# 68. Social Alienation and Loneliness in Mansfield's "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel"[1]

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## Abstract

The concept of alienation is used to characterize a person's lack of interest in and/or incapacity to make a meaningful connection with others, even with themselves, with the physical world, and with institutions including social, political, and religious ones. This notion, which also represents the era Katherine Mansfield lived in and the kind of life she led, can be applied to examine her short stories "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel", published in *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922) collection. In the narratives, Miss Brill and the Pinner Sisters behave in a way that reflects their social alienation in society, however, Mansfield uniquely addresses the issue. In "Miss Brill", first published in 1920, the old lady becomes vulnerable due to her desire to interact with others in the Jardins Publiques every Sunday, which eventually causes her to realize how estranged she is from the people around her. As opposed to Miss Brill, Mansfield portrays the Pinner sisters as being socially isolated because of their self-induced oppression. The demands of their father have so thoroughly dominated Constantia and Josephine's lives that they have never had an opportunity to form their own unique identities. The death of their father could be a chance for the daughters to awaken, allowing them to break free from the colonel's authority and discover that a life outside is possible. But still, the internalized oppression of the women keeps them from staying connected with others and being free. This article discusses how Mansfield handles the issue of social alienation and loneliness by using spinsters with different lifestyles and how solitude negatively affects their daily routine.

**Keywords:** social alienation, isolation, loneliness, Miss Brill, The Daughters of the Late Colonel

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# Mansfield'in "Miss Brill" ve "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" Öykülerinde Sosyal Yabancılaşma ve Yalnızlık[3]

**Öz**

Yabancılaşma kavramı, bir kişinin başkalarıyla, hatta kendisiyle, fiziksel dünyayla ve sosyal, politik ve dini olmak üzere kurumlarla anlamlı bir bağ kuramaması ve/veya ilgisiz olmasını tanımlamak için kullanılır. Katherine Mansfield'in yaşadığı dönemi ve yaşadığı hayatı da temsil eden yabancılaşma kavramı, *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922) koleksiyonunda yayınlanan "Miss Brill ve "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" adlı kısa öykülerini incelemek için çok uygundur. Öykülerde Miss Brill ve Pinner kız kardeşler, toplumda sosyal yabancılaşmayı yansıtacak şekilde davranış sergilerler, ancak Mansfield konuya benzersiz bir şekilde yaklaşmaktadır. İlk olarak 1920'de yayınlanan "Miss Brill"'de, yaşlı kadın her Pazar parkta insanlarla etkileşime girme arzusu nedeniyle kolay incinir hale gelir ve sonunda bu, etrafındaki insanlara ne kadar yabancılaştığını fark etmesine neden olur. Mansfield, Miss Brill'in aksine, Pinner kız kardeşleri, kendi kendini baskı altında tutmaları nedeniyle sosyal olarak izole edilmiş kişiler olarak tasvir eder. Babanın talepleri, Constantia ve Josephine'in hayatına o kadar hâkim olmuştur ki, kendi eşsiz kimliklerini inşa etme fırsatları hiç olmamıştır. Babanın ölümü, kızlar için albayın otoritesinden kurtulmalarına ve dışarıda bir yaşamın mümkün olduğunu keşfetmelerine olanak tanıyan bir uyanma şansı olabilirdi. Fakat yine de kadınların üzerindeki içselleştirilmiş baskı, onları başkalarıyla iletişim kurmaktan ve özgür olmaktan alıkoymaktadır. Bu makale, Mansfield'in farklı yaşam tarzlarına sahip, evlenmemiş orta yaşlı kadınlar aracılığıyla sosyal yabancılaşma konusunu nasıl ele aldığını ve yalnızlığın günlük yaşamlarını nasıl olumsuz etkilediğini ele almaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** sosyal yabancılaşma, izolasyon, yalnızlık, Miss Brill, The Daughters of the Late Colonel

## Introduction

The concept of alienation, studied by philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists for centuries, is applied to describe a person's lack of interest in and/or inability to form a meaningful connection with other people, even with themselves, or with the physical world, as well as with institutions such as social, political, and religious ones. It has a long history but has gained popularity with modernism. In his book *Alienation*, Richard Schacht (1970) describes the Latin origins of the word and states that its meaning comes from "the verb alienare (to make something another's, to take away, remove). Alienare, in turn, derives from alienus (belonging or pertaining to another). And alienus derives ultimately from alius (meaning "other" as an adjective, or "another" as a noun)" (p. 1). Since antiquity, the word has been employed in a wide variety of contexts because numerous factors can lead to alienation, such as social isolation, political suppression, psychological situations, and economic conditions. For instance, Eric

