affection, either in herself or in others” (Chopin, 1992, p. 33). Edna was a rebellious woman. Her first sign of rebellion was her decision to marry Leonce despite her family’s disapproval. Her father and her oldest sister did not approve her marriage to Leonce since Leonce was a Catholic, while Edna’s family was Presbyterian. “.....add to this the violent opposition of her father and her sister Margaret to her marriage with a Catholic” (Chopin, 1992, p. 35).

Edna had married for 6 years and had 2 sons. Her manner toward her children was opposite to other women’s. While the other women loved and adored their children, Edna “was fond of her children in an uneven, impulsive way. She would sometimes gather them passionately to her heart; she would sometimes forget them” (Chopin, 1992, p. 36). Edna was said to be “fond of ” rather than “love” her children. Edna’s feeling to her children is at different level compared to the other women’s feeling toward their children. She did not think of the children all the time, since she sometimes gathered them to her heart. She would sometimes forget them.

The ideal picture of a woman at that time was a woman who played role as the ministering angel for her children. Kate Chopin called that kind of a woman as mother-woman, “they were women who idolized their children, worshipped their husband, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels” (Chopin, 1992, pp. 14-15). At Grand Isle that summer there were many mother women who “fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood” (Chopin, 1992, p. 14). Edna was

not a mother woman, because she did not flutter about her own children, did not protect them from any harm. She rather had the nanny to watch over her children than watch them herself. Edna's inattention toward her children could be seen from her children's independence act "If one of the little Pontellier boys took a tumble whilst at play, he was not apt to rush crying to his mother's arms for comfort; he would more likely pick himself up, wipe the water out of his eyes and the sand out of his mouth, and go on playing" (Chopin, 1992, p. 14). If Edna were an attentive and protective mother, her children would have run to her for comfort whenever they got hurt. What Edna's children did when they got hurt indicates that Edna was not an attentive and protective mother. While the other children, whenever they fell would rush crying to their mother for a comfort, and their mother would give them some comfort, the Pontellier children would handle the same situation in their own. Edna was not a mother woman for she did not idolize her children. Chopin strengthens the notion that Edna is not a mother woman by directly saying, "In short, Mrs Pontellier was not a mother woman"(Chopin, 1992, p. 14).

Not only Edna was inattentive toward her children, she seemed to see her children as a burden. The previous year, Edna's children spent part of the summer vacation in their grandmother's. Being away from her children, Edna did not miss them greatly. She only missed them occasionally. In fact she was relieved by the absence of her children. "Their absence was a sort of relief, though she did not admit this, even to herself"(Chopin, 1992, p. 36). While the other women would miss their children, and probably would not stand to have their children being away from them, Edna felt the opposite. The other women may be worrying their children's welfare and happiness while they were being away, Edna in the contrary felt confident that her children's welfare and happiness were secured. Her children's absence to Edna means that she was free of responsibility. "It seemed to free her of a responsibility which she had blindly assumed and for which Fate had not fitted her" "(Chopin, 1992, p. 36). To Edna her children mean responsibility that she assumed blindly, involuntarily, because at her time, it was assume that to satisfy her maternal

instinct, a woman should by all means have children to complete the family. It also means that having children and taking care of them was not something that she really wants to, but because it was what was expected of her. She even felt that maternal duties did not fit her. Her children to her mean nothing beyond responsibility. So, when her children left, Edna was relieved because she did not have to perform her duties as a mother.

Edna even told her friend Adele Ratignolle once that she would never sacrifice herself for her children, or for any one. "I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself." (Chopin, 1992, p.90). At that time women would wholeheartedly give their life and themselves to their children, to erase themselves as individual because they believed that it was expected of them, and they even considered it as a holy privilege. Yet, Edna thought otherwise. She dared to think and declare that she would never sacrifice herself for her children and give herself to her children or anyone. Edna's idea of not sacrificing and giving herself made another distinction between Edna and the other women.

There is a female character that is contradictory to Edna. She represents the ideal and perfect mother-woman. Her name is Adele Ratignolle. Chopin describes her as follows:

".....; one of them was the embodiment of every womanly grace and charm. If her husband did not adore her, he was a brute, deserving of death by slow torture. Her name was Adele Ratignolle. There are no words to describe her save the old ones that have served so often to picture the bygone heroine of romance and the fair lady of our dreams. There was nothing subtle or hidden about her charms; her beauty was all there, flaming and apparent: the spun gold hair that comb nor confining pin could restrain; the blue eyes that were like nothing but sapphires; two lips that pouted, that were so red one could only think of cherries or some other delicious crimson fruit in looking at them. She was growing a little stout, but it did not seem to detract an iota from the grace of every step, pose, gesture. One would not have wanted her white neck a mite less full or her beautiful arms more slender. Never were hands more exquisite than hers, and it was a joy to look at them when she threaded her needle

or adjusted her golden thimble to her taper middle finger as she sewed away on the little night-drawers or fashioned a bodice or a bib” (Chopin, 1992, p. 15).

Adele is one of the mother women who prevailed in Grand Isle. From the way Chopin described Adele, there is a myth like quality in her. Adele appeared like “the bygone heroine of romance and the fair lady of our dreams”, a person who does not really exist or only exists in a dream or ancient romance. Adele is said as delicious in her role as mother woman. Yet it seems that in the way she describes Adele, Chopin wants to say that a perfect and ideal mother-woman like Adele does not really exist, and that such a perfect mother-woman is unreal person.

Adele loved her children dearly and vice versa. Adele’s children welcome her enthusiastically “her little ones ran to meet her. Two of them clung about her white skirts, the third she took from its nurse and with a thousand endearments bore it along in her own fond, encircling arms. Though, as everybody well knew, the doctor had forbidden her to lift so much as a pin” (Chopin, 1992, p. 23). It also indicates that Adele had an intimate relationship with her children. In one occasion, when Edna wanted to have a little talk to her children, they were reluctant. “She sought to detain them for a little talk and some pleasantries. But they were greatly in earnest. They had only come to investigate the contents of the bonbon box. They accepted without murmuring what she chose to give them, ...and then away they went”(Chopin, 1992, p. 22). While Adele’s children were very enthusiasts in seeing her approaching, Edna’s children came to her only for the bonbons. This indicates that Edna’s relationship with her children was not an intimate one.

Adele's main concern was her children and she was also mindful of the future's need of her children. During the summer vacation, she was often seen busy sewing winter garment for her children. "She had possession of the rocker, and she was busily engaged in sewing upon a diminutive pair of night-drawers." (Chopin, 1992, p. 16).

One afternoon, Adele took her sewing while visiting Edna. She also brought the pattern of winter night garment for Mrs Pontellier to cut out. But, unlike her friend Adele, Edna was not concern about her children's need that much as stated as follows: " Mrs Pontellier's mind was quite at rest concerning the present material needs of her children, and she could not see the use of anticipating and making winter night garments the subject of her summer meditations" (Chopin, 1992, p. 16). Edna did not want to think about her children's present material need, and she did not even know why she should anticipate winter need in the middle of a summer vacation. The subject of her summer meditation was clearly not her children. When finally Edna cut the pattern, it was because she did not want to appear uninterested, nor because she was concern about her children's need and thought that it is necessary to anticipate winter needs. "But she did not want to appear unamiabile and uninterested, so she had brought forth newspapers, which she spread upon the floor of the gallery, and under Madame Ratignolle's directions she had cut a pattern of the impervious garment" (Chopin, 1992, p. 6).

Like any other women, Adele enjoyed doing domestic chores. Besides often seen sewing, she liked to take her sewing material everywhere she went, one day when Edna asked Adele to take walk to the beach with her, she begged Edna

to be allowed to bring her needlework. On the other hand, Edna liked to paint. On her summer vacation she brought her sketching material which she sometimes dabbled with in an unprofessional way. "She liked the dabbling. She felt in it satisfaction of a kind which no other employment afforded her"(Chopin, 1992, p. 21). It is said that Edna enjoyed the dabbling, and that she got satisfaction that she could not get from other employment. As a woman, Edna's employment was domestic chore, but it is said that she could not get satisfaction from other employment, this means that domestic chore could not satisfy her. While the other women like Adele enjoyed and found satisfaction in performing domestic chores, Edna did not enjoy nor found satisfaction in performing domestic chores. Instead, she liked and got satisfaction in painting, which was definitely not domestic chore.

Edna was married to Leonce Pontellier who is 12 years older. Leonce was a successful businessman, the Pontelliers' luxurious and beautiful house situated on a well-known street represented his wealth.

The Pontelliers possessed a very charming home on Esplanada Street in New Orleans. It was a large, double cottage, with a broad front veranda, whose round, fluted columns supported the sloping roof. The house was painted a dazzling white; the outside shutters, or jalousies, were green. In the yard, which was kept scrupulously neat, were flowers and plants of every description which flourishes in South Louisiana. Within doors the appointments were perfect after the conventional type (Chopin, 1992, p. 94).

