THE INFLUENCE OF SETTING IN CHOPIN'S THE AWAKENING TOWARD THE MAIN CHARACTER'S FAILURE IN REBELLING AGAINST THE CONSTRAINT OF THE SOCIAL VALUES

A SARJANA SASTRA THESIS

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A Sarjana Sastra Thesis on

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Dean,

Br. A. Aryanto, M.A
Rejoicing In Hope;
Patient In Tribulation;
Continuing Instant In Prayer.

(Romans 12: 12)

I dedicate my thesis to my beloved family:
my late father and lovely mother
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ABSTRACT

V. Ratna Puspitosari (1999). *The Influence of Setting in Chopin’s The Awakening toward the main character’s failure in rebelling against the constraint of the social values*. Department of English Letters, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, 1999

Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* basically exposes the biological aspect of woman situation as it shows the main character’s realization toward her need for happiness in her sexual life and her inability to live on with her husband in a hypocritical relationship. This novel also draws the relationship between the social environment and the individual who lives in it as it has its purpose which is concerned with woman’s passionnal nature and its relation to self, marriage, and society. This can be seen through Edna Pontellier, the main character in this novel, who wants to rebel against the unhappiness of her marriage in her restrictive society. Edna’s struggle to seek for her freedom finally has failed as there is a contrast between Edna with her special need and her environment with its values. The social values of her society are not responsive to her need for the happiness in her sexual life. Therefore, this thesis attempts to analyze: (1) the social conditions of the setting; (2) the main character’s characteristics; (3) the conditions of Edna’s marriage; and (4) Edna’s reason in rebelling against her easy comfort of marriage.

To analyze Chopin’s *The Awakening*, firstly we read the whole text of the novel to find what happens to the main character so that she reacts to rebel against the easy comfort of her marriage. Secondly, we make a critical analysis by analyzing the work so objectively that we can make a reasonable analysis. The Formalistic approach is used to analyze the work by relating the intrinsic elements of setting and character as there is a close relationship between the main character and the setting in Chopin’s *The Awakening*. Finally, we make a conclusion as the final result.

By doing those steps above, we get the result in answering the problems. First, this thesis reveals the setting of the Creole social environment which holds certain social conditions as seen through their family patterns, religion, and cultural life. Shortly, these social conditions highly value on the Creole women’s duty in their family. In daily life, Creole married women are expected to be good mothers and wves by giving her whole life to their family. They never speak of their own happiness as their family’s happiness is the most important thing in their life. Whether they are happy or not with their marriage, they have no right to get rid of their husbands. They are the property of their husbands so that they are bound to their marriage to their husbands. Furthermore, they seldom figure in domestic scandal with another man. Second, this thesis portrays Edna’s characteristics that are basically different from the characteristics of Creole women. As a Creole wife, Edna is not able to give her life for her family. Third, this thesis draws the conditions of the Pontelliers’
marriage in which there is no harmony in their marriage life. Fourth, this thesis reveals Edna's reason in rebelling against her easy comfort of marriage. Edna is motivated by her sentimental character to get her right for her own happiness in her sexual life. As she has a rebellious temperament, she reacts to rebel against the unhappiness of her married life. She, at the end, fails to rebel against her marriage as there is no one who understands and supports her in seeking her right for a happiness particularly in her sexual life.

In relation to those analysis results, it is concluded that the Creole society in Chopin's The Awakening has strong power to produce Edna's failure in rebelling against the constraint of the social values.
ABSTRAK


Novel karya Kate Chopin yang berjudul The Awakening pada dasarnya menggabungkan tentang situasi kewajiban yang mana novel ini menggambarkan kesadaran dari pelaku utama di dalam novel tentang kebutuhannya untuk mendapatkan kebahagiaan dalam kehidupannya, hal-hal lainnya kehidupan seksualnya dan juga tentang ketidakmanuannya untuk mencerminkan hubungan yang penuh keperluan dengan suaminya. Novel ini juga menggambarkan hubungan antara lingkungan sosial dan individu yang tinggal didalamnya, karena novel ini memiliki tujuan yang mengarah pada sifat dari keinginan wanita dan hubungannya dengan diri, perkawinan, dan masyarakat. Hal ini dapat dilihat melalui Edna Pontellier, pelaku utama di dalam novel, yang ingin memberontak terhadap perkawinannya yang tidak bahagia di dalam lingkungan yang penuh dengan aturan. Perjuangan Edna untuk mendapatkan hak kebebasannya pada akhirnya mengalami kegagalan karena adanya perbedaan diantara keinginan Edna dengan nilai-nilai sosial didalam lingkungannya. Oleh karena itu, skripsi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa: (1) kondisi sosial dalam novel; (2) karakteristik dari pelaku utama; (3) kondisi perkawinan Edna; dan (4) alasan Edna untuk memberontak melawan kemapanan perkawinannya.


Dengan melakukan langkah-langkah tersebut diatas, kita mendapatkan hasil untuk menjawab masalah-masalah. Yang pertama, skripsi ini mengungkapkan setting dari lingkungan sosial masyarakat Creole yang mana masyarakat Creole mempunyai kondisi sosial yang sedemikian rupa yang dapat dilihat melalui pola kekeluargaan, kegemaan dan kebudayaan. Secara ringkas koadisi-kondisi sosial tersebut menekankan pada ngas wanita terhadap keluarga. Dalam kehidupan sehari-hari wanita Creole yang sudah menikah diherapkan untuk menjadi ibu dan istri yang baik dengan memberikan seluruh hidupnya terhadap keluarga. Mereka tidak pernah memikirkan kebahagiaan diri mereka sendiri karena kebahagiaan keluarganya atau yang mempunyai hal yang terpenting dalam hidup mereka. Mereka tidak berhak bercerai meskipun mereka tidak bahagia

Dalam hubungannya dengan hasil analisa diatas, dapat disimpulkan bahwa masyarakat Creole didalam novel karya Kate Chopin memiliki aneh yang besar terhadap kegagalan Edna dalam memberontak melawan nilai-nilai sosial yang mengkanganya.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

A novel is the medium of a writer to share her (or his) experiences, opinions, or even imaginations of life to the readers. Therefore, Forster(1974:58) says that novel has “its specialty” because “the writer can talk about her (or his) characters as well as through them.” The writer also, through the novel, can arrange the characteristics of her (or his) characters when they talk to others. Through the novel, the writer must have a purpose with her (or his) novels. She (or he) must have something to tell; to show or to prove to the readers because, as what Norris says(1970:237), “every novel must do one of three things - it must (1) tell something, (2) show something, or (3) prove something.” Moreover, Norris adds, “some novels do all three of these; some do only two; all must do at least one.”

Here, Kate Chopin’s work The Awakening which will be analyzed does only two of those things above that is “(2) show something” and “(3) prove something.” Firstly, this novel is called “the novel of character” as it “shows something” - it shows the working of a character’s mind in the novel. This novel, then, “exposes the working of a temperament,” and devotes itself to the human beings’ mind (Norris, 1970:237-238). Chopin’s The Awakening shows primarily about the awakening of Edna Pontellier who is the main character in this novel “from the easy comfort of a marriage
of convenience to a realization of what she considers to be the deeper needs of her soul" (Culley, 1976:170-171). This novel, then, exposes "the biological aspect of woman situation" (Culley, 1976:181) as it shows Edna's realization toward "her need for fulfillment and her inability to live on with her husband in a hypocritical relationship" (Culley, 1976:173). In short, this novel devotes itself to the "human situations" as the writer of this novel herself "sympathizes to Edna's awakening to rebel against the constraint of her marriage." There is a "modern honesty in her treatment of human situations, such as Edna Pontellier's awakening, her need for fulfillment, and her inability to live on with her husband in a hypocritical relationship" (Culley, 1976:173).

Secondly, Chopin's *The Awakening* can be called as "the novel with a purpose." It is so because this novel "proves something, draws conclusion from a whole congeries of forces and social tendencies, and devotes itself to a study of man" (Norris, 1970:238). Chopin's *The Awakening* has its purpose which is "concerned not with seduction and retribution, but with woman's passional nature and its relation to self, marriage, and society" (Culley, 1976:188). Therefore, this novel may draw the relationship between the social environment and the individual who lives in it. This novel also devotes to the study of Edna Pontellier as a woman. This can be seen through the main character, Edna Pontellier, who wants to rebel against the constraint of her marriage in her restrictive society. "Her innate sense of independence" and her struggle to seek for her freedom, finally, have failed and even, at the end of the story,
she surrenders her life by suicide (Culley, 1976: 94-195). Her final rebellion against her marriage and her society, "when she swims to her death in the sea", is "the only way she can save herself" because, "she cannot accept the restrictions" from her marriage and her environment (Culley, 1976:195).

Edna Pontellier, the main character in Chopin's The Awakening, is not able to live on in the hypocrisy of her marriage as she cannot find her happiness in her marriage life with her husband. That is why, for this condition, she wants to rebel against her marriage even though she has a comfortable life in her marriage. Unfortunately, most people who live in her social environment do not understand and encourage her struggle for freedom to get a happiness particularly in her sexual life.

Her society, the Creoles, uphold strongly "the Creole belief in the purity of womanhood"(Culley, 1976:173). Furthermore, the Creole married women are expected to be good wives and mother. For them, it is the duty of women - as the Creole women believe - and accept it, to sacrifice and to give their life to their family without paying attention to their own happiness in their life. Edna, of course, fails in breaking this tradition because there is not anyone who supports her.

From those explanations above, it is seen that the setting of the story is important in that it affects action and character as what Murphy says that "the setting of the novel has a great effect upon the personalities, actions and way of thinking of the characters" (1972: 41). Thus, as Kemey states, "setting may thrust itself dynamically into action, affecting events and being in turn affected by them," and together with these
events, "setting seems to assume the role of a major character" (1966: 40). The setting, as Harvey says, "may be allowed a moment of intensity and depth." They may give an impact to the main action of the main character(s). The social setting is "one of the most important of all human contexts" in which there is "a complex web of individual relationship" (Harvey, 1965: 56).

Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is "exotic in setting, morbid in theme, and erotic in motivation" (Culley, 1976: 165). The setting of this novel has a contribution to Edna's awakening. It affects her in realizing her need for the pursuit of her happiness. The Creole society, the setting of her environment, affects Edna's revolt against the constraint of her marriage in which this setting restrains her desire for freedom to get a happiness particularly in her sexual life. That is why, for the reasons above, it can be said that the setting affects Edna's failure to seek her sexual freedom that cannot be found in her constraint of marriage, as Leary says:

"Here is Edna Pontellier, a woman. She is awakened to possibilities for self-expression which, because she is what she is or because society is what it is, can not be realized." (Culley, 1976: 199)

Edna finally meets her failure, when she wants to break and to rebel her marriage, because her society does not understand and accept her need for freedom. Edna's awakening to her marriage life, her realization to the hypocritical relationship of her marriage, her complication in seeking her deeper needs that is to oppose with the
values of her social environment, and her final revolt by committing suicide when she fails to struggle her freedom interest the writer to analyze it.

B. Problem Formulation

This thesis attempts to analyze Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* based on these problems as follows:

1. What kind of setting does the novel present?
2. How are Edna’s characteristics described in this novel?
3. What kind of conditions of Edna’s marriage does the novel describe?
4. Why does Edna Pontellier rebel against her marriage?

C. Objective of Study

Considering those problems above, this thesis aims:

1. to know the social conditions of setting that are presented on Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*.
2. to know Edna’s characteristics that are described in Chopin’s *The Awakening*.
3. to know the conditions of Edna’s marriage that are described in Chopin’s *The Awakening*.
4. to know Edna’s reason in rebelling against her easy comfort of marriage.
D. Benefits of Study

In analyzing one of Kate Chopin's major works *The Awakening*, this thesis is expected to give some benefits, firstly to the study of novels, in relation to the deeper comprehension of Chopin’s idea in her novel *The Awakening*, which is focused on the rebellion of the married woman to seek her sexual freedom that can not be found in her marriage.

Secondly, this thesis, as the writer hopes, could provide a little information about the sexual revolt of American woman in 1890s that is presented through the main character of Chopin’s *The Awakening*, Edna Pontellier, who demands her freedom to get her happiness in her sexual life.

Thirdly, the writer, by analyzing Chopin’s *The awakening*, could provide a little explanation that society sometimes forces the individual arbitrarily to accept and oblige its values without any considering of her(his) particular need. Whether she(he) is happy or not with social values, she(he) is made to pay the moral consequences from her(his) special need which is opposite with these values.

Finally, the writer really hopes that this thesis could open the reader's positive opinion about Edna's struggle for her sexual freedom. Her need to have a happiness in her sexual life should be seen normally as a human situation because she cannot get it from her marriage.
E. Definition of Terms

The term "values," based on Rokeach’s *Understanding Human Values, Individual and Social*, are core conceptions of the desirable within every individual and society. They serve as standards or criteria to guide not only action but also judgment, attitude, evaluation, argument, exhortation, and attribution of causality (1979:2).

The term sexual freedom has a relation with the term "freedom" and also the sexual revolt for a sexual freedom. According to Boyd and Worcester’s *American Civilization: An Introduction to the Social Science*, freedom is the positive rights of the individual to act or to do in getting the pursuit of her (or his) happiness without encroaching upon others’ rights (1968: 716).

Meanwhile, based on Lerner’s *America as a Civilization: Life and Thought in the United States Today*, sexual revolt in America has asserted the sexual freedom. The term sexual freedom here is “the freedom to lead a fully sexual life in the pursuit of happiness.” It is a sexual revolt for freedom to have a happiness in the life (1957: 687).

In relation to those explanations above, we draw a conclusion that the term sexual freedom is the rights of the individual to act and to do in seeking a happiness in her sexual life without encroaching to others’ rights.

Abrams states, in his book: *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, “the setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social
circumstances in which its action occurs” (1981:175). Referring to the term of setting in Chopin's *The Awakening*, the setting in this novel is focused on the social circumstances (environment) in which its action occurs, as the *Longman Dictionary of English language and Culture* states that a setting is “a background or set of surroundings” (1992:1204).

The term “influence” here, based on Webster’s *New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, is “the power of a person or group to produce effects without the exertion of physical force or authority, based on wealth, social position, ability, etc.” (1983:940). Meanwhile, the term “rebellion,” based on *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*, refers to “an act of rebelling” in which “rebel” means “to oppose or fight against someone in a position of control” (1992:408-409).

Based on those explanations above, the title in this thesis, *The Influence of Setting in Chopin's The Awakening toward the Main Character's Failure in Rebell ing against the Constraint of the Social Values*, means that the setting of the novel is the cause of the main character’s failure in rebelling against the constraint of her social values.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A.1. THEORIES ON CHARACTER

A.1. a. Character and characterization

Character is an imagined person who inhabits a story and it shows a distinctive type of person (Abrams, 1981:20). Seeing that he is a feature that inhabits a story and shows a distinctive type of person, a character must be a very important feature of the fiction including that of the novel. Moreover, to interpret the characters that are presented in a dramatic or narrative work, the reader can interpret characters’ moral and dispositional qualities through what they say and what they do. A character’s motivation is constituted from “the grounds in a character’s temperament and moral nature for his speech and actions” (Abrams, 1981:20). Meanwhile, a character’s action must not only be motivated, but they must also be consistent with his behavioral traits.

In depicting characters, a novelist is expected to show people as they are (Eastman, 1965:18). We read fiction because we are interested in what happens to people. We do not ask them necessarily to be like ourselves, but we do ask people in the story to be believable in their behavior (Perrine, 1974:69).
To be believable or convincing, characterization must observe at least three principals (Perrine, 1974:69). First, the characters must be consistent in their behavior. They must have a clearly sufficient reason if they are being in change. In other words, a character may remain stable (or unchanged) or he may undergo a radical change in his outlook and dispositions from the beginning to the end of a work. Whether he is being stable or being unstable, the important thing is that he must be consistent with his behavioral traits. This is clearly stated by Abrams who says that “the character should not suddenly break off and act in a way not plausibly grounded in his temperament as we have already come to know it” (Abrams, 1981:20).

Second, the characters must be clearly motivated in whatever they do, especially when there is any change in their behavior. In other words, we must be able to understand the reasons for what they do at least by the end of the story. We are interested to know that characters act from known motives.

Third, the characters must be plausible or lifelike. If the writer can meet the second principal, the third will automatically be realized. The standard of lifelikeness of the characters, then, is not sufficient to judge character in fiction because the notion of lifelikeness may explain too simply for the fictional character. The relation between fictional characters and real human beings is a complex problem. We should be aware, then, not only of the similarities but also
of the differences between fictional characters and real human beings (Kenney, 1966:24).

The fictional character is never entirely free. Unlike the real human being, the fictional character is part of an artistic whole and must always serve the needs of that whole. A writer of fiction has a delicate task to create and maintain the illusion that his characters are free, while, at the same time, they are not really free. The reason is that a really free character would be free of his duty to the story of which he is a part. Furthermore, a story which admits such freedom can never achieve unity in the whole part of an artistic work (Kenney, 1966:25).

As the fictional character is never entirely free and must always serve the needs of an artistic work, it is not possible, then, for a writer to observe human nature and, from his observations, to imagine a fictional character like a real human being. Kenney (1966:25-26) says that the author should place the characters in a unified work of art. The author must always be prepared to sacrifice one interest for the sake of others. For instance, he is not only interested in the lifelikeness of the character, but he is also considering for the other interests such as plot, theme, setting, or something else. To discuss a character in fiction, we must attend to the relationships between character and the other elements of the story, and between character and the story as a whole. Thus, character must be considered as part of the story's internal structure.
In the standard of lifelikeness, sometimes, we may see a fictional character is similar to a real human being. In other words, we may regard that the fictional characters are similar to ourselves. At this point, we may narrow the writer’s imagination if we ask the characters to be like ourselves or like the people we know. We may also be overlooking the function of character within the story if asking the character to be like ourselves. Therefore, it is better to use the standard of relevance in discussing a character than to use the standard of lifelikeness. The reason is that this relevance standard lets the author a full measure of freedom create his characters without denying the point of contact between the character and the reader (Kenney, 1966: 26-27).

A character is obviously relevant to us and to our experience if he is like ourselves or like others whom we know. Lifelikeness, then, is properly understood as one form of relevance. A character is relevant if there are a lot of people like him in the real world. It is in this sense that we feel his relevance to us (Kenney, 1966:27).

A. 1. b. Types of Character

In fiction, the performers of the action are called characters (Bergman, 1987:115). A novel is greatly concerned with character so that a novel (Little, 1981:91) is expected to present one or a few characters in considerable depth. It is also expected that a novel will present the development of character and
explore deeply in the personal relationships of characters. This personal relationship takes very often the relationship of love, in all its varieties and complexities. The relationships between characters are very important as Little states that "a human personality is a complex of many traits or qualities of character, many motives and desires, some in conflict with one another" (1981:91). Much interest is created when characters have different ideas about another character, or false ideas about themselves. Conflict, contrast, and misunderstanding are but a few obvious relationships between characters. One of the most generally interesting relationships is love in all its aspects (Little, 1981:90).

E.M. Forster in his *Aspects of the Novel* introduces popular new terms to differentiate the term "flat" and "round" characters. For Forster, a flat character is "built around a single idea or quality and is represented without much individualizing detail" (Abrams, 1981:20). A flat character is characterized by one or two traits. Meanwhile, a round character is a fictional feature that has a complex of temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity. Thus, he is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like most people, he has a capability in surprising us (Abrams, 1981:20). From the above explanation we know that the basis for Forster's distinction of characters is the proportion to the fullness of their development.
A character may be called "flat" (or simple) because he has "a single behavioral trait or a stereotyped group of behaviors" (Bergman, 1987:115). A stereotype is a simplified image of a class of people. Because stereotype is so simplified, it is easy to identify. He may typify a social or economic class, virtue or folly, a basic temperament or outlook. His traits are highly selected and consistent because of his typical character. He is unlikely to engage in inner conflict. Therefore he is not likely to change; he is static; his responses are predictable (Eastman, 1965:18). As flat character can be summarized so easily, he has little capacity to surprise us (Bergman, 1987:117). Shortly, a flat character is one who has only one distinctive characteristic, exists only to exhibit that characteristic, and is incapable of varying from that characteristic.

The "round" (or complex) character bears individual traits which set him off from his type. His desires and values are likely to pull in different directions. Because he is in tension, he is also dynamic so that he is capable of new kinds of behavior under new strains (Eastman, 1965:18). In other words, a round character has many facets and has a capability of change as he has "a number of personality traits" (Bergman, 1987:118).

On the basis of importance, we can distinguish two types of character that are main (major) character and minor character. Major character is usually the person on whom our attention is focused because the action of the story is centered on him (Barry, 1964:236). Basically, the story is about this character,
but he cannot stand on his own; he needs other characters to make the story more convincing and lifelike. Minor characters, on the other hand, are characters of less important than those of the main.