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and Mary Josephson (1962) assert that the older meaning of alienation "denote[s] an insane person; aliene in French, alienado in Spanish are older words for the psychotic, the thoroughly and absolutely alienated person. ('Alienist' in English, is … used for the doctor who cares for the insane)" (p. 56). It appears that many subsequent meanings of the term borrow its core ideas from traditional usage, but many scholars associate alienation with the 20th century and beyond; in fact, with the modernist movement, which roughly spanned the years 1890 to 1950. Concerning the usage of the concept in the 20th century, this study discusses the effects of the sense of alienation and solitude in the daily lives of spinsters in "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" by the 20th-century author Katherine Mansfield, who reflects on the discontinuities and tensions of modern life in her stories.

With the rapid change in life and culture after the First World War, people found themselves in an age of doubt and fragmentation. Chaos, disorder, fears, and frustration on the one hand, and the collapsing traditional values on the other hand, including a loss of faith in God and man along with agony and anxiety, estrangement, and loneliness, rendered life completely absurd and senseless. (Saleem and Baniata, 2013, p. 283). In this setting, the meaning of alienation has also transformed. In the 20th century, the idea of alienation, which refers to the state of modern man, becomes a significant literary theme because modern humans are separated from society due to their fragile identities, which leaves them in a meaningless, powerless, and detached situation. Thus, socially alienated people start to live outside the norms of society and are excluded from social life. The community does not also wish to include them as a member. Eric and Mary Josephson (1962) describe alienation in modern times with these words:

> alienation has been used by philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists to refer to an extraordinary variety of psycho-social disorders, including loss of self, anxiety states, anomie, despair, depersonalization, rootlessness, apathy, social organization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism, and the loss of beliefs or values. (pp. 12-13)

The excerpt shows that the definition of alienation is expanded because it is not static, which modern man is either in or not in. Essentially, the idea of alienation, derived from Hegel, has developed in the writings of Karl Marx, who defined it as people's estrangement from a product, the act of production, their fellow beings, and human nature. Similarly, Weber looks into the idea of alienation, focusing on how people become separated from meaningful social relationships and their true selves. To describe how alienation is felt in modern society, Erich Fromm mainly relied on Marx's notions. Fromm (1956), using words directly taken from Marx's work on the topic, characterized alienation as "a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien … estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts" (p. 120). Accordingly, people feeling alone and helpless, are alienated from their identities, from their own emotions, and one another, and get into a sense of isolation. In a word, human beings have started to experience various types of alienation including psychological, social, political, and economic (Marxist) alienation.

In the sociological context, alienation connotes the distancing of people from the social world and the culture it carries. Melvin Seeman (1959) categorizes the main protagonists of alienation in modern society as "the unattached, the marginal, the obsessive, the normless, and the isolated individual[s]" (p. 783). Seeman (1959), by employing Marx's and Weber's perspectives, proposes a theory of social alienation that includes five different characteristics: "powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement" (p. 786). It is important to think of social alienation as a gradual process that progresses in steps. According to this idea, alienation develops in stages, starting with the individual's inability to rule or alter his circumstances, which causes a sense of meaninglessness in the situation in which he finds himself, which is the source of rejection of the norms and values of a society that forces and holds him in this situation, which causes social estrangement with the members of this

society, and ultimately causes social isolation. Thus, interpersonal and social ties between people are impacted by social alienation.

