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**Formal Outline for Essay One: Classical Scheme of Argumentation**

Follow this outline **sentence-by-sentence** when you compose your first draft of Essay One. **Download this form, save it to your computer, and type directly into it.** You will replace these sample sentences with your original sentences. These sample sentences are not necessarily the “correct” interpretation; they represent one possible argument for how Chopin intended “Desiree’s Baby” to be interpreted. Your thesis will state your arguable interpretation, not a summary, but a debatable interpretation. Other critics should be able to agree or disagree with your point-of-view. Begin your introduction with the author and title of the short story you have selected and a captivating description of the plot to lead up to your argumentative thesis. Then, begin each **body paragraph** (Section III-VI) with **a topic sentence** that refers to a subtopic stated in the thesis.

Essay One must include all parts of this outline. Note that each Roman numeral (I.-VIII.) represents one paragraph, and each capital letter (A.-G.) represents one sentence in each paragraph. So the structure includes **a minimum of 46 sentences**: paragraph I. **3 sentences**, paragraph II. **5-7 sentences**, paragraph III. **7 sentences**, paragraph IV. **7 sentences**, paragraph V. **7 sentences**, paragraph VI. **7 sentences**, paragraph VII. **7 sentences**, paragraph VIII. **3 sentences**.

The final essay in paragraph form will be double-spaced whereas outlines are conventionally single-spaced. For your success, focus your attention on following the guidelines for each part of the outline and limiting each paragraph (I-VIII) to the required number of sentences and the role of each sentence.

Reminder: Each letter on the outline will be followed by only one sentence!

**I. Introduction** (3-4 sentences)

A. Introduce topic: State the **author** and **title** of the short story (in quotation marks)

and **topic** to capture the readers’ attention.

Kate Chopin’s story, “Desiree’s Baby” is set in Louisiana during the time of slavery and is a tale about the conflicts that racial intolerance and arrogance can cause.

B. Add more information about the **topic to suggest the significance of the work**.

The plot centers around the prejudice that is rife during this period in time and how it affects people at every level of their life, regardless of how close they should be.

C. State **thesis**: Narrow topic more specifically and state your **claim** and suggest four

subtopics (Organizing principle of your essay—most important sentence)

Diseree’s husband, Armand Aubigny, had no idea that he was of colored descent as he didn't know his parentage was of mixed blood, Diseree would not have married him otherwise, Armand would have avoided any chance of this revelation, and his mother's grand reveal letter was placed at the end of the story by the author.

**II. Expository paragraph**: This paragraph demonstrates your **expertise** on

this author and short story and identifies terms or explains pertinent background information. (**Ethical** **appeal**) (5-7 Sentences) Refer to the links to websites on the authors posted in Canvas on the ***Readings and Resources* pagein Module Two**. Use *MLA* style to cite any information from a source that you include.

1. State the topic: What kind of background information will you describe?

Kate Chopin’s writing style from her other works remains consistent here and her choice of sudden revelations is naturally of great importance in, “Desiree’s Baby” as well.

B. Select relevant details from the website to enhance your argument and prepare

the reader for your defense. Place one sentence on the next line.

Kate Chopin’s controversial collection, “The Awakening” contains stories that begin her writing style with poetic depictions.

C. Add details in your own words or use quotation marks if you quote from the website.

“…sensitive, graceful, poetic depictions of women’s lives.” (CHOPIN, par. 5)

D. Discuss the significance of the information you have summarized or quoted.

This statement by her perfectly explains her methodology to storytelling and how it will affect the outcome of her characters.

E. Relate this information to your thesis.

In “Desiree’s Baby” Kate Chopin’s approach is evident in the grand reveal that occurs at the end of her stories.

F.

Knowing this, the thesis that Armand knew all along that he was of a mixed-race background becomes inarguable in my mind.