All fictional characters may be classified as static or developing. The static character is “the same sort of person at the end of the story as he was at the beginning” (Perrine, 1974:71). The developing (or dynamic) character undergoes a permanent change in some aspects of his character, personality, or outlook. The change may be a large or a small one; it may be for better or for worse; but it is something important and basic (Perrine, 1974:71).

As the dynamic character undergoes a permanent change in some aspects of his character, the change (Perrine, 1974:71) in his character must meet three conditions in order to be convincing that are:

(1) it must be the possibilities of the character who makes it,

(2) it must be sufficiently motivated by the circumstances in which the character finds himself,

(3) it must be allowed sufficient time for a change of its magnitude believably to take place.

A. 1. c. Methods of Characterization

A human personality is a complex of many traits or qualities of character, many motives and desires, some in conflict with one another (Little, 1981:91).
One of the most important features of deep character portrayal is the presentation of development and change, especially as a result of the changing personal relationships with which the story has dealt.

The author must choose not only what kind of characters he will present, but also by what methods he will present them. An author may present his characters either directly or indirectly (Perrine, 1974:68). In direct presentation he tells us straight out, by exposition or analysis, what a character is like, or has someone else in the story tell us what he is like. The direct presentation, here, can also be called the “discursive method” (Kenney, 1966:34). Through this method, the author simply tells us about his characters; he enumerates their qualities and he may even express approval and disapproval of them. The advantages of his method are simplicity and economy. The writer who is content to tell us directly about his characters can quickly finish the job of characterization and go on to other things.

Moreover, Kenney adds that this discursive method, just like the other methods, has its disadvantages. The reader is not encouraged to react directly to the characters, to make up his own mind about them, as he must react to and make up his own mind about the real people he meets.

Meanwhile, in indirect presentation the author shows us the character in action. We infer what he is like from what he thinks or says or does (Perrine, 1974:68). This indirect presentation can also be called as the dramatic method.
(Kenney, 1966:35). In the dramatic method, the author allows his characters to reveal themselves to us through their own words and actions.

The advantages of the dramatic method should be obvious. Compared to the discursive method, the dramatic method is more lifelike and invites the reader's active participation in the story. This method has also its disadvantages. It is less economical than the discursive, since to show takes longer than to tell, and, while it encourages the reader's active participation, it also increases the possibility of his misjudging the character (Kenney, 1966:35).

Moreover, in portraying a character, Little (1981:93) suggests that we should consider firstly to the basic characteristics of his character which contain about: his physical characteristics, his personal relationships with other characters in the novel, and his mental qualities such as his typical ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.

Secondly, we takes the appearance from various points of view through how the character sees himself, how various other characters see him, and how he develops, or fails to develop, during the course of the story. Finally, we consider to place whether this character is a leading character or a minor in the story.
A. 2. THEORIES ON SETTING

A. 2. a. Setting and the Element of Setting

Setting is a part of the complex perspective on people and action that is offered to a reader; it helps to set tone and mood and it helps to realize both character and plot (Beatty and Hunter, 1989:111). Setting is always important to the way a piece of literature affects us and, thus, it is an important element to consider in reading.

In a good story, setting is so well integrated with plot and character that the reader is hardly aware of it. For Connolly, setting is in a sense the time, place, and concrete situation of the narrative, the web of environment in which characters spin out their destinies (Koesnosoebroto, 1988:79).

Marjorie Boulton mentioned the term "background" to refer to the whole environment such as: family patterns, religion, moral assumptions, intellectual, and cultural life (Koesnosoebroto, 1988:79).

Setting is used to enrich the meaning of a story. In a limited sense, setting refers to "the general locale and historical time" (Abrams, 1981:175); it is when and where the action occurs. This kind of setting, Kenney says, is "little more than a reflection of the truth that things have to happen somewhere" (1966:38). In a large sense, setting (Abrams, 1981:175) refers to "the social circumstances in which its action occurs." It takes the social conditions or total environment in which the characters live.
There is a close relationship between setting and the central idea of the story. Also, the setting of the story is important in affecting action and characters as Murphy says that "setting of the novel has a great effect upon the personalities, actions and way of thinking of the characters" (1972:41).

Thus, the setting can influence the main character's personality or his behavior and also it can contribute to the conflict of the story. Therefore, the setting is dynamic because it "may thrust itself dynamically into the action, affecting events and being in turn affected by them," and together with these events, "setting seems to assume the role of a major character" (Kennedy, 1966:40).

The setting may be allowed a moment of intensity and depth. It may give an impact to the main action of the main character(s). The social setting is one of the most important of all human contexts in which there is "a complex web of individual relationship" (Harvey, 1965:56).

Whether there is a conflict between character and setting, or the conflict takes place entirely in the foreground, within, between, or among the characters, the setting, as what Burroway says, is important to our understanding of type and of what to expect as well as to the emotional value that arises from the conflict. We need to know in what atmosphere a character operates to understand the significance of the action (Koesmosoebroto, 1988:82).
Kenney states that there are some elements of which the setting is composed. They are as in the following: (1) the actual geographical location, including topography, scenery, even the details of a room's interior; (2) the occupations and modes of day-to-day existence of the characters; (3) the time in which the action takes place, e.g., historical period, season of the year; (4) the religious, moral, intellectual, social, and emotional environment of the characters (Kenney, 1966:40). In this thesis, the writer will focus the elements of the setting only to the religious, moral, intellectual, social, and emotional environment of the characters.

A. 2. b. The Social Environment in the Novel

The social environment in the novel basically refers to the society that is taken mostly in the novel. This social setting, then, shows "a complex web of individual relationship" (Harvey, 1965:56). Thus, it shows a social condition of the people who live there.

Society, as do all other aspects of novels, functions as an element that is organized to identify, at least, the part of the novel. In this society, we find a "concept" or idea that is constructed in the novel (Langland: 1984:4). Talking about society, Langland says, is not talking merely about people and their classes, but also their customs, conventions, beliefs and values, and culture.
short, this society is revealed through human relationships, through characters' patterned interactions and their common expectations of one another (1984:6).

The society plays an important role to the characters' growth and self-realization although the characters define themselves within their society as their background (Langland, 1984:8). Furthermore, Langland mentions that the character, society, and narrator are the centers of value in the novel. The character is enmeshed in a social milieu. He is presented as being in conflict with it. In other words, the character may be in conflict with the social values in which he lives. Here, the narrator may not be involved in the character. The narrator is just an observer, or he is more or less sympathetic toward the character. The writer, as Langland says, usually is interested in exploring the conflict between the individual and the social environment in which he lives. The conflict basically happens when there is a contrast between an individual with his special needs or particular needs and a social environment with its values that are generally "nonsensitive to those particular needs." In this pattern, "the individual may succeed or fail in establishing the validity of his values' vision" (Langland, 1984:11).

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

By using and developing those theories above, the writer tries to answer the problem that has been formulated in the previous chapter.
Firstly, it is very important for the writer to know what kind of setting presented in the novel. In it, we do not analyze the setting of time and place, but we do focus only on the social condition or total environment in which the characters live. These social conditions, then, can be seen from the “whole environment of life” such as the family patterns, religion, and cultural life (Koesnosoebroto, 1988:79). By knowing these social conditions, we can get the characteristics of the kind of setting presented in the novel.

Secondly, the main character is an important feature in the novel so that it is necessary to analyze the characteristics of Edna Pontellier as the main character. To analyze Edna’s character, it is important to see her character through what she says and what she does. It is appropriate, then, using the methods of character portrayal. These methods present the characters either directly or indirectly. The direct presentation that can also be called as the discursive method may tell us straight out about the character. Meanwhile, the indirect presentation that can also be called as the dramatic method shows us the character through their own words and actions.

The steps to analyze the main character suggested by Little can be seen as follows.

1. Basic Characteristics

   In this term, we can analyze the main character - Edna Pontellier - from: (a) her physical characteristics (physical oddities, age, etc.) ; (b) her personal
relationships with other characters in the novel; (c) her mental qualities (typical ways of thinking, feeling and action).

2. Appearance from various points of view

In this term, we can see the characteristics of Edna Pontellier, the main character of the novel, from the way she sees herself; the opinion of other characters toward her; and how she develops, or fails to develop, during the course of the story.

3. Place in the work

In this term, we consider to place whether Edna is a leading character or minor; and whether the author treats her sympathetically or not.

Thirdly, to know the situation of Edna's marriage described in Chopin's The Awakening, the writer wants to analyze the character of Edna compared to that of Leonce Pontellier. Then, we find the conflict happening between them. Little says that the relationships between characters are very important. It is so because much interest is created when characters have different ideas about another character, or false ideas about themselves (Little, 1981:90).

Fourthly, to know Edna's reason in rebelling against her easy comfort of marriage, theories of character and of setting are used. At first, the writer tries to analyze the development of Edna's character to find the change in her personality or her character. Perrine says that the developing character undergoes a permanent change in some aspects of his character and personality (1974:71). At the second, we should
know Edna's motivation to rebel against her marriage. She should have a clearly sufficient reason for her action and should be consistent in her behavior (Perrine, 1974:69). At the third, the writer tries to find the conflict between Edna and her husband - Leonce Pontellier, - and the conflict between Edna and the Creole society. Edna finds a contrast with her husband and her society in which she lives. Edna may fail in getting her personal need that is getting her sexual freedom because her society may not support her to get her need. This situation is clearly stated by Langhau that there is basically a contrast between an individual with the special needs and the social values that are generally unresponsive to these particular needs (Langhau, 1984:15).

Finally, at the end of the analysis, we may conclude that the social setting in Kate Chopin's The Awakening, may influence Edna's failure for getting her special needs that is to get her sexual freedom. She meets her failure because her society may not allow her to seek her special need in which it is a contrast with the social values of her society.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The study of this thesis is a library research. It means that the writer takes most of references and informations from the book.

A. The Object of Study

This novel, *The Awakening*, is written by Kate Chopin. The novel was first published in 1899. The idea of the novel is focussed on the main character - Edna Pontellier - who is awakened by her impasioned to get her right for the happiness particularly in her sexual life. In other words, this novel is about a sensitive woman's developing awareness and her extra marital love affair (Inge, 1988:554). This novel, based on Baym's *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, is described as "trite and sordid," "essentially vulgar," and "unhealthily introspective and morbid in feeling" (1976:508). The novel which we use in this thesis is taken from *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* that is a corrected version of the first edition.