Leonce himself was a man who had a great taste and he liked to spend his money on the luxurious and tasteful items that decorate his house,: "There were paintings, selected with judgement and discrimination, upon the walls. The cut glass, the silver, the heavy damask which daily appeared upon the table were the envy of many women whose husbands were less generous than Mr Pontellier" (Chopin, 1992, p. 94).

He also loved and valued his possession greatly. He took really good care of his possession as shown by his habit

Mr Pontellier was very fond of walking about his house examining its various appointments and details, to see that nothing was amiss. He greatly valued his possessions, chiefly because they were his, and derived genuine pleasure from contemplating a painting, a statuette, a rare lace curtain-no matter what- after he had bought it and placed it among his household gods (Chopin, 1992, p. 94).

From the outside, Edna seemed to have a happy and satisfying marriage. She had a rich, generous husband. But apart from being a generous husband, Leonce saw Edna merely as one of his valuable personal property. There is a parallelism in the way Leonce treat his personal belonging and his wife. At the beginning of the story, when Leonce noticed Edna's sunburn, he scolded his wife while looking at her as one looked at a valuable piece of personal property that suffered some damage. Leonce liked to examine his precious belonging to see that nothing was amiss, so did he to his wife. He would not like it when his valuable personal property got damage. That is why when he noticed her sunburn he got annoyed for the sunburn would ruin his wife's charming physical appearance.

Leonce was a demanding husband. One night at Grand Isle he returned home late from his club. Edna was already asleep when he arrived. He talked to Edna despite she was being asleep. When Edna responded to his talk with little utterances, he felt that it is discouraging for his wife to show so little interest in things about him and value so little his conversation. It indicates that Leonce demanded much attention from his wife, no matter in what condition or situation his wife was. The fact that his wife was asleep seemed to be little importance to him.

Leonce was a type of husband who thought that he could satisfy his wife by giving her the luxurious things. He also thought that money or luxurious things could substitute affection or even apology. After a fight the night when Mr Pontellier accused Edna of neglecting their children, Mr Pontellier went home to

take care of his business, and while he was home he sent Edna a box filled with delicious sweets. Instead of asking for an apology to his wife for his accusation and his rude manner, Mr Pontellier preferred to send her a box of sweets.

Leonce rarely paid attention to his wife. He demanded his wife to show interest on things concerning him, but he showed no interest on things concerning Edna. When Edna and Robert Lebrun return to the beach after taking a bath, they seat and exchanged smile between them. But Mr Pontellier does not seem to pay much attention and interest on what is going on as his wife and Robert were bathing in the sea. “What is it?” asked Pontellier, looking lazily....”(Chopin, 1992, p. 4). At their summer vacation at Grand Isle, he spent a little time with Edna. He preferred to spend most of his time at a club nearby their cottage and left his wife in the company of another man even when Leonce himself was in the Grand Isle.

Edna and Leonce obviously did not share the same interest, and that they had a separate world. When Edna and her companion, Robert sat and exchanged smile recalling their adventure in the sea, Leonce did not seem to be interested “It was some utter nonsense; some adventure out there in the water, and they both tried to relate it at once. It did not seem half so amusing when told. They realized this, and so did Mr. Pontellier” (Chopin, 1992, p. 4). It seems that Edna had her own world, and that Leonce was excluded from her world, it is shown by the adventure as Robert and she bathed in the sea that they fail to tell Leonce.

One Sunday on the summer vacation, Edna and some other visitors went to *Cheniere Caminada*, an island across Grand Island, to hear a mass. There she almost got faint. Robert then took Edna to Madame Antoine’s house to take a rest. Their friends then left both of them there. When they returned to Grand Isle, Adele Ratignolle told them that Leonce has been very uneasy at first and wanted

to go to *Cheniere* right away. But then one of the visitors that had gone with Edna told him that Edna was only overcome with sleep and that Tonie would take her to Grand Isle. After being informed that his wife was all right, he then went to Klein hotel, looking up some cotton broker whom he wished to see in regard to securities, exchanges, stocks, bonds, etc. It can be seen that Leonce's main concern was his business. He paid more attention to his business rather than to his wife. Even Edna could feel this. While staying in *Cheniere Caminada* Edna wondered if Leonce would be uneasy. 'I wonder if Leonce will be uneasy!' she speculated (Chopin, 1992, p.73). If Leonce were an attentive husband, Edna would have known for sure that Leonce would be uneasy under that situation. He was indeed very uneasy at first, but as soon as he was informed that his wife was all right and someone would take her back, he went right away to see someone in regard of his business. Leonce preferred to see his business colleague instead of waiting for his wife at their cottage to make sure that his wife was fine. The scene strengthens Leonce's ignorance attitude toward his wife that Edna could have sensed as she was wondering whether Leonce would be uneasy.

Leonce preferred to spend his free time in the clubs than in his home with Edna. It is also obvious that there was a lack of communication between Leonce and Edna. When Adele spoke of her disapproval of Leonce's club, saying, "it's a pity Mr Pontellier doesn't stay home more in the evenings. I think you would be more-well, if you don't mind my saying it-more united, if he did" (Chopin, 1992, p. 130). Edna's respond to Adele's comment was "Oh! dear no!" said Edna, with a blank look in her eyes. 'What should I do if he stayed home? We wouldn't have anything to say to each other" (Chopin, 1992, p. 130). From Edna's reply it can be

seen that they had a separated world. It also shows that they were not close one to another, shown by the fact that Leonce left Edna quite often, and that they did not speak much to each other. This was very different compared to Robert and Edna's relationship, in which they are said as "talk incessantly, each was interested in what the other said" (Chopin, 1992, p. 7).

The women around Edna saw Leonce as the best husband in the world, yet Edna did not think so. The day she received the sweets from Leonce, Edna passed the bonbons around to the women visitors. As they selected the bonbon, all of the ladies declared that Leonce was the best husband in the world. They envied her because Leonce could afford luxurious things for Edna. While Edna herself was "forced to admit that she knew of none better" (Chopin, 1992, p. 13). Edna's admittance that her husband was the best in the world is doubtful since she was forced to admit it by her friends. The other women stated that Leonce was the best husband in the world for the luxurious material he could give to Edna, while Edna on the contrary did not think so. This also means that Edna had a different way of thinking from those women around her.

Edna's lack of her husband's attention was filled by a young man named Robert Lebrun. He was the son of Madame Lebrun, the owner of the resort at Grand Isle. Robert was two years younger than Edna. While staying on Grand Isle, Edna spent most of her time with Robert. Unlike Leonce, Robert seemed to pay attention to Edna and shared the same interest with her. After taking a bath in the sea, Robert and Edna sat and had a talk. "They chatted incessantly; about the things around them; their amusing adventure out in the water-it had again assumed its entertaining aspect; Each was interested in what the other

said”(Chopin, 1992, p. 7). When Leonce offer Robert to go with him to the Klein’s, ....Robert admitted quite frankly that he preferred to stay where he was and talk to Mrs Pontellier” (Chopin, 1992, p. 4). While Leonce preferred to go to Klein’s, Robert preferred to stay and talked to Edna showing that he put interest on Edna.

When Edna got sick in *Cheniere Caminada*, Robert was attentive to her, he looks anxiously and continuously down into her face. This showed how Robert cared about Edna. This was opposite to Leonce who looked at his wife’s sunburn with the expression of annoyance and when Leonce went to his club for a business meeting instead of waiting for her as soon as he was told that his wife was only overcome by sleepiness.

One Saturday night, all of the families were having dinner together. That night there were unusual number of people who had came to Grand Isle. They were the husbands, the fathers, and friends of the vacationer. That night they had a festive dinner, there were some performances to entertain the guests. When it was nearly midnight and some people were started to leave, suddenly someone, probably it was Robert, suggested them to take a bath in the sea at that hour. Soon everyone was following Robert to the beach. All summer Edna had tried to learn to swim, she had received instructions from almost everyone, men, women, and children. Even Robert had attempted a system of lessons, and he was almost desperate since his works seemed to be fruitless. Edna always felt a certain dread whenever in the water, unless someone else landed a hand to reassure her. But that night, for the first time Edna was able to swim.

A certain ungovernable dread hung about her when in the water, unless there was a hand near by that might reach out and reassure

her. But that night she was like the little tottering, stumbling, clutching child, who of a sudden realizes its powers, and walks for the first time alone, boldly and with overconfidence. A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul. She grew daring and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before (Chopin, 1992, pp. 52-53).

