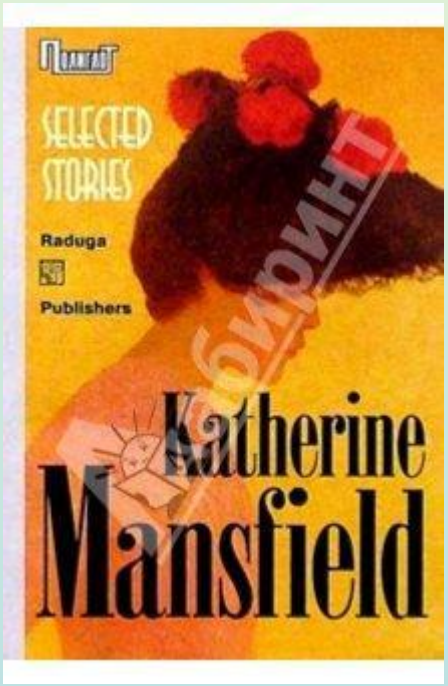
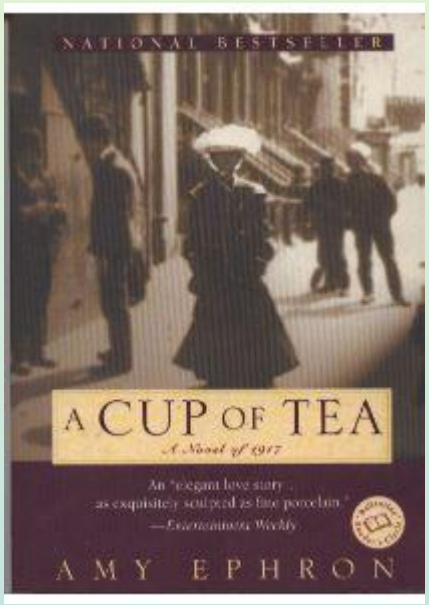
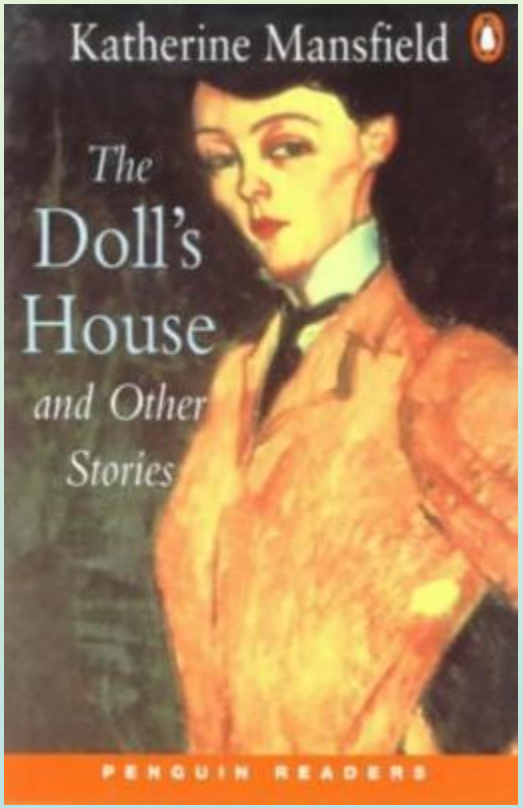
Stylistic devices in Katherine Mansfield's literary works







Biography of Katherine Mansfield

Katherine Mansfield (Kathleen Beauchamp) was born on the 14th of October, 1888 at Tinakori Road, Thorndon, Wellington. The house of her birth had newly been built for her parents, Annie and Harold Beauchamp. Harold Beauchamp was a clerk (later a partner) in the importing firm of Bannatyne and Co. and was also knighted.

The Mansfield family moved from Thorndon to Karori in 1893, where Mansfield would spend the happiest years of her childhood; she later used her memories of this time as an inspiration for the "Prelude" story.

Her first published stories appeared in the *High School Reporter* and the Wellington Girls' High School magazine in 1898 and 1899.

