

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

There are many different ways of spending leisure time. People might go out and entertain themselves or decide to stay at home then do something like reading. From reading, people may get some improvement of their knowledge, insight and sensibility in all kinds of living things' condition. Take an example of reading literary works, the writer believes that people will not get the chief pleasure in reading but information.

Ian Ousby (1988 : foreword) argues briefly that literature is able to map our world and flesh out our reading over newspaper articles and television reports. Through this we know about the feeling, taste, texture, the airs and aromas of a place for literature bridges us to a parallel landscape that definitely rich and various where we may stroll anytime we like.

It is an awesome thing to know that all human beings in this world are actually a big family. While reading literary works we may know and learn about our relatives' ways of life in another side of this world.

We can understand and take some good examples from the way they face and solve their life's problems. According to Ousby (1988 : foreword) it all happens because literature makes us all kin. Every tale is a report from people whose differences are only on the variations of theme of our humanity.

The above reasons arouse the writer's motivation to do the literary study in her thesis writing with the hope that no alienation of human behaviour would appear after studying this literature.

Actually every human being in this world has the same rights, but people have been used to treating women unfairly. They always identify women with home and their natural functions of wiving and mothering. (Hamilton, 1978). This shows that the women's role is more or less confined at home; nursing babies, supervising young children and preparing meals for the whole family.

Economically, women are asked to be dependent on their husbands for it is the husbands who earn. This old fashion of thought has rooted in men's mind then generated.

According to Syamsul Arifin (1995), as he refers to the theological point of view, treatment can be based on the misinterpretation of the words of God in the holy books; Holy Bible or Koran.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then, the rib which Lord God had taken from man, He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man." (Genesis 2 : 21 - 22)

Those verses have been misinterpreted and mis-assumed basically for years which, therefore, influence the development of mankind's life. There are three mis-assumptions as the result of the wrong understanding. First, it is said that the first human being is a man and not a woman. The woman was created later on that was surely made from the man's ribs. So, ontologically, she is derivative and secondary. Second, it has been being believed that the first woman caused the first man to fall in sin and in their eviction from Eden. Since then, people started to treat women badly, suspiciously, lowly and with full of hatred. Third, Eve was created and brought to Adam. In other word, she was created for Adam that, next, was understood about the position of women only as secondary, complement and had no any fundamental meanings.

Those assumptions have obsessed the men's patterns of thought from century to century and become the basic consideration in all layers of community. In accordance with the world modernization, women become the colonized community of men without their knowing as their eyes have been shut down by the old fashion

thoughts and culturalization which poses men in front of women.

Year by year, women started to be aware and tried hard to get free from the "colonialization". That awareness can be defined nowadays as a form of protest towards the oppression and exploitation over women in the society, at work and in the family's life, and also it is a conscious action by either women or men to change the condition. Philosophers call this awareness Feminism.

Problems about feminism have been the part of our daily life activities for long, but it is still hard to get it solved since it requires big and controversial changes in human life. Yet, the struggle to get the equal rights and positions between men and women can be found in various fields of life; in the economics, politics, education, social, etc.

The writer of this thesis tries to analyze the feminism forms and its relevances from a piece of literary work, a novel written by Kate Chopin. The writer takes Kate Chopin as the novelist because she is a bold, explicit and sensitive modern feminist novelist who has an intense concern for the women's problems that she shows in all her novels and short stories, like what Seyersted says, edited by Culley (1976 : 185), that

Kate Chopin was sad only at the thought of woman's position and their problems.

The feminism matters, in this novel, can be grasped not merely from the characters but surroundings. Actually, this novel is not the only one written by Kate Chopin. Her reputation today rests on three books - her two short story collections; Bayou Folk and A Night in Acadie, and her mature novel; The Awakening. Compared to her two books, a critical commentator, Seyersted (1969) states that The Awakening is "Chopin's most elaborate orchestration of the theme of "bondage" which has dramatical form and uses imagery and symbolism to support her illustration over the bondage circle". In At Fault, her first novel, Chopin deals with the characters conventionally, on the surface only, while in The Awakening Chopin captures the deep, inner life of Edna Pontellier, the main character, and projects it powerfully upon a world of convention.

All stated above show that this novel is a worth material study with the best quality. This reason encourages the writer to analyse the feminism steps performed by the main character, Edna Pontellier, in this novel.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Feminism which happens in Edna's life can be analyzed through the characters' actions, the complex psychological effect and the relationship among characters. Moreover, the other two factors, like symbolism and imagery, support this analysis and make the feminism performance clear in this novel.

To reach this, the writer is interested in seeking some interesting things concerning directly to Edna as the main female character in The Awakening.

