

Assessment Task 2: Literary Essay Sample

Name: XYZ

Student ID: 12345678

Class: English 2-30

Selected Text: “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin

Selected Question: What is the theme of Story of an Hour? How does Kate Chopin explore this theme in the story?

Joy that Kills	
<p>“The Story of an Hour” is a short story in which Kate Chopin, the author, provides a unique view of marriage.¹ Mrs. Louise Mallard reacts unconventionally to the news of her husband’s death. Louise although shocked at the news at first begins to realise that she has been released from the repression she has experienced in her marriage. This exhilaration of freedom after she learns of her husband's death is short lived as Mrs. Mallard learns that her husband, Brently, still lives. Thus, with all hope of freedom gone, the devastating blow kills Mrs. Mallard allowing her to escape her oppressive marriage.² Therefore, in this story, Chopin explores the oppressive nature of marriage using various literary devices.³</p>	<p>¹ HAT – Hook, Author, Title</p> <p>² Main Character & Summary</p> <p>³ Thesis Statement</p>
<p>Firstly, an important literary device that Chopin uses to explore her theme is the omniscient third person narrator.¹ The objectivity of the presentation of Louise Mallard’s reaction to being widowed gains sympathy for the character’s plight. This is because society expects individuals who lose a spouse they love to be crushed by their loss and to grieve, however, that is not the case with Louise.² This is revealed as the narrator gives insights to her thoughts that think of her husband and marriage as there not being a “powerful will bending her” (para. 15).³ Hence, this reaction reported by the objective, but omniscient narrator is able to set the stage to reveal the truth of Mrs Mallard’s feelings as she gives into the “monstrous joy” (para. 13) of being free.⁴ In this way Chopin is thus able to establish the idea that marriage is repressive and can stifle the individual.⁵</p>	<p>¹ Topic Sentence</p> <p>² Explanation of ts/Lead in/ Claim</p> <p>³ Textual Evidence</p> <p>⁴ Commentary – analysis</p> <p>⁵ Concluding Sentence</p>
<p>Another device that is employed by Chopin is language in the form of evocative vocabulary.¹ The words used by Chopin that show contrasts, painfully emphasises the negative impact the marriage has had on Louise.² For example, Louise is described as someone who is “...young with a fair calm face...” (para. 8), however this is contrasted with the description that the lines of her face “...bespoke repression” (para. 8).³ The use of the word “repression” here paints a picture of a person who is dominated and not allowed to be her own person. This, thus, indicates that marriage has not been a positive experience but instead has been one that has possibly retarded her growth as a person.⁴ Hence, it is through the careful selection of words that helps the reader visualise the sad effect marriage has had on Louise.⁵</p>	<p>¹ Topic Sentence</p> <p>² Explanation of ts/Lead in/ Claim</p> <p>³ Textual Evidence</p> <p>⁴ Commentary – analysis</p> <p>⁵ Concluding Sentence</p>

<p>Lastly, a third device that emphasises the theme of the story is the use of irony.¹ The structure of the story is built on ironic juxtapositions and this can be examined through the contrasting events that take place.² The story begins by introducing the element that will be the destruction of Mrs Mallard, which is her heart. This is because “[k]nowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband’s death” (para. 1). This line indicates Mrs. Mallard’s delicate state of health and the fact that a shock from unexpected news would have a detrimental effect on her wellbeing.³ The use of the passive voice focuses on the need to protect Mrs. Mallard from the shock of her husband’s death is more important than who is involved in doing so. However, while those who are protecting her assume her grief at the news of her husband’s death, the reader is made privy to the fact that Mrs. Mallard is revelling in the euphoric fact that she is now “free, free, free,” (para. 11). Thus, as she descends the stairs and sees her husband who is supposed to be dead walk in the door, Mrs. Mallard’s heart reacts to the sudden shock although her protectors try to shield her, “[b]ut Richards was too late” (para. 22). The conclusion that is drawn for the reader is “[w]hen the doctors came [and they claimed that she] died of heart disease – of joy that kills” (para. 23). In considering the details that were given of her reaction to her husband’s death, the brevity at the end seems ironic as no indication is given of what Mrs. Mallard thinks and the reader is left to make assumptions.⁴ The irony of the ending thus emphasises the theme.⁵</p>	<p>¹ Topic Sentence ² Explanation of ts/Lead in/ Claim ³ Textual Evidence ⁴ Commentary – analysis ⁵ Concluding Sentence</p>
<p>In conclusion, “The Story of an Hour” convincingly explores how marriage may be more oppressive than wonderful.¹ It is a portrayal of marriage that will resonate with today’s society who would be able to empathise with Mrs. Mallards feelings of being “repressed”. Thus, it would come as no surprise to the modern-day reader that seeing her husband alive is a crushing blow that causes her death.² Therefore, the theme of the story is one that is very relevant even today.³</p>	<p>¹ Restating TS ² Extended argument ³ Importance of the text</p>

