

Deictic Elements in Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour*. A Cognitive Poetics/Stylistic Perspective

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to explore Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour* from a cognitive poetics/stylistics perspective. The analysis emphasizes an integration of language and literature and draws upon theories developed in the general field of cognitive poetics/stylistics (Stockwell 2002; Gavins and Steen 2003). For the purposes of this research, using Stockwell's model of Deictic Shift Theory (Stockwell 2002: 45-49), the analysis will investigate Chopin's use of different types of deictic expressions and shows how such use guides the reader to be involved in the text world(s), leading to a better understanding/exploration of the characters and themes. The analysis reveals how the protagonist, Mrs. Mallard, searches for identity, freedom and the bright future after the husband's death. This paper attempts to explore the text world in which a feminist character challenges the traditional view of marriage/love in a male-dominated society. The discussion of results and the conclusion shows how traditional observations about the text combined with an analysis of deixis helps readers to create the text world of the story.

1 Introduction

Kate Chopin (Katherine O'Flaherty) was born on February 8, 1850, Culley (1976: vii). She began writing late in her life. Her first novel, *At Fault* was published in 1890. It was followed by two collections of short stories:

Bayou Folk in 1894 and *Arcadia* in 1897. After that Chopin worked on a third collection, *A Vocation and a Voice* (Toth 1991) which included works previously rejected by magazine publishers who felt the work dealt too explicitly with love, sex, and marriage. Chopin's most famous short story *The Story of an Hour* is included in this collection. The centre of action in the story is an ill woman who learns of her husband's accidental death. The story examines the woman's reaction to her sudden and unexpected independence/freedom and ends surprisingly when she discovers her husband is actually alive. Her novel *The Awakening*, now widely read, appeared in 1899. She wrote stories, novels, sketches, and essays which had appeared in the popular and literary magazines of the period. She died in 1904.

Fox-Genovese (1999) comments on Chopin as a modernist writer:

She was very important as one of the earliest examples of modernism in the United States...She was a pre-eminent stylist and she was as much interested...in how you told the story as the story itself. In that sense_ perspective, point of view, craft, use of imagery, multiple perspectives_ this legacy of appearance in reality which can be seen to come somewhat out of the New Orleans experience that things are not always what they seem and they seem different to different players. All of these then formed her style...one reason that some of her stories were very short was because she was self-consciously experimenting with stylistic concerns every bit as much as thematic ones.

Chopin's well-known piece of short fiction, *The Story of an Hour*, appeared in 1894 (Meyer 1996: 12-14).

Chopin can be seen as a feminist writer who questions women issues of her time: husband-wife relationship, marriage, love, individuality and freedom. As a result, her works were met with widespread criticism during and after her life. Being a woman Kate Chopin saw life instinctively in terms of the individual. She took a direct personal, immediate interest in the intimate personal affairs of Mrs. Mallard's experience and her changing moods.

The Story of an Hour deals with marriage that is out of balance_ a wife who wishes to be free from this *blind* relationship. The story is about Mrs. Mallard (Louise) who *was afflicted with a heart trouble*. Her husband is supposed to have been killed in a train accident. Her reaction is not as expected: *She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same....* She goes up-stairs to her bedroom where she sits in a comfortable roomy armchair looking out of the window, seeing the world around her

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and thinking of her past, present and future. Different images are employed to describe the conflict inside Mrs. Mallard and the gradual discovery of herself to discover that what she wants and desires after her husband's death is: '*free, free, free!*' After that: *she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.* She thinks of the coming days: '*[s]pring days and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own.*' She has lived a beautiful dream for just an hour. Suddenly, Brently Mallard is back. He has been far from the accident. On seeing him, Louise has a heart attack and she is dead. To all the characters around her: Brently Mallard, Richards, Josephine and the doctors, Mrs. Mallard *had died of heart disease_ of joy that kills.* To the reader, Chopin makes an excellent use of irony. The end is unexpected. All characters expect her death to be the result of hearing the sad news of her husband's death. She dies because she has lost her freedom and beautiful dreams.

The story of an Hour is a third-person limited omniscient text. The narrator is non-participant and the story is told from different perspectives. The focus is on Mrs. Mallard who is the center of action in the story. The reader is invited to create the text-world(s) of the story. Being a woman Kate Chopin is able to see life instinctively in terms of the individual, taking a direct personal, immediate interest in the intimate personal affairs of Mrs. Mallard's experience and her changing moods.

