

The issues of
sexuality and
femininity in carson
mccullers' "a member
of the wedd..."



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Feminism as the theory is based on the discussion of many points among which it is possible to determine the issues of sexuality and femininity. These concepts are closely associated with the gender questions.

The sexual expression is traditionally discussed as the male prerogative, and femininity is considered as an absolute quality which should be characteristic for each woman. The theory of feminism rejects the mentioned ideas, and there are a lot of examples that these statements are not reasonable.

In her novel *A Member of the Wedding*, Carson McCullers discusses many points connected with the woman's development, including the issues of sexuality and femininity.

McCullers' approaches to presenting the aspects of the main character Frankie's development and awareness of herself as a woman depend on rejecting the traditional vision of the problem, and they can be discussed as rather feministic and provocative in their nature.

Young Frankie can be characterized as a tomboyish girl who begins to discover her femininity and sexuality. Frankie begins to pay attention to " a feeling that she had never heard named before" (McCullers 98).

It is possible to speak about Frankie's inner conflict when she discovers her feelings for her cousin and his bride, and when she struggles with her femininity as well with her tomboyishness. On the one hand, Frankie should act according to the social visions of the gender roles.

On the other hand, the girl experiences some unfamiliar and strange

feelings. Free states that young Frankie's " lack of knowledge about the

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existence of homosexuality contributes to her confusion, isolation, and perception of herself as grotesque-ironic” (Free 438).

That is why, Frankie’s feelings are the real challenge, and they cannot be explained with references to the traditional social visions of the fact.

Frankie feels confused when it is necessary to speak about her emotions because they can be discussed as opposite to the appropriate views on the woman’s sexuality. Thus, Frankie is confused when Berenice pays attention to her jealousy which can be seen “ from the color in [her] eye” (McCullers 4).

Furthermore, Frankie does not like strange and “ queer” conversations about love or about “ a thing known and not spoken” (McCullers 100). The problem is in the fact women cannot experience some specific feelings in relation to the definite stereotypes developed in the society.

These feelings are often hidden and not named that is why Frankie even thinks about herself as being a freak who has some wild and forbidden feelings.

The main character of the novel tries to find some features in her inner world which can connect her with the other people. This search is caused by Frankie’s feelings that the world is “ somehow separate from herself” (McCullers 24).

According to Free, “ the universalized loneliness” which is experienced by Frankie can be combined with the issues of “ homosexuality or androgyny” which are rather challengeable for the young girl (Free 428).

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If the traditional public's views on the problem can be different and often negative, the theory of feminism concentrates on these issues as the significant ones for understanding the women's identity and their role in the society.

The story of Frankie depicted in *A Member of the Wedding* can be discussed as the female author's provocative vision of such typical problems as the adolescent's development which is based on the development of the girl's sexuality.

Such notions as homosexuality, androgyny, femininity, and masculinity are also connected with the issue, and their indirect discussion with the help of depicting Frankie's personality accentuates the feministic approach to the problem's presentation.

Free, Melissa. "Relegation and Rebellion: The Queer, the Grotesque, and the Silent in the Fiction of Carson McCullers". *Studies in the Novel* 40. 4 (2009): 426-446. Print.

McCullers, Carson. *A Member of the Wedding*. USA: Mariner Books, 2004. Print.