B. The Approach

The writer uses formalistic approach to find the idea of the novel itself. Rohrberger and Woods, in *Reading and Writing about Literature* say that formalistic approach tries to analyze the literary works merely without reference to the facts of
the author's life; without reference to the genre or to the history; and without reference to its social milieu (1971:7).

In relation to this approach, this analysis will be concerned with the work itself. Therefore, the writer is focusing only on the intrinsic elements of the novel, particularly the elements of the characters and the setting in the novel. There is a close relationship between the characters and the setting of the novel as the setting of the novel is important in that it affects action and characters. This is clearly stated by Murph, who says that "the setting of the novel has a great effect upon the personalities, actions and way of thinking" (1972:41).

C. Research Procedures

To analyze Chopin's *The Awakening*, the writer firstly reads the whole texts of the novel. By reading the whole texts in this novel, the writer is interested to find what happens to the main character of the novel, so that she reacts to rebel against the easy comfort of her marriage.

Secondly, the writer makes a critical analysis. The writer tries to analyze the work so objectively that the writer can make a reasonable analysis. Therefore, the writer uses formalistic approach to analyze the work by analyzing the intrinsic elements of literary work. Then, the writer relates the intrinsic elements of setting and character as the writer finds a close relationship between the main character and the setting in this novel. Finally, the writer makes a conclusion after considering both her responses and analysis.
For those steps above, the writer uses the steps of literary criticism written by Burton to analyze Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. To analyze a work of literature, the writer makes a critical sequence that is divided into three stages: (1) reception; (2) analysis; and (3) final judgment (Burton, 1977).

In the step of reception, the critic tries to receive and respond to the text as a whole. The critic should operate both of the meaning (or the matter) and the style (or the manner) upon her intelligence and her sensitivity. The critic should do two things above in order to produce the strong impression. The critic should be responsive and receptive to the text as a whole.

In the step of analysis, the critic makes a critical analysis. The critic should be objective to analyze "the light of the writer's purposes" (1977:19). The critic should be able to understand the sense. In other words, the critic should be able to make objective and reasonable analysis to the work. To make objective and reasonable analysis of literary work, the critic should understand the values of literary work such as the intrinsic elements (1977:18-19).

Finally, in the step of final judgment, the critic is "entitled to expect careful, unprejudiced and sympathetic reading" (1977:19). The critic is not expected to judge the work, but the critic is expected to consider both her objective analysis and her subjective responses. By doing those, the critic will find the result as the conclusion and "will achieve as high a degree of objectivity as is possible in the critical art" (1977:19).
The successive stages of the critical sequence have a close relationship between each other. Each stage influences to the other stage. For instance, a first impression of the reception stage gives a direction to the analysis; then, the analysis itself refers back to the reception. In other words, the analysis monitors and is monitored by the reception.

Here, those relationships also happen in the last stage, the final judgment, in which this final stage blends the objective (analysis) and the subjective (responses). This final stage also refers to and comes from the analysis and at the same time voices the critic's own opinion of the whole purposes and achievement of the writer (Burton, 1977:19).
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

A. The Social Conditions of Creole Society

The social setting in this novel happens in New Orleans. Most people in this novel refer to the Creole society. The Creole's social conditions can be seen through their family patterns, religion, and cultural life.

A. 1. The Family Patterns of Creole Society

Basically, Creole people hold strong value about a male-dominated role in their family. In other words, the male holds the traditional dominant role in his family as a Creole man is the head of family when he has married. As the head of the family, he is responsible to support the finance of his family by working outside. This condition can be seen through the Pontelliers and the Ratignolles. Mr. Leonce Pontellier has "his hands full with his brokerage business" as he is "making a living for his family on the street" (p.512). Meanwhile, Monsieur Ratignolle also runs his business to support his family as the owner of a drug store as:

The Ratignolles lived at no great distance from Edna's home, on the corner of a side street, where Monsieur Ratignolle owned and conducted a drug store which enjoyed a steady and prosperous trade. His father had been in the business before him, and Monsieur Ratignolle stood well in the community and bore an enviable reputation for integrity and clear-headedness (p.550)

In the daily life, a Creole father is a devoted parent. The children idolize their father so much. They are proud of their father because, in their opinion, their father
has to work so that he can give them everything they want. Therefore, they are very happy to say good-by to their father when their father goes out to have some business. This situation is clearly described in the novel that the children are very happy knowing their father will go out to have some business as follows:

The boys were tumbling about, clinging to his legs, imploring that numerous things be brought back to them. Mr. Pontellier was a great favorite, and ladies, men, children, even nurses, were always on hand to say good-by to him. (p. 513)

A Creole married man is not only a devoted father, but he is also a devoted husband. His wife adores and worships him so much. This condition can be seen through the Ratignolles. As a wife, Madame Ratignolle is proud of her husband. She is always interested and giving a respect in what her husband says as:

He talked a good deal on various topics, a little politics, some city news and neighborhood gossip. He spoke with an animation and earnestness that gave an exaggerated importance to every syllable he uttered. His wife keenly interested in everything he said, laying down her fork the better to listen, chiming in, taking the words out of his mouth. (p. 551)

As the head of the family, a Creole married man has done his duty by supporting the finance of his family. Therefore, he does not want to be bothered about managing and taking care of the home and the children. That is why Mr. Pontellier is very upset knowing his wife's inattention toward the children:

He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself 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 them. (p. 512)
On the other hand, a Creole woman is expected to be a good wife and a good mother in her family. As her husband has to work in supporting the finance of the family, she should be able to take care of her children well. The picture of Creole woman is represented through Madame Ratignolle. In this novel, Madame Ratignolle is one of a perfect feature of Creole women who always cares about her children and husband:

They were women who idolized their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels. Many of them were delicious in the role; one of them was the embodiment of every womanly grace and charm. If her husband did not adore her, she was a brute, deserving of death by slow torture. Her name was Adele Ratignolle. There are no words to describe her save the old ones that have served so often to picture the bygone heroine of romance and the fair lady of our dreams. (p.513-514)

As a good mother, a Creole woman who is represented by Madame Ratignolle will sacrifice herself to “give her life for her children” (p.545). As the mother, Creole woman enjoys her maternity as seen through Madame Ratignolle. Even when she spends her summer day in Grand Isle, she has prepared “the pattern of the drawers” about the winter cloth for her children:

She had brought the pattern of the drawers for Mrs. Pontellier to cut out – a marvel of construction, fashioned to enclose a baby’s body so effectually that only two small eyes might look out from the garment, like an Eskimo’s. They were designed for winter wear, when treacherous drafts came down chimneys and insidious currents of deadly cold found their way through keyholes. (p.514)
For Creole women, their duty is only to make their family happy. That is why they are able to sacrifice and "to efface themselves" (p. 513) for giving the happiness in their family. They never speak of their own happiness in their life as their family's happiness is the most important thing in their happiness.

As the wives, Creole women are mostly loyal to their husbands. They seldom figure in domestic scandal as any affair with another man is "considered enough to ruin a woman's name" (p. 583). Moreover, it can also ruin the family's appearance among their society so that it may do an "incalculable mischief" (p. 581) to the husbands' business prospects.

This condition also happens in the Pontelliers. Mr. Pontelliers feels afraid about his family's appearance among his society if they know his wife's affair with another man and the conditions of his marriage. He is so afraid that the scandal can make misfortune to his business prospects:

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 noisy about that the Pontelliers had met with reverses and were forced to conduct their household on a humbler scale than heretofore. It might do incalculable mischief to his business prospects" (p. 581)

A. 2. The Religion of Creole Society

Most of Creole people in this novel hold a religion of Roman Catholic. It can be seen precisely when this narrator of this novel narrates that some of them go to
church for a mass in order to celebrate Christ's last supper. They go over to the Chemiere for mass on Sunday and Old Monsieur Farray, as a priest, "leads them in the little Catholic church of Our Lady" (p.535).

Moreover, most Creole women are very obedient in their religious teaching. They obey the teaching of their Bible particularly about the duty of women. They believe that women should give their life for their children as their Bible tells them so. In this case, Madame Ratignolhe advised Edna not to think about herself only as Edna said that she would never give up her essential life by giving herself for her children, or for anyone. For Madame Ratignolhe, she thinks that a woman must give herself for her children if she wants to give her life for them:

"I don't know what you would call the essential, or what you mean by the unessential," said Madame Ratignolhe, 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.545)

A. 3. The Cultural Life of Creole People

In their daily life, Creole people have such cultures shown through their beliefs, customs (or tradition), education (or intellectual life), and arts.

In this novel, Creole people hold a belief that all married women are the property of their husband. As she is the property of her husband, she is bound to live on with her husband and follow him wherever he lives. They accept and do this belief in their daily life. They would feel strange if they saw a wife who does not want to live on with and to follow her husband. That is why people in this novel
wonder about Edna who neither follows her husband in New York nor takes care of her children in Iberville. Moreover, she leaves her house and lives alone in another place. For them, her action is not a wise decision so that many of them suggest her to go with her husband or to accompany her children:

"I should think you would have gone to New York with him, or to Iberville with the children." (p.585)

Furthermore, whether she is happy or not in her marriage life, a Creole woman has no right to get rid of her husband. A Creole man, in this novel, sees his wife as "a valuable piece of personal property"(p.589) so that it is impossible for him to set his wife free. This condition is clearly described in the conversation between Robert Leburn and Edna Pontellier as follows:

"Oh, I was demented, dreaming of wild, impossible things, recalling men who had set their wives free, we have heard of such things."
"You have been a very, very foolish boy, wasting your time dreaming of impossible things when you speak of Mr. Pontellier setting me free!"(p.592)

The Creoles uphold strongly the belief about the purity of womanhood in which a married woman is not allowed to have sexual intercourse except to whom she is married. Although they uphold that belief, the Creoles offer the open familiarity and the free expression of affection toward each other. They are free to express their affection when they want to show their attention toward others. In this atmosphere, they are able to face this expression "without any thought of being taken
seriously” (p.516) and also they are not allowed to offer their affection with any special purpose except for the familiarity as seen in the conversation below:

“Why shouldn’t she take me seriously?” he demanded sharply. “Am I a comedian, a clown, a jack-in-the-box? Why shouldn’t she? You Creoles! I have no patience with you! Am I always to be regarded as a feature of an amusing programme? I hope Mrs. Pontellier does take me seriously. I hope she has discernment enough to find in me something besides the joker. If I thought there was any doubt . . .”

