



## GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN KATE CHOPIN'S FIVE SHORT STORIES

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe the forms of gender discrimination in the marriage system experienced by the main female character and the forms of resistance of the main female character against oppression. The author chose five short stories of Kate Chopin to study, namely *The Story of An Hour*, *A Respectable Women*, *Desire's Baby*, *The Storm*, *A Pair of Silk Stockings*. The writer found the forms of discrimination experienced by the main women in the story, namely discrimination in marriage, discrimination in economic, and discrimination in domestic. Writer also found of resistance side to oppression was shown in a non-frontal and open manner. Resistance is carried out with the sides awakening their strength to resist oppression. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method with a feminist literary criticism approach. Based on the results of data analysis, it is produced as follows. 1) The forms of discrimination experienced by the main women in the story 2) The form of resistance against oppression by the main female character in the story. The references used feminist journals, especially liberal feminism from Naomi Wolf theory which includes the theory of power feminism.

**Keywords:** *discrimination, Kate Chopin, short stories*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk bentuk diskriminasi gender dalam sistem perkawinan yang dialami tokoh perempuan utama dan bentuk perlawanan tokoh perempuan utama dalam melawan penindasan. Penulis memilih lima cerita pendek Kate Chopin untuk diteliti yaitu *The story of an hour*, *A respectable women*, *Desire baby*, *The storm*, *A pair of silk stockings*. penulis mendapati bentuk bentuk diskriminasi yang dialami perempuan utama dalam cerita yaitu diskriminasi dalam pernikahan, diskriminasi dalam ekonomi, dan diskriminasi dalam domestik. Penulis juga mendapati sisi perlawanan mereka pada penindasan ditunjukkan secara tidak frontal dan terbuka. Perlawanan dilakukan dengan sisi membangkitkan kekuatan mereka untuk melawan penindasan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif bentuk kualitatif dengan pendekatan kritik sastra feminis. Berdasarkan hasil dari analisis data, maka dihasilkan sebagai berikut. 1) Bentuk bentuk diskriminasi yang dialami perempuan utama dalam cerita. 2) Bentuk perlawanan melawan penindasan yang dilakukan tokoh perempuan utama dalam cerita. Referensi yang digunakan adalah referensi dari jurnal jurnal feminisme khususnya feminisme liberal dan teori Naomi Wolf yang mencakup teori feminisme kekuatan dari salah satu macam bentuk feminisme liberal yang digagas oleh Naomi Wolf sebagai tinjauan dalam analisa.

**Kata kunci:** *diskriminasi, Kate Chopin, cerita pendek*

## **Introduction**

Some people in society assume that women are physically, psychologically, mentally, and spiritually weak figures. Whereas men are considered strong, rational and powerful. Women are always placed second in function, position and role is considered inferior to men. So that women are always weak, defeated and oppressed. According to Xin Liu (2018) from patriarchal dualism insists that women are universalized as passive, emotional, sensitive and fragile human beings while men represent the active, mechanistic, intellectual, analytical and linear.

The existence of discrimination against women arises because of the stereotypes women. The stereotype is a standard image of an individual or group that does not match the existing goods. Negative labeling in general always breeds injustice. Biologically, the female body is seen as a male sexual property. Female organs attract men who are able to provide more sexual pleasure. This makes it easier for women to become victims. Gender injustice is often found in incidents of oppression and extortion of women, impoverishment of women, negative labeling of women's self-image, and acts of violence committed by women in the form of rape and harassment. In this case women become victims because of their powerlessness to fight oppression. Roiphe (1993) argues that raising awareness about sexual violence creates unnecessary fear in women, by encouraging a victim mentality.

One of the stereotypes that developed based on gender, which occurs in one gender, (women). Women are often seen as weak, not independent, irrational, emotionally soft and seductive. Purwani (2019) stated that gender is shaped by culture. According to Fakhrian & Islamiyati (2017) From Liberal Feminism perspective, every human being is created in an equal position, harmonious, and having the same potential and rationality. Women need to be independent in every aspect to be equal to man.

Liberal feminism is the awareness of women in determining their attitudes towards their relationship with men, where women are aware of their rights that must be obtained to be equal with men who uphold social changes that will be achieved in eliminating the oppression that occurs. (Hanifah, et al : 2017) revealed that Wolf said "There's not single thing I believe about feminism of the world that's all men or all women. I don't see the world that way. I see human beings."

