Désirée’s Baby by Kate Chopin

Student Name

Western Governors University

Désirée’s Baby by Kate Chopin

Student Name

**A1. Historical Events and/or Innovations**

The Realism period was a movement that overlapped with the Romantic period during the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. Realism rejected the Neoclassicism of the 18th century and sough to replicate the ancient Roman and Greek aesthetics. Two of the major historical events during this time was the Industrial Revolution and the Revolutions of 1848 sweeping across Europe. In the United States industrialization caused immigrants and farmers alike to migrate to cities for better lives (MindEdge, 2019). The Revolutions of 1848 sweeping across Europe where political revolutions that occurred over the course of a year and were to seek changes in colonialism and imperialism.

The Realism period came into being as a response to the Romanticism that came before that focused on the inner spiritual side of human nature, Realism focused on the mundane and everyday life (New World Encyclopedia, 2006). Literature in the Realism period mainly focused on the middle-class everyday life. Realist authors sought to describe life and human behavior as they were and dealt with the mundane of everyday life (MindEdge, 2019).

**A2. Work Analysis**

The short story explores the part of the life of Désirée set in Louisiana. It reflects the perils of the time when, in the south, interracial relations where considered taboo. In reading the short story you see the love a woman has for her husband and baby, and the hierarchy of the family structure. It is not until the end when you discover that Armond may be of bi-racial decent having come from France where inter-racial marriages appear to be acceptable.

The short story continues to reflect the deep relationship that Désirée and Armond have, but it is race that destroys the family. The realization that the baby is not white raises concerns with Désirée and when she confronts her husband on the issue he in turn blames the wife of not being white knowing that it is from his heritage that has caused the child to “belong to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery” (Chopin, 1892). In blaming his wife, Armond, allows his wife to leave to return to her mother and her families plantation.

**A3. Contribution to Humanities**

Kate Chopin wrote novels and short stories that covered the lives of sensitive and daring women in a time when they were expected to be more submissive to the male hierarchy. Her stories and novels were all based in Louisiana and is considered by some scholars to be an early pioneer of the feminist the occurred in the 20th century in the United States. Her novels and short stories brought to life the mundane and everyday life of women in the south which was a key theme of the Realist era.

Her contributions to the humanities made her a pioneer in the amoral treatment of sexuality, she wrote openly about divorce, and wrote to promote the women not as a submissive servant to the house and family. Kate Chopin’s writing are still referenced today by many feminists as having great influence in the women’s rights and feminists’ movements that came in the 20th century after her death. Her writing focused on the woman’s position in society and inspired many future writers to explore many of the same concepts and issues that face women.

**References**

Chopin, K. (1892, November 24). “Désirée’s Baby”. Retrieved from <https://www.katechopin.org/desirees-baby-text/>

MindEdge, Inc. (2019). *Introduction to Humanities*. Waltham, MA: MindEdge, Inc.

New World Encyclopedia (2006, July 3). Realism. Retrieved from <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Realism>