In light of the definitions and comments of the critics, it is undeniable that Mansfield includes the theme of social alienation and various estranged, lonely, frustrated, and isolated characters in her stories. It is known that Mansfield's modernist manifesto has been influenced by the chaotic atmosphere of the 20th century and shaped according to the First World War. After Mansfield's brother's death, as her husband John Middleton Murry (1954) clarifies, a number of her friends passed away in the war: "No single one of Katherine's friends who went to the war returned alive from it. This will explain the profound and ineradicable impression made upon her by the war" (p. 107). She feels responsible for narrating the reality of her time because the social, physical, and psychological turmoil caused by the conflict has to be taken into account. Mansfield's disappointment with the attitude of politicians throughout the war can be deduced from her letters to her husband and friends. Kaplan (1991) explains the situation with the following words: "Mansfield's growing personal isolation – although caused by her increasingly debilitating illness – reflects as well her disassociation from politics and from efforts for social change, a severance that may have resulted from her association with Murry and her exclusion from the dominant centers of cultural power." (p. 190). A close reading of her letters and diary shows that Mansfield starts to feel deeply depressed and disillusioned in this environment. Even though she is constantly surrounded by supportive and caring people, the author nonetheless experiences loneliness. Because of this, finding parallels between Mansfield's characters and Mansfield herself is not difficult. Although her characters have different lifestyles, unsurprisingly, almost all share the same issue – loneliness and alienation. These are hopeless, disappointed, and exasperated characters who are struggling to find tranquility in both the world and themselves.

In this context, Mansfield's main characters in "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" serve as representations of social alienation in diverse contexts and from varied angles. The old lady, Miss Brill, desires to interact with others in the Jardins Publiques, but, in the end, she realizes how estranged she is from the people around her. Unlike Miss Brill, Mansfield shows the Pinner sisters as being socially isolated because their father has been a very dominant figure in Constantia and Josephine's lives. They have never had a moment to form their identities and as a result of this, they have been trapped in the vicious circle of self-oppression. The spinsters are unable to maintain relationships with others or experience freedom because of their internalized suppression. Based on the social alienation theory of Seeman, it can be interpreted that the alienation of Miss Brill and Pinner sisters occurs in phases, beginning with the spinsters' powerlessness to change their physical environment and people around them which leads to a sense of meaninglessness which results in their social estrangement and isolation from human beings. Consequently, Mansfield narrates in these stories how solitude and alienation negatively affect the spinsters' social lives.

**Social Alienation of Miss Brill and Pinner Sisters**

Elleke Boehmer (2011) asserts in her essay on "Mansfield as Colonial Modernist: Difference Within" that "modernism represented an unfolding of different, interacting responses to the predicament of modernity, frequently expressed as a problem of self-alienation" (p. 58) then Kimber and Wilson (2011) claim that Katherine Mansfield is the "most iconic, most representative writer" of modernism (p. 1). Most critics would agree that Katherine Mansfield played a vital role in shaping modernism. She consistently handles the theme of alienation and loneliness, the spirit that reflects the time in which she lived and the kind of life she led, in her short stories. She lived in the turbulent social and cultural climate of the early 20th century and because of this environment, she felt a sense of alienation which influenced her perspective on life and was reflected in her creative works. "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters of the

Late Colonel", published in *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922) collection, are among the well-received stories dealing with this topic. The speeches and behaviors of spinsters - Miss Brill and the Pinner Sisters - in the stories reflect their social isolation and estrangement in society. Mansfield, however, approaches the issue in each of the stories in a unique way.

In the first story, the main character, Miss Brill, is initially seen removing her priceless fur necklet from its box. She is a spinster who spends her days teaching English at a school near Jardins Publiques in a French town. She goes to the public park once a week because she feels lonely and wants to exist in and interact with the outside world. However, because of her curiosity and desire to engage with others, she becomes vulnerable, which finally leads her to realize how distant she is from the people she once thought were the source of her joy in life. While Miss Brill longs for conversation, neither the young couple nor the elderly people pay attention to her. Throughout the story, the woman's behaviour and her way of thinking about her life prove that she does not communicate with her friends or relatives much. She is even isolated from the reader; we never find out her first name. Only the title Miss is given to the reader, indicating that she is an unnecessary spinster and a one-dimensional character lacking in depth.

She constantly tries to get rid of her loneliness and do something meaningless to avoid thinking about it. To forget her aloneness, she has a habit of watching and listening to people in the park: "She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn't listen, at sitting in on other people's lives just for a minute while they talked round her." (Mansfield, 1923, p. 182) This shows that by observing the lives around her, she feels like a part of the community. She is always disappointed when the people near her do not carry on a conversation. For example, the old couple, who don't talk, frustrates her because they do not offer her any meaningful opportunity for connection. As Middleton points out: "The tragedy of her alienation is that she seeks unreal social contacts, not actual communications in society, but "stolen" communications between other individuals" (1966, p. 84).

