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WORD COUNT AND
SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE OF
RESEARCH PAPER TITLES

Yugianingrum

DISCOURSE MARKERS
IN SUNDANESE ORAL NARRATIVES

*Dientha Yuniar
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SOCIAL CONDITION OF WOMEN
IN THE 19TH CENTURY AMERICA
AS SEEN THROUGH THE PORTRAYAL OF
THE PROTAGONIST IN
KATE CHOPIN'S *THE AWAKENING*

Joanna Deborah Sukham

HUBUNGAN ANTARA PRINSIP
KESANTUNAN TUTURAN
WISATAWAN JEPANG DAN UNDA USUK
BAHASA JEPANG

*A.A.Ayu Dian Andriyani
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KESALAHAN DALAM PENGGUNAAN
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Lispridona Diner

HIRARKI DI LINGKUNGAN KERJA
DALAM DRAMA TV "*BAMBINO!*"

*Suhardi RahmanYohari
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**SOCIAL CONDITION OF WOMEN IN THE 19TH CENTURY
AMERICA AS SEEN THROUGH THE PORTRAYAL OF THE
PROTAGONIST IN KATE CHOPIN'S *THE AWAKENING***

***KONDISI SOSIAL WANITA DI AMERIKA PADA ABAD KE-19
DILIHAT MELALUI PENGGAMBARAN TOKOH UTAMA
DALAM NOVEL THE AWAKENING KARYA KATE CHOPIN***

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at finding out how an unsatisfactory marriage influences the characteristics of a person and at the same time reveals a lot of things about the social pressure and the unfair treatment towards women in the 19th century America. In conducting the study, the library research is used. Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is chosen because the novel clearly describes the social pressure and the unfair treatment experienced by women in the 19th century America through the portrayal of the protagonist. In this novel, the protagonist Edna Pontellier is an American woman who experiences an unsatisfactory marriage and therefore undergoes some developments in her characteristics. The result of the study clearly shows that the unsatisfactory marriage, the trigger that changes the protagonist's characteristics, is also the representation of the social pressure experienced by women in the 19th century America if viewed from a bigger sequence. This is closely connected with the purpose of the author, that is, to give the readers a new perspective on how to fight for rights and freedom.

Key words:

portrayal of the protagonist, unsatisfactory marriage, unfair treatment, social pressure, 19th century America

ABSTRAK

Pernikahan, yang merupakan salah satu tahap penting dalam kehidupan manusia, melibatkan tidak hanya aspek hukum namun juga perasaan dan berbagai aspek lain. Karena pernikahan merupakan suatu hal yang kompleks, banyak orang mendapati kenyataan bahwa kehidupan pernikahan mereka tidak sesuai dengan yang mereka harapkan – atau dengan kata lain, mereka mengalami ketidakpuasan dalam pernikahan. Dalam studi kasus ini, penulis akan menganalisis penggambaran tokoh utama dari novel The Awakening karya Kate Chopin. Novel tersebut menggambarkan bagaimana ketidakpuasan dalam pernikahan dapat mempengaruhi perubahan karakter seseorang dan mengungkapkan banyak hal tentang tekanan sosial dan ketidakadilan yang dialami wanita dalam kehidupan sosial dan pernikahan pada abad ke-19 di Amerika. Hasil analisis membuktikan bahwa kondisi lingkungan dapat mempengaruhi reaksi seseorang

terhadap tekanan sosial dan ketidakpuasan dalam pernikahan mereka. Hal ini juga berhubungan erat dengan tujuan pengarang, yaitu memberikan gambaran mengenai kehidupan wanita pada periode tersebut dan mengungkapkan suatu perspektif baru mengenai pemenuhan hak-hak dasar dan kebebasan wanita dan juga manusia secara umum.

