Storm Warnings: The Eternally Recurring Apocalypse in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

by Amanda Lee Castro

A characteristic of literary naturalism is the representation of "limitations placed on the human will" (Pizer 5), and while naturalistic readings of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) have recognized the way that social and biological forces circumscribe Edna Pontellier's potential to realize her version of self-fulfillment, they fall short of understanding the spatial histories of this post-apocalyptic novel's Gulf Island settings: Chênière Caminada and Grand Isle. Critics such as Erik Margraf and Donald Pizer have read the novel's representation of Edna's Creole milieu and biology as deterministic forces, but they have found it difficult to account for the physical setting of the islands, which, at one time, represented a utopian promise of freedom from restrictive social conventions and mores for New Orleans and island residents. Margraf, for example, has conceded that unlike Edna's Creole milieu, which does restrict her freedom and determine her behavior, the island environment is not "physically threatening" in the way that the natural environment typically is in other naturalistic novels (101). By the time the novel was published in 1899, however,

The Southern Literary Journal, volume XLVII, number 1, fall 2014

the utopianism of the island setting had been undermined by the Hurricane of 1893.

As Barbara Ewell and Pamela Menke have convincingly argued, this hurricane was on Chopin's mind as she was writing *The Awakening*, but it has not yet come to the fore in critical discussions of the novel (6). Two thousand lives were lost in this hurricane on the Gulf Islands, including two thirds of the population on Chênière Caminada, and because of the disaster, the resort culture on Grand Isle went into a steep decline (Ewell and Menke 4–5). As the storm was widely publicized in newspapers at the time and for several years thereafter, for many of Chopin's contemporaries, the utopianism of the island culture would have seemed elusive and unstable from the moment they opened the novel, and Chopin's narrative space mirrors the instability of this utopianism. The hurricane appears in a series of "storm events," or figurative imaginings of the Hurricane of 1893, within a post-apocalyptic setting; moreover, the spatial confluence of this dystopia of eternally recurring natural disaster coupled with the resort culture's utopianism dramatizes the impossibility of fulfilling the utopian promise of liberation, not just from one's social role and biology but also from the natural world order—from all the physical elements that, according to their own laws, conspire either to give pleasure or to wash away humankind's hopes without a moment's notice.

To recreate the resort culture's utopianism and to represent the islands as sites of romantic and temporal liberation, Chopin uses a longstanding convention of landscape description that stretches back to Homer and Virgil called the *locus amoenus* trope. Meaning "pleasant, lovely place" in Latin, *locus amoenus* is an "ideal landscape" (Curtius 195). Capable of constructing perfect, ideal spaces, the trope has the potential to represent the greatest possible utopian strivings of a culture. It is only natural then that Chopin would use it to depict the islands as the utopias her audience imagined them to be prior to the Hurricane of 1893. Yet while Chopin employs the trope to construct the islands, she also disrupts their utopian image by revealing an underlying presence of mortality and hostility in these island cultures. Her imagery subtly evokes the *recurrence* of the hurricane in the novel, partly through indirect allusions to the cultural rhetoric in newspapers reporting on the Hurricane of 1893, and with each of these "storm events," she emphasizes the tremendous power the natural environment has over Edna's will, behavior, and embodiment. Ultimately, the hurricane's presence in the novel acts as a metaphor for

the deterministic force of the natural environment and for all the forces that can determine our fates.