Constructed stereotypes cause the position and role of women to be lower than that of men. Women are subordinated from the division of labor and functions. In terms of domestic roles, women are responsible for caring for children and taking care of the family at home, while men are in public or production affairs. Society defines the father outside the home to work and the mother staying indoors to take care of household duties and the children. (Bai Ying,2010) In patriarchal society, women have acted as "other" for a long time (Sukiman, et al: 2019) and those traditions are formed on the basis of different cultures.

The writer reasons in choosing the topic : *The Story of An Hour*, *A Respectable Woman*, *Désirée's Baby*, *The Storm*, *A Pair of Silk Stockings* depicting the lives of women at the time. Where their conditions are discriminated against by men, they are discriminated against because of the marriage system that is binding in their lives. They get unfair treatment by arbitrary men. Their rights are limited by the marriage system so that they do not get the freedom to express their double burden due to the pressure of patriarchal culture in society, especially in the marriage system. Their mouths are silenced and they cannot speak out to get their rights because they are bound by male power. (Hassan and Kamal : 2020) revealed that The most influential factor reflected in Chopin's writings is the social condition of women. At her time, women were oppressed and dominated by men.

## **Method**

The approach to focus on the feminist movement of literary criticism is used to criticize the context of women oppressed by a patriarchal culture.

Primary data Source are short stories "Desire Baby," The Story of an Hour ", " The Storm ", " A pair of Silk Stocking ", " A Respectable Women "by Kate Chopin. Secondary data Sources obtained in this study: (1) Short stories "Desire's Baby," The Story of an Hour ", " The Storm ", " A pair of Silk Stocking ", " A Respectable Women "by Kate Chopin. (2) The book "The Beauty Myth" by Naomi Wolf (2002). (3) Journal article entitled Naomi Wolf and the New Feminism: Women's Power by Marta Lohyn (1994).

The data technique is done by reading over and over again and documenting the data in this study. Documenting the data in this study is related to a contextual approach that focuses on feminist literary criticism. In this case, it discusses oppression and defense of women based on the theory of liberal feminism by Naomi Wolf. The first of many steps, looking for data from sources such as books, articles, and journals. Second, group the data according to function. Third, data entry to research. The author uses these steps to answer questions about the object of research, deepen the understanding of the context of women's oppression and struggle in a patriarchal culture based on the contextual approach of feminist criticism of literature in a literary work.

## **Result and Discussion**

In this section, they are observed through their position in the family and society. How female characters take on roles in the family and society through thoughts, behavior, actions, conversations and the writer direct comments. The discussion is made into two section. Gender discrimination in marriage, economic,

and Domestic area experienced by the main female character in the Kate Chopin five short stories and their attitudes towards oppression. This section can answer all the problems above.

Gender discrimination experienced by the main female character in Kate Chopin's five short stories. Experienced by female characters namely Mrs. Mallard, Calixta, Nyoya Sommer, Desire's, and Mrs. Baroda. Show like that:

1. Mrs. Mallard in society is positioned as a weak and fragile person. Mrs. Mallard is expressed how weak and fragile she looks like as "A heart trouble" and "Gently".

Mrs. Mallard is a stay-at-home wife and her life depends on her husband as the main breadwinner in the family. In the family Mrs. Mallard is described as an obedient wife who loves her husband. She is at home and doing housework.

2. Calixta is told that she sews on her sewing machine and waits for her husband and son to return from Friedhmeir's shop. Calixta is an obedient wife. Calixta lives an ordinary and fearless life, she only feels afraid when a storm comes and ravages her surroundings. In the story, Calixta does household chores such as washing, lifting clothes and cooking for her husband and children. While the main breadwinner in the family is her husband. Show that : "*Calixta was preparing supper. She had set the table and was dripping coffee at the hearth. She sprang up as they came in.*"

3. Mrs Sommer in the story of a pair of silk stockings is described as coming from a lower class family. Mrs. Sommer in her family shows a wife who is obedient and dependent on her husband. Mrs Sommer is also a mother who is responsible for the lives of her children and their families. The life of a Mrs sommer is very wise which means she is more concerned with her family's life than her own.