She became enamoured with **a cellist**, Arnold Trowell (Mansfield herself was an accomplished cellist, having received lessons from Trowell's father), in 1902, although the feelings were largely unreciprocated.

Mansfield wrote, in her journals, of feeling alienated to some extent in New Zealand, and, in general terms, of how she became disillusioned due to the repression of the Māori people—who were often portrayed in a sympathetic or positive light in her later stories, such as "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped".

She **moved to London** in **1903**, where she attended **Queen's College**, along with her two sisters. Mansfield recommenced playing the cello, an occupation that she believed, during her time at Queen's, she would take up professionally,but she also began contributing to the school newspaper, with such a dedication to it that she eventually became editor during this period.

She **met fellow writer Ida Baker** (also known as Lesley Moore), a South African, at the college, and **the pair became lifelong friends.**

Mansfield returned to her New Zealand home in 1906, only then beginning to write short stories. She had several works published in the *Native Companion* (Australia), which was her first paid writing work, and by this time she had her mind set on becoming a professional writer. It was also the first occasion on which she used the pseudonym 'K. Mansfield'.

She rapidly wearied of the provincial New Zealand lifestyle, and of her family, during this time, and two years later headed again for London. Her father sent her an annual subsidy of £100 for the rest of her life.

In later years, she would express both admiration and disdain for New Zealand in her journals, and she was never able to visit there again, partly due to her **tuberculosis**.

During her first year in London, she embarked on various relationships and published very little - only one poem and one story. Pregnant to Garnet Trowell, the son of her childhood music teacher in New Zealand, she married George Bowden, a singing teacher considerably older than herself, whom she left almost immediately.

After a brief reunion with Garnet, Mansfield's mother arrived in 1909. She quickly had her daughter despatched to **Bad Wörishofen**, in **Bavaria, Germany**. Mansfield had miscarried the child after attempting to lift a suitcase on top of a cupboard, although it is not known whether her mother knew of this miscarriage when she left shortly after arriving in Germany **(Mansfield was subsequently cut out of her mother's will**).

Mansfield's time in Bavaria was to have a significant effect on her literary outlook. She was introduced to the works of Anton Chekhov, a writer who proved to have greater influence upon her writing in the short-term than **Wilde**, on whom she had been fixated during her earlier years. She returned to London in January 1910, and had over a dozen works published in **A.R. Orage's *The New Age***, a socialist magazine and highly-regarded intellectual publication. **Her experiences of Germany formed the foundation of her first published collection, *In a German Pension*, in 1911, a work that was lauded by a number of critics. The most successful story from this work was *Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding*.**

Having returned to London, Mansfield met John Middleton Murry, the Oxford scholar and editor of *Rhythm,* in 1911. They became lovers and were later to **marry in 1918.** Mansfield became a co-editor of ***Rhythm***, later the short lived ***Blue Review***, in which more of her works were published. **She and Murry lived in various houses in England and briefly in Paris. The *Blue Review* folded, Murry was declared a bankrupt and they returned to London where Murry worked on the *New Statesman*.**

In January 1914, they moved to Paris, with the hope that the change of setting would make writing for both of them easier. Mansfield wrote only one story during her time there (*Something Childish But Very Natural*).
Mansfield had an affair in 1914, when she embarked on a brief relationship with French writer **Francis Carco**; **her visiting him, in Paris in February 1915, was retold in one of her short stories, *An Indiscreet Journey*.**

Mansfield's life and work were changed forever by the 1915 death of her brother, Leslie Heron "Chummie" Beauchamp,a soldier fighting with New Zealand's troops in France in World War I. She was shocked and traumatized by the experience, so much so that her work began to take refuge in the nostalgic reminiscences of their childhood in New Zealand. In a poem, describing a dream she had shortly after his death, she wrote:

By the remembered stream my brother stands
Waiting for me with berries in his hands...
'These are my body. Sister, take and eat.'