Edna's breakthrough in swimming symbolizes her awakening. For the first time and all of sudden she realized that she had power to control her body and her soul. Edna was over joy with her newly found power that she became over confidence and daring. As soon as she realized her power and ability to swim, she wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before. Her desire to swim to where no woman had swum before symbolizes her desire to go beyond women's limitation.

When she was in the water, Edna turned and looked back at the shore and the people she had left there. She had not gone far, yet the water that stretched behind her looked like a barrier which she would never be able to overcome with her unaided strength.

Once she turned and looked toward the shore, toward the people she had left there. She had not gone any great distance – that is, what would have been a great distance for an experienced swimmer. But to her unaccustomed vision the stretch of water behind her assumed the aspect of a barrier which her unaided strength would never be able to overcome (Chopin, 1992 p. 53).

However, to go beyond limitation, one needs enough strength to overcome the barrier. Edna realized this as she turned and looked toward the shore and the people she had left there. The water that stretched behind her symbolizes the barrier that she had to face if she wanted to go beyond women's limitation. She also realized that she was lack of strength needed to overcome the barrier. Suddenly a vision of death appeared before her. "A quick vision of death smote her soul, and for a second of time appalled and enfeebled her senses" (Chopin, 1992, pp.53-54). This scene foreshadows Edna's failure in breaking the limit as well as foreshadowing her death.

At the beginning, Edna seemed to be the average wife. As the story goes, she gradually changed. One night, after the midnight swimming, Edna stayed in the hammock at the verandah, waiting for Leonce. But when he came and asked her to come in, she refused to come in at Leonce's request.

'Do you know it past one o'clock? Come on,' and he mounted the steps and went into their room.

'Edna!' called Mr Pontellier from within, after a few moments had gone by.

'Don't wait for me,' she answered. He thrust his head through the door.

'You will take cold out there,' he said irritably.

'What folly is this? Why don't you come in?'

'It isn't cold; I have my shawl.'

'The mosquitoes will devour you'

'There are no mosquitoes.' (Chopin, 1992, p. 59)

This reveals Edna's change, from the obedience wife to a defiance wife.

This was very different compared to when Leonce asked her to check on one of their son, she went in at his request. For the first time Edna refused Leonce's order.

She heard him moving about the room; every sound indicating impatience and irritation. Another time she would have gone in at his request. She would, through habit, have yielded to his desire; not with any sense of submission or obedience to his compelling wishes, but unthinkingly, as we walk, move, sit, stand, go through the daily treadmill of the life which had been portioned out to us (Chopin, 1992, pp. 59-60).

She used to be a passive wife, she would have yielded to her husband's order. Just like the part where Leonce asked her to check on their son, she went immediately. Yet, Edna's submissiveness was only habitual, she responded to Leonce's order unthinkingly just as she did other activities.

With a writhing motion she settled herself more securely in the hammock. She perceived that her will had blazed up, stubborn and resistant. She could not at that moment have done other than denied and resisted. She wondered if her husband had ever spoken to her

like that before, and if she had submitted to his command. Of course she had; she remembered that she had. But she could not realize why or how she should have yielded, feeling as she then did (Chopin, 1992, p. 60).

She used to obey to her husband's order unthinkingly, but this time it was different. She began to be aware of her own desire and will, and she preferred to follow her desire to stay outside rather than to follow her husband's wish to go to bed right away. This also reveals Edna's gradual consciousness, as she used to do things unthinkingly, now she began to wonder why or how she should have yielded to her husband.

She even went further than just insisting on staying outside. She told her husband not to speak to her that way again. "Leonce, go to bed," she said. "I mean to stay out here. I don't wish to go in, and I don't intend to. Don't speak to me like that again; I shall not answer you" (Chopin, 1992, p. 60). Not only Edna refused her husband's command, but she also dare to tell her husband not to speak to her like that again, saying she would not answer him if he ever speak in that way again.

Submissiveness means woman is supposed to live in a kind of perpetual childhood, passively responding to the actions and decision of man. To be perfect wives, women have to realize the three golden threads with which domestic happiness is woven: to repress a harsh answer, to confess a fault and to stop (right or wrong) in the midst of self-defense in gentle submission (Davis & Wodman, 1984, p. 250).

The scene indicates Edna's defiance toward one of the characteristic expected of women: submissiveness. She resisted her husband's order and further answers him harshly. Edna's action also marks her difference from the common woman.

It seems that Edna was attracted to Robert. As Edna and Robert were getting closer to each other, one night at dinner suddenly Robert informed everyone that he was going to leave for Mexico that night soon after the dinner.

Edna was shocked and disappointed at knowing this, since Robert had never told her of his plan to leave for Mexico although they spent the afternoon together.

When Robert left after saying goodbye to her, Edna cried.

Edna bit her handkerchief convulsively, striving to hold back and to hide, even from herself as she would have hidden from another, the emotion which was troubling – tearing- her. Her eyes were brimming with tears. For the first time she recognized anew the symptoms of infatuation which she had felt incipiently as a child, as a girl in her earliest teens, and later as a young woman (Chopin, 1992, p. 86).

From Edna's reaction at Robert's leaving, it can be seen that Edna had a feeling toward Robert. Edna herself for the first time realized that she probably fell in love with Robert. It can be seen further by how she felt after his leaving. "Robert's going had some way taken the brightness, the color, the meaning out of everything. The conditions of her life were in no way changed, but her whole existence was dulled, like a faded garment which seems to be no longer worth wearing"(Chopin, 1992, p. 87). Robert's gone was said to be "leaving a void and wilderness behind him"(Chopin, 1992, p. 88). And when Edna found Robert's letter to his mother, Edna felt a pang of jealousy because Robert had written to his mother rather than to Edna. Further, it can be seen from how Edna induced everyone, even her husband, to talk about Robert because she missed him. One day when Leonce visited her at Grand Isle, he told Edna that he saw Robert at the city. Edna then asked a dozen questions about Robert. It seems that Edna did not think that it would be odd to make Robert the subject of conversation between she and her husband. As Chopin states "It did not strike her as in the least grotesque that she should be making of Robert the object of conversation and leading her husband to speak of him"(Chopin, 1992, p. 90).

Returning to New Orleans, Edna's behavior was getting more bizarre. She gradually changed. At that time there was a custom of receiving guests at one's house namely Reception Day. As the member of an upper-middle class, Edna had to follow this custom. She had piously followed this tradition for six years since she got married. Her reception day was Tuesday. But one Tuesday afternoon, in which she was supposed to hold her reception day, Edna left home without any excuse left to her guests. When Leonce found out that she left home on the afternoon and asks her why, Edna candidly answer "nothing. I simply felt like going out, and went out" (Chopin, 1992, p. 96). She had followed the convention for 6 years but suddenly one Tuesday she abandoned her reception day, simply because she wanted to go out, no particular reason for it. This mark Edna's rejection of social convention by following her impulse rather than following the social convention. By wearing pretty gown, sitting in beautiful drawing room, receiving guests, Edna was becoming Leonce's decorative figurine to be displayed particularly to his colleague. Thus, by abandoning the reception day, Edna rejected her function as a display of her husband's wealth and success as well as securing her husband's position in business circle. Edna's action of following her impulse indicated as well that she now started to listen to herself instead of listening to others.

When Edna added that she did not leave any excuse to the guests, Leonce said that they have to follow the convention. Leonce then scan the names of his wife's guests, reading some of them aloud with comments as he read. "The Misses Delasidas.' I worked a big deal in futures for their father this morning....., "Ms Belthrop." I tell you what it is, Edna; you can't afford to snub Mrs Belthrop. Why, Belthrop could buy and sell us ten times over. His business is worth a good, round sum to me. You'd better write her a note...."(Chopin, 1992, p. 97). This scene strengthens the notion that Leonce is a materialist husband. Leonce's statement "...; we've got to observe *Les Convenances* if we ever expect to get on and keep up with the procession" (Chopin, 1992, p. 96) means that to Leonce they have to follow the social convention, in this case the tradition of reception day, if they wanted to keep up their social status. The reason why he got angry when Edna abandoned her

reception day and her guests was not because he really cared about the convention, but because he was afraid that this might threaten his business. He thought that one of the ways to secure his business prospect was by entertaining the wives of his business partners. Apparently Edna and Leonce did not share the same view on the importance of holding the reception day, yet Edna had never expressed her opinion and feeling before this. Now she expressed it through her action. Leonce's lack of interest of Edna's feeling was portrayed in this scene, as he reproached her for her behavior without asking more further of its cause. It seems that it did not enter to Leonce's mind that something might bothers Edna that she left her reception day. When Edna said that she simply felt like going out, he simply said that he hopes that Edna had left some suitable excuse.

Leonce then criticized the meal served for their dinner, and had an argument with Edna over the meal. He then went by himself to his club to get his dinner.

