The Psychological Character of Rosemary Fell in Katherine Mansfield's Short Story Entitled A Cup of Tea By Ratna Asmarani
Meanwhile, the second type of self-esteem tends to seek external acknowledgment in the form of obtaining fame from the people around him/her (Maslow, 1943: 28). Such narcissism can be called as a low self-esteem needs characterized by “external fame” (Maslow, 1954: 46). [4] This low self-esteem always demands “gratifiers to still the need” (Maslow, 1954: 100). People with low self-esteem will crave for becoming the center of attention, admiration, and love. People with low self-esteem will yawn for the fulfillment of their wishes (Maslow, 1954: 71). The second concept used to support the analysis is about narcissism. According to Walder (1925):

Culturalistics: Journal of Cultural, Literary, and Linguistic Studies, [2], [2018], [49-55] Available online at: http://ejourounl.undip.ac.id/index.php/culturalistics Article Received: 20/04/2018; Accepted: 23/04/2018; Published: 24/05/2018 The Psychological Character of Rosemary Fell in Katherine Mansfield’s Short Story Entitled "A Cup of Tea". Rachel Asmarani. Diponegoro University, Semarang 50275 - Indonesia Abstract The purpose of this paper is to analyze the psychological character of the upper class woman in Katherine Mansfield’s short story entitled "A Cup of Tea". The analysis is based on the concept of narcissism, Maslow’s concept of esteem needs, and consumerism. The method of literary analysis is a contextual one focusing on the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The result shows that the female character has a low self-esteem with narcissisticgrandiosity. Such psychological character always needs attention, appreciation, and praises from other people that are obtained by following upper class exclusive and consumptive way of life. It can be concluded that a narcissistic upper class female often hides vulnerable self-esteem by camouflaging it with glamorous appearance full of self-confidence. Keywords: narcissism, esteem needs, consumerism, upper class 1. Introduction Someone’s appearance or performance is always not compatible with his/her psychological state. A short story written by Katherine Mansfield entitled "A Cup of Tea"[1] portrays this situation. The female main character, Rosemary Fell, is an upper class woman whose rich husband adores her. Her high taste and her husband’s wealth make her different from other upper class females. Her unexpected meeting with the poor Miss Smith begging for a price of a cup of tea in the cold winter while Rosemary Fell is having a shopping spree gives her an idea. Wanting to be better than other exclusive upper class females, she brings the poor Miss Smith home and wants to personally treat her in her luxurious room. Her impulsive action to be friendly with a poor person astonishes her adoring husband. Stopping her wife’s impetuous deed that is not in line with their upper class life, her husband exaggerates admires the beauty of Miss Smith. Sharp jealousy leads Rosemary Fell to quickly dispose her new ‘friend’ to retain her husband’s total attention. Based on the story, Rosemary Fell’s psychological character is challenging to analyze. 49 Culturalistics: Journal of Cultural, Literary, and Linguistic Studies, [2], [2018], [49-55] Available online at: http://ejourounl.undip.ac.id/index.php/culturalistics Some concepts are needed to support the analysis on the psychological character of the female character; namely, the concept of self-esteem, narcissism, and consumerism. Self-esteem belongs to the domain of Maslow’s concept of basic needs of human beings. Maslow proposes five hierarchical needs (Maslow, 1943: 58). [2] Self-esteem needs, the fourth needs, are basically the needs to get appraisals and honor for themselves (Maslow, 1943: 27). According to Brown and Marshall, self-esteem is closely linked to vanity and humiliation (2001: 14). [3] However, self-esteem needs can be categorized into two kinds. The first one tends to be an internal achievement in the form of self-fulfillment to be worthy based on one’s own capacity (Maslow, 1943: 28). Meanwhile, the second type of self-esteem needs tends to seek external acknowledgment in the form of obtaining fame from the people around him/her (Maslow, 1943: 28). The second type of self-esteem needs can be called as a low self-esteem needs characterized by “external fame” (Maslow, 1954: 46). [4] This low self-esteem always demands "gratifiers to still the need" (Maslow, 1954: 100). People with low self-esteem will crave for becoming the center of attention, admiration, and love. People with low self-esteem will yawn for the fulfillment of their wishes (Maslow, 1954: 71). The second concept used to support the analysis is about narcissism. According to Walder (1925):
[5], a narcissistic person has the following characteristics: "feeling superior to others, preoccupied with themselves ... lack of empathy" (quoted by Levy, Ellison, Reynoso, 2011: 5).[6] Narcissism can be divided into two kinds, ‘narcissistic grandiosity’ and ‘narcissistic vulnerability’. According to Pincus and Roche, ‘narcissistic grandiosity’ has the following characteristics: "needs for validation and admiration" (2011: 32).[7] Someone suffering the ‘narcissistic grandiosity’ will be very sensitive to "ego threat" (2011: 32). Meanwhile, someone with ‘narcissistic vulnerability’ will show the inability to feel pleasure and to socialize (2011: 33). The third concept borrowed to support the analysis is consumerism. In general, consumerism has a negative sense and is defined as ‘excessively preoccupied with consumption’ (Gabriel and Lang, 1995: 31). 4.2 Rosemary Fell’s Narcissistic Tendency Rosemary Fell’s narcissistic tendency is closely related to her consumptive desire. Her narcissistic grandiosity presents the only one antique item in the form of a cute little box which is richly decorated and tantalizes her to own it. The consumptive Rosemary Fell cannot refuse such temptation: "She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it." (Mansfield, 1977: 62). Her adoring husband’s answer satisfies her effort to sustain her low self-esteem: "You may, little wasteful one," said he" (Mansfield, 1977: 69). She does not care that her husband considers her as an immature person as implied by his words ‘little wasteful one’ to address her. What is important for Rosemary Fell is the gratification from her husband that makes her happy and proud of herself. 4. Discussion Rosemary Fell, the female main character of Katherine Mansfield’s A Cup of Tea, is a unique character. Her dazzling appearance hides certain psychological characters. 5 Culturalistics: Journal of Cultural, Literary, and Linguistic Studies, [2]. (2018), [49-55] Available online at: http://ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/culturalistics 4.1 Rosemary Fell’s Narcissistic Tendency The wealth of the adoring husband supports Rosemary Fell’s consumptive tendency. One of her favorite shops to spend her money is an antique shop at Curzon Street: "it was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself" (Mansfield, 1977: 62). Here, her inner drive to spend much money on things which are not essential but very expensive shows her outspending. In her conversation with the owner of the antique shop, she presents the only antique item in the form of a cute little box which is richly decorated and tantalizes her to own it. The consumptive Rosemary Fell cannot refuse such temptation: "She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it." (Mansfield, 1977: 62). Her adoring husband’s answer satisfies her effort to sustain her low self-esteem: "You may, little wasteful one," said he" (Mansfield, 1977: 69). She does not care that her husband considers her as an immature person as implied by his words ‘little wasteful one’ to address her. What is important for Rosemary Fell is the gratification from her husband that makes her happy and proud of herself.