Furthermore, the recurrence of this traumatic event leads to hopelessness, an overwhelming sense of the absolute futility of utopian strivings, that is amplified by the extreme disparity that exists between the *locus amoenus*'s representation of the ideal conditions in human life on the surface level of the narrative and the representation of a dystopia of recurring apocalypse on another level. A similar disparity existed in the minds of Chopin's contemporary readers, who remembered the islands as both the resort culture utopias that they used to be and as the sites of natural disaster that they had become, and the coexistence of utopia and dystopia in the novel's island setting mirrors this same dissonant collective memory.[1]

Chopin had rich historical material as well as cultural rhetoric upon which to draw in order to construct Grand Isle and Chênière Caminada as *loci amoeni* on the surface level of the work. This is because the cultural function of the islands for New Orleans residents matched many of the trope's functions and because late nineteenth-century newspapers and literature represented Grand Isle and Chênière Caminada in accordance with many of the trope's characteristic features: "water, trees, and grass" with some additional elements such as gardens, breezes, and flowers (Curtius 195). Similarly, the trope functions as "a refuge from the processes of time and mortality . . . to unite man with nature" (Evett 507); a means to grant "a measure of control in the face of natural determinism" (Hass 670); and an opportunity to free individuals from certain constraints on human sexuality (Evett 502). Additional features of the trope represented are the island's position as "a pastoral retreat from city life," "a sequestered spot," and a site of rest and idleness (Evett 506–507). Regardless of the characteristics the trope embodies in a given instance, the landscape is always "an ideal realm far removed from the painful difficulties of the real world" (Hass 674).

In the late nineteenth century, these islands were the place to go for summer vacation, especially for Creole families. "Businessmen and French-speaking aristocrats of New Orleans" went to Grand Isle's resort to escape the city and enjoy a summer of leisurely entertainment and socializing (Stielow 243), just as they do in *The Awakening*. Lafcadio Hearn and George Washington Cable recall all the essential elements of the trope in their own descriptions of Grand Isle, with Hearn describing its "rural aspect" and the orange groves, flowers,

grassy pathways, and the sea; and with Cable describing the "beautiful, wooded, grassy, and fertile Grand Isle . . . farms and orangeries . . . green meadows . . . the boundless open Gulf" (Stielow 249, 248). Satisfying the "synchronous" characteristic of the trope, these descriptions call upon its essential features simultaneously (Evett 511).

Frequently described as a safe haven from the ravages of time and disease, Grand Isle had a pre-fall Edenic connotation. John F. Krantz, the owner of Grand Isle Hotel from 1878 on, for instance, advertised the resort as a safe space (Stielow 244). Considering that "in the late nineteenth century, New Orleans was one of the most dangerous cities in the world," this was clearly good advertisement (Stielow 247). Others described Grand Isle as actually having curative powers. It had an "elixir of perfect air," according to Hearn, and was "an Eden free of sickness," according to a *New Orleans Republican* article (Stielow 247). Catherine Cole testified to the "miraculous cures" that had been performed there (12). Even doctors encouraged resort life for its salutary effects (Stielow 247).

Further conforming to the "freedom-from-constraints-on-sexuality" characteristic of the trope, it was rumored that a stay on Grand Isle held great romantic promise. If an unmarried person went there for the summer, it was said that she or he would come back to the city engaged ("On the Sea-Swept Island"). Resorts in particular held this reputation for romance and were "sometimes seen as counter to Victorian strictures" (Stielow 251). That resort romances sometimes breached Victorian conventions, however, did not mean that the romance promised there was seen as sinful. For Hearn, Grand Isle embodied an "ancient purity of morals . . . [without] iniquity" (Stielow 247).

Cultural understandings and representations of resort and island culture, therefore, provided Chopin with rich material upon which to draw in order to depict the islands as sequestered utopias, culturally embodying the pastoral ambience, the romantic freedom, the life-sustaining powers, and the purity of Eden pre-fall. Chopin's descriptions of the islands often evoke the essential elements of the trope synchronously, as in the passage: "their amusing adventure out in the water . . . the wind, the tree" (6). Features of the Biblical variation of the trope, such as gardens and fruit trees, are simultaneously introduced elsewhere: "vegetable gardens abounded, with frequent plantations of orange and lemon trees intervening" (18). This same synchronous unity is, likewise, characteristic of her depictions of Chênière Caminada.