Kata kunci:

penggambaran tokoh utama, pernikahan yang tidak memuaskan, perlakuan tidak adil, tekanan sosial, Amerika pada abad ke-19

INTRODUCTION

There are many important stages in people's life; one of them is marriage. Marriage is defined as "the legal relationship between a husband and wife" ("Marriage," 2010). The definition seems to involve mostly the legal aspect of marriage, but in practice, marriage is a complex state which involves one's feelings and many other aspects of life. Because of this complexity, people sometimes find their marriage unsatisfactory. Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is a clear example of those literary works that deal with unsatisfactory marriage as an issue that contributes to the development of the characters. In the novel, the protagonist feels that her marriage is unsatisfactory because she has to suppress her desires due to the marriage, and this contributes to the change in her characteristics.

Kate Chopin is one of the most important American women writers in the 19th century. She was once known as a local-color writer (Carey, 1980, p.6), but later, she is "recognized for her examination of sexuality, individual freedom, and the consequences of one's actions—themes and concerns important to many later American writers" (Kate Chopin 1851-1904). Through *The Awakening*, her most notable work which once was banned because of its directness (Carey, 1980, p.7), she makes a great contribution to the development of feminist literature.

The Awakening is a "scandalous book" (p.7), considering that the protagonist is "a woman who not only had sexual urges and desires, but felt that it was her right to have those drives satisfied" (p.7) – an inappropriate subject matter to be discussed at that time. The book was banned from bookstores and public libraries (p.7) but it had already given a new perspective in understanding women issues.

As the novel itself mostly talks about the contribution of the unsatisfactory marriage towards the protagonist's characteristics, it is felt best for me to choose the character as the literary element to be discussed in this study, considering as well that character is one of the most basic and important parts of literary elements. Character in literature is "an author's representation of a human being, specifically of those inner qualities that determine how an individual reacts to various conditions or attempts to shape his or her environment" (Roberts, 1964, p.54). Edna Pontellier, the protagonist in *The Awakening*, is the author's representation of women in the 19th century America who react towards the unsatisfactory marriage and at the same time undergo a self-development. Later in the analysis, it is found that the condition in America in the 19th century proves to

have some influences towards the results of the protagonist's reactions. As the protagonist is the representation of the real human beings, the author creates such complex and developed characters and this adds to my decision to choose character as the interesting literary element to be discussed in this study.

ANALYSIS

The Awakening is set in the 19th century America. The protagonist, Edna Pontellier, is a young woman of twenty-eight who belongs to the high class society. Because of her unsatisfactory marriage with Leonce Pontellier, she experiences changes in her characteristics.

At the beginning of the novel, Edna is portrayed as a reserved woman, a woman who is "restrained in words and actions" ("Reserved," 2001). She is reserved as she seldom expresses her opinion. For her, the other women's "freedom of expression was at first incomprehensible" (Chopin, 1976, p.11). She is also very restricted by social conventions and quite censorious about the appropriate topic of conversation, as can be seen through the following example:

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* [childbirths], 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.11)

Through her reaction, I conclude that Edna acts carefully when choosing the appropriate topic of conversation. She considers the topic about childbirths something inappropriate to be discussed freely with others even though the other Creole women, such as Madame Ratignolle, think that it is not an unusual or inappropriate topic to talk about.

Edna is also reserved in her manner. This can be seen from her reaction when one day she makes a sketch of Madame Ratignolle and Robert Lebrun sits close to her and makes physical contact with her:

During his oblivious attention he once quietly rested his head against Mrs. Pontellier's arm. As gently she repulsed him. Once again he repeated the offense. She could not believe it to be thoughtlessness on his part; yet that was no reason she should submit to it. She did not remonstrate, except again to repulse him quietly but firmly. He offered no apology. (p.13)

The author's description shows clearly that Edna is uncomfortable with the physical contact made by others. Her reaction shows that she is restrained to appropriateness in her manner. She always keeps herself from making inappropriate physical contacts with other people.