She was somewhat familiar with such scenes. They had often made her very unhappy. On a few previous occasions she had been completely deprived of any desire to finish her dinner. Sometimes she had gone into the kitchen to administer a tardy rebuke to the cook. Once she went to her room and studied the cookbook during an entire evening, finally writing out a menu for the week, which left her harassed with a feeling that, after all, she had accomplished no good that was worth the name. (Chopin, 1992, pp. 98-99).

This is not the first time they had arguments in the middle of dinner. At that time it made Edna feel unhappy and she would quite her dinner. At other time she would have scolded the cook. Once, to settle the meal problem, she studied the cookbook and wrote out a menu for the week, which annoyed her with the feeling that it was useless. But this time it was different, she continued her dinner by herself. "But that evening Edna finished her dinner alone, with forced deliberation. Her face was flushed and her eyes flamed with some inward fire that lighted them"(Chopin, 1992, p. 99). When Leonce left her, she did not seem to be disturbed, she continued her dinner and the expression in her face showed neither disappointment nor sadness. It seemed that it did not matter anymore to her that she had to dine alone. Her decision to

get on with the dinner despite Leonce's anger and absence depicts her will to ignore Leonce's action, while previously she was often affected by Leonce's anger and action of leaving her. This shows another turning point in Edna's life.

Edna then went to her room. She walked to and fro in her room. Edna suddenly getting emotional "... Once she stopped, and taking off her wedding ring, flung it upon the carpet. When she saw it lying there, she stamped her heel upon it, striving to crush it "(Chopin, 1992, pp. 99-100). Previously at Grand Isle when Leonce accused her of being ignorant of their children, Edna cried. But now, when Leonce blamed her of her incompetent in supervising the cook, she was angry and took out her anger by throwing her wedding ring. Edna started to feel resentment of his husband and her marriage life. The wedding ring represented the marital bond between a woman and a man. Edna's action in taking it off her finger, throwing it off the floor and trying to crush it by stamping her shoes upon it symbolizes her wish to break free from the bond of marriage which also means free of her tyrant husband.

One day Edna visited Adele Ratignolle, bringing some of her sketches to be shown to her. She stayed until midday dinner, and joined the Ratignolles' midday dinner. During the dinner, Ratignolles showed domestic harmony. At the dinner table, Monsieur Ratignolle talked a great deal on several topics, politics, some city news and some neighborhood gossip. Adele showed much interest on what her husband is saying. "His wife was keenly interested in everything he said, laying down her fork the better to listen, chiming in, taking the words out of his mouth" (Chopin, 1992, p.106). This scene emphasizes Adele's figure as the perfect and ideal wife: showing much interest to her husband's word.

The relationship between Adele and her husband represented the husband-wife relationship idealized by the society. "The Ratignolles understood each other perfectly. If ever the fusion of two human beings into one has been accomplished on this sphere it was surely in their union" (Chopin, 1992, p. 106). Yet, Edna did not envy them. "Edna felt depressed rather than soothed after leaving them. The little glimpse of domestic harmony which had been

offered her, gave her no regret, no longing. It was not a condition of life which fitted her, and she could see in it but an appalling and hopeless ennui” (Chopin, 1992, pp.106-107). But the domestic harmony shown by the Ratignolle did not induce the feeling of regret or longing of such harmony to Edna, given the fact that her relationship with Leonce was far from being harmonious. Instead of impressed, Edna was rather depressed by the scene. She even dared to say that such a life, as the Ratignolles’ was not the kind of life she wanted to lead, a life which would not fit her. To her, such life is a gloomy life, there is nothing in it but dreadful boredom.

She was moved by a kind of commiseration for Madame Ratignolle – a pity for that colorless existence which never uplifted its possessor beyond the region of blind contentment, in which no moment of anguish ever visited her soul, in which she would never have taste of life’s delirium (Chopin, 1992, p. 107).

In fact, she pitied Adele for her life that according to Edna is a life of colorless existence. From the quotation above, for Edna it means that to lead a life as an ideal wife like Adele Ratignolle was a colorless existence, something less attractive. The contentment shown by Adele to her is prohibiting her to experience agony and life’s passion.

After skipping her reception day and throwing her wedding ring, Edna now fully rebelled. She completely abandoned her social and domestic duties, did whatever she liked, and followed any impulse passing within her.

She began to do as she liked and to feel as she liked. She completely abandoned her Tuesdays at home, and did not returned the visits of those who had called upon her. She made no ineffectual efforts to conduct her household *en bonne menagere*, going and coming as it suited her fancy, and, so far as she was able, lending herself to any passing caprice. (Chopin, 1992, p. 108)

Edna started to completely listen to herself. She preferred to follow her own wishes and feeling. She did not try to conduct her household as a good housewife, she cut off the relationship with the elite Leonce expects her to connect with, for the benefit of his business. Leonce could not accept Edna’s behavior, it irritated him.

Mr. Pontellier had been a rather courteous husband so long as she met a certain tacit submissiveness in his wife. But her new and unexpected line of conduct completely bewildered him. It shocked him. Then her absolute disregard of her duties as a wife angered him.”(Chopin, 1992, p. 108).

Leonce represents the common husband who demanded submissiveness from his wife. As Chopin stated that Leonce was a quite gentle husband so long his wife show submissiveness, so when Edna abandoned her duties, he got angry, yet he did not try to find out why.

Yet Edna had been more daring. “When Mr Pontellier became rude, Edna grew insolent. She had resolved never to take another step backward”(Chopin, 1992, p. 108). However, Edna had determined to step forward, she did not want to return to the condition she used to be. She had determined not to give up to Leonce’s order. Leonce suspected that Edna became unbalanced mentally.

It sometimes entered Mr Pontellier’s mind to wonder if his wife were not growing a little unbalanced mentally. He could see plainly that she was not herself. That is, he could not see that she was becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world (Chopin, 1992, p. 109).

Leonce failed to understand that Edna was becoming herself and revealing her real self. The person she used to be is not her real self. She thought that Edna had grown unbalanced mentally because of her unusual behavior.

Leonce then saw his family physician, Doctor Mandelet to consult on Edna. “She lets the housekeeping go to the dickens.... we meet in the morning at the breakfast table”(Chopin, 1992, p. 124). Edna’s act of rebellion was getting further. Not only she handed over her housekeeping tasks to the servant, she even refused to sleep with Leonce.

Furthermore, when her father asked her to come to her sister’s wedding, Edna refused and said, “...a wedding is one of the most lamentable spectacles on earth” (Chopin, 1992, p. 126). No other woman dared saying such a thing about marriage. Marriage is seen as the most important event in a woman’s life. What Edna said about marriage seems to reflects Edna’s thought that she may see her own marriage to Leonce as lamentable and that she may even

regret her own marriage. Edna's comment as she refused to come to her sister's wedding hinted Edna's disappointment of marriage, in particular her marriage. Being Leonce's wife seemingly had opened her eyes of the reality that marriage is distressing, thus a wedding ceremony becomes "one of the most lamentable spectacles on earth".

Doctor Mandelet told Leonce not to bother Edna and not let her bother him. Doctor Mandelet assured him that it was only a passing whim that would pass happily, and there was no need for him to seek the reason for Edna's changing behavior. Doctor Mandelet then promised Leonce that he would see Edna. But deep in his heart, Doctor Mandelet suspected another man's presence in Edna's life that was responsible for her odd behavior, however Doctor Mandelet did not speak out his mind to Leonce while he was with him.

In Edna's endeavor to entertain her father who was visiting her, one night Edna and her father went to a *soiree musicale* (an evening of musical entertainment) that was held by the Ratignolles once in a fortnight. The Ratignolles welcomed Edna's father warmly, Adele even coquetted with him that made Edna wonder. "Madame coquetted with him in the most captivating and naïve manner, with eyes, gestures, and a profusion of compliments, till the Colonel's old head felt thirty years younger on his padded shoulders. Edna marvelled, not comprehending. She herself was almost devoid of coquetry" (Chopin, 1992, p.129-130). Edna's reaction toward Adele's attitude toward her father indicated that not only she was a prudish person but also lack of the art of flirting. She saw some interesting men at the *soiree musicale*, yet she did not move to flirt with them.

There were one or two men whom she observed at the *soiree musicale*; but she would never have felt moved to any kittenish display to attract their notice-to any feline or feminine wiles to express herself toward them..., and she was glad when a lull in the music gave them an opportunity to meet her and talk with her (Chopin, 1992, p.129-130).

Edna was not interested in any coquettish act to attract men, she had her own way to attract them. She preferred to talk with them to get to know them.

As he had promised before, Doctor Mandelet came to dinner at Pontellier's. At the dinner table, Leonce, Edna's father, Edna and Doctor Mandelet exchanged stories. Doctor Mandelet told them a story of a woman who after getting involved in an infidelity act, returned to her husband.