“Oh, enough, Robert! she broke in to 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.” (p.523)

In their daily life, Creole people have a special custom in each of their family. This custom basically deals to have the social convention among their society. This custom can be seen through the Ratinolles and the Pontelliers. Both of those families always invite their friends to their house nicely. The Ratinolles are widely known with their evening of music:

In the large and pleasant salon which extended across the width of the house, the Ratinolles entertained their friends once a fortnight with a soiré musicale, sometimes diversified by card-playing. There was a friend who played upon the ‘cello. One brought his flute and another his violin, while there were some who sang and a number who performed upon the piano with various degrees of taste and agility. The Ratinolles’ soirées musicales were widely known, and it was considered a privilege to be invited to them. (p.550)

The Pontelliers also have their custom which always happens on Tuesday afternoons. On Tuesday afternoons, Mrs. Pontellier is expected to be at home to receive her female visitors:
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. (p. 547)

Actually, this tradition deals not only to have social conventions but also to have a big advantage in her husband’s prospect of business. Seeing those two advantages, a wife must receive her visitors kindly as her visitors are important people for the business of her husband. She is expected to treat her visitors nicely as it may make a good relation in business between her husband and her visitors’ family or the husbands and the fathers of her visitors. To his wife, he leaves social matters. She dominates it, and runs it, and a Creole man’s social position depends entirely on his wife. Here we see how important this tradition for Creole husbands as follows:

"The Misses Delasidas! I worked a big deal in futures for their father this morning, nice girls; it’s time they were getting married. ‘Mrs. Belthrop!’ I tell you what it is, Edna; you can’t afford to sumb Mrs. Belthrop. Why, Belthrop could buy and sell us ten times over. His business is worth a good, round sum to me. You’d better write her a note." (p. 548)

While Creole men are taught to be smart in the business field, Creole women are taught to learn arts. Creole women are free to broaden their talent in arts; they like to paint, play (music), and sing. For Creole married women, they do not use their talent to get money; they actually show their talent in their meeting of their family, club, or social conventions. It is so because their husbands have supported
the finance for them. Furthermore, whether they are free to broaden their talent in arts, they are not allowed to forget their duty in taking care of the children.

B. The Characteristics Of Edna Pontellier

Edna Pontellier, the main character of Chopin's The Awakening, is a charming woman. She is twenty-eight years old. She has a good face; her eyes are "quick and bright," and her eyebrows are "a shade darker than her hair" (p. 510). Her face shows a strong expression behind her beautiful feature:

She was rather handsome than beautiful. Her face was captivating by reason of a certain frankness of expression and a contradictory subtle play of features. (p. 510)

Edna has two sons from her marriage to Leonce Pontellier. When she spends her summer vacation with her family in Grand Isle, she begins to make a close relationship with her husband's friends. On this vacation, all of her husband's friends like her as her manner is very engaging (p. 510).

Edna has romantic characters, she likes to enjoy emotional situations that she has or experiences. She is very happy to enjoy the situation in Grand Isle - the place where she spends her summer vacation - as this place reminds her again about her romantic adventure of her childhood in her country. For her, she imagines that the meadow in her country seems like the ocean in Grand Isle: blue, hot wind, and very big:

"First of all, the sight of the water stretching so far away, those motionless sails against the blue sky, made a delicious picture that I just wanted to sit
and look at. The hot wind beating in my face made me think of a summer day in Kentucky, of a meadow that seemed as big as the ocean to the very little girl walking through the grass, which was higher than her waist. She threw out her arms as if swimming when she walked, beating the tall grass as one strikes out in the water. Oh, I see the connection now!” (p. 520)

Edna is a sentimental person, she is easy to take seriously such things that express or arouse tender emotions such as, pity, love (words of love), or gentle touch. She is not like her close friend, Madame Ratignolle, who is easy to accept such words of love or adoration from any young man “without any thought of being taken seriously” (p. 516). Seeing that Robert Lebrun always gives a lot of words of love and adoration to all of beautiful women he meets, she hopes that he would not annoy her sentimental emotion by expressing such words of adoration to her:

She never knew precisely what to make of it; at that moment it was impossible for her to guess how much of it was jest and what proportion was earnest. It was understood that he had often spoken words of love to Madame Ratignolle, without any thought of being taken seriously. Mrs. Pontellier was glad he had not assumed a similar role toward herself. It would have been unacceptable and annoying (p. 516)

She is so fragile in facing those expressions because she is “not accustomed to an outward and spoken expression of affection, either in herself or in others” (p. 520). Seeing that she is never accustomed to those expressions of affection, she is not able to know precisely whether those expressions are given earnestly or not. Madame Ratignolle sees her as a weak woman in taking an expression of affection from Robert Lebrun. She then advises Robert not to treat her tenderly:
"I only ask for one; let Mrs. Pontellier alone. I'm in earnest; I mean what I say. Let Mrs. Pontellier alone. She is not one of us; she is not like us. She might make the unfortunate blunder of taking you seriously." (p. 523)

Actually, Edna never has much affection in her childhood. Her mother died while she was quite young, and her father ruled her (and her visitors) up strictly. Lacking of affections in her childhood, she is sometimes being "a self-contained person" (p. 521) who does not need the company of others. When she was young, she had an occasional girl friend who was having the same type with her:

Edna had had an occasional girl friend, but whether accidentally or not, they seemed to have been all of one type - the self-contained. She never realized that the reserved of her own character had much, perhaps everything, to do with this (p. 521).

Whether this is accidentally or not, her self-contained character sometimes influences her to do an impulsive action. As she does not need the company of others, she sometimes acts without paying attention whether what she does is good or not in the public opinion. As an impulsive woman, she is "just following a misleading impulse without question" (p. 520). She always acts without careful thought as she says that she likes to do something that is idle, aimless, unthinking, and unguided (p. 520). It seems that she does not care what people say to her about her impulsive action as she does not need them much.

Madame Lebrun, Edna's friend, sees her as a "capricious" person. She does not understand Edna's attitude; she thinks that her attitude is unpredictable and
impulsive. Sometimes she sees Edna as a kind woman, but right now she sees Edna as an unfriendly person who is leaving her friends so rudely:

She started to walk away alone. They all called to her and shouted to her. She waved a dissenting hand, and went on, paying no further heed to their renewed cries which sought to detain her. (p. 529)

Toward her children, she also shows her impulsive character in taking care of them. She treats her children in an impulsive way:

She was fond of her children in an uneven, impulsive way. She would sometimes gather them passionately to her heart; she would sometimes forget them. (p. 522)

As a sentimental person, she is easily impressed with Robert's affection. She takes seriously his gentle affection while they spend their summer day together. She is accidentally falling in love with him like a young woman in her earliest teens:

For the first time she recognized anew the symptoms of infatuation which she felt incipiently as a child, as a girl in her earliest teens, and later as a young woman. (p. 543)

After she meets Robert, she is awakened by her impasioned to get her happiness in her life. For Edna, Robert's presence has brought the brightness in her life as she never found these brightness in her life before. That is why Robert's going to Mexico has made her life worthless as in the following:

Robert's going had some way taken the brightness, the color, the meaning out of everything. The conditions of her life were in no way changed, but her whole existence was dulled, like a faded garment which seems to be no longer worth wearing. (p. 543)
Edna is too self-absorbed to care about others particularly about her children as she concerns only about herself. She entertains the conviction that her thoughts and emotions have to concern on herself only, not for anyone.

She had all her life long been accustomed to harbor thoughts and emotions which never voiced themselves. They belonged to her and were her own, and she entertained the conviction that she had a right to them and that they concerned no one but herself. Edna had once told Madame Ratignolle that she would never sacrifice herself for her children or for anyone. (p.544 - 545)

Madame Ratignolle, in this case, sees Edna as an imprudent mother as she ignores her duty to take care of her children. Madame Ratignolle suggests Edna not to think about herself only but also about her children. For Madame Ratignolle, a good and a wise mother should give her life to her children as the essential life of the mother is only giving herself to take care of her children:

"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.545)

In short, she is not "a mother-woman" who idolizes her children and her husband so much. She is not able to give herself and to sacrifice herself for her family as in the following:

In short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman. The mother women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them. 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. (p.513)
Edna cannot be called as a good housewife because she has forgotten her duty as a housewife. She begins to do and to feel as she likes:

She completely abandoned her Tuesdays at home, and did not return the visits of those who had called upon her. She made no ineffectual efforts to conduct her household as a good housewife, going and coming as it suited her fancy, and, so far as she was able, lending herself to any passing caprice. (p.552)

Knowing her absolute disregard for her duties, Mr. Pontellier is very angry with her. He does not understand why his wife ignores her home. It seems to him that she does not care what happens to her family. He cannot realize that his wife is becoming a self-absorbed person. For him, it is not wise for a mother ignoring her home by spending much time at the studio:

"It seems to me the utmost folly for a woman as 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." (p.552)

Edna is a woman with a rebellious temperament. She has always been a bit of a rebel to a thing that makes her unhappy and unfit. When she was a child, she showed her rebellious temperament. She was running away from the prayers in her family as those prayers made her unfit:

"Likely as not, it was Sunday," she laughed; "and I was running away from the prayers, from the Presbyterian service, read in a spirit of gloom by my father that chills me yet to think of." (p.520)

Toward her marriage, she also shows her rebellious temperament. To her husband she says that "a wedding is one of the most lamentable spectacles on earth:"
"That's what I want her to do. She won't go to the marriage. She says a wedding is one of the most lamentable spectacles on earth. Nice thing for a woman to say to her husband!" exclaimed Mr. Pontellier, fuming anew at the recollection. (p. 559)

Realizing that she cannot get a divorce with her husband, she rebels against her marriage by leaving her husband and her children to live alone. She does not care what her husband would say about her action. She is growing to be a self-confident person. She likes "the feeling of freedom and independence" (p. 570) so that she does not want to belong to her husband anymore as in the following:

Instinct had prompted her to put away her husband's bounty in casting off her allegiance. She did not know how it would be when he returned. There would have to be an understanding, an explanation. Conditions would somewhat adjust themselves, she felt, but whatever came, she had resolved never again to belong to another than herself. (p. 570)

As a self-absorbed person, she does not care about what people would say about her action. While she is living alone, she is beginning to become close to Alcée Arobin. Seeing Edna's close relationship with Alcée Arobin, Madame Ratignolle suggests her not to be intimate with Arobin as he has a bad reputation. Edna ignores Madame Ratignolle's suggestion although Alcée's presence may ruin her name:

"Well, the reason - you know how evil-minded the world is - someone was talking of Alcée Arobin visiting you. Of course, it wouldn't matter if Mr. Arobin had not such a dreadful reputation. Monsieur Ratignolle was telling me that his attentions alone are considered enough to ruin a woman's name." (p. 583)
Edna is not afraid whether Alee Arobin will ruin her name or not. Her intimate relationship with him shows her weakness, as a fragile woman, in facing some sensual pleasures from any man. Alee is nothing for her although she likes to take some sensual pleasures from his presence.

