

**GENDER INEQUALITY REFLECTED IN KATE CHOPIN'S
"THE AWAKENING": FEMINIST APPROACH**

THESIS



By

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES
PUTERA BATAM UNIVERSITY
2021**

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Sarjana Sastra**



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2021

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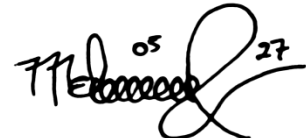
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Mela Krismawati
171210039

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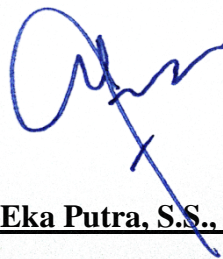
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Batam, July 30th, 2021



Emil Eka Putra, S.S., M.Hum.

Supervisor

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang ketidaksetaraan gender yang terrefleksi di dalam novel *The Awakening* karya (Chopin, (1899). Dalam penelitian ini peneliti mengaplikasikan teori dari Walby (1991). Proses pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian perpustakaan dan dalam menganalisisnya menggunakan metode deskriptif dengan mendeskripsikan menggunakan kata-kata atau paragraf. Tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu untuk mengetahui apa saja bentuk-bentuk ketidaksetaraan gender dan upaya yang dilakukan Edna untuk terlepas dari permasalahan tersebut. Adapun hasil dari penelitian ini yakni di dapatkan bahwa karakter utama Edna mengalami bentuk-bentuk ketidaksetaraan gender yaitu di dalam ruang lingkup produksi rumah tangga, pekerjaan yang dibayar dan budaya. Dari adanya permasalahan tersebut Edna melakukan upaya perlawanan untuk mendapatkan kebebasan atas keinginannya sendiri dan melakukan hal yang dia senangi.

Kata kunci: Feminist, ketidaksetaraan gender, kebebasan dan perlawanan.

ABSTRACT

This research discussed gender inequality as reflected in the novel *The Awakening* by (Chopin, 1899). In analyzing the problem of gender inequality, the researcher applied the theory of Walby (1991). The process of collecting data in this research used library research methods and in analyzing it used descriptive method by describing using words or paragraphs. The purpose of this research described what forms of gender inequality and the resistance performed by main character to disrupt these problem. As for the result of this research, it was found that the main character Edna experienced forms of gender inequality, namely in field of household production, paid employment and culture. From these problem Edna made an effort to fight to get freedom of her own accord choose her own way of life and do what she likes.

Key words: Feminist, freedom, gender inequality and resistance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Feminist is a social movement that aims to build and achieve gender equality in economic, educational, personal and sociality. The movement is called a feminist movement that campaigns for women's rights. Along with the rise of the feminist movement, many feminists have been voiced either through social media, printed media or in a written essay. One of the writings that voiced feminism is classic novels. Some of the novels that voice the issue of feminism are *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf, and *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin. From several examples of classic novels that voice the issue of feminism, the writer analyzes the novel *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin.

In this novel, it is told that the character Edna Pontellier was a character who was not given the freedom to express herself. She is required to follow every word of her husband and she must not do anything other than her husband's words. This is what makes Edna feels that her marriage is unhappy, because she is only required to be a good housewife and do not do what she likes. Edna wanted her right to freedom like most people. From this, Edna fought back from the pressure exerted by her

husband. Not only the phenomena about expressed her freedom in novel *The Awakening* has also reflected other phenomena.

The main character Edna was forced to marry the choice of her parents and caused discomfort in undergoing the household. She is treated arbitrarily because she is only someone who takes care of the child and the house. This can lead to a feeling of pressure on the women because she is demanded to be a good housewife and can take care of children and does not gives freedom on what she wants to do.

An indescribable **oppression**, which seemed to generate in some unfamiliar part of her consciousness, filled her whole being with a vague anguish. (Chopin, 1899 p.35)

In the quote on an indescribable oppression is a violence, especially in the realm of the family. The persecution made by a husband against a wife is an injustice in terms of gender equality. A husband should better appreciate a wife instead of oppressing it by doing some violence against his wife.

In other words, women also want to be respected by their own husbands, as in speaking, women want their husbands in speaking more softly and this indicates that her husband loves her very much and will make her happy. If a husband cannot says be controlled, it will make a woman feel unappreciated.

“you are burnt beyond recognition” he added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal **property** which has suffered some damage. (Chopin, 1899 p.4-5).