In connection with her reserved characteristic, Edna is also portrayed as an obedient woman. Obedient means “submissive to the restrain or command of authority; submissive to the will of another” (“Obedient,” 2001). Edna is obedient in the sense that she is usually subject to her husband’s control and commands. For example, when Leonce reproaches her for not realizing that Raoul, one of their sons, gets a fever, she immediately “sprang out of the bed and went into the next room” to check her son – even though later in the novel it is known that she is quite unhappy about his reproach. It is stated that “she began to cry a little, and wiped her eyes on the leaves of her *peignoir*” (Chopin, 1976, p.6). This can be interpreted as her unhappy reaction towards his reproach. However, she still does what he tells her to do – which shows that she is an obedient woman.

Another part of the novel also states clearly that since her early life, Edna “had apprehended instinctively the dual life – that outward existence which conforms, the inward life which questions” (p.16). The quotation shows that she is getting used to conforming to others and conventions in spite of her inner consciousness that questions the credibility of others’ opinion and conventions.

Apart from being reserved, Edna is described as a dutiful woman. Dutiful is defined as “filled with or motivated by a sense of duty” (“Dutiful,” 2001). There are some examples that show this characteristic. One of them can be inferred from the following scene:

On Tuesday afternoons – Tuesdays 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. (Chopin, 1976, p.59)

From the above quotation, I infer that Edna dutifully does her duty as the hostess of the house by sparing her Tuesdays at home to receive other ladies’ visits. Besides, she also keeps this routine dutifully without absence for quite a long time since her marriage. Therefore, I conclude that she is dutiful because she does everything that is expected from her as the hostess of the house and the wife of Mr. Pontellier.

Edna’s being dutiful can also be seen when she manages her residence in Esplanade Street well. If there is something unsatisfactory during the dinner, “sometimes she had gone into the kitchen to administer a tardy rebuke to the cook” (p.61) and even “once she went to her room and studied the cookbook during an entire evening, finally writing out a menu for the week” (p.61). This

action shows that she is a dutiful person in doing what is expected from her as a wife and the hostess of the house.

However, as her married life goes on, Edna starts to realize that she is not satisfied with her marriage. She is disappointed because Leonce is very conventional and concerns to socially-accepted things. Because of his conventional point of view, he tends to consider her his possession, a part to support his life and business, and gives the responsibility of taking care of the children only to her – which makes her grow tired and disappointed very much.

One scene in the novel is an example of Leonce's behavior towards Edna.

“What folly! To bathe at such an hour in such heat!” exclaimed Mr. Pontellier. He himself had taken a plunge at daylight. That was why the morning seemed long to him.

“You are burnt beyond recognition,” he added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage. She held up her hands, strong, shapely hands, and surveyed them critically, drawing up her lawn sleeves above the wrists.
(pp.2-3)

The above scene describes Leonce's reaction when Edna goes back to the cottage after sunbathing near the beach. I notice that he uses the words “personal property” (p.2) to describe what he thinks of her.

Leonce's conventional point of view can also be seen from his reaction when Edna moves to a smaller residence called the pigeon house. Instead of questioning or worrying why his wife wants to move to the pigeon house, he tends to think first about what other people will say about his financial integrity:

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.110)

Leonce thinks that Edna's action might affect his business greatly as people will assume that she moves to a smaller residence because he cannot afford a proper living in the bigger residence anymore.

Another example from the novel describes that Leonce has a conservative patriarchal point of view which considers that the responsibility of taking care of

the children should be given only to women. It is shown through his manner when he thinks that Raoul gets a fever. He “returned to his wife with the information that Raoul had a high fever and needed looking after. Then he lit a cigar and went and sat near the open door to smoke it” (p.6). Instead of helping Edna with the child, he smokes a cigar and does nothing for his son. His behavior shows that he considers taking care of the children a woman’s job – something that is usually found in the patriarchal system. He himself thinks that he “had his hands full with his brokerage business. He could not be in two places at once; making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell [the children]” (p.6).

