

Kate campbell: poverty in relation to sexuality essay example

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



(Insert Institute)

Kate Campbell

On a chilly night at Mary Hospital, a new baby girl is born. Her mother, Kate Campbell, is wordlessly lying on her bed in the maternity ward as the midwives hold up the baby to her. Kate is happy for the safe delivery. While filling out the birth forms, a nurse asks Kate, “ What is the baby’s name?” Immediately, another nurse asks, “ By the way, where is the father?” Kate stares at the nurse for a second and then stares at the blank wall behind her, going into a pensive mood. She starts to shed silent tears. At this point, Kate’s mom and younger brother Jeremiah enter the hospital to pick her and the baby. However, they could not tell why Kate is crying.

“ My daughter, be happy! You now have a daughter too, my granddaughter. Thank God for both of you are safe,” says Kate’s mother as she tries to comfort her. Her words comfort Kate and suddenly, Kate’s sad face holds a bright smile.

Kate is one of the young women who have had sour relationships. While working part-time as a housekeeper after school, she fell in love with Matt, the son of the wealthy family for which she worked. However, after a brief fling, Kate falls pregnant. Upon discovering the pregnancy, Matt stops seeing Kate and refuses to take responsibility for the pregnancy. Despite Kate’s attempts to prove her baby’s paternity, DNA tests are too expensive to carry out. This is because the family can barely get by let alone afford proper health care plans. Matt has cut off communication with Kate and she cannot talk to him or his family.

The family’s struggles began long before Kate was born. Her mother is a

widow and she once worked as a server at a local McDonald nearby. Ten years ago, she lost both her husband and one of her legs in a car accident and as a result, she lost her employment at the restaurant. This has led to her raising children all by herself and through government welfare. The previously small family of three and now four, lives in ' Sunset village', a place littered with poverty-ridden dwellers. Every single person living in the Sunset village is either completely illiterate or with very minimal form of education. Despite the harsh living conditions, Kate has successfully finished her secondary school education and is looking for funds to join college. Consequently, this led to her working as a house cleaner in the suburban homes of the rich and her current predicament.

When the people learnt of Kate's pregnancy, she was mocked and branded a prostitute. Because of the family's current financial constraints, Kate has to wait until her younger brother graduate from middle school. Once through with middle school, Jeremiah will be able to help with the household income, as he would have reached the legal age to acquire formal employment. Kate understands that College will prove to be an escape for her from the neighbors and poverty. Luckily, the government provides free education from the first grade all the way to high school so her family does not have to struggle financially for school fees.

During her time in high school, Kate struggled and worked hard to help her mother with the finances and household chores. After school, she cleaned houses as a house cleaner. In addition, she acted as babysitter for the families living in the nearby estates. To cut down on the electricity consumption in their home, Jeremiah and Kate opt to finish their schoolwork

at school. Take home assignments are in most cases completed while Kate is babysitting.

Jeremiah always promises Kate that life will get better. Whenever he sees her struggle, he says, “ Kate, I’ll get a well paying job after high school and take care of you and mother! It is coming soon.” To this, Kate replies saying, “ No! You will join college both of us are. That is the only way we can get rid of this poverty.”

The issue in Kate’s home is like a replica of the past. Kate’s mother also faced many challenges during childhood. Her biological parents passed away when she was young, so another family took her in through a fostering agency. However, her foster parents took to treating her as their personal slave and forced her to perform a lot work in the house. In addition, the family’s biological children were never kind to her and excluded her in all they did in the house and at school. Although Kate’s mother completed high school, she did not manage to go to college due to lack of school fees. Therefore, after completing her high school studies Kate’s mom decides to marry Kate’s father. She did so to get rid of the challenging experiences she went through as a foster child.

Now, Kate’s plan of escape from poverty has led to her single motherhood. Matt denies the baby and Kate has a challenging time looking after her baby. She can hardly afford the baby clothes and other necessities. The situation is worsened by the fact that the childbirth has rendered her weak and she has to wait for full recuperation. In addition, the mother had to spend the first few days at home to take care of her. Kate’s employers are not pleased, and under the argument that they cannot afford an errant worker, they dismiss

her from her work.

The mom decides to seek advice from the legal authorities with an aim of seeking redress about the sacking and help her daughter keep her work. However, lack of money to pay for the legal fees, renders Kate's mom efforts to restore the situation in vain. This leaves Kate's mom with no option other than seeking help from the neighbors until her daughter regains her strength. In spite of the original hostility, the equally poor neighbors manage to raise some funds for Kate's family and help sustain them for a few days. In a bid to help her daughter, Kate's mom tries to seek employment as a housekeeper cum babysitter in one of the nearby middle class estates to cater for the family. Unfortunately, her use of a wheel chair inhibits these efforts. Eventually, the family cannot pay the accumulating bills including the rent arrears. As a result, the family is almost kicked out of their shabby makeshift apartment and they receive notices that both the water and electricity bills need to be paid. Kate's mom had to plead with the proprietor for more time to clear the rent arrears that he granted. Eventually, Kate finds work at a boutique and her new boss pities her predicament, gives her salary advancement to clear the family bills, and increases her salary.

