

## Quiet Misogyny in the Bear Came Over the Mountain

Although Alice Munro's "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" is from a third-person point of view, the narrative structures around Grant's perspective. Through deliberate wording and phrases, Grant is subtly characterized as a misogynist. The short story shows that misogyny is not always the direct and outright hatred of women, but that it can also embody the quiet subtle perspective of viewing women as lesser beings. The first clue to Grant's perspective is when he describes Fiona's mother's leftist views as "tirades", a word that has a negative connotation that implies angry nonsense. This reveals that Grant does not see anything that Fiona's mother says as worthwhile or valuable; he dismisses her perspective entirely. Throughout the short story, Grant chooses to ignore the opinions and perspectives of women that contrast his and do not directly benefit him. When speaking of his unofficial dismissal from his position from the university, he states: "The feminists and perhaps the sad silly girl herself and his cowardly so-called friends had pushed him out just in time." His wording attempts to discredit the criticism that he received for his actions by redirecting blame elsewhere. The tone in this sentence is contemptful; he groups feminists with scornful descriptors for the people involved in order to victimize himself. The tone with which he uses the word feminists is not to describe people who rally for gender equality, but rather as an adversary to himself. He does not see the girl he took advantage of as someone who he wronged; instead she is reduced to a "sad silly girl" who overreacted. His subtle perspectives of the women he interacts with is also very telling of his views.

When it comes to his female students, Grant has both a fascination and a condescension towards them. He makes an overgeneralization of his female students by saying that they are attending university not for advancement in their careers and in their lives but rather "simply to

give themselves something more interesting to think about than their usual housework and hobbies.” He does not think that it is possible for women to want to be challenged academically or to have ambitions beyond being a housewife to their husbands. He believes that women’s lives must revolve around their husbands. He does not believe that the women in his class are capable of contributing intellectually to the university community just as he believed that Fiona’s mother’s political views were valuable. Using the subtlety of the language and diction, Alice Munro reveals that Grant views women as lesser beings who are incapable of being his equal either academically or intellectually.