

Tribhuvan University

Conflict Between Edna's Outward Existence and Inward Life in Chopin's *The Awakening*.

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the Degree of Master of Arts in English

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Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled “Conflict Between Edna’s Outward Existence and Inward Life in Chopin’s *The Awakening*” has been prepared by Mr. Suman Ghimire under my supervision and guidance. The research work was conducted from October, 2008 to February, 2009. I recommend this thesis be submitted to the Research Committee for viva-voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis titled “Conflict Between Edna’s Outward Existence and Inward Life in Chopin’s *The Awakening*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Suman Ghimire has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

A woman, who wants to live according to the dictates of her inner self, refusing to conform the ideals of the patriarchal codes, ultimately fails to survive in such society. Chopin's *The Awakening* portrays a woman with the similar plight, who, quite overwhelmed by the 'feminist' awareness, seeks alternatives to marriage and motherhood, contemplates over the problem of woman's inequality in society and raises the question of whether men and women are 'essentially' different because of biology, or are socially constructed as different. Edna, the protagonist of the Novel, therefore, is desperate from the beginning to attain self-fulfillment and to comprehend herself as an autonomous self, and makes a series of protests against all who try to limit her into ideological duties of femininity. In an attempt to break free from her domestic confinement, she grows indifferent to her role as 'self sacrificing' mother and 'faithful' wife. She entertains adultery, pursues art, neglects social obligations, abandons both her children and husband, and lives separately in a 'pigeon house'. Yet, she still fails to find some sort of meaning of her whole existence. When Robert, whom she loves, does not wait for her at the end, she fails to find fulfillment in her life without a man. She could live alone like Mademoiselle Reisz was living, as an artist. But the frequent thought of children tries to drag her into 'soul's slavery', threatening her inner self that was slowly revealing to herself. At last, in order to prevent any harm to her inner self, she destroys Mrs Pontellier -- the 'mechanical' and 'hostile' outward existence of Edna. However, choosing death she has been able to sanctify her moral and spiritual height. She got victory even in defeat.

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