From the quote above, the word **property** it indicates that the husband does not respect his wife as a wife. From the words that Mr. Pontellier clearly indicated that he considered his wife not as his wife or his partner but as a property that he has and now was burned and unrecognized.

The research is a research that is mostly done that discuss the issues of feminist, previously there were also many researcher that discuss this issue such as, the first research, "An Analysis of the Feminist Characters in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*" written by Nur (2017). This study applied Huberman's (1994) theory of model analysis. This research discussed the main character as a feminist character in Kate Chopin's novel. This analysis aims to described the feminist character as the main character of women who adhere to feminist ideology. The result of the study indicate that there is one figure who is considered a feminist figure, namely Edna Pontellier, who has become a feminist character because of social expectations and male domination of her. She wanted to present herself as a woman, an individual, not just as the wife of a man and the mother of children.

The second previous researcher, "Analyzing Edna's Character in Chopin's novel *The Awakening* through Sullivan's Theory of Inter-personal Relations" written by Panhwar et al (2017). This study applied Sullivan's Inter-personal Relations theory. This study aimed to examine and evaluate the main character in Kate Chopin's novel *The Awakening*. The result of this research is that it is found that Edna's character develops her identity and makes her independent from social norms and taboos. She denied doing her duties as wife and mother and decides to be selfish. She

makes decisions that are relevant to her desires but contrary to the average woman in the world.

Based on these two previous studies, it can be concluded that the present research and the previous research are similar with the issues that discussed but applied the different theory. For the first previous study applied Huberman's (1994) theory of model analyzed. The second previous study applied Sullivan's Interpersonal Relations theory and the present research applied Walby (1991) theory.

This research interested to analyze because until now there is still gender inequality that exist in social circles. This gender inequality makes society look down on women. This makes women lose their right to get gender equality.

1.2 Identification of the problem

Based on the background above there are problems as follow:

1. The feel of pressure about matchmaking from the parents in the community.
2. The woman needs to be respected both in speech and in treatment.
3. The forms of gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*.
4. The form of resistance performed by main character to disrupt the gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the problems above, the writer limits the following problems that are:

1. The forms of gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*.
2. The form of resistance performed by main character to disrupt the gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problems, the writer formulated a problem such as:

1. What are the forms of gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*?
2. What is the form of resistance performed by main character to disrupt the gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*?

1.5 Objective of the Research

1. To describe the forms of gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*.
2. To describe the form of resistance performed by main character to disrupt the gender inequality in novel *The Awakening*.

1.6 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, by knowing the theory in this research it is expected that it can increase knowledge in enrich discourse especially in the field of Literature.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, by knowing the research and applied theories, it is intended as additional reference material in the field of literary works, especially those that raise feminist issues.

1.7 Definition of Keys Terms

Feminism :Feminism is an advocacy of women's rights in achieving gender equality (Thompson & Clement, 2018).

Identity :Assume that identity reflects and evokes ideas that are related to a person's basic self-esteem (Fearon,1999).

Rights : Rights are interpreted as an important element in law, politics, ethics and generally in society (Sarani,2017).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Feminist Approach

Feminist approach in the field of literature is known as feminist literary criticism. Feminist itself comes from the word “femme” which means “woman”. Feminist criticism in literary works tries to describe and interpret women's experiences in a literary work, one example is a novel. The novel that researcher used in this research is the one example of feminist novel.

Feminist is a study that focuses on the analysis of gender inequality. The focus of this analysis is because it is seen from the amount of unfair treatment between men and women. Feminist have a goal to achieve gender equality both in the cultural, political, economic, personal and social. In other words, feminists believe that women should get equal rights against men. Barry (2017) stated that feminist is studies that criticize the problem of differences between women and men socially, politically and economically, as well as to show the extent of patriarchy.

2.2 Theory of Patriarchy

Patriarchy itself is a social system that places men as dominant against women. The concept of patriarchal theory from Walby (1991) is very important to

develop and to take into account the forms of gender inequality both in terms of class and ethnic groups. The gender inequality starts from the point where men are the dominant group compared to women. Even in terms of personal life this is seen as a form of patriarchy in domestic relations. As well as the practice of social sex is the desire of men not women, and this is one part of the dominance of men over women. As with the violence of men against women, it is considered a women's control system (Walby, 1991).

The gender inequality that dominant man focuses on the ability of man to take over the female workforce in paid work. Woman does not deserve to work for a large amount of money. Women are considered unworthy of paid work because women are considered human weak. Therefore men dominant in the household that men are the head of household and this makes men able to commit violence or oppression, because according to him women are only creatures who are weak and depend on him for life. Walby(1991) stated that the foundation of patriarchy comes from six structures that are: paid employment, household production, culture, sexuality and state.

