



KATHERINE MANSFIELD IS A MASTER OF SHORT STORIES

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 11 th December 2022 Accepted: 11 th January 2023 Published: 20 th February 2023	This article is dedicated to the life and work of the famous New Zealand writer Catherine Mansfield. Her life is exemplary. Her diaries reflect her perseverance and tenacity. It teaches everyone the secrets of overcoming life's hardships. It inspires them to achieve their goals. Her short stories have a special place in world literature due to the perfection and uniqueness of their forms of artistic expression. In them, the writer penetrates deep into the human psyche and is able to impress and follow the reader.
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When we talk about the development of the story genre in world literature, we cannot do without talking about English literature. Katherine Mansfield has a special place in the development of this genre. Her work is important in developing the narrative genre in English and New Zealand literature. This is confirmed by the many unique stories she wrote during her short life and work. Katherine Mansfield (real name Kathleen Beecham) is one of New Zealand's most famous writers and was born on October 14, 1888, in Wellington, New Zealand. Her father, Harold Beecham, worked at a New Zealand bank. Katherine Mansfield had sisters Vera (1885) and Charlotte (1887) and a brother Leslie Heron (Chammy 1894). In 1893, Mansfield moved with her family to Karori, where she spent her happy childhood years. Later, memories of her childhood in Karori inspired her to write "Prelude", in 1918. In 1898, they returned to the city of Wellington. In 1898-1899, Katherine's first stories were published in the "High School Reporter" and "Wellington Girls" "High School magazine" of the school publishing house. In 1903, Mansfield went to study at Queen's College in London with her sisters. There, Katherine studies the cello. At the same time, her works are published in the school newspaper, and she even works as an editor of this newspaper. Already at that time, she began to be interested in the works of French writers and Oscar Wilde. Mansfield was also highly respected by her peers for taking responsibility for her life and work. Mansfield wrote in her diary about one of her exemplary qualities: "I was like a squirrel. At first, I would collect, collect and hide, and when the long winter came, I would reveal all my wealth..." [Биография Кетрин Менсфилд. <http://еленакузмина.блогспот.ком/>]

In 1906, Mansfield finished her studies in England and returned to New Zealand, where she

began writing her stories. Some of them are published by The Native Companion in Melbourne and are awarded royalties. This recognition planted the seeds of great dreams in her young heart. Gives her a strong incentive. As a result, she chooses her strict path. In the future, she will definitely decide to become a professional writer. We can learn this from the notes she wrote in her diary: "I must be a writer (1908)" ["Я должна быть писательницей " Л. Володарская. Кетрин Менсфилд и ее рассказы. Москва. Книга. 1989. Ст.15.] . She wrote down these sentences when she was 20 years old and chose the pseudonym, Katherine Mansfield. From those times, Mansfield's intense creative work began. In 1908, she left New Zealand for England. Even in the last years of her life, she could not return to her homeland due to tuberculosis. In 1909, she went to Belgium, then to Bavaria and during her travels to these places she was able to read Anton Pavlovich Chekhov's work for the first time. Mansfield was influenced by Chekhov's work even more than Oscar Wilde, whom she had read in her youth. In 1910, Mansfield returns to London. In February of this year, Katherine Mansfield met with the publisher of "The New Age" magazine Alfred Richard Orage and published more than ten creative works in the social direction in her magazine.

Based on her impressions of Germany, Mansfield published her collection German Pension (1911), which received critical acclaim. This collection also included the most famous story Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding. In December 1911, Mansfield met John Middleton Murray, editor of the magazine "Rhythm". John published her story "The Woman at the Store". This story was about murder. At this time, she was influenced by Fauvism (this direction was called "wild" in literature) and Chekhov's work.



From these years, her health started to deteriorate. In 1913, she came to Paris, where she could write only one story. This story was called "Something Childish But Very Natural". Mansfield's life was also full of financial difficulties. We can see this from the information she wrote in her diary: "Why don't I have a real home, a real-life... I'm no longer a girl - I'm a woman." I need things. Will I ever have them? Start writing in the morning, then have a quick lunch - and write and create again until the evening...". In October 1915, Mansfield's brother Leslie Beecham was killed in World War I on the French front. Mansfield is deeply saddened by the death of her brother. She does not know how to comfort herself. On such painful days, she also wrote poems dedicated to her brother's memory. In her poems, she expressed her sorrows and regrets at that time in a very moving way. In January 1917, Mansfield met the writer Virginia Woolf. At first, Mansfield does not make a good impression on her. But then Virginia Woolf recognizes her as the best female writer: "I was a little surprised at her mediocrity at first glance. However, when this impression is lost, she is very intelligent and inscrutable, and she rewards friendship. From 1917, Mansfield's intense period of creativity began with several stories. These are the stories "Reginald Peacock's Day" and "A Dill Pickle" published in "New Age" magazine.

In April 1917, Virginia Woolf and her husband Leonard asked Mansfield for a story at their recently opened "Hogarth Press". She offered them her "Prelude", which she started writing under the name "Aloe" in 1915. This work is devoted to the life of a New Zealand family (which, as we mentioned above, was written with the memory of the childhood years spent in her homeland), after its publication in 1918, the work failed to attract a wide audience. It is also rarely mentioned by critics. Later, Mansfield's "Prelude" will become one of her most famous works. In December 1917, Mansfield was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which was a huge blow to her. She fell into a deep depression.

