

Compare 'the woman's rose', 'the story of an hour' and 'the necklace' essay sampl...



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In a time where woman's views were seldom heard Guy de Maupassant, Kate Chopin and Olive Schreiner give life to three woman's struggles against the patriarchal society they live in. The writers three different views, which are compared in; ' The Necklace', ' The Story of an Hour' and ' The Woman's Rose' help shed light on the experiences of women in the nineteenth century. I will focus on comparing the treatment of love and romance, the way society is structured and the way it looks upon these three women and their personal expectations at the time.

I will look at how the writers develop hope and surprise in their stories, how they use symbolism and to what affect is it used. Then I shall compare the writer's styles and the purpose to which they use literary techniques. I shall finally conclude my essay by stating the main arguments of my essay and what the reader learns about the percentage of women in the nineteenth century. The theme of love and romance is prominent in all three stories however there is a negative view on it in each one.

In ' The Woman's Rose' the unnamed woman does not like the way women are proposed to without being in love and is completely dissatisfied with the way in which the romantic attention she gets is superficial as the reader can see when she says, "... at the hotel men had made a bet as to which was prettier she or I, and had asked each man who came in, and that the one who had staked on me won. I hated them for it".

In ' The Necklace' Madame Loisel never expected to be married to a rich man because of her status and because there was a view from the rest of society that if she did not marry in her lifetime then she would be looked

upon as an oddity and some what out of place and as she cared a great deal about what society thought of her she, " allowed herself to be married to a junior clerk" not out of love but for the sake of being a wife and to fulfil her fathers wishes.

Madame Loisel had dreamed to be a woman of a higher status and was so obsessed with the fact that she thought she should have been rich all her life, that one night was enough for her, "... the prettiest woman there, elegant, graceful, radiant and wonderfully happy". At this point Madame Loisel felt loved. That night she was in love but not with her loving and caring husband, but with the moment of attention from other people of the status to which she thought she belonged. Also, in ' The Story of an Hour' it is clear Louise Mallard is extremely miserable in her marriage.

This is obvious to the reader because she had a burst of joy when she realised she was finally independent and free of the marital shackles which had held her down before, " Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. " Mrs Mallard was extremely happy that she did not have to rely on her husband any more and was finally independent, "... a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome".

Louise Mallard is finally free of her marriage but if that is how women perceived marriage in the nineteenth century it makes the reader feel sympathetic because now in the twenty-first century men and women are equal and can make decisions and go out into the workplace but they had to put themselves in the positions of housewife and ' the other half' of their

husbands because of the judgment from the rest of society, if they did not. In the nineteenth century that is how women were often seen, as the other half of the marriage.

In 'The Story of an Hour', Kate Chopin uses a lot of words that describe events as broken, for example: "... great care was taken to break to her", "... in broken sentences" and "... revealed in half-concealing". Here she is focusing all these words around Mrs Mallard as if now without her husband she is not whole, which is the view a lot of people took in pre-twentieth century times. In the nineteenth century women were dependant on their husband's as they did not work, make any major decisions and were largely weak in power, which is why they were of a lower status to men.

The woman were often unhappy in these situations which is what we see in 'The Story of an Hour' and 'The Woman's Rose' where Schreiner says, "The flowers were damp; they made mildew marks..." here Schreiner is coming back to using the representation of flowers but in a different context. By calling the flowers damp she automatically changes their original representation from being of love, romance and beauty to sadness and discontent, which is what the woman in the story was feeling because of her position in society and in her marriage, and this makes the reader feel sympathetic towards her.

In the nineteenth century the typical view was that women were not supposed to be successful and earn their own living and it was thought that 'a woman's place was in the home' and she should only look after the children and make small talk with other woman of her class which is exactly

what Madame Loisel wanted if only she could be of a higher class, " She dreamt of magnificent drawing rooms, furnished with ancient silks, fine antiques and priceless ornaments, and of chic, perfumed boudoirs, ideal for afternoon conversation with one's closest friends".

However that is definitely not what the unnamed woman in ' The Woman's Rose' or Louise Mallard in ' The Story of an Hour' wanted. They wanted to escape this typical, old-fashioned way of living and be successful and independent, " There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon their fellow creature. As is apparent to the reader here that Louise Mallard doesn't want to be tied down to only living the way society wants her to; she wants to live her own life. This ties in with the lives of Olive Schreiner and Kate Chopin who both wrote at a time when it was unacceptable for a women to work or live independently and went against the norms whereas most women writers of the time would have changed their names to male names in order to be able to publish a book and make whatever money from it that they could.

Kate Chopin and Olive Schreiner took the risk in order to express their views and give other women of the time hope because many women of the time thought that they were the only ones having these thoughts and feelings and both authors did a very important job in giving the women of the time a voice through their books. In pre-twentieth century times it was essential for woman to be socially interactive and be well respected socially.

