

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion and Suggestions

Literature displays life experiences through the language art that heightens one's response. Reading literary works is a means to familiarize students with the English language as well as the culture of the English native speakers. To facilitate their access to literary texts, adapted books are prepared to lessen reading obstacles: linguistic, literary as well as cultural difficulties. For this, the Oxford University Press offers a collection of Katherine Mansfield's nine short stories adapted by Rosalie Kerr in the level five version of "The Garden Party and Other Stories." Besides "The Garden Party," the stories in this collection include "Feuille d' Album," "The Doll's House," "Pictures," "The Little Governess," "Her First Ball," "The Woman at the Store," "Millie," and "The Lady's Maid." The book widens the readers' view on life through various significant situations and careful modification for above intermediate readers. As Mansfield's works are subtle and delicate both in ideas and literary art, the reteller needs to balance the readers' accessibility and the maintenance of the meanings and effects. This study explores the themes and literary techniques of the original version, the simplifying strategies as well as the changed effects by investigating and comparing the original and the adapted versions.

#### **Mansfield's Short Stories: Themes and Literary Techniques**

The investigation reveals that the authors' themes are developed and enhanced by her literary devices.

##### 1. Themes

In this collection of short stories, there are five major themes: initiation, isolation and loneliness, class distinction, hardship of the poor, and human instincts.

Initiation is related to one's psychological development from naivety to maturity. The protagonists' experiences contribute to their learning process. This theme appears in "The Garden Party," "Her First Ball," "The Little Governess," and "Feuille d' Album." On the theme of isolation and loneliness, "The Woman at the Store," "Millie," and "Feuille d' Album" take the readers to the main characters' isolated lives. The author shows that isolation and loneliness can occur to both married or single persons. She also implies that isolation can create destructive outcomes while compassion and love for others can end loneliness. The criticism against class distinction is delicately but effectively suggested through the middle-class's maltreatment of the lower-class in "The Garden Party" and "The Doll's House." Here, different living conditions of the people from the two classes are also vividly depicted to show social discrimination and to call for the readers' sympathy. "Pictures" and "The Lady's Maid" further focus on hardship of the poor, demonstrating their struggle for survival and the rich's exploitation. The protagonists' freedom and dignity are to be sacrificed for survival. The stories of human instincts are presented in "The Woman at The Store" and "Millie" which uncover the complexity of human mind, especially the dark side of life which contains sexual desires, rage, and violence. In "Millie," Millie's spontaneous kind response to help the helpless criminal boy conflicts with her urge to right the wrong. All these themes are expertly conveyed through sophisticated literary styles.

## 2. Notable Literary Techniques

The major literary techniques discussed in the study are plot, characterization, symbolism and her language style involving figurative language and indirectness.

The author rejects the conventional plot and prefers the "slices of life" technique which neither offers definite beginning nor conclusive ending. The stories are left with open-endedness to challenge the readers' interpretation as well as giving surprises. For example, in "Feuille d' Album," the story unexpectedly stops at Ian French's giving an egg to the girl with whom he falls in love, leaving readers to conclude the meaning of the story themselves. Very interesting is her use of an

incomplete dialogue in “The Lady’s Maid.” Here, only the words of the protagonist who is the narrator are presented, requiring the readers’ participation in completing the unsaid parts for a full understanding of the story.

Mansfield’s characterization is another key device to convey her messages. Many of the characters are made clear through free indirect speech or interior monologue and setting. Interior monologue presents the characters’ thoughts blended with those of the narrators without any signals. This helps to reveal the characters’ mental pageants as well as the depth of their psychological states. Good examples can be found in “Pictures” and “The Little Governess.”

A character’s psyche and situations are often suggested in the settings as seen, for instance, in “Millie” when the protagonist’s dry and remote place highlights her life of isolation and sterility. Another example is when the joyous daytime and places suggest the main character’s optimistic view towards life and nighttime and a disgusting place hint at the protagonist’s recognition of the dark side of life, as seen in “The Garden Party” and “The Little Governess.”

The use of symbols also marks the author’s attention on creating vivid and subtle characterization. Private as well as Freudian symbols are used for particular effects. An example is the use of the doll’s house to represent the middle class world, hinting at the hypocrisy and their minimized spirituality. In “The Woman at the Store,” sexual symbols can be found in the rain and horse-riding.

Frequently found as well are well-crafted imagery and figurative language which intensify the readers’ emotions and the literary impacts. For instance, in “Her First Ball,” the opening scene with images of dancing lamp-posts, houses and fences prepares the readers for the lively atmosphere of the ball. On the other hand, the author allows the readers to discover by themselves the meaning through what is presented or what is omitted. This challenges the readers’ intellectual and emotional involvement. An example is in “The Garden Party” when Laura’s words to describe life is dropped.

With unconventional plot, subtle characterization as well as psychological exploration through free indirect speech, symbols and suggestive or implicit statements rather than explicit ones, Mansfield’s works can be difficult for

inexperienced readers whose linguistic and literary experiences are limited. This calls for text adaptation.

### **Adapting Strategies in Retelling Mansfield's Selected Short Stories**

In studying the reteller's adapting strategies, the use of lexical, syntactic as well as figurative patterns in the original version are comparatively analyzed with the those of the adapted version. The examination demonstrates the reteller's five adapting strategies: addition, deletion, substitution, interpretive restatement and simplifying figurative language. Addition includes providing details such as modifiers, further explanations, and marks of interior monologue to clarify difficult points in the text. Deletion is done on too complex or unnecessary components covering vocabulary, ornaments (modifiers, imagery, description, conversation, fillers and interjections) and ambiguous texts. Substitution involves the replacing of uncommon terms and expressions (words, colloquialism and idiomatic expressions, non-standard English, and foreign expressions) and complex syntactic patterns (passive voice and adjectival phrases) by easier counterparts. Interpretive restatement offers the readers the key ideas as well as the meanings implicit in the texts through the reteller's generalization and direct restatements. Simplifying figurative language gives literal restatement and simpler forms of figurative language. With those strategies, the original text is made shorter and clearer while the author's key messages are conveyed through a more approachable language style.

### **The Altered Effects**

In analyzing the altered effects, the effectiveness of stylistic choices in the original version and that of the adapted version are compared. It is found that the adapted version generally maintains the essence: themes and literary devices as the retold book belongs to the level five which is next to the most advanced level. The modified stories are about 75% of the original length, keeping the themes and unconventional "slices of life" presentation and much of the author's language style. However, the shorter and more clarified text is less sophisticated because complex

and ambiguous or subtle parts are significantly eliminated, leaving it less interactive and less emotionally intense.

The reteller's adaptation has fulfilled the purpose of Oxford University Press in enabling inexperienced readers to appreciate the author's works even though the literary effects are slightly reduced. With the reteller's systematic considerations on difficult points in a literary work, an adapted book can be regarded, based on this comparative study, a significant gateway toward foreign or inexperienced readers' development of their language skills while extending and enriching their experience through literature. Even though it is, by no means, a substitute for an authentic text, a good retold text can be attractive, being specially catered for specified readers.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

Besides short stories, other genres of fiction such as detective stories or novels are also simplified. It is interesting to see the adapting process used in these retold works, especially, those of very different literary styles. This will give a fuller picture on difficult stylistics students of literature should learn to cope with.

Another interesting study would be a comparison of a literary work adapted for an elementary level and that for an advanced level. Such analytical comparison would reveal a profile of difficulties students encounter at different levels.