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EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH NATURE IN KATE CHOPIN'S BEYOND THE BAYOU

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EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH NATURE IN KATE CHOPIN'S BEYOND THE BAYOU

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Abstract:

Kate Chopin was an American author of short stories and novels, mainly of a Louisiana Creole background. She is also considered as a forerunner of feminist authors of the twentieth century. Chopin also got a particular insight into the psyche of the South and its women. She is a woman, who exposed the exploitation of both women and nature and this story reconnects women to nature. Chopin's stories and novels are naturalistic and unite the politics of gender with that of ecology. She also brings the relationship between women, nature and the role of ecology in her works. The great act of women's courage is also a part of her story and the main character is brave enough to save a life. This paper highlights the women's interconnections with nature and psyche. The main character La Folle is isolated both psychologically and physically, but she reveals a courageous trait of self-sacrificing and care for others by rescuing a child's life.

Keywords: Nature, Isolation, Courage

In this planet nature is the most precious and noblest gift of God. Chopin's short story expresses the beautiful nature of bayou, woods and fields in Bellissime. Chopin brings the beauty of Louisiana, which is a southeastern U.S. state on the Gulf of Mexico which is famous for bayou. Chopin was inspired by the French culture of Louisiana and the complexities of New Orleans. In the short story, she imported the peaceful bayou, which makes La Folle traumatized and suffers from her fear of the unknown.

In the beginning of the story, Chopin describes La Folle's cabin which stood near the bayou. Between the stream and the hut lay a big deserted field, and she never visited the woods which is beyond her home. Even the cattle pasturing and the little children crossing in the bayou supplied with enough water, but La Folle had an imaginary line not to cross the bayou. This is a form of her mania and her real name is Jacqueline, but it is changed to La Folle because of her childhood fear that P'tit Maitre, the owner of Bellissime came bloodied in crimson and black with powder to her mother's cabin, this is the reason for her deep ingrained fear. Later, she overcomes her childhood trauma while Cheri accidentally shoots himself and cries that he is going to die. In order to save Cheri, La Folle shouts for help but no one heard her cries. So, she takes him with his head upon her shoulder and he weeps and moans in pain and fright. She crossed the bayou with her precious burden, terrible fear, the fear of the world beyond the bayou, the morbid and insane dread she has been under since childhood. While crossing her dreadful line, she cares much for Cheri.

La Folle gave a last despairing look around her. Extreme terror was upon her.

Extreme terror was upon her. She clasped the child close against her breast, where he could feel her heart beat like a muffled hammer. Then shutting her eyes, she ran suddenly down the shallow bank of the bayou, and never stopped till she had climbed the opposite shore. (3)

La Folle saves Cheri with great effort and burden in her heart, then she lays him in his father's arms and faints there. People in the plantation think that she may die but she wakes up as an individual woman with great self-discovery and confidence to enter into the new world. After waking up, she enquires about the health condition of Cheri, waits in his veranda and sees the sunshine which is comparable to her bright future. She then makes her way through the woods and admires nature, takes breath and feels the greenish surrounding around her. For the first time, she watches the beautiful bayou beyond the bayou which is appealing to her. This shows that women can overcome any situation