2.2.1 Paid Employment

Men dominant in paid workers compared to women because men are considered to have more energy and more time to think about work. The position of women in paid work has a high wage inequality compared to men's wages. This inequality occurs because women are considered weak and do not have more time. For this, the inequality that occur are very clear, even

thought basically men and women have their respective abilities in completing their work, but because of the assumption that women are weak the wages that given for women are different against men.

2.2.2 Household Production

Family is conventionally regarded as the center of women's lives and a determinant of gender inequality. Women workers are taken over in doing household work. The work they do does not get paid and men feel benefited by it. The relationship between men and women is basically considered different equal. Men have tasks oriented in the outside world and women take care of household needs.

2.2.3 Culture

According to Walby(1991) culture there was a gender inequality from the norms and the value between men and women. In patriarchal culture still the social norms that the men as "head of the household". From this it is uncommon to find domestic violence committed by men against women. The men think that he is the head of the household and every word that he says must be obeyed by his wife, no matter whether it is a good thing or a bad thing.

2.2.4 Sexuality

Sexuality in here is not just about gender. Walby (1991) argues that in this sexuality men tend to be dominant compared to women. When the men

likes a women he will propose to her and as the women when proposed according to norm and culture it is forbidden to refuse. Therefore, it can be concluded that women do not have rights. Denying their sexual need means that women are not allowed to choose their own partners. Different from men he has the right to choose a partner according to what he wants.

2.2.5 Violence

Walby (1991) see violence against women as a form of male control over women. This is still a problem for many women in the household and in the social sphere. Male violence against women includes sexual violence, rape, wife beating and also sexual harassment.

2.2.6 State

According Walby(1991), the relationship between the state and gender theory is the limitation of women's access to paid work. Women are rarely found among the formal political elite. As in the case in leadership a government is seen more men than women because women are considered unfit to lead a government and women are subdominant to men.

2.3 Previous Study

In the previous section, the writer discussed several previous studies that discussed the novel *The Awakening*, which was used by the author as a source of data for this study. In addition to the previous researches that have been discussed in chapter one, there are several studies that also discuss the feminist approach.

Especially this feminist approach is used to study literary works in the form of novels and films. Here are some previous studies that discuss issues of feminist approach.

The first research is “Harry Potter through the Focus of Feminist Literary Theory : Examples of (Un)founded Criticism” written by Dergisi (2009). This research discussed multiple reading from the perspective of feminist literary theory and applied the theory of Pail (1999). The data sources that are used in this research is novel which include novel of sexist and feminist. The result from this research that this novel can be read by various perspectives and through this novel Rowling has succeeded in awakening readers to the problem of male and female relations by positioning the main character on the opposite side related to emotional relationships, society, people relations and family through convincing and impressionable characterizations.

Next, the second research is ”An Analysis of Feminism Reflected in the Film the French Lieutenant’s Woman” written by Gao (2014). This research discussed women's struggles in demanding freedom to pursue their true love and women's struggles to get their rights. In the Victorian era in a patriarchal social environment, women's social status is influenced by patriarchy in which women are considered an embarrassing position and this lasts for a long time. Apart from the oppression of patriarchy, economy, women are also forced to love men they do not love. That is why women cannot enjoy their rights to self-realization and independence. However, in this film, the heroine shows her courage and determination to go against customs

and pursue true love, as well as defend her freedom and also pursue individual freedom and economic freedom that earned her the freedom to teach children to paint.

The third research is “Adichie’s Purple Hibiscus and the Issue of Feminism in African Novel” written by Ann (2015). This research discussed the character of Mama (Beatrice Achike) who expresses the African conception of the ideal of women who remain ignorant in the face of humiliation, victimization, and brutality. The results of this study are that Achike is included in the category of liberal feminism. However, there was one incident that occurred where she was forced by a situation beyond her control to respond radically and destroy her happiness. The effort made to show how African women are judged on the basis of good women is represented by Beatrice Achike. This research explored various principles of feminism, such as acknowledging the existence of radical feminism, namely violence and radical reactions to humiliation and violence.