Apart from the disappointments that Edna has towards Leonce, there are things that also influence the changes in her characteristics. The first one is Edna’s encounter with some people from the Creole community in Grand Isle, where she takes her summer vacation. One of them is Madame Ratignole, the representation of an ideal wife and mother at that time. There is a scene in the novel when Madame Ratignole asks Edna to help her cut the garment for making her children’s winter clothes. The scene indicates clearly that Madame Ratignole is a good mother who is really devoted to her children’s needs. However, compared with Madame Ratignole’s thoughtful action, Edna herself “could not see the use of anticipating and making winter night garments the subject of her summer meditations” (p.10). This means that she does not show significant consideration on her children’s needs. By comparing herself with Madame Ratignole, she becomes aware of the fact that she is actually unfit for the role of a mother.

Edna’s realization that she is unfit for motherhood is also supported by a part of the book which indicates that since the beginning, she is not a mother-woman. This can be seen from the relationship between her and her children:

If one of the little Pontellier boys took a tumble whilst at play, he was not apt to rush crying to his mother’s arms for comfort; he would more likely pick himself up, wipe the water out of his eyes and the sand out of his mouth, and go on playing. Tots as they were, they pulled together and stood their ground in childish battles with double fists and uplifted voices, which usually prevailed against the other mother-tots...

In short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman. (p.9)

Another part of the book even clearly states that “[Edna’s children’s] absence was a sort of relief, though she did not admit this, even to herself. It seemed to free her of a responsibility which she had blindly assumed and for which Fate had not fitted her” (p.21). Even though she is dutiful towards her children, she does so because it is merely a responsibility that she has to bear due to her position as a mother.

The second thing that influences her changes in characteristics is the fact that Edna is also unfit for marriage. She is forced to adjust herself because she has come into the marriage institution. It is said that “her marriage to Leonce Pontellier was purely an accident, in this respect resembling many other marriages which masquerade as the decrees of Fate” (p.21). Her marriage to Leonce

Pontellier also forces her to leave behind the freedom and dream that she might have before:

The acme of bliss, which would have been a marriage with the tragedian, was not for her in this world. As the devoted wife of a man who worshipped her, she felt she would take her place with a certain dignity in the world of reality, closing the portals forever behind her upon the realm of romance and dreams. (p.21)

The last significant thing that influences her changes in characteristics is the event where she witnesses Madame Ratignole deliver her baby:

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

She began to wish she had not come; her presence was not necessary. She might have intended a pretext for staying away; she might even invent a pretext now for going. But Edna did not go. With an inward agony, with a flaming, outspoken revolt against the ways of Nature, she witnessed the scene [of] torture. (pp.130-131)

Through the above quotation, the author shows clearly how Madame Ratignole's delivery process reminds Edna of her own suffering when she delivers her children and, at the same time, reminds her that being a mother is a painful job which demands her to give up everything for the sake of the children. Marriage comes hand in hand with the possibility of being a mother, but for her, motherhood becomes a thing that limits her freedom. I notice that the author uses the word "torture" to describe what she thinks of delivery process and motherhood.

The accumulated disappointments towards Leonce's behavior, supported by the influence of other things in her life, result in the unsatisfactory marriage, which leads Edna to experience some changes in her characteristics.

Edna is no longer reserved as she is now expressive, in the context of "effectively conveying meaning or feeling" ("Expressive," 2001). She no longer hides her feeling and opinion. For example, when she visits Mademoiselle Reisz's house after they return to New Orleans from the summer holiday in Grand Isle, Mademoiselle Reisz states that she does not believe Edna likes her. Instead of making a polite reply stating that she likes Mademoiselle Reisz, Edna honestly admits, " 'I don't know whether I like you or not,' . . . gazing down at the little woman with a quizzical look" (Chopin, 1976, p.73). However, this honest reply makes Mademoiselle Reisz feel pleased.

Edna neither hides her passionate emotion nor rejects physical contacts anymore. When Alcee Arobin, a flirtatious young man she meets at the race, visits her one evening after she knows that Robert will come home from Mexico, Arobin tries to

kiss her. However, instead of refusing Arobin as she has ever done before to Robert at the beginning of the novel, she “clasped his head, holding lips to hers” (p.98). She simply accepts and returns Arobin’s kiss. From her reaction, I conclude that she is now expressive in showing her feeling.

