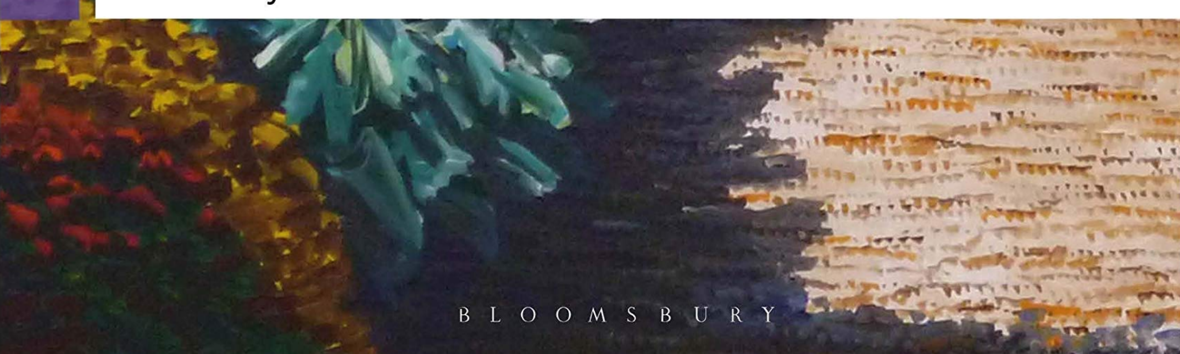
The **Bloomsbury Handbook** to KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Edited by **Todd Martin**



The Bloomsbury Handbook to Katherine Mansfield

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To my parents: whose love, support, and discipline taught me not only the value of hard work but also the gift of a kind word or gesture.

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Abbreviations

Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Katherine Mansfield's works are to the editions listed below and abbreviated as follows. Diaries, journals, letters, and notebooks are quoted verbatim without the use of editorial "[*sic*]".

CW1 and CW2
The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield. Vols. 1 and 2, *The Collected Fiction*. Edited by Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

CW3
The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield. Vol. 3, *The Poetry and Critical Writings*. Edited by Gerri Kimber and Angela Smith. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

CW4
The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield. Vol. 4, *The Diaries of Katherine Mansfield, including Miscellaneous Works*. Edited by Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

CP
The Collected Poems of Katherine Mansfield. Edited by Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

***Letters* 1–5**
The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield, five vols. Edited by Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984–2008.

***Notebooks* 1–2**
The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks, two vols. Edited by Margaret Scott. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

1

Introduction: Expanding the Horizon of Katherine Mansfield Studies

Todd Martin

During her lifetime, Katherine Mansfield enjoyed a wide general readership, and her husband and literary executor, John Middleton Murry, not only made sure that her work remained in print but also edited numerous posthumous volumes culled from her notebooks and papers left after her death. However, until recently, her significance as a writer of influence was generally ignored, and she remained on the fringes of literary modernism until the last decade or so, when her work has experienced a resurgence of popularity. This has been in part guided by the activities of the Katherine Mansfield Society which has sponsored numerous international conferences and which publishes the book series, Katherine Mansfield Studies, as well as through the 2014–16 publication of the Edinburgh edition of the *Complete Works of Katherine Mansfield*. The groundwork for this revival, however, was laid by Sydney Janet Kaplan's pivotal work, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (1991) which set out to elucidate the role of women—specifically Mansfield—in the development of literary modernism, the aesthetics of which were most often defined by the men writing at the time. Kaplan's efforts brought Mansfield in from the fringes of modernism and placed her more centrally within the modernist context. It is as a member of the social fringe, however, that Mansfield becomes an intriguing figure for many current scholars. Mansfield occupies so many various positions: as a woman and as a colonial, but also as a peripheral member of the Bloomsbury group, among others. Yet, despite being in many ways dispossessed, Mansfield was able to insert herself into the heart of modernism, particularly through her connection to some of the literary magazines being published at the time, magazines that helped to define modernism.

Mansfield's choice of the short story as her primary mode of writing further relegated her to the margins of modernism, a dynamic further compounded

by the popularity and accessibility of many of her stories which contributed to the notion that she was not literary enough. However, Kaplan argues that Mansfield's choice of the genre reveals her evolution as a modernist, for the short story provided her with a degree of flexibility that allowed her to undermine conventions more easily. In particular, Mansfield was interested in representing life through the form of the short story which allowed her to attribute symbolic meaning to the realistic events she portrayed, an achievement that would have been significantly more difficult in the longer form of the novel. Kaplan also shows how Mansfield used free indirect style to emphasize the interiority of her characters, but the effect is developed through the use of sensory impressions.[1] Nevertheless, many of Mansfield's stories appear quite simplistic in terms of plot and prose, which inevitably had an effect on her reputation. As Jenny McDonnell argues in *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace* (2010), though, the accessibility of her stories often belies the complexity of the means by which she creates the impression of the story as well as the adeptness by which she explores the inner self of her characters. McDonnell contends that Mansfield helped to propagate some of the ideas and experiments of other modernist authors through her forays into the popularized magazines, preparing the average reader for the aesthetic innovations which tended to question the assumptions of traditional literature.[2] Expanding McDonnell's argument for Mansfield's influence beyond her fiction to include her criticism, Chris Mourant, in his 2019 book *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture*, concludes his chapter on Mansfield and the *Athenaeum* (where she placed the majority of her book reviews) by positing that "Mansfield's reviews […] conditioned the public reception and interpretation of her own creative work,"[3] particularly as it pertains to her characters and form.

Thus, in a collection of essays like *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Katherine Mansfield*, which sets out to provide readers with an assessment of Mansfield's current critical position while at the same time anticipating future directions for scholarly engagement, it seems appropriate to begin by considering the critical position she occupied at the time she was writing. Drawing on Hans Robert Jauss's notion of the "horizon of expectation," I would like to join McDonnell and Mourant in making a similar case for Mansfield's influence, but extending this beyond her own work to her reviewers who, while not necessarily representing the average reader of the time, wrote for the general audience who read the publications for which they were writing.

According to Jauss in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, the extent to which an author's works challenge and revise the aesthetic expectations of readers can be directly tied to the literary significance of her work. The enduring value of a

work, for Jauss, is determined not simply by an author's response to her historical moment, but also by the impact it has on the reader:

> [L]iterature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing subject but also through the consuming subject—through the interaction of author and public [… through] the interrelations of production and reception.[4]

For Jauss, the work of art "is no longer just mimetically defined, but rather is viewed dialectically as a medium capable of forming and altering perception."[5] In other words, the value of a text is determined by how the author uses and builds upon aesthetic trends, but also how her innovation helps to change readers' aesthetic expectations—the general premise of both McDonnell's and Mourant's studies—as well as how readers respond to her work over time.

While Jauss's view of the horizon of expectation emphasizes the continual reassessment of a text over time, he does acknowledge that "it must also be possible to take a synchronic cross-section of a moment in the development [of aesthetic attitudes …] and thereby to discover an overarching system of relationships in the literature of a historical moment."[6] My intent, then, is to unpack what Mansfield's reviewers reveal about their aesthetic expectations during the time she was writing. While Mansfield's first collection of stories, *In a German Pension* (1911), received some attention in the UK, it wasn't published in the United States until 1926, after the publication of both *Bliss and Other Stories* (1920; 1921 in the United States) and *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1923), as well as after her death in 1923. Therefore, responses to this early volume of stories from US reviewers would have been tempered by her two more mature volumes; likewise, the anti-German sentiment which buoyed the reception of *In a German Pension* in Britain which was on the brink of war would have been muted in the United States almost a decade after the First World War ended. Both *Bliss* and *The Garden Party*, however, were published almost simultaneously in the UK and in the United States as well as during the height of Mansfield's career; they stood or fell on their own merits.[7] In light of this, I will be tracing the shifting perspectives of Mansfield's reviewers through these latter two collections; I want to suggest that Mansfield helped to expand their horizon of expectation for her short fiction and thereby indirectly influenced her literary successors by extending the aesthetic boundaries within which they could write.

The comparison that many of Mansfield's contemporary reviewers made between her work and that of nineteenth-century Russian and French writers has

been widely acknowledged. Oftentimes they compared her broadly to general trends in these national literatures, particularly their realism, though at other times specifically evoking Fyodor Dostoevsky or Guy de Maupassant and, of course, Anton Chekhov. Such comparisons are telling in that, according to Jauss, "the first reception of a work by the reader includes a test of its aesthetic value in comparison with works already read."[8] Chekhov, then, can be understood not only as a direct influence on Mansfield but also as one whose "slice of life" stories provided the groundwork for contemporary reviewers to better appreciate Mansfield's work. But Mansfield continued her formal experimentation and pushed the horizon ever further, becoming a benchmark for other writers.

Focusing on the aesthetic perception of the reviews, one discovers that while the reception of both *Bliss and Other Stories* and *The Garden Party and Other Stories* was generally positive, reviews of *Bliss* often noted that the characters were unlikeable and the stories too cynical, while reviews of *The Garden Party* felt the need to address the plotlessness of the stories, explaining that they often relied too much on atmosphere and character. What I would like to suggest is that Mansfield's contemporary reviewers reveal a tension between an admiration for what Mansfield accomplishes in her short stories and their own resistance to fully fit her aesthetics into their perceived expectations of what a short story is, thereby confirming that Mansfield was pushing the horizon of their expectations. I will focus here particularly on how her contemporary reviewers responded to her treatment of both character and plot (or lack thereof) and suggest some of the implications for her reception.

In his 1921 assessment of the characters in *Bliss and Other Stories*, the influential American critic Malcolm Cowley notes that Mansfield's "observation of people is extensive and accurate,"[9] but it is her hate that leads to "understanding." Many of her characters are "disagreeable" and "neurotic," and for Cowley, these tend to overshadow the other characters because they are the most striking, making the book "very hard to forget."[10] For Cowley, though, this memorableness is a negative facet of the collection. Contrasting Cowley's view, in an anonymous review in the *Athenaeum* that Mansfield's bibliographer B. J. Kirkpatrick convincingly attributes to Walter de la Mare, Mansfield is praised for her "unflinching contemplation and acceptance of life,"[11] what the author calls a "coming-alivedness"[12] which suggests that Mansfield offers an honest portrayal of her characters achieved through an intellectual detachment.

De la Mare's positive assessment, however, was in the minority. Perhaps the most scathing indictment of Mansfield's characters occurs in a review in the *Saturday Review* titled "Unpleasant Stories" which claims that

> We see in Miss Mansfield's book an entire ignorance of the repellent nature of her subjects which puts her on a different plane. She is not inhuman, but unhuman, observing the writings of the objects before her, like a savage watching the attempt of a wounded animal to reach its hole in safety—with interest indeed, but without either cruelty or pity. We cannot pretend to feel any beauty or aesthetic enjoyment in making acquaintance with the emotions of some of her characters in the execution of their business.[13]

The reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* likewise disparages Mansfield for the fact that her characters are "horrible: all of them are dismal. Here are no roseate hues for life as it is, nor golden promise of what life shall be."[14] The expectations for laudable characters and an optimistic view of life are particularly striking, given that the First World War had ended only two years previously. The irony is all the more pronounced given that the column just to the right of the review is an advertisement for *The Blue Guide to Belgium and the Western Front*, which is pitched as a "Christmas gift for a Man" and which includes the blurb: "'There is not a soldier who can pick up this book without feeling that some of its pages are particularly his pages.'"[15] Mansfield's reviewer, evoking Thomas Hardy, considers that she fails to portray her characters with pity, as Hardy would have done, and claims that the elements of tragedy—which by implication would redeem the harshness of the stories—are absent, undermining the stories' ability to "enlarge and purify life."[16] Like Cowley, the reviewer acknowledges the "singularity" of form that will appeal to some, but this is overshadowed by the critique of Mansfield's treatment of her characters.

What this reveals is that while many of the early reviewers of *Bliss and Other Stories* found something compelling in Mansfield's collection, the stories themselves disturbed their contemporary sensibilities about character. When *The Garden Party and Other Stories* was published two years later, however, the general tenor toward Mansfield's characters had changed. One reason for this shift could be attributed to the fact that many of the reviewers of *The Garden Party* noted that these new stories seemed more hopeful; however, with the exception perhaps of Mansfield's sordid depiction of Raoul Duquette in "Je ne parle pas français," the tone of the collection does not seem strikingly more or less hopeful than in *Bliss*. Therefore, the revised perspective could signal a growing acceptance of characterization that is more realistic. In fact, the reviewer from *The New York Times* praises the stories in *The Garden Party* as "vivid slices of life animated by a clever and meticulous characterization that lifts them far from the usual run of stories."[17] Unlike Conrad Aiken, who in his review of the collection suggests that Mansfield lacks range in her characters and claims that they "are

not real people" and that rather than their own voice we hear only Mansfield's,[18] most reviewers commented on the objectivity with which she approached her characters, allowing the readers to provide their own moral judgments—a point regarding which she had been criticized in *Bliss*. In *The Observer*, for example, the reviewer of *The Garden Party* notes that "nothing is more remarkable than her absorption in these creatures of her fancy, creatures who are never mere mirrors of her own mood, but are the fruit of a genuinely sympathetic imagination reflecting on the ironies and tragedies of the world."[19] This was a significant shift from the notion that Mansfield observed her characters like a savage watching a wounded animal.

Perhaps more significant is a comment by Marion Holden reviewing for *The Detroit Free Press*: "Her trick of getting into character is one of Katherine Mansfield's most engaging devices. […] Miss Mansfield gets behind the character and stays there. It is a method much experimented with these days."[20] Here, the suggestion is that an author removing herself from the context of a story has gained traction as an aesthetic expectation. Reviewers, thus, appear more open to the fact that Mansfield's characters exist independently of the author, and they accept the author's dependence on the reader to render their own moral judgments. Furthermore, unlike the earlier critiques of *Bliss*, the fact that Mansfield portrays ordinary lives here garners ready praise.

Mansfield's treatment of plot is another instance where we see a marked difference between the reviews of *Bliss* and those of *The Garden Party*. Conrad Aiken, in his 1921 review of *Bliss*, praises the form of Mansfield's stories, which he compares to those used in poetry. Aiken notes that Mansfield chose "the short story 'form' not as a means to the telling of a tale, and not always or wholly as the means for the 'lighting' of a single human character, but rather as the means for the presentation of a 'quintessence.'"[21] Aiken concludes that Mansfield's poetic stories are "a magical evocation of mood, and, through mood, of character."[22] This, however, was not the typical stance on *Bliss*'s form, although it would resonate more with the reviewers of *The Garden Party*. Instead, not only did reviewers typically criticize what they saw as "ugly" characters, but they questioned Mansfield's method of presenting the characters, particularly the stories' lack of plot. Some responses were ambivalent, such as the reviewer in *The New York Times* who notes that the volume "much of whose contents ought to be called sketches or impressions rather than short stories—provided that a plot is considered necessary to the composition of a short story—shows freshness and a cleverness which is often more than a little strained."[23] This is a rather backhanded compliment, suggesting on the one hand that the form

is "fresh" but on the other that it is "strained." But, whatever else it does, the review establishes the expectation that the short story will consist of a clear, traditional plot, an expectation perhaps reinforced by an advertisement on the same page promoting a characteristic adventure tale about the American West.[24] Both the review and the ad reveal that the readers at the time would have most commonly expected a typical plot with rising action, a climax, and a resolution. Even more pronounced is Anne de Selincourt's comment in *The Manchester Guardian* that:

> Miss Mansfield's aim as a short-story writer is to express not an action but an atmosphere, to fix a mood or a perception, to sketch a group or arrest an attitude, rather than to give artistic completeness to a movement of continuous thought which, whether or not it issues in outward action, is itself organic and alive. And it is partly because these stories are without action in this more serious sense of the word that they fail to produce any lasting impression.[25]

She then describes "Je ne parle pas français," which has a greater degree of traditional plot than most of the other stories in the collection, as "dramatic and powerful," while her assessment of "Prelude" (one of Mansfield's more experimental, but also most celebrated stories) is that it "lacks vital interest" because it "has omitted even the formal symmetry which elsewhere […] gives her work a certain intellectual charm, and without which all fiction of this static, pictorial type becomes at once trivial and irritating. 'Prelude' is a bad story."[26]

Reviewers of *The Garden Party*, however, take a very different tack. While almost every review makes a point of mentioning that the works included in the volume are not stories in the traditional manner, namely with regards to plot, they all praise them for how fully they reveal something more than just action. Rather, they present a "slice of life" that enhances her portrayal of characters, bringing them to life in a way that simple action cannot do. A review in *The English Review*, for example, calls them "psychological whiffs which rely chiefly upon manner and presentation […] which have real power." And this approach, for the reviewer, enhances Mansfield's depiction of her characters: "It is a book of life, cruel for the most part, passionless, cynical, the mirror of humanity as seen through the unsentimental eye of a very clever woman."[27] In this, the review identifies some of the same aesthetic characteristics that were noted with regards to *Bliss*; but here they are not seen as negative, but rather as matters of fact. The cruelty and cynicism are more realistic, and therefore seen as a validation of the stories' effectiveness rather than as off-putting. As Robert Littell noted in his review in *New Republic*,

> Miss Mansfield does not write what one usually thinks of as a "short story." She is interested in people, not in plots, in the substance and color of life, and not the chess patterns that can be made with it. [… S]he is trying to reproduce the feelings that a certain kind of person has in a certain—and usually a very slight—situation, the moods that pass over people in one day, or the small fraction of a day.[28]

Of course, the shift of the aesthetic horizon is not sharply defined, and earlier expectations often linger even as artistic taste evolves. In *Life* magazine, for example, the reviewer clearly understands his audience and, speaking of *The Garden Party*, notes: "These are fragments rather than stories; and there are no fire-cracker endings. Accordingly, those schooled in the fire-cracker tradition may well find them flat."[29] Still, the reviewer praises the characters and the effect that Mansfield is able to create in her stories, so that while nothing really "happens" in them, the stories draw the reader into the life of the individual characters. So, even in acknowledging that many readers might not like the experimental nature of the stories because they lack the expected plot, the reviewer is still able to recognize their artistic value. The audience of *Bliss* only two years earlier were unable to fully break from their expectations of what a story should be and what characters should be like. While one cannot tie the shift in aesthetic expectations directly to Mansfield's own experimentation, her publication of *Bliss* did establish a precedent for certain types of characters and plotlessness that the reviewers initially rejected, while similar strategies used in *The Garden Party* were more fully accepted and understood, and in fact appreciated, by reviewers only two years later, suggesting an expanding appreciation for her aesthetic innovation.

When one considers the original readers of her work, one discovers just how much Mansfield disrupted their aesthetic expectations. While there was a general appreciation of Mansfield's stories in both *Bliss and Other Stories* and *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, one can see a clear shift in how the reviewers viewed some of the more innovative aspects of her work. As Jauss posits, the literary value of an artistic work rests on the extent to which it pushes the boundaries of current taste and forces a reassessment of aesthetic expectations.[30] If this is the case, Mansfield's role in expanding the horizon of expectation of her readers not only establishes her as an important contender for the attention of broader modernist studies, but reveals the degree to which she helped lay some of the groundwork for her successors. In the last decade especially, scholars have begun to understand the extent of Mansfield's influence and the significance of her innovation; indeed, *The Bloomsbury Handbook to*

Katherine Mansfield sets out to demonstrate not only the scope of Mansfield's impact on the development of the short story as a genre, but also her wider influence on literary modernism itself.

The chapters in this volume are written by eminent scholars from around the world, and they are organized by topics chosen to guide readers toward key developments in Mansfield studies. Part One, *Katherine Mansfield at Work*, provides an overview of key aspects of her life and work which illuminate her development as a writer as well as situating her within the context of literary modernism, paying specific attention to her own innovations. The section begins with "Katherine Mansfield and Modernism," Enda Duffy's assessment of Mansfield as a modernist writer, setting the tone not only for this section but for the volume as a whole by exploring how key concerns of the literary period found expression in both the topics she chose and the style she developed. Duffy discusses the significance of Mansfield's use of the short story genre in developing modernist tropes, demonstrating how the form she chose enhanced her ability to create an intimacy between her protagonists and the reader, particularly through free indirect discourse, a key technique much used by writers of the era which follows the thought processes of literary characters. This method allows Mansfield to explore the unconsciousness of her characters and to magnify their impressions of the world. What is perhaps most modern in her work, according to Duffy, is that Mansfield refuses to provide specific insights for her readers, but simply relies on the general perceptions of her protagonists to evoke a comparable, unsettled feeling in her reader. While Duffy shows Mansfield's work within the broader context of modernism, the other chapters in this section complement this perspective by illuminating particular moments in Mansfield's life and career, providing important insights into her development as a writer.

Next, Gerri Kimber, in "*Juliet* and *Maata*," provides one of the first sustained discussions of Mansfield's early attempts to write a novel. Both novel fragments are important because they offer self-portraits of the author at times in her life when biographical evidence is lacking, and both concern themselves with similar themes of unrequited love and abandonment, including portrayals of Mansfield's family and friends. Kimber assesses these unfinished novels as "biografiction," discussing the implications they have for understanding Mansfield's life and offering an analysis of her incursion into the form of the novel. Jenny McDonnell continues the discussion by exploring the relationship between Mansfield and the periodical culture, a topic which has gained increasing prominence among modernist scholars. In "Katherine Mansfield, the Magazine Writer," McDonnell

connects Mansfield with a network of contemporary writers and artists who also appeared in both literary and popular magazines of the day. Complementing Duffy's chapter, McDonnell argues that magazine publishing allowed Mansfield to capitalize on the popularity of the short story while also providing opportunities for experimentation with the form. Also considering Mansfield's experimentation with prose technique, Alex Moffett focuses his attention on Mansfield's final attempt to write a novel, an attempt that he traces from its conception as *The Aloe* to its eventual manifestation as one of Mansfield's most celebrated stories, "Prelude." In "From *The Aloe* to 'Prelude,'" Moffett argues that the evolution of "Prelude" demonstrates Mansfield's reconsideration of form and genre, pointing out that while the work shares some formal conventions with the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* (a coming-of-age story), it subverts that form by foregrounding a series of symbolic moments rather than tracing traditional narrative development. It does this in part by portraying the lifespan of a woman not through the development of a single character over time, but instead by capturing several women at one particular stage of life, balancing modernist fragmentation with a precise means of organization that demonstrates the potential of Mansfield's most experimental work. Jane Stafford's chapter, "The New Zealand Stories," concludes Part One, revealing just how distinct some of the early "New Zealand" stories are when compared to later stories because of Mansfield's deliberate and self-conscious choice of a literary mode that maneuvers between two literary cultures, that of empire and that of the settled colonial world, a key topic of discussion in Mansfield studies. What ultimately unifies these stories, for Stafford, is that they are all permeated by a modernist emphasis on interiority.

Part Two, *Katherine Mansfield and Her Contemporaries*, extends Mansfield's interaction with modernism beyond her specific work to some of the key relationships she formed with various of her contemporaries, including key modernists Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence, as well as Mansfield's cousin, the author Elizabeth von Arnim. Setting the context for these discussions, Jay Dickson places Mansfield within two key overlapping coteries in "Katherine Mansfield, Garsington, and the Bloomsbury Group." Dickson explains that Mansfield's visits to Garsington, the manor house of Lady Ottoline Morrell, placed her in the midst of some of the most important figures of London's literati, including not only Virginia and Leonard Woolf, but also Dorothy Brett, Lytton Strachey, and, of course, Lady Ottoline herself. Moving beyond the biographical, though, Dickson homes in on the gossip that—along with the intellectual talk—permeated the conversations of Lady Ottoline's guests. He argues that Mansfield

drew on the gossiping atmosphere to develop a series of experimental dialogues such as “In Confidence,” which honed her abilities in her later, mature stories to convey what her characters both do and do not say. In “Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf,” Ruchi Mundeja focuses her attention on Virginia Woolf, Mansfield’s most significant rival. Mundeja begins with the idea that much scholarship on women’s writing focuses on affiliations and legacies; however, while she notes some commonality between Mansfield and Woolf, she unpacks each writer’s emphasis on both domestic and public space and the appreciable differences in how each mediates these themes, positioning their work in a combative complementarity with one another.

