CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

Literature is a form of creative work and fiction with imaginative and beautiful language, whose existence can be useful for other things. Literature is defined as written work, with the caution that not all written works qualify under the more precise definition of the term (Holdsworth & Luckhurst, 2013). Meanwhile, According to Cuddon (1998), the term "literature" is popular and typically refers to works that fall under one of the following major genres: epic, drama, lyric, novel, or short story. Literature has always played an important role in human life, not just writing on a piece of paper. Through literature, people can convey their wishes to other people, from the community to the government. According to Klarer (2004), literary is typically used in reference to all written communication, with the caveat that not all written works fall within the most precise definition of the term. Examples of literature include poetry, short stories, and novels. A good literary work can at least show two main functions. In other words, literary works have great literary benefits if they can provide entertainment to readers and positive lessons for readers. A literary work that can only provide impractical entertainment will feel dry. Likewise, literary works that are only useful for readers but do not provide entertainment have a bland taste. Therefore, literature is an entertainment medium for teaching and an entertainment medium.

Novels are complex literary works that depict fictional stories through deep prose narration. They not only narrate the problems of their characters but also explore various aspects of human life, including cultural, social, political, and psychological dimensions. With diverse, lengthy, and intricate narrative structures, novels enable authors to delve into their characters by describing backgrounds, motivations, internal conflicts, and sustained developments. Various types of novels, ranging from romance, mystery, to science fiction, offer different reading experiences. Additionally, novels serve as powerful mediums to explore social and cultural issues, including feminism.

In her late 19th-century novel The Awakening, Kate Chopin examines issues of identity, independence, and the limitations placed on women by society. The narrative centers on Edna Pontellier, a married mother of children who starts to doubt the traditional responsibilities that society has given her. Edna's self-discovery journey reveals her inner turmoil as she pursues autonomy and personal fulfillment, ultimately questioning the then-dominant standards of marriage, parenthood, and female subservience. The setting of the book—New Orleans and Grand Isle—highlights the social and cultural constraints placed on women during that time. The book's portrayal of Creole society is characterized by strict gender roles, with women expected to put their families first and follow social norms. Edna experiences sexual, intellectual, and emotional self-realization during her awakening, which leads her to a world where she longs for authenticity and independence.

The Awakening was first criticized for its depiction of female desire and its defiance of conventional gender conventions when it was first published in 1899. At the time, its themes of self-assertion and emancipation were regarded as contentious, if not scandalous. The book, which depicts the hardships of a woman who tries to escape social constraints in order to discover who she really is, has subsequently been acknowledged as a groundbreaking piece of feminist writing.

Kate Chopin (1850–1904) was an American author known for her groundbreaking works of fiction that explored themes of female independence, identity, and the constraints of societal norms. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, she grew up in a prominent family, but experienced personal loss early in life with the death of her father and later, the death of her husband. Chopin's writing often reflects her experiences as a widow and a mother of six, as well as her keen observations of the lives of women in the late 19th century. She is best known for her novel "The Awakening" (1899), which stirred controversy for its candid exploration of a woman's sexual and emotional liberation. Chopin's work was ahead of its time, addressing issues of gender roles, marital expectations, and personal freedom, which often led to critical rejection during her lifetime. However, her reputation has since grown, and she is now considered a pivotal figure in American literature, particularly in the development of feminist literary traditions.

The feminist approach in literature involves examining texts through the lens of gender equality and women's rights, aiming to uncover how gender dynamics shape literary representations. It scrutinizes the portrayal of female

characters, analyzing whether they are depicted as empowered individuals with agency or as passive objects serving male narratives. Tong (2009) identifies third-wave feminism as a subset of feminism that arose in the 1990s and was impacted by the theories and methods of earlier feminism waves. The fight for women's rights to be treated equally with men is referred to as feminism (Abbas, 2020). Additionally, the feminist approach delves into the thematic content of literary works, exploring how issues such as sexism, misogyny, and gender discrimination are addressed or perpetuated within the text. It also considers the socio-political context in which the literature was produced, recognizing the influence of historical, cultural, and ideological factors on gender representations. Feminism is a struggle to end the oppression of women (Jenainati & Groves, 2007). Feminism can be defined as a belief, movement, and endeavor to promote the equal status of men and women in a patriarchal society by connecting the various definitions of the term.