Moreover, Edna is no longer obedient. She is now rebellious, as she is “unwilling to obey rules or accept normal standards of behavior, dress, etc” (“Rebellious,” 2010). For example, she is against Leonce’s command for the first time when he tells her to go into the house after she swims in the sea and goes for a walk on the beach. She refuses to go into the house and firmly tells him that she wants to stay outside and sit in the hammock. She even dares to tell him not to speak rudely to her.

“Edna, dear, are you not coming in soon?” he asked again, this time fondly, with a note of entreaty.

“No; I am going to stay out here.”

“This is more than folly,” he blurted out. “I can’t permit you to stay out there all night. You must come in the house instantly.”

With a writhing motion she settled herself more securely in the hammock. She perceived that her will had blazed up, stubborn and resistant. She could not at that moment have done other than denied and resisted. She wondered if her husband had ever spoken to her like that before, and if she had submitted to his command. But she could not realize why or how she should have yielded, feeling as she then did.

“Leonce, go to bed,” she said. “I mean to stay out here. I don’t wish to go in, and I don’t intend to. Don’t speak to me like that again; I shall not answer you.” (Chopin, 1976, pp.36-37).

Another example of her becoming rebellious is when Edna and her father have an argument about her refusal to go to her sister’s wedding:

Edna and her father had a warm, and almost violent dispute upon the subject of her refusal to attend her sister’s wedding. Mr. Pontellier declined to interfere, to interpose either his influence or his authority. He was following Doctor Mandelet’s advice, and letting her do as she liked. The Colonel reproached his daughter for her lack of filial kindness and respect, her want of sisterly affection and womanly consideration. His arguments were labored and unconvincing. He doubted if Janet would accept any excuse – forgetting that Edna had offered none. He doubted if Janet would ever speak to her again, and he was sure Margaret would not.

Edna was glad to be rid of her father when he finally took himself off with his wedding garments and his bridal gifts, with his padded shoulders, his Bible reading, his “toddlies” and ponderous oaths. (pp.83-84)

In spite of all reproaches her father gives her and the possibility that her sisters will never speak to her again as the result of her violating the normal standards of behavior, Edna still keeps her decision not to go to the wedding.

Her being rebellious can also be seen through the scene in the novel when, later in the story, Edna decides to move to a small house near her former residence on Esplanade Street – the one which she calls the pigeon house:

Then flinging herself upon the uncomfortable sofa she said, "Mademoiselle, I am going to move away from my house on Esplanade Street."

"Ah!" ejaculated the musician, neither surprised nor especially interested.

.....
"Aren't you astonished?"

"Passably. Where are you going? To New York? To Iberville? To your father in Mississippi? Where?"

"Just two steps away," laughed Edna, "in a little four-room house around the corner. It looks so cozy, so inviting and restful, whenever I pass by; and it's for rent. I'm tired looking after that big house. It never seemed like mine, anyway – like home. It's too much trouble. I have to keep too many servants. I am tired bothering with them."

"That is not your true reason, ma belle. There is no use in telling me lies. I don't know your reason, but you have not told me the truth." Edna did not protest or endeavor to justify herself.

"The house, the money that provides for it, are not mine. Isn't that enough reason?"

"They're you husband's," returned Mademoiselle, with a shrug and a malicious elevation of the eyebrows. (p.93)

The scene in the novel indicates Edna's thoughts of the residence on Esplanade Street and the money that keeps the house going: They are not hers, they are her husband's, and she wants to have "the feeling of freedom and independence" (p.94) from her husband by moving to the pigeon house and living with the small amount she inherits from her mother.