G. (Close the paragraph in your final sentence. (F or G)

**III.--VI**. **Confirmation Section**: The next four body paragraphs develop the evidence from the short story to support your thesis. You may include either one or two quotes in each paragraph of the confirmation section as long as you develop the paragraph with 7 sentences. The outline for two quotes is displayed in paragraph III and IV, and the outline for one quote is illustrated in paragraph V and VI. You may choose either option that you think will be more effective as you develop your outline. Copy and paste the guidelines for sentences E-F from the alternate arrangement if you choose to change it.

**III. Subtopic One**: You may follow this paragraph structure with two quotes from the short story: one on sentence C and another on sentence E or you may use the **alternate arrangement** with only one quote as outlined in **paragraph V and VI.**

1. **Topic Sentence**: State the **topic** of this paragraph and your **claim** about it.

Armand didn’t know for certain the origins of his parentage based on the information provided to him and the reader.

1. Elaborate on the significance of the topic.

Armand’s parentage was a fact that was only revealed months later in the story and would be pertinent to such an exacting man.

1. Introduce a quote and state it. Use quotation marks and punctuate in MLA style!

The story states, “…Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery” (BABY pg86 par5).

1. Explain your interpretation of the quote. Analyze its significance to your thesis!

I interpret this information as being unknown knowledge to Armand and that he is only shown to be made aware of it at the story’s conclusion.

1. Introduce next quote and state it.

The story also states that, “…an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it” matter-of-factly.

F. Discuss the quote. Do not simply paraphrase or restate it: analyze it. Do not use the

words of the quote to discuss it. Do not open the sentence with “This quote”;

instead, refer to an aspect of the passage that you will analyze.

While this is a small unassuming detail, it does ask the question, why would he bother reading through information that he was already aware of if he wasn’t truly aware of his status at the story’s beginning?

1. Transition to the next paragraph: close this paragraph and introduce the next.

Armand is made abundantly clear to be an man in a time of ignorance that affects all and his wife Desiree is no exception.

**IV**. **Confirmation Section: Subtopic Two**

1. **Topic Sentence**: State the **topic** of this paragraph and your **claim** about it.

Desiree would not have married Armand if she was in any doubt of his parentage.

1. Elaborate on the topic

Armand would eventually have to tell his wife if he were to avoid the failure of his marriage if he had known previously.

1. Introduce a quote and state it. Use quotation marks and punctuate in MLA style!

Desiree reveals the truth of her personal beliefs when she exclaims, “You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die” (BABY pg85 par1).

D. Explain your interpretation of the quote. Do not refer to the selected quote as “this

quote. Instead, refer to the issue in the quote that you want to discuss.

In my interpretation she is clearly distraught over even the mere thought of not being white herself.

1. Introduce next quote and state it.

Armand’s intentions reveal, “…he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife’s soul”.

F. Discuss the quote by explaining how it supports the claim stated in your topic

sentence.

He shows the same treatment towards his wife as he shows towards his slaves as he is now showing to his wife, in his mind they are the same.

1. Transition to the next paragraph.

Her nature being close to Armand’s own would’ve prevented her from entering a relationship and would cause them to avoid a child completely.

**V**. **Confirmation Section: Subtopic Three**

A. **Topic Sentence**: Introduce the topic of this paragraph and your claim about it.

Armand would have avoided any chance of this revelation had he known, such as having a child that would be physical evidence of his deceit.

B. Elaborate on the topic

The baby is quickly shown to not be of the same race as Mr. Armand is presumed to appear and result in questioning his origins.

C. Introduce a quote and its context in the story and state it.

Desiree describes “…Armand Aubigny’s imperious and exacting nature…” (BABY pg83 par4).

1. Explain your interpretation of the quote.

This depiction of Armand makes me think of him as someone who appreciates the fine details and oversees everything to keep it under control.

E. Continue to discuss the quote by analyzing a **particular word choice** in the

passage.

This “Exacting” quality calls into question of, how could he not foresee the issue of having a child that would expose his purpose secret to world?