Chopin also confers a measure of liberation from time and mortality by deconstructing the progress of linear time, thereby emphasizing the leisurely pace of island life. On Grand Isle, time runs slower than it does in New Orleans. Although it is a Sunday, Léonce Pontellier is reading a Saturday newspaper because "the Sunday papers had not yet reached Grand Isle" (3). On Chênière Caminada, Edna feels that time does not progress at all, instead remaining always "God's day" (42). The island environment, moreover, makes her "feel . . . as if [she] . . . were walking through the green meadow" of her childhood again, causing past and present times to converge (21). "Foraging the island" to gather food for Edna on Chênière Caminada, Robert Lebrun similarly travels back into the past, reverting to the old lifestyle of hunting and gathering, and Madame Antoine tells stories in the old oral way (45). Adèle Ratignolle, too, is a part of bygone days, so much so that only "the old [words]" are adequate to describe her (11). The seaside setting itself disrupts linear time since, as Donald Ringe observes, the sea represents eternity in romantic iconography (587). Also detaching the islands from real historical time, Chopin leaves the exact date of the novel's setting unspecified.[2]

Additionally, fulfilling the leisure characteristic of the trope, idleness is the norm of behavior on the islands. The word idle is repeated several times in its different parts of speech: Robert and Edna "sit idle," and Léonce "let[s] the paper drag idly from his hand" (4). Typical behavior on Grand Isle includes "eating bonbons" while "leaning listlessly against the post" (12). Chênière Caminada, too, is a place where people can behave without any productive end in mind and where one goes to rest. Not only does the island inspire Edna to say that "pirate gold is something to squander," or not something of which to make productive use, but it also provides her with a resting place for what seems like "one hundred years" to Robert (41, 45).

Finally, Chopin portrays the islands as sites of romantic and sexual liberation. This is reflected in the Creoles' "freedom of expression," their "entire absence of characteristic prudery," and Mariequita's sauciness with men, fulfilling a stereotype of the island girls (Chopin 12; Stielow 252). Completely oblivious to their surroundings and seeming to "tread on blue ether," the young lovers who always seem to be in Edna's periphery appear liberated from the rest of society (26). Also in this environment, Edna spends a substantial amount of time with Robert, who is openly flirtatious with her, and it is on the islands that she and Robert start to desire each other, experiencing their "first-felt

throbbings of desire" (36). The islands, thus, open up a space in which Edna can enact fantasies of challenging her husband's authority and developing an intimate relationship with another man.

In many respects, therefore, Chopin's depiction of the islands draws upon their historical background and the pre-1893 cultural imagination to generate a utopian atmosphere, evoking an image of the islands as the utopias the nineteenth-century audience would have believed them to be before the Hurricane of 1893. If we bring cultural rhetoric about the hurricane and the collective memory of that traumatic experience to bear on the novel's imagery, however, the hurricane itself comes into view as an event that recurs throughout the narrative in a series of storm events, or figurative imaginings of that disaster. Its implicit recurrence produces in both the characters and the setting an affect of hopelessness, and that affect is enhanced by the stark contrast between the surface-level utopian vision and the underlying dystopic impulse in the narrative, a contrast that implies that even the most ideal world, bearing as it does the seeds of its own destruction, cannot transcend mortality or the destructive force of physical nature.

Even before the Hurricane of 1893, this contrast characterized the island environment, for that storm was not, of course, the first hurricane in the Gulf Islands' history. Another traumatic event was the Hurricane of 1856, which submerged Isle Dernière (thereafter known as "Lost Island"). Between the Hurricane of 1856 and the Hurricane of 1893, however, Americans somehow managed to forget the former, and in so doing, they were able to maintain their utopian vision of the Gulf Islands, clinging so firmly to that vision that they could not consciously entertain the thought of that world's ruination. They would not, or could not bear to, acknowledge that there had been a catastrophe in the history of the islands nor would they consciously acknowledge the possibility of a future natural disaster. Despite the historical evidence to the contrary, for instance, the Ocean View Hotel contractor insisted that the hotel could survive any hurricane, so confident was he in the permanence of the place (Stielow 255). The superficial reasoning island visitors gave for leaving the islands makes their repression of the memory even more apparent. According to the unnamed author of "On the Sea-Swept Island," a *New York Times* article written after the Hurricane of 1893, visitors said it was because of the custom of always having left at that time of the year that they continued the custom, never mentioning the Hurricane of 1856 as part of their reason for leaving.