The reader- following Mrs. Mallard to her place near the window, getting into her mind, thoughts, feelings and emotions, her dreams and hopes for the future- would realize the sickening reality of women at that time.

This study adopts a stylistic approach in which the researcher attempts to find a connection between the findings of linguistic analysis and the responses of literary criticism.

Stylistics is one of the dominant trends to emerge in the study of literature during the twentieth century. Its roots originate in the major literary movements that flourished in the first half of the century which include: practical criticism in Britain, New Criticism in America and Russian Formalism (Breen 1999). Several studies state that stylistics is concerned with the study of style and view this approach as an integration of language and literature, Widdowson (1975), Leech and Short (1981), Wales (1989), Carter and Long (1991) and Verdonk (2002).

The analysis in this paper adopts a cognitive poetics/stylistic approach, Stockwell (2002) and Gavins and Steen (2003). Stockwell (2002: 4) values cognitive poetics as a means of being able to have a clear view of text and context, circumstances and uses, knowledge and beliefs. Cognitive poetics focuses on both the linguistic features of the text combined with the

reader's background knowledge. The analysis in this paper combines a traditional/contextual account with linguistic support through an analysis of deixis and deictic shift theory.

This paper examines the working of deixis in Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour*. It also aims to show how the author's employment of different deictic elements helps the reader to understand the different perspectives in the text, mainly that of the protagonist (Mrs. Mallard) in addition to that of the narrator/author in the light of other contextual aspects which are related to Chopin as a feminist.

2 Deixis and Deictic Shift Theory

Wales (1989: 112) states that deixis is "from the GK 'pointing' or 'showing', **deixis** in *LINGUISTICS* refers generally to all those features of language which orientate or 'anchor' our utterances in the context of proximity of space...and of time...relative to the speaker's viewpoint." Furthermore, the importance of deixis to encounter a stylistic analysis of literary texts has been the concern of many studies, Fowler (1981), Leech and Short (1981), Levinson (1983), Simpson (1993), Duchan et al (1995), Short (1996), Culler (1997), Stockwell (2002) and Gavins and Steen (2003). "The use of deixis is thus one of the ways in which writers persuade readers to imagine a fictional world when they read poems, novels and plays", Short (1996: 100).

For the purposes of the cognitive poetics analysis in this paper, deixis and deictic shift theory model is adapted from Stockwell (2002: 45-49). Stockwell's deixis categories are:

- Perceptual deixis
- Spatial deixis
- Temporal deixis
- Relational deixis
- Textual deixis
- Compositional deixis

Here is a summary of each category:

- **Perceptual deixis:** personal pronouns 'I/me/you/they/it'; demonstratives 'these/those'; definite articles, definite reference 'the man'; mental states 'thinking, believing'
- **Spatial deixis:** pointing expressions locating the deictic center in place, spatial adverbs 'here/there', 'nearby/far a way'; locatives 'in the valley', 'out of Africa'; demonstratives 'this/that'; verbs of motion 'come/go', 'bring/take'.

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- **Temporal deixis:** expressions that locate the deictic center in time, temporal adverbs 'today/yesterday/soon/later'; locatives 'in my youth', 'after three weeks'; tense and aspect.
- **Relational deixis:** expressions referring to social viewpoint and relative situations of authors, narrators, characters, and readers, including modality and expressions of point of view and focalization; naming and address conventions 'social deixis'; evaluative word-choice.
- **Textual deixis:** expressions foregrounding the textuality of the text, chapter titles/paragraphing; co-reference to other parts of the text, reference to the text itself or the act of production; reference to other texts 'intertextuality'; poetic features, speech presentation.
- **Compositional deixis:** aspects of the text that manifest the generic type or literary conventions available to the reader. Stylistic choices encode a deictic relationship between author and literary reader.

Stockwell (49) concludes his outline of the above deixis categories:

It is important to state that even single words, expressions and sentences can display all of these facets of deixis. They are only determinable as deixis, of course, if they are perceived as such by the reader, if they are seen as anchoring the various entity-roles in participatory relationships. Because occurrences of deictic expressions are dependent on context, reading a literary text involves a process of context-creation in order to follow the anchor-points of all these deictic expressions. Reading is creative in this sense of using the text to construct a cognitively negotiable world, and the process is dynamic and constantly shifting.

