

The awakening essay



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The suicide acknowledges many personality traits of Edna in addition to broadcasting a major theme of human vs. self. Throughout the novel Chopin creates events that suggest an unstable Mrs.

. Pointillist. Often times Edna is full of Joy one moment, and extremely depressed the next; these situations lead one to the assumption that Edna has a bipolar disorder, and it is not uncommon for an individual with this particular disorder to commit suicide. While fairly unexpected, the suicide finalizes assumptions about Mrs. Pointillist's condition and reveals a considerable amount about her character. It is hard for many readers to connect and empathize with Edna; this could be connected to the fact that the brains of the character and the reader are working in entirely different ways. The suicide also reveals a great deal about society.

Compared to other characters in the novel, Edna sticks out like a sore thumb because of her inability to conform into someone she is not. In chapter 32 when Mr. Pointillist learns Edna is moving into the pigeon house, his first thought is not of his marriage, but instead of what society will think.

This fact alone speaks volumes of the impact society has on one's choices. In many cases Edna's suicide was an act of triumph; the final phase along the Journey of awakening herself. In Edna's last moments " She felt like some new-born creature, opening its eyes in a familiar world that it had never known" (Chopin 175). This take of the ending tends to appeal to optimists, thinking of the suicide as the birth of Edna's true self and finding peace.

One is reminded of a previous conversation with Madame Rotational when Edna told Adele " I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I

would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself" (Chopin 97). This conversation becomes very important towards the end of the novel because as Edna learns she cannot have both herself and her children, she makes the choice to give up the unessential to keep herself intact. Above all else, Dean's soul is the most important to her which is undoubtedly a very selfish but inspiring trait. Others believe Dean's final moment was an act of submission. Events leading up to the tragedy show an increase of depression within Edna, among these is her resentment of her children.

The thing Edna wants most in the world is Robert, but they can never be together because of her marriage to Mr. Pontellier, and her children are a reminder of this fact. Early in the novel the narrator informs that Edna "felt no interest in anything about her. The street, the children, the fruit vender, the flowers growing there under her eyes, were all part and parcel of an alien world which had suddenly become antagonistic" (Chopin 104). Society will never allow Edna to live her perfect life; the awakening within Edna comes with a new realization that freedom comes with a price.

The catalyst for Dean's suicide seems to be the rejection from Robert. As Edna is on the verge of drowning she thinks of Robert's letter, "Good-bye because I love you" (Chopin 176). Towards the end of the novel Robert begins to transform into everything Edna resents about her husband, again Edna feels alone in the world when one of the few people she connected with falls in line with society views.

In conclusion, depending on personal beliefs there are many different assumptions one can make of the tragic ending to this novel. Whether out of

triumph or submission it is undeniable that Edna felt trapped between her inner and outer self which led her to end her life. Society views played a major role in this outcome and contributed to an overall theme of human vs. society.