In the years following the Hurricane of 1856, Americans repressed their belief that Grand Isle was bound to share the fate of Isle Dernière, but such desperate clinging to a utopian illusion was no longer possible after the second catastrophic storm. On the list of the most serious disasters in the world that year, the extent of the damage was immense ("Disasters of the Year 1893"). Culturally imagined as a second event of apocalyptic magnitude, the Hurricane of 1893 brought to the surface the culture's latent belief that the future is determined by the past, and registering this deterministic thought, newspaper articles and literature began to draw comparisons between the two storms. Americans suddenly started to assert that the Hurricane of 1893 had been foretold and determined by that earlier hurricane, the Hurricane of 1856, all along ("On the Sea-Swept Island"). The sudden unleashing of this belief can easily be explained by the enormity of the disaster, which impressed upon them the stark contrast between what the islands were and what they had become. Previously thought of as safe havens, mystically curative, and Edenic, the islands seemed to have transformed into settings of apocalypse in no time at all, revealing earthly paradise to be a human construction always susceptible to the overriding forces of antagonistic nature.

The utopian rhetoric about the islands before the Hurricane of 1893, therefore, was more symptomatic of a cultural amnesia—a repression of that first traumatic event—than it was a true reflection of collective memory. Once the second hurricane came to pass, the culture could no longer forget the first trauma and, as a result, began to voice a determinism that had been lying latent since 1856 by comparing the two storms. "On the Sea-Swept Island" was one of the many newspaper articles that unveiled the belief that the second hurricane was fated. Other articles followed suit in expressing that same deterministic line of thought. According to the unnamed author of "Swept by an Ocean Wave," Grand Isle and Chênière Caminada "shared the fate of Lost Island," except that the present tragedy was even worse than the earlier one in the number of fatalities (1). Hearn's *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* and the author of the article "In Their Last Dance," an article published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, emphasized the cultural similarities between Grand Isle and Lost Island, implying that their fates were superstitiously interconnected. As with Grand Isle, according to the author of "In Their Last Dance," Lost Island was also "a Fashionable Watering Place" with "romances intertwined with its history" (11). Overall, people felt that the disaster of 1893 had been under the

surface and unfolding on the islands since 1856 even as people were enjoying their festivities, as the subhead of "In Their Last Dance" implies: "Dancing While the Hurricane Roared." Two diametrically opposed forces were believed to coexist on Grand Isle—one utopian (the festivities, merrymaking, and carefree dancing) and the other unbearably dystopic (the hurricane itself, not just preparing to start but already roaring up from beneath).

Furthermore, the belief that the islands would share the same fate as Lost Island was so strong after 1893 that it acted as a self-fulfilling prophecy, contributing to the further cultural decline on Grand Isle. According to Stielow, this "tendency to equate its fate to Isle Dernière" caused the Grand Isle resort business to fail (256). Once this hidden current of thought was released, the popular suspicion became that, even if Grand Isle did not share the exact same fate as Isle Dernière presently, it inevitably would in the future. And no one wanted to be there when that fate unfolded. The comparison between the two islands in the cultural imagination thus reveals the underlying widespread belief that disasters are fated to recur in human life, that past disasters inevitably get repeated in a peculiarly exact manner, and that physical nature is uncontrollable. Viewing the Hurricane of 1856 as an event of apocalyptic magnitude, New Orleans and island residents construed the Hurricane of 1893 as a post-apocalyptic apocalypse, an ending after the end.[3]

Taking into consideration this deterministic mindset, Ewell and Menke's argument that the figurative presence of the hurricane brings out "the poignancy" of Chopin's novel is persuasive (6). But while they argue that Edna awakens at the end of the novel in a place on the verge of destruction, or exactly one year before the Hurricane of 1893 begins, I want to argue that the final scene is not the onset of the storm but rather a temporary calm after several storm events that precede it, all of which stage Edna's drowning in a storm. In the final scene, the storms have momentarily quieted their roaring: a bird is flying "disabled" in the distance, having received its wing injury from a previous storm, but on this day, "the water . . . [is] gleaming with a million lights of the sun" (132). The final scene is, then, a haunting and prophetic turn-of-the-century post-apocalyptic vision of an uncanny new world. With the end of the narrative itself, this vision appears to mark the end of the pattern of recurring apocalypse that is represented by the storm events, but this pattern, as I will discuss, is fated to persist in the minds of Chopin's readers in the continuing debate over the meaning of the novel's ending.

In the storm scenes, Edna is overcome by water and experiences the effects of drowning, after a storm—or the Hurricane of 1893 itself—is foreshadowed by overpowering or restless water imagery and allusions to death and/or imminent disaster. The first storm event, and drowning scene, occurs immediately after Edna's husband, Léonce, chastises her for neglecting the children and is foreshadowed on that same day three times. The first instance of foreshadowing is a parrot shrieking "go away" at the very beginning of the novel as if to warn people of an impending danger. Making Léonce feel uncomfortable and restless, its shrieking causes him to move positions (3). The second instance is the Farival twins playing *Zampa*, which Margo Culley tells us "involves a lover's death in the sea" (Chopin 4). Finally, in a third foreshadowing, Chopin recalls Hearn's description, in his work *Chita*, of a hurricane about to be unleashed. Hearn describes the wind as "a Voice moaning across the world,—hooting,—uttering nightmare sounds,—Whoo!—whoo!—whoo!— . . . with each stupendous owl-cry" (Hearn 23). Drawing upon Hearn's description to signal an oncoming storm, Chopin reproduces these sounds of hooting and voices within nature, "the hooting of an old owl . . . and the everlasting voice of the sea," immediately before Edna starts to drown in her own tears (9):

> The tears came so fast to Edna's eyes that the damp sleeve of her peignoir no longer served to dry them. She was holding the back of her chair with one hand; her sleeve had slipped almost to the shoulder of her uplifted arm. Turning, she thrust her face, streaming and wet, into the bend of her arm, and she went on crying there, not caring any longer to dry her face, her eyes, her arms. (9)

Here, the description is suggestive of Edna's own internal storm: Edna overflows with tears to such an extent that her sleeve no longer serves to dry her eyes, she thrusts her face into her arm as though to shield it from a deluge, and she desperately clings to the chair as the sleeve of her peignoir slides upwards, revealing her bare skin.

The second and third storm events occur on the day Edna is "possessed" by the Gulf spirit. These events begin to be foreshadowed soon after the first storm event as Edna and Adèle sit beside each other on the beach: Chopin writes, "there [is] . . . a choppy, stiff wind that whipped the water into froth," an image that reminds Edna of being a little girl walking in grass "as if swimming" in

water up to her waist (19, 20). Both storms are also foreshadowed four times on the very same day that they occur, by the Farival twins playing *Zampa* again, the parrot again shrieking "go away," "the capricious will of a stiff breeze that swept up from the Gulf," and a "restless" sea (28, 29). Edna is looking outside the window at that restless sea when the second scene of drowning occurs: "the very passions themselves were aroused within her soul, swaying it, lashing it, as the waves beat daily upon her splendid body" (31). After Chopin compares Edna's passions to restless water, Edna experiences the actual effects of drowning: "choking" and being "blinded" by water (31). The third storm event is the "quick vision of death [that smites] her soul, and for a second . . . enfeeble[s] her senses" when she swims out to sea alone that same day (33). Even though it is not death per se but rather a vision of it that smites her soul, that vision has the effect of weakening her physical strength. Demonstrating that these two events are not only drowning scenes but also storm events, Chopin thereafter reverses the language Hearn uses to describe the arrival of a hurricane, quieting the hooting and moaning of his description so that, in Chopin's words, "[t]he old owl no longer hooted, and the water-oak had ceased to moan" (38). This is the temporary and unsustainable calm after the storm.

