

Close reading essay: Anna VanSeveren

1. Rebellion
 - a. Is Edna's suicide an act of rebellion?
 - b. Argue yes by citing examples of her rebelling against Victorian norms throughout the story
2. The ocean
 - a. Paradox of her finding new life in the ocean but then ending her life in the ocean
 - b. Seems contradictory but actually she is finding new life by killing herself because she realizes that she will never be able to live and be free, so she sets herself free by killing herself.
3. Working title: A Final Act of Rebellion: Exploring Edna's Suicide in Chopin's *The Awakening*
4. Working thesis: The paradox of the sea in Chopin's *The Awakening* showcases Mrs. Pontellier's suicide as an act of rebellion, an expression of freedom, rather than a surrender to the oppressive ideals of her time, making the sea representative of rebirth and escape.
5. Paradoxical because of the first encounter being like a rebirth while the second encounter is death, but the second encounter is actually a kind of rebirth, too
6. Quotes:
 - a. "but that night she was like the little tottering, stumbling, clutching child, who of a sudden realizes its powers, and walks for the first time alone, boldly and with over-confidence" (49)
 - i. She's alone
 - ii. It's at night- dark and solitary, unknown, frightening
 - iii. Being in the sea is empowering- someplace she can realize her strength
 - iv. It's important that she's discovering this alone- no one is there to influence her
 - v. Interesting that she thinks she is "over-confident" like maybe she's never felt confidence before, so the whole feeling is overwhelming?
 1. Or feeling of being invincible, like nothing can hurt her or touch her
 - vi. Novel experience/feeling
 - vii. Clutching- still reliant
 - viii. Child- innocent, naïve, reliant, needy, follows blindly, questions nothing
 - ix. Power- being able to do something- realization that you *can* do something
 - b. "a feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul" (49)
 - i. Realization of power
 - ii. Exultation- immense joy, rejoicing
 - iii. Overtook, she didn't necessarily have control over it, she wasn't expecting it, but then she gains control
 - iv. She is in complete control instead of feeling like everyone is in control of her and she can't do anything to fix her situation
 - v. Soul- deeper than the physical- being impacted in multiple ways
 - c. "the voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude" (138)

- i. Seductive- sexual awakening piece?- tempting, attractive, enticing, something she shouldn't want or have? Relates to freedom piece?
 - ii. Sounds kind of like a heart?
 - iii. Invites the soul- not the body: deeper purpose
 - iv. Abyss- bottomless, has no limits- solitude is what freedom is
- d. "and for **the first time** in her life she stood naked in the open air, at the mercy of the sun, the breeze that beat upon her, and the waves that **invited** her" (138)
- i. She's alone
 - ii. Naked like in birth
 - iii. Waves invite her- she's welcome there, she feels safe there, feels like she belongs there
 - iv. Open air- no boundaries, nothing holding her back
 - v.