The poignancy of the story lies in the attempt of a lonely individual to overcome her solitude by establishing an imaginative communion with strangers rather than a real relationship. She sees all the people, in their separate interactions, as being part of an elaborate stage production. The statement made by Shakespeare in *As You Like It* (1623) appears to be taken literally by Miss Brill: "All the world's a stage" (1997, p. 83) for her and they were all "on the stage". (Mansfield, 1923, p. 188). Each person has a role in this stage: "They weren't only the audience, not only looking on; they were acting" (Mansfield, 1923, p. 188). The young laughing ones are the key characters because they transform society with their energy. Little children run among people. The resolute and brave voices of the males soon join. In the end, Miss Brill and the other nearly all old people sitting on the benches accompany them. For her, everyone in the park represents a distinct character in this play of life, both literally and symbolically. She imagines herself as being such a part of the production as a performer: "Even she had a part and came every Sunday. No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was part of the performance after all" (Mansfield, 1923, p. 188). Her sense of worth is linked to how she thinks others perceive her, and she believes she plays a crucial role in this show that takes place every Sunday. This is an idealized view of interconnectedness and Miss Brill clings to it to keep herself from falling into hopelessness. Through this imaginary performance, she experiences a fulfilling identification with society. However, it is an illusion she eagerly and faithfully recreates every week to escape her depressing loneliness. The story's framework alternates between what Miss Brill believes and what really occurs.

As readers, we share Miss Brill's agony when she hears the elegantly dressed boy and girl mock her fur coat as old and worn out and discuss how she has no right to sit next to them: "Why does she come here at all – who wants her? Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home? ... It's her fu-ur which is so

funny," giggled the girl" (Mansfield, 1923, p. 189). It is evident that when she is rejected by the community that she believes she belongs to, Miss Brill runs away to her apartment and lonely life. The rude remarks of the two lovers shatter Miss Brill's illusion that her life is valuable. Her urge to connect with others makes her fragile, and hence, she eventually realizes how isolated from society she is. Mansfield narrates her returning home as follows:

> But to-day she passed the baker's by, climbed the stairs, went into the little dark room her room like a cupboard— and sat down on the red eiderdown. She sat there for a long time. The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying (Mansfield, 1923, p. 190).

At this point, the narrative concludes. There is a page break; a blank area in the text. In this final moment, as she puts the fur back in its box, she hears something weeping, which represents her own powerlessness and despair. It can be said that in addition to pretending or imagining social contact with other people, she also personifies her fur piece. In the entire narrative, Miss Brill solely communicates with her fur coat. She treats this inanimate object with the utmost affection and devotion as if it were a living being. Thorpe (1962) views that the fur has "virtually a one-to-one correspondence to all that Miss Brill aspires to, for it is male, it is adventuresome, and it provides some sort of sensual, if not sexual, satisfaction…the fur is a substitute for the society, the love, sympathy, and understanding which are absent from Miss Brill's life." (p. 662). In a word, by boxing it up, the old lady buries the fur alive, which, in one sense, serves as a metaphor for her own condition. The fur represents Miss Brill's existence because, much as her fur is kept in a little, dark box, Brill lives in a small, dark, and coffin-like chamber. The possibility of loneliness and alienation increases as one gets older since friends and family may pass away or stop being in touch. Therefore, it is natural that she needs belonging and seeks spiritual support but whatever she does, she is unable to overcome her solitude.

According to Jean-Charles Seigneuret's classification in the *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, six primary types of alienation can be found in literary texts: "The alienation from the physical environment, the alienation from one's own epoch, the estrangement of characters from society, separation from the Creator and the cosmic order, alienation from the divided self and existential estrangement from the condition of a human being" (1988, pp. 31-32). In "Miss Brill", it can be remarked that nearly all these alienation patterns are seen – her estrangement from her small room, from the young couple, from the people in the park. Throughout the story, it is observed that Miss Brill lives in a world that is more than just lonely; actually, it is an existential world in which she is cut off from God, nature, humanity, and—most importantly—from herself.

The second story "The Daughters of the Late Colonel", completed in 1921, only two years before she died, is the narration Mansfield herself was most proud of. About this story, Mansfield reports that "The only occasion when (she) ever felt at leisure was while writing "The Daughters of the Late Colonel." And then at the end (she) was so terribly unhappy that (she) wrote as fast as possible for fear of dying before the story was sent." (Murry, 1954, p. 287). Kleine interprets Mansfield's statement as follows: "Dreading in the sisters' metaphoric "death" her own, evidently, the author was emotionally trapped in the snare she set for them" (p. 424). The author finishes the story before she dies but finally, she feels that she caused the sisters' spiritual dying.