Mansfield’s relationship with D. H. Lawrence was another of her significant literary connections; in fact, Lawrence was responsible for helping Mansfield gain access into the Garsington circles. Andrew Harrison, in “Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence,” traces the short-lived but intense relationship between the two writers and their respective partners, John Middleton Murry and Frieda Weekley. As Harrison notes, the two couples lived in close proximity to one another for two brief periods, but Mansfield struggled to write in the midst of Lawrence’s outbursts, and Lawrence later suspected Mansfield and Murry of duplicitousness and disloyalty, leading to a falling out. Harrison, having offered newly detailed nuance to the fraught relationship of the two writers based on the latest biographical evidence, then assesses influential comparative readings of the two writers’ work before offering a fresh account of the multi-voiced and multi-perspectival form of satire Mansfield and Lawrence shared in their short fiction. Finally, in “Katherine Mansfield and Elizabeth von Arnim,” Isobel Maddison moves us from the professional rivalries of Garsington and Bloomsbury to explore the relationship between Mansfield and her best-selling cousin Elizabeth von Arnim. Maddison is particularly interested in the potential influence that each writer had on the other. While von Arnim’s early work inspired and influenced Mansfield, Maddison explores the respective renderings of fathers and the father/daughter dynamic in Mansfield’s story “The Daughters of the Late Colonel” to suggest both literary and familial connections with von Arnim’s novels *The Pastor’s Wife* and *Father*, revealing fresh and illuminating insights into the relationship between the two writers.

The next few chapters of the *Handbook* return us to the specific works of Mansfield, but with particular attention to the various modes of writing that Mansfield practiced. *Katherine Mansfield and Genre*, Part Three of the volume, explores not only Mansfield as a short story writer, but also as a critic, letter-

writer, and even poet. Ailsa Cox begins this section with "Katherine Mansfield and the Short Story," which discusses the genre for which Mansfield is best known. Here, Cox provides a broad overview of Mansfield's contribution to the genre's development in the twentieth century, noting particularly the influence of Impressionism on her stories' "plotlessness." Cox then moves into a discussion of how Mansfield uses the compressed and elliptical aspects of the genre to develop characters' complex subjective states through free indirect discourse, imagery, and non-linear techniques, complementing both Duffy's and Moffett's earlier chapters. She concludes by discussing Mansfield's cycle of linked stories which focus on the Burnell family, suggesting that she also pioneered her formal experimental techniques in these important stories. Chris Mourant then turns our attention to Mansfield's book reviews in "Katherine Mansfield as Critic," an aspect of her professional writing that he argues deserves greater scholarly attention because it provides significant insights into Mansfield as an important modernist writer. Mourant demonstrates how Mansfield's book reviews provide a detailed record of her response to the social, political, and economic forces of her time as well as providing insights into her attitudes toward writing and her understanding of the formal possibilities of literature in the post-war world. Like her reviews, Mansfield's letters and journals, although often used to provide insight into her life and fiction, have not been adequately discussed in light of personal writing as a genre. In "Katherine Mansfield's Letters and Journals," Anna Jackson begins to rectify this oversight by looking at how this form of writing not only answered Mansfield's need for personal relationships but also satisfied her need to write. In turn, they provide insight into the developing aesthetic that she would hone in her fiction. Jackson suggests that the formal aspects of letter writing, which is as much description and performance as revelation, allowed Mansfield to experiment with an aesthetic of the disparate and random and offered opportunities to explore ways of shaking free of conventional plot and characterization. Likewise, her journal writing is distinguished by her eye for detail and longing for the visionary. Erika Baldt rounds out Part Three by exploring a genre frequently overlooked in Mansfield criticism in her chapter, "Katherine Mansfield's Poetry." Unlike her stories, Baldt argues, Mansfield's poems are intentionally personal. Memories from childhood and glimpses of significant events in her life such as her miscarriage in Germany, her brother's death, and her struggles with her own terminal illness are the subjects of her poetry, providing Mansfield with an emotional outlet. However, while Mansfield did not allow herself similar self-indulgence in her fiction,

Baldt suggests that her poetry helped foster some of the themes, imagery, and rhythms characteristic of her more mature work. In light of this, Baldt works to situate Mansfield's poetry within her larger oeuvre.

Part Four, *Katherine Mansfield and the Arts*, widens the lens beyond the written word and Mansfield's own work within various genres to explore her interactions with various other artforms. Mansfield, for example, was an accomplished musician and considered a professional musical career before she settled on writing. Claire Davison opens this section with "Katherine Mansfield's Musical World," which examines Mansfield's love of music and its intricate connection to her writing. Noting that Mansfield was familiar with a wide variety of music, from popular songs to operatic arias, and from music-hall dance tunes to the symphony, Davison discusses how music provided a soundscape in all of Mansfield's written work, including writing about musicians and musical plots, adopting musical forms in her prose techniques, and incorporating musical analogies to define her poetics and craftsmanship. Davison pays particular attention to how musical sounds are recorded in her narrative structures. But while music was a lifelong passion, Mansfield was also very much attuned to the visual arts, having been influenced by Roger Fry's Post-Impressionist exhibit of 1910. In "Katherine Mansfield and Post-Impressionism," Angela Smith focuses especially on the influence that Mansfield's interaction with the artists associated with *Rhythm* had on her evolving aesthetic, particularly their reaction against realism. Showing distinct variations in the plot conventions used in "The Woman at the Store" compared to "An Indiscreet Journey," for example, Smith notes that the latter begins *in medias res* and provides a more complex narrative voice, suggesting psychological disturbance, which is on par with Post-Impressionist aesthetics. She then traces this tendency to Mansfield's more mature stories, contending that the sharp lines and fluctuating rhythms of these works challenge the reader by creating a form that does not imitate life but finds an equivalent for life. Faye Harland extends the discussion of the influence of visual culture on Mansfield in "Katherine Mansfield and the Cinematic." She argues that Mansfield, who had served as an extra in the burgeoning British film industry, found inspiration in the visual forms of representation captured in this new medium. However, Harland also suggests that it is likewise necessary to return to a pre-cinematic period to fully trace the history of the relationship between word and image. She provides an overview of visual entertainment and connects that with Mansfield's experimentation in her short fiction with particular attention to focalization through the eyes of her women characters.

The World of Katherine Mansfield, Part Five of this study, broadens the contextual influences on Mansfield to key geographical locations and world events that shaped both Mansfield's oeuvre and her wider reception. In "Katherine Mansfield and New Zealand," Kathleen Jones, for example, places Mansfield within the context of her native country which she wanted to recreate in her fiction and make it "live" in the minds of her readers; however, in her youth, Mansfield's worst nightmare was to be stranded in provincial Wellington, separated from the culture and influence of cosmopolitan London. Drawing on Mansfield's notebooks, letters, and stories, Jones examines Mansfield's childhood and adolescence in New Zealand and how it influenced her future direction as a writer. She focuses especially on Mansfield as an exile, which on the one hand freed her from conventional English narrative modes and on the other provided her with the necessary distance she needed to regain a love of her native country but also to be clear sighted about its limitations. In "Katherine Mansfield and Empire," Janet Wilson picks up a similar thread by continuing the discussion of Mansfield's dual affiliations to New Zealand and Britain, focusing on how she masked her colonial "otherness" as British in order to allow her an anonymous multi-positionality. Focusing on the German imperial values in Mansfield's 1911 collection *In a German Pension*, Wilson argues that Mansfield creates an interior subjective space that establishes a colonial counter to concerns of gender. Contrasting the stories in this collection with two of her New Zealand "outback" stories, Wilson notes the gaps and silences which indicate untouched areas of colonial experience that Mansfield fostered in her later stories. But, while Mansfield had to contend with her precarious place as a colonial in the imperial center, she and her whole generation were affected by the First World War, the focus of Christine Darrohn's chapter, "Katherine Mansfield and the Great War." As Darrohn points out, Katherine Mansfield averred, "I feel in the *profoundest* sense that nothing can ever be the same" after the Great War, and felt that artists "have to take it into account and find new expressions new moulds for our new thoughts & feelings."[31] Taking this as her starting point, Darrohn explores how Mansfield developed innovative literary techniques to more effectively convey the "thoughts & feelings" that were shaped by the war. However, while Mansfield addressed the war directly in several stories, Darrohn also discusses texts that seemingly lack any connection to the war yet which subtly and profoundly register its impact.

While the First World War in many respects signaled the beginning of the end of the British Empire, the cultural influence of the East on the metropole had already been significant, and Ezra Pound's famous dictum "Make it new!"

in response to Japanese art reflected the larger role that the East was having on modernism. As Tracy Miao discusses in "Katherine Mansfield and the East," Mansfield was very much attuned to the growing interest in the Orient, even if her exposure was primarily second hand. Miao notes that the manifestations of the East in modernism generally stemmed from fantastical Western constructs of the East, and she focuses her attention on how imagery of the East decorated Mansfield's living space and adorned her person: Mansfield wore kimonos, owned Japanese dolls, and also read translations of Chinese poetry by Arthur Waley. The result was that Mansfield's own invention of the East manifests itself in her writing and influenced her artistic vision. Russia held a similar fascination for Mansfield. The influence of Anton Chekhov on Mansfield has been well established, but after dealing with the loss of her brother, Leslie, and contracting tuberculosis and facing imminent death, Mansfield turned to three Russian Theosophists and mystics for solace, as Galya Diment explains in "Katherine Mansfield and the Russian Mystics." Diment traces Mansfield's quest for obtaining meaningful answers through a number of key figures, including Madame Blavatsky, George Gurdjieff, and Pyotr Ouspensky as well as her reading of "M. B. Oxon's" (Lewis Alexander Richard Wallace) *Cosmic Anatomy*. Mansfield's spiritual journey, Diment posits, is reflected in a number of Mansfield's short stories, including "A Dill Pickle," which critics often consider the most Russian of all her stories. As Mansfield continued to struggle with her health, she finally turned to Gurdjieff, joining him and his followers at the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, where she died in 1923. It is with Mansfield's "afterlife" in France that Gerri Kimber, following up on her 2008 study *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France*, concludes this section. The first French critical reviews of Mansfield's work romanticized her life and death, leading to a cult of personality which Kimber argues that her husband and literary executor, John Middleton Murry, fostered. Drawing on her archival work, Kimber uses newly investigated correspondence between Murry and French writers, critics, editors, and translators to provide an even clearer understanding as to how the hagiography of Mansfield's life served his own agenda.

Each of the chapters in this volume provides context for understanding Mansfield's life and work, offering potential critical approaches. However, the final part of the volume, *Critical Approaches to Katherine Mansfield*, is more purposeful in demonstrating the value of applying current theoretical trends to Mansfield's work, applications that reveal its significance in modernist studies but also the true depth of her stories. Rishona Zimring begins this section by combining the biographical and the critical, discussing Mansfield's reading

habits. In "Katherine Mansfield and Reading," Zimring draws on the notion of "surface reading," the focus of critics who are interested in understanding the sensual appreciation of textual forms and pleasures rather than uncovering hidden meanings, to reveal how Mansfield's notebooks, reviews, and fiction offer instruction in "how to read" and contribute to current conversations about the value of reading for pleasure and consolation. Claire Drewery combines gender studies and cultural materialism in her chapter on "Katherine Mansfield and Sexuality." Drewery contextualizes her discussion within Oscar Wilde's notorious trials of 1895 and then examines how Mansfield responds to shifts in beliefs about sexuality and human subjectivity through the motifs of fashion and performativity. Exploring several of her stories, Drewery shows how Mansfield used dramatic form and references to the corset and Wildean dandyism to reveal how truth can be glimpsed through artificiality. Extending our understanding of subjectivity to the plant world in "Katherine Mansfield and Ecocriticism," William Kupinse examines how plants in Mansfield's fiction are not simply pleasing objects that happen to be alive, but vibrant beings that possess agency. Showing how Mansfield draws on Romantic notions of "negative capability" and the "pathetic fallacy" alongside developments in botanical sciences fostered by Charles and Francis Darwin and Jagadish Chandra Bose, Kupinse argues that Mansfield's plants are beings that desire, need, and, quite literally, move.

Aimée Gasston concludes the volume with a selected annotated bibliography of Mansfield scholarship, with special attention given to the most important works published after 1988, the centennial of Mansfield's birth, including an overview of the recent *Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield* as well as the individual volumes of Katherine Mansfield Studies, the book series sponsored by the Katherine Mansfield Society. This bibliography should provide an excellent starting point for anyone interested in pursuing a study of Katherine Mansfield beyond the contents of this book.

The early reviews of Mansfield's two mature volumes of short stories, *Bliss and Other Stories* and *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, show how her audience was able to adjust their expectations and embrace the new innovations she fostered there. Even after her untimely death, and despite the fact that her husband continued to release her unpublished materials which seldom represented the best of what she had to offer, Mansfield maintained a significant readership and was even the subject of some scholarly studies into the 1950s. However, while her work has remained in print, scholarly interest waned, and she was relegated to the fringes of literary studies and considered by many modernists scholars as unworthy of serious consideration. This volume, however, demonstrates that, like her early

reviewers, scholars have begun to expand their own horizon of expectation and to understand Mansfield and her work more fully in the context of her literary and social *milieu*. More importantly, as the scholars in this volume demonstrate, Mansfield is so much more complex than a surface reading of her stories reveals. Like those early reviews, this volume also represents only a snapshot of our understanding of Mansfield and her influence. However, as *Bliss* set the tone for *The Garden Party*, this book provides the foundation for future assessments of Katherine Mansfield and her place in the pantheon of literary modernists.

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Notes

1 See Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).
2 See Jenny McDonnell, *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace: At the Mercy of the Public* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
3 Chris Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 228.
4 Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 15.
5 Ibid., 16.
6 Ibid., 36.
7 Subsequent collections like *The Doves' Nest and Other Stories* (1923) and *Something Childish and Other Stories* (1924) were published posthumously by Murry and included incomplete works and works not vetted by Mansfield; furthermore, their reception was affected by the sense of loss of a writer of promise. The suggestion has been made that contrasting the UK and US reviewers could be fruitful; however, the general assessments and emphases of the various reviewers are fairly consistent on both sides of the Atlantic.
8 Jauss, *Aesthetic of Reception*, 20.
9 Malcolm Cowley, "'Page Dr Blum!': Bliss," in *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Jan Pilditch (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 5.
10 Ibid., 6.

11 [Walter de la Mare], "[Anonymous review of 'Prelude,' *Bliss and Other Stories*]," in *Critical Response*, 3. See B. J. Kirkpatrick, *A Bibliography of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 18, for attribution.
12 Ibid., 4.
13 "Unpleasant Stories," *The Saturday Review*, February 19, 1921, 157.
14 "Miss Mansfield's Stories [in *Bliss*]," *Times Literary Supplement*, December 16, 1920, 855. In *Bibliography*, Kirkpatrick attributes the review to Harold H. Child (18).
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 "Fiction for Vacation Satchels," *New York Times*, June 4, 1922, 19.
18 Conrad Aiken, "The Short Story as Colour," in *Critical Responses*, 11.
19 "Miss Katherine Mansfield," *The Observer*, February 26, 1922, 4.
20 Marion Holden, "A Stimulating Young Woman," *The Detroit Free Press*, June 18, 1922, E4.
21 Conrad Aiken, "The Short Story as Poetry," *Freeman* (NY), May 11, 1921, 210.
22 Ibid., 211.
23 "Bliss," *New York Times Book Review and Magazine*, February 20, 1921, 25.
24 Ibid. The novel advertised is *The Strength of the Pines* by Edison Marshall and is described as "a splendid novel of life in the open, of blood-stirring adventure and of a brave man, inspired by the love of a splendid woman, winning out against long odds."
25 [Anne de Selincourt], "Miss Mansfield's Stories," *The Manchester Guardian*, December 24, 1920, 5. Kirkpatrick, in *Bibliography*, attributes the review to Selincourt, though the by-line is simply A. de S. (18).
26 Ibid.
27 "[Review of *The Garden Party*]," *The English Review*, June 1922, 602.
28 Robert Littell, "Katherine Mansfield," *New Republic*, July 5, 1922, 166.
29 W. L. "The Latest Books," *Life* 80, no. 2071, July 13, 1922, 21.
30 Jauss, *Aesthetic of Reception*, 25.
31 *Letters* 3, 82.

Part One

Katherine Mansfield at Work

2

Katherine Mansfield and Modernism

Enda Duffy

Of the lilies of modernism, Mansfield's modernism might be said to come down to the difference between canna and arum lilies. Consider this scene in one of Mansfield's supreme stories, "The Garden Party" (1921):

> "It's the florist, Miss Laura."
> It was, indeed. There, just inside the door, stood a wide, shallow tray full of pots of pink lilies. No other kind. Nothing but lilies—canna lilies, big pink flowers, wide open, radiant, almost frighteningly alive on bright crimson stems.
> "O-oh, Sadie!" said Laura, and the sound was like a little moan. She crouched down as if to warm herself at the blaze of lilies; she felt they were in her fingers, on her lips, growing in her breast.
> "It's some mistake," she said faintly. "Nobody ever ordered so many. Sadie, go and find mother."
> But at that moment Mrs. Sheridan joined them.
> "It's quite right," she said calmly. "Yes, I ordered them. Aren't they lovely?" She pressed Laura's arm. "I was passing the shop yesterday, and I saw them in the window. And I suddenly thought for once in my life I shall have enough canna lilies. The garden-party will be a good excuse."
> "But I thought you said you didn't mean to interfere," said Laura. Sadie had gone. The florist's man was still outside at his van. She put her arm round her mother's neck and gently, very gently, she bit her mother's ear.[1]

Is this the brilliance Virginia Woolf spoke of when she admitted in her diary that Mansfield was the only modernist writer who "I was jealous of [...] Who could do what I can't"?[2] Certainly, here on full display is the nervy sensitivity, the concern for beauty in the mundane, the attunement to women's feelings and to the unspoken solidarity of sensitive women (of the same class), which led earlier male critics such as the short story writer Frank O'Connor to condemn Mansfield as an over-excited, petulant writer[3] and led others to condescend

to Woolf's and Mansfield's "feminine sensitivity." This same exactitude in registering a thrill, an intense experience—and the determination to record it as a minor, but meaningful act of women's rebellion—marks precisely the moment when the narrative rows out from a late nineteenth-century naturalism into the choppier waters of modernist excess.

Avowedly modernist, this passage registers sensations, desires, and achievements barely envisaged in the pages of Thomas Hardy or George Moore. This is the excess of style: a new, easy elasticity, that makes possible an exact registration of feeling with a new accuracy. Hence we are told as a matter of course that an ordinary "O-oh" comes from Laura's throat as "a little moan," while the lilies which elicit it seem to emit a very modern heat-energy, before which the heroine crouches "to warm herself at the blaze." Here a bouquet of older imageries—of the vestal offering sacrifice, the young woman at the hearth, or as the figure who truly knows that nature never betrayed the heart that loved her—is repurposed as a portrait of dynamic energy transfer. The blooms turn out to be not so much "radiant, almost frighteningly alive," as Laura thinks, as hyper-modernly radioactive. Moreover, the passage makes clear that the new style is necessary because a whole population whose feelings had up to now barely been considered—in this case, women—are finally given the opportunity to express themselves. The text's dashes and leaps, its choppy, rat-tat-tat delivery (" … pink lilies. No other kind. Nothing but lilies—canna lilies, big pink … ") are modernist excess spurred on by the politics of gender. This is subaltern modernism in a fresh, excited mode: the voiceless voiced in a newly lively medium.

And yet. The passage also dares us to ignore the obvious fatuousness of the flower-buying that occasions the modernist flowering of style. Here is an impulse purchase, after all, by a rich woman: of too many showy flowers for an ostentatious party, a binge of upper-bourgeois conspicuous consumption by the mother of a group of girls whose smugness the story, as it unfolds, is structured to condemn. In this unfolding, it turns out that arum lilies (as opposed to the hot pink cannas) soon appear as riposte to the earlier lilies' excessiveness. Nine pages later, when Laura, the sensitive daughter, is about to carry the basket of party leftovers to the poor cottage where the body of the carter killed that morning lies, her mother intervenes:

> "Take it yourself, darling," said she. "Run down just as you are. No, wait, take some arum lilies too. People of that class are so impressed by arum lilies."
> "The stems will ruin her lace frock," said practical Jose.
> So they would. Just in time. "Only the basket, then […]"[4]

When Mrs. Sheridan, canna lily-lover, blandly declares that "People of that class are so impressed by arum lilies," the story throws down a challenge to *us*, the readers, who were so impressed by the earlier lily-ecstasy. In fact, she is challenging the lily-love that crops up especially in the work of D. H. Lawrence as an echo of John Keats, the pre-Raphaelites, and Oscar Wilde. Mansfield's accounts of women's flower-offerings, and the buying of flowers for parties, also anticipate the opening of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. The ambivalence embedded in Woolf's opening sentence—"Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself"[5]—its desire to celebrate apparently harmless excess undercut by its critique of women and class—is shared by Mansfield in "The Garden Party" and its doubled lily scenes. That blithe dialectic might, then, have been what Woolf recognized, and prized, in Mansfield: not just the exactitude of feeling, especially of women's feelings, but, in the same modernist breath, the crystal-sharp critique of class divisions between the upper bourgeois and the workers around them.

This is Mansfield's dialectical modernism: a modernist excess enabled by a new flexible style, the use of that excess to express, with apparent ease, a new, gendered sensibility in fiction, and, at the same time, a determination that gendered subaltern perspective will be carried through to offer not only a record of newly speakable feelings, but also a social analysis of different women's places in culture. Mansfield's modernism begins with modern coolness, an up-to-the minute hard-edged and energy-driven excessiveness of style. That style is a vehicle for rendering a range of new sensations, hitherto barely described. These sensations, affects, and reactions constitute the day-to-day existences of women—here Mrs. Sheridan and Laura, Bertha Young and Pearl Fulton in "Bliss" (1918); they are the possibilities we watch Constantia and Josephine, now that the fearsome patriarch has died, intuit in "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1920). Yet in each of these stories, behind the well-off women and their newly registered energies, is at least one other female figure: a servant. They are Sadie and the cook in "The Garden Party," the nurse in "Bliss," Nurse Andrews and Kate in "The Daughters of the Late Colonel." Mansfield's stories open vistas of female sensation, but they are also sharp-eyed critiques of women and class. Mansfield, subaltern modernist to the core, is determined that women's feelings need a new language which should be put at the service of all women, not just the rich. Her modernism therefore offers us not just insight into new ways of living and sensing, but, what must follow: a newly acute panoramic analysis of modern culture.

It is impossible to think of Katherine Mansfield as other than a quintessential modernist. If modernism was a cultural vortex, then Mansfield was at the center

of it. If the movement can be thought of as a reorganization of cultural production around avant-gardes and coteries, then, as the partner of John Middleton Murry, the editor of *Rhythm* and, after 1919, of *The Athenaeum*, which published Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, and Woolf, she was one key to the project of introducing European progressive modes into British literary life. If, as postcolonial critics have claimed, Western modernism represents a cultural awareness that the planetary power balance was shifting to the Global South, then Mansfield, as a recent arrival in Europe from New Zealand—one of whose most famous stories, "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" (1912) represents the indigenous people of her native country—enacted in her writing versions of the hybridity that variously governed colonial subjectivities. If modernism marks the arrival of women on a new footing on the literary scene, at the moment of female suffrage and rights for women, then Mansfield, whose works are always generated from a woman's perspective, stands next to Woolf, Djuna Barnes, Jean Rhys, Mina Loy, and many more. If modernism represents high art's reaction to the proliferation of new media and modes of pop culture, then Mansfield's up-to-the-minute style reverberates with the idioms of modern media. Finally, if modernism is the literature of alienated cosmopolitanism, then Mansfield's many depictions of *anomie* add a new dimension on the most pervasive of modernist tropes. Mansfield, from the montage of "Prelude" (1917) to the trauma-text of "The Fly" (1922) is the consummate modernist.

Mansfield's centrality in Anglophone modernism begs a question: wherein, amongst a host of modernist originals and their frenzies of experiment, does her specific difference, her unique distinction, lie? How is her participation in a powerful London-based coterie, her specific positioning in relation to late-imperial global race and power relations, her attitude toward and treatment of the new expression of women's experience, and her conscious and unconscious registration of the anomie felt in various registers by the many "–isms" of modernism, different to that of others? To grasp Mansfield's modernist distinctiveness, her unique contribution to the overall modernist project, this essay suggests that we note her own relatively anomalous quotient of privilege and marginality. On the one hand, her writerly project fits perfectly with the heroic account of modernism as the early twentieth-century subaltern takeover and subversion of the expectations and protocols of high culture. If, as has often been claimed, modernism represents the arrival to the Western metropolises of London and Paris of people from the European margins and, soon, from the Global South, Mansfield, as a New Zealander *arriviste* who was labelled "a little savage from New Zealand"[6] at her London school, is an avatar.

