

Literary criticism essay example

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



- Feminist Criticism of Cat in the Rain by Ernest Hemmingway

The Short story presents to the reader a desperate wife immersed in the world of boredom, and her husband does nothing to improve the situation. Instead, the husband makes it worse because he does not pay attention to her. She is suffering in isolation in an Italian hotel by the beach far away from home. This short story fits into the feminist criticism because it is evident there is the presence of a patriarchal figure who seems superior to the woman, who wants her freedom from her confinement. Male dominance is evident through the two males and females in the story. The maid is at the disposal of the padrone where the husband dominates his wife. He even decides the kind of hairstyle she should clad.

At the end, the wife rebels against her husband's dominance. She endures physical, psychological and emotional barriers mostly presented by her husband. Her husband does not stand up from the bed and even when she went to sit there while airing her feelings, she did not last long. She almost immediately moved to the mirror. Her husband's use of the bed seems to express his dominance that was steady and indifferent. But this is meant to change, as implied by the disappearance of the cat from under the table.

The cat disappears and runs into freedom, never to be caught. The movement of the cat from under the table is symbolic of the movement of the woman from male dominance. It is a self realization that she can be free. The rain is what brings out the turning point, where she realizes that she cannot stay under male dominance anymore, and that she can walk away into her freedom.

The empty square symbolizes loneliness and isolation. The war monument is

a representation of masculine power. Within the confines of her hotel room, she is under dominance, and even she goes outside the same dominance is spelt loud and clear. One wonders why they left their country to go into a foreign land where there is nothing much than boredom, at least for the woman because her husband is busy with his books. There is lack of emotion and passion between husband and wife. But then she passes for a meek and obedient creature, who is a subject of her 'boss' husband. She is likened to the cat that is cooped up in fright because of the rains, and only finds solace under the table. The woman's feelings are suppressed and she has no control over her life, not even how to do her hair.

The American woman is depressed and isolated even in the presence of her husband. They are in a foreign land where they do not even know the language of communication. She is keen on keeping herself busy and useful and that is why she insists on getting the cat out of the rain and a kitty for herself. Perhaps this is a prelude for a female revolt that was brewing inside of her. Going to fetch the cat gave her a momentary escape from her woes. But getting a kitty for herself means getting her freedom and herself back. The woman resorts to engage in a rebellion, 'And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.' It is the only sure way of getting back her freedom.

- Psychological criticism of the passionate shepherd to his love by Christopher Marlowe

The poem The Passionate Shepherd to His Love by Christopher Marlowe is a poem filled with sexual innuendos and desires expressed by a man to a

woman he desires. The persona has psychological motivations of partnership and love in the true sense of commitment and love for one another. It is for that reason that he invites the woman to ' come and live with thee and be my love' (Line 1). Marlowe uses pastoral life to idealize rural life in the context of personal emotion, and it is for this reason that the poem fits into psychological criticism. The persona wishes to woo his lover and so many other things that he intends to offer in order to ensure that he gets her. The shepherd chooses his words wisely and this is typical of all men, when they want to woo a woman with whom they are in love. He says he is willing to make a bed of roses for her and fragrant poises. He is willing to do superficial things; any lover could do for the women they love. Perhaps, the shepherd could be flirting with the woman because of his choice of words, and that he may not be serious with her. The picture one gets is that of the Id, in the Freudian approach caring the day. The language the shepherd uses is filled with sexual connotations if it was to be taken serious from its poetic and not literal analysis. The pleasure principle of the unconscious is at play. It is supposed to elicit pleasure in the persona and his subject.

A couple of sexual symbols and imagery has been used by the persona to symbolize feminine features. For instance, the persona says " And we will all the pleasures prove/ That valleys, groves, hills, and fields/ Woods, or steepy mountain yields" (Line 2- 4). All these are connotations of features that symbolize the female anatomy. The persona succeeds in creating female stereotypes intent to making a man want her. The woman, through the descriptive language used is depicted as having contours and curves that the man idolizes. In fact, this description makes the audience reach a

conclusion that the features are those of the woman.

The 'landscapes' that are used by the author are meant to illustrate the various curves of the female body. The shepherd could be fantasizing about the body of the woman. The sexual desires of the shepherd help create a sexual image of love making, " And we will sit upon rocks,/ Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,/ By shallow rivers to whose falls/ Melodious birds sing madrigals" (Line 4- 8) This symbolizes a love making session. The shepherd hopes he can woo the lover and make his desires real. This poem perfectly fits into the Freudian psychological approach because the actions implied by the persona and the intended events are derived from what Sigmund Freud termed as sexual energy that dictates all human behavior

Works Cited

Hemingway, Ernest. Cat in the Rain. Short Story

Marlowe, Christopher. The Passionate Shepherd to His Love. Poem