The fourth research is “Feminism Reflected in *Pride and Prejudice* Novel by Jane Austen” written by Suadi (2016). This research analyzed the main characters that reflected in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. In this novel, Jane Austen presented human nature as a person who only sees happiness in her life. In this novel, Jane Austen the materialistic nature of society and is always obsessed with money and position. The result of this research indicate that readers can understand the novel *Pride and Prejudice* to provide knowledge to the public to find out what kind of role of women have in the early nineteenth century who are considered weak and do not have abilities in themselves.

The fifth research is “Feminism Analysis in the Novel *Woman at Point Zero*” written by Wilany (2017). This research discussed demanding for equality and justice, as well as fighting for sexist exploitation and oppression. This research is based on the struggle for women's rights that are differentiated by existing rules and culture and because this makes women feel oppressed and intimidated. The result of this study illustrate the difficult condition of a woman named Firdaus who wants to fight for and get her rights as a woman and also as a feminist human.

For the last research is “Women Violence and Resistance in *Sweat* Short Story by Zora Nrale Hurston: Feminist Approach” written by Bere & Arianto (2019). This research discussed the story of a woman's perspective who reveals violence and resistance against women in patriarchal development. This research focused on oppression in resistance by women as a form of struggle for women's existence. The result of this research indicated that Delia fought back by rejecting her husband, Sykes. Delia seeks her freedom by fleeing from the cruel treatment her husband gave Delia. Delia's action is contrary to the patriarchal construction in which women must submit to and respect men because women are considered dependent on men.

The phenomenon of feminist is an interesting thing to examine. This because feminist itself continues to the present where women do not get gender equality against man. This feminist movement has its own impact on women, namely by getting the same rights over man, making woman not burdened performance to live their lives. In each research has its own theory that is closely related to the analysis to be performed. The existence of this theory makes a study acceptable to the theory

as strong evidence. In solving an issue based on a theory, the results of the research can be well received and can also be held accountable for its authenticity.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

In a research, the existence of a theory is very important. The existence of a theory in research makes the research acceptable for clarity because it is based on a theory. In this research, the researcher used a feminist approach from Barry(2017). The researcher also uses Walby theory(1991) to identify gender inequality that reflected in the novel *The Awakening* by Chopin(1899). As for the theory of patriarchy from Walby(1991), it is divided into 6 aspects that are paid employment, household production, culture, sexuality, violence and state. For more detail, the researcher includes a theoretical framework for this research, which is as follows:

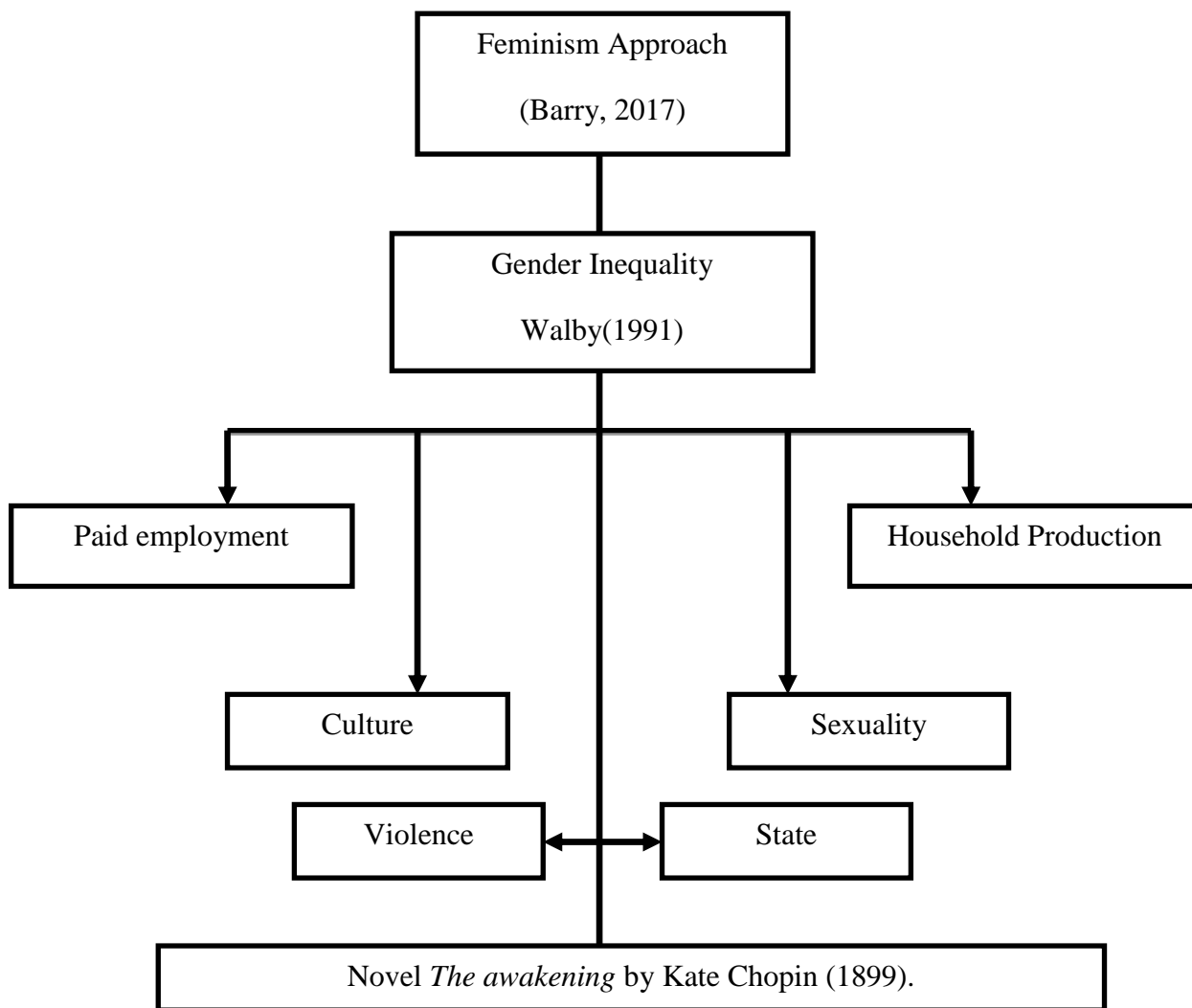


Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF RESEARCH

In a research, it is important for the researcher to specify method of the research. This chapter describe about the methodology of the research which was used by the researcher. This chapter consists of research design, object of the research, method of collecting data, method of analyzing data, and method of presenting the analysis result.

3.1 Research Design

This research is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative descriptive design is used to describe focusing on the details of what, where, when, and why an event or experience. This research also used qualitative method and according to Creswell (2014) qualitative methods are used to analyze and identified question such as narrative research and case studies. Case study is research that investigates carefully about an event or activity that occurs within a certain time.

This result of the research explained in the form of words and sentences. Descriptive qualitative method provides accurate description of the situation of the research object. This study uses theory Walby (1991) to examine gender inequality that reflected in the novel *The Awakening* by Chopin (1899) as a data source.

3.2 Object of the Research

Object of the research is the most important part as the main analysis of this research. This research analyzed gender inequality and applied theory of Walby (1991) in the novel *The Awakening* by Chopin (1899). In this case, gender inequality as the main reference in this analysis.

3.3 Method of Collecting Data

In this research the process of collecting data taken by using library research method. According Creswell & David (2018) Library research is research conducted with a step-by-step process to collect, analyze or evaluate information obtained from primary sources.

The primary data source of this research were taken from novel *The Awakening*. This research used theory Walby (1991) to analyze gender inequality that reflected in the novel *The Awakening*. The researcher in collecting data through several stages, as follow :

1. First, the researcher read the novel *The Awakening* as a data source.
2. The second, the researcher looking for the phenomenon that related to the theory.
3. The third, the researcher highlights the sentence or phrase that contains the phenomenon in question.
4. The last, the researcher rewrite the data that has found and analyzes it according to the theory that the writer applied.

3.4 Method of Analyzing Data

This research applied feminist approach with context while identifying the data. Ratna (2013) stated that method of descriptive analysis is a method that is carried out by looking for facts and then analyzing the data using theory. Or in other words, descriptive analysis method is a method that is carried out by describing the data obtained. For doing this study, the writer use step by step to analyze that are :

1. The researcher analyzed the intrinsic element of the fiction in the novel, from plot, characters, theme, setting and point of view.
2. The researcher analyzed the intrinsic element by applying the theory of gender inequality that reflected in the novel.
3. The researcher analyzed through words that interpret theory of gender inequality.
4. The researcher analyzed the data obtained by outlining the explanation according to the theory that applied.

3.5 Method of Presenting the Analysis Result

Presenting the analysis result was the final step of this research. It applied formal method by Ratna (2013). The analysis result present through words and sentences. In this descriptive qualitative there is no number, no chart and no diagram. This analysis present the elements contained in literary works, these elements can be divided into two namely intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements.