Essay One: Partial Formal Outline

**Paragraph I**

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. 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. My thesis is that Diseree’s husband, Armand Aubigny, thought that he was purely white during most of the story 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.

**Paragraph III**

Armand didn’t know for certain the origins of his parentage based on the information provided to him and the reader. Armand’s parentage was a fact that was only revealed months later in the story and would be pertinent to such an exacting man. 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). 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. The story also states that, “…an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it matter-of-factly.” (BABY pg86 par4). 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? Armand is made abundantly clear to be an man in a time of ignorance that affects all and his wife Desiree is no exception.

**Paragraph IV**

Desiree would not have married Armand if she was in any doubt of his parentage. Armand would eventually have to tell his wife if he were to avoid the failure of his marriage if he had known previously. 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). In my interpretation she is clearly distraught over even the mere thought of not being white herself. Armand’s intentions reveal, “…he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife’s soul”. 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. 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.

**Paragraph VII**

Another critic might argue that the way in which Mr. Armand acts supports the idea that he is attempting to conceal his past. 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 actuality an attempted evidence burning (BABY pg86 para3). 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. I see this more as a swansong to his old life and the relations these articles represent. 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. 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. My thesis thus remains strong as it is based upon the consistent nature of the characters as well as the writer.

**Sources**

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>.