If, as has been claimed, modernism is the invention of women (if it was then reclaimed for the patriarchy by Eliot, Ezra Pound, and John Middleton Murry, Mansfield's husband), Mansfield's evident feminist perspective, female-centered textuality, and acute perception of the textures of women's lives are unparalleled. If modernism is the expression of the pervasive alienation and angst of the modernist subject under capitalism, as seen especially in fictions from James Joyce's *Ulysses*[7] to Jean Rhys' *Good Morning, Midnight* through the figure of the *flâneur* or *flâneuse*, the wanderer in the city, then Mansfield's tales often highlight such baleful victims of modernity, from the lonesome Miss Brill in the *Park Publique* to the owner of the dead bird in her final story, "The Canary" (1922). On the other hand, Mansfield's privileged class origins also meant that while she was fully cognizant of marginal lives, such as that of the charwoman Ma Parker in one of her most moving stories, she also knew of the ennui of privileged ones close to the centers of wealth and power. Born into the inner circles of the new colonial bourgeoisie—her father, Sir Harold Beauchamp, would become Chairman of the Bank of New Zealand—she rebelled. In this, she might be compared to such writers as Samuel Beckett or Wallace Stevens: high modernists whose origins made them familiar with the mores of modern business. Her anomalous marginality-in-privilege, however, makes her closer to contemporary upper-class revolutionaries such as the Irish aristocrat-turned labor leader Countess Markevicz. Like her, Mansfield knew privilege from within, but, cognizant of its flaws, was determined to side with the powerless. Thus, her experimental modernist expressiveness, when used to show in minute detail the rich affective lives of rich women, is accompanied in almost every story by a more shadowy presence as foil, that of a nurse or a servant.

It is at this crossroads of privileged sensitivity and subaltern consciousness that we sense the taut excitement in Mansfield's dialectical modernism. First, we are granted the pleasure of grasping how her stories act as efficient encounter spaces, in which the onrush of impressions and stimuli is absorbed and filtered by the consciousness and the senses of the protagonist. Consider, for example, the exactitude of the account of how Miss Brill is buoyed by the music of the Sunday afternoon band. Then, the stories confront us—sometimes in a moment, as in the case of Miss Brill, overhearing the malicious pair at the end of her park bench, or sometimes gradually, as in the case of Raoul's slow drip of salacious revelations in "Je ne parle pas français" (1918)—with the social facts of the case, and, as the worm of the story turns, we realize that we are party to a stinging satirical labor of social criticism. Mansfield's stories, like those of Joyce in *Dubliners*, come close often to stream of consciousness narration, granting us contact with characters'

sense-lives in a way unprecedented in English fiction. Yet this opportunity for insight into the viewpoint, moment by moment, of a single character, is at odds with the synoptic, social viewpoint implied by the third-person narration. There is little learned by the protagonist in a characteristic Mansfield text; her stories eschew a conventional moral register. If the stories incite us to such insights, it is implied with modernist insouciance that is our own affair. Rather, the texts delineate the way in which a given character is confused by, relishes, or is frightened by, a series of uncannily familiar but often jarring stimuli. Each character is shown sparring with the external world of other people, while she is also engaged in the management of her own body and her own sense of self. (This is the governing formula of "Prelude's" episodes). Simultaneously, the third-person narrative becomes the port of entry for a vein of social satire. Mansfield stages this dialectic in text after text, and it corresponds to the mixture of the cool and the intense with which the modern heroine or hero might encounter the modern world. One example: the grieving father, but also ruthless business-man, in the devastating story about post World War I trauma, "The Fly." This is Mansfield's modernism. It is transmitted in a lithe and sometimes jigging prose, resonant with the stressed, oftentimes jazzy rhythms of modernity.

Let us now consider in turn each of what we might think of these horizons of Mansfield's modern prose. First, if modernism was a constellation of artistic movements that reorganized cultural production in response to new social forces at the turn of the twentieth century through coteries which had in common a shared belief in the artistic value of the avant-garde, then there is no question that Mansfield was at the center of one of the most pivotal of such coteries, based in London. As early as 1910, when she visited the Post-Impressionist exhibition organized by Roger Fry, she had already befriended A. R. Orage, editor of *The New Age*, and would soon come to know his wife, the South African Beatrice Hastings. However, it was when she submitted "The Woman at the Store" to Murry's magazine *Rhythm* in 1912 that her place at the very pole position of modernist London avant-gardism began; a few months later she would be assistant editor of the magazine. By mid-1913 Mansfield and Murry were friends of Frieda and D. H. Lawrence; Mansfield was the model for Gudrun, perhaps the most richly observed character in all of Lawrence's oeuvre, and heroine of his masterpiece, *Women in Love* (1920). She and Murry were the witnesses at the pre-war wedding of the Lawrences. During the war, Mansfield was part of the "Garsington set" presided over by Lady Ottoline Morrell; by 1916, when she and Murry were living in Gower St., Bloomsbury, in a house also occupied by Dorothy Brett and Dora Carrington (in the attic), she was corresponding

with Bertrand Russell and getting to know Virginia Woolf, who reports that they looked at the manuscript of Joyce's *Ulysses* together. As the artist of the Mansfield-Murry partnership, editor, and friend to the most interesting British writers of her generation, Mansfield fits unequivocally at the center of the British modernist network.

That said, access to the vast range of modernist "–isms" then breaking out in Paris—Fauvism, Expressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, and many others—was for Mansfield second hand. She was certainly familiar with these developments; however, her modernism appears, at first glance at least, to be less experimental, for example, than that of Joyce or Gertrude Stein. Thus, she was cast as peripheral in what the post-Second World War critic Hugh Kenner would title "the Pound Era"[8]—thereby canonizing Pound's network as the key modernist coterie (and appropriating modernism as American). Neither was she part of what Shari Benstock would name the "Women of the Left Bank,"[9] another coterie of highly experimental, mostly lesbian writers in Paris which included Natalie Barney, Djuna Barnes, and Gertrude Stein, although she had much in common with their outlook. Instead, she stands between Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence, her output smaller but sharper than either of theirs, felled tragically at thirty-five by tuberculosis possibly contracted from Lawrence, slighted (and secretly admired) at different times by each of them.

What did this location within the modernist firmament mean for Mansfield's prose? The aesthetic promulgated in *Rhythm* may be the initial defining influence. Murry launched it after a European trip in which he had enthusiastically absorbed the *vitalisme* of Henri Bergson.[10] The artistic movement most influenced by Bergson's teachings on flux was Italian Futurism; therefore, we might claim that Mansfield, Lawrence, and the other *Rhythm* writers produced work in a mode that was one British version of Futurism (Wyndham Lewis's work provides another). For Lawrence this fostered, first, a modernist reinvention of pastoral, and, in later years, a shrill neo-Fascism. Mansfield had no truck with such reactionary tendencies, but from the Bergsonian influence she learned a language of flux, energy-transmission, and nervous excitement which colors the texture and influences the way she describes the moment-to-moment lives of her characters. Thus when Bertha trembles before the pear tree in her garden in "Bliss," one might sense the shade of Lawrence's breathy pastoral in *The White Peacock*, yet the suggestion of a sacred tree, evocative of Lawrence,[11] is trumped by the close annotation of Bertha's shimmering *élan vital*, which shows Bergson's direct influence. Likewise, Bergson—in *Matter and Memory*[12] where he elaborates a theory of self as involving the retrieval of images from

past memories—influences the integration of flashbacks, memory-sequences, flashes of illumination, and remembered images which register multiplying temporalities in stories such as "Prelude." Mansfield's centrality to a specifically British modernism turns out, unexpectedly, to have made her a Bergsonian; at the same time, her gender and class consciousness might owe most to her anomalous place as a New Zealander in the imperial center that was London.

One might think of Mansfield's political-cultural journey as exactly the reverse of that of Lawrence. When he went to Australia, which he described in *Kangaroo* (1923), and to Mexico, which he wrote about in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), he showed how his Futurist vitalism had led to fascism; when Mansfield came to London—the imperial center of the empire which had spread as far as her native New Zealand—her work came to show an intense awareness of how the possibilities of living to the full for any given character were determined by class. Furthermore, this awareness was sparked in New Zealand, where Mansfield early encountered the Māori.[13] Mansfield's consciousness of the Māori, and of race in the context of colonization, is a complicated affair and sometimes does not rise above a primitivist interest in native peoples that was, as Marianna Torgovnik[14] and others have shown, often deployed by modernists, from Man Ray to Picasso, as a dubious means of declaring their own alterity. However, if we take seriously Fredric Jameson's sweeping assertion that modernism was the literature of the age of Empire, and its implications, we can begin a more totalizing reading of Mansfield's postcolonialism.

For Jameson, the disjointed and multi-layered experimentation which characterized modernist forms, and the interest in anomie and shock that cuts through almost every modernist artwork from Edvard Munch's *The Scream* to Eliot's "The Waste Land," resulted from modern art's intuition that in the global system of empire, the real work of resource extraction, production, and toil was now taking place not in the West but in the colonial "elsewhere."[15] In this context, the cast of Mansfield's experimental verve, and the way in which her privileged characters' anomie gets refracted in the servitude of others, is particularly interesting. Mansfield was certainly not a colonial local "writing back" to empire. Neither, however, was she fully at home in London. Her partial marginality raised her awareness, and her first perceptions of injustice, of the ways in which the colonial system considered the white settlers literally more human, were developed in relation to the Māori people of New Zealand. In her stories, whether set in New Zealand or in Europe, she was engaged in the task of showing in greater detail than before attempted the nuances of what indeed, day-to-day, being alive, and being human, meant, not just for the cosmopolitans, but

for the subalterns, whether indigenous people in the colony or working people in the metropolis, as well. There invariably arises in her stories the disquieting realization that a right of access to the intense kinds of human aliveness she elaborates varies by the race and class to which one belongs.

Behind Bertha in "Bliss," for example, is the figure of the nurse. The nurse minds Bertha's child—the nurse, the cook, and the servants are the workers who allow Bertha and her friends the time, and the luxury, to *feel*. In "Bliss," the question hangs there: do these now elaborated feelings—for example, the intensity of lesbian desire between women—belong only to the upper classes? "The Life of Ma Parker" (1921) shows as scandalous the refusal to countenance feelings in working people. The charwoman Ma Parker, after a grim life, has now seen her grandson die. For her, however, there is nowhere—no room of her own—where she can even go and cry. The callousness of her bourgeois employer (like Mrs. Sheridan in "The Garden Party") is registered, by contrast, as an evil, shocking failure of empathy. If we consider that, in Mansfield's case, the origins of this insight was her colonial background and her inability to look away from Māori lives, then we might claim that when she is writing of the callousness of upper-class subjects, both in Europe and in New Zealand, she is doing so with a full awareness of how the imperial system and the class system are analogous and complementary. Thus, for example, the brutality of the boorish husband in "Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding" (1911) is part of a system of exploitation by the powerful which stretches all the way to the expropriation of Māori land in New Zealand. If one doubts this connection, turn to "Je ne parle pas français," where Raoul almost gleefully suggests that his grim career of sexual exploitation (he procures girls for older men) began with his sexual awakening at the hands of an African nurse. This origin story, narrated (or possibly invented) by himself, confronts us with the entanglement of primitivism, sexual desire, gender and social relations, class and power, where the Westerner's subject identity gets marked as the product of global and colonial race relations.[16] All Raoul's behavior, and the story he tells, has its start in this incident; in the same way, the race relation engendered by colonialism may be said to be at the root of all of Mansfield's work.

Raoul's troubling story brings us to what is perhaps the most crucial horizon of Mansfield's modernism, its basis in the experience of women. In many Mansfield stories, the women are, literally, silent. Miss Brill merely watches, thinks, dreams, and overhears the nasty speech of others, but does not speak herself. Mouse, in "Je ne parle pas … ," says disquietingly little, while her utterance which gives the story its title is her avowal that she does not speak

the language of France. Or consider "The Woman at the Store": here, again, is a lonesome, lonely, woman who speaks so little that she seems taciturn to the point of derangement; her daughter, in turn, draws a picture to tell of the truth, rather than put it in words. Each of these women is missing her name or part of it: the "Woman in the Store" is merely "the woman," or "Mumma" to her daughter; we never hear the first name of "Miss Brill," while "Mouse" is known by her nickname alone. Half-named, half-known, and silent: Mansfield's stories feature women who are not allowed to speak their feelings, desires, or claims. This is nowhere more clear than when Mansfield describes the existences of servants: for Ma Parker, the story of her cleaning the house and dirty dishes of the "literary gentleman" is a study of the impossibility of speaking her anguish about her grandson's death. Instead, she remembers her grandson as the last person to whom she could speak, and the story records her memories of this speaking, as well as the throwaway lines she speaks to herself. ("What have I done? Said old Ma Parker. What have I done?"[17]) At the same time—and here Mansfield's dialectical modernism is at its height—the story makes it abundantly clear that Ma Parker's feelings of bereavement are immense:

> As she said these words she suddenly let fall her brush. She found herself in the kitchen. Her misery was so terrible that she pinned on her hat, put on her jacket and walked out of the flat like a person in a dream. She did not know what she was doing. She was like a person so dazed by the horror of what has happened that he walks away—anywhere, as though by walking away he could escape. …
>
> It was cold in the street. There was a wind like ice. People were flitting by, very fast; the men walked like scissors, the women trod like cats. And nobody knew—nobody cared. Even if she broke down, if at last, after all these years, she were to cry, she'd find herself in the lock-up as like as not.[18]

This might seem a piece of uncompromising naturalist description of a working-class woman's suffering, in the manner of Zola's *L'Assommoir*.[19] Yet its modernist attributes carry it further. First, it describes a limit at which Ma Parker's ability to repress her emotions comes to an end, and, dazed, she is "like a person in a dream." Yet there is no depth-sounding here of the unconscious. Rather, the text turns to the surreal image of the "men like scissors." After that, the next sentence offers us a drift of internal monologue (Ma Parker speaking to herself): "She'd find herself in the lock-up as like as not." Here is a woman of feeling who does not have the language to give those feelings currency. Thus, crucial material here is unsaid, eloquently represented by the break that divides the two sections of this passage. Almost every Mansfield story with a silent female heroine also features that heroine straining to express her tumult of feelings,

but which she is forbidden to express. This is Mansfield's modernist feminism: she richly suggests women's feelings, but portrays subjects condemned never to speak them aloud.

Mansfield's work, therefore, stands at the intersection of a series of key modernist concerns. It originated in the coterie culture of the various modernist "–isms." It exemplifies the role of the colonial "political unconscious." Its feminist consciousness is generative of its modernist perspectives. How did these matters find expression not only in the topics she chose to address, but also in her literary style? To answer, first consider her preferred medium: the short story. Short stories, unlike lyric poems or novels, comprised a genre largely free from the dead weight of literary history. They appeared with the rise of mass magazines, and the time it took to read one matched the time of the average commuter train-trip. They can thus be thought of as *the* modernist literary mode: not as condensed novels, but as short bursts of energetic discourse that engage the reader in a more intense readerly experience. They also frequently record the growing ability of the heroine to express her feelings, and the growth of her perceptive powers. They thrive on more free, slangy, and colloquial styles, but also work as stream of consciousness narratives *avant la lettre*. Superseding the earlier vehicle of inner feeling, the lyric poem, they are literary vehicles in which reactions, feelings, sensations, and affects get to slosh around and reverberate. Modernist short stories have their roots both in the work of Chekhov (beloved of Mansfield), but also in the original accounts of urban anomie, the detective stories of Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, tales of strangers in the teeming night-city that glamorize policing and surveillance. They are structured around the mystery of an anomalous, singular human subject—the criminal. Mansfield subverts these narrative legacies even as she negotiates between the increased access to the subject's interiority and the increased powers of outside surveillance their forms facilitate.

In "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped," for example, the aperture into the child's consciousness opened up by the short-story form is framed by the mention of a crime (even if comic) in the title: " … Kidnapped." The criminal register allows a cloud to hover over this apparently happy story of a little girl's encounter with two Māori women. "'You coming with us, Pearl Button? We got beautiful things to show you,' whispered one of the women."[20] The mystery of a child's abduction is wrapped around a sunlit account of her beach outing. When it ends with the child's scream as "Little men with blue coats—little blue men came running, running towards her with shouts and whistlings,"[21] we get both an exact representation of the child's perception (she does not yet understand

perspective, how figures far away seem small), and an invocation of the law and order world. The two are wrapped in a surreal image that invites us to smile at the child's limited understanding and to laugh more at the comic policemen's chase. The story delicately balances a little menace and a lot of pleasure: unresolved, its surreal image of the "little blue men" reverberates as surreal comedy. Its models are the comic chases of the then new pop culture form, the cartoon cinema reel. As in a cartoon chase, the rush is the point: the mystery involved remains suspended.

Is it this mystery, the end-result of the dialectical structure of many of her stories, that makes Mansfield most modernist? In her stories, this sense of ambiguity abounds, is heightened, and almost always is left unresolved at the end. A detective short story opens with a mystery, which the detective will decode through "clues"; Mansfield's short stories, instead, end with one. As in a detective story, the mystery may reside in the unknowability of a human subject; in Mansfield's case, this unknowability becomes the basis for the suggestion of a utopian potential.

Take "Je ne parle pas français," for example, a story whose night-time urban milieu, its seedy characters, its cheap hotels and cafes, are close to those of the typical detective story. Raoul, the would-be writer and pimp who narrates the story, is no detective, amateur or otherwise, but if it were revealed that he had a further sideline as a police informant, we would not be at all surprised. The story even drolly refers to the world of sensational crimes which is also the detective story's feeding ground: when Raoul describes the grim café waiter, he notes that "When he is not smearing over the table or flicking at a dead fly or two, he stands with one hand on the back of a chair […] waiting to be photographed in connection with some wretched murder. 'Interior of Café Where Body was Found.' You've seen him hundreds of times."[22] Raoul's seediness, his admission that he supports himself as a gigolo, and his claim that he procures young girls for old men, are part of the detective-story world. Yet his parallel world of writerly ambition, his strange attraction to Dick, and his even stranger attraction to Mouse—whose character is never developed enough to allow us to understand the possible fascination of her enigma—and his bitterly humorous stabs at a few scraps of a philosophy of life and his wry analyses of his own existence, leaven the hints of his louche and seedy existence. They are the story's true mystery: how can such a trivial person have such flashes, or at least minor hints, of something that moves us? Mansfield's mystery, in other words, far from working at the service of surveillance, has a utopian edge: for her, the ambiguous is situated at the point where the apparently ordinary bursts into the potentially

extraordinary, the apparently callous is revealed as full of potential feeling or at least the desire for feeling, and the minor becomes significant.

This leads us to the final horizon of Mansfield's modernism: its excess. Mansfield is not a writer of excessive prose in the manner of Gertrude Stein or the later Joyce. Her textuality never takes off into the utterly heteroglossic. Yet no one should make the mistake of thinking of her as a "proper" or polite modernist. What sets her prose apart, and grants it the shock of the new in the first place is its easy use of the demotic. She uses ordinary colloquial speech especially when, even though narrating in the third person, she has *de facto* entered the consciousness of her protagonists. Thus, when we are asked, regarding Bertha Young, the heroine of "Bliss," "What can you do when you are thirty and, turning the corner of your own street, you are overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss—as though you'd suddenly swallowed a bright piece of the late afternoon sun and it burned in your bosom, sending out a little shower of sparks into every particle, into every finger and toe? … ,"[23] we know that this is not just a surreal image, not just a very exact recording of the sense of excitement experienced by the heroine, but also her own on-the-hoof analysis of her sensations at that moment. When the narrative is recounted by one of the characters, as in the case of Raoul, this colloquialism, with its sense of straining against the leash of proper, expository prose, is taken for granted. This represents a new arrival of popular culture and everyday speech as a medium in high literature. Moreover, as the quote from "Bliss" also demonstrates, Mansfield's demotic language proved excellent at a new level of recording human sensation in its modulations and progressive flux and flow. This is the Bergsonian vocation of Mansfield's prose,[24] one shared, to different literary effects for each, by Woolf and Joyce: after the weighing up of motivations in the work of Henry James and the consideration of the effects of social forces in Zola, modernist fiction writers all took on the task of recording in real time, second by second, the modulation not of feeling as such, but rather of the sensations of their characters. For this somatic monitoring of characters' modulations in real time, Mansfield, especially in her descriptions of women characters from Bertha to Miss Brill, developed a subtle, flexible line.

At the same time, Mansfield's refusal to pursue this style to its logical end point, as Virginia Woolf did in *The Waves* (1931) and Joyce did in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), means that her commitment to a social as well as a personal vision appears all the more directly. Her determination to always see her characters' inner lives, as in the case of Miss Brill, not just as the product of their surroundings but also as an utterly accurate reflection of the social forces refracted through the sensations experienced upon the characters' bodies,

means that her post-Chekhovian, post-naturalist prose never loses the tense quality born of its dialectical struggle between the implied social world and the intensely annotated personal sensation. Her colloquial style, her ability to record moment by moment her character's fluctuation of sensation and energy, is always operating alongside an implied social commentary—on the society which humiliates Miss Brill, which sends the police chasing after a child who has gone to the beach with some Māori women, and which ruins women's lives when they remain as the servants of their aging father, in "The Daughters of the Late Colonel." The utopian dream that is held out as the lively reach of these women's sensory and feeling lives, placed over against the social forces which crush and humiliate them, is this: somehow, despite the cruelty which exists and is epitomized by the patriarchal system in which the characters find themselves, the restless energy of the characters, annotated in every story, might just possibly provide an escape route.

All his leads us back to "The Garden Party." Here again, the warm enthusiasm for the energy of the rich and varied and fluctuating lives of the young generation, and even of their mother, is played off against the cool appraisal of the social stratification of New Zealand society. This is the dialectic of warmth and coolness which characterizes every Mansfield story. Parties are very common in modernism:[25] Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* ends with one, Joyce's "The Dead" is a party story, while *Finnegans Wake* is a novel about an all-night party. Even Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" features a party in which " … the women come and go/Talking of Michelangelo."[26] Mansfield eschews the party scene, cast as a false and brittle model of community, for a look at the party's aftermath. As in Joyce's "The Dead," it is the journey and the destination afterwards, in this case to the tiny house of the dead carter and his wife and children in the lane, that is shown to us as a reality which Laura, in her brittleness, cannot take in, and in which, at the same time, she encounters some truth which utterly abashes her. Like Gabriel in Joyce's story, here Laura encounters death, in this case when she is shown the body of the dead carter. Like Gabriel, she senses a kind of epiphany. Yet all she can come out with, to her brother Laurie, is:

> "Isn't life," she stammered, "isn't life—" But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood.[27]

There is no decisive discovery. Yet in this thick moment, we know that in Laura's spirit of empathy and her desire to honor the dead, there exists the seeds of a utopian dream of a better, more life-enhancing connection to others. This is the connection for which every Mansfield story yearns, the riposte to each stories' dialectical modernism.

Notes

1 Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden Party," in CW2, 404.
2 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume II 1920–1924*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1980), 226.
3 See Frank O'Connor, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1963). O'Connor, notes, however, "It may be that for me and for people of my generation her work has been obscured by her legend, as the work of Rupert Brooke has been" (128–9).
4 Mansfield, "The Garden Party," 411.
5 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925), 7.
6 CW4, 190.
7 James Joyce, *Ulysses*, The Gabler Edition (1922; New York: Vintage, 1985).
8 Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).
9 Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank, Paris, 1900–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).
10 See Clare Hanson, "The World of Two: Katherine Mansfield and J. M. Murry, 1911–19," in *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), 21–32. See also *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).
11 On *Rhythm*, primitivism, and Mansfield, see Carey Snyder, "Katherine Mansfield, *Rhythm*, and Metropolitan Primitivism," *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 5, no. 2 (2015): 138–59, and, on the interest of émigré contributors to the magazine in a new primitivism, see Gerri Kimber, "Mansfield, *Rhythm* and the Émigré Connection," in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, ed. Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber, and Sue Reid (London: Continuum, 2011), 13–29.
12 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (London: Allen and Unwin, 1911).
13 For Mansfield's early impressions of Māori life and culture, see Katherine Mansfield, *The Urewera Notebook*, ed. Ian A. Gordon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).
14 Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
15 Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in an Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (Autumn 1986): 65–88. For a discussion of the debates generated by Jameson's essay, see Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 89–113.
16 See especially Urmilla Seshagiri, *Race and the Modernist Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).
17 Katherine Mansfield, "The Life of Ma Parker," in CW2, 296.
18 Ibid.