The story did not seem especially to impress Edna. She had one of her own to tell, of a woman paddled away with her lover one night in a pirogue and never came back. They were lost amid the Baratarian Islands, and no one ever heard of them or found trace of them from that day to this. (Chopin, 1992, p. 133)

Obviously Doctor Mandalet's story was aimed to Edna. He tried to indirectly tell Edna to return to Leonce by telling such story. Especially since he suspected that Edna's change was caused by another man's presence. Yet, the story did not impress Edna, instead she had her own story to be told, her story is of a woman who disappear with her lover. The story the she told was about herself and it indicated her desire on solving the situation: running away with her lover. Thus, Edna did not seem to be interested in returning to Leonce.

Finally the time came for Edna's father to go. Before he left he had a heated argument with Edna upon her refusal to come to her sister's wedding. Edna's father accused her of lack of filial kindness and respect. Leonce then stated that he would stop by at the wedding as an expression of apology for Edna.

Edna was relieved as her father left. Meanwhile, Leonce himself had to leave for New York on business purpose. At Leonce's leaving, Edna was not so pleased. She became attentive and bustling around taking after his clothes. When he finally left, Edna "cried when he went away calling him dear, good friend, and she was quite certain she would grow lonely before very long and go to join him

in New York. But after all, a radiant peace settled upon her when she at last found herself alone. Even the children were gone.“(Chopin, 1992, p. 136). Edna cried as her husband left, but as soon as she was alone, she feels peace. The absence of her husband and her children brought her a sense of peace rather than longing. It was as if her husband and children were intruder to her life. “When Edna was at last alone, she breathed a big, genuine sigh of relief. A feeling that was unfamiliar but very delicious came over her” (Chopin, 1992, p. 137). When she was finally alone, there was a feeling of relief and freedom that she had never known before which now she enjoyed. That night as she went to bed “a sense of restfulness invaded her, such as she had not known before” (Chopin, 1992, p. 139).

When Edna’s father visited her, her father and she went to the horse race quite often. After her father returned home, she kept on going to the horse race. In one of the races she met Alcee Arobin who was a well-known womanizer. As the time went by, they met each other more frequently and got closer to each other. Arobin then attracted to and admired Edna. It was Arobin who awakened Edna’s sexuality. It was through Arobin as well that Edna acknowledged and enjoyed her sexuality. One night Edna and Alcee had dinner at Edna’s. He stayed after the dinner and they talked. When it was time for him to go, “he stood close to her, and the effrontery in his eyes repelled the old, vanishing self in her, yet drew all her awakening sensuousness. He saw enough in her face to impel him to take her hand and hold it while he said his lingering good night” (Chopin, 1992, pp. 145-146). It seemed that Arobin had awakened Edna’s sensuality. Apparently Edna’s expression reflected her awakened sensuousness and Alcee was moved by it to take her hand and hold it boldly and confidently.

Edna was excited by Arobin's action and tried to hide it. Yet, she failed to and Arobin could notice that she was in fact excited by his action. When Arobin asked and persuaded her to see him again, she tried to refuse his request. "No. Good night. Why don't you go after you have said good night? I don't like you," she went on in a high, excited pitch, attempting to draw away her hand. She felt that her words lacked dignity and sincerity, and she knew that he felt it" (Chopin, 1992, p. 146). Yet it seems that Edna did not mean what she was saying for her word lack of dignity and sincerity and Arobin could feel that. Arobin then begged for forgiveness and kissed her hand warmly. To this Edna complained and begged him to leave. But when she was alone "she look mechanically to her hand which Arobin has kissed so warmly"( Chopin, 1992, p. 147). This shows that Edna was taken by Arobin's warm kiss on her hand for if it were nothing to her she would have not "looked mechanically to the back of her hand". Suddenly Edna felt that she had betrayed Robert.

She felt somewhat like a woman who in a moment of passion is betrayed into an act of infidelity, and realizes the significance of the act without being wholly awakened from its glamour. The thought was passing vaguely over through her mind, 'what would he think?' She did not mean her husband; she was thinking of Robert Lebrun. Her husband seemed to her now like a person whom she had married without love as an excuse (Chopin, 1992, p. 147)

Edna felt that she was deceived by a moment of passion into an act of infidelity. She realized the consequence yet she was not completely rid herself of its attraction that is shown by her act of looking at the back of her hand. Apparently Leonce was no longer matter to her. For Edna did not feel that she was being unfaithful to Leonce. Instead she felt that she had betrayed Robert and wondering what would he think. She realized now that she had married to her

husband not because of love and she did not love her husband although she had married him for 6 years. As a married woman of course she was expected to love her husband, yet she did not love her husband, and realized it without any sense of guilty.

Edna's feeling to Alcee was physical. Edna did not even deny the fact. "Alcee Arobin was absolutely nothing to her. Yet his presence, his manners, the warmth of his glance, and above all the touch of his lips upon her hand had acted like a narcotic upon her" (Chopin, 1992, pp. 147-148). Edna's feeling of Arobin's kiss on her hand explained that her feeling of him was based on nothing but lust. Arobin's manner was entirely lead to physical intimacy: his glance that was warm had drawn the awakened sensuousness, and above all, his kiss upon Edna's hand. Yet she was intoxicated by them.

The next morning Arobin wrote an apology note which embarrassed Edna for in quieter moment she felt that it was absurd to take Arobin's act the previous night so seriously, so dramatically. She was not sure whether to reply to the note or not. She did not want to leave an impression to Arobin that she had yielded to his influence. Edna then replied Arobin's note in a light way and invited him to look at her works. As the reply of Edna's note, Arobin came to her home at once. After that, they were getting closer, and more intimate. The way Arobin talked fascinated her. "...He sometimes talked in a way that astonished her at first and brought the crimson into her face; in a way that pleased her at last, appealing to the animalism that stirred impatiently within her. (Chopin, 1992, p.150). This also marks another chance in Edna. While in the beginning of the novel she was

shocked by the Creoles' candidness, now she was fascinated and even pleased by Arobin's candidness. It even fascinated the animalism within her.

Whenever Edna felt turmoil within herself she visited Mademoiselle Reisz, a pianist whom she met at Grand Isle, to sooth it. In one of her visits she told Mademoiselle Reisz of her intention to move out from the house on Esplanade Street to a smaller house nearby. At first Edna said that she was tired of looking after the big house, and she did not feel home in it. "...I'm tired of looking after the big house. It never seemed like mine, anyway-like home..." (Chopin, 1992, p. 151). Yet, Mademoiselle did not believe it. Edna then said that because it was not hers. "The house, the money that provides for it, are not mine. Isn't that enough reason?" (Chopin, 1992, p.152). Still Mademoiselle Reisz did not believe it. Finally Edna admitted that she got enough money from the racetrack and from selling her sketches to support her life.

'Oh! I see there is no deceiving you. Then let me tell you; It is a caprice. I have a little money of my own from my mother's estate, which my father sends me by driblets. I won a large sum this winter on the races, and I am beginning to sell my sketches. Laidpore is more and more pleased with my work; he says it grows in force and individuality. I cannot judge of that myself, but I feel that I have gained in ease and confidence. However, as I said, I have sold a good many through Laidpore. I can live in the tiny house for little or nothing, with one servant. Old Celestine, who works occasionally for me, says she will come stay with me and do my work. I know I shall like it, like the feeling of freedom and independence (Chopin, 1992, p. 152).

Edna's decision to move out from the house that belonged to Leonce can be seen as her effort to gain independence and freedom. By life in a house that she rented for herself, she could do whatever she wish to do. By selling her sketches to rent the house and to support her life, she became financially independent on Leonce. Edna's spirit is growing stronger, it can be seen in her

works that were well improved, as said by Laidpore 'grows in force and individuality' and were sold well.

When Mademoiselle Reisz asked what Leonce said about Edna's plan, she admitted that she had not told Leonce of her plan. Edna did not know how it would be when Leonce returned, but Edna had reached a point where she had decided not to be another's possession. "Whatever came, she had resolved never again to belong to another than herself. (Chopin, 1992, p. 153).

That evening, Arobin visited Edna at her house, he wondered what happened to Edna since she had never been this happy. However, Edna did not tell him that it was the news that Robert was going home soon that made her happy. Instead she said something that Arobin could not understand.

In *The Awakening* Chopin also used image. The image used was bird. The repeated bird images in Chopin's *The Awakening* served as a symbol. "They represent the human desire to escape gravity, to reach the level of the angel. The bird is often the disembodied human soul, free of its physical constrictions"

(<http://www.umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/temp/B/birds>).