Women are often described as beautiful and weak. Tradition and male-female relationships are factors that cause gender differences. All of these factors contribute to an imbalance of power between men and women, which can have consequences in other areas of life. For example, there is a common belief that men hold a higher position than women because men are perceived as smarter, stronger, and less emotional. Men have a stronger function in society because men are stronger, more productive and have more potential, while women, who have fewer opportunities are seen as weaker Collins. (1991) said that feminism is the

recognition of power imbalances between sexes, with women playing subordinate roles to men.

The shifting dynamics of Edna's relationships and her developing sense of self are reflected in The Awakening through register. The exchange between Edna and her husband, Léonce Pontellier, is a prime example of this; Edna's comments show her slow transition toward independence, while Léonce's tone reflects his role as an authoritative spouse. Early in the book, when Edna returns late one night, Léonce chastises her for failing to perform her household chores.

> **"You are taking the thing too seriously and making too much fuss over it."** (Chopin, 1899, p. 58)

Léonce's tone is contemptuous and domineering, which reflects their marriage's formal, hierarchical register. His words make it clear that he expects Edna to put her responsibilities as a wife and mother above her personal emotions or wants. In this exchange, Léonce assumes a dominant role and demands Edna's obedience, demonstrating how language perpetuates the patriarchal dynamic in their relationship.

The novel also critiques the dominance of men over women in both familial and societal contexts, reflecting the theory of male dominance. Léonce embodies the patriarchal ideal of the husband who views his wife as a possession rather than an equal partner. He expects Edna to conform to societal norms and fulfill her roles as a wife and mother without question.

> **"He could not see that she was becoming herself and casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world."** (Chopin, 1899, p. 64)

Male dominance is also reinforced by societal norms that confine women to domestic roles. The "mother-women" in the novel, such as Adele Ratignolle, represent the idealized feminine role of complete devotion to husband and children. Edna's rejection of this ideal challenges the dominance of men and the societal structures that perpetuate women's subservience.

"…I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself…"
(Chopin, 1899, p. 54)

A significant turning point in the book that represents Edna's independence is when she leaves her husband's home and moves into a smaller one that she refers to as the "pigeon house." By doing this, she expresses her determination to live her life as she sees fit and her rejection of the patriarchal authority that her husband, Léonce Pontellier, represents. Even though she recognizes the costs involved, this comment demonstrates her dedication to her own identity and independence. Edna's behavior exemplifies Simone de Beauvoir's idea of the independent woman, who aspires to achieve personal independence by overcoming social expectations rather than being defined only by her obligations as a wife and mother.

"It seems to me the utmost folly for a woman at the head of a household, and the mother of children, to spend in an atelier days which would be better employed contriving for the comfort of her family." (Chopin, 1899, p. 64)

This social perspective is exemplified by Léonce, who sees Edna as a possession whose major responsibility is to take care of the home and their kids rather than as an independent person. He lets Edna know how unhappy he is with her actions. As Edna starts to express her independence, she encounters harsh treatment that is exacerbated by societal censure. She faces rejection and criticism

when she defies expectations by ignoring her responsibilities at home, having an affair, and pursuing a career in art. Her behavior goes against the social norm of the "mother-woman," who is exemplified by her friend Adele Ratignolle and who puts her family's needs ahead of her own. Edna's defiance of these limitations is consistent with Beauvoir's criticism of patriarchal systems that imprison women in subservient positions and reduce them to immanence.

There are some research that conducted image of woman in their respective research. The research from Khasanah (2019) Presenting the two significant male academics who are advocating for gender equality makes this study relevant. In a feminist framework, the author attempts to work with both personas. This research employs a critical analysis methodology. According to the study's findings, Husein Muhammad leans toward liberal feminism, whilst Gus Dur trends toward social feminism. Husein Muhammad's and Gus Dur's feminist perspectives on humanity are based on Islamic principles. Husein did, however, write specifically on gender. Gus Dur's perspective, however, was inferred from his writings. The two figures' feminist perspectives are the result of social unrest in response to inequity. Justice was thus the primary idea they put out. According to the author, Husein's perspective did not consider the feminist viewpoint of Western scholars; instead, he tended to agree with As-Sat` bi and Ghazali. In the meanwhile, it is unclear how independent Gus Dur's feminist viewpoint is.