Mansfield entered into her most prolific period of writing post-1916, which began with several stories, including *Mr Reginald Peacock's Day* and *A Dill Pickle* being published in *The New Age*. Woolf and her husband, Leonard, who had recently set up Hogarth Press, approached her for a story, and Mansfield presented "Prelude", a story she had begun writing in 1915 as *The Aloe*. The story is centred around a family of New Zealanders moving home, with little external plot. Although it failed to reach a wider audience, and was little noticed and criticized upon its release in 1918, it later became one of Mansfield's most celebrated works.

"Miss Brill" the bittersweet story of a fragile woman living an ephemeral life of observation and simple pleasures in Paris, established Mansfield as one of the preeminent writers of the Modernist period, upon its publication in 1920's *Bliss*. The title story from that collection, **"Bliss"**, which involved a similar character facing her husband's infidelity, also found critical acclaim. She followed with the equally praised collection, ***The Garden Party***, published in 1922.

Mansfield spent her last years seeking increasingly unorthodox cures for her tuberculosis. In February 1922, she consulted the **Russian physician Ivan Manoukhin**. His "revolutionary" treatment, which consisted of bombarding her spleen with X-rays, caused Mansfield to develop heat flashes and numbness in her legs.

Mansfield suffered a fatal pulmonary haemorrhage in January 1923, after running up a flight of stairs to show Murry how well she was. **She died on January 9** and was buried in a cemetery in **the Fontainebleau District** in the town of **Avon**.

Mansfield proved to be a prolific writer in the final years of her life, and much of her prose and poetry remained unpublished at her death. Murry took on the task of editing and publishing her works.

His efforts resulted in two additional volumes of short stories in 1923 (***The Dove's Nest***) and in 1924 (***Something Childish***), the publication of her ***Poems***, ***The Aloe***, as well as a collection of critical writings (***Novels and Novelists***) and a number of editions of Mansfield's previously unpublished letters and journals.

Katherine Mansfield is widely considered one of the best short story writers of her period. A number of her works, including **"Miss Brill", "Prelude", "The Garden Party", "The Doll's House"**, and later works such as **“The Fly”**, are frequently collected in short story anthologies**. Mansfield also proved ahead of her time in her adoration of Russian playwright and short story writer Anton Chekhov, and incorporated some of his themes and techniques into her writing.**

Collections

- *In a German Pension* (1911),
- *The Garden Party: and Other Stories* (1922),
- *The Doves' Nest: and Other Stories* (1923),
- *Bliss: and Other Stories* (1923)
- The Montana Stories (1923) (Republished in 2001 by Persephone Books)
- *Poems* (1923),
- *Something Childish* (1924),first published in the U.S. as *The Little Girl*
- *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (1927, 1954), *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield* (2 vols., 1928–29)
- *The Aloe* (1930),
- *Novels and Novelists* (1930),
- *The Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (1937)
- *The Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield* (1939)
- *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (1945, 1974), *Letters to John Middleton Murry, 1913-1922* (1951),
- *The Urewera Notebook* (1978),
- *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* (1987),
- *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield* (4 vols., 1984–96)
- Vol. 1, 1903–17,
- Vol. 2, 1918–19,
- Vol. 3, 1919–20,
- Vol. 4, 1920–21,
- *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks* (2 vols., 1997),

Short stories

- "The Woman At The Store" (1912)
- "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" (1912)
- "Millie" (1913)
- "Something Childish But Very Natural" (1914)
- "The Little Governess" (1915)
- "Pictures" (1917)
- "Feuille d'Album" (1917)
- "A Dill Pickle" (1917)
- "Je ne parle pas français" (1917)
- "Prelude" (1918)
- "An Indiscreet Journey" (1920)
- "Bliss" (1920)
- "Miss Brill" (1920)
- "Psychology" (1920)
- "Sun and Moon" (1920)
- "The Wind Blows" (1920)
- "Mr Reginald Peacock's Day"
- "Marriage à la Mode" (1921)
- "The Voyage" (1921)
- "Her First Ball" (1921)
- "Mr and Mrs Dove" (1921)
- "Life of Ma Parker" (1921)
- "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1921)
- "The Stranger" (1921)
- "The Man Without a Temperament" (1921)
- "At The Bay" (1922)
- "The Fly" (1922)
- "The Garden Party" (1922)
- "A Cup of Tea" (1922)
- "The Doll's House" (1922)
- "A Married Man's Story" (1923)
- "The Canary"" (1923)
- "The Singing Lesson"
- "An Ideal Family"

“Sun and Moon”

“Sun and Moon” is a short story. It was first published in the *Athenaeum* on 1 October 1920, and later reprinted in *Bliss and Other Stories*.