Mademoiselle Reisz saw Edna as a bird that wanted to soar above to seek for its freedom. She seemed to understand that Edna wanted to flee from her obligations toward her family. She warned Edna that she would need strength for it. "When I left her today, she put her arms around me and felt my shoulder blades, to see if my wings were strong, she said. "The bird that would soar above the level plain of tradition and prejudice must have strong wings. It is a sad spectacle to see the weaklings bruised, exhausted, fluttering back to earth" (Chopin, 1992, p. 158) Mademoiselle Reisz' words also served as foreshadow to Edna's fate.

That evening, Arobin visited Edna at her house, he wondered what happened to Edna since she had never been this happy. However, Edna did not tell him that it was the news that Robert was going home soon that made her happy. Instead she said something that Arobin could not understand.

One of these days,' she said, 'I'm going to pull myself together for a while and think – try to determine what character of a woman I am, for, candidly, I don't' know. By all the codes which I am acquainted with, I am a devilishly wicked specimen of the sex. But some way I can't convince that I am. I must think about it. (Chopin, 1992, p. 157)

Edna was aware that she was completely not what society's codes expected her to be. She was an ignorant mother, she did not love her husband, she abandoned her domestic and social duties, she refused to have sex with her husband, she was involved in an extra marital affair with two mens, she fell in love with another man while she knew for sure that she should not have, she acknowledged her sexuality and enjoyed it with another man. She called herself a 'a devilishly wicked specimen of the sex' for her attitudes, yet somehow she did not feel that way.

Arobin then said that he was jealous of Edna's thought that seemed to be wandering. To this Edna merely smiled. They stared at each other silently for some moments. Then Arobin kissed her, when he kissed her, Edna "clasped his head, holding his lips to hers. It was the first kiss of her life to which her nature had really responded. It was a flaming torch that kindled desire" (Chopin, 1992, p. 159). Edna's eager response to Alcee's kiss and her desire that aroused by the kiss are one of the aspects that make this novel a controversy the time it was published. The novel written at that time seldom mentioned sexual term. As stated by Showalter "The representation of female sexual pleasure is not in terms of heterosexual romance but rather the holding of a baby" (Showalter in Chopin, 1992, 1992, p. xii). Edna's action by clasping Arobin head and holding his lips to her indicates that she was as eager as Arobin in pursuing physical relationship. What Edna felt on Alcee's kiss indicates that Edna had sexual desire and that she did not get sexual satisfaction from her husband, shown by the words "it was the first kiss of her life to which her nature had really responded". Edna's

acknowledgement of her sexual desire and her enjoyment of it became a controversy the time the novel was published. What makes things get worse was fact that Edna found and enjoyed her sexuality through another men, instead of her husband.

After Arobin left her, Edna cried a little, but she did not even feel shame nor regret that some other man had kissed her. What she regretted for is that because it was not of love but of lust. "But among the conflicting sensations which assailed her, there was neither shame nor remorse. There was a dull pang of regret because it was not the kiss of love which had inflamed her, because it was not love which had held this cup of life to her life (Chopin, 1992, p. 160). According to the norm and convention of her time, she should have been regretted and ashamed the kiss because it meant an act of infidelity to her husband, yet Edna did not regret or ashamed of it at all.

Edna was getting on with her plan to leave her home and moved out to a smaller house. She did not even wait for her husband's opinion or wish concerning her plan. The next day after the kiss, she hastened her preparation of moving out. Early in the morning, Edna worked on to take over her hew residence, and hastening the arrangement to occupy it. "Whatever was her own in the house, everything which she had acquired aside from her husband's bounty, she caused to be transported to the other house, supplying simple and meager deficiencies from her own resources (Chopin, 1992, p. 161). In her great enthusiast in gaining her freedom and independence Edna only bring with her what belongs to herself that she acquires aside from her husband's gift. That way Edna is setting herself free of Leonce's possession that surround her, and that means that she started to gain her independence by living surrounded by her own not Leonce's.

In the afternoon as Edna was packing her things, Arobin visited her. When he saw her, Edna was not sad at all. "If he had expected to find her languishing,

reproachful, or indulging in sentimental tears, he must have been greatly surprised” (Chopin, 1992, p. 162). Instead, she was dazzling and vigorous. In fact, when Arobin entered the house, Edna was mounting a ladder, unhooking pictures from the wall.

When Leonce found out Edna’s intention to move out, he instantly wrote a letter of disapproval and reproach. Her reasons that had been given are, according to Leonce, inadequate. He was worrying that it might affect his business prospect.

He hoped she had not acted upon her rash impulse; and he begged her to consider first, foremost, and above all else, what people would say. He was not dreaming of scandal when he uttered this warning; that was a thing which would never have entered into his mind to consider in connection with his wife’s name or his own. He was simply thinking of his financial integrity. It might get noised about that the Pontelliers had met with reverses, and were forced to conduct their *menage* on a humbler scale than heretofore. It might do incalculable mischief to his business prospect (Chopin, 1992, p. 179)

Leonce’s reaction shows his lack of understanding toward Edna. The only thing that he cared about was his business prospect, on how people might think that the Pontelliers were in misfortune so they cannot afford their big house and they had to move to a smaller house. He did not think about Edna’s feeling. Edna had told him the reason in the letter that she sent, but was unwilling to consider it as satisfactory. Instead of discussing with Edna, Leonce took an action by himself. He instructed a well-known architect to remodel his home. Leonce also put a notice in daily newspaper saying that while their home was being renovated, the Pontelliers would go abroad.

However, Edna was pleased by the pigeon house and soon made it her home.

The pigeon - house pleased her. It at once assumed the intimate character of a home, while she herself invested it with a charm which it reflected like a warm glow. There was with her a feeling of having

descended in the social scale, with a corresponding sense of having risen in the spiritual. Every step which she took toward relieving herself from obligations added to her strength and expansion as an individual. She began to look with her own eyes; to see and to apprehend the deeper undercurrent of life. No longer was she content to 'feed upon opinion' when her own soul had invited her"(Chopin, 1992, pp. 180-181).

The pigeon house had an intimate character of a home, while the big house to Edna had never seem like home to her. This could be because in the big house she lived with Leonce which means she had obligations as a wife and a mother. While in the pigeon house she lived by herself. She was free of any responsibility and obligations which also mean that she was free to do anything she like. It was in the pigeon house that Edna's individual development began. Every step that she had taken in relieving herself from obligations expand herself as an individual. It is as if that her responsibility and obligations had bid her from being an individual. Just as Maupassant whom Chopin admires had 'entered into himself and looked out upon life through his own being and with his own eyes', so was Edna. She began to see realities with her own eyes, to understand more about her life and she would not accept anyone's opinion any longer.

After a few days, Edna visited her children who were staying with their grandmother. She was very happy to see her children. "How glad she was to see the children! She wept for very pleasure when she felt their little arms clasping her; their hard, ruddy cheeks pressed against her own glowing cheeks. She looked into their faces with hungry eyes that could not be satisfied with looking" (Chopin, 1992, p. 181). She had a good time in Iberville, and enjoyed the time spend with her children. When finally Edna left them, she was sad.

It was with a wrench and a pang that Edna left her children. She carried away with her the sound of their voices and the touch of their cheeks. All along the journey homeward their presence lingered with her like the memory of a delicious song. But by the time she had regained the city the song no longer echoed in her soul (Chopin, 1992, p. 182).

As stated previously, Edna was fond of her children in an uneven, impulsive way. She would sometimes gather them passionately to her heart, she would sometimes forget them. When her children was with her she enjoyed their presence, she left them with sadness and on her way home and their presence stayed on with her. Yet, once she regained the city, the presence of her children was no longer with her. One minute she remembered her children, the other minute she forgot about them.

Edna kept on visiting Mademoiselle Reisz to seek for relaxation and talk about Robert. If Mademoiselle Reisz happened to be out, she would wait for her return. One day, after worked all morning to paint, she felt that she was filled up and needs to rest, so she went to Mademoiselle Reisz's apartment to rest and to talk about Robert. Mademoiselle Reisz was out when Edna went to her apartment. She decided to wait for her as usual. As she sat at the piano stool, picking out bars of a piece of music, there was a knock on the door and the visitor turned out to be Robert. Both were shock at seeing each other unexpectedly. They then decided not to wait for Mademoiselle Reisz and Robert walked her home. Robert was invited to dine with Edna. When Edna asked him what he had been seeing, doing and feeling in Mexico, Robert says "I've been seeing the waves and the white beach of Grand Isle, the quiet, grassy street of the *Cheniere*, the old fort at Grand Terre..."(Chopin, 1992, p. 191). Robert's statement hints that he had been

thinking of Edna since he mentioned things about the summer in Grand Isle which related to Edna.

