

**THE STRUGGLE OF EDNA PONTELLIER TO BREAK THE  
CREOLE'S PATRIARCHY SYSTEM IN KATE CHOPIN'S *THE  
AWAKENING***

A Thesis

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Attainment of the *Sarjana Sastra* Degree in English Literature



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2012

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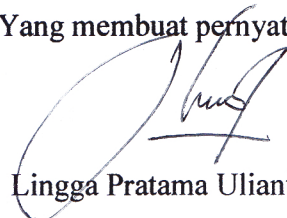
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## **MOTTO**

Travel often; getting lost will help you find yourself.

(Anonymous)

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis for:

You



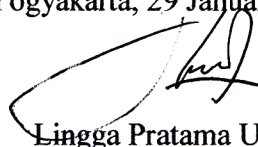
## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Alhamdulillah rabbil alamin*, all praise be to *Allah*, the Almighty, the Most Beneficial, the All-Loving, and the Most Merciful. Without His blessings, love, and guard, I would have never finished this thesis. In this occasion, I would like to express the greatest gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Sugi Iswalono M.A; as the first consultant, and Mrs. Niken Anggraeni M.A, as the second consultant, for their guidance, advices, ideas, corrections, suggestions and patience during the writing process of this thesis.

Many thanks are due to my family; all my beloved lecturers of the English Education Department of Yogyakarta State University from whom I gain my knowledge, especially Mr. Bambang; to all of my classmates in English Literature who I have shared precious moments, and valuable experiences that can never be forgotten; and to Mrs Indun and Mr. Zamzani. I also thank my KKN's friends, my futsal's friends and my buddy Sigit.

Finally, I realize that this thesis is far from being perfect even though I have tried the best. However, I will be glad to get some criticisms to this thesis.

Yogyakarta, 29 January 2012



Lingga Pratama Uliantara

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims at describing the Creole's discrimination toward Creole women and Edna Pontellier. This is also to show the struggle of Edna Pontellier against the oppression from the Creole that does not give more space to express her ideas by breaking the Creole's patriarchy system in Chopin's *The Awakening*.

This study was a qualitative research with content analysis method. The objects of this study were Edna Pontellier and her struggle to achieve freedom and independence in Chopin's *The Awakening*. The data taken were words, phrases, and sentences found in the novel. The researcher became the primary instrument in this study, while the secondary instruments were the data sheets. The data analysis of this study was based on the Creole's discrimination toward Creole women and Edna Pontellier, and the actions taken by Edna to struggle against the Creole's discrimination.

The researcher finds four discriminations toward Creole women: being considered weak, being forced to obeying husband's rules, being forced to keep silent, and not getting the same opportunity in job distribution. Moreover, the discriminations toward Edna are that the Creole do not give much space to Edna to explore her talent in art; they push Edna to spend her life to serve her husband and children; and they consider Edna as a property. The researcher finds Edna's efforts to attack the Creole by breaking the norms: falling in love with Robert Lebrun, sending her children away to their grandmother and moving out from her husband's house, having an affair with Alcee Arobin, and committing suicide. Finally, Edna's struggles are fighting for her right, showing her existence, and confirming her identity to the Creole.



# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background of the Study**

A society system is needed to take control every single action of human being. The system like patriarchy or matriarchy has very important roles to make everything in the society become under control and to create a harmony among people. The system, for example the patriarchy, should be created for the good but in the progress this system cannot accommodate all of people`s desire especially women`s. That makes the role of the male becomes the primary in the society and they hold authority over women, children, and property.

In fact, that system only produces the dictatorship because the male`s authority is so broad and further it creates the injustice, discrimination, and inequality toward female. In the majority of homes, the man is the figure who financially supports a family while the woman stays home and cares for the children. Women`s roles become meaningless in the family and society as they do not have any authority to make a decision since everything is determined by the men.

People who are not satisfied with the situation try to break the system that makes women become subordinate. They believe that women must constantly fight for their rights and sometimes they struggle just to survive without the power and under domination of men. To accomplish their goal

they make a movement which is called feminism, whose aims are establishing and depending equal politic, economic, and social right and equal opportunities for women ([www.merriam-webbster.com/dictionary/feminism](http://www.merriam-webbster.com/dictionary/feminism)). One of the efforts is using literary work; they have prompted rediscovery and reevaluating of a number of women writers to have access to all of point of view (Walker, 1979: 60).

The feminists want to give another perspective to the readers because “mainstream political and social theories focused on ‘male’ experience in the public sphere of work, women found themselves, paradoxically, ‘outside’ analysis of class and relations of production” (Whelehan, 1995:4). Thus, to counter those perspectives, they try to interpret the text using woman`s points of view and the text which is commonly used is *The Awakening* written by Kate Chopin.

Kate Chopin, the American author, portrays this condition in her work *The Awakening*. She uses Edna Pontellier, the protagonist, as the ‘warrior’ to fight against the system. Edna represents the struggle of a woman who has a dream to find the independence in her life. The main conflict in Chopin’s *The Awakening* is a woman’s needs to have the right to express herself and live freely versus the expectations of Creole society, which is strongly influenced by patriarchy system, and its narrow definitions for what a woman should and should not do. The novel has been received as a feminist text and although this literary work has a distinguished reputation all over the world, this

phenomenon is still needed to be discussed to show that women also have the same opportunity in their lives.

## **B. Research Focus**

The research is entitled “The Struggle of Edna Pontellier to Break the Creole’s Patriarchy System in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*”. The struggle of Edna means her fighting against her Creole's patriarchy system which denies her to gain equality in the Creole’s society. In the United States the Creoles are the descendents of French and Spanish colonists of the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, the patriarchy system refers to the system showing how the father or man in this society takes all the authority in the family.

Marry Wollstonecraft is one of the feminists who is concerned with the equal rights between men and women. As an enlightenment feminist, Wollstonecraft (in Whelehan, 1995:29-30) declares that women also possess the innate capacity for reason, and should, therefore, be granted equal citizenships. She believes if women are given the opportunity to realize their full potential, they could achieve full equality with men. Thus, her idea about the same opportunity among men and women in the society will become the focus of the research because that idea has correlation in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* where the protagonist wants to get equal opportunity in her life.

In Chopin’s *The Awakening*, the major issue of the of the novel is about discrimination and oppression upon women. To limit the problem, the research only focuses on the equality issue and to be more specific it talks

about the same opportunity or equal citizenship. The protagonist's effort become the main focus of this research though there is another character in the novel, Mademoiselle Reisz, who also fights against the system. The Creole society in this novel refers to the society which occupied the southern part of Louisiana and part of Alabama and eastern Missouri at the late 1900s as represented in Chopin's *The Awakening*.

### **C. Research Objectives**

The research objective is to describe the Creole's discrimination Creole women and Edna Pontellier and also to show the struggle of Edna Pontellier against the oppression in the Creole that does not give more space to express her ideas by breaking the Creole's patriarchy system.

### **D. Significance of the Problems**

Academically, this research provides information about feminist literary criticism. The main interest of this theory is to explore the point of patriarchal ideology in literature, especially to explore the material forms of social, economic and political discrimination of women. Practically, it provides information about the Creole's patriarchy system and its effects to women.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Theoretical Description

##### 1. Patriarchy System

When talking about social system, people should not forget about patriarchy. "Patriarchy" derives from the Greek πατριαρχία (*patriarkhia*), literally means "rule of fathers" from πατριάρχης (*patriarkhēs*), "father" or "chief of a race, patriarch." Based on *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1984: 800), the word patriarchy means:

a hypothetical society system based on the absolute authority of the father or an elderly male over the family group. Sometimes patriarchy also includes in its meaning *patria potesta*, the system in which power to govern members of even extended family rested in the hands of father and his kin.

The quotation explains that the father or the elderly male has a full authority to manage his family. On the other side, mother or a female must follow the commands from the father or the male.

Similarly, patriarchy is a social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patriarchy>). Patriarchy can, for instance, refer to a specific society where the father (the “patriarch”) rules not only the women in the family but also the younger men.



Some scholars try to define the meaning of patriarchy. According to Bhasin (1993: 3) the word patriarchy means the rule of the father or the patriarch, and originally it was used to describe a male domination on the family. The large household of the patriarch which includes women, junior men, children, and domestic servants is under the rule of the dominated male.

Further, she explains that patriarchy is used more generally to refer to male domination, to the power relationship by which men dominate women and to characterize a system where the women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. It has created discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression and violence within the family, at the place of work and in society.

Hartmann also has the same idea as Basin's. She (in Griselda Pollock, 1988: 46) defines patriarchy as "a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence or solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women." She believes that the domination of men will create the slavery among women because women are the valuable "commodity" in the industry as a cheap worker.

The system of patriarchy and feminism are like dogs and cats that cannot be united. Patriarchy system is the main enemy for feminism. Feminists always attack this system because they believe that it gives so

much opportunity to men to control everything. They consider patriarchy system as the cause of the oppression and discrimination toward women.

## **2. Feminism**

### **a. Definition of feminism**

Feminism appears as the protest to the system of society which has created a false idea about women since a long time ago. It is known that women`s status and position in the society are very low. Aristotle, for example, says:

Woman is to man as the slave to the master, the manual to the mental worker, the barbarian to the Greek. Woman is an unfinished man, left standing on lower step in the scale of development. The man is by nature superior, and the female inferior, the one rules and the other is ruled; and this principle extends, of necessity, to all mankind. Woman is weak of will, and therefore incapable of independence of character or position; her best condition is a quiet home life in which, while ruled by the man in her external relations, she may be the domestic affairs supreme.

(From *The Story of Philosophy* in Subhan, 2003: 85-6)

From the quotation above, one can understand that since in Ancient Greek, women have been regarded as slaves, manual workers, and uncivilized people. At the end, the best place for woman was at home. Even today, many women are still treated as “slaves”, or as “manual workers”. However, women movement, or feminism, has wanted to disturb an acceptance of such a patriarchal culture, and to eliminate sex domination in charging society.

Garda Lerner (in Bhasin, 1993: 33) states that feminism is a women`s struggle against patriarchy and for equality. Beasley (1999: 27) in his book entitled *What is Feminism?: An Introduction to Feminist Theory* wrote some definitions of feminism from some scholars such as Porter, who defines feminist as a perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordinate, oppression, inequality, and injustice women suffer because of sex.

The other scholar, Kate Millet, also attacks the patriarchy culture. In her book *Sexual Politics* (1970) Millet (in Subhan, 2003: 86) wrote that patriarchy subordinates the female to the male; the men have treated women as inferior people. Power is exerted by men directly or indirectly in civil and domestic life. Women are powerless so feminists want to change that condition to gain the equality with a movement that is called feminism. Lexically, feminism is a kind movement that struggles for a full equality between women and men in all the aspects of life.