Characters

- **Sun**
- **Moon**
- **Nurse**
- **Annie**
- **Mother**
- **Father**
- **the pianist**
- **Minnie**, the new cook.
- **Nellie**, the housemaid.

The plot

The children, Sun and Moon, are hanging around the house while a party is being prepared. They play games, then are sent off to bed. The party wakes them up; their parents find them out of their beds and instead of scolding them, they let them go downstairs for a bite - but Sun starts sobbing because Moon has eaten the nut from the centerpiece (the moment of ruined perfection, a recurring theme in Mansfield's work), and they are sent off to bed again.

Major theme

- the gap between children and adults

Stylistic devices

Simile:

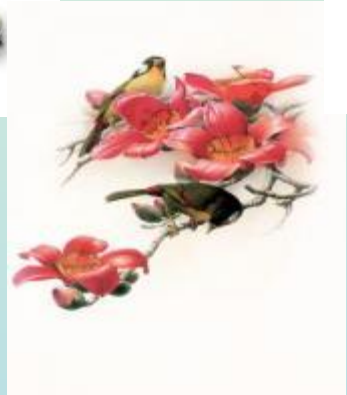
- the flower pots looked like funny awfully nice hats nodding up the path;
- there was a man helping in a cap like a blancmange;
- and you look like a sweet little cherub of a picture;
- there was a loud, loud noise of clapping from downstairs, like when it rains.

Repetition:

- And more and more things kept coming;
- Round and round he walked with his hands behind the back;
- Oh, the ducks! Oh, the lambs! Oh, the sweets! Oh, the pets!

Epithets:

Two silver lions, tiny birds, winking glasses and shining plates and sparkling knives and forks…



Metonymy:

- In the afternoon the chairs came, a whole big cart full of little gold ones with their legs in the air;
- She gave them each an almond finger…;
- …clean tiny games.

Hyperbole:

- He’s a perfect little ton of bricks.

Antithesa:

- Moon laughed,too; she always did the same as other people. But Sun didn’t want to laugh.

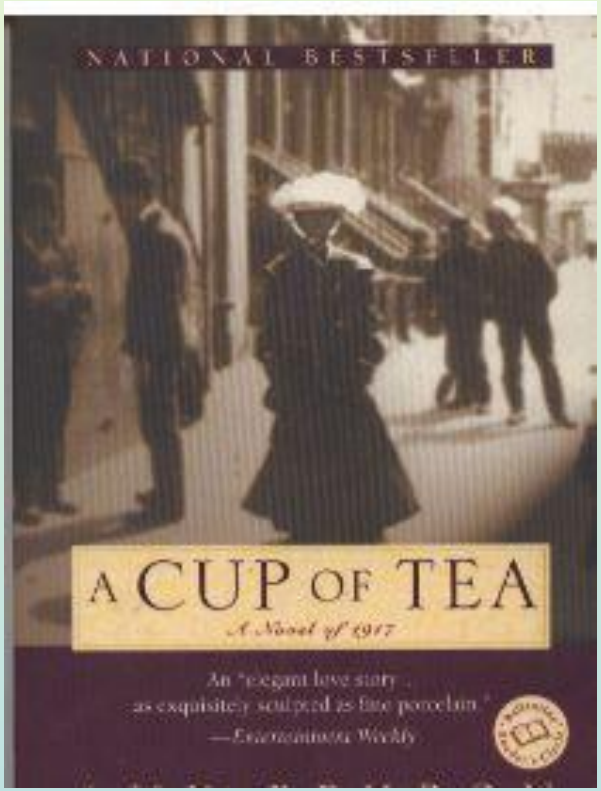
Metafor:

- …the salt cellars were tiny birds drinking out of basins.