Madame Loisel again fits the expectancy of the time by wanting to be well respected and to, " compete with the grandest lady in the land", meaning that she thinks that by being attractive and having a sense of refinement she should be able to mingle with even the most important of ladies. But even though she had a low status she still acted and behaved as if she were one of the most important ladies in the country as she proved when she visited Madame Forestier to borrow some jewellery (the word borrow shows her true status and position), "... ave you got anything else? "

Madame Loisel still asks to look through more jewellery as if the pieces she had already seen were not good enough for her, which is another example of how she portrays the image of someone she is not. Fashion was a way that Madame Loisel was able to live the lie, so to speak. She was able to give the impression of a wealthy woman, even if she was not, if she wore the right clothes. That is why fashion was so important to her, "... I have nothing to wear and so I cannot possibly go to this ball.

It would be better if you gave the invitation to a colleague whose wife is better dressed than I am". Here the reader can see that she is so concerned about what people will think of her if she is not immaculately dressed that she is willing to throw away the invitation she has always dreamed of receiving and that her husband had worked so hard to obtain because of it.

However when they had got themselves into debt fashion no longer became an issue because her priorities had changed, " She would scrub the floor, heedless of her uncombed hair, her disordered skirts and her red hands. but her longing to be seen as upper-class and fashionable never did cease, "

sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she would sit at the window and dream of that evening which now seemed to belong to another time". In 'The Woman's Rose' all the men worshipped one woman; "... these men shut off from the world should pour at the feet of this one woman". This gives authority to the woman and describes her almost as royalty and the men as her followers, which enforces the idea of a social hierarchy.

The nineteenth century fashion and community is very different to the way it is today, for example if a woman told another she had, "great white arms", it would be taken very much as an insult; as it would be saying that she was overweight and pale, however in 'The Woman's Rose' it is a great compliment to the other woman which shows the difference between the times. Symbolism is an important aspect in all three stories as all three writers use it. In each story the main symbol means something positive to the main character and signals a change in each of the women's lives.

The symbol of 'spring' is very important as it appears in both 'The Woman's Rose' and 'The Story of an Hour' and in both the stories it helps to build up the anticipation. In 'The Woman's Rose' 'spring' gives a sense of a new beginning, hope, freshness and blossoming, which links up with the symbol of the rose and its connections with the way the main character is like a rose as if she is first a bud as a young woman with an immature view on love and courting, "The mother heart had not swelled in me yet; I did not know all men were my children" and then blossoms into a woman.

The word 'spring' may have been symbolic for a point of change in her life and the rebirth of it that would come with it. The use of the word 'spring'

was similar in 'The Story of an Hour' as Louise became excited when thinking of 'spring'. Here 'spring' is used in exactly the same context as that of Schreiner: to signify a rebirth and a fresh start. Even though there was no mention of 'spring' in 'The Necklace' there is still the similarity that in each story there is a fresh start and an extent of change to each woman's life.

In 'The Necklace' the main symbol used by Guy de Maupassant is just that, 'The Necklace', which is a symbol of wealth, beauty and class. When 'The Necklace' is lost it is the point in which Madame Loisel starts to lose everything it stands for. The repetition of 'winter' in 'The Woman's Rose' is used to symbolise darkness, pain and suffering, "It was midwinter". There was nothing in the gardens but a few dahlias and chrysanthemums... " Here Schreiner uses midwinter to signify a point in her life where there was no hope and she says that there were hardly any flowers to give the idea that there was no sign of romance or love.

As Schreiner uses the seasons to represent mood and feeling Chopin does the same with weather, for example, "The delicious breath of rain was in the air." Kate Chopin does this with rain to give the feeling of freshness and the fact that rain washes things away as if it is Louise Mallard's problems which are doing so. Also in 'The Woman's Rose' the unnamed woman seems lonely, "I would have given all their compliments if she would smile at me as she smiled at them..." This shows how much a smile is worth to her and emphasizes the importance of the symbol of the other woman giving her the rose.

Schreiner shows how important it was to her in her response, " You are so beautiful to me... " which gives emphasis to how much she appreciates the gesture and not the rose itself. This is echoed at the start of the story but with flowers, " After many years I threw them away. There is nothing of them left in the box now, but a faint, strong smell of dried acacia, that recalls that sultry summer afternoon... " The anticipation of the stories created partly through the pace of them. In ' The Story of an Hour' the pace is fast because Chopin uses a lot of simple sentences, " And yet she had loved him-sometimes.

Often she had not. What did it matter! " and also uses the unusual technique of using the heart or pulse rate to speed up and slow down the story, " Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body" here the pulse is used to speed up the story and here the absence of a pulse has the impression of slowing it down, "... the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. " ' The Woman's Rose' flows a lot more as the semi-colons in the complex sentences keep the story flowing.

However towards the end of the story she starts to use hyphens which slow down the pace and add emphasis to what is being said; for example, "... it may or may not be so-but the rose-the rose is in the box still! " Olive Schreiner uses many complex sentences in her work but keeps them to the point with her use of punctuation in them. The build-up of hope and surprise is also created by the actual context of the stories. In ' The Necklace' it was a surprise that Madame Loisel had lost the necklace and the reader was kept

in suspense as to what Madame Forestier's response would be and how Madame Loisel would pay her back.