After the unexpected meeting at Mademoiselle Reisz's apartment, Edna had never seen Robert again. One day as Edna was having her dinner at her favorite small garden café, she ran into Robert. Edna then insisted that Robert would share her dinner there. Edna asked him why he had kept away from her, Robert became irritable and refused to give her an excuse. Edna then expressed her disappointment toward Robert, she felt that he neglected her, and that he never consider how she felt of that. "I suppose this is what you would call unwomanly; but I have got into a habit of expressing myself. It doesn't matter to me, and you may think me unwomanly if you like" (Chopin, 1992, p. 203). Edna had never expressed her feeling before this. Apparently women of Edna's time were not getting use to express themselves freely, since they were expected to be submissive which prevented them from expressing their feeling. However, Edna preferred to be straightforward rather than to be coy. She was aware that being straightforward is unwomanly, but it did not matter now for her. She had chosen to be honest to herself, and left the coyness expected of her. After the little fight they were soon involved in light conversation. Once again Robert walked her home. This time, Edna did not ask him to stay, yet he stayed. Edna then left Robert in the living room while she bathed her face and hands. When Edna returned to the living room, she found him sit in the shadow and leaned his head back on the chair. Edna came to him, bent over the chair's arm and called his name, asking if he was asleep. He looked up at her answering. Edna then "...leaned over and kissed him – a soft, cool, delicate kiss, whose voluptuous

sting penetrated his whole being – then she moved away from him” (Chopin, 1992, p. 205). While in the beginning of the story Edna was a woman with a sense prudery, and that she lacked of the art of flirting, now Edna boldly kisses Robert. While with Arobin it was Arobin who initiated the physical relationship, with Robert it was her who initiated the physical relationship. This also marks another changes in Edna from a prudery woman to a bold woman. Women of her time were expected to repress their sexual desire, yet Edna did not repress hers. Instead she acted on her sexual desire with confidence and without a feeling of shame or remorse.

When Robert told her of his dream of making her his wife and that it was impossible for him since Edna is Leonce’s wife which means that she was not free, Edna laughed at him, saying;

You have been a very, very foolish boy, wasting your time dreaming of impossible things when you speak of Mr Pontellier setting me free! I am no longer one of Mr Pontellier’s possessions to dispose of or not. I give myself where I choose. If he were to say, “Here, Robert, take her and be happy, she is yours,” I should laugh at you both. (Chopin, 1992, pp. 206-207).

Edna’s declaration that she was no longer one of Leonce’s possessions that he could dispose of hints her awareness that it was how Leonce saw her: as one of her possession. But she was aware now that she was a free person, not anyone’s possession. She was indeed Leonce’s wife but that did not mean that she belonged to him, and that she could not free herself unless Leonce did. She felt that she is able to free herself without Leonce’s mercy. When she said that she gives herself to where she chose, it means that she would be with whoever she would like to be with. It also means that there was possibility that if one day she fell in love with

another man, she would leave Robert to be with the man. Just like she did now, she gives herself to Arobin and Robert despite the fact that she is Leonce's wife.

As she had mentioned before, she was getting use to express her feeling.

She then declared her feeling toward Robert.

I love you,' she whispered,' only you, no one but you. It was you who awoke me last summer out of a life-long, stupid dream. Oh! You have made me so unhappy with your indifference. Oh! I have suffered, suffered! Now you are here and we shall love each other, my Robert. We shall be everything to each other. Nothing else in the world is of any consequence. (Chopin, 1992, p. 207)

Here, Edna played an active part, it is Edna who first declared her love. While Robert hints his feeling by saying "Now you know,' he said, 'now you know what I had been fighting against since last summer at Grand Isle, what drove me away and drove me back again" (Chopin, 1992, p. 205), he did not express his feeling directly. Edna, in the other hand declared her feeling directly, by saying the word 'I love you'. Initially, Edna was a reserved person. She was said as 'was not accustomed to an outward and spoken expression of affection, either in herself or in others', but now she expresses her feeling toward others by both spoken and action. Since Edna had resolved to belong only to herself, it also means that she was not interested in becoming Robert's wife. If she became Robert's wife, then once again she would become someone's possession. She just wanted them to love each other, not marry each other.

In the middle of the meeting, Edna's servant interrupting, saying that Adele was going to give a birth and begged Edna to come to her house immediately. Edna then went to Adele's despite Robert's wish that she should stay, since once she promised her friend that she would be there when Adele's giving birth. At the Ratignolles' home Edna witnessed her friend's pain and struggle, and she was reminded of her own experience.

Edna began to feel uneasy. She was seized with a vague dread. Her own like experience seemed far away, unreal and only half remembered. She recalled faintly an ecstasy of pain, the heavy odor of chloroform, a stupor which had deadened sensation, and an awakening to find a little new life to which she had given being, added to the great unnumbered multitude of souls that come and go. (Chopin, 1992, p. 211)

Once again, Edna did not see her children as important as the other women see their children. While Adele enthusiastically expected children, Edna only saw her children just as the addition to the multitude of souls that came and go nothing special about the presence of her children. This indicates that Edna was not a maternal woman. Edna's memory of her own child delivering was a memory of torturing, and she tried to forget them. When Edna said goodbye to Adele, Adele whispered to her "Think of the children, Edna. Oh think of the children! Remember them!" (Chopin, 1992, p. 211).

At Adele's house Edna met Doctor Mandelet. After assisting Adele's childbirth, Doctor Mandelet offered to walk Edna home. Doctor Mandelet asked her if she were going abroad and Edna answered

Perhaps-no, I am not going. I'm not going to be forced into doing things. I don't want to go abroad. I want to be let alone. Nobody has any right – except children, perhaps – and even then, it seems to me – or it did seem – she felt that her speech was voicing the incoherency of her thoughts, and stopped abruptly (Chopin, 1992, p. 213).

Edna expressed her will not to be forced into doing anything by anyone. From her statement it seems that she felt she had been forced to do things. While walking with Doctor Mandelet, Edna spoke out what she had been thinking 'Yes, she said. 'The years that are gone seem like dreams – if one might go on sleeping and dreaming – but to wake up and find – oh! well! perhaps it is better to wake up after all, even to suffer, rather than to remain a dupe of illusions all one's life.'

(Chopin, 1992, p. 213). To Edna her past life seemed like a dream, illusion, something unreal. The society she lived in believed and promoted the idea that marriage and motherhood was the only vocation suitable for women, in spite of what women really wanted or felt. She used to believe in what society believed and had tried to live in the way society expected her to. However after a sequences of events in her life, she realized that she had been living in illusions. She had awakened to the feelings that were unknown to her previously. She had realized that her life was not something she really wanted to live. Now that she had awakened, she was aware that she might suffer from her awakening. The rejection of the society was what she might suffer for what she had found out about her self. But it did not matter to her. She preferred to be awake rather than remain in an illusion for all her life.

Doctor Mandeleet seemed to understand that Edna was in trouble. He offered his help. "...you seem to me to be in trouble. I am not going to ask for your confidence. I will only say that if ever you feel moved to give it to me, perhaps I might help you. I know I would understand, and I tell you there are not many who would-not many, my dear" (Chopin, 1992, p. 213). Doctor Mandeleet's word hints what might be the society's respond, no one would understand her. However, Edna had insisted that she did not want anything but her own way.

When Edna returned to her pigeon house, she remembered Adele's words that she should think of her children. She determined to think of them, yet the determination inflicted her. "...She meant to think of them; that determination had driven into her soul like a death wound...." (Chopin, 1992, p. 215). Edna was objected by the thought that she should think of her children. Her thought was

filled by Robert. But when she entered her house, Robert was gone. Yet, he had left a piece of paper with his handwriting on it, saying, “ I love you. Good-because I love you.” Edna grew faint as she read it. She sat and stretched herself in the sofa, and remained there awake for the whole night. Robert loved her, and he even dreamt of making Edna his wife, yet he realized that there was no way his dream would come true. He understood the consequence of the act were he to marry Edna. He realized that their act would only raise scandal, and he did not want it to happen, so he left Edna, to save both of them.

Edna returned to Grand Isle which at the time was off season. Her coming surprised Victor and Mariequita who were there repairing one of the porches at the cottage. Edna said that she was going to stay to have a rest for a few days. Then they discussed where she should stay and what they would have for dinner. As Victor and Mariequita were preparing for Edna’s dinner, Edna said that she was going to swim for a while before taking her dinner. She walked down the beach unthinkingly. She had done all the thinking which was necessary the night she laid awake until morning. She said over and over again to herself “..., it does not matter about Leonce Pontellier-but Raoul and Etienne! She understood now clearly what she had meant long ago when she said to Adele Ratignolle that she would give up the inessential, but she would never sacrifice herself for her children”(Chopin, 1992, p. 219). Edna realized that she could not follow her heart’s desire without considering the consequences for her children. If she were to be with Robert that would be mean a scandal for her society and it might hurt her children. Leonce’s feeling on this does not matter to her, his feeling seemed of no importance to her. But it was her children’s feeling that mattered to her. She

also understood now what she meant by saying that she would sacrifice the inessential for her children, but she would never sacrifice herself for her children. She preferred to lose her life by committing suicide to save her children from the scandal, rather than losing her new self. For if she returned to her children, it means that she would have to give up her new self.