It is also stated that "without even waiting for an answer from her husband regarding his opinion or wishes in the matter, Edna hastened her preparations for quitting her home on Esplanade Street and moving into the little house around the block" (p.99). So in other words, her being rebellious can also be seen from her action of not asking her husband's opinion about the matter. Later, it is known that Edna's action makes Leonce upset, as it may influence his financial integrity. By moving to a smaller house, she will make people assume that the Pontelliers have gone bankrupt, and Leonce thinks that this assumption will influence his business prospects. However, she still sticks to her decision. Based on her various actions, I conclude that Edna is now rebellious.

Edna also turns from being dutiful into being undutiful. Undutiful is defined as "not filled with or motivated by a sense of duty" ("Undutiful," 2001). Through Leonce's report to Doctor Mandelet, his family physician, it is known that Edna no longer socializes with her friends and abandons her duty on Tuesdays to receive the visiting ladies and to return the calls. Leonce reports that "she began to do as she liked and to feel as she liked. She completely abandoned her Tuesdays at home, and did not return the visits of those who had called upon her" (Chopin,

1976, p.67). When she feels like going out on Tuesday, she simply goes out without providing any excuses for the lady-callers – something which Leonce considers socially inappropriate as “people don’t do such things” (p.60) and that “[people] have got to observe *les convenances* [appearances; society’s convention] if [they] ever expect to get on and keep up the procession” (p.60). From the quotations, I conclude that Edna has done some undutiful actions by abandoning her Tuesday duty and violating social rules by not leaving any proper excuses for her action.

Edna’s being undutiful is also reflected when she abandons her duty to control the housekeeping and to manage the employees. One evening, Leonce finds that the dinner does not meet his expectation and tells her that she should not abandon her duty to control the employees – in this case, the cook. However, she only reacts indifferently towards his reproach:

The fish was scorched. Mr. Pontellier would not touch it. Edna said she did not mind a little scorched taste. The roast was in some way not to his fancy, and he did not like the manner in which the vegetables were served.

“It seems to me,” he said, “we spend money enough in this house to procure at least one meal a day which a man could eat and retain his self-respect.”

“You used to think the cook was a treasure,” returned Edna, indifferently.

“Perhaps she was when she first came; but cooks are only human. They need looking after, like any other class of persons that you employ. Suppose I didn’t look after the clerks in my office, just let them run things their own way; they’d soon make a nice mess of me and my business.”

“Where are you going?” asked Edna, seeing that her husband arose from table without having eaten a morsel except a taste of the highly-seasoned soup.

“I’m going to get my dinner at the club. Good night.” He went into the hall, took his hat and stick from the stand, and left the house. (p.61)

Edna’s reaction indicates that she no longer considers his reproaches something to be concerned about so much. When he chooses to go out of the house to have dinner at the club, she does nothing but “finished her dinner alone with forced deliberation” (p.61) instead of feeling “deprived of any desire to finish her dinner” (p.61) as she would have done on any previous occasions. From the situation above, I conclude that Edna has become undutiful – she no longer does the things that are expected from her as a woman and a housewife.

The portrayal above clearly shows that the unsatisfactory marriage, caused by the disappointment towards her husband and all responsibilities she gets because of her marriage, leads to the changes in Edna’s characteristics. Her unsatisfactory marriage and the other triggers around her become the means that makes her aware of her position as a human being and thus changes her characteristics.

By creating such a character, Chopin not only aims at showing women's life in the 19th century America, but also wants to criticize the society that restricts the women with all conventions about motherhood, womanhood, and married life ("Women's History in America").

It is obvious that Edna Pontellier is the representation of women at that time. Her characteristics at the beginning of the novel – reserved, obedient, and dutiful – are the characteristics which are expected from women at that time ("Feminism in Literature"). However, the pressure that comes from the unsatisfactory marriage which represents the social conventions will, sooner or later, affect the one who goes through it. Edna, for example, reacts rebelliously towards the pressure, and in the process, experiences some changes in her characteristics.

