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Freedom in The story of an Hour

Section A starts here, thesis statement has been introduced in the end

Kate Chopin’s The Story of an Hour presents a very different aspect of marriage to the readers. In the time, when this story was written the married women had a very different life in terms of freedom. They don't have the joys, as the women of today have. Louise Mallard who is the central character of this story is also living a life, which is opposite to what she thought for herself. She is subjected to many limits, which she think suffocates her. Louise is of the opinion that these limits are subjected to the life of her husband. The only case she could free herself is if her husband dies. The story is specifically about how the nineteenth century weddings were more like a notorious contract for the women. This is the reason Mallard experiences an emotional change when she is told that her husband has left this world. At this point in the story, Louis also becomes emotional but deep inside her, there was a feeling that now she could see the world from a different perspective. But her own life ends with a sudden heart attack when she gets to knows that her husband is alive and harmless.

In this story, Kate Chopin has used different techniques to make the theme of the story appear different. She has used symbolism and irony to develop the theme of this story. She has also used different settings to demonstrate the qualities of the characters, their particular moods and different features in the themes. For example, Kate has used time settings for describing Louise hidden desires compared to the restrictions she is facing. The entire plot of the story is taking place in the spring of the 1890s. As spring is associated with hope, but the women of that time were facing restrictions. The next setting is the room, which is upstairs. Most of the time Kate mentions that the room is locked. The room belongs to Louise and it appears that Louise has been locked in the room. This shows that Louise is trapped in the room, and this is why one may opine about Kate’s ‘the story of an hour’ that *unexpected freedom for Louise proves transitory*.

Section B starts here, analysis of the scholarly resources have been analyzed here, which has also been argued considering the writer’s way of writing the literature

The story of an hour received mixed remarks from the contemporaries of Kate Chopin. Since the time of the nineteenth century was much different from what is today, and Kate Chopin has challenged that time's traditional norms in the story of an hour, therefore it has been subjected to wide criticism. There are other works of Kate Coppin's which have received wide criticism. Her contemporaries believed that she wrote what was not there at that time. Selina Jamil writes that Kate has presented no evidence about how she is repressed(Chopin). Jamil opines that although Louise has been painted by Kate as the most repressed soul but on another hand it appears that she had every financial support she needed to change her fate. The main controversy between Kate and Jamil’s thoughts appears about the manner of freedom. Jamil writes that Kate has provided every appliance to Louise for achieving freedom but has restricted her character’s will to grab freedom. This is what Jamil finds controversial. Jamil also mentions that Louise reaction towards her husband’s death was all different. As she said under her “breath free, free, free!”(Chopin). The freedom here is still not understood by Jamil. For Louise, freedom is the freedom of thoughts and the freedoms from the earthly problems which are around her. Chopin's idea about Louise freedom is that she must have the pleasures what she thinks are necessary. These pleasures of life are necessary for everybody. For Chopin’s, it is quite right that she cannot justify her character's freedom by depicting her as a woman who is allowed to roam around.

Another criticism of Chopin's character Louise is about her own negligence towards life. Some believe that since it appears that the protagonist in the story is weak and for her very own reasons (might be the medical ones)(LIU and WANG), she is unable to witness the beauty around her. She has therefore confined herself in a single room. The sociological criticism also guides that if one is not open herself to the outer world, how come then she be given an excuse to blame anyone (as Louise husband in this case) (LIU and WANG). This is how Chopin has invited criticism over *the story of an hour*. Considering their understanding of Louise role and their interpretation of freedom, it appears that the authors are taking unparallel both these concepts. Louise is a character and freedom is what she wants. She wants this along with the ills in her. These critiques have studies the freedom and Louise character in a separate manner. This is how this story must not be interpreted. Louise weaknesses are not coupled with the limits imposed over her. If the character is bound in a single room somewhere at upstairs, what reasons are left behind to think that Louise is a free lady?