From the explanation of feminism above, it is clear that women have to face discrimination and should move on a better life. However, women already realize that those false ideas make them become discriminated. To fight against the discrimination they need to create a women`s movement to change the perspective of women on the people and to get equal right for women in the field of law, economy, and society.

## **b. The waves of feminism**

Feminism does not appear without a process; it has developed from time to time. Although many people think that feminism was formed in the 1970s, in fact there have been three successive “waves” of feminism, starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and continuing to the modern day (Whelehan, 1995: 2).

The first-wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activities during 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning focused mainly on opening up various opportunities for women such as the promotion of equal contract, marriage, parenting, and property rights for women. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, activism focused primarily on gaining political power, especially the right to vote which had already been accorded to poor white and black men but had been regularly denied to women though some feminists were active in campaigning for women's sexual, reproductive, and economic rights at this time (Freedman, Estelle B., 2003: 464). The feminists in the first wave are Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Olympia Brown, and Helen Pitts; there are countless more.

The second-wave of the women's movement refers to a period of feminist activity which began during the early 1960s and lasted through the 1990s and was particularly connected to other social movements occurring at the time, such as the anti-Vietnam protests and the civil rights movement. Figures like Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan are

typically seen as the most prominent members of this wave of feminism. They have largely concerned with issues of equality other than suffrage, such as ending discrimination (West, 2010: par 5). Burkett (2011: par 2) states that second-wave feminism talked a wide range of issues: de facto inequalities, official legal inequalities, sexuality, family, the workplace, and, perhaps most controversially, reproductive rights (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/647122/womens-movement>).

In the end of 1990s in the USA, the third-wave feminism began as the representation of the failure of the second-wave feminism that could not explain specific about femininity, which often assumed a universal female identity and over-emphasized the experiences of upper-middle-class white women. According to Thomas West (2010: par 4) in his article “The History of American Third Wave Feminism,” third-wave feminism is concerned with several central ideas and issues related to women and their role in society. Although, like earlier feminists, they are interested in women’s political advancement, this wave is also interested in the ways in which gendered oppression intersects with other types of discrimination including race, sexual orientation, and class.

Rebecca Walker, who coined the term third wave, is one of the most prominent figures in this wave of feminism. She co-founded Third Wave Foundation, a non-profit organization aiming to encourage young women to get involved in activism and leadership roles



(<http://thomaswest.suite101.com/the-history-of-american-third-wave-feminism-a255781>).

Clearly, feminism gives a massive influence in the history. Although much has changed in the process, feminists, regardless of which wave they claim to belong to, still fight for the equality of women everywhere.

### **c. Types of feminism**

Feminism is not a simple or unified philosophy. Imelda Whelehan, in her book *Modern Feminist Thought: From the Second Wave to 'Post-Feminism'*, divides it into five types:

#### **1) Liberal feminism**

Based on this philosophy, society itself does not need a major renovation, but rather laws need to be changed and opportunities have to be opened up to allow women to become equals in society. Liberal Feminism has a long tradition of gender-based interventions in Western thought. And one have the legacy of such writer as Mary Wollstonecraft, and later John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, who set out to show that all social categories are structured by the fact of gender, and that “femininity” is a prison rather than a quality of healthy femaleness. The language of liberty, right and legal equality is the currency of liberal feminism (Whelehan, 1995: 29). It can be concluded that liberal feminists focus on individual empowerment.

## **2) Marxist/Socialist feminism**

Marxist feminism emphasizes that true equality will not be achieved without major overhauls within society, particularly economic overhauls. Socialist feminists argue that there are fundamental inequalities built into a capitalist society because power and capital are distributed unfairly. Engels (in Whelehan, 1995: 45) claims that a woman's subordination is not a result of her biologic disposition but of social relations, and that the institution of family as it exists is a complex system in which men command women's services. In the end, socialist feminists focus on collective change and empowerment.

## **3) Radical feminism**

Radical feminism is similar to Marxist feminism in that it emphasizes the need for dramatic social change in order to achieve genuine equality for women. Radical feminists believe that society is extremely patriarchal, and until patriarchy is transformed on all levels, the system will remain unfair. A minority of radical feminists is separatist feminists, who believe that men and women need to maintain separate institutions and relationships (Rockler-Gladen, 2008: par 4). To reach their aim, radical feminists more focus on the personal lives of women.

## **4) Lesbian feminism**

Lesbian feminism largely emerged in response to the women's liberation movement's exclusion of lesbians. Westerband (2006: par 3) writes that lesbian feminists produced a political texts including "The Woman Identified Woman". These activists called lesbian separatism, they arguing that "only women can give each other a new sense of self ("The Woman Identified Woman," 235)." They held that "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" are categories created by a male-dominated society utilized to separate and dominate women. Notably, "The Woman Identified Woman" argued that the issue of lesbianism is essential to women's liberation. "It is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other, which is at the heart of women's liberation and the basis for Cultural Revolution ("The Woman Identified Woman", 236)."

### **5) Black feminism**

Black Feminism suggests that sexism, gender discrimination or sex discrimination, and racism are inseparably linked, and that sexism will never be overcome while the system is still so fundamentally racist. Black feminists struggle that the liberation of black women needs freedom for all people, since it would require the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression. They have struggled for recognition, not only from men in their own culture, but also from Western feminists (Weedon, 1999: 161).

#### **d. Patriarchy on feminists perspective**

For feminists, patriarchy is the big enemy. Patriarchy is the one which should be blamed as the condition of women which is treated unjust. Bhasin, in her book *What Is Patriarchy?*, argues that women live on patriarchy control. These are the areas of women's lives that can be said to be under patriarchal control:

##### **1) Women's productivities or labor power**

Men control women's productivities both in the household and outside in paid work. Within the household women provide all kinds of free service to their husband, children and other members of the family. Men also control women's labor outside in several ways. This control and exploitation of women's labor means that men get benefit materially from patriarchy. They derive concrete economic gains from the subordinate of women.

##### **2) Women's reproduction**

Men control women's reproductive power. In many societies women do not have the freedom to decide how many children they want; it depends on the husband. In modern time some states try to control women's reproduction through family planning programs. The states decide the optimum size of the country's population and accordingly, actively encourage or discourage women to have children.

### **3) Control over women`s sexuality**

In this area women are obliged to provide sexual service to their men according to their needs and desire. A radical feminist analysis says that women under patriarchy are not only mothers but also sexual slaves. The male culture defines women as sexual object for male`s pleasure.

### **4) Women`s mobility**

In order to control women`s sexuality, productivity and reproduction men need to control women`s mobility. They control it by restrictions on leaving the domestic space, a strict separation of private and public, limits on interaction between sexes, and so on.

### **5) Property and other economic resources**

Most property and other productive resources are controlled by men and they pass from one man to another, usually from father to son. Even when women have the legal right to inherit such asset, it is still difficult for them to claim their own property. This condition have illustrated by UN statistic: “Women do more than 60 percent of the hours of work done in the world, but they get 10 percent of the world income and own one percent of the world property (in Bhasin, 1993: 9).”

Further, Bhasin says that all economic, political, religious, social and cultural institutional are by and large controlled by men. An analysis of the main institution in society shows that they are all patriarchal in nature, such as:

**a) The family**

The family is the basic institution of society. It is probably a simple example of patriarchy system. A man is considered the head of the household; within the family he controls women sexuality, labor or production, reproduction and mobility. There is a hierarchy in which man is superior and dominant, but woman is inferior and subordinate. According to Gerda Lerner, the family plays an important role in creating a hierarchical system and keeping order in society. She writes, “The family not merely mirrors the other in the state and educates its children to follow it. It also creates and constantly reinforces that order (in Bhasin, 1993: 10).”

**b) Religion**

Most modern religions are patriarchal, defining male authority as supreme. Almost every religion considers women to be inferior, impure, and sinful, and how they have double standards of morality and behavior.

**c) The legal system**

The legal system in most countries is both patriarchal and bourgeois; it favors men and economically powerful classes. Laws pertaining to family, marriage and inheritance are very closely linked to the patriarchal control over property.

**d) The economic system and economic institutions**



Within a patriarchal economic system, men control the economic institutions, own most property, direct economic activity, and determine the value of different productive activities. Moreover, women's role as a mother and labor is not considered an economic contribution at all.

**e) Political system and institutions**

Almost all political institutions in the society, at all level, are male dominated, from village to parliament. The percentage of women in parliament is very small when it is compared with the women's population, in almost every country.

**f) Media**

Media are very important tools in the hands of upper class, upper caste men to propagate class and gender ideology. From films and television to magazine, newspaper, radio, portrayal of women is stereotypical and distorted. The messages about male superiority and female inferiority are repeated constantly, violence against women is out of control, especially in film.

**g) Education institutions and knowledge systems**

Ever since learning and education become formal and institutionalized, men have assumed control over whole areas of knowledge. This male hegemony over the creation of knowledge

marginalized women's knowledge and experiences, their expertise and aspirations.

Some people believe that men are born to dominate and women to be subordinate. They believe that this hierarchy has come from nature. Those stereotypes are difficult to change and will always exist until now. The culture makes men become more powerful in the society and give them authorities to rule the people then give women a position as the subordinate. This situation creates gender discrimination in the society because of men domination.

#### **e. Feminist Literary Criticism**

Feminist literary criticism is a type of literary criticism, which was developed in the late 1960s, focusing on the roles of women in literature. As the direct product of the women's movement, the main interest of this theory is to explore the extent of patriarchal ideology in literature, namely to explore the material forms of social, economic and political discrimination of women. It happens because most of the literary works, which are mostly written by men, portray women as inferior and oppressed. It develops the following central issues of feminism:

- a) Making them have little or no voice in political, social, or economic issues of their society, men have oppressed women;
- b) Men suppress the female, define what it means to be feminine and thereby devoice, devalue, and trivialize what it means to be women by

not giving voice and value to women's opinions, responses, and writings;

c) Men make women the 'nonsignificant other'. (Bressler, 1998: 180)

It shows that even in literary works, women are also placed as the inferior. As men's domination has influenced literature, women have to follow the society to create good and 'acceptable' writings. It is feminist literature aim to load women's voice and their experiences. Women's voices have developed along the history of feminist criticism.

Based on Barry (2002: 122), in the 1970s, this theory focused on exposing the mechanism of patriarchy, and then in the 1980s the focus changed: there was a shift from androtexts (texts by men) to gynotexts (texts by women). The main focus of gynocriticism is to retrieve forgotten literature by women, so they can participate in literature and not only accept the constructs of femininity developed by men.

Furthermore, Tuttle (1986: 194) cites the goals of feminist criticism as: (1) to develop and uncover a female tradition of writing, (2) to interpret symbolism of women's writing so that it will not be lost or ignored by the male point of view, (3) to rediscover old texts, 4) to analyze women writers and their writings from a female perspective, (5) to resist sexism in literature, and (6) to increase awareness of the sexual politics of language and style.