The reader is also kept in anticipation in how she would survive being poorer than before when her only dream was to be wealthy. In 'The Story of an Hour' the reader is led to believe Louise Mallard's husband is dead throughout the story so it is a huge surprise that there is a twist ending where after thinking her husband was dead he comes home and the shock of everything else plus losing her independence kills her. This is especially ironic and a total shock to the reader who had also started to become understanding of her position and feel sympathy for her which adds to the sadness of her death.

In 'The Woman's Rose' the surprise to the reader is that the other woman gave the unnamed woman the rose. The rose in this case being a symbol of friendship was given to her after they had not spoken throughout the whole story, "... she and I never spoke to each other". This shows that it was a surprise to the unnamed woman as well as the reader and adds suspense by leaving the reader wondering what the relationship between them will be like after that. One way the authors create hope and surprise is to use different narrative techniques.

In 'The Woman's Rose' Olive Schreiner uses the first person narrative which helps the reader relate to the character as it makes it sound as if she is reading to you alone; making it more personal to the reader. However in 'The Story of an Hour' Kate Chopin uses the third person narrative, which makes the reader feel more distant to the character but also makes the

reader feel that they know more than the character in the story, which is maybe why Chopin used it because in the end they clearly did not.

In 'The Necklace' the narrative point of view is in the third person, which makes the reader understand the story from the narrator's point of view and not the character's. All three stories are structured in such a way so that they build-up to a climax in the end. In 'The Necklace' the story all builds up to the ending where Madame Loisel had worked for ten years and then finds out the necklace she worked so hard to pay back was fake. In 'The Story of an Hour' the climax is hinted at the beginning with the fact that, "Mrs Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble" which hints that something will happen to do with her heart problems.

In 'The Woman's Rose' the climax is that the woman is given the rose as the rose stands for friendship and beauty and there is a lot of tension throughout the story as to whether they will become friends as she is the main object of her attention and as they have never spoken to each other before that it builds up a huge climax when it is given. In 'The Story of an hour' the imagery used by Kate Chopin is quite negative in the beginning, "... tender hands folded in death", which shows that Louise Mallard was very upset by the events that happened but as she realises her independence the imagery becomes more and more positive, "... he was drinking in the elixir of life through that open window", that shows she is 'taking in' everything she never had before and Chopin uses the 'open' window as a metaphor for the opportunity that has come to her.

In 'The Necklace' the similes and metaphors used by Guy de Maupassant are placed to describe an amount of wealth or an amount of riches; for example, "... floating on a cloud of happiness", which shows that Madame Loisel thought the wealth she was experiencing was like being in heaven. However when Madame Loisel was in debt Maupassant uses much darker imagery, "... looks like a church mouse", which describes Madame Loisel's appearance as like the poor, as a church mouse is a metaphor for the poor because they have nothing to eat and have to scrounge for food.

The three stories are all fairly flowing. Kate Chopin in 'The Story of an Hour' uses mainly short sentences, which suit the story as they are to the point. 'The Woman's Rose' and 'The Necklace' are both made up of a mixture of sentence types however both authors use mainly complex sentences which are made to flow because of the use of punctuation by Maupassant and Schreiner.

Olive Schreiner uses a lot of sound devices compared to Chopin and Maupassant, for instance: assonance, "I liked her slow walk and drawl..." and alliteration, "... fair and rather fully fleshed". She uses these devices often to help the reader understand the emotions of the character. However Kate Chopin does use sound devices although they are subtler such as, "... composedly carrying his grip sack" which helps the reader get a picture of the scene through the narrator/character's point of view.

In 'The Necklace' Maupassant also uses sound devices like, "He lapsed into a stunned silence", which are used to emphasize what is happening. There are many similarities between the three stories. Each one, however, is about

what happens when a woman achieves that moment of happiness and independence that women in the nineteenth century times were not meant to achieve. The three writers each portray a woman different to the norm of the times and try to create something that will be an inspiration to the female readers of pre-twentieth century times when independence and equality were not taken for granted.

The main similarities occur between the, ' The Woman's Rose' and ' The Story of an Hour' as they both have similar meaning to do with being independent and looking forward to their futures. In both these stories the idea that men and woman's marriages are based on the desire for a husband or wife and not a longing to be/get something that can be obtained through marriage is mentioned in both the ' Story of an Hour' and ' The Woman's Rose'.

The Necklace has a different meaning to it, whereas the other two stories are about a woman gaining independence and freedom ' The Necklace' is about satisfying a dream whatever it takes and doing whatever you can to get there. Madame Loisel's longing was to be wealthy and upper class, which was, perhaps, her way of gaining independence. The authors, Olive Schreiner and Kate Chopin's own lives may have may have contributed to the way their books were written and their context.

For example in ' The Woman's Rose' the story is about the struggles and hardships of women's lives in the nineteenth century, which it states, were, "... of central importance to Olive Schreiner". Also Kate Chopin writes that Louise Mallard's husband died in a rail accident and, "... her father died in a

train crash when she was very young". In brief each story helps the reader understand the difficulties and adversities of woman in the pre-twentieth century era and the troubles they had to experience to realise their destiny.