

A deep literary analysis of colette's "the hand"

Literature



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Nowadays in our society, to be in a “ perfect” relationship with one another is when there is a significantly perfect balanced in the role of the couples. However, it is nearly impossible to achieve that “ perfect” couple, and even more impossible to maintain it. A couple of reasons why it is impossible is because it's natural for humans to not always agree in some things as a couple, while some also lose interest in their significant other. It is completely normal for couples to stay in good conditions or can be complicated, no matter how the difference in the roles are. In the story “ The Hand” written by Sidonie-Gabreille Colette, the main idea portrays the different roles between man and woman. With the use of imagery, symbolism, conflict, the narrator, which is the woman, will clearly show how a relationship can consist of a dominant and a submissive role.

Firstly, the use of imagery can be found almost everywhere in the story that helps the central idea on the differences between two couples, especially in the description of the characters. For instance, the wife is portraying herself as “ slim and adolescent” while the husband is described as a “ blond, young man” (1) with “ his big arm [...] and his strong hand” (1). This sentence shows the difference between the husband and his wife and describes how he is always the strongest than the woman in a relationship. Another use can be found where she describes the hand itself. For example, she mentions how it was “ exaggerating the powerful knuckles and the veins engorged by the pressure on the arm.” (1) This quote shows how this hand itself somehow be described as something with such power. In fact, the hand is described with such overwhelming amount of dominance that the wife was unable to do anything about it. A different quote shows how the hand “ took on a vile,

apelike appearance" (1) and when the hand calmed down, it " lowered claws, and became a pliant beast." (2) This sentence makes the hand look more of a fierce, dangerous animal. It obviously shows how the wife fears this hand and causes her to become helpless, which shows how the hand has complete power over her.

The husband's detailed physical appearance and its hand clearly shows how he plays the dominant role in the relationship. Secondly, since it is obvious that the man symbolizes dominance in the story, then the women plays the submissive. A lot of situations from the story can relate to real-life relationships where one role is different than the other. For example, the husband falling asleep on the young woman's shoulder may symbolize the reality of women who must comfort or support their loved ones in order for them to have a more enjoyable, calm life, since men are traditionally portrayed as a hard-working person. Another example of symbolism is when the wife describes the room itself, mostly the curtains. She explains how she loved the " blue of the brand-new curtains, instead of the apricot-pink through..." (1). This symbolism behind these colors show how in reality, blue considers to be a men's color, as for the pink, it's mostly a color for women. Since we know she loves blue, it signifies once again the dominance of men in the relationship.

Also, the conflict in this story is between the husband and the wife. The story clearly shows how the couple are married not too long ago. It is mentioned in the beginning of the story how it is only two weeks since she is " living with someone unknown" (1) and how happy she is to " meet a handsome, blond young man, recently windowed [...] a month later." (1) However, these kinds

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of situations rarely happen in reality. It is not surprising that after the wife decides to marry a month after meeting her significant other that she is in shock to face such a monstrous hand, because after all, it is her naivety and her quick decision making that will make her end up in this situation.

However, by the end of the story, overcomes her fear and “ humbly kisses the monstrous hand.”(2) This simply shows that she made the decision of marrying the man too quickly without knowing too much about him and realizes the consequences of doing so, but she decided to live with it and accept her choice of being the submissive wife living with a dominant husband.

In conclusion, the author is showing this short story as a message to the readers the role of dominance and submission. She mentions in some parts of the story how these roles can affect a relationship through her literary devices. For conflict and imagery, the story shows how it can affect the couple physically and emotionally. As for symbolism, parts of the story can be connected to real life relationship stereotypes, which also relates to the central idea of the story.