



Kate Chopin's "The Awakening." Being a 'New Woman'

By Melissa Gronebaum



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Seminar paper from the year 2010 in the subject English - Literature, Works, grade: 3,0, University of Kassel, language: English, abstract: Kate Chopin's "The Awakening", which is today seen as an "important early feminist text", [hungry minds], was published for the very first time in 1899. Many readers, mostly men "who wished women would remain at home" [book: criticism], were shocked how Chopin, who was seen as a "regional writer" [book: criticism], could publish such a rebellious novel. Since female writers were supposed to "stick with ladylike subjects" [book: criticism] Edna's story was not desirable, and men did not want to let women get any revolutionized ideas about 'New Woman fantasies'. The scandal about 'The Awakening' spoiled its chance to become popular at first and so it did not come to public attention till the 1960s, when feminist movements took place. Today it belongs to the canon of important American Literature. The novel 'The Awakening' contains the story about a respectable woman of the late 1800s. Between the centuries Edna Pontellier is trapped in New Orleans' upper-class, the Creole society, with its old fashioned thinking. On the contrary, she is already having new society ideas - the ideas of a New Century's Woman. During her summer stay at Grand Isles she collects a lot of new experiences and gets to know some new friends, for example Robert, with whom she falls in love with.

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