

## ABSTRACT

Ferinda Utami (2006). **Questioning the Conventions of Marriage and Womanhood: A Comparative Study of Charlotte Perkins Gilman "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening***. Yogyakarta : Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University, 2006.

This study is focused on Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Charlotte Perkins Gilman "The Yellow Wallpaper". These two literary works emphasize on the confinement of women in the conventions of the society especially marriage and womanhood which lead them to breakdown. The writer chooses the breakdown of the female characters in these two literary works because the authors of these literary works question the conventions of the society and awaken readers' awareness of the confining and oppressive society by showing the readers the breakdowns of the female characters.

In this study, the writer has three problems to discuss. The first problem is how the female characters in *The Awakening* and "The Yellow Wallpaper" are depicted. The second problem formulation is how the breakdowns of the female characters in *The Awakening* and "The Yellow Wallpaper" are depicted. The third problem is how the breakdowns of the female characters in *The Awakening* and "The Yellow Wallpaper" become the ways of Chopin and Gilman in questioning of the convention of the society and awaken readers' awareness of the confining and oppressive society.

The writer uses library research method. The writer finds the primary data in the library as well as in the internet. The writer applies feminist approach because it deals with women's marginalization and struggle to get free from it. It also concerns with the authors' idea and thought about women to awake the readers' awareness of the situation women are in.

The result of the study is the females characters who are oppressed and confined by the conventions of the society have to experience breakdown when they try to fight against the conventions of the society and the authors of these literary works show their breakdowns to question of the conventions of the society. Edna Pontelier, the female character in *The Awakening*, experiences breakdown. Kate Chopin depicts the causes of breakdown brilliantly and uses breakdown as the ultimate point of *The Awakening*, that the Edna's struggle results in breakdown. The female character of "The Yellow Wallpaper" who is already depicted as a woman who has a postpartum depression also experiences breakdown in the end of the story. Gilman depicts the process of the narrator's breakdown brightly but it is not the process of the breakdown which is ultimate. It is the breakdown itself which is important because it shows that the narrator's struggle to get free is in vain because the society are so strong and the female characters are not really ready to fight against it.

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Penelitian ini difokuskan pada *The Awakening* karya Kate Chopin dan "The Yellow Wallpaper" karya Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Kedua karya sastra ini menekankan pada pengekangan wanita oleh norma-norma sosial khususnya pernikahan dan kewanitaan yang membawa mereka ke kerusakan mental. Penulis memilih kerusakan mental karakter-karakter wanita dalam karya-karya sastra ini karena pengarang-pengarang karya sastra ini mempertanyakan norma-norma sosial dan menggugah kesadaran pembaca akan kenyataan sosial yang mengekang dan menindas dengan menunjukkan kerusakan mental karakter-karakter wanita tersebut.

Pada penelitian ini, penulis menyetengahkan tiga permasalahan. Permasalahan yang pertama adalah bagaimana karakter-karakter wanita dalam karya-karya sastra tersebut digambarkan. Permasalahan kedua adalah bagaimana kerusakan mental karakter-karakter wanita di gambarkan. Permasalahan yang ketiga adalah bagaimana kerusakan mental ini menjadi alat Chopin dan Gilman dalam mengusulkan penataan kembali norma-norma sosial.

Penulis menggunakan metode penelitian pustaka. Penulis mencari data-data utama di perpustakaan dan juga internet. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan feminis karena pendekatan ini berhubungan dengan pengesampingan wanita dan perjuangan mereka untuk terbebas dari pengesampingan itu. Pendekatan ini juga berhubungan dengan ide dan pemikiran pengarang tentang wanita untuk membangun kesadaran wanita tentang situasi mereka.

Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa karakter-karakter wanita yang ditindas dan dikekang oleh norma-norma sosial harus mengalami kerusakan mental ketika mereka mencoba memberontak norma-norma sosial dan pengarang karya sastra ini menunjukkan kerusakan mental ini untuk mempertanyakan norma-norma sosial. Edna Ponteliev, karakter wanita di *The Awakening*, mengalami kerusakan mental. Kate Chopin menggambarkan sebab-sebab kerusakan mental Edna secara brilian, dan menggunakan kerusakan mental di akhir cerita sebagai maksud utama *The Awakening*, bahwa perjuangan Edna berakhir di kerusakan mental. Karakter wanita di "The Yellow Wallpaper" yang pada awal cerita digambarkan menderita depresi pasca melahirkan juga mengalami kerusakan mental di akhir cerita. Gilman menggambarkan proses kerusakan mentalnya secara cerdas, akan tetapi proses kerusakan mental ini bukanlah hal yang paling utama. Yang utama adalah kerusakan mental itu sendiri karena hal ini menunjukkan bahwa perjuangan karakter wanita untuk bebas dari norma-norma sosial yang mengekang sia-sia dan berakhir di kerusakan mental.