When Edna visits Mademoiselle Reisz for the first time in New Orleans, there is a fourth storm event. Between the third storm event and this one, several more images and allusions again foreshadow an impending storm. As Edna and Robert sail back from Chênière Caminada, wind is "overflowing" the sails and "phantom ships [are] speeding to cover," as if taking cover from a storm (40, 46). The drowning of islanders is also foreshadowed in the novel's dialogue. Monsieur Farival wishes that Victor had been "drowned" in the ocean as a child, and Victor "[thinks] there would be more logic in thus disposing of old people" (49). When Robert first announces that he is going to Mexico, Edna compares the urgency of his behavior to the behavior of a person in "a matter of life or death," having to flee from some impending disaster that threatens his life (51). It is while Mademoiselle Reisz plays "Isolde's song," foreshadowing a lover's death, that the fourth event actually takes place: "Edna begins to sob again as she did that one midnight on Grand Isle when strange, new voices awoke in her" (74–75).[4] Extending the imagery of drowning, Chopin then compares the music that "fills the room" to the sea on Grand Isle, and just as the sea implores "a loving but imperative entreaty," the music is "soft with entreaty," evoking

an image of the sea suffusing the room (16, 75). Despite the presence of the hurricane, Edna imaginatively imbues her environment with some aspects of the *locus amoenus* trope as she thinks of her romance with Robert. Her reminiscences disrupt linear time; she does not know when Mademoiselle Reisz's song "began or ended" (74).[5] Her mind is so fixated on the islands, and the room is so consumed by island imagery that her New Orleans environment takes on an aura of mirage-like unreality—so much that Edna herself does not seem to have left the islands at all. She herself seems like no more than a supernatural being or ghostly embodiment of her former self.

Like Edna, the island setting itself is ghost-like. Readers of the time were faced with what to them was already a post-apocalyptic setting, but for readers today, that same atmosphere is evoked by the pervasive imagery of desolation in the landscape of Grand Isle and Chênière Caminada. On one page alone, there are no less than five sentences about the absence of life on Chênière Caminada: voices can "no longer be heard," the chickens are gone, Tonie is not there, and no one is in the kitchen (44). When Edna joins Robert under the trees outside of Madame Antoine's cottage, they converse about everyone having "[disappeared] from the face of the earth" and about Madame Antoine and Tonie having died long ago (45). Returning to Grand Isle at the end of the novel, Edna is shocked to find "how dreary and deserted" the island is, and the narrator, too, observes that there is "no living thing in sight" on the beach (131, 132). Island properties also show signs of destruction by a storm. On Chênière Caminada, there are "weather-beaten houses," "a rusty buoy . . . sunk into the ground," and a "disabled boat lying keel upward," all of which can be explained by a previous submersion of the island in water (43). Property on Grand Isle has, likewise, undergone destruction. Victor tells Edna that "there's nothing fixed up yet" and that his room is "the only place" (131).