Thus, there are several questions that come up in the writer's mind, they are:

1. What does Edna do that she is considered representing feminist thoughts?
 - a. What phenomena lay behind Edna's self-awareness?
 - b. How is Edna's relationships with others?
2. How do the symbolism and imageries become the reflective factors of feminism desires?
3. Why is Kate Chopin considered as a feminist author?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The writer of this thesis tries to discuss as clearly as possible about the feminism and the feminism relevances in a piece of literary work. Through the analysis on the literary work, the writer also attempts to show that feminism is not a new philosophy for more civilized people but it is an expression of the inner intention of a human being, particularly a woman, towards her community. This intention has actually existed in every woman with or without her awareness. Simply because of the different period and culture, this feminism may have various realization.

In order to achieve the major objectives, the minor objectives should be found out first. They are:

1. to analyze Edna's actions that shows feminism
 - a. to find out the phenomena behind Edna's self-realization.
 - b. to analyze Edna's relationships with other characters.
2. to analyze the symbols and imageries appeared in this novel.
3. to discuss about the author herself as a bold feminist author.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that through her study, people may know more about Chopin as a feminist writer. Another importance, if there are people who are interested in doing a study on feminism through literary works, this thesis will be useful for them. It provides some insights for their further study in the same area. Moreover, the writer also hopes that this thesis will give others more understanding to avoid misassumptions towards feminism in this modern life.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The writer of this thesis limits herself only to the study of feminism in one of the Chopin's work of The Awakening particularly in Edna's life and some symbolism concerning with the feminism. The underlying reason is owing to the fact that there are some other novels and short stories in the same topic feminism.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation in understanding this thesis writing, the writer decides to define some key terms used.

1. **A novel** is an extended, fictional, prose narrative that portrays characters in a plot. The novel may stress adventure for its own sake or characters development or a partisan position on some issue or a blend of these and other emphases. The plot of the novel is more extended than that of the short story, having usually many more episodes. (Guerin, 1986)
2. **A character** is a person (or personified or anthropomorphized animal, object or gaiety) who acts, appears or is referred to in a work. (Bain, Beaty, Hunter, 1977)
3. **Feminism** is an awareness to fight the oppression and the exploitation towards women in the community, at work and in the family's life and it is also an aware action done by either women or men to change the situation. (Bhasin, 1986)
4. **Symbolism** is basically a kind of imagery that evokes a concrete, objective reality and suggests an additional level of meaning beyond that reality. (Kenney, 1966)
5. **Literal images** is expressions or a single word used to satisfy the reader's demand for specific objects, concrete details, his desire to know how things look, sound, smell, taste and feel. (Kenney, 1966)

1.7 Methodology of the Study

In this study, the writer bases her analyses on phenomenological approach which the writer applies to a literary text with the purpose of examining the main female characterization.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975: 2, 13) clearly state that this approach is used to understand and to know about the clear figure of a human being by observing the events happened in his surroundings. This approach also shows how the human being behaves in his world as a result of his interpretation over the world. In addition, the main task of this approach is to see and to identify the process of the interpretation from the person's point of view.

To analyze the main female character, the write uses the practical criticism and formalistic criticism as the study of literary analyses as introduced by Little. Practical criticism has two branches. They are intrinsic and extrinsic. Everything people may find in the text such as character, plot, theme, structure and atmosphere are considered as the intrinsic practical criticism. While the extrinsic one is outside the text such as historical-biographical feminism, and moral-philosophical considerations.

When the readers are asked to look for the denotative and conotative meanings of words, sentences patterns and relations of words, metaphors, symbolism, imagery and allusions, it means that people apply the formalistic criticism. As there have been many ways to start a literary study, the writer is intended to focuss her study on the character, symbols and imageries which Kate Chopin actually creates in The Awakening's female character.

Moreover, the above methods are seen from the feminist's point of view toward a phenomenology of feminist consciousness. The phenomena of psychological oppression and the domination of men which have been faced by women for a very long time cause their consciousness to start seeing and pitying themselves. In the struggle of the victimization, a feminist changes her behaviour and her own life style entirely. She does whatever she wants and even she is capable to express her feeling and to decide something for her needs (Bartky, 1990:11)

However, those feminist's view and literary analysis will be elaborated in the next chapter.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis starts with Introduction which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Objectives of the Study, Significance of the Study, Scope and Limitation, and Organization of the Study. In Chapter II, the writer reviews some related literature which can support and help the writer to do the analysis. In Chapter III, she wants to employ the theories in the analysis and she presents her interpretation of the analysis in Chapter IV. In the last chapter, Chapter V, she makes a conclusion about what she has already analyzed.