Two important representatives are Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir. Virginia Woolf wrote *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and others

essays on women authors and on the cultural, economic, and educational disabilities within what she called a "patriarchal" society that have or prohibited women from realizing their creative possibilities. Simone de Beauvoir, with her book *The Second Sex* (1949), wrote about a wide-ranging critique of the cultural identification of women as merely the negative objects and claims that women are subjects and not objects.

#### **f. Gender Discrimination**

Catharine MacKinnon is an American feminist, scholar, lawyer, teacher and activist. She (2006: 244) believes that women get discrimination in the society because of their gender. Many people look women as the weak person who cannot live without any help from men or women's life depends on men's mercy. She argues that the stereotype judging that women are weak is a mistake. She later explains that women are as good as men. Anything men can do, women can do (MacKinnon, 2006:245).

Because they are considered weak, women often get different treatment by the society especially in job distribution. MacKinnon gives an example that the society always forces women to be housewives to serve the husband and children. If women work outside, they still have not got equal pay, or equal work, far less equal pay for equal work (MacKinnon, 2006: 247).

Women are generally underpaid because they often do low-status jobs, compared to men. In Japan, it is difficult for women to reach the high position in a company. Usually, they only work as the office lady or the part time worker which is very difficult to get a promotion (<http://www.hrsolidarity.net/mainfile.php/1999vol09no01/788/>). The condition in the Creole is not different. The women mostly work in the factory as the labor and they only get low payment for their duty. Unfortunately, the father or husband takes the control of the money that they get from working (Bauman, 2002: par 13).

MacKinnon also concerns about sexual harassment. She argues that sexual harassment is sex discrimination because the act reinforces the social inequality of women to men. Women always become the victim of sexual harassment because she claims that women are still treated more like "things" than people (2006: 266). Sexual harassment becomes the nightmare in school and workplace. She (2006: 270) says "I think that when men sexually harass it expresses male control over sexual access to us. It does not mean they all want to fuck with us, they just want to hurt us, dominate us, and control us, that fucking us".

Those are the kinds of male supremacy. The men are so dominant and it makes women`s voice become voiceless. In Saudi Arabia, women have few political or social rights. They cannot vote or be elected to high political positions (al-Mohamed, 2010: 46). Meanwhile, the Creole women have different problems. In the society, they cannot make any

protest to the men about the rules that discriminate them. They have to be silent about the condition in the society (Bauman, 2002: par 14).

MacKinnon wants women to fight the male supremacy because “women have done good things, and it is a good thing to affirm them” (2006: 248). Then she adds that “I think women have history. I think we create culture” (2006: 248). The statement shows how women need to be confident to gain the equality. They need to unite in solidarity to end traditions, practices, and laws that harm women. It is a fight for freedom to be fully and completely human and equal without apology or permission.

## **B. Previous Research Findings**

There are several texts which have studied about feminism and *The Awakening*. The first text is “Feminist or Naturalist: The Social Context of Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*” by Nancy Walker. This text describes the novel using naturalism theory not feminist criticism. Walker (1979) explains that in Edna’s case, the problem is not about how Edna tries to struggle for her freedom from the patriarchal society but rather because she is confused with the culture or the way of life from the Creole.

The other texts are theses at English language and Literature Study Program in Yogyakarta State University, written Kardina Hadiati entitled *Gender Discrimination And Its Impact In Tan’s The Joy Luck*



*Club*, and by Pramusita Putri Dewanti entitled *Women's Identity And The Process In Pursuing It In Cunningham's The Hours*. Both theses focus on the issues about women on the patriarchal society.

The theory of the first previous study is the same as the theory used in this research that feminist criticism theory focuses on discrimination upon women. However, the focus of the researchers is different. Kardina's thesis more focuses on women's discrimination that happens in China where Eastern value is still powerful. Conversely, this research investigates *The Awakening* novel by Kate Chopin. This research is aimed at identifying the effort of the main characters in the novel as the effect of oppression in the Creole society. The second thesis use feminism theory. It has more focus on women's identity that somehow has cover by the system which does not want women to know about their identity. The focus is almost similar to that of this research where in this research Edna tries to find her own identity though has to face her society.

### **C. Background of the Novel**

#### **1. The Creole**

Generally, Creole is the term used originally from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century to denote white person born in Spanish America of Spanish parents as distinguished from America resident. Creole is also someone who had been born in Spain. In Louisiana in the United States it refers, in

some context, to French-speaking white descendants of early French and Spanish settlers and in the other contexts, to mulattos speaking a form of French and Spanish (Warren E. Preece (Ed.), 1984: 233). Moreover, Creole society is unlike any other in the United States. Occupying in the southern of Louisiana and part of Alabama and eastern Missouri, the Creoles are the descendants of French and Spanish colonists of the eighteen century (Walker, 1979: 60).

In her text, Walker states that some of them (Creole) become very wealthy as sugar cane planters; others are less successful economically, but all are bound by Catholicism, strong family ties, and common language, French, into a cultural subgroup. Clement Eaton (in Walker, 1979: 61) states that “the Creoles, to a greater degree than the Anglo-America, lived a life of sensations and careless enjoyment. They loved to dance, gamble, fish, attend feast, play on the fiddle and to live without much thought of the morrow.”

Thus, Walker describes that there are several reasons for this reputation for an easygoing attitude of the Creoles. One is Catholicism. Most of them are Catholic; they have pre-Lenten celebration known as Mardi Gras. New Orland is called Southern Babylon because of the quadroon and octoroon mistresses supported openly for Creole men. In quadroons, there have one quarter Negro blood which is considered fully Negro and the mother of quadroon girls will be happy to have her daughter become the mistress of a wealthy white man.

Another reason is Creoles did not move westward in searching for large pieces of land, as did most colonists. They were content to remain in area of New Orland, and made up about a third of its population in 1860. (About forty-five percent of the white population of the state then lived in New Orleans, which had until shortly before been the capital state.) Those spirits are shocking the visitors or the foreigners who still do not understand about the uniqueness of this society, so it makes Creoles often in conflict with Anglo-America society.

In the Creole family the father is dominant. The men like to go to the cafes to discuss business, play dominoes, and have a drink while women should spend their time to make sure the house becomes comfortable for the family (Walker, 1979: 60). The position of the Creole men is very high in the society because their family needs them to get the money to buy the daily needs. That is why they are very dominant in the Creole society. (Bauman, 2002: par 13)

## **2. The Novel**

*The Awakening* was published in 1899, and it immediately created a controversy. Kate Chopin's contemporaries were shocked by her description of a woman with active sexual desires, who dares to leave her husband and has an affair. The novel was not paid much attention by the critics and society of that time. Some found it too harsh, too sexual, and too shocking. Although Chopin had written a small library of works,

including *Bayou Folk* and collections of short stories *A Night in Acadie* and *A Vocation and the Voice*, it is *The Awakening* that ultimately placed her in the league of valued writers.

The plot of *The Awakening* centers on Edna Pontellier and her struggle to reconcile her increasingly unorthodox views on femininity and motherhood with the prevailing social attitudes of the turn-of-the-century South. It is one of the earliest American novels that focus on women's issues without condescension. It is also widely seen as a landmark work of early feminism (Telgen, Diane, and Kevin Hile (eds.), 1998). Based on feminist interpretation, Edna becomes emotionally independent of her marriage after falling in love with another man, sending her children away to their grandmother, moving out from her husband's house, and having an affair which is solely on physical attraction. Further, she commits suicide at the end of the novel (Walker, 1979: 60).

### **3. The Author**

Kate Chopin (1850-1904) was born Kate O'Flaherty in St. Louis, Missouri in 1850 to Eliza and Thomas O'Flaherty. She was known as an American novelist, a short story writer, and an essayist. She was the third of five children, but her sisters died in infancy and her brothers (from her father's first marriage) in their early twenties. She was the only child to live past the age of twenty-five in her family. She studied at the St. Louis Academy of the Sacred Heart from 1855 until 1868.

In 1870, at the age of twenty, she married Oscar Chopin a son of a wealthy cotton-growing family in Louisiana. After their marriage they lived in New Orleans where she had five boys and two girls, all before she was twenty-eight. Unfortunately Oscar died of swamp fever there in 1882 and Kate took over the running of his general store and plantation for over a year. To support herself and her young family, she began to write. She was immediately successful and wrote short stories about people she had known in Louisiana.

Her first novel, *At Fault*, was published in 1890, followed by two collections of her short stories, *Bayou Folk* in 1894 and *A Night in Acadia* in 1897. *At Fault*, was a moderate success, but did not truly establish Chopin as a reputable writer. Then *The Awakening* was published in 1899, and after that she was well known as both a local colorist and a woman writer, and had published over one hundred stories, essays, and sketches in literary magazines (Wyatt, 1995: par 8). While visiting the St. Louis World's Fair on August 20, 1904, Chopin suffered a brain hemorrhage and died two days later, at the age of 53. She was interred in the Calvary cemetery in St. Louis.

#### **D. Analytical construct**

Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* shares to the readers a story about the life of Edna Pontellier in a patriarchy society, the Creole. Edna is a picture of woman who is trapped in a system that makes her become a

victim of it. The unkindness of the system makes her try to fight against the orthodox views although her efforts are not accepted by many people.

The researcher chooses the protagonist in the novel, Edna Pontellier, as the main focus of the research. The research identifies Edna's struggle and how she tries to survive from her "battle" against the Creole society. The researcher applies feminism theory to answer the research questions about how she has struggle against the Creoles. The assumption of the theory of each person, men and women must be equal in all aspects of life. Women also have the same rights to control their own life. Thus, the concept that women are subordinate is totally wrong because women are able to work as well as men when they get the same opportunity to prove their potential.

To link literature and feminism theory, the researcher uses feminist literary criticism. It focuses on the role of women in literature. This theory argues that literary text can be the weapon to attack patriarchy system and also change the perception about women who somehow are described improperly in literary texts. Further, women do not depend on men's perspective anymore when they interpret texts (Barry, 2002: 122).