In this episodic story, told in chronological order, separated by chapters, Mansfield skillfully switches between one sister's perspective and the other as the sisters struggle to cope with their changing situations. She describes the miserable life of two sisters - Constantia and Josephine- over the week following the death of their father. Josephine and Constantia, the two middle-aged, and unmarried protagonists of the story, have existed only with their father. Constantia and Josephine are identified as

the story's indecisive and conflicted characters from the beginning. Instead of acting in challenging circumstances, they choose to mull over their options and quarrel with one another. Sisters discover that although they are no longer required to follow the colonel's orders after his death, they have lost their ability to be independent because of their lifetime of submission to his control. Unlike Miss Brill, Mansfield illustrates the Pinner sisters as being entangled in a web of self-imposed oppression and, as a consequence, the sisters experience social detachment. Their father's demands have so thoroughly dominated Constantia and Josephine's lives that they have never had a chance to develop their own unique identities. Even the colonel's gaze frightens them: "Grandfather Pinner shot his eyes at Cyril in the way he was famous for" (Mansfield, 1923, p.105). They were not peaceful eyes and his eyes, representing his family name "Pinner", never displayed any signs of love or tranquility. While he was lying on his deathbed with his "angry purple" face, he then abruptly "opened one eye", his terrible eye, as if he wanted to check on his daughters (Mansfield, 1923, p. 90). It is the fact that "The two women are defined by what other people think; that is, they live in the "eyes" of others and are metaphorically "pinned down" by those eyes" (Norman, 1999, pp. 19-37). The death of their father could be the catalyst for the two women's awakening, allowing them to break free from the colonel's control over them and discover what is truly important to them as individuals. However, the internalized isolation of the two sisters prevents them from achieving socialization and freedom.

They are trapped in the claustrophobic rooms of his house and unable to change their world for freedom and experience external reality. When they finally find sufficient courage to enter his room, they also ponder his former relationship with them: "It was the coldness which made it so awful. Or the whiteness – which? (Mansfield, 1923, p. 96). This quote refers to both the chamber and the girls' entire living circumstances. Thus, they raise an important query: Was it their father's "coldness," or lack of warmth and affection, that caused "their life to be so awful"? Or was it "whiteness," that is the lack of family, which characterized their lives as empty, kinless, friendless, or sterile? (Mansfield, 1923, p. 96). Even the relief that the father is no longer alive does not warm the room with any lovely memories.

Without a domineering father to take charge in every little situation, the women are confused by their newfound life, and they cannot come to any agreement, they cannot communicate with others and get social. Their negativity and pessimism make them defensive and more and more isolated from people. Pinner sisters distract themselves from any relationship with their fellow beings whom they regard as strangers. In part two, it becomes clear that the sisters' behavior toward Nurse Andrews and their housekeeper Kate is a direct result of their father's oppression of them. They invite the nurse Andrews, but after a few days, they realize how difficult it is to welcome guests and they cannot handle the situation. Along with being impolite and incompetent, their maid and cook, Kate, is another issue they must deal with. When they request that she put jam on the table, Kate disregards the sisters. Josephine and Constantia are quite concerned about what to do with her. They are not able to establish the necessary communication and handle the situation. They discuss how they've wanted to fire her for a long time and are finally ready to do so because they no longer need her to cook for their father. They hesitate to ask her to go, though, and they are unsure about their next move. It can be deduced that they choose to maintain their distance rather than engage in good dialogue. They do not want to join in and become emotionally involved in the game of life which, for Pinner daughters, is the source of the problems. On the other hand, they may not want to be alone in the house.

The final scene clearly reveals the entire depth of the daughters' social estrangement. The daughters are initially invited to experience life outside of their homes by the music of the barrel organ. Their instinctive reaction is to mute it because it is an intrusion. In their solitary environment, the sound is inappropriate. Then, the sisters recall that their father had always forbade the sound of music coming

from outside. Because of this, they cannot feel the taste of music. The sound has no place in their lives. It is as if both physical and spiritual interaction with the outside world is forbidden by their tyrannical father. This part shows that Mansfield depicts the Pinner sisters as being confined in the house by their cruel father and as a result of this, they are trapped by self-inflicted oppression. This makes us think of sisters as two birds in a cage with the door open, but they cannot dare to fly and reach great heights.