Stockwell values the deictic shift theory (DST) as an effective approach to cognitive deixis. A summary of its key concepts is as follows:

- **Deictic Shift Theory:** refers to the perception of the reader getting inside a literary text taking a cognitive stance within the mentally constructed world of the text. "This imaginative capacity allows the reader to understand projected deictic expressions relative to the shifted deictic center (narrator, author, character, reader). Shifting deictic centers is a major explanatory concept to account for the perception and creation of coherence in the text."
- **Deictic fields:** are composed of expressions that are: perceptual, spatial, temporal, relational, textual and compositional in nature. The literary text may consist of one or more deictic fields.

- **Deictic center:** Each deictic field has a deictic center which can be a narrator, author, character or reader.
- **Deictic shift:** a deictic shift occurs when, through the use of deixis, the author shifts focus from, for example, the narrator to a location, then to a character or the extra-fictional world of author.
- **Pushes:** deictic shifts towards the inside world of the text (characters, time, place)
- **Pops:** deictic shifts towards the outside world of the text (narrators, authors, readers).

3 The Story of an Hour

For easy reference, the full text is reproduced and sentences numbered:

(1) Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

(2) It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. (3) Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. (4) It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." (5) He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

(6) She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. (7) She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. (8) When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. (9) She would have no one follow her.

(10) There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. (11) Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

(12) She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. (13) The delicious breath of rain was in the air. (14) In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. (15) The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

(16) There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

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(17) She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

(18) She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. (19) But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky.

(20) It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

(21) There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. (22) What was it? (23) She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. (24) But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

(25) Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. (26) She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

(27) When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. (28) She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" (29) The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. (30) They stayed keen and bright. (31) Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

(32) She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. (33) A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

(34) She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. (35) But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. (36) And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

(37) There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. (38) 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 a fellow-creature. (40) A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

(41) And yet she had loved him--sometimes. (42) Often she had not. (43) What did it matter! (44) What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

(45) "Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

(46) Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. (47) "Louise, open the door! I beg, open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

(48) "Go away. I am not making myself ill." (49) No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

(50) Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. (51) Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. (52) She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. (53) It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

(54) She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities.

(55) There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. (56) She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. (57) Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

(58) Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. (59) It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. (60) He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. (61) He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

(62) But Richards was too late.

(63) When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease-- of joy that kills.

The next section aims to explore the working of deixis in *The Story of an Hour*.

The Story of an Hour.

4 Cognitive poetics analysis

The Story of an Hour is a third-person narrative in which Mrs. Mallard is the center of action. The non-participant narrator provides an access to Mrs. Mallard's world: medical condition, marriage, relationship with husband, love, freedom. In other words, the narrator describes Mrs. Mallard's thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and emotions, worries and decisions with reference to her past, present and hopes for a future in which she becomes a free, independent individual setting the scene for the feminist change in the 20th century. Therefore, the whole story can be seen as a deictic field in which Mrs. Mallard is its deictic center. The social status of the main character, foregrounds her marital status. She is married and she is an example of housewives who are not happy in their marriage. The author/narrator refers to her as Mrs. Mallard in sentence (1) and the third-person-pronouns 'she' and 'her' in sentences (2-45, 49-56, 63). Such

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pronouns are used by the narrator to refer to the main character who is the centre of action in the story. 'Louise', her first name is used by her sister in (47), while the first-person-pronoun 'I' appears in (48), '*Go away. I am not making myself ill,*' her words are loud and direct to the reader for the first and last time in the story and in her life. Her voice reflects a challenging spirit to illness and the terrible circumstances around her. She seems to put an end to her fears and worries and decide that she is '*Free, free, free!*'

The title of *The Story of an Hour* has deictic significance. The reader is invited to think of its meaning. '*The*' is a definite article, as if the author/narrator assumes the readers familiarity with "*The Story*". From the very beginning the reader is invited to be part of the action *in medias res* (in the middle of things). There is a story to be told and the reader is expected to know more about its characters, setting, themes, symbolism and other narrative features. Then, there is a temporal reference in the title '*an hour*'. The reference is to the time of the story (all events happen in one hour). So, I think the title constitutes a deictic field in which the extra-fictional voice (Kate Chopin) is the deictic center.