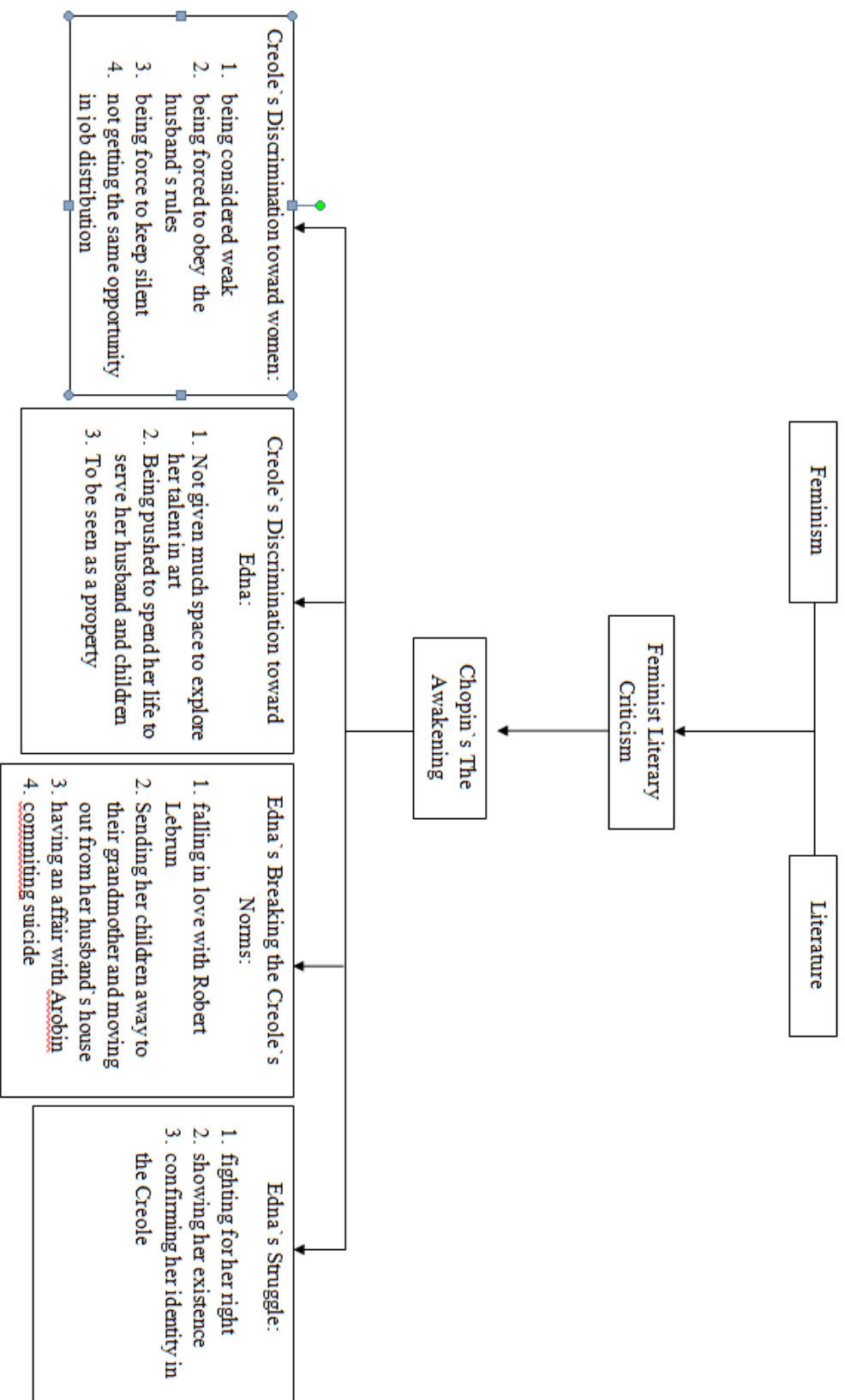


Figure 1. Framework of Thinking

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHOD

##### A. Research Design

The research uses qualitative approach which is interpretive and mainly shares some special characteristics. Qualitative research is a research procedure that resulting descriptive data from the written or spoken words of the subject of the research being observed (Moleong, 2003: 3). This approach focuses on the background and the individuality holistically. It means that the research describes all the data found to be analyzed in the line the objectives of the research. Because novel is the portrait of the real life, the research should use qualitative approach to observe human behaviour.

##### B. The Data Source

The data of the research are some significant expressions in words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs taken from Chopin's *The Awakening* that represent the oppression and discrimination faced by women in Creole society. In this research, the researcher also took the data about the struggle of Edna Pontellier to break the injustice in the Creole society. Thus, they became the main data and materials for this research.

The main source of the research is a novel by Chopin entitled *The Awakening*, published in New York, United States by Bantam Classic in 1981. In order to support the analysis, this researcher also used other books,



articles and online sources, which focus on feminism, Creole and history about Americans to help him analyze the novel.

### **C. The Instrument of the Research**

The instrument of this research is the researcher himself. According to Wiersma (1995: 218), since the qualitative research is very “researcher independent”, the researcher holds a very significant role. It means that during the entire research process, the researcher makes decision about what data to collect and so on. In other words, it can be said that he takes a role as the designer, data collector, analyst, data interpreter, and results reporter of the research.

Data cards and data sheets serve as secondary instruments to guide in the process of identification and analysis. The researcher also used a computer, books and internet support to facilitate his work during data processing.

### **D. Data Collection and Categorization**

Before collecting the data, the researcher did two steps for the data collection techniques; they were reading and note taking. The first step was carefully reading and rereading the novel to find the words, phrases, and sentences to be analyzed in this research. This comprehensive rereading aimed to understand the detail of the story. It was expected to help the researcher analyze the data accurately. The second step was note taking. The researcher took notes on the words, phrases, and sentences in the novel.

Then the researcher wrote them the same as the original ones written in the novel. The notes were divided into different categories based on what the researcher wants.

To get a good arrangement of the found data, the researcher used data cards as presented below:

Figure 2.

#### **The Form of Data Card**

No.	Data/Quotation	Page	Note
1.	“...looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of person properly which has suffered some damage.”	3	Creole discrimination
2.			
...			

Figure 2. **The example of card used in data collecting and classifying.**

The cards, then, were rearranged based on the categories. Tables were also used as field notes.

#### **E. Data Analysis Technique**

In analyzing the data from Chopin's *The Awakening*, the researcher employed qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative approach was mainly employed to describe the data in the words or in making

interpretation on the findings. Context analysis is used as the technique to analyzed Chopin`s *The Awakening*.

After finishing data reduction, the researcher tried to do data clarification through references. It was done in several steps. The first one was by collecting the data from the novel which was related to the topic of the research. The data were categorized into appropriate unit. The data reduction was also performed after the researcher categorized the data to eliminate the irrelevant ones. In the next step, the researcher described and analyzed the data to deal with the problems of Edna Pontellier regarding to her efforts to find her freedom in the Creole society. The last step was checking the trustworthiness of the data.

#### **F. Validity and Trustworthiness of the Data**

To prove the validity of this research, the researcher made a crosscheck between the story and the theory used and made a data triangulation with the supervisors as the expert's judgment. There are four main types of triangulation, by source, by methods, by researcher or observers, and by theories.

In this research, the researcher used sources and observers. The sources are forms of books, papers, articles, journals, and some written sources from internet related to feminist literary theory. Meanwhile, in utilizing the observer, the researcher applied peer review. In so doing, the researcher asked his friends from the same major study Sigit Budi Sulisty

to confirm the research data. In addition, to gain the trustworthiness the researcher consulted the data with the first and second consultants, Mr. Sugi Iswalono, M.A. and Mrs. Niken Anggraeni, M.A. After all the steps done, then, the research is trustworthy.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Chopin's *The Awakening* is the story about the hero versus the villain. In the novel, the heroin is Edna Pontellier, an innocent woman and her opponent is the Creole. This battle is also like the battle of David versus Goliath, in which the weak wins against the strong one. As a heroine, she makes some "rebellions" against the ruler which has oppressed her with the system. Edna does that thing to find her independency though by common people her actions are unacceptable.

With all of her power, Edna tries to break the Creole's patriarchy system. On the other side, the Creole does not want to lose their hegemony to control their people either. This is in line with Jacqueline Berke's statement (in Walker, 1979: 60) that: "...consciousness did not kill Edna; on the contrary, what killed Edna Pontellier was on the part of unawakened society, every effort to unfold as a total human being that she was forced finally to capitulate."

The quotation above clearly attacks the society. Berke (1976) argues that the Creole become the one that should be blamed because the Creole absence makes Edna live under the discrimination. They cannot accommodate Edna's desire to be herself without any distraction from the other. The patriarchy system which exists in Creole society is so repressive and so harsh to ask Edna to become an ideal wife and mother based on their

perspective. They do not give Edna any option to improve her talent as an artist. She obviously gets oppression and discrimination because of her status as a woman. Finally, Edna tries to find her identity by struggling against the system.

### **A. Creole`s Discrimination toward Women**

An issue that becomes the topic in the novel is discrimination. Dorsen (in Finkelman, 1998: 327) states that discrimination amongst people is the prejudicial treatment of different group of people based on certain characteristics. The characteristics are race, color, descent, or national or ethnic. Based on that definition, it can be inferred that Edna lived under discrimination because she obviously gets different treatment in the society.

Chopin in the beginning of the novel already gives a picture of the kinds of discrimination to women that happen in the Creole society. She starts the novel with a green and yellow parrot singing in the cage which symbolizes the discrimination women and especially upon Edna Pontellier.

A green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage outside the door, kept repeating over and over:  
 "Allez vous-en! Allez vous-en! Sapristi! That's all right!"  
 He could speak a little Spanish, and also a language which nobody understood, unless it was the mocking-bird that hung on the other side of the door, whistling his fluty notes out upon the breeze with maddening persistence. (Chopin, 1981: 1)

The quotation above is the picture of the condition of women in the Creole society. The caged birds in general are the representative of women in the Creole who expected by society to have no other roles besides those of a

wife and a mother. It is reasonable to think of the women as living out their lives in gilded cages – present for decoration, given every comfort, and banned from any real freedom.

The Creole women have to follow their husband and must obey all of the rules that do not give them much opportunity to be independent. After marriage, they must dedicate their lives in their husband's house to become a good wife and mother to serve their husband and children. Perhaps, they get a comfortable life because their husband gives what they need but on the other hand they lose their freedom. That creates other discrimination such as women are considered weak, should obey their husband's rules, should keep silent, and not get the same opportunity in job distribution. This is the explanation of Creole's discrimination toward the women:

### **1. Women are considered weak**

MacKinnon (2006: 244) mentions that women get discrimination because they are considered weak. The Creole women also become the victim of the stereotype because the Creole see women as weak people. The stereotype of women is weak, beautiful, gentle, and sensitive. People mostly see or value women from the body or the beauty only, not from their brain or talent (Manderson and Liamputtong, 2002: 151-152).

They are like the birds as the symbol of beauty (Werness, 2006: 321). When they are already married, they have to follow their husband and must obey all of the rules that sometimes not give them much opportunity to be

independent. That happens because the Creole believes women's duty tend to take care the house and the children, be a good wife for their husband, and be a good mother for their children. A gentlewoman ensured that the home is a place of comfort for her husband and family from the stresses of work.

Whether married or single all Creole women are expected to be dependent to men. Because they do not have power, the single Creole women have to marry before they are twenty five years old. They usually have a "coming out" to the Theater d'Orleans which mark their beginning of their search of husband. The Creole man who is interested with the girl will stop and give their respect to her. Later, the young man talks to the girl's father. If he wants to marry the girl, the two fathers will negotiate the dowry and the girl has no power to reject it (Bauman, 2002: par 15).