A marriage brings him to be a person who has full responsibility for one's life. He was a man who sacrificed himself throughout his many years of marriage in poor economic conditions. He never complained in living every moment of his family life. As it is indicated in the story that Mrs. Sommer is used to bargaining by standing for hours to get to the desired object which is sold below the price. She is also seen sacrificing herself to feed her children and busy shopping for her.

4. Désirée's in the story is a gentle figure as a woman. She is a wife and mother to her child. In her marriage, her life is devoted to her husband (Armand Aubigny). She puts herself aside, her life for her husband. Proven in the story "*Désirée's so*

*happy, for she loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God”.*

Then it was told that Désirée's Baby was born. When he was three months old, conflict occurred in Armand and Désirée's relationship because Désirée's Baby was not white but black. The doubts arose from the races of both parties. Désirée's is cornered in the conflict, and the suspect Désirée's is a descendant of the black race.

Desire's became a helpless woman because of the arbitrary actions of Armand against Desire. This is shown in the word *“She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door”*. At the end of the story, it appears that the one with black race is Armand. Desire's actions in the story, desire can only obey what Armand says. Desire draws a woman who is controlled by centuries of authority and has no freedom.

5. Mrs Baroda's story depicts a Victorian Woman. Victorian women are described as having no freedom in marriage. They have no right to express their opinion. Even for opinions, her pleasures and desires have been snatched away and only the husband has the right to all of them.

Mrs Baroda featured Kate Chopin in the story "A Respectable Woman". Just like other kate chopin stories that the writer has studied, Mrs. Baroda is positioned as a wife and mother who has both responsibilities and roles in her family. The oppression experienced by Mrs. Baroda is described when Mrs. Baroda is forced by her husband to comply with her husband's wishes. By asking Mrs Baroda to accept her husband's friend (Gaston) to spend a week or two on her plantation. Even though it was really not wanted by Mrs. Baroda to entertain guests from outside. What Mrs. Baroda wanted was to live alone with her husband.

Women's attitudes against their oppression in Kate Chopin's five short stories. Show like that :

**First**, Mrs. Mallard's stance against oppression was described when she heard of her husband's death. She fought the oppression by crying but unlike most women who were sad to hear the news of death, but Mrs. Mallard wept with joy because she felt that her freedom was in front of her eyes. He feels a second life with his newfreedom. Mrs. Mallard's resistance to oppression is described by her condition, which was originally dependent on her husband, turned independent from her husband. He told himself over and over again:

*When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under the breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes.*

This was an outburst of joy from Mrs. Mallard. Even though she loves her husband very much, her feelings and soul are very happy with her husband's departure. In the story Mrs. Mallard whispered to herself

*"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering..*

This is a form of resistance to oppression that has been dominated by her husband.

**Second,** The attitude Calixta took to resist the oppression she felt was not like Mrs. Mallard enjoying her freedom. Calixta is very tired in doing her domestic duties and she needs a cradle to take a moment to relieve the fatigue due to her domestic work. *"But she felt very warm and often stopped to mop her face on which the perspiration gathered in beads. She unfastened her white sacque at the throat. It began to grow dark, and suddenly realizing the situation she got up hurriedly and went about closing windows and doors."*

In the story *The Storm* Calixta the main character has an affair with his ex-girlfriend, when a storm comes where Bobinot and Bibi are not at home. This is a form of resistance to oppression that he experienced in his household, to expel his fatigue and fatigue in taking care of his household. Calixta felt happy and smiled when she and Alcee who was her ex-boyfriend after having a husband and wife relationship and in the story also Calixta was described as having no regrets after committing the affair. After the Hurricane was over, Calixta did her job in a very calm and relaxed manner.

**Third,** Mrs Sommers seemed to give up all her desires with the money she got. She bought every thing that crossed her mind and forgot about her husband and children and her responsibilities at home. Even Mrs. Sommers bought theater tickets as well as lunch at a fancy restaurant to quench her thirst because her responsibilities and household chores were so time-consuming that she had no time for herself.

**Fourth,** Desire's chose to free herself by disappearing and out of Armand's control. The End of the Story which reveals that Desire's looks Tragic "where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds". Desire's disappeared among the reeds and willows.

**Fifth**, Mrs. Baroda's attitude is when Mrs. Baroda shows displeasure with Gouvernil and tries to talk to her husband to express her opinion on his displeasure at Gouvernil's presence at his place.