19 Emile Zola, *L'Assommoir*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (1877; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
20 Katherine Mansfield, "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped," in CW1, 286.
21 Ibid., 288.
22 Katherine Mansfield, "Je ne parle pas français," in CW2, 113.
23 Katherine Mansfield, "Bliss," in CW2, 142.
24 See also Clare Hanson, "Katherine Mansfield and Vitalist Psychology," in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, 23–37.
25 See Kate McLoughlin, ed., *The Modernist Party* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
26 T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in *The Oxford Book of American Poetry*, ed. David Lehman and John Brehm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 343–4.
27 Mansfield, "The Garden Party," 413.

3

Juliet and *Maata*

Gerri Kimber

"[E]very portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter."
Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.[1]

Introduction

Juliet (1906) and *Maata* (1913) are fragments of two novels which Katherine Mansfield began but never completed, written seven years apart but with very similar themes. Because of their fragmentary nature, they were not deemed worthy of publication either by Mansfield during her lifetime or by her husband John Middleton Murry after her death. Yet although incomplete, both novels are of singular importance to Mansfield scholars since they offer clear self-portraits of the author at moments in her life when other firm biographical evidence is mostly absent. Indeed, my own biography of Mansfield drew on the contents of *Juliet* to provide evidence of Mansfield's mindset in her late teenage years.[2] In this chapter, I shall examine the writing history, content, and autobiografictional elements of each incomplete novel in order to offer new insights into Mansfield, from both writerly and biographical perspectives.[3]

Mansfield and the Fictional Self

As I noted in my biography, Mansfield put a good deal of her own experiences into her fiction.[4] From her early teens onwards, she made a conscious effort to record what was happening to her, whether in a diary entry, in a letter, in her fiction, or even in her poetry. As Ian Gordon notes:

> Katherine Mansfield to a degree almost unparalleled in English fiction put her own experiences into her stories. She wrote of nothing that did not directly happen to her, even when she appeared to be at her most imaginative and fanciful. Her stories, read in their order of composition, gain force and significance, and are illuminated at all points by the events of her own history. Her whole work read in this manner emerges as a kind of *recherche du temps perdu*, a remembrance of things past.[5]

Of course, allowance must be made for artistic license. No claim is being made that everything Mansfield wrote in her fiction—or indeed even in her diary entries—actually happened. But if the reader wants to understand Mansfield the small child growing up in Karori, for example, no amount of biographical research can compete with her own portrait of Kezia in the Burnell stories.

Mansfield's two unfinished novels exemplify her use of autobiografiction, a term first coined in 1906 in an essay of the same name by the Edwardian writer Stephen Reynolds (1881–1919).[6] For Reynolds, his invention of the portmanteau word was an attempt to describe "autobiographical fiction," that is to say, "fiction with a good deal of the writer's life in it, or for those lapses from fact which occur in most autobiographies."[7] More recently Max Saunders's ground-breaking study, *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature*, discusses "how modern writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found new ways to combine life-writing with fiction." He offers a caveat, however, since "reading something as 'autobiographical' […] is different from reading it as 'autobiography'; its autobiographical dimension can be covert, unconscious, or implicit."[8] Nevertheless, Max Saunders's main argument is that

> from the 1870s to the 1930s autobiography increasingly aspires to the condition of fiction and that this rewrites the literary history of modernism, to show that, far from negating life-writing, modernism constantly engages with it dialectically, rejecting it in order to assimilate and transform it.[9]

Mansfield remains one of the most important exponents of modernist autobiografiction. In a letter to Sarah Gertrude Millin written in March 1922, less than a year before her death, Mansfield explored in depth her personal fictionalizing of the self:

> Always my thoughts and feelings go back to New Zealand—rediscovering it, finding beauty in it, re-living it. Its about my Aunt Fan who lived up the road I really want to write, and the man who sold goldfinches, and about a wet night on the wharf, and Tarana Street in the Spring. […] I think the only way to

> live as a writer is to draw upon one's real *familiar* life—to find the treasure in that […]. Our secret life, the life we return to over and over again, the "do you remember" life is always the past. And the curious thing is that if we describe this which seems to us so intensely personal, other people take it to themselves and understand it as if it were their own.[10]

The techniques Mansfield would go on to develop in her pitch-perfect later stories, utilizing inner consciousness as a technique of revelation of character, arose from an instinctive sense, honed very early on in her writing career.

Juliet (1906)

According to a notebook entry by Mansfield, *Juliet* was begun on "18.V.06."[11] Given the date, several events might have been the catalyst for its genesis. Toward the end of March 1906, and prior to her parents' arrival in England to collect Mansfield and her two older sisters from Queen's College in London, where they had been educated for the past three years, they were taken abroad for a short vacation by a relative. After a brief stay in Paris, the party moved on to Brussels to see the musically gifted Trowell twins, Tom and Garnet (Tom now officially using his middle name, Arnold, to distinguish him from his father, Thomas), who were studying at the Conservatoire. Mansfield had believed herself in love with Tom, whom she also referred to in her diaries as Caesar since her schooldays in Wellington. With their red hair, huge black hats, and immensely long, continental cigarettes, their bohemian ways now entranced Mansfield; she wanted to be a bohemian too, and Tom taught her how to smoke, fueling a life-long addiction that not even tuberculosis could weaken.

Mansfield's absorption in music, and the recent contact with Tom, now gave her the fanciful idea of becoming a professional musician (which, for women in those days, had a similar social stigma to putting one's daughter on the stage). When her parents arrived from Wellington, Mansfield must have broached the subject, but her father soon put a stop to any such fanciful notions. Mansfield wrote to her cousin Sylvia Payne on April 24, 1906:

> A great change has come into my life since I saw you last. Father is greatly opposed to my wish to be a professional 'cellist or to take up the 'cello to any great extent—so my hope for a musical career is absolutely gone. It was a fearful disappointment—I could not tell you what I have felt like—and do now when I think of it—but I suppose it is no earthly use warring with the inevitable—so in the future I shall give all my time to writing.[12]

And so, just a couple of weeks before commencing *Juliet*, Mansfield had made the decision to devote "all of her time" to writing. Also, given that this period represents the height of her infatuation with Tom Trowell, it is only natural that the male protagonist should be based on him. In addition, when Tom and Garnet arrived in London in May 1906, having completed their studies on the Continent, Tom visited Mansfield at Queen's College, and of course his presence now made the idea of having to return to New Zealand all the more painful. Tom's arrival in London did not quite play out to Mansfield's romantic plans, however. Her see-sawing, teenage emotions made her an unattractive prospect for the overwhelmed Tom, who started to cool down the relationship—such as it was. The emotional turbulence stimulated by the presence of the Trowells, together with her own burgeoning sexuality, would all subsequently be poured into *Juliet*, which she now began on 18 May and which she carried on writing intermittently until January 1907, when it would be abandoned.

The plot of *Juliet* (such as it is) involves a young woman eager to move from Wellington to London, especially after David, the musician she is infatuated with, travels there to study. Once in the metropolis, she becomes close to Pearl, a fellow student at a women's hostel, with whom David falls in love, while Juliet is seduced by his friend, Rudolph (in fact the name of one of the Trowell twins' friends, whom Mansfield had met in Brussels and who had recently committed suicide). Following a pregnancy and her refusal to consider returning home, Juliet lives in some degree of squalor (with the suggestion of an abortion), and a relationship is hinted at with another man called Walter. She is desperately ill when found by David, taken to live with him and Pearl, and dies at their home.

The other main female character in *Juliet*—Pearl—is based on Mansfield's close schoolfriend at this time—Vere Bartrick-Baker (known as "Mimi"), who was petite, dark, and sophisticated. Her unconventional background was a particular attraction for Mansfield, whose own solid, colonial family seemed dull by comparison. Vere's parents were divorced—rare at that time—and her mother lived alone in Surrey, having declared herself a widow, and wrote poetry. "Curious Eve," one of the protagonists in Mansfield's only Queen's College-based story, "Carnation" (1918), is also a portrait of Vere. Most importantly, it was Vere who lent Mansfield the copies of *Lippincott's* magazine, where the then salacious text, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, had first been serialized (Mansfield thus reading the book in its first, unexpurgated version); its influence on Mansfield at this time was considerable.

The character of "Walter" in *Juliet* (without even a name change) is based on Mansfield's brilliant Queen's College German master, Walter Rippmann (1869–1947), who, of all the teachers at the school, would have the greatest influence on her. He became Professor of German at Queen's in 1896, aged just twenty-seven, and stayed for nearly twenty years.

> [He] was an admirer of Oscar Wilde, of Walter Pater, and of art nouveau. In contrast to most of the other professors, he was "young and ardent," and a man of great social charm. With his more able original students, he was ready to spend time in stimulating conversation, introducing them to new ideas and encouraging them to discover their own potentialities. A select group was invited to visit his house in Ladbroke Grove, where he would talk to them of his literary heroes, show them his collection of Japanese prints, and introduce them to an exciting new world.[13]

In *Juliet*, she fictionalizes her first visit to his strange and wonderful house in a section called simply "The Man," whose name, as noted above, is Walter:

> The room was full of gloom but vivid yellow curtains hung straight and fine before the three windows. Tall wrought-iron candle-sticks stood in the corners […]. There were prints of beautiful women on the walls, and the graceful figure of a girl holding a shell in her exquisite arms stood on a table. There was a long low couch upholstered in dull purple, and quaint low chairs in the same colour. The room was full of the odour of chrysanthemums.[14]

It is probably not an exaggeration to state that in introducing the impressionable Mansfield to the works of Wilde, Pater, and other writers of the *fin-de-siècle* and Decadent movements (especially Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, Paul Verlaine, and Nietzsche), Rippmann would alter the course of her reading—and writing—life. At this time, Mansfield was an open vessel, absorbing every influence that came her way.

The first person to attempt any sort of transcription of parts of *Juliet* was Ruth Elvish Mantz, who, in her jointly authored biography of Mansfield with John Middleton Murry, published about a quarter of the material as autobiograficton—with many omissions and misreadings.[15] The full extant text of *Juliet* was subsequently transcribed from Mansfield's notebook (no. 1 in the Turnbull Library's holdings) by Margaret Scott and published in the *Turnbull Library Record* in New Zealand in 1970,[16] but with no attempt at a chronological ordering. Scott subsequently revised her own transcription of the unfinished novel for her edition of the *Katherine Mansfield Notebooks* in 1997, again with

no chronological ordering. It was most recently published in volume one of the *Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield* in 2012, this time with the various sections reordered to create some sort of coherent narrative.

Scott notes that within the story it is possible "to perceive the weaving in of themes which were to remain central to her [Mansfield] for the rest of her life,"[17] which elsewhere she elaborates as follows: "early death, unrequited love, art *v* commerce, London *v* New Zealand, experience *v* conventional behaviour. And all through *Juliet* and many other of the unpublished pieces of this period, is the recurring crisis of falling."[18] Only two critics have made a sustained attempt at a critical analysis of *Juliet*: Sydney Janet Kaplan and Cherry Hankin.[19] Kaplan takes a feminist approach to the youthful work, while at the same time reading *Juliet* as a proto-modernist narrative, while Hankin reads the text—and especially the notion of Juliet "falling"—from a psychological perspective; both critics, however, assert the importance of *Juliet* within Mansfield's overall oeuvre, from both a writerly and a biographical perspective.

The reordered story has two pieces marked "Chapter 1." The first is pure fantasy—dreamlike in its atmosphere and clearly set in New Zealand, as the young protagonist Juliet climbs up a steep, "bush-covered" hill;[20] for no discernible reason, she stumbles, clinging to brambles and trees, until an unseen guide's hand pulls her out of the bush and promptly disappears, after which she hears angry voices, starts running, trips, and falls, whereupon the unseen guide helps her up again, and once more disappears. Then Juliet finds herself on a road in a dense fog where she is violently struck in the face by an unseen hand, generating "a feeling of intolerable shame,"[21] before ultimately finding herself on top of a windswept mountain where she "falls" once more. The words "and fell" end the second and final paragraphs of the first "Chapter 1" and indeed become a recurring motif throughout the entire narrative. For Hankin, they point to "the finality of 'death,'"[22] and demonstrate a repeated conflict between fantasy and reality that would be a feature of Mansfield's writing in the early part of her career.

The much longer, second "Chapter 1" is still set in New Zealand. It begins with Juliet sitting in front of a mirror, affording Mansfield the opportunity of describing in detail the face of her youthful protagonist, with her masses of pale gold hair and greenish eyes,[23] the opposite of her own dark hair and deep brown eyes, but perhaps reflecting what her youthful self wished she looked like. This liminal moment of staring into a mirror, even conversing with her "Mirror face,"[24] becomes a common trope in Mansfield's mature writing. Liminality,

together with the sense of the transitional, becomes part of an impressionistic, stylistic device, and is to be found in the ordinary spaces and commonplace objects such as mirrors, staircases, and windows within the confines of her domestic arena. Characters as insiders, self-absorbed in their own reflections, frequently position themselves in liminal spaces such as staircases or staring out of windows, allowing Mansfield to engage with altered perceptions of interiority. In this same chapter, she has Juliet crossing over to a window before "leaning far out and turning her face up to the stars."[25]

What follows is autobiografiction, as Mansfield describes the Beauchamp family (now Juliet's family), in some detail, and in particular her own teenage personality:

> Juliet was the odd man out of the family—the ugly duckling. She had lived in a world of her own, created her own people, read anything and everything which came to hand, was possessed with a violent temper, and completely lacked placidity. She was dominated by her moods which swept through her and in number were legion. [...] She criticised everybody and everything with which she came into contact, and wrapped herself in a fierce white reserve. [...] She had no defined paths ahead, no goal to reach and she felt compelled to vent her energy upon somebody, and that somebody was her family.[26]

At a musical evening she meets "David," in essence Tom Trowell. In a now-familiar trope, both characters "crossed over to the wide opened window and both leant out."[27] David, a talented musician, then travels to London leaving Juliet isolated. Subsequently, we find her on those windswept hills of the fantasy Chapter 1, buffeted by the wind: "vague thoughts swept through her—of the Future, of her leaving this little island and going so far away, of all that she knew and loved, all that she wished to be."[28]

The remaining extant sections all take place in London, with Juliet at school for a couple of paragraphs, and then, suddenly, she is grown up, living with Pearl (Vere), in love with David (Tom), but pursued by David's friend Rudolph. *Fin-de-siècle*, exotic symbology is everywhere, from Juliet's favorite kimono, to Pearl's throwaway comment, "'I should like to take opium this afternoon'"[29] to an overtly sexual conversation between the two women:

> "It's sure to be something physical. Why don't you sleep better Juliet? Are you—you're not ... repenting?"
> "Good Heavens, no. The truth is, my dear girl, well I hardly like to own it to myself even, you understand. Bernard Shaw would be gratified."
> "You feel sexual."

> "Horribly. And in need of a physical shock or violence—perhaps a good smacking would be beneficial."[30]

Now the notion of falling returns, metaphorically and literally: "—and she fell";[31] "— — — and fell — — —."[32] David is now with Pearl, and Juliet, who has been seduced by Rudolph and is now a "fallen" woman, is found by David and Pearl on the brink of death:

> Day and night the rain fell and at last one afternoon the end came. Juliet came back painfully. She was groping the dark, trying to feel her way along. Out of the dark two voices came.
> "It cannot be long now."
> "But it is for the best. If she had lived what could have happened?"
> "I begin to believe there must be a merciful God."
> "I, too."
> She opened her eyes and saw the two beside her.
> "Ought I to join your hands and say bless you," she whispered.
> Suddenly she raised herself—"O—O I want to live," she screamed, but Death put his hand over her mouth.[33]

David and Pearl go on to marry, and Rudolph, who had gone abroad, only much later learns of Juliet's death, at which point he composes "a charming little morceau 'Souvenir de Juliet.'"[34] The tone of the narrative throughout veers from heavily romantic to sharply cynical. There is also a notable and uncanny prescience in the writing, anticipating as it does the turmoil of Mansfield's own experience in the year after she returned to England in 1908, rejected by Tom Trowell, and her subsequent pregnancy by his brother Garnet, his rejection of her, and her stillbirth in Bavaria, much of which forms the content of *Maata*.

Maata (1913)

Mansfield's second attempt at a novel, of which again only fragments were written, was *Maata*, drafted between August and November 1913. By now, Mansfield was an established author and a very different person to the author of *Juliet*. Having persuaded her parents to let her return to London to become a writer, she arrived to a heartfelt welcome from her devoted friend Ida Baker in late August 1908, aged nineteen, initially staying at Beauchamp Lodge, a hostel for unmarried women (mainly music students). Eager to see Tom and the rest of the Trowell family, who were all now living in St John's Wood, Mansfield soon

realized that although the family welcomed her into their home, her affections for Tom were most definitely not being reciprocated. She therefore judiciously turned her affections to his twin brother Garnet instead, who was more than receptive to such attention, and soon Mansfield was spending far more time with the Trowells than at Beauchamp Lodge. Her feelings were now, finally, being reciprocated, and passionate love letters were exchanged during Garnet's frequent absences as a traveling musician with the Moody Manners Opera Company. For her twentieth birthday on October 14, Garnet sent her a little ring, and the two believed themselves to be secretly engaged.

Toward the end of November, Mansfield finally left Beauchamp Lodge in order to become the Trowells' lodger, thus providing them with much-needed additional income, and herself with ever closer proximity to Garnet, which, when he was home, inevitably led to a sexual relationship. Their affair was discovered by Dolly, the young Trowell sister, who immediately informed her shocked parents. By the end of the year, or early in 1909, Mansfield had become pregnant by him. She now found herself rejected by both Garnet and the Trowell family, the latter fearing the shame her pregnancy would bring on them given the importance and influence of her father back in New Zealand. In despair, and solely to seek legitimacy for her unborn child, on March 2, 1909, she married George Bowden, a singing teacher whom she had met at a soirée and whom she had known for less than three months. Her calculated mission of legitimacy for her unborn child accomplished, she left Bowden the day after the wedding and followed Garnet to Glasgow and Liverpool from March 10 to 28 (the pair having recently been reconciled), where he was on tour. For a short time Mansfield, who had a fine singing voice, became a member of the chorus. During the trip, however, Garnet's mother sent him the newspaper notice of Mansfield's marriage and, in complete disbelief at her duplicity, he once more rejected her. Mansfield spent the rest of 1909 in Bavaria, giving birth to a still-born child, and then taking up with a group of Polish émigrés.

In early 1910, now back in London and thanks to a recommendation from her erstwhile husband George Bowden, Mansfield's stories and poems started to be published in the *New Age* magazine and elsewhere, and her career as a writer in London was launched. Having moved on from Bowden, she soon became part of the circle surrounding the editor of the *New Age*, A. R. Orage, and his mistress, Beatrice Hastings. In December 1911, her first collection of short stories, *In a German Pension*, based on her experiences in Bavaria, most of which had already appeared in the *New Age*, was published by Stephen Swift & Co.

and widely reviewed. In the same month, she met Murry, then a young, 22-year-old Oxford undergraduate, having sent him "The Woman at the Store" for his newly founded little magazine, *Rhythm*. By April 1912, he was her lodger and some weeks later they became lovers.

During the month of May 1912, Mansfield traveled with Murry to Paris for a "honeymoon" (although they could not officially get married until 1918 after her divorce from Bowden). It was around this time that the couple first came into written contact with D. H. Lawrence and Frieda, when they requested a story from him for *Rhythm*. In May, *Rhythm* folded and was replaced by the *Blue Review*, which ran for just three months from May to July 1913. In June, the couple met Lawrence and Frieda for the first time, and Mansfield read *Sons and Lovers* which had recently been published. In December 1913, their finances in a parlous state due to the demise of both *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review*, Mansfield and Murry decided on a permanent move to Paris, although in fact they were back in London by the end of January 1914, their finances now even worse than when they had left.

This then was the state of affairs in Mansfield's life when she started writing *Maata*, which in essence narrates Mansfield's relationship with the Trowell (Close) family during the autumn and winter of 1908–9, following her return to London from New Zealand. Her written plan for the novel, comprising thirty-five chapters, was drafted by the beginning of August 1913, and by the end of the second week in August she had written the first chapter. However, the many complications of her life at this time, with constant house moves plus dealing with the aftermath of *Rhythm*'s publisher, Stephen Swift, absconding, leaving Murry liable for all the debts incurred, must have made fiction writing almost impossible. The second chapter of the novel was completed in mid-November and then subsequently abandoned.

Kaplan calls the novel Mansfield's second attempt at a *Bildungsroman*,[35] claiming as a formative influence Lawrence's own autobiographical novel *Sons and Lovers*, which, as noted above, she and Murry had read during the summer of 1913. Claire Tomalin also believes Lawrence's novel was the impetus for Mansfield's beginning *Maata*:

> One or two touches suggest that Lawrence had put his fingerprint on her imagination: Maata's skin "flames like yellow roses" when she undresses, and when Rhoda leans out of her bedroom window in the morning, "'Ah-ah' she breathed, in a surge of ecstasy. 'I am baptized. I am baptized into a new day,'" which certainly does not sound like anything else in Mansfield.[36]

And, of course, in naming herself Maata in the novel, Mansfield was recalling her youthful, intense relationship with her former schoolfriend, the exotic and glamorous Māori princess, Maata Mahupuku.[37]

After Mansfield's death, complications arose with the manuscript, mainly due to Murry's actions. He had first mentioned the existence of the incomplete novel in his first edition of her *Journal* (1927). Where Mansfield had written on January 1, 1915, "Well, J. doesn't want money and won't earn money. I must. How? First get this book finished," Murry had written the following footnote: "'This book' refers, I think, to a novel called 'Maata,' of which the two opening chapters and a complete synopsis alone remain."[38] Murry was incorrect, however; Mansfield had in fact just started writing "The Aloe," which she would continue to write on and off for the next year or so, completing it in Bandol in March 1916. In addition, in the Mantz/Murry biography of Mansfield from 1933, we find the following equally erroneous statement:

> [I]n the autumn of 1913—Katherine Mansfield drafted a novel with Maata, for its central character. In Paris that winter she wrote the first chapters of *Maata*, catching something of the flame and the passion—something of the Maata of those days when they both were in their teens; but her writing was interrupted unexpectedly, and she never was able to complete the "novel."[39]

The character of Maata in the novel was in fact a fictionalized version of Mansfield herself, and *not* Maata the Māori princess, but of course Mantz was merely replicating Murry's opinion. These errors combined led to much speculation as to why Murry had chosen not to publish any excerpts from the novel in his numerous edited collections of Mansfield's manuscripts, and particularly by Mansfield enthusiast, Pat Lawlor, who in 1946 published a slim little volume called *The Mystery of Maata: A Katherine Mansfield Novel*,[40] where he described Mansfield's relationship with Maata, and then revealed how he had in fact "met the original Maata myself in Wellington recently when she told me some extraordinary stories about Katherine Mansfield and also claimed that she had in her possession the original MS."[41]

Lawlor's belief that a complete manuscript of *Maata* existed became ever more entrenched as his quest continued. When Mansfield wrote to Murry on March 25, 1915, from Paris that she had fallen "into the open arms of my first novel"[42] (in fact, "The Aloe"), Lawlor convinced himself that she was in fact writing *Maata*, insisting that "As a matter of fact, 'Prelude' was commenced in January 1916, nearly a year after the letter referred to was written," further surmising that "the existence of the 'Maata' MS. has been submerged in a contradiction

of records."[43] Most sensationally, Lawlor asserted that "Without any hesitation, Maata said that she had the MS. in her possession," that it was about 60,000 words long, adding that "the arrangement was that she (Maata) was to complete the story."[44] Try as he might, however, Lawlor was never able to persuade Maata to show him the manuscript, if indeed it ever existed. Nevertheless, his little book contributed much by way of mystery surrounding the missing novel.