Literary significance

The text is written in the modernist mode, without a set structure, and with many shifts in the narrative.

A Cup of Tea


NATIONAL BESTSELLER
A CUP OF TEA
A Novel of 1917
An "elegant love story . . .
as exquisitely sculpted as fine porcelain"
—Entertainment Weekly

“A Cup of Tea” is a short story. It was first published in the ***Story-Teller*** in May 1922.

It later appeared in ***The Dove's Nest and Other Stories***.

Characters

- **Rosemary Fell**, a rich woman
- the antiquarian on Curzon Street
- **Miss Smith**, the poor girl picked up and fed by Rosemary
- **Jeanne**, a housemaid
- **Philip**, Rosemary's husband

The plot

Rosemary Fell, a young, wealthy woman, goes shopping at a florist's and in an antique shop. Before going to the car, Rosemary is approached by Miss Smith, a poor girl who asks for enough money to buy tea. Instead, Rosemary drives the girl to her plush house. At the Fells' home, Miss Smith eats her fill. She then begins to tell Rosemary of her life when the husband, Philip, comes in. Although initially surprised, Philip recovers and asks to speak to Rosemary alone. In the library, Philip conveys his disapproval. When Rosemary resists dismissing Miss Smith, Philip tries another, more successful, tactic. He plays to Rosemary's jealousy by telling her how pretty Miss Smith is. Rosemary retrieves three pound notes, and, presumably, sends the girl away. This dismissal is a far cry from Rosemary's first vow to "Be frightfully nice to her" and to "Look after her." Later, Rosemary goes to her husband and informs him "Miss Smith won't dine with us tonight." She first asks about the antique box from the morning, but then arrives at her true concern: She quietly asks him, "Am I pretty?"

Major themes

- **class consciousness**
- **feminism**

Stylistic devices

Simile

- *"**It was like something** out of a novel by Dostoevsky, this meeting in the dusk."*

  Katherine Mansfield shows us suddenness of this event.

Anaphore

- ***Supposing she*** *took the girl home?* ***Supposing she*** *did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen?*

This stylistic device tells us that Rosemary doubted in her decision.

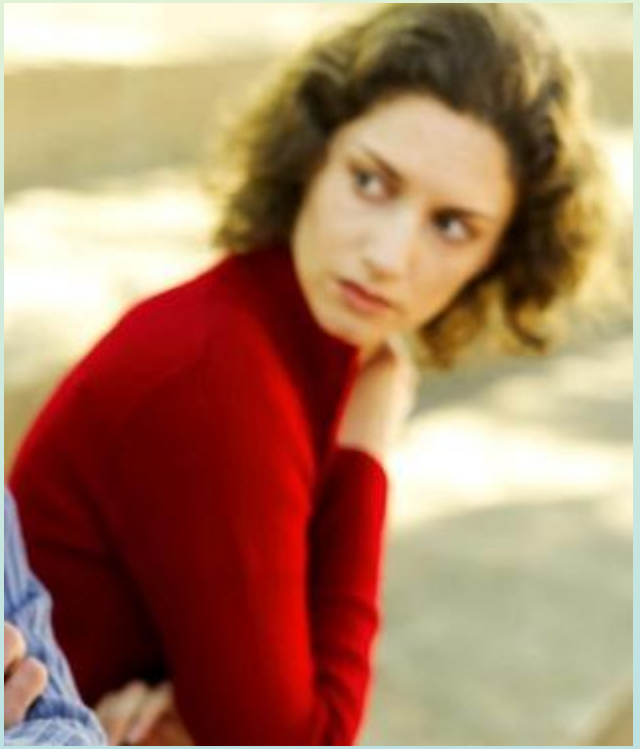
Epithets

- *…**beautiful big bedroom**, the **fire leaping on her wonderful lacquer**, her **gold cushions** and **the primrose** and **blue rugs**.*

These epithets describe the beauties of Rosemary's bedroom. The room was really beautiful.

