

Name

Professor

Class

Date

Miss Brill

Miss Brill is a story about a woman who lives a superficially bi-faceted life. The author, Katherine Mansfield walks us through the life of the main character, Miss Brill, which is in the essence a window through which we are exposed to her behavioral traits. Through a second person perspective, we see the reality of Miss Brill's existence as portrayed through the series of her thoughts. Mansfield develops and shapes Miss Brill, her main character in a way that portrays her nature as a lonely, proud, delusional and emotional character. She goes ahead to empower her character through idealism and fantasy.

Miss Brill is revealed as a lonely woman as the story begins with her sitting in a French Public garden 'Jardins Publiques' alone. She holds a fur coat so dear to her, engaging it in a conversation. Initially, the reader is made to think that Miss Brill is crazy as she is directly addressing a fur coat: an inanimate object. She personifies it for the coat looks like a fox, with a tail and tiny eyes. As the story unfolds, we discover that she is a bored and lonely figure. This is portrayed through the thoughts she shares over her fur coat. She had taken it from its box where she had kept it for years and shook out the moth-powder, brushed it then rubbed life into its little dim eyes. She only wore the coat during the cold, but she had decided on it anyway, even though the sky was fine (pg1). The author describes the spectacle whereby the fur's sad little eyes spoke back to Miss Brill asking what had been happening to it. This

statement portends the loneliness that is going to be unraveled towards the end of the story. It conjectures the reality Brill lives in over the life from her imagination. Brill lives alone, in a tiny house and as an English woman working in a French environment, she finds it challenging to make new friends. From this fur coat, we discover Brill's life exposed as somewhat lonely and boring. The box she takes her fur coat from is the projection of her lonely room, where she leaves to search for life by making ritualistic trips to the public garden during Sunday afternoons. The public garden rubs life into her, same way as getting the fur coat out of its box.

To add to her loneliness, Miss Brill is full of prejudice and self-endowment. This is because of the kind of power she thinks she harbors by the feeling of her ability to connect into everyone's thoughts. She has even allocated herself a special seat in the park where she thinks she can monitor closely all the events that are going on in the park (pg1). As the feeling of her 'specialness' encapsulates her egocentric fantasy, Miss Brill imagines herself playing a key role in her imagined band in the park. Miss Brill mentions that she is in the primary group while the 'other' people in the stands are her accompaniment. Miss Brill actually has the feeling that she is the one connecting all the activities in the park and without her, there is no harmony. She even goes ahead to think that the band is waiting for her to cue-in for the performance to go on. The liveliness through which she describes the band, as 'louder and gayer', reflects how uplifted her mood is. Miss Brill also glorifies her position in the park as godly as possible where she visualizes all thoughts that go on in the people's mind. She even gives herself the power to direct conversations, run activities and determine the situations through her observational eavesdropping. Brill develops this thought for she sees herself as the ultimate conductor, she considers herself as a model, a kind of miniature leader whom everybody looks up to. It is a self-conceited deduction, making us probably believe she does not get attention, which adds up to her being single.

Through the projection of her inner thoughts, Mansfield portrays Miss Brill as one whose life is a play and the stage being the Jardins Publiques. Miss Brill, a delusional woman in denial of her age through her introversive tendencies, opts to live in a world of fantasy rather than accept the harsh reality presented by the real world at large. She keeps referring to an old man at the park as invalid but that thought happens to be a regressive reflection (pg3). She does not understand herself, but takes pleasure in engaging other people through her idealism which has become a lifestyle she is accustomed to. This is seen when she explains the events the previous Sunday's events where she says nothing would please her (pg2). She engages everyone around her in her imagination, dresses them up and gives them roles in which they will dance according to her tune. This is portrayed when she names the young people who come to sit by her on the bench as a hero and heroine in her play (pg3). She goes ahead to give them parts but after she eavesdrops in what they are saying, she gets rebuffed back to her reality where the young girl calls her old (pg3). Miss Brill is awakened to the reality that she was a lonely figure in the public garden, in fact, she is an old woman who sees the ageing in others but is not ready to embrace the idea she is old herself..

Lastly, Miss Brill is discovered as an impulsive, critical and fragile character towards the end of the story. This is observed towards the end of her play when her dream of her being in charge within her fantastical world is harshly ruined by the two little heroes. The young people rudely end the illusions where they drop the harsh reality on Miss Brill. They go ahead to gang up on her, making her realize the false image she had donned in her 'manuscript' as fictional. The two young people divert attention from their argument and end up blaming the presence of Miss Brill as to inhibiting them from indulging in a romantic activity (pg3). Her feelings are hurt and she ends up dejected for the mood she had created for herself, making her self the center of her own universe gets harshly and abruptly trampled on, demoting her position as just a character: an undermined character. Miss Brill's emotions and self-image

transition from pleasure, then pride and end up in dejection. This takes us back to the image of the woman who wore an ermine toque. She gets so hurt to an extent she passes by the baker without buying her routine honey cake. Miss Brill gets home alienated from her pleasant imaginations that used to be aroused by her custom visits to the park. She discovers she is dispensable; she is no longer the object of attention but ridicule. This makes her sad, as illustrated when she locks her fur coat back into the box when she thinks it starts crying.