The research from Maulana et al (2021) This study examined the relationship between the emergence of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the dominance of

Biblical culture over women's roles in Western civilization. The idea of gender emancipation and the patriarchal ideology present in biblical tradition would be examined. This study will employ the "Document Analysis" approach to expound on CEDAW records and the "Discourse Analysis" method to address the biblical foundations of liberal feminism in order to address this research topic. The analysis comes to the conclusion that the idea of liberal feminism as it is expressed in CEDAW and biblical values are closely related.

The research from Arundyna (2015). This study was to examine the status of women in the Test Pack book. The purpose of this research is to examine the main character's coping mechanisms from a feminist standpoint. This study uses Simone de Beauvoir's "Second Sex" to examine how married women struggle to conceive. The results show that a woman's patriarchal circumstances are one factor influencing her character.

In terms of similarities, previous study used a theory of liberal feminism even though the previous research used multiple theory of liberal feminism from multiple expert. In terms of dissimilarity, the data sources of this study are different from the sources of previous studies. This study uses the novel "The Awakening" as a data source. The researcher chose this novel because the data obtained was easier to find, making it easier for this research to find essential data. The researcher chose the novel of "The Awakening" as the source in the title "An Analysis of Image of Woman in The Novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin: Feminist approach"

1.2 Identifications of The Problem

Based on the background, the problems of the study, there are several problems identified as follows:

1. The use of register in the novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin.

2. The male dominance found in the novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin.

3. The image of woman found in "The Awakening" novel by Kate Choppin.

4. The unfair treatment experienced by woman in novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin

1.3 Limitations of The Problem

Based on the identifications of the problem above, the writer has taken out the limitations of the problem:

1. The image of woman found in "The Awakening" novel by Kate Choppin.

2. The unfair treatment experienced by woman in novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin

1.4 Formulations of The Problem

Based on the background of the problem can be formulated into the research questions as follows:

1. What are the images of woman found in novel "The Awakening" by Kate Choppin?

2. What are the unfair treatments experienced by woman in novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin?

1.5 Objectives of The Research

Based on statements of the problem above, the researcher arranges the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To identified the image of woman found in novel "The Awakening" by Kate Choppin

2. To identified the unfair treatment experienced by woman in novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin

1.6 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this research broadens our comprehension of how social norms and gender roles influence women's identity and independence. The analysis of Edna Pontellier's journey highlights the limitations imposed on women in patriarchal societies, demonstrating how stereotypes such as "the mother," "the wife," and "the independent woman" define and limit women's lives. This argument, which draws from Beauvoir's ideas in The Second Sex, demonstrates how literature may both reflect and question social norms.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this analysis sheds light on ongoing issues of gender expectations and the pressures women face to conform to specific roles. Edna's conflicts in the novel resonate with modern struggles for identity, independence, and self-expression. Exploring how "The Awakening" critiques these restrictive images can promote greater awareness of how societal expectations impact women today. It may inspire readers to critically examine and question the traditional roles and

stereotypes that influence their own lives and interactions, contributing to more inclusive and empowering views on gender in contemporary society.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Feminism   : Feminism is a movement advocating for gender equality, focusing on dismantling systems of oppression that marginalize women. Feminism challenges traditional gender roles and seeks to ensure that all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal access to opportunities and rights, striving for a more just and equitable society. Feminism is an understanding, research, and social movement aimed at changing the inferior status of women in a male-dominated society. (Wright, 2006)

Gender   : The word "gender" can be defined as a clear difference between men and women in terms of values and behavior The social, cultural, and behavioral characteristics that come with being male, female, or non-binary are referred to as gender. Instead of biological distinctions, it includes roles, identities, and expectations that are shaped by society standards. (Neufeldt, 1984)

Image of Woman : The term "image of woman" describes how society views and portrays women, influenced by social, historical, and cultural elements. These pictures have an impact on how people see, treat, and assign positions to women in society. The way that women are portrayed depends on the literary genre, and emotions are a major factor in shaping that perception.

Liberal Feminism : Liberal feminism uses institutional and legislative changes to promote gender equality. It challenges traditional conventions that restrict women's freedoms and potential by working toward equal rights, opportunities, and autonomy for women in fields including politics, the workplace, and education.