Simile

- ***"She seemed to stagger like a child…"*** shows us that Miss Smith was really helpless and weak.



Metonymy

- ***"…thin birdlike shoulders…"*** tells us that this woman was fragile.

Epithets

- *"…the effect of that slight meal was* ***marvelous****; a new being,* ***a light, frail creature*** *with* ***tangled hair, dark lips, deep lighted eyes****…"*

  These epithets tell us that Miss Smith was more vivid after tea. I think she was born one more time.

Epithets

- *"…she's so **astonishingly pretty**."*

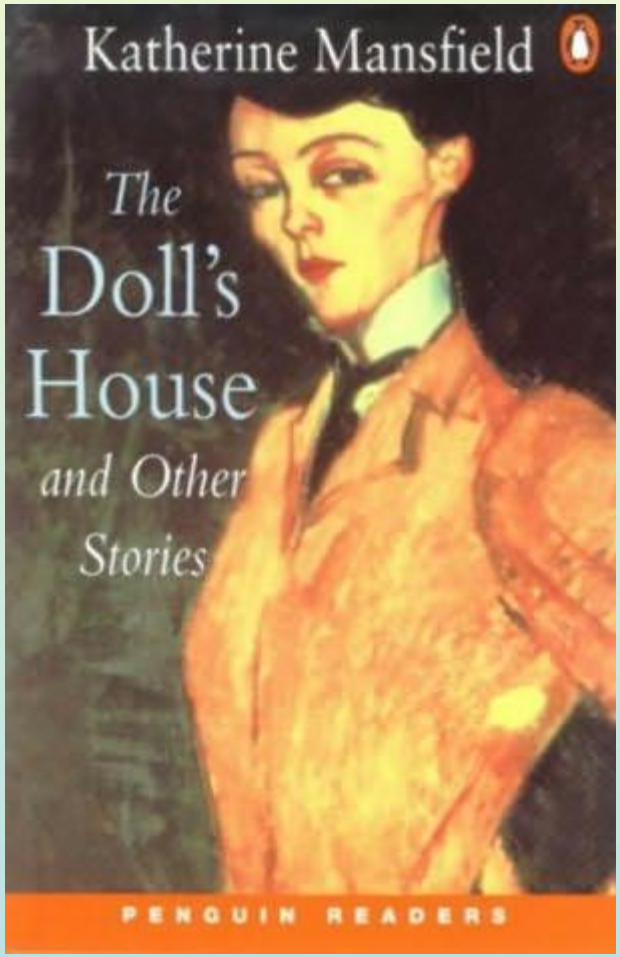
Said these words Philip wanted to make Rosemary nervous, that she went back the poor woman.

Repetition

- *"**I can't bear it**. **I can't bear it**. **I can't bear it** no more."*

  Katherine Mansfield wanted to show us that the poor woman was in despair of her life.

The Doll's House



“The Doll's House” is a short story. It was first published in *The Nation & the Anthenaeum* on 4 February 1922, and later appeared in *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*.An alternative title used by Mansfield in other editions was *At Karori*.

The plot

Mrs. Hay has given a doll's house to the Burnell children; it is minutely described, with especial emphasis on a lamp inside of it, which the youngest girl, Kezia, thinks is the best part of the doll house. The next morning they cannot wait to show it off to their school friends; Isabel bossily says she will be the one to decide who is allowed to come and see it in the house as she is the eldest. The Kelveys, two poor girls, Lil and "our" Else, will not be allowed to do so; Aunt Beryl talks Kezia out of letting them. Later, Isabel and two of her friends, Emmie Cole and Lena Logan, taunt the Kelveys about their low social status. Soon afterwards Kezia impulsively decides to show them the house anyway; Aunt Beryl, worried about an insisting letter from a certain Willie Brent, walks in on them, shoos away the Kelveys, scolds Kezia, then feels better. The Kelveys have managed to see the lamp though and Else smiles joyfully which is rare.And the story ends with them being silent once more.

Major theme

Class Consciousness : the school is portrayed as a melting pot or mixing of all social classes, and the Kelveys as the lowest of the social classes. The other children are discouraged from talking to them; they are outcasts.

Epithets:

- … an exquisite little amber lamp with a white globe.

Simile:

- …was like a little slab of toffee.
- Like two little stray cats they followed across the courtyard…

Simile:

- Lil hudding alone like her mother…
- …our Else was still as a stone.

Hyperbole:

The father and mother dolls…were really too big for the doll's house.

Anadiplosis:

…“Got something to tell you at playtime.” Playtime came and Isabel was surrounded.

Repetitions:

- But perfect, perfect little house!
- "It's true – it's true – it's true," she said.

Repetitions:

- …at the Kelveys eating out of their paper, always by themselves, always listening…

Anaphora:

"Watch! Watch me!
Watch me now!"

Anaphora:

Now she could see that one was in front and one close behind. **Now she could see that** they were the Kelveys.

Metonymy:

The Kelveys came nearer, and beside them walked their shadows, very long…

Metaphor:

- Dead silence.
- But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys…

Oxymoron:

…Wild with joy.

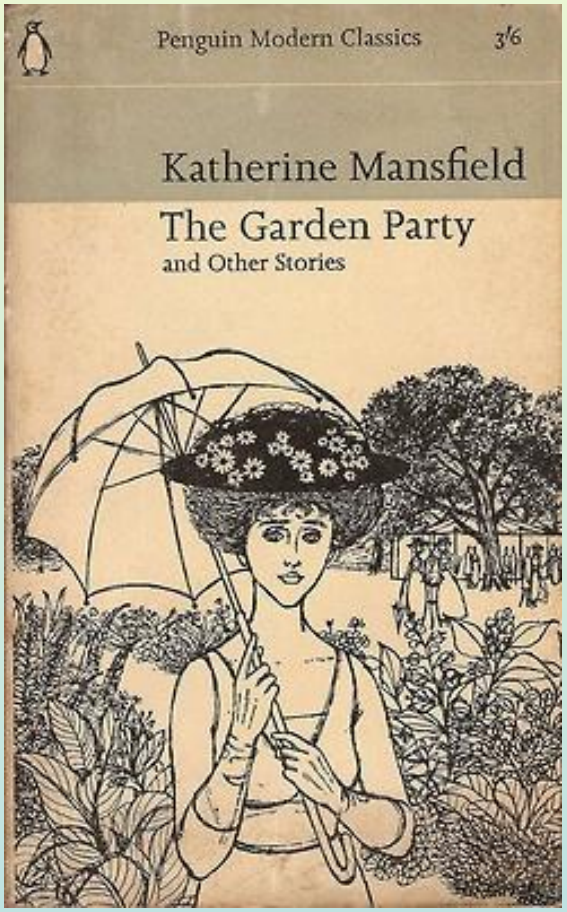
Personification:

- It seems to smile to Kezia, to say, “I live here”.

Literary significance

The text is written in the modernist mode, with minute details and haphazard narrative voices.

The Garden Party



“The Garden Party” is a short story. It was first published in the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* on 4 February 1922, then in the *Weekly Westminster Gazette* on 18 February 1922. It later appeared in *The Garden Party and Other Stories*.

Characters

- **Mrs. Sheridan**,
- **Laura Sheridan**, one of three girls(main)
- **The workers**, who put up a marquee in the garden
- **Meg Sheridan**, a second daughter
- **Jose Sheridan**, a third daughter
- **Laurie**, a brother
- **Kitty Maitland**, a friend of Laura and a party guest
- **Sadie**, a female house servant
- **Hans**, a male house servant
- **the florist**, who delivers lilies ordered by Mrs Sheridan
- **Cook**, a cook
- **Godber's man**, the delivery-man who brings in the cakes
- **Mr. Scott**, a lower-class neighbor who has just died
- **Em Scott**, the deceased's widow.
- **Unnamed referred to as 'Mrs. Scott's sister'**

