

Propagation of Racial Feminism and Patriarchal Environment In The Short Story of Katherine Mansfield, A Cup of Tea: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This research article explains the racial feminism within the radical feminism in patriarchal society in one of the famous short story of the 20th century modernist and feminist writer, Katherine Mansfield. It explains the different dimensions of feminism which a female has faced in this short story. Norman Fairclough's 3D model of textual analysis has been applied on this story. It was that the story manifests different items of racial feminism thereby unfolds the layers of racism through the lens of patriarchal dominance throughout the story. It is recommended to explore the other related dimensions such as eco-feminism in further research.

Introduction

A Cup of Tea is a short story written by Katherine Mansfield published in 1922 . She was a famous modernist writer. Born in New Zealand, she travelled to England and was adapted to that Bohemian culture. She preferred to settle there. There, she became the member of Bloomsbury group and met famous literary figures like Virginia Wolf, Lady Ottoline Morrell, D.H. Lawrence. Furthermore, she also had some relations with Ida Baker, Mona and many others. In the last stage of her life, she was diagnosed with tuberculosis and died. She wrote many short stories, novels, essays, journals on many themes involving anxiety, sexuality and existentialism. In a Cup of Tea, the story revolves around the protagonist Rosemary who belongs to an elite class but was an object of pleasure and beauty in the patriarchal environment, surrounding her. On her way back to home from a boutique shop, she met Miss Smith who was needy and was in a bad condition. She just needed a cup of tea from Rosemary and asked the price for it. Looking at the situation, Rosemary felt pity for the lady and out of sympathy, she took the women to her home where she looked after her.

She basically wanted to show that lady that there was still goodness out there. All the good things that happened in stories did exist in real life. She took great care of the lady at home. She gave her clothes to change. Moreover, she also ordered the servants not to come in the room

to give her that peaceful and comfortable environment. Furthermore, she ordered the servants to bring a cup of tea with something to eat. She herself sat on the couch and told the lady to sit on the sofa. Then, she asked about the lady and her life that what was her life and what was her reason of weeping. She was having gossip with Miss Smith when her husband Philip came. He saw the scenario and called Rosemary to library and inquired her. She told him everything. Living in a patriarchal culture, he wanted that lady should leave their home, so he used many tricks on Rosemary to psychologically control her and achieved his target. Rosemary became insecure. She took the money from library, gave it to Miss Smith and let her go. She came back to her husband and asked him about her beauty and buying of object from a boutique shop.

Literature Review

Katherine Mansfield, a modernist and a feminist writer has written a lot of works especially short stories on women who are usually a victimized in male patriarchal society. She might be a single, married or a spinster woman. (Aihong, 2012) in her article, "Women's Characters in Katherine Mansfield's short stories" has described the oppression of women from three levels: victims in the family: poor women in marriage, The invisible women: poverty and loneliness of the lower class, Doll and Rebel: Ambivalence and dis-illusionment of the upper class women. She was very much concerned with the position of women in the society. Mansfield herself has gone through a lot of turmoil, brutality and oppression which leads her to write stories related to feminism and male chauvinism in patriarchal society. She has explained a lot of such experiences in her short stories. Aihong in her article has taken a short story Frau Brechenmacher Attends a wedding as an example to explain the victimization of poor women in marriage as Frau Brechenmacher who represents an ideal example of women suppression in society. Being a wife of Her Brechenmacher and mother of five babies, she represents the traditional sufferings of a rude man who dominates her, bearing tortures and indignities of life with selfless compromises and patience.

Mansfield has shown the exploitation of women who might once in a while stand for justice but are repelled back because of the circumstances and dominance of the male patriarchy. The couple went to attend a wedding in a village where the bride was also being sexually exploited by a traveller who left her in the midway. As a result of which, she was going to marry another person whom she did not love. Aihong in her article has discussed the invisible women: poverty and loneliness of the lower class women and their needs. Every woman even of the lowest class are in a need of sympathy, love and care which in the case of Rosabel in *The Tiredness of Rosabel*, old Ma Parker in *The Life of Ma Parker*, and Miss Ada Moss were deprived of. They were in the state of hopelessness and loneliness because they belong to lower class. They only fulfil their wishes by day dreaming or depending on other but in reality they live only to accommodate their daily needs. Some of characters in the short stories of Mansfield also went for prostitution.

Aihong in *Doll and Rebel: Ambivalence and dis-illusionment of upper class women* has explained the inner turmoil going on in a woman regarding her role as wife in a patriarchal society. Her role is to take care of her husband, bear children and handle the household chores. At the end, the woman starts asking herself a question that why she is sacrificing her life. Her life is meaningless and it is going without any purpose. *Prelude* and *At The Bay* are the best examples

of Mansfield ' short stories which represents the example of an English family in New Zealand. Linda who appears to be living a happy life , belonging to upper class, having two children and a wealthy husband still faces such problems because she does not want to handle the responsibility of a wife. One can see as she prefers bags and luggage more than her two children. She prefer to stay away from her husband even. She compares her life to an aloe tree, a pure feminine figure, which stand stud but try to stay away from all responsibilities. According to her , she wanted to go back to her childhood which was free from responsibilities but she could not . She was leading a meaningless life. Thus, showing a dis illusionment in her personality.

(Assmarani 2018) in her article, "The psychological Character of Rosemary Fell in Katherine Mansfield's short story Entitled, A Cup of Tea" discusses the psychological traits of the main character Rosemary Fell. She focuses on the three main factors related to Rosemary Fell character i.e. the consumptive tendency, the narcissistic tendency and the low self-esteem of Rosemary Fell character. Firstly, being a narcissistic person, she always needs the feel to be admired, respected, flattered and important even though this attitude is driven by the purpose of getting profit from selling antiques items by the owner of the antique shop. Rosemary Fell belong to an upper elite class. The wealth of her husband always finds ways to adore her in many areas. She used to go to expensive shops, buy costly items and visits abroad also. One of the shops which she likes the most is the antique shop at Curzon Street. She used to enjoy spending money which was always sophisticatedly exploited by the owner of the shop, thus representing the consumptive tendency of Rosemary Fell. Thirdly, she has a low self esteem which is camouflaged by the appearance of self confidence. However, she always needs admiration and respect from people which kept her self-esteem as in the case of the owner of the flower shop and antique shop. She also needs the confirmation as one can see in the case of her husband love for her which she wanted to express it to her physically in order to remove her insecurities. These three factors define her psychological traits which she as a female has and is facing in the society. Little work has been done on the feminism which females face in the society especially in this short story, "A Cup of Tea". The scope of my research is to find the racial feminism in the patriarchal environment in a cup of tea under the umbrella of radical feminism. Furthermore, this research article also explains the Norman Furlough's theory on the cup of tea.

Research Questions

This research article is going to explain this short story from two aspects i.e.:

1. How racial feminism is represented within patriarchal society in a cup of tea under the umbrella of radical feminism?
2. How the Norman flaircloughs 3D model manifest itself in the story of "A Cup of Tea" and what are its indicators?

Statement of The Problem

This research article is going to explain racial feminism within a patriarchal society under the umbrella of radical feminism and how women face oppressions not only by men but other females in society especially the upper elite class.

Research Methodology

This short story (sample) has been taken from one of the collections of short stories of Katherine Mansfield. The research design for this research is qualitative. The theoretical framework for this research is Norman Fairclough's theory of 3D model which is applied to analyze this short story from three levels i.e.

1. Textual analysis
2. Discourse practices
3. Social practice

Data Analysis

Norman Fairclough has shown the relation between language and power. He has explained the power in discourse and power behind discourse which expresses the ideologies and other bigger social structures. According to Fairclough's theory, language is a social practice and it shows the relation between the text, interactions and the context. Norman Fairclough theory of three-dimensional modal mostly explains the description, interpretation and explanation of the text. In description, one analyses the language/linguistic elements of the text (textual analysis) while interpretation part deals with the production and consumption of the discourse by the readers and what ideology is being presented in the text (discourse practices). Explanation relates these ideologies with the speaker and consumer and explains the different aspects of the society in terms of sociocultural, socio-political and socioeconomic status of the society in the context (social practices). In a Cup of tea, Mansfield has explained the racial feminism and radical feminism in the patriarchal society. She has shown the racist aspects of the society. Race is not defined by the colour only but is described by the caste, creed, status, ranks and with many other factors. In this short story, Miss Smith was shown inferior on the basis of her rank and colour. She was discriminated on her status as in comparison with Rosemary who belonged to a high status and elite class. She was represented as a **young, brilliant, extremely modern, exquisitely well-dressed lady**.

Not only that, but she used to travel in cars and high level parties. Norman Fairclough's theory of 3D model can be best applied to this text. Writer has analyzed the text by describing their semiotic appearances to represent their classes. She has used many adjectives and adverbs (textual analysis in the form of linguistic elements) like young, brilliant, exquisitely well-dressed to add meaning to the text. It represents how high class people dress up themselves in order to make them distinguished from the rest of the persons representing their high class (description in the form of discourse practices) which are the causes of class discrimination in the society and it paves a way for socioeconomic conditions in the society (explanation in the form of social practices). One day, she visited a boutique shop. There, she saw a beautiful antique which she decided to buy later. She bought some stuff,

"She followed to the car by a thin shop girl staggering under an immense white paper armful that look like a baby in a long clothes..."