Murry eventually sold the notebook—where both the chapter plan and drafts of Chapters 1 and 2 appeared—to a private Mansfield collector in America, where it subsequently disappeared. Meanwhile, two much smaller sections of the novel were eventually acquired by the Alexander Turnbull Library in New Zealand in 1957, as part of the manuscripts bought at auction from the Murry estate following his death in the same year. When, in 1974, Margaret Scott, continuing her series on the unpublished manuscripts of Mansfield in the *Turnbull Library Record*, published the two pieces of *Maata* the library had acquired at that time, she revealed the library's vain search for the missing, much larger part of the incomplete novel.[45] However, by 1979, she had traced the rest of the extant manuscript to the Newberry Library in Chicago, and subsequently published her transcription in the same year,[46] noting that the Turnbull fragments seem to relate to Mansfield's plan for Chapter 12. She also notes that the novel has affinities with the strange story, "Brave Love," written in January 1915:

> In both stories the heroine is beautiful, cynical, self-absorbed, drawn to the innocent young lover, but destructive of him too. In both cases, the young man is not only betrayed but also punished. […] it does seem likely that Evershed in both stories was suggested by George Bowden, and that Mildred in one and Rachael West in the other were suggested by Beatrice Hastings.[47]

As with *Juliet*, all the extant parts of the manuscript were included in Scott's edition of the Mansfield notebooks,[48] with no attempt made to order them into a coherent narrative. Again, this did not happen until volume one of the Edinburgh Edition in 2012,[49] allowing the reader, for the first time, to fully engage with the text as Mansfield had planned it, although it is evident that the extant fragments depart from Mansfield's original chapter plan. The character of Rhoda Bendall in the novel is clearly based on Ida Baker, and for Scott "represents the only attempt K. M. made to describe Ida Baker's feelings for her. It is important for that alone."[50] The first name reflects Baker's Rhodesian colonial origins, and Bendall was the surname of Mansfield's close friend, Edith Bendall, during the time she spent in Wellington during 1907–8, before returning to London. Here in *Maata*, Dolly Trowell is called Maisie, for as Scott reveals, where Mrs Close says, "the

one you had afterwards Maisie,"[51] Mansfield had "started to write 'Dolly,' crossed it out and substituted 'Maisie,' thus confirming that it was the Trowells she had in mind."[52] This, of course, also confirms the autobiografictional basis of the text, precisely what she did in *Juliet*, where real names such as Vere and Caesar (Mansfield's nickname for Tom Trowell) pepper the story.

Chapter 1 begins in Rhoda Bendall's bedroom, as she wakes up to the sound of rain. Today is the day that her dearest friend Maata, who has been away for two years in some far off, unnamed place, is to return to London, and later she is to go to the station to meet her off the boat train. The language Rhoda uses as she paces her bedroom betrays her intense emotions toward her friend: "'My treasure, my beloved one, the day is beautiful with you. Your breath is in this wind and the same rain falls on us both. *On us both*. Oh God, bring her quickly. Bring her quickly. […] She is your spirit, your essence. She is God in woman.'"[53] Such extreme devotion sets the tone for their entire relationship. Mansfield paints an unflattering portrait of Rhoda herself, "big and heavy," and with a "violent bodily hunger and a wavering sense of shame,"[54] again features of Baker's appearance and need for comfort eating.

In Chapter 2, we are introduced to Philip and Maisie Close. In *Juliet*, the Mansfield character had been in love with David the cellist; now in *Maata*, she is in love with Philip the violinist, echoing, as noted earlier, her real-life transference of affection from Tom Trowell (cellist) to Garnet Trowell (violinist). Philip and Maisie, like Rhoda, have come to the station to meet Maata from the boat train. Completely forgetting Rhoda, it is to Philip and Maisie that Maata rushes, enveloping Maisie in her arms. Rhoda is eventually spotted, and Maata apologizes for having forgotten about her. Yet, ever practical, it is Rhoda who has seen to Maata's luggage and hired a waiting hansom cab, which Maata completely takes for granted. Here it is Rhoda's emotions that Mansfield portrays, using free indirect discourse, to the detriment of Maata's selfish character: "Those moments at the station hurt her still. Her throat ached and tears pressed into her eyeballs."[55] In fact the two opening chapters could almost be perceived as a hymn to Ida Baker's unswerving devotion to her. Mansfield could not know in 1913 how this devotion would last for the rest of her life. But glimpses of the excess of it are painted here: "Rhoda knelt on the floor and handled her darling's possessions as though these were all—every one—more precious than gold."[56]

The rest of the manuscript, bar one small section at the end, takes place at the Close family's house. Philip (Pip) and Hal are twins, and both musical, as is their father. But it is clear that the family has little money, and that socially they are beneath the glamorous Maata, as Mansfield's portrait of Mrs. Close reveals:

> By the table sat Mrs Close, darning whole new feet into a pair of Hal's socks. Her skirt was turned back over her lap, her little slippered feet curled round the chair legs. Now and again she leant forward and opened her mouth for Maisie to pop in a "beautifully soft one" [roasted chestnut], but she was, for the most part, pale and tired.[57]

Maata and Philip contrive to be alone together in his room, where "The violin case lying open on the white bed was like a little coffin"[58] (presaging, perhaps, the unhappy denouement of their relationship, for according to the chapter plan, when Maata eventually marries not for love but for social position, Philip kills himself). The two lovers sit and talk but all the time with a sense of foreboding, as though such talk will ultimately be futile, as here in Maata's speech to Philip:

> "You know sometimes I feel I am pursued by a sort of Fate—you know—by an impending disaster that spreads its wings over my heart—or maybe only the shadow of its wings—but it's so black and terrible I can't describe it. Sometimes I think it is […] foreboding, telling me that what I am facing in the future—is—" she shrugged her shoulders—"just *darkness*."[59]

This speech echoes the numerous occasions in her life when Mansfield wrote of darkness in her future, using the word "wings" to describe her fluttering heart, which she always thought would kill her, and subsequently, following her diagnosis of tuberculosis, her lungs. The last fragment of the novel ends with a similar foreboding atmosphere as Maata reflects on her own character, her secret self, and the sham that is her outer world:

> Standing there in the dark she drifted away to that shadowy loneliness which sometimes seemed to her to be her only true life, the only changeless truth—the thing that she was never really certain was not reality after all. How extraordinary! She saw herself all these last weeks, playing a part—being Maata, being herself, caring for things that after all don't matter at all. Why, only that afternoon, a minute or two ago, she had believed in it all—and it was all nothing, nothing.[60]

In *Maata*, Mansfield does not victimize her protagonist as she does in *Juliet*. This time she has agency, and it is the man who is destroyed, for the chapter plan tells us that Philip will ultimately commit suicide after learning of Maata's marriage to Evershed: "His heart bursts with grief. He listens to Hal and by and bye he takes out the revolver and puts the spout in his mouth and shoots himself."[61] As Kaplan notes, however, "In terms of creative power, the assertions of artistic freedom in the later novel seem to lead to a confusing and ambivalent impasse, and to a corresponding diminishment of energy."[62] Her inability to continue with the novel points as much to her personal emotions regarding the story's

autobiografictional elements as much as to her outward, difficult circumstances. She would never forget the deep passion between herself and Garnet, her first true relationship, and of course the anguish of their ill-fated, stillborn child. As late as 1920, she would write in her diary: "Last day I heard from Jack. Posted the story and a telegram. Very tired. The sea howled and boomed and roared away. When will this cup pass from me? Oh misery! I cannot sleep. I lie retracing my steps—going over all the old life before …. The baby of Garnet's love."[63] *Maata* was the last time that her creative energies were directed toward a *recherche du temps perdu* of the Trowell family.

Conclusion

After her two previous attempts at novel-writing, Mansfield would try just once more—with "The Aloe"—to extend the length of her short fiction narratives. Indeed, as noted above, she more than once referred to "The Aloe" as her "book" as she was writing it, although its final length is actually that of a novella.[64] As a story cycle, her Burnell family stories, "Prelude" (the later revised, shortened version of "The Aloe"), "At the Bay," and "The Doll's House" in effect create a short novel, or a long novella. "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," written in episodes, or short chapters, like "Prelude" and "At the Bay," constitutes another example of her attempts at an extended narrative. In all three cases, the action takes place over a matter of hours rather than months or years, and almost nothing happens of any consequence. All three stories have an identical narrative style, reflecting their modernist origins: an omniscient point of view, combined with multiple limited points of view represented as free indirect discourse; together with a plotless form, the result is an intimate method of storytelling, where, for certain moments, we become intimate with the character on the page. This use of free indirect discourse would become a hallmark of Mansfield's mature narrative technique, together with the episodic nature of certain stories and their theatrical quality; as Mansfield remarked in a letter discussing "Prelude," "What form is it you ask? […] As far as I know, it's more or less my own invention."[65] Some years later she referred to "the *Prelude* method—it just unfolds and opens."[66]

As Mansfield's unique form of modernist storytelling developed so, unfortunately, did her ill health. Short stories became a fast and efficient way for her to make the money she needed to pay for medical bills. Dead at thirty-four, and seriously ill for the last five years of her life, Mansfield's creativity, like the breath from her tubercular lungs, came, by necessity, in short gasps. On a

prosaic level, there simply was no time, and she was too ill to make the effort to write anything longer. A notebook entry for October 14, 1922, her last birthday, written in Paris, is painful to read, even a hundred years on:

> My heart is so exhausted and so tied up that I can only walk to the taxi and back. I get up at midi and go to bed at 5.30. I try to "work" by fits and starts, but the time has gone by. I cannot work. Ever since April I have done practically nothing. […] And five years have passed now, and I am in straighter bonds than ever.[67]

Who knows what Mansfield might have accomplished had her life not been cut short or whether her narrative art might have moved toward the writing of longer fiction. Nevertheless, since the publication of the Edinburgh Edition, it is now possible to assess her true creative legacy, which comprises some 216 stories and story fragments, totaling nearly half a million words. Mansfield was, in the words of Peter Childs, "the most important Modernist author who wrote only short stories,"[68] and that is an important enough legacy in itself.

Juliet, written when she was still a teenager, is immature in both form and content, although glimpses can be seen of Mansfield's love of interiority—free indirect discourse—that hallmark of her mature style. Nevertheless, it remains "of special interest as a version of Mansfield's self-development in that it is both a fairly transparent account of her early adolescence and an unnervingly prescient projection into a life she had not lived."[69] *Maata* represents that uncanny projection brought to life, this time via a recall of actual events lived, rather than describing an indeterminate fantasy future. Both fragmentary novels deserve their place in any critical discussion of Mansfield's oeuvre, not least because of the autobiografictional basis of each narrative, as well for revealing evidence of the proto-modernist writer Mansfield was in the process of becoming.

Notes

1 Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 1999), 5.

2 Gerri Kimber, *Katherine Mansfield—The Early Years* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

3 See Max Saunders, *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

4 Kimber, *Early Years*, 2.

5 Ian Gordon, *Katherine Mansfield*, Writers and Their Work, no. 49 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1954), 7.

6 Stephen Reynolds, “Autobiografiction,” *Speaker* [new series] 15, no. 366 (October 6, 1906): 28; 30, https://blogs.kcl.ac.uk/maxsaunders/autobiografiction/autobiografiction-scan/.
7 Ibid., 28.
8 Saunders, *Self Impression*, 4; 5.
9 Ibid., 22.
10 *Letters* 5, 80.
11 CW1, 59.
12 *Letters* 1, 18.
13 Kimber, *Early Years*, 111.
14 Katherine Mansfield, *Juliet*, in CW1, 52.
15 Ruth Elvish Mantz and John Middleton Murry, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1933).
16 Margaret Scott, “The Unpublished Manuscripts of Katherine Mansfield,” *Turnbull Library Record* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 1970): 4–28.
17 *Notebooks* 1, 48.
18 Scott, “Unpublished Manuscripts,” 5.
19 Cherry Hankin, “Fantasy and the Sense of an Ending in the Work of Katherine Mansfield,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 24, no. 3 (1978): 465–74; C. A. Hankin, *Katherine Mansfield and Her Confessional Stories* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1983); Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).
20 Mansfield, *Juliet*, 37.
21 Ibid.
22 Hankin, “Fantasy,” 470.
23 Mansfield, *Juliet*, 38.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 39.
26 Ibid., 38–9.
27 Ibid., 40.
28 Ibid., 42.
29 Ibid., 45.
30 Ibid., 50.
31 Ibid., 56.
32 Ibid., 58.
33 Ibid., 59.
34 Ibid.
35 Kaplan, *Modernist Fiction*, 97.
36 Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (London: Viking, 1987), 120.
37 For a detailed summary of the relationship between the young Mansfield and the real Maata Mahupuku, see Kimber, *Early Years*.

38 John Middleton Murry, ed., *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1927), 17.
39 Mantz and Murry, *Life*, 157.
40 P. A. Lawlor, *The Mystery of Maata: A Katherine Mansfield Novel* (Wellington: Beltane Book Bureau, 1946).
41 Ibid., 7.
42 *Letters* 1, 167.
43 Lawlor, *Mystery of Maata*, 11.
44 Ibid., 17.
45 Margaret Scott, "The Unpublished Manuscripts of Katherine Mansfield, Part VI: Two Maata Fragments," *Turnbull Library Record* 7, no. 1 (May 1, 1974): 4–14.
46 Margaret Scott, "The Unpublished Manuscripts of Katherine Mansfield, Part VII: Maata," *Turnbull Library Record* 12, no. 1 (May 1, 1979): 11–28.
47 Ibid., 12.
48 *Notebooks* 1, 237–61.
49 Katherine Mansfield, *Maata*, in CW1, 344–65; "[Plan of *Maata*]," in CW1, 520–8.
50 Scott, "Unpublished Manuscripts, Part VII," 11.
51 Mansfield, *Maata*, 359.
52 *Notebooks* 1, 243n229.
53 Mansfield, *Maata*, 345.
54 Ibid., 347.
55 Ibid., 350.
56 Ibid., 351.
57 Ibid., 357.
58 Ibid., 354.
59 Ibid., 356.
60 Ibid., 364.
61 Mansfield, "[Plan of *Maata*]," 527.
62 Kaplan, *Modernist Fiction*, 99.
63 CW4, 298.
64 See Gerri Kimber, "The Novella: Between the Novel and the Story," in *The Cambridge History of the English Short Story*, ed. Dominic Head (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 538–9.
65 *Letters* 1, 331.
66 *Letters* 4, 156.
67 CW4, 433.
68 Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 95.
69 Kaplan, *Modernist Fiction*, 89.

4

Katherine Mansfield, the Magazine Writer

Jenny McDonnell

Katherine Mansfield's career developed at a crucial juncture in the history of both the short story and magazine culture in Britain. Throughout the nineteenth century, the short story form became established as a "basic unit of magazine production" in terms that often emphasized its lucrative, commercial aspects.[1] As Adrian Hunter suggests, "the gathering pace of periodicals—monthlies, weeklies, dailies, evening dailies—meant a vast increase in demand for material that was as easy for the jobbing writer to produce as it was for the time-pressed commuter to consume."[2] However, this expanding market also facilitated the development of another kind of short story by the *fin de siècle*, spearheaded by journals such as the decadent *Yellow Book* and writers such as Henry James, who "saw how the short form could be adapted to deliver thematically sophisticated and multi-dimensional narratives within its narrow limits, achieving amplitude within the economies demanded by the periodical format" in ways that would anticipate and influence later innovations by literary modernists.[3] In this way, the short story's "oscillation between mass culture and high art" was shaped by the material conditions in which it was produced, and its defining feature of brevity ultimately came to be recognized as both a marketable *and* an experimental feature.[4]

Rather than singular, monolithic categories, then, "the modern short story" and "the periodical press" need to be understood as diverse and varied facets of what Dean Baldwin identifies as "a fractured market," within which authors sought "to negotiate and survive the uncertainties of multiple audiences and aesthetics," seemingly divided along such lines as class and gender, literary taste and value, and commercial and avant-garde appeal.[5] This multiplicity is evident in the short story's dual identity as both a popular, "plotted" and an experimental, "plotless" form that appeared variously in commercial magazines, avant-garde papers, and literary and middlebrow journals. A similarly diverse magazine

culture played a key role in the publication and dissemination of modernist texts, including Katherine Mansfield's short fiction, which also displays the "amplitude" that Hunter associates with Henry James's writing. This is apparent at a formal level, in the suggestive and often open-ended short stories that Mansfield produced throughout her career, and also in more material terms in the sheer volume of work that she contributed to a range of different periodicals.

Recent scholarship has sought to move Mansfield *and* the short story "in from the margins," establishing the importance of both within the history of literary modernism.[6] This has been further enriched by the critical attention that has been paid to the publishing networks that shaped Mansfield, the short story, and modernism more broadly. Mansfield's career as one of the foremost proponents of the modern short story form in the early decades of the twentieth century needs to be understood in terms that reflect the publishing conditions introduced above. She worked within a tradition in which, as Rebecca Bowler notes, "[t]he short story must be simultaneously a potboiler, capable of bringing in money quickly, and of artistic merit in itself (because what, after all, is the point of getting a piece in a magazine with your name on it, if it is not going to act as an advert for the author-as-product?)."[7] As a professional author within the literary marketplace, Mansfield worked closely with a series of editors, publishers, and literary agents, and disseminated her writing through channels that included commercial and coterie book-publishing, as well as the magazine networks that will form the main focus of this chapter.

Before her death in 1923, Mansfield published three collections of short stories (*In a German Pension* [1911], *Bliss and Other Stories* [1920], and *The Garden Party and Other Stories* [1922]), as well as two limited-edition, single-story volumes (*Prelude*, published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press in 1918, and *Je ne parle pas français*, printed by John Middleton Murry's Heron Press in 1919). Many of the stories included in her published collections first appeared in magazines, to which she also contributed poetry, translations, and critical writings, some of which have only recently come to light. B. J. Kirkpatrick's *Bibliography of Katherine Mansfield* remains an invaluable research aid in negotiating Mansfield's publishing history, and has been supplemented by additional discoveries by Chris Mourant, Gerri Kimber, and Redmer Yska, who have identified previously unknown writings by Mansfield.[8] Recent critical attention has frequently turned to Mansfield's associations with these periodical publications and her location within "magazine modernism."[9] This has been further facilitated by the increased accessibility of several key modernist

magazines in a number of digitization projects—for example, the *Modernist Journals Project* hosted by Brown University and the University of Tulsa, the *Modernist Magazines Project* hosted by the University of Sussex and De Montfort University, and Princeton's *Blue Mountain Project*.

A survey of Mansfield's encounters with the magazine culture of the early twentieth century offers a cross-section of modernist, "middlebrow," and popular publications that is in keeping with Baldwin's "fractured marketplace," ranging from social and political weeklies (the *New Age*), modernist little magazines (*Rhythm* and the *Blue Review*), literary journals (the *Athenaeum* and the *London Mercury*), to popular and illustrated papers (the *Sphere*). Within the pages of these journals, Mansfield made a name for herself as a writer of short fiction that "negotiate[d] a balance between commercial viability and literary credibility," as I have previously argued.[10] However, she did not limit herself to writing short stories; she also undertook important duties as an editor of several papers between 1912 and 1915 and produced a substantial number of literary reviews, in particular those published in the *Athenaeum* between 1919 and 1920. Indeed, as Chris Mourant has argued, Mansfield's sustained engagement with various aspects of periodical culture ultimately reveals her to be a "prototypical magazine modernist," whose career was "conditioned by and constituted through networks of association," in dialogue with the work of contemporary writers, artists, and cultural commentators with whom she shared magazine pages, both popular and "modernist."[11]

The increased critical interest in Mansfield's engagement with early twentieth-century periodical culture is in keeping with developments in modernist studies more generally. There now exists a large body of work that has examined the relationship between modernist texts and the material contexts in which they were produced; this has encouraged a reconsideration of the "great divide" of literary modernism in general, and modernist writers' engagement with the marketplace in particular.[12] Critics such as Lawrence Rainey and Mark S. Morrisson (in *Institutions of Modernism* and *The Public Face of Modernism*, respectively) have provided useful models for understanding the ways in which modernist writers negotiated the practicalities of working within a professional world of book and periodical publishing, and even—in some cases—actively embraced the opportunities afforded by the changes in publishing practice wrought by modernity itself.[13] Magazines played a particularly crucial role in the promotion of modernist writing, art, and manifestoes.[14] As Faith Binckes has argued in her ground-breaking study of *Rhythm*:

> Even the littlest of little magazines still participated in a textual environment that not only linked one article, or one journal, to another, but connected them as publications to mass-market newspapers, middle-brow literary reviews, illustrated magazines, and journals devoted to self-education and improvement. This environment necessitated sets of negotiations and series of positions involving editors, publishers, printers, investors, and advertisers, as well as contributors, illustrators, critics, and readers.[15]

This was the environment in which Mansfield worked throughout her career, and critics have increasingly explored the relationship between her writing and what Rainey terms "the social spaces and staging venues" of modernism.[16]

To date, particular attention has been paid to Mansfield's association with two important "modernist" papers in the early phase of her writing life: the *New Age* and *Rhythm*.[17] Mansfield began her career before leaving New Zealand for good in 1908, publishing work in a number of Australian and New Zealand papers, but her first professional short story publication in a London paper came in February 1910, when "Bavarian Babies: The Child-Who-Was-Tired" was published in the *New Age*. She would continue to forge important links with the paper in the years that followed, contributing a variety of texts (such as short stories, travelogues, and dialogues) between 1910 and 1912, and again in 1915 and 1917, including the stories that were collected as *In a German Pension* in 1911. The *New Age* personnel—in particular, editor A. R. Orage and his co-editor (in all but name) Beatrice Hastings—proved to be the first of many key associations that Mansfield developed within literary London; she would later credit Orage as the man who "taught [her] to write," but her collaborations with Hastings are now being recognized as equally significant, as Carey Snyder and Chris Mourant have demonstrated in their discussions of Mansfield's satirical and early feminist writings in particular.[18] Perhaps most noteworthy was the co-authored "letter to the editor," "A P.S.A," in which Mansfield and Hastings parodied writing by seven contemporary male authors, including H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett—themselves frequent contributors to the *New Age* during this era—in terms that anticipated Virginia Woolf's later critique of Edwardian materialism in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown."[19]

Mansfield would soon become the target of similarly sharp-tongued and satirical commentary by both Hastings and Orage after she began her association with *Rhythm*. The journal was co-founded and edited by John Middleton Murry, whom she would subsequently marry. She made her debut in the fourth issue of *Rhythm* with the short story "The Woman at the Store" (1912) and two poems ("Very Early Spring" and "The Awakening River," which were published under

the name "Boris Petrovsky"); she continued to contribute stories, poetry, and critical writings to the paper throughout the remainder of its short run (and the even shorter runs of its successors the *Blue Review* and the *Signature*). She also became the paper's co-editor by June 1912, and co-authored a number of pieces with Murry, often offering commentary on *Rhythm*'s avant-garde publishing ideals.[20] As her career evolved, Mansfield would come to embrace more diverse audiences and publishing venues—for example, by contributing to popular magazines and newspapers—but her early commentaries on the role of the artist in *Rhythm* provide clear evidence of her awareness of the broader literary marketplace very early in her career.

Within the pages of the *New Age* and *Rhythm*, then, Mansfield experimented with different names, modes of writing, and collaborations. As Carey Snyder has suggested, this has sometimes contributed to a tendency to see Mansfield as struggling to establish an authorial identity for herself within these journals; she "has too often been perceived as a literary changeling, dutifully tailoring her style to fit the 'editorial call' of first *The New Age*, then [...] *Rhythm*" in what Snyder terms a "chameleon reading" of Mansfield's early career. Instead, Snyder suggests that these "experiments in voice and venue" should be regarded as instances of self-promotion, in which Mansfield undercut the cultural authority of established literary norms (as in "A P.S.A.," cited above) and "align[ed] herself with the rhetoric of the new" that was promoted by both papers, in a statement of intent for her own brand of experimental, innovative prose.[21]

At times, Mansfield's experimentation with different forms of writing throughout her early association with the *New Age* and *Rhythm* may have been marked by a sense of authorial anxiety, as I have discussed in *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace*, but nevertheless it attests to her continued determination to make a name for herself. This is apparent, in quite literal terms, in her decision to publish under a number of different pseudonyms. It has often been noted that the writer born "Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp" adopted numerous personae and aliases in her personal and professional lives, and this tendency is "materially imprinted" on her writing career, as Faith Binckes observes.[22] Variations on "Katherine Mansfield" (such as "Katharine Mansfield" and "Katharina Mansfield") appeared within the *New Age* and *Idler* between 1910 and 1911, but it was after her move to *Rhythm* that she began using greater variations in her choice of pseudonym. This was in part a shrewd move on the part of the paper's co-editor as it helped generate the impression of a more diverse contributor list, but it could also be suggested that she used different pennames for different kinds of writing during this time. For example,

two of her stories that focused on child-protagonists ("How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" [1912] and "The Little Girl" [1912]) appeared under the name "Lili Heron," while she used "The Tiger" for her satirical attack on literary London in "Sunday Lunch" (1912) (echoing the review of J. M. Synge's *Well of the Saints* that she and Murry co-authored as "The Two Tigers" in August 1912). Similarly, a series of poems were presented as, according to Chris Mourant, "parodic translations" from the Russian by "Boris Petrovsky," allowing Mansfield to "experiment with writing in a different national register and to practice a certain kind of self-fashioning."[23] Further instances would recur in her later magazine career, such as the publication of stories by "Matilda Berry" in the *Signature* in 1915, and poems by "Elizabeth Stanley" in the *Athenaeum* between 1919 and 1920. Ultimately, though, the most marketable and enduring persona proved to be "Katherine Mansfield," the authorial identity that appears with most frequency throughout her short story writings for periodicals, and the name under which her books were published.