In Chopin's *The Awakening*, Edna is only "a green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage outside the door, kept repeating over and over: "Allez vous-en! Allez vous-en! Sapristi! That's all right!" (Chopin, 1981: 1)" Like the parrot which hangs in a cage outside the door, she is trapped in her husband's house and the society. She does not have any power to break the pillar surrounding her life. Her duty is only "singing" for her husband and the society to make them happy with her voice.

Edna is not happy with the condition that happens to her. She frequently asks why she lives under the rule which becomes so discriminating to her. Unfortunately, her voice is also meaningless as no one understands her language to be independent, not her husband, not Madam Ratignole, not



Robert Lebrun, the one she loves, and not also the society. Chopin has described it in the beginning of the story. She wrote that “he could speak a little Spanish, and also a language which nobody understood (Chopin, 1981: 1).” He (a green and yellow parrot) in the previous sentence refers to Edna. That is the symbol of Edna’s life which is her voice is meaningless in the society.

## **2. Women should obey their husband’s rules**

Because women are considered weak, in the Creole society, women should obey their husband commands. They cannot reject it because the husbands are the ones who give them food, clothes, money, home, and protection (Hirsch and Logsdon (Eds), 1992: 144). In the Creole family, a father or a man is very dominant. He controls the wife and the children. The position of Creole men is very high in the society because they are the ones who make money while women only presents to serve them.

In the Creole family the father was dominant... If he was a planter, he ruled his estate like a king. He had a large house, large crops, and a large family... He would go to the cafes to discuss business, play dominoes, and have a drink. (Bauman, 2002: par 13)

The quotation shows how powerful a man in the Creole society. Moreover, in Louisiana, the husband’s authority is superior to the wife and their children. He lives like a king in the family and as a woman the wife should obey husband’s rules without any complaint because men are the heads of their household while women dedicate their lives to home and family. Women have no rights, and are legally bound to do whatever their

husbands decided is best. Once married, they are transformed into property and have the legal status of a slave. In this society a woman has little hope, other than to pray that the man she marries is kind to her.

### **3. Women should keep silent**

Besides possessing weakness, Creoles women should also hold the prudence in speech. This means they have to control their tongue when talking with others. For women that become discriminated because the society treats them differently from men because men have a freedom to talk what they want and even cursing is allowed while women need to talk politely.

The condition constructs a perception that good women should keep silent and follow all of men's instruction. As stated by Archer and Lloyd (2002: 19-20), stereotype may be viewed as desirable image, but if it is not seen as desirable ones, it can form prejudice and discrimination. How people view women's desirable image can create discrimination since they decide what is ideal and not by social construct.

Sadly, it happens to Creole women. The woman-mother image in the Creole society makes them get discrimination. It happens because as a woman-mother they need to control every word that comes out from their mouths. They cannot talk as freely as men because of their status as a woman. Further, their words do not have value in the society either and the consequence is they cannot fight for their right.

Furthermore, in the law and court the Creole women`s words not have values. They cannot give a testimony because the Creole decide the people who are unable to bear witness to testaments:

1. Women of any age whatsoever. 2. Male children who have not attained the age of sixteen years complete. 3. Persons who are insane, deaf, dumb or blind. 4. Persons whom the criminal laws declare incapable of exercising civil functions (Culley in Sprinkle, 1998: 120).

Women are placed on the same legal level as children, sick person and the criminal. It means that their position is not the same as Creole men.

In *The Awakening*, the main characters live in a society obsessed with the reputation. Mr. Pontellier in particular carries this obsession out to unhealthy ends – he becomes more concerned about his reputation than about his marriage, and is willing to put good money on it. Chopin described:

The Pontelliers possessed a very charming home on Esplanade 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. The softest carpets and rugs covered the floors; rich and tasteful draperies hung at doors and windows. There were paintings, selected with judgment 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, 1981: 19)

In Creole society, husbands hold the power of the purse, and as such, the quality of a woman`s married life was absolutely dependent on the wealth and generosity of her husband. Women also need to be careful when they are

talking with another people. As a result, the voice of women is meaningless at home and also in the society.

#### **4. Women do not get the same opportunity in job distribution**

The societal structure of the Creole society decreed that a woman was fit to be only a wife and a mother. MacKinnon (2006: 247) states that the society always forces women to be the housewife to serve the husband and children. Chopin (1981: 19) wrote that phenomena clearly in her book:

The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood. They were women who idolized their children, worshipped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels.

The Creole society has poor perception to women who cannot do their duty as a wife and mother as they wish for. In their culture, they always consider that the right place of women is staying in the house. The job outside of house is the duty of men. The wife only needs to wait for her husband at home and makes the house become comfortable when her husband comes back home.

The Creole women are still expected to stay at home as idle, decorative symbols of their husbands' wealth. They are, as Virginia Woolf called it, expected to be angels in the house. They are pregnant frequently due to the restrictions on birth control, they care for their homes, husbands, and children, play music, sing, or draw to enhance the charm of their homes and to reflect well on their husbands.

Those values create discrimination toward women because not all Creole women want to spend their entire life to become a mother-woman. They also have passion to work outside of home like the men. Further, some Creole women could earn wages as factory workers. This looks like they already get equality but the fact is the pay is low, and their income is legally controlled by their husbands or fathers. Even they have opportunity to work but they still get discrimination from the society.

## **B. Creole`s Discrimination toward Edna**

The previous sub-chapter has explained about the Creole`s discrimination toward women in which the women are considered weak, should obey husband`s rules, should keep silent, and do not get the same opportunity in job distribution. Thus, this part would like to explain about the Creole`s discrimination toward Edna.

As a woman who lives in the Creole society, she obviously gets multiple discriminations by the society like other Creole women. However the kinds of discrimination she suffers from are as follows:

### **1. Not given much space to explore her talent in art**

Edna also gets discrimination in her society. She does not get the same opportunity in job distribution. This possibly happens because the Creole always pushes a woman to become a good housewife like Madame Ratignole. They always expect Edna want to follow Madame Ratignole`s

way. However, Edna does not want to do that. She has a dream to be an artist, which is forbidden in the Creole norm.

Mrs. Pontellier had brought her sketching materials, which she sometimes dabbled with in an un-professional way. She liked the dabbling. She felt in it a satisfaction of a kind which no other employment afforded her. (Chopin, 1981: 28)

Edna finds satisfaction in art that she cannot find elsewhere. This activity is solely her own and pursued for no purpose other than enjoyment. She even says "I feel like painting," answered Edna. "Perhaps I shan't always feel like it" (Chopin, 1981: 147). Moreover she

spent an hour or two in looking over some of her old sketches. She could see their shortcomings and defects, which were glaring in her eyes. She tried to work a little, but found she was not in the humor. Finally she gathered together a few of the sketches--those which she considered the least discreditable; and she carried them with her when, a little later, she dressed and left the house. (Chopin, 1981: 139)

Painting is becoming a serious work to Edna, who begins seeing her own shortcomings and desires improvement. Therefore, she gets pressure from the society which is force her to dedicate her life for the family and forget about the painting. When Edna says:

"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. I can't make it more clear; it's only something which I am beginning to comprehend, which is revealing itself to me" (Chopin, 1981: 122).

Madame Ratignolle attacks Edna by saying:

"I don't know what you would call the essential, or what you mean by the unessential," said Madame Ratignolle, cheerfully; "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, 1981: 122).

Madame Ratignolle, as the representation of a mother-woman in the Creole, obviously disagrees with Edna's perspective and even she attack Edna using Bible. She believes women have to dedicate their life for the family and she wants Edna follow the norm as a Creole woman.

## **2. Being pushed to spend her life to serve her husband and children**

The Creole expects Edna to be a good woman and wife whom Chopin calls it a mother-woman in her novel. The society wants Edna to become a woman who idolizes her children and worship her husband. They ask Edna to act perfectly, look pretty, be humble, like to cook, and be charming.

In the novel, the perfect Creole woman is represented by Madame Adele Ratignole. She is a personification of a perfect womanhood in Creole society. She is dedicated to her husband, who adores her, gives birth every two years, and adorns herself with lavish clothing and jewelry and she is notable for her beauty.

The problem seems to be that Edna is not a mother-woman. She cannot become the idol of her children or rather not care with that problem. She does not love her husband and she does not care with all of Creole's norms. Chopin also describes it in the novel "in short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman" (Chopin, 1981: 19). However, the Creole wants Edna to spend her life to serve her husband and children like Madame Ratignolle because that is their fate.

...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, 1981: 122).

Madame Ratignolle has a perspective that a woman is created by God to give her life for her children and of course for her husband. And they cannot do more than that.

### **3. To be seen as a property**

In *The Awakening*, Edna's marriage is a huge barrier to happiness and individual fulfillment. Because of not having any power, Edna must obey her husband's rules. Moreover, as a successful businessman Leonce Pontellier is always busy with his business and spends much more his time in the outside home.

Mr. Pontellier wore eye-glasses. He was a man of forty, of medium height and rather slender build; he stooped a little. His hair was brown and straight, parted on one side. His beard was neatly and closely trimmed. (Chopin, 1981: 2)

The main problem is not about his profile but about how he treats his wife. He fails not only to give much attention into his wife, but also to treat his wife as an ownership, as something else that he can get. He does not see Edna as a human being who needs much attention from her husband. Mr. Pontellier more looks at his wife "as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property" (Chopin, 1981: 4).

Mr. Pontellier can do that thing because as a Creole man, he feels superior toward Edna. He believes his wife cannot live without him so he can do whatever he wants to Edna. Further, like other Creole men he prefers to



spend his time to go to the cafes to discuss business, play dominoes, and have a drink rather than accompany Edna at home (Walker, 1979). When Edna asks him about dinner, he responds it with:

...halted a moment and shrugged his shoulders. He felt in his vest pocket; there was a ten-dollar bill there. He did not know; perhaps he would return for the early dinner and perhaps he would not. It all depended upon the company which he found over at Klein's and the size of "the game." (Chopin, 1981: 6)

Because Mr. Pontellier considers Edna as a property, he becomes angry when his wife disobeys his order. As a man and a husband, Mr. Pontellier feels superior to Edna. He is upset with Edna's action when she defies his command to take care his child who, according to him, gets a fever. He does not like his wife who has not followed his order. When Edna explains that they are perfectly healthy and happy, he erupts with anger, blaming her for being inattentive and a bad mother.

Mr. Pontellier does not care about his wife's opinion. He wants to dominate his wife because the Creole norms ask him to do that. In the Creole family the father is dominant. Thus, he is really upset to Edna because he believes his wife must obey his entire request without any protest.

### **C. Edna's effort to break the Creole's norms**

Discrimination will only create a disappointment. It happens because everybody needs to express their ideas or dreams. When somebody gets discrimination from others, he or she will fight against it to get his or her

freedom. According to Andrade (2010: par 11), discrimination physically and emotionally could

cause bad effects such as: depression, anger, loss of self-esteem, isolation, and feeling stressed or unable to cope. Further the long-term effects could include lost of motivation, reduced individual rights, restricted opportunities, limited access to services, mental illness caused by stress (<http://technorati.com/lifestyle/article/diversity-harmful-effects-of-discrimination-part4/>).