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“The Story of an Hour” is a short story in which Kate Chopin, the author, unique view of marriage. Mrs. Louise Mallard reacts unconventionally to the news of her husband’s death. Louise although shocked at the news at first begins to realise that she has been released from the repression she has experienced in her marriage. This exhilaration of freedom after she learns of her husband's death is short lived as Mrs. Mallard learns that her husband, Brently, still lives. Thus, with all hope of freedom gone, the devastating blow kills Mrs. Mallard allowing her to escape her oppressive marriage. Therefore, in this story, Chopin explores the oppressive nature of marriage using various literary devices.

Firstly, an important literary device that Chopin uses to explore her theme is the omniscient third person narrator. The objectivity of the presentation of Louise Mallard’s reaction to being widowed gains sympathy for the character’s plight. This is because society expects individuals who lose a spouse they love to be crushed by their loss and to grieve, however, that is not the case with Louise. This is revealed as the narrator gives insights to her thoughts that think of her husband and marriage as there not being a “powerful will bending her” (Chopin, para. 15). Hence, this reaction reported by the objective, but omniscient narrator is able to set the stage to reveal the truth of Mrs Mallard’s feelings as she gives into the “monstrous joy” (para. 13) of being free. Through this device, Chopin is, therefore, able to establish the idea that marriage is repressive and can stifle the individual.

Another an important literary device that Chopin uses to explore her theme is the omniscient third person narrator. The objectivity of the presentation of Louise Mallard’s reaction to being widowed gains sympathy for the character’s plight. This is because society expects individuals who lose a spouse they love to be crushed by their loss and to grieve, however, that is not the case with Louise. This is revealed as the narrator gives insights to her thoughts that think of her husband and marriage as there not being a “powerful will bending her” (para. 15). Hence, this reaction reported by the objective, but omniscient narrator is able to set the stage to reveal the truth of Mrs Mallard’s feelings as she gives into the “monstrous joy” (para. 13) of being free. In this way, Chopin is, thus, able to establish the idea that marriage is repressive and can stifle the individual.

Lastly, a third device that emphasises the theme of the story is the use of irony. The structure of the story is built on ironic juxtapositions and this can be examined through the contrasting events that take place. The story begins by introducing the element that will be the destruction of Mrs Mallard, which is her heart. This is because “[k]nowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband’s death” (para. 1). This line indicates Mrs. Mallard’s delicate state of health and that a shock from unexpected news would be detrimental on her wellbeing. The use of the passive voice focuses on the need to protect Mrs. Mallard from the shock of her husband’s death is more important than who is involved in doing so. However, while those protecting her assume her grief at the news of her husband’s death, the reader is made privy to the fact that Mrs. Mallard is revelling in the euphoric fact that she is now “free, free,

free” (para. 11). Thus, as she descends the stairs and sees her ‘dead’ husband walk in the door, Mrs. Mallard’s heart reacts to the sudden shock although her protectors try to shield her, “[b]ut Richards was too late” (para. 22). The conclusion drawn for the reader is “[w]hen the doctors came [and they claimed that she] died of heart disease – of joy that kills” (para. 23). In considering the details given regarding her reaction to her husband’s death, the brevity at the end seems ironic as no indication is given of what Mrs. Mallard thinks and the reader is left to make assumptions. Hence, the irony of the ending thus emphasises the theme.

In conclusion, “The Story of an Hour” convincingly explores how marriage may be more oppressive than wonderful. It is a portrayal of marriage that will resonate with today’s society who would be able to empathise with Mrs. Mallard’s feelings of being “repressed”. Thus, it would come as no surprise to the modern-day reader that seeing her husband alive is a crushing blow that causes her death. Therefore, the theme of the story is one that is very relevant even today.

(793 words)