The acts of self-promotion and self-fashioning outlined above illustrate the ways in which Mansfield availed of magazine publishing to carve out an identity for herself as author. However, further layers can be added to this reading by considering the multivalent nature of magazine publishing, which focuses less on a singular concept of the author and more on what Faith Binckes terms "the composite format of magazines [which] encouraged associations and juxtapositions, often between different areas of related aesthetic production."[24] Indeed, Mansfield's experiments with different personae in print might be read as an example of the kind of "authorial ventriloquism through anonymous and pseudonymous publication" that Ann Ardis sees at work throughout early twentieth-century renegotiations of authorship within the public sphere. Rather than reading Mansfield's periodical contributions as discrete, self-contained units, then, recent criticism encourages a consideration of their "dialogic" nature, emphasizing what Ardis identifies as "discursive exchanges with other print media," so that Mansfield's writing can be read in terms of its "internal dialogics" (i.e., with reference to other work published alongside it in the same magazine), or its "external dialogics" (i.e., in dialogue with work published in other, contemporary publications).[25] Mansfield's engagement with periodical culture can be seen to have influenced the form and content of her writing in a number of ways. In particular, the dialogic nature of magazine publishing, as well as Mansfield's own sustained engagement with the administration of several papers, placed her in direct and indirect contact with a plethora of contemporary writers, artists, and commentators, and several critics have explored ways in which Mansfield's writing was influenced by these exchanges.

Binckes's exemplary analysis of *Rhythm* illustrates the ways in which "periodicals tend to reveal the tangled skeins that make up the fabric of modernism," demonstrating the journal's dialogic encounters with papers as varied as *T. P.'s Weekly*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the *New Age*. In particular, the *New Age* and *Rhythm* entered into direct debate on such subjects as artworks by Pablo Picasso and Andre Dunoyer de Segonzac, while the editors swapped scathing portraits of one another in writings by Hastings, Orage, and Mansfield, respectively.[26] More recently, Chris Mourant's compelling study, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture*, has framed an analysis of Mansfield's writing in similarly dialogic terms, identifying numerous instances of overt and covert exchange between her writing and the periodical culture in which it was produced. For example, in "Ole Underwood" (1913) he notes "a veiled allusion to Mansfield's first appearance in print" in a New Zealand paper as an eleven-year-old, when "His Little Friend" (1900) was published in the *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies' Journal* alongside a cartoon in which a man throws a cat into the ocean, an image that is echoed at the climactic moment of "Ole Underwood" several years later. In contrast to the subtlety of this reference, Mourant argues that a more open conversation can be seen in Mansfield's later literary reviews for the *Athenaeum*, offering a comparative reading with Virginia Woolf's contemporary reviews of similar material.[27]

Mansfield's contributions to the *Athenaeum* continued throughout 1919 and 1920 under the editorship of Murry, who refashioned the paper (first established in 1828) into an important vehicle for modernist writing, listing several members of the Bloomsbury group as contributors, including Virginia Woolf. Sydney Janet Kaplan devotes significant space to discussions of the *Athenaeum*'s personal and professional networks in *Circulating Genius*, and further compares the reviewing careers of Mansfield and Woolf in "A Critical Duet: Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf Reviewing Their Contemporaries."[28] In this way, Mansfield's literary reviews can be positioned as "a dialogue in print" with Woolf, perhaps providing further insight into the private debates and correspondence that characterized their relationship as a "public of two," as Angela Smith categorizes it.[29] Smith has also considered the importance of Mansfield's reviews, suggesting that her experience of reviewing relatively uninteresting material for the *Athenaeum* encouraged her to hone her own "fastidious" short story technique (which was in turn influenced by the Fauvist visual cultures and Bergsonian philosophies that she encountered at *Rhythm*); by contrast, Janka Kascakova argues that Mansfield's reviews interrogate questions of literary "value" in their critique of perceived "inauthenticity" in work by both "traditional" and "modernist" writers.[30] Ultimately, as I have previously argued, Mansfield's career

as reviewer was crucial for her evolution as a writer, in particular in the final phase of her career during which she more actively disrupted categories of literary "value" by publishing in a range of popular and middlebrow papers in order to promote her own brand of fiction, the "new word" that she called for in an important review that attested to her endorsement of the modern short story form, as well as her commitment to addressing a new audience.[31]

In this way, several critics have demonstrated the ways in which an understanding of the broader publishing and magazine networks in which Mansfield's writing was produced can shed new light on her literary and critical practice, even to the point of revealing otherwise undetectable hidden meanings at work within her writing, as Mourant's observation about "Ole Underwood" suggests. Critics have also paid close attention to the "internal dialogics" that informed Mansfield's writing, offering analysis of the immediate influence of these periodical environs on the form and content of her short fiction. This includes consideration of the dialogue between Mansfield's writing and the visual cultures published in *Rhythm* (both commercial advertising and artistic forms)[32]; Beatrice Hastings's feminism[33]; *Rhythm*'s Bergsonian philosophies[34]; and the "primitivist," gendered, and colonial discourses espoused by artists and prose writers within *Rhythm*.[35] The latter in particular reflects the "transnational turn" in modernist studies, which presents modernism "less as an aesthetic movement invented in the metropolis and exported to (colonial) peripheries and more as a transnational cultural process generated by high capitalism and identifiable in diverse locales and forms."[36] This has proven to be productive for periodical studies in general, and re-readings of Mansfield in particular.

The magazines in which Mansfield published have been identified as sites of transnational exchange in a variety of ways. At the beginning of her career, she contributed decadent vignettes (inspired by the work of Oscar Wilde) to Australian and New Zealand papers such as the *Native Companion*, which Chris Mourant identifies as "a typical 'little magazine' [...] one among a constellation of new literary journals founded in the decade following the Federation of Australia in 1901 as alternatives to the established weekly periodical *The Bulletin*."[37] As a New Zealander in London, Mansfield subsequently joined a cosmopolitan community of writers and artists at work within the dialogic magazine culture discussed above, and several of the papers with which she was associated aimed for international readerships: for example, Anna Snaith notes that Mansfield's second appearance in the *New Age* coincided with the journal's publication of a "map of the 'New Age World' with dots indicating distribution" across the globe, while Gerri Kimber provides an overview of foreign correspondents and

contributors to *Rhythm*, emphasizing an internationalism that was eroded when the paper was relaunched as the *Blue Review* in 1913.[38]

Beryl Pong has also argued that "magazine dialogism describes a periodical's relationships to the world beyond as well as within its pages," and regards it as "an important component in understanding how marginalised writers, particularly colonial modernists, were featured and figured within or alongside dominant metropolitan culture in the early twentieth century."[39] Read in these terms, Mansfield can be seen as negotiating a cultural identity as well as an authorial identity in her engagement with periodical culture, as Kate Krueger, Chris Mourant, and Anna Snaith have discussed in their analyses of Mansfield as a colonial modernist who worked within British magazine culture. This may also resonate at a formal level, in keeping with a long-established reading of the short story that aligns it with what Frank O'Connor termed "submerged population groups" in 1962—that is, those on the perceived margins of society.[40] More recently, Adrian Hunter has drawn on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "minor literature" to argue for the popularity of the fragmented, disruptive short story form within postcolonial literatures and links this further to economic factors and the accessibility of "the low-capital, low-circulation literary magazine" for colonial and postcolonial writers.[41] Questions of form, context, and content all feature in Snaith's argument that Mansfield's early interrogation of gendered and national identities was in dialogue with the transnational space of the *New Age*, a journal which Snaith sees as consistently "engag[ing] in some way with imperial politics or colonial affairs, particularly relating to India and South Africa."[42] Similarly, Krueger and Mourant discuss ways in which Mansfield's writings for *Rhythm* engage with and at times critique the colonial discourses that recur throughout essays and images that were reproduced in the paper throughout its run; this includes the "primitivist" visual culture that Carey Snyder also discusses in a persuasive essay.[43]

Several of these issues converge around readings of "The Woman at the Store," Mansfield's first contribution to *Rhythm* in 1912, which depicts a story of domestic violence and murder in a harsh New Zealand landscape. In doing so, it offers a complex inversion of the pastoral and utopian images that were used to market New Zealand to European settlers throughout the nineteenth century and effectively revises popular colonial narratives, typified by the "outback stories" of the Australian writer Henry Lawson, by "offering a brutal parody of Lawson's depiction of the nobility of the isolated frontier woman."[44] Indeed, as several critics have noted, "The Woman at the Store" displays self-conscious commentary on "the power of print culture" and written and pictorial representation, as it is largely

set in a storehouse "plastered with old pages of English periodicals" and hinges on the final revelation that the woman has murdered her abusive husband, a fact that is communicated to the story's narrator by a child's drawing.[45] Moreover, on its first publication in *Rhythm*, the story was surrounded by images that arguably offer more exotic and romanticized representations of "primitive" landscapes and figures than that found in Mansfield's subversive narrative; Krueger suggests that this "muddies the colonial bent of Mansfield's early fiction and rather reframes such works as a largely aesthetic enterprise, dampening her cogent critiques of the project of colonial settlement in the lives of women."[46] Thus, the images published alongside the story may in fact reproduce "the idealizing rhetoric of metropolitan primitivism" that Carey Snyder suggests Mansfield frequently critiques throughout many of her contributions to *Rhythm*.[47]

Perhaps the most notorious interaction between Mansfield's prose and the visual media that accompanied it was to come much later in her career, when she contributed a series of stories to the *Sphere*, a popular illustrated paper first established by Clement Shorter in 1900. In a letter to Dorothy Brett, Mansfield described her receipt of "copies of the stories with ILLUSTRATIONS! Oh Brett! Such fearful horrors! All my dear people looking like—well—Harrods 29/6 crepe de chine blouses and young tailors gents. And my old men—stuffy old wooly sheep."[48] As I argue in *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace*, "it is certainly possible to detect an element of discomfort about the commercial nature of the *Sphere* venture" in her choice of language here, but ultimately I would suggest that her reaction speaks once more to the dialogic nature of magazine publishing, which placed Mansfield's stories alongside material that could variously complement or counteract their effect. In particular, the illustrations in the *Sphere* "ran the risk of imposing external meaning on the stories, limiting the disruptive potential of the fundamentally open-ended narratives" that often characterize Mansfield's prose.[49]

Many of the *Sphere* stories end on ambiguous notes, such as the deferred resolution of "Mr. and Mrs. Dove."[50] This is in keeping with Mansfield's practice of the short story more generally, for example in the uncertain future that Bertha Young faces at the end of "Bliss" (1918). Mansfield's stories frequently capture her characters' experience of transient, epiphanic moments, but it is often the case that conclusive textual closure is denied. Ira Nadel discusses the singular moment as a recurring feature of modernist (specifically, Bloomsbury) short stories, and links this to the periodical context in which they were shaped, providing a "discursive frame for reading them [that] demanded brevity and clarity." He argues that the form "intensified its expressiveness precisely because of its boundaries [… and]

capitalized on its precision and brevity, while shifting in purpose from narrative and action to impression and sensation," seemingly "fix[ing] a moment as if it were a picture or a photograph."[51] However, Claire Drewery suggests that "[d]espite the apparent symbiosis [...] between modernism, the epiphanic trope and the brevity of the short story form [...], the notion of the epiphany as an aesthetic of *dis*unity is gaining in critical currency," in response to the "unity of effect" originally theorized by Edgar Allan Poe.[52] Indeed, it is arguable that these fleeting moments may also become *un*fixed when encountering a story within the context of dialogic and multivalent periodical publications, "ephemeral, disposable and competing with the clamour of material distracting the reader's attention on the pages of the magazine."[53]

This sense of ephemerality and disposability was often a defining feature of the material cultures of early twentieth-century modernity. In a fascinating essay on Mansfield and the "literary snack," Aimee Gasston has made a compelling link between the changing habits of consumers of literary texts and food, drawing a parallel between "the establishment of a magazine culture which required episodic, consumable fiction appropriately sized to its format" and "the industrial production of fast food and snacks, with chocolate bars, biscuits and pre-packaged snacks becoming available for quick, easy and informal consumption by those on the move."[54] Like these convenience foods, the short story was often perceived as a "snack," less substantial and less enduring than the longer prose forms against which it was usually defined, in what Dominic Head terms a "quantitive distinction between novel and story" that is based on "a neat, but reductive, binary opposition."[55]

Similar value judgments are evident in the frequent tendency to regard Mansfield's contributions to popular magazines as lesser work, largely based on her own admission to Ottoline Morrell that she wrote for the *Sphere* because it "pays better than any other paper I know."[56] However, a dismissal of these stories on the basis of their commercial nature is problematic, and Saralyn R. Daly notes that "clearly Mansfield took the *Sphere* stories as seriously as her important 'At the Bay.'"[57] In fact, Mansfield's engagement with this mainstream, popular magazine should be recognized as another important factor in her emergence as "magazine modernist," in which she frequently crossed lines between mainstream and avant-garde publishing, disrupting any clear-cut distinction between these categories. Even the stories that have often been granted more cultural capital as Mansfield's "finest" work demonstrate her persistent transgression of these boundaries and experimentation with different types of publishing. The first publication of "Prelude" was as a limited-edition volume, hand-printed by the

Woolfs at the Hogarth Press; "At the Bay" appeared in the *London Mercury* (long deemed too "middlebrow" in its post-war association with the Georgian poets, but now undergoing critical re-evaluation);[58] and "The Garden Party" was serialized across three issues of the newspaper the *Saturday* (renamed the *Weekly*) *Westminster Gazette*—albeit with some cuts, and the imposition of a cliff-hanger ending to the first installment.

The first publication of "The Garden Party" also helps illustrate another key factor to bear in mind when considering Mansfield as a magazine writer—namely, what Mourant terms "the mutability of Mansfield's writing as it passed through different textual transmissions."[59] Earlier in her career, she had at times resisted requests that she edit her stories for space; for example, when Murry suggested that one of her contributions to the *Blue Review* should be shortened, she responded that "I'd rather it wasn't there at all than sitting in the Blue Review with a broken nose and one ear as though it had jumped into an editorial dog fight."[60] Nevertheless, there are several instances that demonstrate her acquiescence in amending her writing in order to see it in print, although the most infamous came, not in a magazine, but in the inclusion of a heavily expurgated version of "Je ne parle pas français" in *Bliss and Other Stories*, published by Constable in 1920.[61] Throughout her career, Mansfield also revised a number of stories, re-publishing them in different formats and different papers. For example, "Autumns: II," first published in the *Signature* in 1915, was rewritten from a first-person to a third-person narrative and re-published as "The Wind Blows" in the *Athenaeum* in 1920; similarly, the *New Age* dialogue "The Common Round" (1917) was revised into a short story entitled "The Pictures" (1919), which was published in *Art & Letters*, and later collected as "Pictures" in *Bliss and Other Stories*. Because "[m]agazine stories do not have the same physical or cultural status as fiction published in book-form,"[62] Mansfield's book publications are often privileged, but nevertheless, as recent criticism has demonstrated, a return to the sites of original publications is valuable, and at times even necessary in order to reveal some of the revision her stories underwent, both during her lifetime and posthumously. For example, when "The Woman at the Store" was included in *Something Childish and Other Stories* in 1924, the character Hin (a name seemingly derived from the Māori "Hine," meaning daughter) was renamed Jim in more overtly masculine terms.[63] Chris Mourant detects a similar erasure of gendered and colonial ambiguities in Mansfield's posthumous appearances in the *Adelphi*, curated by John Middleton Murry from 1923, arguing that after her death, "Murry placed Mansfield's

writings within an explicitly English national tradition, eliding reference to her troubled, ambiguous colonial status."[64]

Mansfield's "final" story was "The Canary," which was first published in the *Nation & Athenaeum* in April 1923, three months after her death. Thus, her posthumous career began in much the same way as her initial career—in the pages of a magazine. Throughout her writing life, Mansfield's name was indelibly associated with periodical culture, which contributed to Wyndham Lewis's infamous dismissal of her as "the famous New Zealand Mag.-story writer."[65] While Lewis's statement implies a dismissive value judgment, recent critical work on Mansfield, magazine modernism, and periodical culture has sought to counteract such limited interpretations of these categories, revealing the extent to which Mansfield's practice of the short story was typical of her engagement with the modernist marketplace in general, and magazine culture in particular. In short, Mansfield *was* a "Mag.-story" writer, and this ultimately enabled and informed her development of a short story form that proved to be both marketable and experimental, ephemeral and enduring.

Notes

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5 Dean Baldwin, *Art and Commerce in the British Short Story, 1880–1950* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), 156.

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12 Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

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15 Faith Binckes, *Modernism, Magazines and the British Avant-Garde: Reading Rhythm, 1910–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12–13.

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46 Krueger, *Social Space*, 150.
47 Snyder, "Metropolitan Primitivism," 150.
48 *Letters* 4, 271.
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58 J. Matthew Huculak, "*The London Mercury* (1919–1939) and Other Moderns," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines. Volume 1:* 240–59.

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5

From *The Aloe* to "Prelude"

Alex Moffett

What form is it? you ask. Ah, Brett, its so difficult to say.
—Katherine Mansfield to Dorothy Brett, October 11, 1917[1]

The question Katherine Mansfield imputes to Dorothy Brett when reporting the Hogarth Press's imminent publication of her story "Prelude" (1917) remains, more than one hundred years later, a difficult question to answer. What is "Prelude?" Too short to be a novel, too lengthy and too intricately structured to be a short story, "Prelude" defies easy formal categorization. (Personally speaking, when I impishly include it in my Twentieth Century British Novel course for undergraduates, I tend to retreat to the bloodless argot of literary criticism: "text" and "work" are good enough.) However, the formal slipperiness of "Prelude" is also an indicator of its significance in the canon of modernist literature. In its radical reconsideration of form and genre, "Prelude" expands the possibilities of prose fiction, and in doing so anticipates, as Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr have observed, modernist masterpieces such as *Ulysses* and *Jacob's Room*.[2] This reconsideration allows Mansfield to shed the constraints of conventional narrative—what Virginia Woolf would later describe in her essay "Modern Fiction" as the "tyrant who has [the writer] in thrall."[3] In its organization into coherent chapters and its deployment of a large group of characters, "Prelude" possesses in miniature some of the formal conventions of the nineteenth-century novel, but it ultimately subverts that form by arresting narrative development, and instead foregrounds a series of symbolic moments. In doing so, it reimagines the classical *Bildungsroman* by representing it in the characterization of several women at one moment, rather than one woman across the span of her life. It therefore replaces the serial narrative sequence of the English nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* with a "parallel" structure. The result of these experiments with form and genre is a narrative that is neither novel nor

short story, one that paradoxically balances fragmentation with precise cohesion, and in doing so expands the possibilities of modernist prose technique.

Like many formal innovations in literature, "Prelude" was not achieved in the single flash of inspiration we sometimes imagine. In the aforementioned letter to Brett, Mansfield claims credit for the experimental form of the story: "As far as I know its more or less my own invention."[4] However, that invention was only achieved through a series of false starts and reconceptualization in the years prior to its publication by the Hogarth Press in July 1918. Begun in March 1915 as *The Aloe*, Mansfield worked on the manuscript in her various sojourns in England and France over the forthcoming years, often setting it down to attend to other projects and personal concerns. Mansfield's life narrative over that three-year period reveals much about how "Prelude" came to take the form that it ultimately possessed.

The Aloe: Composition and Revision

"Kick off," wrote Katherine Mansfield in her journal on March 24, 1915, the day she started *The Aloe*.[5] The idea for the work had been in her mind for a couple of months, as indicated in an entry in her notebooks just after the new year, but it was not until this time that Mansfield's personal circumstances permitted the composition to begin.[6] She was staying in the flat of her former lover Francis Carco on the Quai aux Fleurs, near Notre Dame in Paris. While briefly estranged that winter from her longtime partner and future husband, John Middleton Murry, Mansfield had visited Carco in the war zone in Gray—not actually at the Western Front, but close enough that it was a restricted area—in an episode that she would chronicle in the story "An Indiscreet Journey" (1915). It is clear that Mansfield considered the affair to be over at that point, but she was not averse to accepting Carco's offer of his Paris flat while he was serving with the army. By mid-March, she was once again reconciled to Murry but savored the opportunity to work in Paris.

Mansfield clearly found her sojourn in Paris very conducive for creative endeavor; aside from one party she attended thrown by her friend, Beatrice Hastings, her main activities were taking solitary walks and working on her manuscript. Mansfield's letters to Murry during this period indicate nicely her state of mind as she began *The Aloe*: "I had a great day yesterday," she reported the day after she began writing. "The Muses descended in a ring like the angels on the Botticelli Nativity roof […] and I fell into the open arms of my first novel.

[…] I expect you will think I am a dotty when you read it—but—tell me what you think—won't you? Its queer stuff. Its the spring makes me write like this."[7] Her likening of the first stages of composition to falling in love is perhaps no surprise, given her recent romantic entanglements and the atmosphere of Paris in the springtime. But there was another aspect to Parisian life in spring 1915 that also affected her: the impact of the Great War. Paris was frequently targeted by German zeppelins in bombing raids and Mansfield experienced one such raid on March 22, a couple of days before she started *The Aloe*. Mansfield's letters to Murry and S. S. Koteliansky indicate both fear and a sense of excitement. "The nights are full of stars and little moons and big zeppelins—very exciting," she wrote to Koteliansky on the night of one raid.[8] For Mansfield, the threat of the war augmented, rather than detracted from, the romantic ambiance of the city.

However, if starting *The Aloe* seemed to her to be akin to a moment of passion, then its ongoing composition became something more like an extended courtship. Mansfield returned to Murry in London at the end of March but found their new lodgings entirely unconducive to literary work—"I *cannot* write my book living in these two rooms. It is impossible—" she wrote to Koteliansky after a month back—and so she returned to Carco's flat for another fortnight on 5 May.[9] Once again, she worked steadily on *The Aloe* and sent positive accounts of the composition back to Murry: "Ca marche, ça va, ça se dessine—its good," she wrote on May 8.[10] Six days later she reported to Murry that she had reached a stopping point: "My work is finished my freedom gained. […] I have only to polish my work now; its all really accompli."[11] When she returned to London on May 18, she was carrying with her fifty pages of the *Aloe* manuscript.[12]

The matter of what she had composed consisted of scenes from her New Zealand childhood, concentrating on the time her family moved from their house on Tinakori Road in Wellington to a house in Karori, a few miles from the city. The name Beauchamp was changed to Burnell, which was the middle name of Mansfield's mother, Annie Beauchamp. Mansfield's focus on personal past was likely prompted in no small part by the arrival of her brother, Leslie, in Britain in early 1915 to enlist in the British army to support the war effort. She had serendipitously encountered him in February, and when he was stationed in Aldershot that summer, she was able to spend a great deal of time with him. Much of that time was apparently spent in conversation, remembering their childhood together in their distant homeland.