Alee Arobin was absolutely nothing to her. Yet his presence, his manners, the warmth of his glances, and above all the touch of his lips upon her hand had acted like a narcotic upon her. (p. 569)

Edna feels uninterested in anything except about herself. Seeing that Robert Lebrun is the only man who gives the brightness and the colour in her life, she abandons her children and her husband. Unfortunately, Robert does not understand what she has fought. He leaves her although he also loves her so much. He is a kind of rational man. He realizes that it is impossible for him to live with Edna as she is the property of her husband and she cannot get a divorce from him.

Knowing that her love has gone away, she feels so desperate and despondent because Robert is the only man whom she loves and wants to live on with. Her desperation can be seen in the following:

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 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. (p. 598)

As a desperate person, Edna does not care for her life. She is guided by her impulsive thought to forget her desperation by swimming far away in the sea. She
does not realize that she is doing the extremely dangerous thing to her life. For her, the voice of the sea seems to invite her soul to plunge to the water:

The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in 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.(p.598)

At the end, Edna surrenders her life by committing suicide to the sea because it is the only way for her to save herself from the restrictions of her life. She believes that the sea offers no restrictions for her because there is "no beginning and no end" at the sea as seen in the following:

She went on and on. She remembered the night she swam far out, and recalled the terror that seized her at the fear of being unable to regain the shore. She did not look back now, but went on and on, thinking of the blue grass meadow that she had traversed when a little child, believing that it had no beginning and no end.(p.598)

C. The Conditions of Edna Pontellier's Marriage

Edna Pontellier has been married to Leonce Pontellier for six years. She has two sons, Raoul and Etienne, from their marriage. In her marriage, Edna always gets all the physical needs from her husband as he is a successful businessman. The Pontelliers are well-known as an honourable family because of their richness as seen:

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. 
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. (p. 546)

Mr. Pontellier regards his wife as an object to adorn his house. He gives all her physical needs abundantly because he thinks that his wife is "a valuable piece of personal property" of his (p. 509). Regarding that his wife is an object of the house, he expects his wife to worship him as the head of the family. That is why his wife's inattention toward his conversation makes him discouraged:

He thought it very discouraging that his wife, who was the sole object of his existence, evinced so little interest in things which concerned him and valued so little his conversation. (p. 511)

As the head of the family, Mr. Pontellier takes the financial responsibility of his house by working out. He expects his wife to take care of the children well in the home. He does not want to take part in taking care of children as he thinks that he has done his duty well by supporting the financial needs. Thinking that he has done his duty, he reproaches his wife with her inattention toward her children as seen in the following:

He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself 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 befall them. (p. 512)

Edna feels very anguished with her husband's reproachment. For her, such experiences always happens in her marriage life. She wants an understanding and a
cooperation between them in managing the home and the children. In fact, her husband never tries to have "a tacit and self-understood" between them (p. 512). She wants to be regarded as a human being and she needs to be respected by others:

At that early period it served but to bewilder her. It moved her to dreams, to thoughtfulness, to the shadowy anguish which had overcome her the midnight when she had abandoned herself to tears. 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. (p. 518-519)

Actually, Edna's marriage to Leonce Pontellier is not based on true love. Edna accepts Leonce Pontellier as her husband because she thinks that Leonce loves her genuinely and deeply. In fact, Leonce falls in love with her just like "men are in the habit of doing" as seen in the following:

Her marriage to Leonce Pontellier was purely accidental. 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 flattered her. She fancied there was a sympathy of thought and taste between them, in which fancy she was mistaken. (p. 521)

As a successful man in the business field, Mr. Pontellier is so rich that he is very fond of his property as follows:

Mr. Pontellier was very fond of walking about his house, examining its various appointments and details, to see that nothing was amiss. He greatly valued his possessions, chiefly because they were his, and derived genuine pleasure from contemplating a painting, a statuette, a rare lace curtain - no matter what - after he had bought it and placed it among his house's goods. (p. 546-547)

To his wife, he leaves social matters as he is very busy with his business. He expects his wife to run her duty as a good housewife by receiving her visitors kindly
on Tuesday afternoons. For him, her nice reception to her visitors will give some benefits for his business as all the visitors on her Tuesday afternoons are the important people for his business. They are the wives and the daughters of his partners in business. Seeing that they are important people, Mr. Pontellier is very disappointed with his wife's neglect toward her visitors as follows:

"Why, my dear, I should think you'd understand by this time that people don't do such things; we've got to observe social conventions if we ever expected to get on and keep up with procession. If you feel that you had to leave home this afternoon, you should have left some suitable explanations for your absence"(p.547)

Edna thinks that her husband is a kind of business-minded man as he always takes seriously about getting advantages in business field. For Edna, Mr. Pontellier is not a good husband and a good father as he never pays attention to his family. He is a responsible husband and father in supporting the financial needs, but he is not a good husband in showing the attention to his family because of his much absence among the family:

Mr. Pontellier left his home in the mornings between nine and ten o'clock, and rarely returned before half-past six or seven in the evening - dinner being served at half-past seven.(p.547)

Moreover, Mr. Pontellier always spends much time to have dinner at the club although his wife has cooked for him. He never considers that what he has done has made his wife unhappy:

He went into the hall, took his hat and stick from the stand, left the house. She was somewhat familiar with such scenes. They had often made her very unhappy.(p.548)
Little by little Mrs. Pontellier grows to be insolent. She begins to do as she wants and to feel as she likes. She completely abandons her Tuesdays at home, and does not return the visits of those who have called upon her. Moreover she leaves her house all day long without feeling afraid of her husband's anger:

Mr. Pontellier had been a rather courteous husband so long as he met a certain tacit submissiveness in his wife. But her new and unexpected line of conduct completely bewildered him. It shocked him. Then her absolute disregard for her duties as a wife angered him. When Mr. Pontellier became rude, Edna grew insolent. She had resolved never to take another step backward. (p.552)

Mrs. Pontellier, then, decides to leave the house and to live alone in a small house. As an honourable person in his society, Mr. Pontellier does not expect his society knows the reality of their marriage. He is not worried about the condition of his marriage, but he is worried about his reputation if people know the hypocrisy of his marriage life. This scandal will give disadvantages in his business prospects:

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 noticed that the Pontelliers had met with reverses, and were forced to conduct their household on a humbler scale than heretofore. It might do incalculable mischief to his business. (p.591)

To save his name in his society, Mr. Pontellier gives a brief notice of his marriage in the daily papers as seen in the following:

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.581)
Edna admires the skill of her husband's manner to save his reputation in his society. As a Creole wife, she knows that she cannot get rid of her husband as she is the property of her husband. She then, leaves all of her husband's property to live independently. She does not want to belong to her husband anymore although she is bound to her marriage to Leonce Pontellier.

D. Edna's Reason to Rebel against Her Marriage

To know Edna's reason to rebel against her marriage, it is necessary to analyze the development of her character and, then, to find her motivation in rebelling against her marriage. After that, we find the attitude of Creole people to her and the final result of her rebellion.

D. 1. The Development of Edna's Character

As a Creole wife, Edna is expected to be loyal and obedient to her husband, Mr. Leonce Pontellier. For six years of her marriage, she gives all of her loyalty and obedience to her husband. She does her duty as a housewife in taking care of the children and the home. Furthermore, she accepts what her husband has done to her without any protest although she disagrees with his attitude. As an obedient wife, she just keeps silent and cries by herself whenever her husband reproaches her inattention to manage home or children.

She said nothing, and refused to answer her husband when he questioned her. When his cigar was smoked out he went to bed, and in a half a minute he was fast asleep.
The tears came so fast to Mrs. Pontellier's eyes that the damp sleeve of her peignoir no longer served to dry them. She was holding the back of her chair with one hand; her loose sleeve had slipped almost to the shoulder of her uplifted arm. Turning, she thrust her face, steaming and wet, into the bend of her arm, and she went on crying there, not caring any longer to dry her face, her eyes, her arms. She could not have told why she was crying. Such experiences as the foregoing were not uncommon in her married life. (p. 512)

While Edna spends her summer day with her family at Grand Isle, she begins to be close to one of her husband's friends named Robert Lebrun. Robert is a very young man and a son of the cottage's owner. Both of them are interested in what they talk about:

They chatted incessantly; about the things around them; their amusing adventure out in the water - it had again assumed its entertaining aspect; about the wind, the trees, the people who had gone to the Cheniere; about the children playing croquet under the oaks, and the Farival twins, who were now performing the overture to "The Post and Peasant."

Robert talked a good deal about himself. He was very young, and did not know any better. Mrs. Pontellier talked a little about herself for the same reason. Each was interested in what the other said. (p. 510)

To have a friend like Robert she is very glad because her husband never spends his time with her and the children. Mr. Pontellier is so busy with his business that he never has a lot of time for his family. Furthermore, he does not see the importance of staying home together with his family. He is feeling better to join the club than the home because it is more joyful for him to spend the time with his company at the club. His wife, Edna, understands and accepts this condition as seen in:

"Coming back to dinner?" his wife called after him. He 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." He did not say this, but she understood it, and laughed, nodding good-bye to him.(p. 510)

Her close relationship with Robert makes her realize her position as a human being and an individual in the world. Robert treats her in a respectable manner genuinely. She, then, realizes that her husband never gives any respect for her feeling as he always regards her as an object to adorn his house. For the first time in her marriage, she is beginning to be regarded as a human being who needs a respect from others:

A certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within her, - the light which, showing the way, forbids it.
At that early period it served but to bewilder her. It moved her to dreams, to thoughtfulness, to the shadowy anguish which had overcome her the midnight when she had abandoned herself to tears.
In short, Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relation as an individual to the world within and about her.(p. 517-518)

Facing Robert's treatment which is full of affection and respect, Edna falls in love with him lately. Robert gives her the brightness and the color of life so that his presence makes her infatuated. For the first time in her marriage life she feels infatuated:

For the first time she recognized anew the symptoms of infatuation which she felt incipiently as a child, as a girl in her earliest teens, and later as a young woman.(p.543)

Edna then realizes the hypocrisy of her marriage. She feels unhappy with the conditions in her marriage. The Pontelliers are well known as an honourable family
among their society. No matter what happens to their relationship, the Pontelliers, as an honourable family, are always demanded by the society to give and show the good (ideal) type of their marriage. Any scandal about their marriage will ruin their appearance among their society. Moreover, the scandal may give any disadvantages to the business prospects of the husband. Seeing that her marriage and society have restricted her right to be happy in her sexual life, Edna reacts to rebel against the restriction from her marriage and society.