The writer will describe result of research in data frame work, shown as follows :

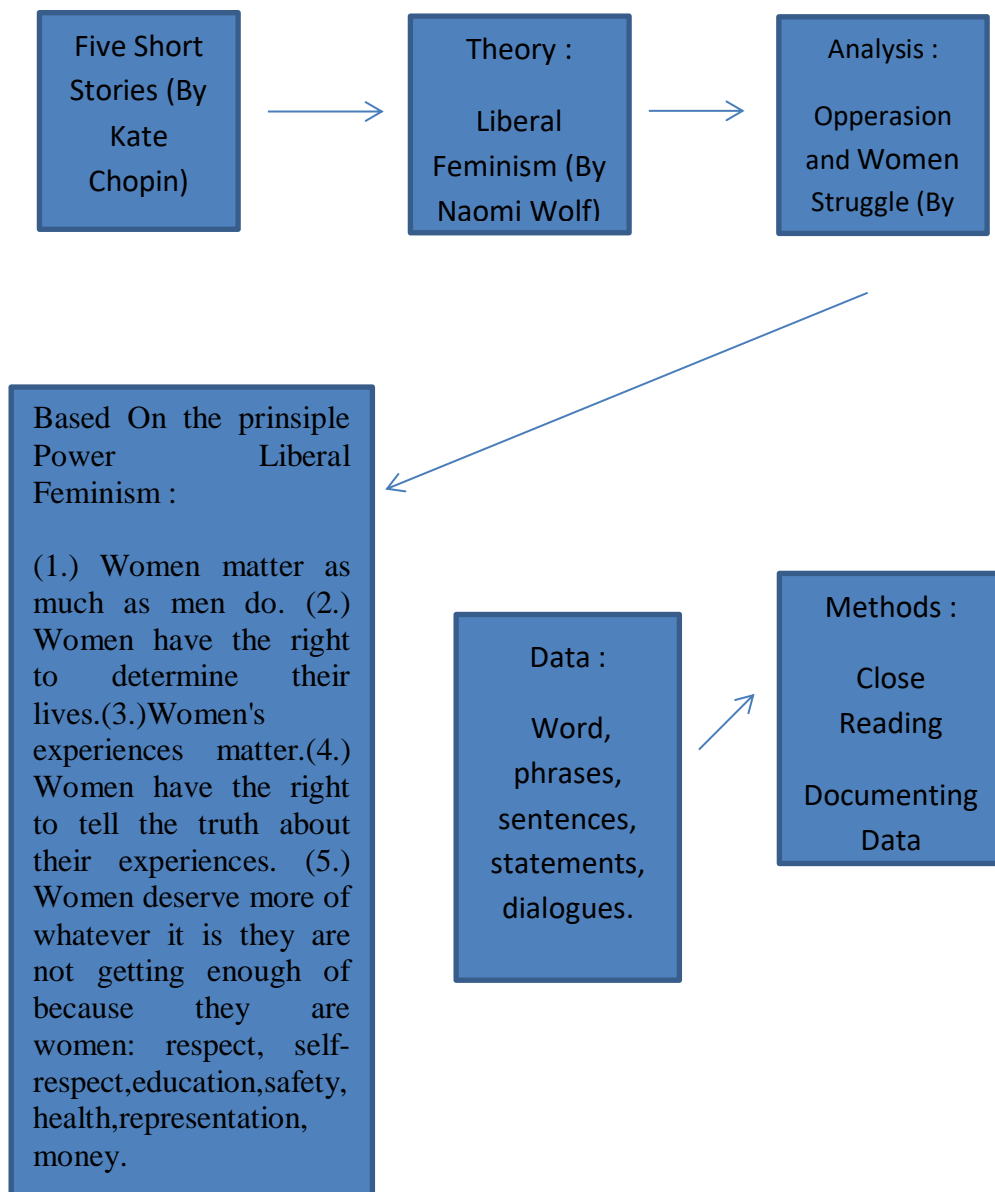


Diagram 1. Research framework

After the writer studies from the references obtained, the writer found result of the research in the five stories experienced by female characters namely Mrs. Mallard, Calixta, Nyoya Sommer, Desire, and Mrs. Baroda is a description of the forms of economic, domestic and marriage gender discrimination that occurred in

women 19th century. Where freedoms and rights have been lost and taken away by patriarchal power. The oppression experienced by the female characters above illustrates that women experience mental and physical oppression. Because of their powerlessness, women do not have the power to fight real forms of oppression. According to Marta Lohyn (1994) wolf cash women as victimised and vulnerable, longsuffering, better than men, incapable of aggression and violence.

