
Act of Freedom in the Novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin

While there is arguably no justification for suicide, in the novel *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin, it is Edna's act of freedom. The time period in which it happens, and the events that lead up to it only give a clear explanation that all she wants is freedom. Edna can be viewed as selfish in this situation but with the circumstances she was under and the thought process she thoroughly dissected, it is very clear Edna's rebellion toward her life in society was not selfish at all, however done in an act of freedom.

In the society that Edna is living in, she continuously searches for freedom. She feels as if being independent is not an option, especially in a society that does not accept women. Edna searches for freedom anywhere she can grasp it because no one understands her, "He did not know; he did not understand" (116). Robert was the "he" in her pre-suicidal self talk. Robert in a way helps her achieve her independence, but never understands her just like everybody else in her family. As she kills herself she feels that she is escaping the world that does not understand her or accept her and thus gaining freedom.

Edna eventually decides that suicide is the only way out of her horrible life and finds her freedom. She clearly thinks about every possible impact that her death may have on a person and is very careful about her way of killing herself, therefore not acting selfishly because she took time to think of everyone, "She thought of Leonce and the children. They were a part of her life. But they need not have thought that they could possess her, body and soul" (116). Edna would not have any satisfaction going back to her children and Leonce because she would feel as if she restricts her own freedom by choice. Her whole thought process involves making her suicide look like an accident so that there is no faulty feeling by anyone in the family. Her suicide allows her freedom in an unselfishly manner because of her thoroughly planned out attack that set her free.

Edna continuously throughout her life tries to stand up for what she believes and be true to herself and everyone in her life but no one understands. She feels that there's no hope for freedom and she's so sad that there's nothing else to do. Her community keeps damaging her right to be herself and to have freedom. Edna finds freedom in the sea, "The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude".(115), for Edna solitude was her suicide.

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