Tragically, the joy that Mansfield derived from this reunion was short-lived. On October 11, Mansfield received a telegram reporting that Leslie had died in a training accident a few days before, when a grenade he was throwing had

prematurely detonated. Mansfield was utterly distraught, and her sense of loss would transform the direction of *The Aloe*. She chronicled her devastation in one of her personal notebooks:

> Yes, though he is lying in the middle of a little wood in France and I am still walking upright, and feeling the sun and the wind from the sea, I am just as much dead as he is. The present and the future mean nothing to me: I am no longer "curious" about people; I do not wish to go anywhere and the only possible value that anything can have for me is that it should put me in mind of something that happened or was when we were alive.
>
> "Do you remember, Katie?" I hear his voice in trees and flowers, in scents and light and shadow.[13]

The despairing tone of this entry is palpable, but it is followed by an affirmation of artistic dedication and vision: "Then why don't I commit suicide? Because I feel I have a duty to perform to the lovely time when we were both alive. I want to write about it and he wanted me to."[14] Less than a year after she conceived *The Aloe*, the death of Leslie caused Mansfield's attitude to her text to transform from a feeling of romantic adventure to one of obligation. However, this sense of duty was bound up with a concurrent attention to the aesthetics of her fiction, as she reveals in a notebook entry in early 1916:

> Yes I want to write about my own country till I simply exhaust my store—not only because it is a "sacred debt" that I pay to my country because my brother & I were born there, but also because in my thoughts I range with him over all the remembered places. I am never far away from them. I long to renew them in writing. [… B]ut all must be told with a sense of mystery, a radiance, an after glow because you, my little sun of it, are set.[15]

There is a palpable sense in these writings that Mansfield perceives *The Aloe* as being something beyond an exercise in nostalgic reminiscence. Only by imbuing the text with "a radiance" will she achieve the sort of renewal she seeks. It is this impulse that leads her to work toward the "kind of special prose" she writes about later in that notebook entry.[16]

Despite her rededication to *The Aloe*, Mansfield did not reapply herself to the composition until late winter 1916 when she was living with Murry in Bandol. She recommenced writing on February 15 after having reread the 1915 Paris manuscript.[17] Recording her thoughts on this rereading in her journal, she reports that "The Aloe is right. The Aloe is lovely. […] Oh, I want this book to be written. It must be done."[18] Driven by this imperative, Mansfield immersed herself into the manuscript over the next several weeks. The "book on [her]

hands" that she mentions in a letter to Ottoline Morrell on February 26 is almost certainly *The Aloe*.[19] By the time she and Murry left Bandol at the end of March, she had completed another large segment of the text, and by the time she wrote to Beatrice Campbell on May 4, she was mentioning it in the past tense: "Ive reread my novel today, too and now I cant believe I wrote it—"[20] The tone of the letter suggests Mansfield felt she had reached a stopping point, and she apparently did not work on the novel that summer, a summer that was spent in an unsuccessful attempt to live with D. H. Lawrence and his wife in Cornwall. However, the opportunity for publication would not arrive for another year. After having been introduced to members of the Bloomsbury circle in late 1916, Mansfield received an offer from Virginia Woolf in the spring of the following year to have the Hogarth Press publish a story. *The Aloe* was the only complete piece of sufficient length that would be appropriate, and so, Mansfield set about editing it for publication in the summer of 1917.

That editing process would transform *The Aloe*—the novel into whose open arms she fell in Paris two years before—into "Prelude," the long story that would become so important in the development of literary modernism. A comparison of the Paris-Bandol manuscript of *The Aloe* with the final version of "Prelude" reveals the extent of Mansfield's revision of the text. Most obviously, "Prelude" is a good deal shorter than *The Aloe*. Long passages were removed in Mansfield's 1917 edit, including a longer version of the episode when Kezia and Lottie have dinner with Mrs. Samuel Josephs and her family, and a more detailed backstory of Linda and Stanley's courtship. More generally, Mansfield closely pruned her prose. For example, here is a passage from *The Aloe* in which Kezia visits the empty house from which the Burnell family has moved:

> The windows shook, a creaking came from the walls and floors, a piece of loose iron on the roof banged forlornly—Kezia did not notice these things severally, but she was suddenly quite, quite still with wide open eyes and knees pressed together—terribly frightened. Her old bogey, the dark, had overtaken her, and now there was no lighted room to make a despairing dash for. Useless to call "Grandma"—useless to wait for the servant girl's cheerful stumping up the stairs to pull down the blinds and light the bracket lamp.[21]

The same section in "Prelude" is considerably leaner:

> The windows of the empty house shook, a creaking came from the walls and floors, a piece of loose iron on the roof banged forlornly. Kezia was suddenly quite, quite still, with wide open eyes and knees pressed together. She was frightened.[22]

Most of what has been expunged here is a miniature psychological history of Kezia, one that places her current fears in the context of her past. What the passage loses in diachronicity, it gains in sparse precision. In consequence, the emotion becomes more immediate; the sharpness with which Kezia experiences it is more adequately transferred. In addition, the third-person narrator's presence becomes less obvious. Without the explicit invocation of Kezia's past in the sentence beginning "Her old bogey," the narrator recedes into the background. In *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction*, Sydney Janet Kaplan identifies this effect as occurring throughout the text: "Many of Mansfield's alterations serve to bring the narration closer to a specific character's consciousness and away from interpretation by an omniscient narrator."[23] One way in which Mansfield achieves this is by eliminating all parenthetical asides, which are frequent in the original *Aloe* manuscript. Jenny McDonnell argues that Mansfield's experiments with dramatic dialogues at the time she was working on editing "Prelude" helped her achieve this shift away from an authoritative narrator.[24] In effect, then, the editorial changes to "Prelude" generate a more unfiltered representation of the consciousness of the characters.

The editing process also affected tonal shifts. Some of the romantic spirit of the first text is tempered in "Prelude." The figurative language becomes more understated, and some of the less subtle metaphors are eliminated. For instance, the original *Aloe* manuscript has the following description of Mrs. Samuel Josephs, registered when Kezia and Lottie are left with the Samuel Josephs family at the beginning of the story:

> When Mrs Samuel Josephs was not turning up their clothes or down their clothes (as the sex might be) and beating them with a hair brush, she called this pitched battle "airing their lungs." She seemed to take a pride in it and to bask in it from far away like a fat general watching through field glasses his troops in violent action.[25]

Mansfield wrote this passage in her first stint with *The Aloe* in Paris, not long after she had traveled to the war zone at Gray to meet Francis Carco, so it is not surprising that she might turn to a military metaphor to describe the Samuel Josephs family. This description is not present in the final version of "Prelude," and in general Mansfield excised this sort of martial figurative language from the text.[26] On the other hand, more semiotically complex images—the aloe itself, for instance, or the rushing animals about which Kezia dreams—remain prominent. And then of course there is the change in the title, which achieves several things at once. For those familiar with Mansfield's biography, it immediately draws attention to her brother, Leslie, his birth anticipated in the text by Linda's

pregnancy and Stanley's reference to the empty seat at the children's table where his son would subsequently sit. Bearing in mind her rededication to her writing in the wake of Leslie's death, it is little wonder that Mansfield's revised title would pay tribute to her beloved brother. It's also a literary reference to Wordsworth's *Prelude*, another formally experimental work of autobiography that drew upon the childhood memories of the author. "Prelude" also calls to mind, as Paul Giles observes,[27] the musical form, and in choosing this name, Mansfield is invoking an analogy for her experiment in the possibilities of prose fiction. However, it's possible that the title "Prelude" possesses its most profound resonance not through its extra-diegetic referents, but rather as a signpost to the narrative technique it embodies. It invites the reader to ask a version of the question D. H. Lawrence posed when he heard the title of the novel: "'Prelude to what?'"[28] Lawrence's query may sound obtuse, but it actually gets at the heart of the matter: we as readers are impelled to look for the title's referent, a referent that only exists in hints in the text, and only in a state of potentiality. "Prelude" is a sign without an obvious signified referent, a presence that exists as a near-absence. As such it is the perfect title for the text that initiates Mansfield's experiments with the possibilities of modernist prose technique.

"Prelude": Reception and Structure

"I threw my darling to the wolves," writes Mansfield to Dorothy Brett in the same October 11, 1917, letter in which she considered the question of the form of "Prelude," "and they ate it and served me up so much praise in such a golden bowl that I couldn't help feeling gratified. I did not think they would like it at all and I am still astounded that they do."[29] The "wolves" in question are of course Virginia and Leonard Woolf, who had just begun to print the typewritten manuscript of "Prelude." The three hundred completed copies of it would be published in July 1918. While "Prelude" would, in the long run, prove to be an immensely influential text in the annals of modernist literature, it is fair to say that its initial publication was greeted with neither rapture nor deprecation. As Jenny McDonnell notes, it was circulated almost entirely in Bloomsbury literary circles, and only two copies were made available for reviewers.[30] Therefore, the initial reception was driven largely by word of mouth amongst the London literati. Woolf herself admired the story that she helped to publish, albeit with qualifications. "I suppose a great many tongues are now busy with K.M.," she wrote in a July 12, 1918, entry in her diary. "I myself find a kind of beauty about

the story; a little vapourish I admit & freely watered with some of her cheap realities; but it has the living power, the detached existence of a work of art."[31] A couple of years later, "Prelude" would be included in *Bliss and Other Stories* when it was first published in 1920. Because the initial Hogarth print run was so small, this would be the first time "Prelude" would have been available to a larger reading audience. According to Woolf, E. M. Forster expressed his admiration of the story shortly after this renewed publication: "'Morgan Forster said that Prelude and The Voyage Out were the best novels of their time, and I said Damn Katherine! Why can't I be the only woman who knows how to write.'"[32] Woolf's jealousy was also tinged with admiration, for scholars have identified many channels of influence connecting the two authors. For instance, in her comparative analysis of the two authors, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two,* Angela Smith catalogs the similarities between "Prelude" and *To the Lighthouse* (1927).[33]

The experimental nature of "Prelude" derives from two intertwined narrative strategies that are characteristic of high modernist literature: its eschewal of conventional plot and its emphasis on the interiority of the characters. This interiority is explored by a narrator who inhabits the consciousness of a large number of characters in proportion to the story's length. Consequently, the reader is privy to the thoughts of various members of the Burnell household: daughter Kezia, mother Linda, father Stanley, aunt Beryl, grandmother Mrs. Fairfield, and servant Alice. The narrational voice moves from character to character, and although this movement is not quite so initially bewildering as that of, say, Woolf's later narrator in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), the narrator is still highly mobile; for instance, in the sixth section of "Prelude," the narrator shifts from narrating the consciousness of Mrs. Fairfield, to Beryl, to Linda, to Kezia, and back to Linda once again, over the course of a few short pages. Mansfield makes extensive use of free indirect discourse to render these characters so that the reader is privy to the thoughts even of minor characters, such as the children of Mrs. Samuel Josephs, who are delighted when they fool Kezia into thinking that strawberries and cream are an option for her tea: "'Ah-h-h-h.' How they all laughed and beat the table with their teaspoons. Wasn't that a take-in! Wasn't it now! Didn't he fox her! Good old Stan!" A couple of lines later, the narrator is back with Kezia: "But Kezia bit a big piece out of her bread and dripping, and then stood the piece up on her plate. With the bite out it made a dear little sort of gate. Pooh! She didn't care!"[34] Mansfield effortlessly narrates in the idiolects of her characters, losing the authorial voice that was more prominent in the *Aloe* manuscript.

The story is built around the Burnell family as they settle into their new household. As Vincent O'Sullivan argues, "*Prelude* [… is] written in sections whose apparent randomness works towards the overarching revelation of one family. Its members are seen in their public and private roles, in their shared identity, and their diverse fragmentary selves."[35] While paterfamilias Stanley Burnell is one of these characters, the majority of this collective revelation concentrates upon the female members of the family, for it is they whose private selves the text gradually divulges. In comparison with Stanley, whose private self is revealed as essentially being much the same as his public one—bluff, obtuse, and financially focused—the women, the reader discovers, have rich and complex interior lives. The narration of these lives reveals the way in which they exist in a state of tension with normative middle-class gendered conventions.

The most palpable example of this tension is demonstrated by Linda Burnell, the wife of Stanley. Married to a successful businessman, mother of three daughters and pregnant once again, Linda should be the epitome of an ideal housewife; however, she is harboring secret thoughts, thoughts whose unutterable nature derives from their deviation from and conflict with the gendered expectations of her society. For a start, she has an ambivalent relationship with her children and fantasizes about abandoning them right at the beginning of the story, as she decides to take her luggage on the dray rather than her youngest daughters, Lottie and Kezia: "'We shall simply have to leave them. That is all. We shall simply have to cast them off,' said Linda Burnell. A strange little laugh flew from her lips; she leaned back against the buttoned leather cushions and shut her eyes, her lips trembling with laughter."[36] This passage initiates one of the central issues in "Prelude," which is Linda's hesitant relationship to her maternal role. The bourgeois world of the Burnells places immense stock in the Victorian ideal of the mother being the "angel in the house," an ideal that Mansfield's characterization of Linda completely explodes. Linda resists even watching over the children in the garden in this colloquy with her mother, Mrs. Fairfield:

> "Isn't there anything for me to do?" asked Linda.
> "No, darling. I wish you would go into the garden and give an eye to your children; but that I know you will not do."
> "Of course I will, but you know Isabel is much more grown up than any of us."
> "Yes, but Kezia is not," said Mrs Fairfield.
> "Oh, Kezia has been tossed by a bull hours ago," said Linda, winding herself up in her shawl again.[37]

As in the opening scene, Linda's quip is one of those comments whose ostensible jocular tone is the sole concealment of an inexpressible desire to be unburdened by the pressures of motherhood. This moment is one of many in "Prelude" where Mansfield skillfully interweaves symbolic moments. The masculine image of the bull reminds the reader of Kezia's horror of animals that "rush at" her, a horror that will later be precisely echoed in Linda's recollection of a childhood fear of "things that rush at her."[38] That recollection is triggered by thoughts of Stanley jumping around her and penning her in like an overeager "Newfoundland dog." These linked images reveal that Linda's feelings of entrapment are not *sui generis*; rather, they indicate something about the systemic nature of patriarchal restrictions on women's freedom. The implication very much is that Linda's present may be Kezia's future.

These thoughts of Linda's occur in the eleventh chapter of "Prelude" and comprise part of a remarkable passage in which she honestly assesses her relationship with Stanley. Once again, Mansfield renders sentiments that would be radical and shocking to readers allegiant to dominant gender ideology. Reflecting upon her married life with Stanley, she thinks not about the outward exchanges in their lives, but rather about the inward loathing she sometimes feels toward her husband, a loathing that bubbles not far beneath the surface of her apparent spousal contentment:

> There were times when [Stanley] was frightening—really frightening. When she just had not screamed at the top of her voice: "You are killing me." And at those times she had longed to say the most coarse, hateful things. …
>
> "You know I'm very delicate. You know as well as I do that my heart is affected, and the doctor has told you I may die any moment. I have had three great lumps of children already …."[39]

Once again, albeit in a different valence, there is an absence that asserts a presence: Mansfield's narrator tells us about the things that were *not* said. The phrase "[w]hen she just had not screamed … " possesses a clarion directness so startling that it is almost easy to forget that this statement is a negative. As much as this moment is revelatory for the reader, it is also so for Linda herself, who is coming to a level of self-awareness of the dualism of her thinking that she has never achieved before:

> Yes, yes, it was true. Linda snatched her hand from mother's arm. For all her love and respect and admiration she hated him. […]It had never been so plain to her as it was at this moment. There were all her feelings for him, sharp and defined, one as true as the other. And there was this other, this hatred, just as real

> as the rest. She could have done her feelings up in little packets and given them to Stanley. She longed to hand him that last one, for a surprise. She could see his eyes as he opened that….[40]

This is not only a raw moment, but also one of considerable psychological complexity. Mansfield does not render Linda's negativity with any sort of implicit or explicit moral judgment. A different author might have characterized Linda as some sort of shrewish antagonist. But such a characterization would be far safer than what Mansfield has presented here: a complex psyche in which affection is intermingled with seething, barely repressible, resentment. In representing Linda in this way, Mansfield implicates not merely the fictional Stanley, but also an entire patriarchal system that demands female fertility at the expense of psychological and physical health. It's little wonder that Simone de Beauvoir cited Mansfield's fiction, and "Prelude" in particular, in *The Second Sex* as illuminating the embedded sexist structures that undergird Western society.[41]

Linda's younger sister, Beryl, also feels the pressures of these structures, albeit in a different way. Beryl is unmarried and perceives the move away from town as being detrimental to her matrimonial prospects. The outward signs of her frustration are palpable; for instance, she flirts with her brother-in-law Stanley when they play cribbage after dinner, and she relishes too obviously her power over her nieces and the housemaid, Alice. The first glimpses of her inner life further reveal this discontent. "'One may as well rot here as anywhere else,' she muttered savagely," as she hangs curtains shortly after the move.[42] The night before, Beryl indulges in romantic visions of being introduced at a government ball and of being wooed by a suitor in the garden, a fantasy that Mansfield characteristically narrates in free indirect discourse:

> The window was wide open; it was warm, and somewhere out there in the garden a young man, dark and slender, with mocking eyes, tip-toed among the bushes, and gathered the flowers into a big bouquet, and slipped under her window and held it up to her. She saw herself bending forward. He thrust his head among the bright waxy flowers, sly and laughing. "No, no," said Beryl. She turned from the window and dropped her nightgown over her head.[43]

Upon initially reading this passage, one might well be uncertain as to whether the young man is actually there, but his phantasmagoric nature is subtly revealed by Beryl's own awareness of the fictionality of the scene: "[s]he saw herself." Beryl becomes briefly bifurcated into Beryl the dreamer and Beryl the observer of the dream. The double nature of Beryl in this episode presages the conclusion of "Prelude" when bifurcation evolves from being a literary effect to a central

theme. As Beryl writes a letter to her friend Nan Pym, she becomes aware of the degree to which the different roles she plays come at a cost to her ontological unity and authenticity:

> Beryl sat writing this letter at a little table in her room. In a way, of course, it was all perfectly true, but in another way it was all the greatest rubbish and she didn't believe a word of it. No, that wasn't true. She felt all those things, but she didn't really feel them like that.
>
> It was her other self who had written that letter. It not only bored, it rather disgusted her real self.[44]

She then regards herself in a full-length mirror, a passage that Mansfield narrates in such a way that it is as if Beryl is seeing herself for the first time. The sight of her image furthers Beryl's feelings of dislocation and despair:

> What had that creature in the glass to do with her, and why was she staring? She dropped down to one side of her bed and buried her face in her arms.
>
> "Oh," she cried, "I am so miserable—so frightfully miserable. I know that I'm silly and spiteful and vain; I'm always acting a part. I'm never my real self for a moment." And plainly, plainly, she saw her false self running up and down the stairs, laughing a special trilling laugh if they had visitors, standing under the lamp if a man came to dinner, so that he should see the light on her hair.[45]

While it was her letter to her friend Nam Pym that precipitated this reverie, it is clear that these images of her "false" self are heavily associated with images of courtship and masculinity. It is in social situations in which she might be an eligible single woman that her "false" self is more likely to emerge. This association forges a connection between Beryl's falseness and Linda's reluctant motherhood in that both are secret sentiments that implicate patriarchal expectations. Beryl's acute sense of performance around men, which she senses even around Stanley, disgusts her, and yet she also feels completely unable to change that behavior; indeed, she is called away from her reverie by the news that a young man is downstairs. As Nancy Gray argues, Mansfield was acutely aware of the ways in which the demands that women "[occupy] the patriarchal category of man's other" necessarily require that female selfhood be defined by plurality and fragmentation.[46] Beryl's crisis, therefore, is symptomatic of a larger issue for young women in the bourgeois society in which she moves.

The desperation of Linda's and Beryl's inner lives might appear contrapuntal to the sections in which Kezia is the lens character. However, one of the dominant elements in these sections is the looming specter of adulthood and the way in which Kezia and the other children are being acculturated to their

bourgeois world. For instance, the childhood games that the children play show them practicing their future roles as hosts, a lesson that Mansfield intensifies by rendering the dialogue entirely through the context of the children's play, and without any surrounding narration:

> "Good morning, Mrs Smith. Dinner won't be ready for about ten minutes."
>
> "I don't think you ought to introduce me to the servant. I think I ought to just begin talking to her."
>
> "Well, she's more of a lady-help than a servant and you do introduce lady-helps, I know, because Mrs Samuel Josephs had one."[47]

This scene strikes several different notes. It possesses an undeniable sweetness; but in a narrative that sees adults inwardly railing against their assigned social roles, there is an ominous undercurrent to this world of make-believe. This ominousness erupts to the surface of this section shortly afterwards when the servant Pat invites the children to watch him kill a duck for the Burnells' supper, and Kezia rails against him, screaming, "Put head back! Put head back!"[48] The episode is a clear *memento mori* and reveals a moment when Kezia, in an ineffectual way, demonstrates her opposition to the application of force and indeed to the necessity of death itself. Mansfield's narration of this moment of resistance places her in a continuum with her mother and her aunt.

The thematic and symbolic connections between Kezia, Linda, and Beryl accumulate to the point where we can perceive the structural design of "Prelude." By adding the grandmother of the household, Mrs. Fairfield, to this trio, we have characters who each represent the four phases of a woman's life: girlhood, young womanhood, maternity, and old age. In nineteenth-century European literature, the work of representing these phases of life (albeit primarily, though not exclusively, for men) was most frequently taken up by the *bildungsroman*, the novel of formation. A typical *bildungsroman* might follow a protagonist through these various stages of development. Instead of concatenating these stages within a single subject, "Prelude" juxtaposes them in a single moment of narrative time. As Sydney Janet Kaplan has argued, "'Prelude' breaks the form of the *bildungsroman*, but is a narrative of *bildung* nonetheless. The spatial organization suggests simultaneity, but the typical linear pattern of individual development is rather spread out among the female characters."[49] One effect of this reconfiguration is to take the emphasis off of discrete narrative occurrences in characters' lives as being determinative to the process of formation, and substituting in its stead an analytical dissection of class and gender norms. The perfect example of this is Beryl's reverie at the conclusion of "Prelude." As the

young unmarried woman of the story, hers is the most potentially narratable character, the one to whom one can imagine (and indeed Beryl does *herself* imagine) all sorts of things happening. Mansfield playfully dangles one potential moment in front of the reader: there is a man downstairs! Yet instead of focusing on this sort of potentially life-changing plot development, we have instead a much more important topic: Beryl's psychic duality and its relationship to patriarchal society. While a more conventional story might follow the encounter between Beryl and the man, for Mansfield, the real narrative is over. Individual women do not become their mature selves by way of the sort of conveniences of plot that dominate conventional narratives, nor do the typical characteristics of pluck and determination that can be found in the protagonists of traditional *bildungsromane* always triumph.[50] Rather, Mansfield's narrative reveals the way in which they are shaped by patriarchal forces, and yet work toward a degree of autonomy through their resistance to these forces.

More generally, the parallel *bildungsroman* form that Mansfield develops in "Prelude" is thoroughly in keeping with the emerging aesthetic of her historical moment. In his work, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman,* Gregory Castle proposes that modernist writers sought to critique the formal and thematic conventions of the classic *bildungsroman,* while at the same time "[enacting] that resistance through those conventions."[51] Mansfield's simultaneous engagement with and resistance to such conventions are at the heart of "Prelude." The work's presentation of a fractured *bildungsroman* is a quintessentially modernist strategy, the literary narrative equivalent of Cubists reimagining the concept of perspective. As such, it has not only proven to be an immensely influential work on later modernist authors, it also still speaks powerfully to readers today, more than a century after its initial publication.

Was this Mansfield's initial vision with *The Aloe*? It's difficult to say. In a May 12, 1915, letter to Murry, when *The Aloe* was in its first stages of composition, she told him that "[i]t will be a funny book."[52] One presumes that she means funny peculiar rather than funny ha-ha, but it's impossible to know precisely what aspects of *The Aloe* she was anticipating as being unconventional. Mansfield's October 11, 1917, letter to Dorothy Brett, the one in which she confesses that it's difficult to say what form it is, perhaps gives a clearer indication of her awareness of what the work, now titled "Prelude," would be. She says that she "tried to lift that mist from my people and let them be seen and then to hide them again."[53] This metaphorical unveiling nicely describes the revelation of the innermost thoughts of her principal female characters. That tortuous process of writing and editing that Mansfield engaged in from 1915 to 1917 ultimately produced a

work that stands *sui generis*. With its careful dissection of social mores, its radical literary form, and its moments of incandescent beauty, "Prelude" continues to be a text that is like nothing else in the English literary tradition.