Previously, it is describe the kind of Creole`s discrimination toward women and Edna Pontellier. However, some Creole women choose to reject social norms. The column “Le Catechisme Conjugal” appearing in *L’Avant Coureur*, the local newspaper of St. John the Baptist parish, cited one of the principles of marriage, indeed of all society, as, “The wife is a property that one acquires by contract. . .she belongs to you [the husband].” The “Conjugal Catechism” further elaborate on this point, proclaiming, “Worry nothing of her murmurs, of her cries, of her sorrows; nature makes her to our usage and for all to bear: children, chagrins, cuts and pains of the man.” (Morlas, 2005: 56)

Edna Pontellier also decides to fight against the patriarchy system in the Creole society. She attacks the discrimination that happens to her by breaking the Creole`s norm. She attacks the stereotype that mentions how women are considered weak, should obeying the husband`s rules, should keep silent, and not get the same opportunity in job distribution. She also hits the Creole`s discrimination to her that makes unable to get much space to

explore her talent in art, pushes her to spend her life to serve her husband and children, and sees her as a property.

In the beginning of the novel, Edna is shown as a repressed, traditional woman. However, in progress, “Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her” (Chopin, 1981: 33). She does not want her to be an independent woman to be stopped by the society so she has to break the Creole’s norm to gain it though her efforts are not popular among the Creole’s point of view. Actually, she only wants to enjoy her life like when she is swimming in the sea because she feels that:

The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clearing, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in the abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation. The voice of the sea speaks to the soul. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace. (Chopin, 1981: 34)

However, she gets the problem to find joys in her life. The discrimination that Edna gets from the society forces her to get struggle. She has no option except fighting back to find the equality in her live and her identity as a free woman like her expressions; “Perhaps it is better to wake up after all, even to suffer, rather than to remain a dupe to illusions all one’s life” (Chopin, 1981: 292). Finally, Edna becomes emotionally independent of her marriage after falling in love with another man, sends her children away to their grandmother, moves out from her husband’s house, and has an affair which is solely on physical attraction. Further, she commits suicide at the end

of the novel as her final triumph. Edna's efforts to break the Creole's norms are explained further in the following points:

### **1. Falling in love with Robert Lebrun**

Leonce Pontellier looks like a perfect husband. He gives Edna plenty of money, sends her care packages, and indulges her hobbies. Furthermore, he makes a good living and is a popular figure in society. But in fact he acts as if Edna were his property. Mr. Pontellier certainly treats Edna well, but in the same way as someone treats his dog well. He pampers it and gives it treats, but at the end of the day, he expects it to behave and turn tricks. Because of that condition, Edna feels that "Her husband seemed to her now like a person whom she had married without love as an excuse" (Chopin, 1981: 202). She believes that:

Her marriage to Leonce Pontellier was purely an accident, in this respect resembling many other marriages which masquerade as the decrees of Fate. It was in the midst of her secret great passion that she met him. He fell in love, as men are in the habit of doing, and pressed his suit with an earnestness and an ardor which left nothing to be desired. (Chopin, 1981: 46)

Moreover, Edna's sexual awakening begins when she has falling in love with Robert Lebrun, a son of a resort owner. They walk and relax on the beach, which makes Edna feel more alive. She has only known a boring life before. Through her moments with Robert, she realizes that she is unhappy with her husband.

Edna's feeling to Robert obviously break the Creole's norm. The Creole expects the wives to be passive and innocent lovers. Falling in love

with another man is forbidden because it betrays the husband and the marriage. That is also far from the Creole's ideal women that the women must love their husband (Bauman, 2002: par 14). However, Edna loves Robert very much and Robert also has the same feeling though Adele Ratignolle warns Robert: "She is not one of us; she is not like us. She is might make unfortunate blunder of taking you seriously (Chopin, 1981: 50-51)." Ratignolle tells Robert that Edna is not a Creole. She is a Kentucky Presbyterian by birth which has different culture with the Creole. Ratignolle assumes Edna has misunderstanding about Robert's attitude to her.

Edna is very sad when Robert leaves her for Mexico. However, she realizes that she is seeing life in a new way now after Robert leaves her. "That she was seeing with different eyes and making the acquaintance of new conditions in herself that colored and changed her environment, she did not yet suspect" (Chopin, 1981: 138). She continues to think about Robert, and on some days she is happy and on some other days she is sad. Edna is simply deciding to do what she wants, regardless of what her husband or society may think.

## **2. Sending her children away to their grandmother and moving out from her husband's house**

In Creole society, a good mother is a selfless mother who puts her family before herself. The Creole women need to make house comfortable for their husband and children. Home is the place for men to recharge their energy after working all day long to get money to buy foods for their wives

and children. For children, home is the first place to study about the moral, religious, ethical and social precept of good citizenship (Shanley, 1989: 4).

A house has major role for the family like in Ruskin's (in Shanley, 1989: 4) description: "This is the true nature of home – it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt and division." But Edna does not care about this concept. After she realizes that her marriage does not give her a happiness, Edna decides to abandon her duty as a mother, she sends her children away to their grandmother and moves out from her husband's house. She just wants to gain her independency. Edna does not care about other people's opinion either. When Madame Ratignolle hears of Edna living alone and leaving her husband, she tells her that Edna "seems to like a child" (Chopin, 1981: 127) but Edna ignores it because she finally recognizes that:

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, 1981: 70-71)

The explanation above shows that Edna finally success swimming more far than other women. It means she feels more powerful than other women. She is not an ordinary woman because she already proves it by swimming farther where no women have swum before. Moreover, Edna has already understood that she is declaring war with the society.

Edna looked straight before her with a self-absorbed expression upon her face. She felt no interest in anything about her. The street, the children, the fruit vender, the flowers growing there under her eyes,

were all part and parcel of an alien world which had suddenly become antagonistic. (Chopin, 1981: 138)

The society is now Edna's enemy. This condition is not very pleasant and it does not promise well for the future. Edna has ignored her housework and decides to move out of their large home on Esplanade Street and into a smaller "pigeon-hole" home down the block. She wants to be independent and does not want her husband to have any sort of claim on her.

### **3. Having an affair with Alcee Arobin**

Creole women must be faithful to her husband and have to keep secure their married whatever their husband done. Thus, an affair is a big mistake because it has betrayed the marriage. Sheri and Stritof (2003: 209) mention that affair is a romantic and emotionally deep sexual or emotional relationship that may not last long that is between two people who are not married to one another.

After Robert leaves for Mexico, Edna she starts to spend most of her time with society people at the horse races and Jockey Club. She seeks Mademoiselle Reisz for comfort and advice. She slowly becomes more independent and does not live her life for Mr. Pontellier or her children alone; rather, she lives her life for herself.

Edna meets Alcee Arobin, a man who has a well-deserved playboy reputation, and he introduces Edna to various physical pleasures. Arobin comforts her with kind words and soft caresses. She tells him, goodnight. He does not answer, except to continue to hug her.

“He did not say good night until she had become supple to his gentle, seductive entreaties” (Chopin, 1981: 242).

Edna is drawn to Arobin because of her desires to be satisfied sexually. Arobin impresses her with not only his knowledge of the way around a woman, but also his horses at the lake. Unlike her relationship with Robert, Edna's affair with Arobin is emotionless.

Van Mechelen (1992: par 22) in his article “What Every Man Should Know about Feminist Issues: Affairs” wrote that the feminists might say women have affairs because their men do not treat them right. Another reason is that “affairs are appealing as sexual experimentation” (<http://www.backlash.com/book/affairs.html>). This happens to Edna. She makes an affair because Mr. Pontellier does not treat her right. Moreover, maybe she only wants to have fun with Arobin because she still loves Robert. Another reason is Edna wants to show to the people that she has a full authority to control her body. Edna is free to sleep with a man that she likes although this is not accepted in her culture and it is against the Creole norm.

#### **4. Committing suicide**

The last effort of Edna is committing suicide. Edna imagines her final triumph where she could finally prove her independency to the society, and the one way to do that would be in death. Hornby (1995: 1195) mentions that suicide is any action that may result in disaster for oneself or action of killing oneself intentionally. Becoming suicidal is a process that begins in severe



stress and pain generated by serious life crisis, stress, and pain increase as the crisis or perception of it (<http://www.save.org/basic/q&a>).

Obviously, committing suicide is not allowed in the Creole society. Based on the theology of the Roman Catholic Church which is adopted by many Creole, death by suicide is considered a grave or serious sin. The chief Roman Catholic Christian argument is that one's life is the property of God and a gift to the world, and to destroy that life is to wrongly assert dominion over what is God's and is a tragic loss of hope (<http://lds.org/study/topics/suicide?lang=eng>)

However, Edna still does her final effort to show her independency to her husband and the Creole. It is important to note that she is controlled by her own emotions, not by men or society. Edna says:

"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. I can't make it more clear; it's only something which I am beginning to comprehend, which is revealing itself to me." (Chopin, 1981: 122)

She simply wants her independence, to become her own woman in her own way, and to not give up her entire life and soul for her children. The last scene of suicide is written in a beautiful prose. Chopin (1981: 300-301) wrote it so calmly and described Edna's condition. She wrote:

The water of the Gulf stretched out before her, gleaming with the million lights of the sun. The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander of abysses of solitude. All along the white beach, up and down, there was no living thing in sight. A bird with a broken wing was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down, down to the water.

Edna visits the water and dips her feet into it briefly. The water produces so many mixed emotions, from her childhood and that summer at Grand Isle with Robert. The ocean is a seductive and powerful force that pulls Edna away from her world and into one of its own independent nature. At the end of the story she says "I love you. Good-by - because I love you (Chopin, 1981: 303)." That is her farewell and finally:

She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father's voice and her sister Margaret's. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air. (Chopin, 1981: 303)

Edna decides to end her life. She wears her bathing suit but suddenly decides to undress and walk into the water. She is naked as the day she was born. She pictures so many people in her life as she walks deeper into the water. It makes her move forward and she swims deeper and deeper until she is breathless and cannot turn around. The book begins and concludes with Edna in the water, just as life begins in water. Edna Pontellier's suicide is an act of will. It is something she chooses, by herself, for herself.

#### **D. Edna's Struggle**

Edna is trapped in a society in which a woman will spend her entire life to be a maid at home to serve her husband and children. There is no opportunity to reach her dream to become an artist. Her fate is already decided by the society and she cannot run from it until she meets Mademoiselle Reisz, the eccentric single pianist who charms Edna with her

“Chopin Impromptu” at Grand Isle. This woman makes her suddenly change her mind to fight against Creoles to get her independency as a free woman.