In the first paragraph, sentence (1) constitutes a deictic field in which the narrator is the deictic center. The narrator provides some information about the main character. She is *afflicted with a heart trouble*. Here the reader is invited to think of the possible cause of her illness which could be related to her unhappy marriage. Using the passive form, *great care was taken to tell her the news of her husband's death*. The following expressions may have deictic significance: *Knowing, Mrs. Mallard, a heart trouble, care was taken, to break, to her, as gently as possible, the news, husband's death*. Perceptual and temporal deixis are evident in these expressions. Everybody seems to be worried. They expect her to have a heart attack on hearing such devastating news.

A push to another deictic field occurs in sentences (2-5) in which the deictic center is that of her sister Josephine and her husband's friend Richards. Richards knows about the death of Brently Mallard in a rail accident. Then, Josephine tells her the sad news *in broken sentences*; spatial deixis in sentence (3), *there, near her*, invite the reader to speculate on the relationship between Mrs. Mallard and Richards.

Sentence (6) involves a pop to the narrator's viewpoint. Mrs. Mallard's reaction is less than expected; she is not like many women who have the same experience who react *with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance*.

There is a major shift into the deictic field in which the protagonist, Mrs. Mallard, is the deictic center, sentences (7-15). Here, the reader is invited to

enter Mrs. Mallard's world which is full of suffering and confusion. The unhappy marriage and oppression she is under is just an example of what wives experience in late nineteenth century America. Mrs. Mallard's feelings, perceptions and thoughts are kept hidden from all those around her except the extra-fictional voice, the narrator and the reader. Mrs. Mallard's story represents women's suffering in a male-dominated society.

The deictic shift is perceptual in *wept*, temporal in *at once*, perceptual in *sudden wild abandonment* then spatial in *in her sister's arms*. Then Mrs. Mallard leaves her sister and Richards. Spatial deixis is active in: *went away, no one follow her, There, facing the open window, into this, she sank, reach into her soul*. Such expressions help the reader to maintain the spatial center. Relational deixis appear through use of evaluative expressions, *pressed down by physical exhaustion, haunted her body, seemed to reach into her soul*. Now Mrs. Mallard is sitting on the chair, facing the window.

Sentences (12-16) involve a shift/pop to the narrator. Through the use of spatial and relational deixis, the narrator succeeds in creating the setting and Mrs. Mallard's reaction to it. Examples of spatial deixis: *in the open window, before her house, tops of trees, spring life, in the street below and in the eves*. The setting is spring and all her senses are invited- through use of relational deixis- to see *the tops of trees that all were aquiver with the new spring life, smell the delicious breath of rain in the air, hear a peddler...crying his wares, hear the notes of a distant song and sparrows twittering in the eves* and seeing again *patches of blue sky* which are contrasted with *the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window*. Popping out to the deictic center of the narrator enables the reader to identify irony. Mrs. Mallard, who is expected to be sad and thinks of widowhood, is now thinking of life, spring and her future.

Her decision about her future has not been made yet. This is not an easy task. In sentences (17-21), perceptual deixis and her mental states are at constant work: *a sob came up into her throat and shook her, dull stare, gaze, something coming to her, she was waiting for it, what was it? She did not know; felt, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her*. Such expressions reflect the conflicting thoughts inside Mrs. Mallard's mind. Through a number of shifts to the narrator, relational deixis reveals the main character's inner thoughts. Mrs. Mallard is *like a child who had cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams. She was young and her fair and calm face...bespoke repression and even certain strength*. Her gaze at those patches of blue sky is *not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of an intelligent thought*. She is thinking of something, *fearfully*. It is *too subtle and elusive to name*.

