**Studying the depiction of womanhood in Katherine Mansfield's works**

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Katherine Mansfield is a prominent figure in modern English literature, whose work explores the cross-cultural issues of womanhood. Mansfield’s "The Garden Party" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" consist of an innovative narrative style that is implied to critique traditional gender roles and social expectations while illustrating the complex process of female protagonists toward autonomy in a male-dominated society.

"The Garden Party" is a complex representation of womanhood shaped by Laura Sheridan as she navigates through her privileged position and social limitations placed on women during the early 20th century. The adherence to traditional gender roles and patriarchal values is exemplified by Mr. Sheridan and particularly Mrs. Sheridan, who plays a pivotal role in preserving respectability and femininity in society by forcing her daughter Laura to conform to Victorian standards [Firoz, Sebmen 2011: 54-56].

Initially, the female protagonist conforms to the traditions and social norms of her family; however, the tragedy profoundly impacted Laura Sheridan’s personal development, fostering compassion and realization of life beyond her privileged environment. K. Mansfield employs “death as a metaphor to comment on the superficiality of the upper class” and promotes a more profound insight into the complexities of life [Imdad, Mahrukh, Kainat 2023: 114].

Overall, Laura's quest serves as a representation of the struggle women face in reconciling societal expectations with their personal identities. This tension reflects the complex process of identity formation and the desire for self-expression within societal frameworks.

Another Mansfield’s work, “The Daughters of the Late Colonel,” is also devoted to the complexity of womanhood, considering the struggle for independence and societal expectations in the post-war setting, that employs feminist ideas and critique of the patriarchal society of the Victorian era. Protagonists Constance and Josephine contend to maintain their identity after the loss of the father because “their lifelong submission to his authority has stripped them of their potential for independence” [Nasrullah Mambrol, 2022: 1].

Katherine Mansfield uses the image of the late colonel as a symbol of the patriarchal society of that time. The tyrannical upbringing of the main characters crucially influenced women as individuals. Constance and Josephine serve as a representation of the female experience, portraying the horror of abusive behavior of the oppressor that required women to be submissive and prioritize societal demands instead of their own.

The author reflects on the fact that instead of grieving for a lost parent, protagonists struggle to fit into society without the father’s guidance.

Overall, the representation of female experience of Constance and Josephine highlights the damaging effects of everyday oppression, leading to isolation and stunted personal growth.

Katherine Mansfield offers a critical examination of the complexities of womanhood in "The Garden Party" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," exposing the tension between Victorian-era social expectations and personal desire. The narratives advocate individualism and autonomy as the vital tenets of women's empowerment.

Works Cited:

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