F. Discuss the **symbolic aspect** of the passage or another element of fiction in the

quote.

It appears to me that he is described this way to be a symbol of the arrogance of such powerful men of the era that Kate Chopin would bring attention to.

1. Transition to the next paragraph

This attention to how the writer views their own character leads me to implicate how they structure the story as well.

**VI.** **Confirmation Section: Subtopic Four**

1. **Topic Sentence**: Introduce the topic of this paragraph and your claim about it.

The letter’s contents are placed at the end of the story.

B. Elaborate on the topic

This is typical of Kate Chopin’s writing as the *big reveal* similar to her other stories from “The Awakening” and onward.

C. Introduce a quote and its context in the story and state it.

Armand’s mother’s letter was described as, “There was one remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them” (BABY pg86 para4).

1. Explain its significance to your interpretation.

The way that is placed and referred to is as something that was overlooked or forgotten, rather than something that was hidden away.

E. Continue to discuss the quote by analyzing a **particular word choice or**

**punctuation mark or the sentence structure** in the passage.

It is referred to as a “Remnant” which means to me to be of something long left behind, not of modern concern.

F. Discuss the ramifications of the passage.

It is exactly because of the place of this passage and its descriptors that builds up the shock to the reader that the last paragraph of the story gives.

G. Transition to the next paragraph

This last subtopic is the most crucial for the main thesis as the others are more easier to try and refute.

**VII.** **Concession and Refutation**

Demonstrate your critical thinking skills and develop your ethical appeal to your audience by recognizing an alternative interpretation of this story and its merits; then, refute it by explaining how it is flawed and reasserting your interpretation over the alternate.

A. Topic sentence: Acknowledge a strong opposing view to your thesis. Begin the

topic sentence with the statement: Another critic might argue that . . .

Another critic might argue that the way in which Mr. Armand acts supports the idea that he is attempting to conceal his past.

B. Explain the appeal of this position and introduce a quote to support it.

Armand’s choice, “…all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre” where he is incinerating anything related to his mixed-race child, which lends credence to the thought that this is actually attempted evidence burning (BABY pg86 para3).

C. Analyze the quote.

He is doing this as a great spectacle, a pyre that attracts the attention of everyone and commits this act through the use of his slaves in a very non-private affair.

1. Juxtapose this position to your interpretation of the story.

I see this more as a swansong to his old life and the relations these articles represent.

1. Reemphasize why your interpretation is more appealing than your opponent’s.

If his aims were to remain evidence, then yes a burning would be a very effective method, but one so open is not the approach that a man of his nature would employ.

1. Your appeal continued.

Something far more discreet and with less witnesses would be the likely way that Armand would handle such a mission, and one that he would handle and oversee personally to let as no rumor escape.

G. Close by highlighting the defense of your thesis.

My thesis thus remains strong as it is based upon the consistent nature of the characters as well as the writer.

**VIII.** **Conclusion**

A. **Restate (do not simply repeat)** your thesis with a **bolder claim**.

**Armand definitely acts as someone who was completely ignorant of the true nature of his parentage.**

B. Clarify any questions your analysis may have posed.

My analysis can be questioned if I believe that the narration can be relied upon to be truthful, in which I concede that it does require an amount of faith in the writer to be a worthwhile interpretation.

1. Add a final assertion to provoke the reader to reconsider their interpretation or to apply your points to their own lives (Avoid condescending or commanding tone).

Considering that my thesis is based upon the actions that the characters take, one can understand that they would take said actions if they were in the same position and mindset as they.

CHOPIN. <https://www.katechopin.org/biography/>, 2005–2024, *The Kate Chopin International Society,* Editors of KateChopin.org

BABY. Kate Chopin, *Desiree’s Baby*. The Kate Chopin International Society, 2005 -2021, 1892. Retrieved from <https://www.katechopin.org/pdfs/desirees-baby.pdf>.