The narrative's final section relies on metaphorical images representing the sisters' potential to rebel against patriarchal authority, develop their unique female identities, and get rid of their alienation. At the end of the story, the sunlight appears for the first time as an awakening of the sisters: "On the Indian carpet there fell a square of sunlight, …went and came – and stayed, deepened until it shone almost golden." (Mansfield, 1923, p. 112). Nelson (1949) states that the sunlight is "an extremely effective symbol of their first uncertain glimmer of hope; the way it has to press, thieve its way in makes the darkness, of which we had been only half aware, seem suddenly tangible, oppressive" (p. 158). Josephine sees the sunlight and her desire to escape her captivity and rejoin the live world—from which she has been estranged for so long—is sparked when she hears several sparrows on the window edge, but this feeling is too weak. It is understood that her inner voice cries for freedom, but she does not dare to remove her father's effect from her life and take a step to keep up with life outside.

Dreaming in front of the Buddha, Constantia wonders how things could be different in the future: "The stone whose smile always gave her such a queer feeling, almost a pain and yet a pleasant pain, seemed to-day to be more than smiling" (Mansfield, 1923, p. 112). At that point, the Buddha represents her liberty and release from her estrangement. Both the sunlight and the Buddha arouse a sense of hope for spinsters' futures and an opportunity to break free from their isolation in society. The possibility of escape, however, diminishes when Constantia turns her back on the Buddha and Josephine observes a cloud blocking out the sunshine. Tragically, although still having the desire, they are no longer able to leave their estrangement and enter the social sphere of free people since their lives have been negatively impacted by their abusive father. It is clear that they, for a moment, feel liberated from the dominance of their father: oppressed and frightened women turn into free people. But neither of them can hold onto this feeling of liberation or share it with the other: "A pause. Then Constantia said faintly, 'I can't say what I was going to say, Jug, because I've forgotten what it was . . . that I was going to say.' Josephine was silent for a moment. She stared at a big cloud where the sun had been. Then she replied shortly, 'I've forgotten too.' (Mansfield, 1923, p. 116). The expected moment of self-disclosure and independence is destroyed by these words and this meaningless moment. Mansfield, in her letter to writer William Gerhardi, in June 1921 clarifies:

> There was a moment when I first had 'the idea' when I saw the two sisters as amusing; but the moment I looked deeper (let me be quite frank) I bowed down to the beauty that was hidden in their lives and to discover that was all my desire… All was meant, of course, to lead up to that last paragraph, when my two flowerless ones turned with that timid gesture, to the sun. "Perhaps *now*" And after that, it seemed to me, they died as surely as Father was dead (1996, p. 389).

With this explanation, Mansfield refers to the death of spinsters spiritually. Kleine (1978) comments on this as follows: "The humor of "The Daughters" depends upon postponement of the moment when her "flowerless ones" turn to the sun; its pathos upon the discovery that there is nothing to postpone" (p. 424). It can be deduced that the sisters' awakening is restrained by their upbringing. Freire (2005) states, "The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom" and they are scared to socialize (p. 47). Eventually, Mansfield uses daughters' actions, conversations, and reactions to show how conflicted they are over his death and how isolated they are throughout their lives. It is in some ways a relief to them, yet also leaves them uncertain about what to do next. They can no longer remember how to experience desire and they remain trapped and lonely.

Seeman (1959) explains that "when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe-when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met, what he calls "high alienation" might manifest as a sense of meaninglessness" (p. 786). This type of estrangement as an extremely lonely individual is embodied in both Mansfield's "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel". Miss Brill is torn between her dreams - the play happening around her- and her life, namely between reality and imagination. On the other hand, Pinner sisters are unable to make clear judgments. Concerning Seeman's categorization, isolation is a condition in which a person has little or no contact with society: "The alienated in the isolation sense are those who, like the intellectual, assign low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society". (1959, pp 788-89). In both stories, spinsters are so isolated that they are almost invisible to society or they are not valued by people. They have minimal or no interaction with the outside world. For example, in "Miss Brill", a young elegantly dressed boy and girl find Miss Brill and her fur stupid old thing and they humiliate her. This situation causes her to distance herself from society even more. Mansfield creates similar isolation for Pinner sisters; for instance, they want to have as little contact with the maid Kate as possible. This case is narrated in the story as follows:

> And proud young Kate, the enchanted princess, came in to see what the old tabbies wanted now. She snatched away their plates of mock something or other and slapped down a white, terrified blancmange.
>
> "Jam, please, Kate," said Josephine kindly. Kate knelt and burst open the sideboard, lifted the lid of the jam put it on the table, saw it was empty, and stalked off.
>
> "I'm afraid," said Nurse Andrews a moment later, "there isn't any."
>
> "Oh, what a bother!" said Josephine. She bit her lip. "What had we better do?"
>
> Constantia looked dubious. "We can't disturb Kate again," she said softly. (Mansfield, 1923, p. 89).