There are other reasons also to opine that Louise had remained a victim of her own limits. Sociologists opine that it is not the right way to criticize the patriarchy that existed in the nineteenth century. Louise wanted freedom which she interpreted in a very different way(Kolodny). The freedom as opined by the critiques is there and conforms to every aspect of those times. Similarly, Catherine opines that it is not at the part of Louise's husband that he has forced Louise to stick in a world of restrictions. Rather it is her own self which still is in an evolutionary phase. She lacks confidence in self-freedom. According to many critiques, it is not at the part of her husband that Louise has to remain in a closed room, but it is her own self-confinement (Kolodny). They opine that her own thoughts are so powerless to think in a different manner. They believe that the use of the word “open” in the story is to depict about opportunities. There are not many restrictions compared to how Louise has confined herself. The repetition of the word open shows that at every new phase in the story there are opportunities available which Louise is unable to grab. Kolodny has viewed things in a narrower manner. It appears from his critique on Chopin's this work that he has focused more on the usage of the word by the author, and not the theme of the complete story. This is not always enough for a literature's critical analysis that someone should analyze a literary work in a single perspective as Kolodny has done. Although she has referred this work in a narrative manner it is not conforming as how Kate Chopin has completed it. The freedom for Kate's character is more of the kind of physical openness and not just about the feelings attributed to the openness of things.

There is some more criticism on Kate Chopin's demand for freedom for her character Mrs. Millard. In the *discourse of literary history*, authors mention that Chopin had been ambiguous in portraying the character of Louis. For them, this must not be the way for painting a character so bounded. They opine that if Mrs. Millard truly wants freedom. She must, therefore, be pictured in a more struggling manner. According to the authors, there is a contrast between how she is actually passing her days and what she wants(Mroz et al.). For example, it becomes obvious when the author mentions about the financial resources what Louise have with her and what she aspires. Considering this critical commentary of the authors, one may opine that freedom for Chopin’s character was more of the form of feeling herself. She had been portrayed as living in a separate room and is not allowed to go outside. Kate Chopin’s character conforms to every aspect of an oppressed being. Not much generally, but Kate has elaborated her desire for freedom in a more precise manner. Chopin's writing has called over any criticism. Story of an hour is just one example of this. Kate’s work invites criticism for the purpose just because she opposes patriarchy of that time. Although she has mentioned particularly against the male dominance she has criticized it in one way or another. Same is true for her short stories *The Awakening* and *Desiree’s Baby.* Her critiques argue that why it is so that Kate every time finds fascination in portraying the female character as oppressed. Though the time she used to write short stories, it was the time of male dominance but her critiques opine that she could have done it in a more balanced way.

Freedom in The Story of an Hour by Kate Chopin has been elaborated in a more understandable manner. Louise which has been mentioned in many parts of the story as Mrs. Millard is subjected to traditional restrictions of that time. As the story has been set in the time of the nineteenth century, so it is natural for Chopin to write about some phenomena while being conservative. The critique over her work normally is about the way she targets the norms of that time's society. But she has done so in a very different form. It would be right to opine that her readers have not completely got the gist of what she wanted to convey. She has never mentioned the conservatism of those times as the problem, but she has criticized the violations of the natural rights of the women in her stories. For her, freedom was a thing that was desirous. She could not have the pleasures and joys of the life she wanted, in a small room. She never hated her affection towards her husband but it was not also something much worthy she could have lived with. This was the reason that with time she started to think that once if her husband is no more she could set herself free. When she is told that her husband has died in a road accident, she weeps because she has any time felt an affection with his name. But suddenly when she realizes that her husband is fine and is harmless, she gets a heart attack. This is how the thesis of the story is confirmed that for her the freedom is very short lived. She was unable to enjoy the freedom because of the restrictions imposed over by her husband. She remained true to him by not attempting to set herself free. But the freedom she aspired proved transitory for her, as she moved from the world she was living a caged life in, to the world where she would be freed.

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