The explanation above shows that women's oppression has existed since they entered the gates of marriage. Their freedom is taken away because of the social structure created by society itself. Marriage is a shackle for women to submit to men and depend on them for life. The resistance shown by women is the culmination of their emotions that have been nurtured and buried for a long time since the oppression occurred, and in the end when the oppression is experienced continuously and then turns into resistance, it is a form of post-structuralism that object to authority figures.

The resistance shown by the main character in Kate Chopin's story shows that women at certain times show their expression of freedom. even in expressing such resistance they only care about themselves and ignore their family and responsibilities even their love for their partner. This can ultimately lead to women's independence and not depending on their partners. The resistance carried out by the main characters in the story is not only aimed at their partners who have dominated them, but is also aimed at fighting the traditions built by the community, that women are domestic workers in the household who should be shared responsibility between husbands. wife is the duty of the wife. Not only that, in Kate Chopin's story, she also illustrates that women are weak, which is a weakness built by society so that women are considered weak and fragile.

The process by which the change from oppression to resistance is very long for women to go through. The problem is that women are victims continuously, starting from society's view that labels women physically and mentally that women are weak and fragile, thus making women really weak and fragile. Until they can't control themselves to fight violence. From here there is no trajectory of moving to defend themselves in their minds.

The attitude of women who ultimately fight against oppression is a form of women's struggle to fight for their rights back to the side of freedom where they are consciously aware that they have their own freedom as men's freedoms which have been taken away as a result of the cultural structure built by society. when a woman becomes a wife. With all their strength and mind that they built to fight, it shows that a woman in essence has enormous power and breaks the notion that a woman is weak, fragile, and powerless that has been shaped by culture and society in general.



Women are able to show their existence from their power to achieve freedom. Women are great figures who were never seen in the eyes of society at first. According to Martha Lohyn (1994) Wolf refers to feminist theory and research which argues that women's consciousness is dominated by connection and intimacy, and averse to masculine expression of power, aggression and control.

From the description of several stories of Kate Chopin who fought for feminism, it is a form of her image that tries to share in her works. Xin liu (2018) says about Chopin "Not surprisingly, in her fiction she shared this kind of image of women who try to pursue freedom, independence and true love".

The analyzed story, which the writer put forward, has illustrated that gender discrimination that occurs to women in marriage, economics and domestic, has been overcome by women themselves. Because women have strength within themselves so that mental steel has been awakened and shape their self-image, within them to lead to victory and achievement. According to Martha Lohyn (1994) in Wolf's view, this story demonstrates that women can challenge the status quo with their own intelligence, power and persistence, and win.

The writers means here is the change from oppression to freedom of struggle referring to Naomi Wolf's liberal feminism theory which is based on the principles of power feminism as follows :

1. Women matter as much as men do.
2. Women have the right to determine their lives.
3. Women's experiences matter.
4. Women have the right to tell the truth about their experience.
5. Women deserve more of whatever it is they are not getting enough of because they are women : respect, self-respect, education, safety, health, representation, money.

### **Conclusion**

Gender discrimination has been a problem in terms of equality from the 19th century to the present. Equality has been declared but in reality women are still victims of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination has inspired many famous literary figures, one of which is Kate Chopin's.

From the data provided, in the form of gender discrimination experienced by the main female character in five stories selected by Kate Chopin's. In general, they all experience gender discrimination in the form of gender discrimination in marriage, gender discrimination in economic and gender discrimination in domestic

area which are all shaped by the existing culture of society. Gender discrimination has stuck with the main female characters since they were born. Where they are destined by the culture of society to be weak, fragile, and do not have any strength. This ultimately makes them weak and vulnerable physically and mentally.

Gender discrimination experienced in Kate Chopin's short stories shows how the condition of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century experienced so much discrimination, besides that Kate Chopin's short stories was a form of protest against the social conditions that occurred to women in that century.

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