

Tianna Tatum-Fisher

ENGL 333

Dr. Buchholtz

29 September 2018

The Author is Deus Ex Machina

Kate Chopin's "The Storm" highly offers the opinion that marital cheating comes as natural as storms do and without repercussions, but staying within one's marriage is still the objective. However the story contradicts itself by revealing the message that marriage may be at its strongest when there's freedom/brief moments of escape from marriage's obligatory constraints. The reason *The Storm* is capable of delivering a message such as this is because of Chopin being the *deus ex machina*, she as God has the power to allow certain fleeting moments and have it be forgiven, by having it not be known, except to the character/s who committed their sin and to God, herself. The readers, who are society looking in can only forgive the character/s for the reason being is they will never know the consequences of the actions already unfolded as such society only cares about the justice of a wrongdoing.

The storm within in the story is symbolic of the brewing passion of the main characters Calixta and Alc . However the rain of the storm can be symbolic to represent the cleansing of sin by allowing their passion (sex) to happen and to have the relationship to end as the storm does. Chopin creating the only means of allowing two formerly known characters to evade one's spouse is to create the moment of time stopping to allow passion to ignite, happen, and flame out. The concerns to why people cheat, particularly women, in this case, can be due to the concept of the Cult of True Womanhood/Domesticity which dictates that a real woman worth the world is to find love/her self-worth in a man, in marriage, as a wife, baring children, particularly a son, and being sexually available to her husband even if she doesn't want to. This usually has

to happen while she is still young. For it to be known that a woman had cheated during her marriage ruins her reputation of ever being married/finding love again. When the storm passed allowing Calixta's husband with their son to return with a can of shrimp, a sign of good faith, suggests that Chopin (God) is reassuring the character this is where she should be, married and a mother. To move outside of this ordained fate could possibly lead to heartbreak and ruin.

Chopin as God further insinuates that marital cheating creates a strong marriage through Alcé's wife, Clarisse who concludes the story by stating, "Devoted as she was to her husband, their intimate conjugal life was something which she was more than willing to forego for a while" (4). Assuming that Alcé is a restless lover, Chopin (God) further implies that men are in constant need of sexual gratification to which further suggests that Clarisse knows her husband is going to cheat which she is fine with because it is not she who he is wearing out. Alcé gets his gratification and Clarisse gets her satisfaction in relieving her "maiden days", her single days where she wasn't a mother or a wife, having to shift her life from girlhood to womanhood in order to live comfortably secure just as Calixta has had to do.

The Storm may not directly be addressing that in order for a marriage to work, spouses have to cheat, but it does imply that occasional separation to do one's own thing is a must. More than likely this is to assure the partners that they do belong with each other because when they reunite with each other, the passion reignites. If that doesn't happen then obviously the relationship needs to end. However *The Storm* indirectly suggests that a woman would have a harder time adjusting outside the marriage, given it's discovered that she has cheated because she has the most to lose: her virtuous reputation, her security of having a comfortable life, and her child because if it's a boy, then he leaves with the father, and if it's a girl the child will have to grow up with the knowledge of having an adulterous wife of a mother while more than likely

living in poverty. As Chopin is the *deus ex machina* the possibility of Calixta's secret being discovered is null because as far as the reader is concerned, like the storm had passed, the adulterous affair is merely a thing in the past. To which ends the story with everyone being happy.