Now, here one can observe that how the writer has described the physical appearance of a girl (staggering under an immense white paper armful that look like a baby in a long clothes) to

show the oppression of a female by a female on the basis of rank in terms of clothes and services she offered to Rosemary, presenting psychological behaviour of a person that how status has shaped her mind which results in such actions. This represents the socio-economic conditions of the environment. The next scene of Miss Smith who is a victim of racial feminism. She came to Rosemary and asked for a cup of tea as she was not feeling good **“I am very sorry madam, I am going to faint, I shall go off, madam, if I don’t have something “** The writer has beautifully described the basic needs (textual analysis of Norman Faircloughs theory) of Miss Smith that how miserable her condition was that she cannot afford even a single cup of tea. She requested Rosemary in a humble and polite yet in a respectful way by saying madam to her representing the class difference which she is facing in the society (description). Looking at the condition, Rosemary felt pity, she wanted to know what happened to her and why she was in that state, so she took her to her home where she offered her a cup of tea with something to eat, changed her clothes and took good care of the lady. Rosemary’s character reveals different aspects of radical feminism. She was the first one who took out that helping hand towards Miss Smith breaking the traditional gender roles and inviting her to home. It was her desire for Miss Smith and to subvert the traditional passive role of women in relationships. This attempt of Rosemary to connect with Miss Smith across class boundaries challenge the power structure at that time.

She wanted to let her know that good things did happen in life and the big people could also be nice. This was an opportunity for her to prove herself of being a good lady when she exclaimed with excitement, **“How extraordinary!”**. It was like an adventure for her. Basically, she wanted to remove all those rumours which are associated with the high level people that they don’t care for such pity things. She wanted to show people her good side and get that title of being a generous lady. Still she wants to have an upper hand on that lady (explanation). Initially Miss Smith was unable to believe her. When Rosemary was taking her home to have a cup of tea, she was afraid to go as she thought that she would take her to a police station. Rosemary made her believe that they were going to home which made her confused by saying, **“You didn’t mean it, madam”**. It is because there was a social class difference and usually the elite class people or the wealthy ones never help such poor people and they don’t care but Rosemary was becoming different from the rest. Miss Smith character is the marginalized one. She initially refused Rosemary’s condescending offer of help thus maintaining her artistic integrity. But Rosemary insisted and took her home with her.

She didn’t let her servants to take care of Miss Smith, instead she wanted herself to take care of that lady. She took off her hat and coat but put it on the floor, thus showing superiority complex which Rosemary had because of the status. She wanted to maintain that statistical level, making her inferior to sit on the floor. This is showing her psychological mind again which has been shaped by the materialized world. However, it is also indicating the socio-economic context of the discourse (Norman Faircloughs theory). Her condition was miserable and she started crying because of hunger on which Rosemary immediately called her servants and ordered for her tea and brandy. **“Don’t cry, poor little thing, she said, don’t cry,”**. She put her arm round her shoulders and comforted her showing Miss Smith her soft side. She took her tea with some eatable

item like sandwiches, bread and butter. Every time her cup was empty, Rosemary filled her cup again. After that Miss Smith started to tell her about her life story when Philip came in. He was surprised because he didn't want such people to enter in his home. By one glance at Miss Smith, he came to know about everything that happened before. She looked at her hat and coat and came to know about her status. He wanted to talk to Rosemary alone in library so called her in library. She told him everything, but he was reluctant to let Miss Smith at home. Rosemary insisted and begged for it, but he remained fixed on his grounds. He tried another trick by saying, "be frightfully nice to her". He further adds to "look after her". He describes her beauty by saying, she's so astonishingly pretty, she absolutely lovely." Furthermore, he invited her for dinner also. These statements made Rosemary insecure about herself.

In patriarchal environment, men were always considered dominant. They never let their women dominate them. Due to these reasons, they were deprived of education, vote, political and many other social aspects which made them inferior. They became weak and subordinate and this gave many male members to dominate them. One can observe the socio cultural analysis of the text. Mansfield used various discourses to portray the social norms and the culture which they used to follow in that time. She wants to show the patriarchal environment and the effects of that environment on females who are considered as an object for men. The same was the case with Rosemary that she was tricked by her husband who considered her a play doll and an object of pleasure. He made her insecure, and jealous of Miss Smith. She was innocent and she got effected. She straight away went to library, took out some penny and gave it to Miss Smith and let her go. Furthermore, she came back to her husband, told him that **Miss Smith won't dine with us tonight**. Miss Smith had to go and she insisted. So she let her go

This line of Rosemary explains everything that how much insecure she was from Miss Smith or from any other lady and it occurred in an instinct by her husband, Philip. She asked her about her beauty to remove her insecurities and told him that she needed money to buy that beautiful antique which she saw in the market, thus bringing everything back to normal. Philip represents a true patriarchal man who tricked his wife by using her fears to let Miss Smith go out of his home. Not only Rosemary made her inferior, Philip also played a great role in it. Philip has shown the oppressive attitude of the elite towards the poor one. One can see the power imbalance between the white women and the women of colour. She would have stopped him, but she was psychologically so affected by this patriarchal society and their fears that let her go even though she wanted to be like fairy God mother to her. Rosemary dismissed her husband's concerns regarding Miss Smith, thus showing the societal differences which the less privileged one in the society faced by the elite class. The role of Rosemary played in the short story showed a path of empathy and better understanding between the Miss Smith and herself which she wanted to create but it was soon found impossible to create it among the people of different classes because of the limitations of the material wealth, social and economic disparities in bringing happiness and meaning. Social status and material wealth can maintain power and control on the life of others especially in terms of relationships between people of different classes. One can see that the life of Rosemary of luxury and privileges was empty and unfulfilling.

In patriarchal society, men were considered men. They were brutal, clever, intelligent, smart and got education. They had access to many things. They were allowed to do whatever they want to which made them the “Boss of the home”. On the other hand, women were deprived of all such things which made them inferior, and weak. They got psychologically effected. They were degraded on the basis of race, beauty colour, cast etc. They were treated brutally in some eras like in this case, Miss Smith and Rosemary both were treated as objects, creating a radical aspect in feminism. These ideas later became a source of raising voice for the basic rights of women in the society. And this represents the socio-cultural condition of the society in which they were living. Mansfield has basically shown the inner lives of the people who are basically the victims of this patriarchal society especially females and how wealthy one effects and plays with the poor one, thus representing socioeconomic conditions of the society. It creates inequality and power dynamics in the society. This story valued material wealth and social status above human connection and their values.

In this short story, Mansfield has portrayed Philip as a true patriarchal man and Rosemary as an object of beauty, symbol of luxury and privilege and Miss Smith who faced racist feminism in this patriarchal society (discourse practice). She was the struggling artist. The contrast between their lives and experiences drives way for the social and economic disparities emphasizing the privileged life of Rosemary and the struggling life of Miss Smith. Rosemary only knew about the markets and shopping. She wore beautiful and delicate dresses. She was given this much access. But, one can observe that she cannot let anyone in her home without the permission of her husband. She was bound to him. Rosemary’s fascination towards Miss Smith reveals her own desires and sense of emptiness which she tries to fill through her encounters with the young women. Her obsession with status and wealth is juxtaposed with Miss Smith’s creativity and real nature and genuine talent critiquing Rosemary’s artificial world. Rosemary’s shallow character exposes the faults and flaws of the superficial elite class based on material possessions. Hence, Rosemary is trapped in a life of luxury where Miss Smith struggles to live like an artist.

Miss Smith, who because of her financial conditions wasn’t able to live life like Rosemary due to which she was discriminated on colour, caste, her rank, her financial conditions etc. She faced racial feminism in the sense that she was not allowed to become the part of high elite classes. Even in home, her clothes were put on floor. She also became a source of entertainment for Rosemary who wanted to know her miserable condition and she played with her conditions because of the insecurities which she had for herself from her husband. One can observe in various areas where male dominancy and female suppression is being objected in the text. Through different discourse practises and social practises, this ideology is being transmitted in the text where male will be on the lead forever and female as his subordinate. This is done in order to create inequality among the genders in the society and to exercise power by male or female (radical feminism) and female on female (racial feminism).

According to analysis, one can observe the socio cultural and socio economic conditions of the society in the text. Both Rosemary and Miss Smith are portrayed as lonely and isolated, despite

their different circumstances, emphasizing the universal need for connection and understanding. In conclusion, Mansfield has shown inner lives of the different people of different classes, raising questions about the nature of relationships, empathy and understanding, societal expectations based on women related to marriage and social status and various aspects of discrimination which women faced in patriarchal environment like race, beauty, rank, status, and many other factors. This was one of the idea of radical feminism. In this text, one can find textual analysis, and socio cultural and economic conditions of the environment of Norman Faircloughs theory.

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