Although Edna was willing to sacrifice her life for her children, Edna still saw her children in a negative sense even in the last minutes of her life. “The children appeared before her like antagonists who had overcome her, who had overpowered and sought to drag her into the soul’s slavery for the rest of her days. But she knew a way to elude them (Chopin, 1992, p. 219)”. Edna even saw her children as a threat to her. In the last minutes of her life the image of her children come to her in a negative sense. Her children seem to Edna as antagonists who had seek to drag her into the soul’s slavery for the rest of her life. To Edna being a mother means that she had to give up her own idea, feeling and desire, for being a mother was not her true desire, and it needed self-sacrifice, which she could not bear.

At the bathhouse Edna found her old bath suit and she put it on. But once she reached the beach, she took it off and stood naked by the sea. She started to swim, and she swam further to the sea. As she swam she thought of Leonce and the children. “They were a part of her life. But they need not have thought that they could possess her, body and soul” (Chopin, 1992, p. 221). Edna had resolved never again belong to others than herself, and she held her determination.

In the end of the story the bird image reappeared. “A bird with a broken wing was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down, down

the water” (Chopin, 1992, p. 220). The bird represents Edna who failed in leaving the constraint of tradition. While the mother-women used their wings to protect their children, Edna used her wings to flee. However, her wings were not strong enough for it. Adele’s last words remained her that she could not just leave the ground. Adele heard the rumors about Edna and Arobin, she was afraid that it might rise a scandal which may hurt Edna’s children. So she asked Edna to think of the children. Edna had not thought much of her children, but Adele’s last words had remained her of her children and the consequence of her action toward them. She then chose to give up her life to protect her children. Thus it became an ironic that after all of her effort to fly leaving her family, her wings were weighted down by her family. However, Edna’s drown could not be seen merely as an act of defeat. She could return to her family, forget about Robert and Arobin, that way she would save the whole family from scandal. Yet, she preferred to drown herself rather than returning to her family. To Edna returning to her family means that she had to once again become other’s possession. By committing suicide she was also freeing herself from becoming her husband and children’s possession both body and soul. In death she would always belong to herself.

One of the factors why the novel received harsh critics was Chopin’s sympathetic attitude toward Edna. She did not condemn Edna’s act. Drowning was used in 1890s fiction to punish a woman’s misbehavior, as stated by Showalter “Readers of the 1890s were well accustomed to drowning as the fictional punishment for female transgression against morality...” (Showalter in *The Awakening*, 1992, p. xxviii). However, Edna’s drowning was not a

punishment. There was not any sign of guilty feeling or shame in Edna when she was to drown herself.







## CHAPTER IV

### A. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### Conclusion

After analyzing the data in the previous chapter, the conclusion of this research can be described as the following description. The first problem statement is what criticism Chopin expresses on society's expectation toward women seen in *The Awakening*. Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women is that the expectation the society has upon women has restrained them from being themselves. What women really want or feel has never been heard by society and by being obliged to fit in the expectation women has to efface themselves as individuals.

The second problem statement was how does *The Awakening* reflect Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women. Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women is reflected through the theme, plot, and characterization mainly the main character Edna Pontellier. Chopin's criticism can be seen in the way she characterizes Edna Pontellier. Edna is described as a different person compared to the common woman of her time. Edna does not fit in the cult of true womanhood. She does not love her husband, does not adore her children, she even probably never wants the children, and she is involved in extra marital affair with two men. She acknowledges her sexual desire and enjoys it with another man instead of her husband. Later on she refuses to sleep with her husband. She spends her time to paint instead of performing domestic duties. She paints because she likes it, she even find a satisfaction in painting instead of in performing domestic duties. She starts to set herself free of her husband by moving out from the big house the Pontelliers occupy into a smaller house called pigeon house. She

also set herself financially free from her husband by selling sketches, and she uses the money to rent the pigeon house.

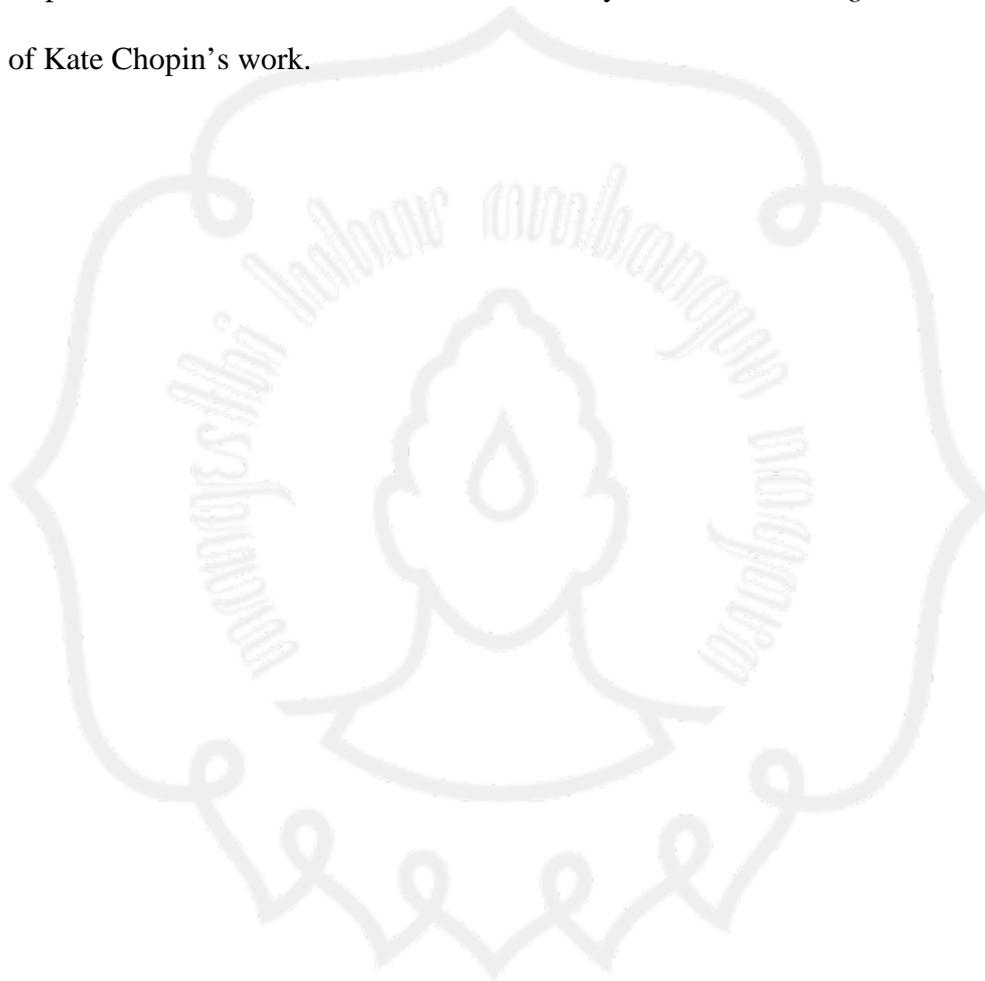
Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women becomes clearer as the story is moving to its end. Edna eventually aware that her marriage and motherhood are not what she really wanted to. To Edna her marriage and motherhood are illusions and she prefers to walk out of illusion even if she might suffer, rather than living within illusion for all her life.

When Edna commits suicide in the end of the story by drowning herself, it is not an act of guilt, but more as an act of independence. Now that she has realized what her own desire is and that she is not and would not be anyone's possession, she could not just let it go and return to be her family's possession. Thus by drowning herself to death, she could escape from being her family's possession.

### **Suggestion**

The research is only based on Genetic Structuralism approach. The limitation of the research is that the research only highlights the author's view, which means that there are other aspects left for the discussion. It will be better if there are others researchers who highlight the research from other point of view. This research only focuses on Kate Chopin's criticism on society's expectation toward women. Therefore, it is suggested to the next researcher to analyze this novel from another point of view. The next researcher could analyze this novel from feminist point of view since it tells a story of a woman who is restrained by her society and her fight to gain her freedom.

The readers of *The Awakening* are expected to produce various critical works in order to enlarge the comprehension of the novel. Above all, an exploration to reveal other meaning of this novel would be a valuable contribution to the world of literature. Apart from the weaknesses of this research, this research is expected to be able to give benefit especially for the students of English Department who are interested in further study of *The Awakening* and the readers of Kate Chopin's work.



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