The story itself shows that other things remain the same – there is no change in the social conventions and the system of married life as the result of the protagonist's reactions. However, the result of the reaction is interestingly shown by the protagonist herself. At the end of the story, Edna chooses to commit suicide by drowning herself in the sea because she does not want to go back to her husband in an unsatisfactory marriage and to the motherhood that limits her freedom. This, indirectly, shows that she no longer conforms to society.

The reaction shown by the protagonist is assumed to be influenced by the place and the background where the author lives. *The Awakening* was published in 1899 – in the late 19th century – the period when American literature started to change. It is said that "writers at the Turn of the Century were beginning to think about traditional social morality in a new way" (High, 1986, p.98), which means that the average American writers, including Kate Chopin, started to develop new thoughts on the established moral values. Therefore, it can be concluded that through *The Awakening*, Chopin suggests a new perspective on freedom of human beings, especially women's freedom and its correlation with the society. This new perspective is applied to the novel, resulting in the protagonist's doing some actions which are different from what is expected at that time – in this case, Edna's decision to get out from the forced responsibilities that are put on her shoulders as a woman.

From one point of view, Edna's decision of committing suicide may be seen as the sign of her defeat against life, but interestingly, from a different point of view, it may become the sign of her victory as well. The latter point of view is concluded from the fact that Kate Chopin is a feminist and that *The Awakening* itself is considered an early work of feminism ("Kate Chopin"). By committing suicide, Edna can at last achieve her desire to have the independence and freedom from the unsatisfactory marriage and life. This is the point of view which Chopin applies in the novel – the one that aims to encourage the readers, especially women, to reconsider their position as human beings in life and to fight for freedom.

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* in the previous part of this study, I find that the protagonist, Edna Pontellier, has suffered from the social pressure and unfair treatment that is generally experienced by women in the 19th century America.

At the beginning of the novel, it is indicated that the protagonist is suitable for neither marriage nor motherhood. However, she has to adjust herself in accordance with the demands that society asked from her as a married woman. In this novel, the married life then becomes the representation of the social pressure and unfair treatment that is given to women. Marriage becomes the smallest social institution where a man and a woman meet and relate in many aspects of life. Considering that the American society at that time was a patriarchal society, it is not unusual if women were considered a second class in the society and therefore given certain rules the society has created ("Women's History in America").

The so-called rules can be seen clearly in the novel, mostly in the form of treatments that are given to Edna by her husband, Leonce Pontellier. As a woman, Edna is expected to be a good mother, to take care of her children, to be faithful in doing her social duty. This sort of life may be suitable for some women, like Adele Ratignolle, who thinks that it is a common thing for women to do. This type of women, consciously or unconsciously, simply conforms to the organized rules the society has created. However, there is also another type of women, like Edna, whose nature cannot accept this kind of rules.

The unsatisfactory marriage, supported by the influence of other things in her life during her vacation in the Grand Isle, then becomes the trigger that makes Edna realize her true nature and the social pressure in the form of forced responsibilities that are put on her shoulders. The process of Edna's realizing her true nature can be seen clearly through the development of her characteristics. Before the unsatisfactory marriage, Edna is described as a reserved, obedient, and dutiful woman. However, after experiencing the unsatisfactory marriage, she becomes expressive, rebellious, and undutiful. The change in her characteristics results in her decision to commit suicide, which represents her refusal to bear the forced responsibilities and to conform to the society anymore. This is the sign that she has finally achieved the freedom that she wants.

To sum up, considering that Chopin is a feminist and that *The Awakening* itself is an early work of feminism ("Kate Chopin"), I am of the opinion that Chopin wants to show that women and all human being in general, are born free with their own unique nature. The social conventions cannot and should not limit the freedom that they have. People have the rights to have their freedom fulfilled. Through the novel, Chopin not only gives real descriptions of marriage life – how it is conducted, how society has significant influences on it, and how the different characteristics of the people involved in it affect the married life itself – but also encourages the readers to embrace a new, important perspective that human beings have the rights to have their needs and freedom fulfilled.

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