Based on Creole values, Edna`s attitude disappoints the Creole. They still consider that Edna`s manner is against the values and that is unacceptable. The society wants Edna to follow the rules without any questions. Further, the Creole gives so much pressure to Edna because her attitude is far away from the image of mother-woman that prevails in the society.

However, she already breaking the Creole norms by falling in love with Robert Lebrun, sending her children away to their grandmother and moving out of her husband`s house, and having an affair which is solely on physical attraction with Alcee Arobin, and finally committing suicide at the end of the novel. Those are her efforts to struggle against the Creole`s discrimination that happen to her. Edna`s struggles are as follows:

### **1. Fighting for her right**

Edna Pontellier obviously breaks the Creole`s norms to fight for her right. She wants Creole society to see her as a strong and independent woman. By breaking the Creole`s norms she declares that she is free from the control of the Creole. She believes that it is better to live as an aware and conscious being rather than repress one`s real desires and live according to illusions.

"The trouble is," sighed the Doctor, grasping her meaning intuitively, that youth is given up to illusions. It seems to be a provision of

Nature; a decoy to secure mothers for the race. And Nature takes no account of moral consequences, of arbitrary conditions which we create, and which we feel obliged to maintain at any cost."

"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 to illusions all one's life." (Chopin, 1981: 292).

It is clear that Edna does not want to live comfortably but under the discrimination of men. She wants the society to respect her passion to be an artist. She has the right to decide her future without pressure from the Creole which always ask her to be a mother-woman.

She also has a right to get same treatment like men. In the Creole society, men always see women as the stranger.

"Pontellier," said the Doctor, after a moment's reflection, "let your wife alone for a while. Don't bother her, and don't let her bother you. Woman, my dear friend, is a very peculiar and delicate organism—a sensitive and highly organized woman, such as I know Mrs. Pontellier to be, is especially peculiar. It would require an inspired psychologist to deal successfully with them. And when ordinary fellows like you and me attempt to cope with their idiosyncrasies the result is bungling. Most women are moody and whimsical. This is some passing whim of your wife, due to some cause or causes which you and I needn't try to fathom. But it will pass happily over, especially if you let her alone. Send her around to see me" (Chopin, 1981: 172-173).

Women, as a group, are viewed as impossible to understand, too emotional, and too different from men. This stereotype makes women get different treatment in the society and somehow it makes woman get discrimination.

## **2. Showing her existence**

Previously, it describes that Edna has a passion in art especially painting. She really likes to draw something to satisfy her desire as an individual. Moreover, by using her painting, she also wants to show her existence to the Creole. Thus she shows her works to Madame Ratignolle who becomes the icon of the Creole woman.

"Perhaps I shall be able to paint your picture some day," said Edna with a smile when they were seated. She produced the roll of sketches and started to unfold them. "I believe I ought to work again. I feel as if I wanted to be doing something. What do you think of them? Do you think it worth while to take it up again and study some more? I might study for a while with Laidpore."

She knew that Madame Ratignolle's opinion in such a matter would be next to valueless, that she herself had not alone decided, but determined; but she sought the words of praise and encouragement that would help her to put heart into her venture.

"Your talent is immense, dear!"

"Nonsense!" protested Edna, well pleased.

"Immense, I tell you," persisted Madame Ratignolle, surveying the sketches one by one, at close range, then holding them at arm's length, narrowing her eyes, and dropping her head on one side. "Surely, this Bavarian peasant is worthy of framing; and this basket of apples! Never have I seen anything more lifelike. One might almost be tempted to reach out a hand and take one." (Chopin, 1981: 143).

That is clear that Edna wants to show her existence to other people. She needs to do that because she wants people to recognize her as an independent woman. She proves that woman also has a capability to make the good artwork. Beside to show her existence to Madame Ratignolle, she also declares her success to the society which always oppresses her.

By showing the picture to Madame Ratignolle, Edna already proves to Madame Ratignolle and the Creole that she has a talent and she is not dependent with her husband anymore. She also attacks the creole's concept that a woman cannot live without support from man with her work. Mr. Pontellier cannot claim Edna as his own again because his wife already tells to the society that she exists in the world. It means she does not live under her husband's domination.

### **3. Confirming her identity to the Creole**

After fighting for her right and showing her existence, Edna's other struggle is confirming her identity to the Creole. Edna's story depicts a young woman who finds herself. She wants the society to know about her identity which is far away from the woman stereotype. She lives in the traditional views that ask women to become the housewives and give their lives for the husbands and children. However, Edna feels that views are totally wrong because women also can gain an achievement like men.

Edna simply wants to confirm her identity to the Creole as a strong and independent woman. She is a woman but she is not weak. She has a power to control herself and choose her lifelines. She decides to become an artist which means she has courage to be independent. She is "...beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her" (Chopin, 1981: 33).

Moreover, Edna transforms into an independent woman as explained by Chopin (1981: 282) in her novel:

"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."

Edna declares that she is not a possession which actually contradicts the Creole norms. Edna states that she alone has the power to give herself her love, her time, her company, etc. to someone. Finally, Edna has proven that as a woman who lives in the Creole society, she is able to free herself from the discrimination which is strongly rooted in the society at the time which is not easy to be beaten.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion in chapter IV, some conclusions can be drawn related to the research focus and research objectives in chapter

I. The conclusions are formulated into the following points:

1. The research discovers that the Creole women have lived under discrimination because they obviously get different treatment in the society. It happens because Creoles have a stereotype that women are considered weak, should keep silent, obey husband's rule, and should be a women-mother. The Creole also has made oppression to Edna. They obviously do not give much space to her to explore her talent in art because of her status as a wife and mother. The Creole has pushed Edna to spend her life to serve her husband and children. And they see Edna as a property.
2. Edna has to cope with problems due to her efforts in confirming her identity in the Creole. Patriarchy, a system which is adopted by the Creole, creates discrimination to women. That makes women in the Creole society become weak and makes them become subordinate. Being discriminated, Edna slowly shows her reaction to patriarchy system. She decides to break the Creole's norms like: falling in love with Robert Lebrun, sending her children away to their grandmother and moving out from her husband's house, and having an affair which is solely on



physical attraction with Alcee Arobin, finally she committing suicide at the end of the novel. Furthermore, she keeps struggling by fighting for her right as depicted in the novel. She also shows her existence to the society by using her paintings. Edna has to cope with problems due to her efforts in confirming her identity in the Creole. Edna's problems in the society unable her to express her identity because of her status as a wife and a mother.

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# Appendices

### **A. Plot Summary of *The Awakening***

Leonce Pontellier and his young wife, Edna, spend the summer months at Grande Isle. While resting, Leonce gambles and works in business at the local hotel, Klein's, and visits Carondelet Street in New Orleans during the week. Edna learns how to swim on the beach and befriends Madame Adele Ratignolle and Robert Lebrun. As Edna is discovering new ways to live on her own and support herself in the water, she spends almost all her time with Robert, developing feelings for him. Adele warns him not to flirt with Edna, for she is not like them - society people who come and go at their pleasing.

There are several parties during the weekends, in which dancing, singing, and nonchalant banter are the norm. One day at the Lebrun cottages, Mademoiselle Reisz, a middle aged, single, eccentric pianist, plays the Chopin Impromptu. Edna is mesmerized by the music and nostalgic by the emotions it elicits. She generally does not like Mademoiselle Reisz, but is nonetheless enthralled. Reisz asks Edna how she liked the music and believes her to be the only worthy audience member that day.

One evening at dinner, Robert announces to his mother and everyone else that he is leaving for Mexico in the evening for an indefinite period of time. Edna is shocked and hurt, and leaves the table to mend her aching heart. Adele follows her, agreeing that Robert showed little respect by not telling her that he was planning on leaving.

After Robert leaves for Mexico, Edna feels as if she sees him everywhere, thinks of him all the time, and tries to continue with her life in New Orleans without him. She starts to spend most of her time with society people at the horse races and Jockey Club. She seeks Mademoiselle Reisz for comfort and advice. She slowly becomes more independent and does not live her life for Leonce or her children alone; rather, she lives her life for herself.

Edna's father, the Colonel, comes to town and beckons Edna to come to her sister, Janet's wedding. Edna refuses, claiming that weddings are a melancholy event. They dine, attend the Ratignolle's soirees, and discuss family matters.

Leonce Pontellier leaves for New York on business for an extended period of time. While away, Edna begins to awaken even more to her own life, her own soul. She paints, goes out alone spontaneously and refuses to return other people's calls. Leonce was worried about her odd behavior before he left and sought help from Doctor Mandelet. The two men simply assumed that her mood would pass.

Edna neglects her housework and decides to move out of their large home on Esplanade Street and into a smaller "pigeon-hole" home down the block. She hosts a grand farewell dinner party before she moves out, which is a great success. Her friends, with the exception of an ill Adele Ratignolle, attend. Alcee Arobin seduces Edna soon after, and although Edna feels guilty for giving into her carnal pleasures; she feels remorse for her beloved Robert - not her husband Leonce.



After moving into the pigeon house, adjusting to her new life, and painting portraits, landscapes, and anything she can see, Edna still misses Robert. She seeks Mademoiselle Reisz one day for comfort, and instead finds Robert at her home. She is shocked to learn that he has returned without finding her. They bicker and soon express their love for one another. Edna plans to be with him and only him. While back at her small home, a servant of Monsieur Ratignolle comes to find Edna to bring her to the Ratignolle home. Adele is in labor and wants to see Edna. Edna tells Robert to stay and wait for her. Once there, Adele whispers to Edna to think of her children.

When Edna returns home, Robert has left with a goodbye note that tells of his love for her. She is so hurt and shocked that she stares at the wall all night, holding the letter in her hand. The following day, Edna goes to her beloved ocean, removes all her clothes, and walks into the water. She continues farther and farther until she is seen no more.

