

In Kate's Chopin's "The Storm" societal norms are challenged through the actions of our main character Calixta, and her former lover, Alce. Our main character is faced with the cultural binary of obligation vs desire; obligation being the privileged one in a normal society. Our western society believes that woman's virtue and self worth depends on the marital status. A woman's purity, self-worth, and social status depends on her mothering/wife abilities. In addition to, the man's role has been perceived to be the breadwinner for the family but it usually stops there. The wife is never compensated for her duties of being a great wife and mother. The idea of the perfect woman is simply a social construct.

Lois Tyson's theory of deconstructive criticism proves our social construct to be just that, a construct we have deemed to be valuable due to the majority's opinion. Tyson states " Our mental life consists not of concepts - not of solid, stable meanings- but of a fleeting, continually changing play of signifiers. These signifiers may seem to be stable concepts - they look stable enough when we hear them spoken or see them written down." (236) It is here Tyson is stating that there is no such thing as a stable solid meaning for something. Our interpretation is ever changing, even social constructs we live by today. How we view society is our own perception which is based off what we've learned our society to be and function as. Just because we have learned that the man is the breadwinner and the wife stays home does not make it stable truth. That is just what we've come up with as a society and deemed it normal for each family to live within that social construct, and when someone goes outside of that it is deemed not "normal."

In Chopin's "The storm" protagonist, Calixta, goes against the typical social norms of being a good wife to her husband. In the end of the story her "unfaithfulness" ends up benefiting her and it becomes the saving grace for her marriage. The text states "Calixta, at home, felt no uneasiness for their safety. She sat at a side window sewing furiously on a sewing machine. She was greatly occupied and did not notice the approaching storm. But she felt very warm and often stopped to mop her face on which the perspiration gathered in beads." It is here

The protagonist was fulfilling her obligation of being a homemaker and mother. Crumbling under the pressures of perfection, it is implied that Calixta was exploding on her son and husband due to pent up tension. Calixta has been fulfilling her marriage duties by keeping the home and having a child but she got nothing in return. After having her rendezvous with her lover, her emotions seemed to be tempered down; she ultimately came back to her senses realizing how much she should appreciate her husband and son. Calixta states "Oh, Bobint! You back! My! But I was uneasy. We're you been during the rain? An' Bibi? he ain't wet? he ain't hurt?" Before her intimate time with her former lover she was upset that her husband went out before the storm with their son knowing that they both could potentially get caught in it. The text states "let us hope, Calixta, that Bobinôt's got sense enough to come in out of a cyclone."

For that reason she was not concerned about the safety of the two at all, but more so upset that her husband made a poor choice to leave with their son. Her intimate "affair" allowed her to release any tension and stress she had built up within herself towards her husband and the stress she had at being the perfect mother. When they returned "She had clasped Bibi and was kissing him effusively. Bobint's explanations and apologies which he had been composing all along the

way, died on his lips as Calixta felt him to see if he were dry, and seemed to express nothing but satisfaction at their safe return.”

Calixta’s cheating could be counted as a type of self care and saving grace for her marriage. If the action would not have happened I’m sure she would have argued with Bobnit when he returned and their marriage would have continued down a rocky road. In conclusion we see how tysons theory of deconstruction can turn a negative action that we know as cheating and turn the meaning that society has put on the word and turn it into the complete opposite. Usually when a negative action like this takes place there is a negative domino effect. In this particular instance that the act of cheated fixed the marriage itself and made calixta a refreshed, loving individual.