In February 1918, she arrived in Bendol, France. Despite her illness, she continued to write stories. Here she wrote the story "I don't know French" ("Je ne parle pas francais"). This year, her story which was called "Bliss" was published. This story was about the fate of a woman who suffered from her husband's infidelity. The story was critically acclaimed. Later, this story became the title of her second collection of stories published in 1920. In 1918, Mansfield married John Murray. At the beginning of 1919, John Murry was appointed editor of the famous

Athenaeum weekly. Mansfield wrote over 100 reviews for this publication. However, these were published after Mansfield's death in a collection called *Novels and Novelists*, edited by John Murray.

Mansfield's condition continued deteriorating, returning to England in April 1919, her last trip. She felt that she was living the last years of her life and wrote it down in her diaries: "I am writing... I wish I could write all the stories if only I had time!" Her words show that despite her deteriorating health, she was full of creative inspiration and rushed to write down all the stories in her mind. Writing had already become the content of her life. In the summer of 1919, Mansfield spent time with Virginia Woolf, who became friends. Virginia Woolf had great respect for her as a writer. She wrote in her diary after Mansfield's death: "The only woman writer I have ever admired." In September 1919, Mansfield came to Italy, where she wrote the story "The Man Without a Temperament". The story was about a woman with an illness and her partner who was suffering. In the last years of her life, she started writing stories based on her life problems. In this story, she tried to show her life through the example of a sick woman and her husband. In 1921, Mansfield wrote her most important works, despite the further deterioration of her health. In February 1922, she came to Paris and wrote her last stories here - "The Fly" and "The Canary". When she wrote the story "The Canary", she dreamt of returning to her native New Zealand, where she spent her childhood years, but it remained a dream for her. Katherine Mansfield died on January 9, 1923, after a long illness. Unfortunately, most of her stories and poems were not published during her lifetime. After her death, her husband, John Murray, took over the job. With his effort, two collections of Mansfield's stories "The Dove's Nest" (1923) and "Something Childish" (1924) and the story "Aloe" (The Aloe), "Novels and Novelists", a collection of critical articles, several previously unpublished letters and diaries were published and presented to the public. Katherine Mansfield is considered one of the best short story writers of her time. Today, many schools are named after her. Karori School in Wellington, New Zealand has a statue of Mansfield as a tribute to her memory and work. In the French city of Menton, the street where the house where she lived and created is located is named after her. Furthermore, a New Zealand writer, who receives a scholarship in Katherine Mansfield's honour every year, will have the opportunity to work in the same house (Villa Isola Bella) in which Mansfield worked in. At the same time, the popular competition for the best story



held in New Zealand is also named after Katherine Mansfield.

If we look at the creative direction of Katherine Mansfield, we can see that she covered more social and psychological problems in her works. She was always interested in enigmatic subjects such as relationships between people, conflicts between family members, wealth and poverty, good and evil, and class conflicts.

For many years, critics have argued about the influence of English and Russian literature in Mansfield's work. Katherine Mansfield was an early novelist who grew up in New Zealand. She brought world literature closer to her national literature. Having learned and been influenced by them, she managed to portray the pain and dreams of her country and people in a lively, vital way. She was able to elevate the topics and ideas she wrote to the status of universal importance. For example, the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, who have been living without understanding each other in life, motivated her to create works on social and psychological topics. We should especially highlight her stories about the relationship between parents and children, such as "The little girl" and "New dresses". In the story "The Little Girl", Mansfield skillfully expressed how a little girl named Kes is nervously afraid in front of her father, stutters when she dares to speak in front of him, and even stutters when she speaks in front of her father as a result of this fear. A little girl was punished by her father for trying to make a birthday present from the necessary papers on his father's desk. During the story, the girl sees her father and mother always busy. However, it is necessary for parents to devote special time to give love to their children. Katherine Mansfield aimed to convey the same to the readers through the story. At the end of the story, the little girl, who is asleep, begins to accept that strict and scary father with her childish innocent eyes, as a loving father who is weak and tired of working to earn money for his family. With this, the writer wanted to reveal how innocent and pure the children's world is. The next story "New Dresses" condemns the parents' preference for one of their children in the family, their lack of love and mistrust of their children, and manages to express it vividly, vitally, and effectively. An important aspect of Katherine Mansfield's work is her contribution to the development of the short story genre. The Russian writer Chekhov had a great influence on this. Mansfield was inspired by his works and wrote several stories. For example, his story "The child who was tired" is clearly influenced by Chekhov's story "Sleepy" ("Спать

хочется"). Literary experts who have studied Mansfield's work have debated about it for many years. In addition, some of Mansfield's stories are inspired by Chekhov's works, so we can observe some similarities between them. Such similarities often arise from their writing styles. For example, both writers created a number of socio-psychological works about war, the problems caused by war, its negative consequences, the rivalry between officials, and the social evils in it. Of course, like other great writers, Mansfield's work has its own characteristics that distinguish it from other authors. When she wrote a story, she started the story by describing the setting and in doing so, she paid attention to the smallest details. She tried to express the appearance, situation, outlook, inner world and inner experiences of the hero of the story. She paid particular attention to showing the inner world and thoughts of the characters. Until now K. Mansfield's works have been reprinted several times. Including a collection of poems [Poems. 1923], short stories [Prelude. 1918], diaries [The Notebooks. 1997], letters [The Letters. 2 vols, 1928-1929], a collection of stories that aroused great interest among readers. Katherine Mansfield has earned a well-deserved place in world literature through the works she created during only 35 years of her life and 15 years of creative work. Although she continued the tradition of Chekhov in her work, her original, unique stories make up the majority. For this reason, interest in the writer's works never fades. The universal problems she raised are always relevant. Katherine Mansfield lives on in her works.

RESOURCES:

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