Her first rebellion against her marriage is that she abandons her duty on Tuesday afternoons. Edna has religiously followed this tradition on Tuesday afternoons for six years of her marriage. Now, she abandons this tradition without having any certain reason as if this tradition is not important for her and her family. She does not care if what she has done may give any disadvantages to her husband’s prospects in his business field:

"Out!" exclaimed her husband, with something like genuine consternation in his voice as he laid down the vinegar cruet and looked at her through his glasses. "Why, what could have taken you out on Tuesday? What did you have to do?"

"Nothing. I simply felt like going out, and I went out." (p. 547)

From a loyal and an obedient wife, Edna grows to be an insolent wife. She begins to do everything she likes. She does not keep silent or cries by herself anymore when her husband reproaches her negligence in taking care of the children and the home:

Mr. Pontellier had been a rather courteous husband so long as he met a certain tacit submissiveness in his wife. But her new and unexpected line of conduct
completely bewildered him. It shocked him. Then her absolute disregard for her duties as a wife angered him. When Mr. Pontellier became rude, Edna grew insolent. She had resolved never to take another step backward. (p. 552)

As the property of her husband, Edna realizes that she cannot get rid of her husband. Realizing that she cannot get a divorce, she decides to leave the house, the money, and all the things from her husband's property. She decides to live independently and does not want to depend on her husband's property anymore. She grows to be a self-confident person when she decides to make money by selling her sketches. She wants to live in a small house by using her mother's estate as she likes to be free and independent person:

"I have a little money of my own from my mother's estate, which my father sends me by dribbles. I won a large sum this winter on the races, and I am beginning to sell my sketches. Laidpore is more and more pleased with my work; he says it grows in force and individuality. I cannot judge of that myself, but I feel that I have gained in ease and confidence. However, as I said, I have sold a good many through Laidpore. I can live in the tiny house for little or nothing, with one servant. I know I shall like it, like the feeling of freedom and independence." (p. 570)

Edna has told to herself that she never wants to belong to her husband or the other anymore. She wants to have her own life and does not let anybody possess her life. She does not want to belong to her husband's property although she is bound to her marriage to Mr. Pontellier. That is why she tries to put away her husband's gifts in order not to belong to her husband's property. Furthermore, she means to throw out her loyalty to her husband by leaving the house, the money, and the gifts from her husband:
Instinct had prompted her to put away her husband’s bounty in casting off her allegiance. She did not know how it would be when he returned. There would have to be an understanding and an explanation. Conditions would somehow adjust themselves, she felt, but whatever came, she had resolved never again to belong to another than herself. (p. 570)

D. 2. Edna’s Motivation to Rebel Against her Marriage

Edna’s motivation to rebel against her marriage does not happen suddenly. Her motivation basically is constituted from her basic temperament and her characteristic. Edna is a woman with a rebellious temperament. As she has a rebellious temperament, she will always rebel against the things which make her unfit and unhappy. She has shown her rebellious temperament since she was a child. When she was a child, she was running away from the prayers which made her unfit and unhappy:

“Likely as not it was Sunday,” she laughed, “and I was running away from prayers, from the Presbyterian service, read in a spirit of gloom by my father that chills me yet to think of.” (p. 520)

Even though she has a rebellious temperament, she has also a sentimental characteristic. As a sentimental person, she is easily impressed with the expression of affection given to her. She is so fragile in facing some affection as she is “not accustomed to an outward and spoken expression of affection, either in herself or in others” (p. 520). Her lack of affection has influenced her to be a sentimental person. That is why she takes seriously Robert’s gentle affection given to her while she spends her summer day. Her close relationship with Robert has made her realize her
right for happiness. For six years of her marriage, she is beginning to realize the hypocrisy of her marriage. She is not happy with the conditions of her marriage. She needs to get the attention, the respect from others, and she also wants to love and to be loved in the relationship with her partner.

In short, Edna is motivated by her sentimental character to get a happiness in her sexual life. Facing that her need to be happy cannot be found in her married life, she shows her rebellious temperament. She rebels against her marriage which has made her unhappy and unfit.

D. 3. The Attitude of Creole Society to Edna

As a Creole wife, Edna is different from other Creole wives in this novel. She is not able to sacrifice herself to give her whole life for her family's happiness. She is too self-absorbed to care about others particularly about her children as she concerns only about herself. She feels uninterested in anything except herself as she does not want anything but her own way (p. 595). That is why she abandons her duty in taking care of the children and the home after she finds her happiness in her relationship with Robert.

She, then, realizes her right for happiness so that she fights to seek it in her life. As she cannot get rid of her husband, she entertains the conviction that she only gives herself where she chooses:

"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. 592)

Edna has chosen to give her life for her happiness. Realizing that Robert is the only man who gives the happiness in her life, she decides to leave her house and her family. She does not want to belong to her husband anymore so that she leaves all her husband's property by living alone.

Mademoiselle Reisz, an artist who chooses strongly to live alone on her own terms, does not understand about her action leaving the house without asking her husband's consent. As a single woman, Mademoiselle Reisz realizes that a married woman belongs to her husband and she is bound as her husband's property. Therefore Mademoiselle Reisz does not understand Edna's action by leaving the house and the family although she is also choosing to live alone on her own terms:

"What does your husband say?"
"I have not told him yet. I only thought of this morning. He will think I am demented, no doubt. Perhaps you think so."
Mademoiselle shook her head slowly. "Your reason is not yet clear to me," said she. (p. 570)

Seeing Edna's strong desire to leave the house and the family, Mademoiselle Reisz, even though she does not understand and agree with her action, only supports her to be strong in facing any reaction from others because what she has done is breaking the tradition which is established strongly by the society:

"Well, for instance, when I left her today, she put her arms around me and felt my shoulder blades, to see if my wings were strong, she said. "The bird that would soar above the level plain of tradition and prejudice must have strong wings. It is a sad spectacle to see the weaklings bruised, exhausted, fluttering back to earth."" (p. 573)
Madame Adele Ratignolle, Edna’s close friend, advises her again to think about her children. For Madame Ratignolle, a good mother should give her whole life to her children as the happiness of her life is only to make the children happy.

That is why she is asking Edna to care for her children:

She was still stunned and speechless with emotion when later she leaned over her friend to kiss her and softly say good-by. Adele, pressing her cheek, whispered in an exhausted voice: “Think of the children, Edna. Oh think of the children! Remember them!” (p. 594)

Doctor Mandelet, who is well known as a wise physician and is a friend of the Pontelliers, sympathizes to Edna’s conflict. Doctor Mandelet sees that Mrs. Pontellier is trapped between her illusions and the condition which society arbitrarily establishes to maintain itself, and she is made to pay the moral consequences from her illusions which are opposite with the condition:

“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.” (p. 595)

Moreover, the Doctor gives a hand to Edna as he thinks that he is able to give a solution. He may understand and give a help to her if she dares to speak of things which trouble her:

“It seems to me, my dear child,” said the Doctor at parting, holding her hand, “you seem to me to be in trouble. I am not going to ask for your confidence. I will only say that if ever you feel moved to give it to me, perhaps I might help you. I know I would understand, and I tell you there are not many who would not many, my dear.” (p. 595)
Robert Lebrun himself, a man whom Edna loves and wants to live on with, finally realizes that it is impossible for both of them to live together. Robert realizes that Mr. Pontellier will never let his wife free and will never let him to take his wife as she belongs to his property. Furthermore his affair with a married woman will ruin his family’s name and also his lover’s name. He really loves her but he does not have sufficient courage to face what people would say about his action. He loves her so much that he finally chooses to leave her in order to keep Edna’s reputation:

Still, she remembered Adele’s voice whispering, “Think of the children, think of them.” She meant to think of them, that determination had driven into her soul like a death wound - but not to-night. To-morrow would be time to think of everything. Robert was not waiting for her in the little parlor. He was nowhere at hand. The house was empty. But he had scrawled on a piece of paper that lay in the lamplight:

“I love you. Good-by - because I love you.”(p.596)

D. 4. Edna’s Failure for Getting her Need

Edna finally fails to seek her need. She wants to have a happiness in her sexual life as she never gets in her hypocrisy of marriage. As an honorable family, the Pontelliers are always demanded by their society to give and to show the good (or ideal) type of their daily life in their marriage without questioning whether they are happy or not in their relationship. Edna is not able to live on with her husband in a hypocritical relationship as there is no understanding and no respect in her relationship with her husband. Her husband, Mr. Pontellier, always thinks about
himself, and so does she. Both of them are interested in their own interest. Mr. Pontellier concerns only about his business and he does not pay attention any more to his family. Edna herself has no interest for managing and taking care of the children and the home. Furthermore, she is more interested in her painting than her home and children.

For six years of her marriage, she has done her duty as a housewife without asking the right for her happiness. She is beginning to realize her right for happiness while she makes a close relationship with Robert. Realizing her position as a human being in the world, she demands a respect from others, particularly from her husband. She falls in love with Robert as she is impressed by his gentle affection and his respect given to her. For her, Robert's presence always gives the happiness in her life. She becomes aware that she never gets the happiness in her relation with her husband.

Edna rebels against her marriage by leaving her family and her home. She fights to seek her happiness of her life particularly in her sexual life. Unfortunately, people in her environment do not understand and encourage her to seek for her happiness. On the contrary, most of them give a strong reaction toward her rebellion. For them, it is not a wise action for a married woman like Edna who has an affair and leaves the house and the children.

What she has done is breaking the tradition which is arbitrarily established by the society. For them, a married woman is bound to give her whole life for her
family. It is no matter to her whether she is happy or not with her marriage life. Her
duty is only to give her life for making her family happy. That is why most of
Creole people do not understand and do not give any support for her need. It is only
Mademoiselle Reisz who gives a support for her strong desire. She only encourages
Edna to have a strong courage if she really wants to break the tradition which has
restricted her happiness.