## B. Data Collection on *The Awakening*

### 1. The Creole's discrimination toward women

No.	Quotation	Page
1.	"Oh, enough, Robert!" she broke into his heated outburst. "You are not thinking of what you are saying. You speak with about as little reflection as we might expect from one of those children down there playing in the sand. If your attentions to any married women here were ever offered with any intention of being convincing, you would not be the gentleman we all know you to be, and you would be unfit to associate with the wives and daughters of the people who trust you."	51
2.	"Well, good-by, <i>a jeudi</i> ," said Mr. Pontellier, as he let himself out.  The Doctor would have liked during the course of conversation to ask, "Is there any man in the case?" but he knew his Creole too well to make such a blunder as that.	174
3.	On Tuesday afternoons--Tuesday being Mrs. Pontellier's reception day--there was a constant stream of callers--women who came in carriages or in the street cars, or walked when the air was soft and distance permitted. A light-colored mulatto boy, in dress coat and bearing a diminutive silver tray for the reception of cards, admitted them. A maid, in white fluted cap, offered the callers liqueur, coffee, or chocolate, as they might desire. Mrs. Pontellier, attired in a handsome reception gown, remained in the drawing-room the entire afternoon receiving her visitors. Men sometimes called in the evening with their wives.  This had been the programme which Mrs. Pontellier had religiously followed since her marriage, six years before. Certain evenings during the week she and her husband attended the opera or sometimes the play.	128

4.	"The trouble is," sighed the Doctor, grasping her meaning intuitively, that youth is given up to illusions. It seems to be a provision of Nature; a decoy to secure mothers for the race. And Nature takes no account of moral consequences, of arbitrary conditions which we create, and which we feel obliged to maintain at any cost."	291
5.	"Woman, my dear friend, is a very peculiar and delicate organism - a sensitive and highly organized woman, such as I know Mrs. Pontellier to be, is especially peculiar. It would require an inspired psychologist to deal successfully with them. And when ordinary fellows like you and me attempt to cope with their idiosyncrasies the result is bungling. Most women are moody and whimsical. This is some passing whim of your wife, due to some cause or cause which you and I needn't try to fathom."	172

## 2. The Creole's discrimination toward Edna.

No.	Quotation	Page
1.	<p>"I'm jealous of your thoughts tonight. They're making you a little kinder than usual; but some way I feel as if they were wandering, as if they were not here with me." She only looked at him and smiled. His eyes were very near. He leaned upon the lounge with an arm extended across her, while the other hand still rested upon her hair. They continued silently to look into each other's eyes. When he leaned forward and kissed her, she clasped his head, holding his lips to hers.</p> <p>It was the first kiss of her life to which her nature had really responded. It was a flaming torch that kindled desire.</p>	217
2.	Mrs. Pontellier, though she had married a Creole, was not thoroughly at home in the society of Creoles; never before had she been thrown so intimately among them. There were only Creoles that summer at Lebrun's. They all knew each other, and felt like one large family, among whom existed the most amicable relations. A characteristic which distinguished them and which impressed Mrs. Pontellier most forcibly was their entire absence of prudery. Their freedom of expression was at first incomprehensible to her, though she had no difficulty in reconciling it with a lofty chastity which in the Creole woman seems to be inborn and unmistakable.	23

	<p>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. Oftener than once her coming had interrupted the droll story with which Robert was entertaining some amused group of married women.</p> <p>A book had gone the rounds of the pension. When it came her turn to read it, she did so with profound astonishment. 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. Mrs. Pontellier gave over being astonished, and concluded that wonders would never cease.</p>	
3.	<p>Despite herself, the youngster amused her. She must have betrayed in her look some degree of interest or entertainment. The boy grew more daring, and Mrs. Pontellier might have found herself, in a little while, listening to a highly colored story but for the timely appearance of Madame Lebrun.</p>	156
4.	<p>When Mr. Pontellier learned of his wife's intention to abandon her home and take up her residence elsewhere, he immediately wrote her a letter of unqualified disapproval and remonstrance. She had given reasons which he was unwilling to acknowledge as adequate. 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 ménage on a humbler scale than heretofore. It might do incalculable mischief to his business prospects.</p> <p>But remembering Edna's whimsical turn of mind of late, and foreseeing that she had immediately acted upon her impetuous determination, he grasped the situation with his usual promptness and handled it with his well-known business tact and cleverness.</p> <p>The same mail which brought to Edna his letter of disapproval carried instructions--the most minute instructions--to a well-known architect concerning the remodeling of his home, changes which he had long contemplated, and which he desired carried forward during his temporary absence.</p>	243

	<p>Expert and reliable packers and movers were engaged to convey the furniture, carpets, pictures--everything movable, in short--to places of security. And in an incredibly short time the Pontellier house was turned over to the artisans. There was to be an addition--a small snugery; there was to be frescoing, and hardwood flooring was to be put into such rooms as had not yet been subjected to this improvement. Furthermore, in one of the daily papers appeared a brief notice to the effect that Mr. and Mrs. Pontellier were contemplating a summer sojourn abroad, and that their handsome residence on Esplanade Street was undergoing sumptuous alterations, and would not be ready for occupancy until their return. Mr. Pontellier had saved appearances!</p>	
5.	<p>"Well, I hope you left some suitable excuse," said her husband, somewhat appeased, as he added a dash of cayenne pepper to the soup.</p> <p>"No, I left no excuse. I told Joe to say I was out, that was all."</p> <p>"Why, my dear, I should think you'd understand by this time that people don't do such things; we've got to observe les convenances if we ever expect to get on and keep up with the procession. If you felt that you had to leave home this afternoon, you should have left some suitable explanation for your absence.</p>	130
6.	<p>She had said over and over to herself: "To-day it is Arobin; to-morrow it will be some one else. It makes no difference to me, it doesn't 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 unessential, but she would never sacrifice herself for her children.</p> <p>Despondency had come upon her there in the wakeful night, and had never lifted. There was no one thing in the world that she desired. There was no human being whom she wanted near her except Robert; and she even realized that the day would come when he, too, and the thought of him would melt out of her existence, leaving her alone. 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. She was not thinking of these things when she walked down to the beach.</p>	299
7.	<p>Her marriage to Leonce Pontellier was purely an accident, in this respect resembling many other marriages which masquerade as the decrees of Fate. It was in the midst of her secret great passion that she met him. He fell in love, as men are in the habit of doing, and pressed his suit with an earnestness and an ardor which left nothing to be desired. He pleased her; his absolute devotion flattered her. She fancied there was a</p>	46

	sympathy of thought and taste between them, in which fancy she was mistaken. Add to this the violent opposition of her father and her sister Margaret to her marriage with a Catholic, and we need seek no further for the motives which led her to accept Monsieur Pontellier for her husband.	
8.	He did not answer, except to continue to caress her. He did not say good night until she had become supple to his gentle, seductive entreaties.	242

### 3. Edna's breaking the Creole's norms

No.	Quotation	Page
1.	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 undercurrents of life. No longer was she content to "feed upon opinion" when her own soul had invited her.	245
2.	<p>"Why?" asked her companion. "Why do you love him when you ought not to?"</p> <p>Edna, with a motion or two, dragged herself on her knees before Mademoiselle Reisz, who took the glowing face between her two hands.</p> <p>"Why? Because his hair is brown and grows away from his temples; because he opens and shuts his eyes, and his nose is a little out of drawing; because he has two lips and a square chin, and a little finger which he can't straighten from having played baseball too energetically in his youth. Because--"</p> <p>"Because you do, in short," laughed Mademoiselle. "What will you do when he comes back?" she asked.</p> <p>"Do? Nothing, except feel glad and happy to be alive."</p>	212
3.	Mrs. Pontellier had brought her sketching materials, which she sometimes dabbled with in an un-	28

	professional way. She liked the dabbling. She felt in it a satisfaction of a kind which no other employment afforded her.	
4.	<p>"You are the only one worth playing for. Those others? Bah!" and she went shuffling and sidling on down the gallery toward her room.</p> <p>But she was mistaken about "those others." Her playing had aroused a fever of enthusiasm. "What passion!" "What an artist!" "I have always said no one could play Chopin like Mademoiselle Reisz!" "That last prelude! Bon Dieu! It shakes a man!"</p>	67
5.	Edna spent an hour or two in looking over some of her old sketches. She could see their shortcomings and defects, which were glaring in her eyes. She tried to work a little, but found she was not in the humor. Finally she gathered together a few of the sketches--those which she considered the least discreditable; and she carried them with her when, a little later, she dressed and left the house.	139
6.	<p>"I feel like painting," answered Edna. "Perhaps I shan't always feel like it."</p> <p>"Then in God's name paint! but don't let the family go to the devil. There's Madame Ratignolle; because she keeps up her music, she doesn't let everything else go to chaos. And she's more of a musician than you are a painter."</p> <p>"She isn't a musician, and I'm not a painter. It isn't on account of painting that I let things go."</p> <p>"On account of what, then?"</p> <p>"Oh! I don't know. Let me alone; you bother me."</p>	147
7.	When Edna awoke it was with the conviction that she had slept long and soundly. The voices were hushed under the shed. Madame Antoine's step was no longer to be heard in the adjoining room. Even the chickens had gone elsewhere to scratch and cluck. The mosquito bar was drawn over her; the old woman had come in while she slept and let down the bar. Edna arose quietly from the bed, and looking between the curtains of the window, she saw by the slanting rays of the sun that the	94

	afternoon was far advanced. Robert was out there under the shed, reclining in the shade against the sloping keel of the overturned boat. He was reading from a book.	
8.	She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father's voice and her sister Margaret's. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air	303

#### 4. Edna's struggles

No.	Quotation	Page
1.	She stood watching the fair woman walk down the long line of galleries with the grace and majesty which queens are sometimes supposed to possess. 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!	31
2.	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.	79
3.	"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 to illusions all one's life."	292
4.	In short, Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her. This may seem like a ponderous weight of wisdom to descend upon the soul of a young woman of twenty-eight—perhaps more wisdom than the Holy Ghost is usually pleased to vouchsafe to any woman.	33



	<p>But the beginning of things, of a world especially, is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic, and exceedingly disturbing. How few of us ever emerge from such beginning! How many souls perish in its tumult!</p> <p>The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation.</p> <p>The voice of the sea speaks to the soul. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace.</p>	
5.	<p>But you have told me nothing of yourself. What are you doing?"</p> <p>"Painting!" laughed Edna. "I am becoming an artist. Think of it!"</p> <p>"Ah! an artist! You have pretensions, Madame."</p> <p>"Why pretensions? Do you think I could not become an artist?"</p> <p>"I do not know you well enough to say. I do not know your talent or your temperament. To be an artist includes much; one must possess many gifts—absolute gifts—which have not been acquired by one's own effort. And, moreover, to succeed, the artist must possess the courageous soul."</p> <p>"What do you mean by the courageous soul?"</p> <p>"Courageous, ma foi! The brave soul. The soul that dares and defies."</p>	302
6.	<p>"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."</p> <p>His face grew a little white. "What do you mean?" he</p>	282

	asked.	
7.	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.	70
8.	<p>Edna had once told Madame Ratignolle that she would never sacrifice herself for her children, or for any one. Then had followed a rather heated argument; the two women did not appear to understand each other or to be talking the same language. Edna tried to appease her friend, to explain.</p> <p>"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. I can't make it more clear; it's only something which I am beginning to comprehend, which is revealing itself to me."</p> <p>"I don't know what you would call the essential, or what you mean by the unessential," said Madame Ratignolle, cheerfully; "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."</p> <p>"Oh, yes you could!" laughed Edna.</p>	121
9.	She let her mind wander back over her stay at Grand Isle; and she tried to discover wherein this summer had been different from any and every other summer of her life. She could only realize that she herself--her present self--was in some way different from the other self. That she was seeing with different eyes and making the acquaintance of new conditions in herself that colored and changed her environment, she did not yet suspect	102
10.	There was something in her attitude, in her whole appearance when she leaned her head against the high-backed chair and spread her arms, which suggested the regal woman, the one who rules, who looks on, who stands alone.	231