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Then sentences (25-45) represent Mrs. Mallard's decision concerning her future. From now on she is free. She is no more a household. She retained her freedom. There is a temporal shift in sentence (25) which begins with *Now*. She approaches the most critical moment in her life, reaching to the climax of the story. Now, she is '*free, free, free!*', '*Free! Body and soul free!*' Moreover, perceptual deixis is employed to represent her physical and mental states, *rose and fell tumultuously, beginning to recognize, striving to beat it back, abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her... lips*. Then there is a textual pop shift towards the narrator followed by a push shift towards the character. Here, speech presentation is activated. Indirect speech in (28) is followed by direct speech in which Mrs. Mallard is the speaker pronouncing her freedom. At this point, there is a shift towards the body-parts of Mrs. Mallard: *vacant stare, look of terror, went away from her eyes*. Her eyes *stayed keen and bright, her pulses beat fast, her coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body*. Again perceptual deixis which is ascribed to the main character and relational deixis which involve a pop to the narrator are blended. She is making sure she has taken the right stance and offers a justification for her position: *did not stop to ask, monstrous joy, enabled her to dismiss, suggestion as trivial, She knew, would weep, she saw, years to come, belong to her, she opens and spread her arms to them in welcome*. She seems to be satisfied with her sense of discovery and she starts to think of her future. Temporal references to the future are evident: *during those coming years, brief moment of illumination*, while perceptual references reflect Mrs. Mallard's view of the future: *would be no one to live for, would live for herself, would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence, seem no less a crime, she looked upon it, what could love count for in face of this position of self-assertion, recognized as the strongest impulse of her being*. Also she reflects on her relationship with her husband. She knows he had *never looked save with love upon her*. On the other hand her feeling towards him is not the same: *she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not*. Then a textual shift occurs: Mrs. Mallard is involved in direct speech stating her final position: '*Free! Body and soul free! She kept whispering*'.

Sentences (46-48) describe a pop out to Josephine, the sister: *was kneeling before the closed door, her lips to the key hole, imploring for admission*. She asks her sister to *open the door*. She seems to be worried: *you will make yourself ill*. A strong, joyous and confident answer comes from the inside: '*Go away. I am not making myself ill.*'

Another deictic shift occurs, this time it is a pop out to the narrator/author stand: '*No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open*

window.' This comment is an instance of relational deixis. It can be seen as an example of intertextuality where the writer invites the reader to reflect on *elixir of life*- an image/concept originated in the middle ages, of a drink that is expected to make life longer- and relate it to the speaker's world which seems now a happy one. Now, Louise is now free from the bonds of marriage and she prepares herself for a brighter future.

In sentences (50-57) there is a push into Louise cheerful world. Temporal expressions refer to the future: *those days ahead of her, spring days, summer days, would be her own*. These references are contrasted with *yesterday when she had thought with a shudder that life might be long*. Perceptual deixis is apparent when *she breathed a quick prayer that life might be long* (here she wishes to have a long life after the death of her husband). And yesterday, *she thought with a shudder that life might be long* (when Brently Mallard was alive). Other perceptual references include: *she arose, opened the door, carried herself, clasped her sister's waist, together they descended the stairs*. A relational shift occurs in *like a goddess of victory*, the narrator/author takes us back to this concept of Greek mythology. Louise is winning her battle against oppression in a male-dominated society.

A pop out is assigned to Richards, *who stood waiting for them at the bottom*. Another pop out to Brently Mallard who is referred to as: *some one was opening the front door*, reflecting the view point of the characters inside the house. Other perceptual references which are related to the husband include: *entered, travel-stained, carrying his grip-sack and umbrella, had been far from...accident, did not even know, there had been one, stood amazed*. Brently Mallard is back. His unexpected arrival results in a pop shift to Josephine and her *piercing cry* and another to Richards' *quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife*.

Sentence (62) *But Richards was too late*, involves a relational shift to the narrator's comment. The reader is invited to fill in the missing part of the narrative regarding what has happened to Mrs. Mallard. On viewing the husband, she has a heart attack and collapsed. Then the doctors are called to diagnose the cause of death.

The last sentence in the story involves a deictic shift to the doctor's perceptual world: *'When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease_ of joy that kills.'* They decide that Mrs. Mallard is overjoyed to see her husband is still alive. She has a heart attack and died. Probably, the doctors, Richards, Josephine, and the public of late nineteenth century America would accept this account. On the other side, the extra-fictional voice/author, the narrator and the reader would have a different

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interpretation of the closing sentence. It represents a deictic shift in which the doctors are the deictic center. It also includes different references: perceptual reflecting the doctor's perceptions; textual in the sense it is written in free indirect speech which is used as a vehicle of irony, Short and Leech 1981: 325-36 and Short 1996: 306-10; and relational which reflects the narrator/author perspective making of the final statement an excellent example of situational/dramatic irony. Mrs. Mallard dies for the loss of her dreams to be a free individual in a male-dominated society. She dies because the spring days and the summer days she plans to enjoy have gone and she returns back to the prison of marriage where she is forced to live with a man against her will.