It cannot be said that Kate intends to communicate with them either. Kate seems to ignore them and refuses to respond to their requests. It is seen that the spinsters, who are already alone, are increasingly isolated from everyone. As Seeman has characterized, the gradual alienation of sisters occurs. Though they must first acknowledge that they have been prisoners, they have an unconscious desire to be free. However, their powerlessness to change their situation causes the meaninglessness of their lives – meaningless conversations and meaningless behaviors. In one instance, the two women are discussing their nephew Cyril's coming for the funeral and Josephine says that it would have been fine if he could have come. Constantia replies not thinking what is she saying: "He would have enjoyed it". (Mansfield, 1923, p. 102). This response is nothing more than senseless speech. Certainly, Cyril would not have found pleasure in the funeral. In addition to this, they would much rather keep everything the same since they are scared that opening anything will result in significant changes. Meaninglessness is followed by normlessness and they began to ignore social values which led to normlessness. Although traditional values such as mourning, male dominance, and female domesticity exist in the story, the family is illustrated as far from traditional family but as reflecting the changing social scene of early twentieth-century Europe. For example, Clergyman, Mr. Farolles visits and offers assistance with the funeral arrangements, including a "little Communion." The sisters are hesitant to accept the offer since "The idea of a little Communion terrifie[s] them" and they believe their flat is not suitable for the Communion ceremony. (Mansfield, 1923, p. 89). This situation can be interpreted in two ways. The first one is related to their reluctance to communicate with people. The second one is related to the religion. It seems that they do not have faith in God because when they talk to Mr. Farolles about how they felt as their father died, they describe the situation as awkward rather than finding relief in religion. Furthermore, they liken Communion, one of the important events of the church, waiting in "torture".

(Mansfield, 1923, p. 89). Daughters not only are alienated from the rest of the world but also lose faith in God. In the end, they start to experience social detachment which causes isolation and alienation.

In the stories, crying, as a common issue, should be examined concerning the characters' social alienation and solitude. The crying of the spinsters, near the end of the stories, is proof of how lonely and spiritually torn they are and how much they have suffered. In "A Trickle of Voice: Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Moment of Being,", Paccaud-Huguet (2011) questions this crying as to whether it is a protest or just a cry and interprets the crying case in "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters" as follows:

> We are often made to hear such 'noises' in Mansfield's stories, at the very point at which the Imaginary and the Symbolic fail, where a wisp of silent knowledge oozes from the nearby void, like the little crying noise from within Josephine's bosom in 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' – '*Yeep – eyeep – yeep*. Ah, what was it crying, so weak and forlorn?' or the sob from the fur box in 'Miss Brill': in both cases it is as if the affect were transferred into a sob without a subject. (p. 141).

The music heard in both stories is also remarkable because what words cannot express is frequently represented through music. Additionally, music has a physical and spiritual impact on the body; it vibrates the organism, triggering emotion and feeling. So, while music is expected to give happiness and hope in the stories, the situation is not as it seems. Correa (2011) asserts that at the end of "The Daughters of the Late Colonel", the recurring sound from the street serves as both a "realist and symbolic soundscape". (p. 94). The daughters become aware that they no longer need to leave the room to ask for silence because their oppressive father has died. Correa (2011) continues as follows: "This musical intervention underpins the movement of Mansfield's prose, working alongside a transient burst of sunshine that fleetingly illuminates lost possibilities in the lives of two Edwardian women while a 'perfect fountain of bubbling notes shook from the barrel-organ, round, bright notes, carelessly scattered'" (p. 95). In "Miss Brill", it can be said that the characters' feelings and actions are reflected in the music's rhythm. The band plays more subtly while the woman stands there, vulnerable and alone, but speeds up and plays louder than before once she pretends to see someone and leaves. When a woman and gentleman meet in front of Miss Brill, she witnesses the man rejecting the woman. Mansfield relates the rejection to the bass drum's "The Brute, the Brute" beat: "Even the band seemed to know what she was feeling and played more softly, played tenderly" (Mansfield, 1923, p. 187). Miss Brill herself seems to perceive the band's music to be a component of a musical. She even seems to think that some park visitors will start dancing to the music as if it were an organized performance because she believes she is acting in a play, and everyone around her is a character. Thorpe (1962), analyzing Miss Brill's thoughts and explaining to the reader why she felt so alone, expresses: "The band, the music, and the rooster-like conductor are merely raw materials for the dramatizations of Miss Brill's mind" (p. 661).