Kate's mother has since been assisting in the house by looking after her young grandchild while Kate goes to work. While she babysits, she makes cheap jewelry to sell in the slum and the surrounding estates. Jeremiah has found work at the town's grocery store and like his sister, is saving up for college.

As Kate continues working, one of her schoolmates brings her application forms to join college. However, Kate becomes hesitant to receive them

because she tries to avoid putting pressure on the family. In addition, she considers her poor family background and her newly acquired motherhood state. The friend goes on to convince her, and upon consulting her mother she agrees with said friend. Having been convinced, Kate writes an application letter and sends her high school grades to the colleges. When the acceptance letters come, she acquires a scholarship to one of the colleges near her hometown. Kate's life takes a dramatic change after that.

Poverty in Relation to Sexuality

The story's major theme finds basis on the family's lack of financial stability to ensure proper health care and access to basic needs. Poverty as a theme is evident throughout the narration as the characters are forced to take extra steps to ensure survival. To understand said major theme, there is need to take into consideration the views and statistics recorded by scholars in the field. In addition, the contextualization of poverty with regard to the female species will have to be put into consideration with the probability of change because of a grown man's presence in the story. Poverty and sexuality go hand in hand especially with regard to the female specie.

In "The Feminization of Poverty," Peterson (1987) argues that trends are inclined to show more women joining the poverty-ridden populations over time. This he attests to when he states that, "the number of poor families headed by males (male only and husband and wife families) dropped from 3.2 million to 2.6 million. During the same period, the number of poor families headed by women with minor children increased by one-third, from 1.8 to 2.7 million" (p. 329). He goes further to elaborate that female headed families

recorded the highest number of families that live below the poverty line. However, it is not just the families. The female population has also declined among the middle class and high-class numbers (Peterson, 1987, p. 329). As in the narration, the women are seen struggling to make a living. Kate is pregnant but the man responsible is not held liable for the pregnancy. At the same time, her mother fails to gain employment after her accident. Most disabled men in America are still capable of gaining employment. However, women are in most cases sidelined in said employment opportunities. The chances of a crippled woman rapidly dwindle as her sexuality and her being a handicap work against her chances.

It is important to note that the only man in the family is Kate's younger brother. He is young and is still considered a boy as seen by Kate's ability to change his ideologies on what to do after he completes high school, education. There are high chances that whatever Jeremiah wants to do after high school will help the family sustain itself. This is so because the prospects of an uneducated male making it in the working industry are considerably higher when compared to those of their female counterparts. Sexuality and poverty are in many ways directly linked to each other. For instance, there are few poor male-headed houses while female-headed houses are highest in ranking. In addition, a house with sons is bound to live above the poverty line while one with daughters might live below said poverty line.

The lives of the characters in the novel are stuck in a vicious cycle dictated by poverty and women left to fend for their lives alone. The past in this case is repeating itself as evidenced by Kate's suffering and that of her mother's

before the current storyline. Hooks (1983) argues that such cases are common as the past often dictates the future and it is hard for one to detach said self from an already dictated blueprint in life (p. 80). However, introducing education in the picture might have the desired effect of liberation from poverty. This is so as education will break the cycles hinted before and help the family help themselves.

Peterson (1987) attributes women's low earnings to, “conscious decision-making within the household to invest less in education and training for women. That is, men's higher earnings reflect their higher level of job-related skills” (p. 333). In other words, a poverty-ridden family will see more sense in investing money in a boy's education and will consider educating a girl to be a waste. This is especially so when a family has both sons and daughters. For instance, in the narration, Kate is set to join college but the mother would rather see her son through high school than use the little funds she has to help her daughter get into college. There are high chances that if the situation was reversed, Kate would have to drop out of school for Jeremiah to obtain a college degree.

Finally yet importantly, there is the issue of the biological makeup of women that requires them to carry pregnancies. This factor directly influences the financial status of women in that, once pregnant a woman is expected to look after herself and her unborn baby. Unless they are married, the man can deny the pregnancy and in turn refuse to take responsibility for the baby. Unless the mother is financially stable, there are very high chances of poverty kicking in or increasing if it already existed. Reid and Tom (2006), attest to this when they state that, “The main causes of women's poverty

are labor market inequalities, marriage breakdown, mother-hood, and welfare systems” (p. 402). Kate has to look after her baby and plunges her already struggling family into more poverty. Matt lives his life, as he would have without the baby.

Therefore, it is clear that poverty and sexuality go hand in hand especially with regard to the female specie. A man not aware of his prowess as a man can be swayed from his ideas and hindered from pursuing his dreams and climb out of the poverty criteria. A woman is on the other hand crippled by her sexuality and if not careful can be thoroughly disadvantaged by the same. Poor women face more challenges than poor men do in raising their financial status.

References

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