Edna herself has a strong courage to break the tradition which is established
arbitrarily by the society. She does not care what people would say about her
action. For her, she just wants to get a happiness in her sexual life with Robert. She
loves and wants to live on with him although she is bound to her marriage to Mr.
Leonce Pontellier. In fact, Robert, the man whom she loves, does not have sufficient
courage to face the reaction from his society if they find his affair with Mrs.
Pontellier. He finally leaves her alone. Edna, of course, fails to break the tradition
for getting her need. Her need to live on with Robert has failed because no one
understands, helps, and supports her.

The society itself has established certain conditions arbitrarily in its
environment so that a person who tries to oppose with these conditions must get
strong reactions from society. Even though Edna has strong courage to take the moral
consequences from her society, she finally meets a failure. Robert, the man whom
she loves, chooses to leave her as he is not able to oppose the conditions in his
environment.
Facing Robert's leaving, she feels desperate and despondent. At the end, she surrenders her life by committing suicide to the sea, a place where she can escape and find freedom from the restrictions of her happiness.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Chopin’s *The Awakening* takes its setting in New Orleans in which most people who live in this place are referred to as the Creole society. The Creole people hold certain social conditions as seen through their family patterns, religion, and cultural life.

The Creole hold a strong value about male-dominated role in their family. A Creole man is the head of his family when he has married. He is responsible to support the finance of his family by working outside. In daily life, a Creole married man is a devoted father and husband. His children idolize him so much as he always gives them everything they want. His wife also adores and worships him so much.

As the Creole man runs his duty to make the money, he expects his wife to manage and to take care of the home and the children well. The Creole married women are faithful and loyal wife and mother. As the mother, Creole women enjoy their maternity. They give their life for their children. They idolize their children and care for their happiness. They sacrifice themselves to make the children happy. They never speak of their own happiness in their life as their children’s happiness is the most important thing in their happiness.

As the wives, they are mostly loyal and faithful to their husband. They seldom figure in domestic scandals with another man. Any affair with another man is
considered to ruin a woman's name and also a family's appearance among the society. The Creole hold strongly their belief about the purity of womanhood. Even though they uphold the purity of womanhood, they are offering the open familiarity and the free expression of affection without any thought of being taken seriously.

Creole people hold mostly a religion of Roman Catholic. Most Creole women are obedient in obeying their religious teaching. They obey particularly the duty of the mother as the Bible tells them so. Moreover, Creole people hold a belief that all married women belong to their husband. Whether they are happy or not with their marriage, Creole women have no right to get rid of their husbands.

Creole people have a special custom in each of their family which deals to have the social convention among them. To their wives, Creole men leave this social matter. They expect their wives to run it well, so that Creole men's social position depends entirely on their wives.

Creole women are free to broaden their talent in arts. They usually show their talent in their meeting of their family, or their social conventions. For them, they do not use their talent to get money as their husbands have supported the finance for them. Although they are free to broaden their talent in arts, they are expected to pay attention more to their children.

Edna Pontellier, the main character in this novel, is the wife of Mr. Leonce Pontellier who is an honorable person in Creole society. Edna is a sentimental person as she is easily to take seriously the expression of affection. She is not accustomed to
Facing the expression of affection from others as she never has much affection in her childhood. Her lack of affection has made her so fragile in facing the atmosphere of Creole society which offers the open familiarity and the free expression of affection toward each other.

Facing Robert’s affection, Edna takes his affection seriously and, then, she falls in love with him. Her relationship with Robert has made her realize the hypocrisy of her marriage life. She feels unhappy with the conditions of her marriage. Her husband, Mr. Pontellier, uses their marriage to make his position fulfilled in his society. For Mr. Pontellier, their marriage functions as a means to run the social matters in the society. To his wife, he leaves the social matters, and his social position depends on his wife’s skill in running her duty.

Furthermore, Mr. Pontellier expects his wife to manage and to take care of the children well as he has done his duty by giving the money. They never have an understanding in their relationship. Mr. Pontellier always spends his much time to work outside and to have dinner at the club. Mrs. Pontellier, little by little, begins to abandon her duty as a housewife.

As she has a rebellious temperament, Edna reacts to rebel against the hypocrisy of her marriage. She is motivated by her sentimental character to get a happiness in her sexual life. She needs to get the attention, the respect from others, and she also wants to love and to be loved in the relationship with her partner. For her, Robert is the only man whom she loves and also he is the only man who gives the happiness in her sexual
life. She rebels against her marriage by leaving her family and her house as she wants to live on with the man she loves.

Edna's struggle to get a happiness in her sexual life, finally, has failed. The Creole people do not understand and support what she has fought. For them, a wife is bound to her marriage so that she belongs to her husband. Whether she is happy or not with her marriage, she has no right to get rid of her husband. She is expected to give her life for her family, particularly for her children as the only happiness in her life is only to make her family happy.

Moreover, the Creole uphold strongly their belief about the purity of womanhood in which a married woman is not allowed to have sexual intercourse except to whom she is married. Any affair with another man will ruin her name and also her family's appearance among the society.

Robert, the man whom she loves, realizes these conditions in his society. He, then, leaves her alone as he is not able to oppose against the strong conditions in his society. Knowing that her love has left her, Edna feels desperate and despondent. As a desperate person, she does not care for her life. She is guided by her impulsive thought to forget her desperation by swimming far away in the sea. For her, the voice of the sea seems to invite her soul to plunge to the water.

At the end, she surrenders her life by committing suicide to the sea as it is the only way for her to save herself from the restriction of her life. For Edna, her society and her marriage have restricted her need to be happy. Even though she has strong
courage to face the strong reaction from her society and also to take the moral consequences from what she has done, she fails to fight her sexual freedom. There is no anyone who understands, supports, and helps her struggle. Even Robert, the man whom she loves and wants to live on with, leaves her as he does not have sufficient courage to oppose the social conditions in his society.

With those explanations above, it can be concluded that Edna’s failure for getting her need is caused by her strong social values which are opposite with her need. Edna meets a failure because the society does not support and allow her to seek her sexual freedom with another man. The Creole society has strong power to produce Edna’s failure for getting her sexual freedom as their values do not allow her to have her sexual freedom. Since the Creole’s values have produced Edna’s failure for getting her need, this novel, then, could give an example that society sometimes forces the individual to pay the moral consequences from her need which is opposite with its values.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of the Story

Edna Pontellier has been married to Mr. Leonce Pontellier for six years. She has two sons, Raoul and Etienne, from their marriage. The Pontelliers are well known as an honourable family in the Creole society in New Orleans. Mr. Pontellier is a successful businessman and a hardworker in supporting the finance of the family. As a successful businessman, he is very busy with his business. He rarely spends his time among his family. To his wife, he leaves the managing of the home and the children. He also expects his wife to do her duty her duty on social matters.

While Edna spends her summer days with her family in Grand Isle, she begins to be close with one of her husband's friends named Robert Lebrun. Robert is a son of the cottage's owner and a very young man. To have a friend like Robert, Edna is very glad as her husband never spends his much time with his family. Both Edna and Robert are interested in what they talk about. Her close relationship with Robert makes her realize her position as a human being and an individual in the world. Robert treats her in a respectable manner genuinely. Edna, then, realizes that her husband never gives any respect for her feeling as he always regards her as an object to adorn his beautiful house.

Facing Robert's treatment which is full of affection and respect, Edna falls in love with him lately. She is infatuated by his presence as his presence brings her the brightness and the color of life. Edna, then, realizes the hypocrisy of her marriage.
She feels unhappy with the conditions in her marriage. As an honourable family, the Pontelliers are always demanded by the society to give and to show the good type of their marriage. No matter what happens to their relationship, they should give a good type to their society, and any scandal in their marriage will ruin their appearance among their society and also will give any disadvantages to the business prospects of the husband.

Seeing that her marriage and society have restricted her right to be happy in her sexual life, Edna reacts to rebel against the restrictions from her marriage and society. Her first rebellion is that she abandons her duty in receiving her visitors in Tuesday afternoons. She has followed this tradition for six years of her marriage, and now she abandons it without having any certain reason. From a loyal and obedient wife, Edna grows to be an insolent wife. She begins to do everything she likes. Furthermore, she dares to face her husband's anger.

As the property of her husband, Edna realizes that she cannot get rid of her husband. The Creoles hold a belief that a married woman is the husband's property so that she is bound to her marriage to her husband. She decides to live independently and does not want to depend on her husband's property anymore. She rebels against her marriage by leaving her family and her home. She fights to seek her happiness of her life particularly in her sexual life. Unfortunately, people in her social environment do not understand and encourage her to seek for her happiness. On the contrary, most of them give a strong reaction toward her rebellion. For them, it is not a wise action
for a married woman like Edna who has an affair and leaves the house and the children.

Edna, finally, fails to struggle her need for the happiness in her sexual life. She fails to seek her need as there is no one who supports, helps, and encourages her need. Even Robert, the man whom she loves and wants to live on with, leaves her alone in seeking her special need. Edna, at the end, surrenders her life by committing suicide to the sea as it is the only way for her to escape from the restriction of her marriage and society.

**Appendix 2: Biography of Kate Chopin (Taken mostly from The Norton Anthology of American Literature; edited by Nina Baym)**

Katherine O'Flaherty was born in 1851 in St. Louis, Missouri. Her father was a successful businessman, the family enjoyed a high place in St. Louis society, and her mother, grandmother, and great grandmother were active, pious Catholic. But in part under the influence of her strong willed great-grandmother (who was also compelling and tireless storyteller), and long before she began to compose and submit stories in the 1880s for publication, the young woman asserted her independence by smoking in company and going about the streets without a companion of either sex -- both rather daring acts for the time.

At the age of twenty she married to Oscar Chopin (who pronounced his name Shó-pin) and spent the next decade in New Orleans, where her husband first prospered, then, failed, in the cotton business. After spending a few years in Cloutierville in northwest Louisiana, where her husband had opened a general store and
taken over the management of a family cotton plantation, she returned in St. Louis in 1884, a year after her husband's sudden death from swamp fever. A year later her mother died, and at the age of thirty-five Kate Chopin was left essentially alone to raise her children and to fashion a literary career out of her experience of Louisiana life, and her reading of such French realist as Émile Zola and Guy de Maupassant.

Her first novel, *At Fault*, was published in 1890; but it was her early stories of Louisiana rural life, especially the collection *Bayou Folk* (1894), which won her national recognition as a leading practitioner of local-color fiction. Chopin's major work, *The Awakening*, was published in 1899. The novel traces the psychological and sexual coming to consciousness of a young woman. The book was described as "true and sordid," "essentially vulgar," and "unhealthily introspective and morbid in feeling." Kate Chopin died in 1904, five years after the publishing of *The Awakening*. 