Furthermore, some scholars appreciate Miss Brill and Pinner sisters as Prufrock-like characters. This is not interesting because it is known that Mansfield has repeatedly expressed that she was impressed by Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and she thought it was the best modern poetry and even it was like a short story (O'Sullivan and Scott, 1987). Norman (1999), in his essay, "Prufrock, Freud, and the Late Colonel's Daughters: New Light on the Genesis of a Mansfield Story" compares the daughters to Prufrock and sees them as Prufrock's mirror image:

> Like Prufrock, the two spinster sisters are middle-aged, ill at ease with members of the opposite sex, and hopelessly indecisive. Prufrock's discomfort in the room … is comparable to the difficulties the sisters have with the priest Mr. Farolles, with entertaining their nephew Cyril, with brother Benny, and with their irascible father. Indecisiveness looms large in both works (p. 21).

Both in Eliot's poem and Mansfield's story, the characters fail to make a critical, liberating choice, which eventually frustrates their desire for satisfaction. On the other hand, Köseman (2016) in her work, "A

Comparative View of Eliot's "Prufrock" and Mansfield's "Miss Brill" in terms of the Mental States of Isolation, Alienation, and Anomie" reveals that Mansfield "portrays a Prufrock-like English teacher in a French town who has a tendency to go walking regularly in the park, as well as spending all her Sunday afternoons resting there. The way she behaves just reflects her sense of alienation and isolation within society, just as Prufrock does" (p. 238). Consequently, because of their sense of isolation and loneliness in their surroundings, like Prufrock, Miss Brill and Pinner sisters develop melancholy tendencies.

## Conclusion

In Mansfield's stories, "Miss Brill" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel", the issue of social alienation and loneliness has been analyzed through the ideas of several scholars. People, who feel desperate and frustrated in the modern world, find themselves living in a meaningless world and experience alienation, which is a state of estrangement that implies a lack of or loss of understanding of society and a sense of isolation from it. Sense of alienation suits Mansfield's characters because, in the stories, she has expressed the main characters' anxieties and identity crises in a disordered world. As a consequence of these feelings, her characters do not find a place for themselves in society, and they have both social and psychological troubles. In "Miss Brill", an elderly woman's attempts to have a socially fulfilled life and her failure have been examined, and in "The Daughters of the Late Colonel", the inability of middle-aged sisters to overcome their internalized loneliness has been explored. The study shows that both stories have focused on alienated, isolated, and vulnerable elderly spinsters, whose social and psychological despair is reflected in their speech and movements. As a result of her desire to socialize with people at the Jardins Publiques every Sunday, Miss Brill has become exposed and eventually faced with how distant she is from others around her. In contrast to Miss Brill, the Pinner sisters have been shown by Mansfield as being suppressed by their father and being isolated from people which causes them to be socially alienated. At the end of the story, it is understood that Constantia and Josephine's lives have been so completely dictated by the expectations of their father that they have never developed their own distinct identities and overcome their loneliness.

In conclusion, Mansfield's stories, which are interwoven with sociological observations, transform into a mirror reflecting human existence in the modern world, where alienation and isolation desolate human beings. It has been deduced that the alienation of spinsters in both stories transforms in terms of Seeman's social alienation term, which happens in stages. The stages start with spinsters' helplessness and powerlessness to alter the people and physical surroundings around them, which creates a sense of meaninglessness and then leads to their rejection of values and ultimately causes their social estrangement and isolation from other people. With spinsters, Mansfield indicates the profound effects that social alienation and loneliness have on people's lives and the situation of the old ladies deepens the reader's comprehension of the complexity of human existence in the disordered modern world.

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