The plot

The Sheridan family is preparing to host a garden party. Laura is supposed to be in charge, but has trouble with the workers who appear to know better, and her mother (Mrs. Sheridan) has ordered lilies to be delivered for the party without Laura's approval. Her sister Jose tests the piano, and then sings a song in case she is asked to do so again later. After the furniture is rearranged, they learn that their neighbor Mr. Scott has died. While Laura believes the party should be called off, neither Jose nor their mother agrees. The party is a success, and later Mrs. Sheridan decides it would be good to bring a basket full of leftovers to the Scotts' house. She summons Laura to do so. Laura is shown into the poor neighbors' house by Mrs. Scott's sister, then sees the widow and her late husband's corpse. The sight of his dead body brings her to tears, and she runs off back to her own house, where she falls sobbing into her brother's arms.

Major themes

- **Class consciousness**. Laura feels a certain sense of kinship with the workers and again with the Scotts. Her mother thinks it would embarrass them to receive flowers. An omniscient narrator also explains that as children Laura, Jose, Meg and Laurie were not allowed to go near the poor's dwellings, which spoil their vista.
- **Illusion versus reality**. Laura is stuck in a world of high class housing, food, family and garden parties. She then discovers her neighbour from a lower class has died and she clicks back to reality upon discovering death.
- **Sensitivity and insensitivity Death and Life**. The writer masterfully handles the theme of death and life in the short story. The realization of Laura that life is simply marvellous shows death of human being in a positive light. Death and life co-exist together and death seems to Laura merely a sound sleep far away from troubles in human life.

Katherine Mansfield used the metaphor "the blue was veiled with a haze of light gold" *that proved* if they had ordered the weather they couldn't have had more perfect day.

Metonymy

- “The daisy plants had been seemed to shine”, this metonymy underlines it was awfully beautiful plants;
- “stamped on each cheek”;
- “she flies”.

Oxymoron:

- “fearfully affected”;

Comparison:

- “bushes bowed down as though they had been visited by archangels”.

Literary significance

The text is written in the modernist mode, without a set structure, and with many shifts in the narrative.

The Fly

"**The Fly**" is a short story. The text was first published in *The Nation & Athenaeum* on 18 March 1922 and it later appeared in *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*.

Characters

- **Mr. Woodifield**, an old and infirm man, who is only allowed to leave his house on Tuesdays. He lives with his wife and daughter.
- **The boss**, a well-off friend of his, who has lost a son to World War I.
- **Macey**, the office boy.
- **The fly** the symbol of the story
- **Gertrude**, Mr. Woodifield's daughter

Plot

Woodifield, an old and infirm gentleman, is talking to the boss Woodifield, an old and infirm gentleman, is talking to the boss, his friend, who is five years older than he is and 'still going strong'. The latter apparently enjoys showing off his redecorated office to Woodifield, with new furniture and electric heating, yet an old picture of his deceased son. Woodifield wants to tell the boss something, but cannot remember what it was, when the boss offers him some whisky Woodifield, an old and infirm gentleman, is talking to the boss, his friend, who is five years older than he is and 'still going strong'. The latter apparently enjoys showing off his redecorated office to Woodifield, with new furniture and electric heating, yet an old picture of his deceased son. Woodifield wants to tell the boss something, but cannot remember what it was, when the boss offers him some whisky. After drinking, his memory is refreshed and Woodifield talks about a recent visit that "the girls" (his two daughters) made to their sons' graves. We now come to know that both their sons had died in the war Woodifield, an old and infirm gentleman, is talking to the boss, his friend, who is five years older than he is and 'still going strong'. The latter apparently enjoys showing off his redecorated office to Woodifield, with new furniture and electric heating, yet an old picture of his deceased son. Woodifield wants to tell the boss

Major themes

The inevitability of death and man's unwillingness to accept this truth. The story can also be read as an indictment of the brutal horror of World War I. Much attention has been paid to the central character of the boss. He has been seen as a symbol of malignant forces that are base and motiveless, a representative of the generation that sent its sons to their slaughter in a cruel war.

The presentation was prepared by

Arutyunova Anna

Group 06 – H

5 course

Slavyansk – on – Kuban

2011