In light of the aftermath of the storm events, *The Awakening* has a particularly modern resonance, not only because twentieth-century American "cultural sensibility" was, as James Berger argues, predominantly post-apocalyptic but also because Chopin's setting enacts a form of Nietzschean eternal recurrence (Berger xix). Similar to Camus's vision of Sisyphus—who, though condemned to the fate of eternally rolling a rock up a hill only for it to fall back down again, can be "happy" each time he works his way back up to the top—in *The Awakening* the promise of being liberated from the *pattern* of unfulfillment remains intact even as deterministic forces repeatedly prevent

the fulfillment of that promise for Edna and others, including for Chopin's contemporary readers who might have nostalgically hoped to see recreated the island cultures that were lost. The tragic gap between promise and fulfillment is the experience mirrored by the interplay of utopia (the promise) and dystopia (the unfulfillment) in the island landscape. Indeed, even interpretations of the novel stand as a testament to the resilience of that promise of liberation in spite of its continual unfulfillment. More than a century after its publication, Chopin's novel continues to provoke debate over whether the promise of freedom is ever realized for Edna. Is it her choice, we wonder, to drown herself in the sea, being the one act she can freely choose and that she knows can release her from the demands of motherhood and married life? Providing evidence against this reading, however, we are told that Edna "walked out" to sea only after "foamy wavelets curled up to her white feet, and coiled *like serpents* about her ankles," an image of the ocean pulling her down into hell (133; emphasis added). Doesn't her death, therefore, seem instead to be against her will? Ultimately, these questions do not have answers because the ending is, in fact, *both* the utopian promise and its eternally recurring unfulfillment—and its power lies in its ability to seduce us, serpent-like, into that very hoping for her liberation despite all odds.

NOTES

1. According to Kathleen Stewart and Susan Harding, the "[post-apocalyptic] voice mixes nightmare and dream, destruction and creation, dystopia and utopia" (286).

2. This also leaves open the possibility that the novel is set after the Hurricane of 1893.

3. According to James Berger, this oxymoronic structure of thought is always contained within the concept of the "post-apocalypse" (xi). The recurrence of the storm apocalypse within the novel only intensifies this oxymoron.

4. Underscoring that this fourth storm event is a recurrence, this description compares it with the first storm scene.

5. The hurricane's presence combined with Edna's utopian memory of the islands in this scene epitomizes the coexistence of utopia and dystopia that persists throughout the novel.

WORKS CITED

Berger, James. *After the End: Representation of Post-Apocalypse.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999.

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. 1899. Ed. Margo Culley. New York: W.W. Norton, 1994.

———. *The Awakening and Selected Short Fiction*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003.
Cole, Catherine. "An Island Outing." *Times-Picayune* 25 Sept. 1892: 12.
Curtius, Ernst. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc., 1953.
"Disasters of the Year 1893." *Chicago Daily Tribune* 31 Dec. 1893: 26.
Evett, David. "'Paradice's Only Map': The *Topos* of the *Locus Amoenus* and the Structure of Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*." *PMLA* 85.3 (1970): 504–513.
Ewell, Barbara, and Pamela Glenn Menke. "*The Awakening* and the Great October Storm of 1893." *Southern Literary Journal* 42.2 (2010): 1–11.
Harding, Susan, and Kathleen Stewart. "Bad Endings: American Apocalypsis." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28 (1999): 285–310.
Hass, Robert. "The Mutable *Locus Amoenus* and Consolation in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*." *Studies in English Literature* 38.4 (1998): 669–687.
Hearn, Lafcadio. *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*. Auckland: The Floating Press, 1888.
"In Their Last Dance." *Chicago Daily Tribune* 8 Oct. 1893: 11.
Margraf, Erik. "*The Awakening* as a Naturalistic Novel." *American Literary Realism* 37.2 (2005): 93–116.
"On the Sea-Swept Island." *New York Times* 5 Oct. 1893: 2.
Pizer, Donald. "Late Nineteenth-Century American Literary Naturalism." *American Literary Realism* 38.3 (2006): 189–202.
Ringe, Donald. "Romantic Imagery in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*." *American Literature* 43.4 (1972): 580–588.
Stielow, Fredrick. "Grand Isle, Louisiana, and the 'New' Leisure, 1866–1893." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 23.3 (1982): 239–257.
"Swept by an Ocean Wave." *New York Times* 5 Oct. 1893: 1.