UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

PROPRIETY OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW WOMAN IN KATE CHOPIN’S SELECTED FICTION

ALI KHOSHNOOD

FBMK 2012 12
PROPRIETY OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW WOMAN IN KATE
CHOPIN’S SELECTED FICTION

By

ALI KHOSHNOOD

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2012
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

PROPRIETY OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW WOMAN IN KATE CHOPIN’S SELECTED FICTION

By

ALI KHOSHOOD

June 2012

Chairman : Associate Professor Rosli Talif, PhD
Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication

This dissertation tries to depict Kate Chopin’s protagonists’ quests for autonomy, self-determination and freedom aligned with nineteenth century female traditions of New Woman’s writing. Chopin deploys some features of the modernist form to refute the Victorian era’s rigid system of normative ethics and this study attempts to show Chopin’s modernist disillusionment with Victorian society’s convention through her depiction of the emergence of modern New Women in her selected fiction. Feminist and psychoanalytical critical approaches are employed to interpret the modern features of the selected texts. The first critical chapter, At Fault, “Lilacs” and “Two Portraits”, unravels how Catholicism and patriarchal hegemonic ideology of the fin-de-siècle served as the primary sources of women’s oppression and their limitation. This chapter also introduces Chopin’s early works as a prologue to her more anthologized works and to
show her subtextual intention to depict characters who can emerge, in later works, as more developed, liberated and rebellious females with modern attitudes. This dissertation traces the ways in which the protagonists possess or anticipate the New Woman’s attributions. *The Awakening*, “A Point at Issue”, “The Story of an Hour” and “A Pair of Silk Stockings” are put in the second critical chapter to examine how the female protagonists adopt the New Woman’s visions to disregard the propriety code of society. The heroines strive to denounce the gospel of motherly self-sacrifice and dismantle the female domestic conﬁnements within patriarchal social orders. All these quests for individuality, self-fulﬁllment and freedom which were practiced or envisioned by the heroines anticipate the New Woman’s traits and creeds which are examples of a modernist writer’s obsessions. *The Awakening*’s heroine personality development and her individuation process have not been deservedly examined on psychoanalytic grounds combined with feminist perspective. Thus, the last critical chapter looks at Edna Pontellier’s revolt from the eyes of Jung’s, Briggs Myers’ and Erikson’s psychological theories of human life transition to identify the phases through which Edna Pontellier passes on her journey towards self-discovery. This dissertation tries to delineate that some of the psychological and cultural processes she experiences in her transformation into a new identity are akin to New Woman’s feeling and ideals.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KEWAJARAN KEMUNCULAN WANITA BARU DALAM BEBERAPA KARYA FIKSYEN OLEH KATE CHOPIN

Oleh

ALI KHOSHNOOD

Jun 2012

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Rosli Talif, PhD

Fakulti : Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been accomplished without many people’s intellectual and personal support. With love, admiration and gratitude I thank my father, uncle Mashallah and my eldest brother for their financial support and benevolence. I am indebted to my dissertation supervisor Associate Professor Dr. Rosli Talif for his supportive encouragement and academic assistance and my supervisory committee members: Associate Professor Dr. Wan Roselezam and Dr. Shivani Sivagurunathan whose advice shaped the body of my thesis. I also wish to express my gratitude to Associate Professor Dr. Mardziah Hayati Abdullah for her constant support throughout my course and her initiative steps to recommend UPM library to add students’ required books to its shelves. I would like also to acknowledge the guidance of Associate Professor Dr. Nortiah Omar and Dr. Arbaayah Ali Termizi, as my early advisors, all from Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Besides those of my committee, I have benefited from many Kate Chopin’s scholars, psychologists, academic mentors, friends and colleagues as well. I owe thanks and sincere appreciations to the Emeritus Professor of Kingston University, Avril Horner who generously mailed me two chapters of her books unavailable to me, Professor Ann Heilmann form University of Hull, Professor Helen Taylor, from University of Exeter. My thanks go to prominent psychologists such as Dr. James Hollis from USA and Associate Professor Dr. Terence Richard Dawson, from Nanyang Technological University of Singapore.
I would like to thank the many people who have discussed, read and commented on my work and helped me in a variety of ways. In particular I am grateful to Assistant Professor Sandya Mehta from Sultan Qaboos University of Oman, my colleagues and friends Mr. Javad Yaghoobi who advised me patiently and cordially to organize and improve the structure of my thesis, Mr. Kayhan Bahmani who inspired me with the idea of Mid-Life Crisis and Mr. Patrick Yeoh who heartedly proofread on a chapter of my dissertation. I also wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Gerard Hearne, from Lancaster, who proofread and refined my language.
I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on …. to conduct the final examination of Ali Khoshnood on his thesis entitled “The Propriety of the Emergence of New Woman in Kate Chopin’s Selected Fiction” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

(Chairman)

(Internal Examiner)

(Internal Examiner)

(External Examiner)

BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, Ph.D
Professor/Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:
This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the supervisory committee were as follows:

**Rosli Talif, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Wan Roselezam, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Shivani Sivagurunathan, PhD**  
Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

---

**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, Ph.D**  
Professor and Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  

Date:
DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institutions.

ALI KHOSHNOOD

Date: 22 June 2012
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives of the Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitation of the Study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Key Terms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  CONCEPTUAL THEORY AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  EARLY FICTION AS A PROLOGUE TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW WOMAN</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  THE PROPRIETY OF EMERGENCE OF NEW WOMAN: CONFLICTS OF MOTHERHOOD, SELF-OWNERSHIP AND SELF-FULFILLMENT IN SELECTED FICTION</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  THE AWAKENING: AN EXPLORATION OF EDNA PONTELLIER’S TRANSITION DURING HER MID-LIFE CRISIS</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Mild-Life Crisis</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Woman and Independence</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generativity at Mid-Life</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stagnation in Mid-Life: Self-Destruction</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generativity: creative works</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-Intimacy</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreams, Goals and Desires not Accomplished</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontent and Bored with People, Life Style and Society Norms</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Woman and Solitude</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 CONCLUSION

REFERENCES

APPENDIX

BIODATA OF STUDENT

216

230

241

243