5 Conclusion

The analysis in this paper shows how cognitive poetics using Stockwell (2002) model of deictic shift theory offers an approach which allows more integration of language and literature where the linguistic features of the text are incorporated with the readers background knowledge (narrative features, literary theory, author, reader, culture, society, history).

Deictic shift theory model offers the reader a dynamic movement throughout the process of analysis and interpretation leading to the creation of striking images/understanding of the participants in the text: author, narrator, character and world. Chopin seems to be successful in using deixis to provide insight into the speakers' thoughts, feelings and motivations.

Perceptual deixis is more associated with Mrs. Mallard's world: The title, 'Mrs.', a marker of status, signals her out from others. She is married and her case is just an example of many women who are oppressed and suffer in their marriage, not in Chopin's time and the American/New Orleans context, but also in all times and places all over the world. The third person pronoun 'she' appears almost in every sentence. Mrs. Mallard is the centre of action in the story. She is the deictic center in most of the deictic fields in which there is focus on her thoughts, feelings, emotions and senses: *wept, pressed down, could see, smiling, hearing, stare, gaze, glance, coming to her, waiting for it, did not know, felt, creeping out, reaching toward her, bosom rose and fell, beginning to recognize this thing, posses her, striving to beat it back, abandoned herself, word escaped, parted lips, said it over and over, 'free, free, free!', stare, look of terror, went from her eyes which stayed keen and bright, pulses beat fast, coursing blood warmed and relaxed...her body, did not stop, held her, enabled her to dismiss, knew, would weep, saw, would belong to her, would live for herself, she had loved him—sometimes, Often she had not, recognized, 'Free! Body and soul free!' she kept*

whispering, go away, I am not making myself ill, She breathed a quick prayer, had thought with a shudder.

Spatial deictic expressions help the reader to follow Mrs. Mallard's movement from one place to another inside the unbearable prison-house which is full of death and illness and to compare it with the spring life outside: *went away to her room, There stood, facing the open window, Into this she sank, the open square of her house, In the street below, sparrows twittering in the eaves, There were patches of blue sky, showing here and there, clouds...piled...in the west facing her window, out of the sky, open window.*

Temporal references help the reader to follow the participants in time. She *wept at once, new spring life, historical now, years to come, during those coming years, that brief moment of illumination, those days a head of her, Spring days and summer days, prayer that life might be long, yesterday, shudder that life might be long.*

Relational deictic expressions point to the narrator/author comments. Such comments can be seen as a vehicle of irony. 'Afflicted', in sentence (1), invites the reader to think of Mrs. Mallard's illness. Probably, the heart trouble is an outcome of her unhappy life with Mr. Mallard. Other relational references include: *a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul* (depression), *in the west facing her window* (death image), *as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams* (innocence), *lines of her face bespoke repression and even certain strength, a glance of reflection, a suspension of intelligent thought* (positive thoughts of future life), *fearfully* (social values of the time), *subtle and elusive to name* (thoughts of freedom), *coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body* (cheerful thoughts). Moreover, the narrator/author voice is eminent in the following sentences: (37) *There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself.* (38) *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 a fellow-creature.* (40) *A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination* (my underline). Other examples of relational expressions: *possession of self-assertion, the strongest impulse of her being* (freedom), *she was drinking in a very elixir of life, like a goddess of victory and joy that kills.*

Textual references are skillfully employed: the title of the story, the opening paragraph, the closing paragraph, use of metaphors and irony, competent employment of speech presentation in addition to drawing on intertextuality.

Deictic Elements in Kate Chopin's *The Story of...*

Finally, this paper is another example of cognitive poetics in practice where the researcher is involved in a process of analysis and interpretation based on an exploration of Chopin's utilization of deixis combined with observations about the text in addition to other external/contextual aspects in order to construct the text-world of *The Story of an Hour*.

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