Notes

1 *Letters* 1, 331.
2 Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr, *Katherine Mansfield* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 50.
3 Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," in *The Common Reader*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: Harcourt, 1984), 149.
4 *Letters* 1, 331.
5 CW4, 162.
6 Kathleen Jones, *Katherine Mansfield: The Story-Teller* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 234.
7 *Letters* 1, 167–8.
8 Ibid., 163.
9 Ibid., 174.
10 Ibid., 178.
11 Ibid., 188.
12 Vincent O'Sullivan, "Introduction," in *The Aloe* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983), 12.
13 CW4, 171.
14 Ibid., 172.
15 Ibid., 191–2.
16 Ibid., 192.
17 Jones, *Katherine Mansfield,* 183.
18 CW4, 205.
19 *Letters* 1, 247.
20 Ibid., 261.
21 Katherine Mansfield, *The Aloe* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983), 37.
22 Katherine Mansfield, "Prelude," in CW2, 59.
23 Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 113.
24 Jenny McDonnell, *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace: At the Mercy of the Public* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 96–7.
25 Mansfield, *The Aloe,* 27.
26 I discuss Mansfield's expunging of the language of war from "Prelude" in more detail in "Katherine Mansfield's Home Front: Submerging the Martial Metaphors

of 'The Aloe,'" in *Katherine Mansfield and World War One*, ed. Gerri Kimber et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 69–84.

27 Paul Giles, *Backgazing: Reverse Time in Modernist Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 99.

28 Quoted in Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1988), 161.

29 *Letters* 1, 330–1.

30 McDonnell, *Modernist Marketplace,* 104.

31 Ann Olivier Bell, ed., *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume I: 1915–1919* (London: Hogarth Press, 1977), 167.

32 Quoted in McDonnell, *Modernist Marketplace,* 102.

33 Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 91–110.

34 Mansfield, "Prelude," 58.

35 Vincent O'Sullivan, "Introduction," in *The New Zealand Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.

36 Mansfield, "Prelude," 56.

37 Ibid., 71.

38 Ibid., 87.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., 87–8.

41 De Beauvoir cites "Prelude" at length on two occasions. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 2010), 351; 494–5.

42 Mansfield, "Prelude," 71.

43 Ibid., 64.

44 Ibid., 89.

45 Ibid., 91.

46 Nancy Gray, "Un-Defining the Self in the Stories of Katherine Mansfield," in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, ed. Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber, and Susan Reid (London: Continuum, 2011), 78.

47 Mansfield, "Prelude," 78.

48 Ibid., 82.

49 Kaplan, *Origins*, 117.

50 For an analysis of the way in which female *bildungsromane* resist gendered narrative conventions, see Susan Fraiman, *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

51 Gregory Castle: *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 4.

52 *Letters* 1, 186.

53 Ibid., 331.

6

The New Zealand Stories

Jane Stafford

What does it mean to use the descriptor "Katherine Mansfield's New Zealand stories"? None of the dozen or so works that might be classified in this way were written or published in New Zealand. There seems little common ground among them: the early, "colonial" stories which appeared in the journal *Rhythm* in 1912 and 1913 are generically quite distinct from the later, covertly autobiographical narratives of the Sheridan and Burnell families. The obvious answer is that all have a New Zealand setting. But does the eponymous Millie inhabit the same "New Zealand" as that of "The Garden Party's" Laura Sheridan? Can the desolate central North Island volcanic plateau of "The Woman at the Store" be aligned with the Wellington "drill hall" of "Her First Ball," its "gleaming golden floor," azaleas, lanterns, "red carpet and gilt chairs"?[1]

Ian Gordon describes Mansfield's New Zealand works as being set, at least partly, in a "landscape of the mind."[2] It is a pertinent reminder of Mansfield's artifice, of the fact that her sources were self-consciously literary as much as experiential. Indeed, for the young Mansfield, writing in Wellington between 1906 and 1908, the "landscape of the mind," the imaginary world in which she set her stories, was London. "In a Café" (1907) begins, "Each day they walked down Bond-street together […]."[3] In "the Education of Audrey" (1909), London is "sparkling and golden, and enchanting, like champagne."[4] "The Tiredness of Rosabel" (1908) traces the heroine's route home from the corner of Oxford Circus to Westbourne Grove and then to Richmond Road.[5]

This particularity of detail could be interpreted biographically as an expression of her longing to return to "the wizard London"[6] where she had spent three years at school. But it was also a deliberate choice of literary register, a professional alertness, a claim to membership of a metropolitan literary club. Empire had its own stories, but its peripheral audiences were also captivated by the stories of the imperial center, and Mansfield was acutely aware of this.

By the time she returned to London, Mansfield had outgrown these generic forms. It was, paradoxically, her familiarity with colonial literature that became the source of advantage, the earlier "New Zealand" stories a matter of professional practice rather than autobiographical indulgence: as Angela Smith points out, this was when "there is less nostalgia for New Zealand in her personal writing […] than at any other time."[7] And the journal *Rhythm* was, in Anna Snaith's judgment, "the venue where Mansfield could come out as a New Zealand writer in England."[8]

Rhythm's editor, later Mansfield's partner, John Middleton Murry, had rejected fairy stories she had sent him; the colonial stories she substituted were more in keeping with *Rhythm*'s neo-barbarianism and its credo, "Art must be brutal." Carey Snyder suggests that Mansfield "negotiated her relationship to metropolitan discourses of primitivism within the pages of *Rhythm*" which she describes as "self-consciously designed as a *metropolitan* publication [which] set out from the start to traffic in 'barbaric' products—to package them, as it were, for refined consumption."[9] But the primitivism of Mansfield's *Rhythm* offerings is by no means a celebration of the savage at the expense of the civilized. The stories' settings delineate painful attempts at civil and domestic order which are either inadequate and unfinished, or bleakly restrictive. Savagery is thus all the more disquieting, an undercurrent to pathetic attempts at decorum. The primitive is here not admirable or even productive; in all cases, it denotes failure.

These stories may have been in keeping with *Rhythm's* primitivist enthusiasms, but they were also sophisticated reworkings of the various forms of colonial literature Mansfield had encountered in her early reading.[10] Mark Williams sees Mansfield as "exploring its limits, taking what she needs and rejecting that which does not suit her purposes."[11] The colonial yarn often features character sketches delivered in an authentic though uncentered voice, melodramatic and violent, with loose formal characteristics. The colonial short story, of necessity, anticipates the fragmented mode of modernist writing: Terry Eagleton writes that "on the colonial edges the world is less easy to totalise in classical realist fashion, precisely because some of its central determinants lie elusively elsewhere, in the metropolitan country."[12] Snaith points to "the difficulty of telling, hence the experimental and often uneven forms of colonial modernism."[13] In this literature, human relationships are incomplete and unreliable, social structures are scanty, and women are vulnerable—to snakes, to itinerants, and to husbands. The general antagonism of the bush to the domestic and the female is one of the central themes of this literature, enacted in the stories of such popular authors

as Australians Henry Lawson and Barbara Baynton, both of whom Mansfield is likely to have read, given the close Australasian literary and publication market.

In 1909, the Australian author Marcus Clarke wrote that in the Australian bush "is to be found the Grotesque, the Weird, the strange scribblings of nature learning how to write."[14] "The Woman at the Store" begins with such an uncanny and unsettling landscape, inhospitable to the Pākehā (European) settler and devoid of Indigenous presence though—a convention of colonial literature—they may be discerned as ghosts. "There is no twilight in our New Zealand days," explains the narrator, "but a curious half-hour when everything appears grotesque—it frightens—as though the savage spirit of the country walked abroad and sneered at what it saw."[15]

A group of three riders plan to break their journey at a store in the middle of this bleak and empty landscape. There is no explanation of the group's identity, final destination, purpose, or relationships. The narration is characterized by what Sydney Janet Kaplan describes as the "elimination of personal intrusion—the cutting away of the author's voice."[16] Only late in the story does the reader learn that the narrator is female; there is a suggestion on the concluding page that she and one of the men, Jo, are sister and brother. The other man is called "Hin," suggestive of a Māori name (as in Hine or Hemi), which Murry "corrected" to "Jim." As they ride, Hin paints a picture of what lies ahead:

> […] a fine store, with a paddock for the horses an' a creek runnin' through it, owned by a friend of mine who'll give yer a bottle of whiskey before 'e shakes hands wit yer […] there's a woman too […] with blue eyes and yellow hair, who'll promise you something else before she shakes hands with you.[17]

When they do reach the promised store, the friend is absent, the yellow-haired woman is there but she is carrying a gun, and she mistakes the riders for hawks. Instead of the promised beauty of Hin's reminiscences ("as pretty as a wax doll," knows "one hundred and twenty-five different ways of kissing"),[18] she is "a figure of fun," "sticks and wires"[19] and recounts a narrative of marital abuse and neglect. But Jo is unwilling to give up his fantasy and its concomitant expectation of sex: "she'll look better by night light—at any rate […] she's female flesh," he reasons.[20] This is a continuation of the way the woman has been treated by her husband and, at the story's conclusion, puts Jo in danger of a similar kind of retribution. The woman's small daughter reveals in a picture that he is not "away shearin"[21] but has been shot by his wife with a "rook rifle": "I done the one she told me not to," the girl explains of her drawing, "I done the one she told me she'd shoot me if it did."[22]

In what might be seen as a companion *Rhythm* story, "Millie," the central female figure is less isolated, the setting less menacing: there are farms, neighbors, bosses, and workers, and Millie has a husband. Yet there is a similar thread of arbitrary violence. The "new chum" (i.e., recent arrival from England) on the neighboring farm has killed his boss. Millie is not a victim as is the store's woman. Yet her narration is as hectic and unbalanced, her decision to shelter and hide the young fugitive is quixotic, her motherly care of him arbitrary, as is her subsequent decision to join the hunt for him.

In both "The Woman at the Store" and "Millie," the incoherence of the characters' reality is counterpointed by the irony of the walls of their houses being plastered with pages from English magazines depicting subjects such as Queen Victoria's Jubilee and a "Garden Party at Windsor."[23] This was, in fact, a common colonial practice, but at the same time it works as a metaphor of belonging and estrangement, as an attempt at ownership of the visual imagery of empire and connection as well as a bleak commentary on its failure. And yet there is also a nascent sense of "New Zealand" as a form of national identity in each house's décor. The store displays a picture of Richard Seddon, the reforming New Zealand prime minister of the 1890s[24]; Millie's wedding photograph has a background of "fern trees, and a waterfall, and Mount Cook" (New Zealand's highest mountain),[25] gesturing to the romanticized landscapes of late-colonial visual culture, at odds with the actualities of settlement.

"Ole Underwood" is a companion piece to these two stories, at least in tone if not in form. Short and fragmentary, it evokes a fractured nightmare world which is both in the disordered mind of the main character but also a reflection of the landscape he moves through. Unlike "The Woman at the Store" and "Millie," the setting is urban, but barely so. Human structures are provisional: "ugly little houses"; "a little cinder path [. . .] threaded through a patch of rank fennel to some stone drain pipes carrying the sewage into the sea."[26] The only solid structure is the prison "perched like a red bird" above the town.[27] Other characters appear as disconnected encounters as Ole Underwood lurches down the street raving at the wind. There are jeering children, "men in big coats and top boots with stock whips in their hands," a bar-maid, "Chinamen sitting in little groups on old barrels playing cards."[28] The world of the story is more peopled than its companion pieces, but no more integrated. And the narrative is no less gnomic. Whom has Ole Underwood murdered? Whose is the face at the window of the house he passes? Whom is he about to murder at the conclusion, and why?

The *Rhythm* stories are generally seen as a group, but "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" differs in style and literary genesis. Murry dated it 1910, although

its first publication was in 1912. It is certainly in the style of Mansfield's earlier, more sentimental works for children. It employs the literary tropes of the late-colonial "Maoriland" period of New Zealand literature, with its use of Māori material of a romanticized cast. Indeed, the portrayal of Pearl's kidnappers derives less from Mansfield's first-hand encounter with Māori society—in 1908 she had been on a camping trip to the Urewera, a remote and largely Māori district—than from the conventions of local literary culture. It is clear that she was familiar with both: in her Urewera notebook she observes the hybridized modernity of the Māori settlements she encounters and at the same time, often on the same page, tries out the stereotypical, romanticized conventions of Maoriland writing.[29]

The Māori figures in "Pearl Button" are not identified as such, and Indigenous markers are vague and, to a non-New Zealand reader, unspecific. The women who kidnap Pearl carry a "big flax basket of ferns"[30]; one has a "green ornament around her neck"; the men wear "rugs and feather mats around their shoulders."[31] Perhaps Mansfield did not wish to burden her English audience with ethnographic detail, but the figures are also presented in terms of Pearl's limited perspective, as a child and as a stanchly Pākehā settler, ignorant of any world but her own "House of Boxes." Characters from Maoriland, the kidnappers represent a kind of generic "other." Like the stereotypical gypsy, they stand for everything that is opposed to "the House of Boxes" where Pearl lives, the conventional world of offices, clean pinafores, and mother "in the kitchen ironing-because-it's-Tuesday."[32] The kidnappers are relaxed, loving, humorous, and sensual. They look at the House of Boxes "in a frightened way" and Pearl in turn is puzzled: "Haven't you got any Houses of Boxes [...] Don't you all live in a row? Don't the men go to offices? Aren't there any nasty things?"[33] Nastiness comes from the Pākehā world: the story ends as "little men in blue coats" come "running towards her with shouts and whistlings"[34] to carry her back to the Houses of Boxes.

"Pearl Button" is a schematic and reductive depiction of settler society, ordered but bleak, in contrast to the other *Rhythm* stories which convey the incipient violence and unpredictability of new settlement. If "Pearl Button" is about opposing models of community, the Houses of Boxes versus the Māori world (or, perhaps, the Maoriland world), in "The Woman at the Store" and "Millie," there are no attractive or romantic choices, no running away with the gypsies. "Thank the Lord we're arriving somewhere," says the narrator in "The Woman at the Store"[35]—but in fact they have arrived nowhere. At the conclusion, she and Hin ride off and "[a] bend in the road, and the whole place disappeared."[36]

After 1913 Mansfield did not revisit this colonial style and subject matter, and she did not allow these stories to be republished. (Murry ignored her wishes and included them all in the posthumous 1924 collection *Something Childish but Very Natural.*) Her work moves from the fractured external of the colonial world to the dispersed and malleable interiorities of modernism. When she returned to New Zealand—or rather to the Wellington of her childhood—as a setting, it was not to adopt or adapt colonial forms for a metropolitan market, but to pursue an explicit literary agenda of innovation, to pioneer a new mode dependent on personal memory—and thus inevitably rooted in a particular place and time. These are stories of the past—not a national past but a personal one: "Do I ask anything more," she wrote, "than to relate to remember to assure myself."[37] Her aim was to be "warm, vivid, intimate—not 'made up'—not self-conscious."[38]

As early as 1910 Mansfield had published a story, "Mary," about schoolgirls and classroom politics. The reference to "the Karori bus going home from town full of business men"[39] indicates its setting to be that of the Wellington suburb her family had moved to in 1893. It was one she returned to in "Prelude." Although she began working on a form of this latter story in April 1915, the project became more pressing and focused with the death of her brother, Leslie, in a military accident in October that year. "Prelude" was completed in 1918. Its length—the first version, *The Aloe*, was 26,000 words, later reduced to 17,000—quite apart from subject or style, made it a daunting prospect for a mainstream publisher. It was too long for a short story, too short for a novel, but it was accepted by the nascent Hogarth Press of Virginia and Leonard Woolf.

Virginia Woolf felt that, despite her admiration of the story, it was at times "a little vapourish" and dealt with "cheap realties."[40] It is a nice illustration of the two writers' differing approaches. Mansfield wrote to Ottoline Morrell that Woolf "is not *of* her subject—she hovers over, dips, skims, makes exquisite flights—sees the lovely reflections in the water that a bird must see—but *not humanly*."[41] "Prelude" is far more human than anything that Woolf had or would ever write, due to its cheap realities, perhaps: Stanley's fried chops; Pat's gold earrings and his smell of "nuts and new wooden boxes"[42]; the "very dirty calico cat" with the face-cream lid on its head that concludes the story.[43]

Mansfield was intent from the start that "Prelude" was to be a formal experiment—that the literary qualities of the piece, as opposed to the subject matter, were significant to her and marked an important stage in her career as a writer. "Now, really, what is it that I want to write?" she had asked herself in her notebook in early 1916, obviously a period of some sort of existential creative

crisis. She felt unsure: "Am I less of a writer than I used to be?" She wondered, was the need to write "less urgent"? But she answered herself: "at bottom never has any desire been more ardent. Only the form that I would choose has changed utterly." Character was no longer of interest, and "[t]he plots of my stories leave me perfectly cold."[44]

Claire Tomalin writes of the setting of "Prelude" that it is "unstated, and disquietingly English-seeming without being English."[45] There are enough local markers to signal place, from tui (a native bird) to paua (a native shell), but they are subtle and unforced. "English without being English" could be seen as a neat way of characterizing colonial Wellington, and certainly the Wellington of Mansfield's family. Antony Alpers suggests that "Prelude" "sets out to show what all the members of a household think and feel, and how they behave, during their adjustment to the new home—their whole Colonial life, of course, being exactly that."[46] It is an attractive idea that the new home in the story is analogous to the new home of Pākehā settlers in New Zealand. But the old house is not noticeably English (no English magazines papered on the wall of this aspirant middle-class home); the new Karori house is not especially or contrastingly Indigenous—the aloe tree in the garden is an exotic, not native to New Zealand, after all. It is rather a contrast between a familiar, secure, and conventionally structured space versus something newer, looser, with more potential.

The house where the children have lived all their lives is emptied out and made disconcertingly unfamiliar; the journey to the new house is done at night so everything looks odd and unsettling, provoking Kezia's question to Pat, "Do stars ever blow about?"[47] Their destination is not yet ordered. There are piles of boxes, unpacked furniture and unhung pictures, scratch meals, beds without sheets. Protocols are inverted—Isabel has a chop rather than the children's normal bread and milk; Kezia drinks from Aunt Beryl's cup.

Even the next day the house is in the process of still coming into being—a task taken on by the grandmother. That is what she is doing throughout the story, organizing "everything in pairs,"[48] solving problems of placement and furnishing such as where to, tactfully, place the two Chinese pictures Stanley has acquired. In "Prelude" and in the later "At the Bay," the grandmother is order, continuity, routine of the most satisfying kind but also, as the oldest, the repository of memory and the harbinger of mortality.

The movement of "Prelude" is one of expansion, from small to larger, from the familiar confines of the old house and garden to the unexplored wilderness of the Karori garden. Expansion is a continuous theme of the story, enjoyed, even reveled in by Stanley as upward mobility, a measure of his success, but feared by

Linda and her small associate Kezia. For Stanley, the new house will herald a life of increase and improvement, a fitting setting for his social and economic ascent in the world. For Beryl it is, in her fantasy, a world of romantic possibilities, a ball, a handsome stranger, a release from the dependent, emotionally blank life in her sister's household. And yet at the same time as she fantasizes, she contemplates the reality of geography—that the new house will be too far for people to come up from town to visit, too far for her to go anywhere, that the "chaps" Stanley has promised to bring up for tennis at the weekends will all be versions of his dull associate, Wally Bell.

The children are a significant part of this world. As in later works—"The Doll's House" and "At the Bay"—connections between the adult world and that of the children are few. Stanley does not have much to do with the children at all; Beryl, the aunt, clashes and admonishes, and little else; Linda, the mother, strenuously distances herself from the start, distinguishing Lottie and Kezia from the "absolute necessities" of the house move and saying she cannot have "a lump of a child" on her lap in the buggy.[49] The grandmother is a reliable source of succor, support, and understanding—but busy.

Largely, the children form their own society. The stories offer not a Romantic view of children as innocent and untouched by the world of the social, but as a savage and slightly feral version of adult society with the same hierarchies, factions, and rivalries. All their games are practice for adult life of a not particularly pleasant kind. Kezia complains that playing mothers and fathers with Isabel means all they do is go to church and come home and go to bed—a judgment on the adults and their routines. The children's interactions pivot between imitating their parents and something potentially more savage—encapsulated in the scene where Pat kills the chicken. The children are upset and then fascinated and then highly excited: "When the children saw the blood they were frightened no longer. They crowded round him and began to scream."[50]

"Prelude" is marked by a thread of fearfulness throughout. Stanley, for all his ebullience, lives in a world that is still fraught with potential danger: "A sort of panic overtook Burnell whenever he approached near home. Before he was well inside the gate he would shout to anyone within sight: 'Is everything alright?'"[51] Even in his most satisfied moments he wobbles: "That's where my boy ought to sit," thought Stanley. He tightened his arm round Linda's shoulder. By God, he was a perfect fool to feel as happy as this![52] Linda fears her entrapment in the bonds of family and has fantasies of escape: "She saw herself driving away from them all in a little buggy, driving away from everybody and not even waving."[53]

But less articulated is her fear of the swelling, rushing THEM, the birds on the wall paper, the small but tumescent bird in her dream. This is similar to Kezia's fear of the presence in the empty house at the story's beginning. Kezia lives in an animate universe: the new house is "like a sleeping beast"[54]; "[o]utside the window hundreds of black cats with yellow eyes sat in the sky watching her."[55] But she isn't afraid; she manages her fears; she is not trapped like the married Linda.

If there is an epiphany in this story, a transcendence, it is momentary, linked to the aloe's one-hundred-year flowering, and the congress of women, as the grandmother and the mother walk in the garden:

> Bright moonlight hung upon the lifted oars like water, and on the green wave glittered the dew.
>
> "Do you feel it, too," said Linda, and she spoke to her mother with the special voice that women use at night to each other as though they spoke in their sleep or from some hollow cave—"Don't you feel that it is coming towards us?"[56]

It is, again, a dream of escape: "How much more real this dream was," Linda thinks, "than that they should go back to the house where the sleeping children lay and where Stanley and Beryl played cribbage."[57] But in the end cheap realities win: "'What am I guarding myself for so preciously?'" asks Linda. "'I shall go on having children and Stanley will go on making money and the children and the gardens will grow bigger and bigger, with whole fleets of aloes in them for me to choose from'"[58]

"Prelude" was published in 1918. A number of stories from this time onwards are similarly located in the Wellington territory of Mansfield's childhood. In "The Wind Blows" (1920), a characteristic Wellington gale is "shaking the house, rattling the windows, banging a piece of iron on the roof."[59] "The Voyage" (1921) features an overnight trip on "the Picton boat," the ferry from Wellington to the South Island.[60] In "Her First Ball" (1921), shy Leila longs to be back "sitting on the verandah of their forsaken up-country home, listening to baby owls crying 'More pork' in the moonlight" (a morepork, or ruru, is the New Zealand native owl).[61] The description of her dancing teacher as "Miss Eccles (from London)"[62] gently mocks colonial insecurity and deference.

"The Doll's House," written in 1921, uses the same characters as "Prelude." The setting is again that of the new suburb of Karori where the inchoate and fluid nature of new place means that social distinctions are difficult to police. The children attend the local school where "all the children in the neighbourhood, the judge's little girls, the doctor's daughters, the store-keeper's children, the milkman's, were forced to mix together."[63]

The children are given the gift of a doll's house—a replica family, manageable and better behaved, perhaps, than an actual family. The front of the doll's house opens, so it is instantly possible to see what is happening everywhere, unlike the complicated and secret family of the real house. The house's detail is perfect. But the toy people do not quite fit:

> The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff as though they had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll's house. They didn't look as though they belonged.[64]

The doll's house may be delightful in its precision and perfection, but it is a simulacrum, made and manufactured, artificial in a way that does not accommodate the messy, imperfect, and unpredictable world of human beings.

This is a story about ventriloquism, about learning the appropriate collective voice, so the narration is more shifting and unstable than that of simply the author or any one character.

Just as the doll's house imitates the adult or "real" world, so much of the story is about the children learning how to behave in that world. There are rules, even for children, and those rules are of hierarchy and of permission. Access to the doll's house is carefully controlled:

> For it had been arranged that while the doll's house stood in the courtyard they might ask the girls at school, two at a time, to come and look. Not to stay to tea, of course, or to come traipsing through the house. But just to stand quietly in the courtyard while Isabel pointed out the beauties, and Lottie and Kezia looked pleased ….[65]

Already the children—especially Isabel—have absorbed the structures and strictures of adult life. Boundaries are significant: the doll's house is in the courtyard not inside; only two children at a time are allowed; no tea or traipsing; the visitors must stand quietly. Even though the reader has not been brought face to face with the adult world—just their imperfect representation in the doll's house—they are beginning to recognize its rules.

The school and especially the playground are an even more explicit demonstration of this. Social hierarchies are enforced, and the limit of social acceptability stops short of the Kelvey girls whose mother is a washerwoman, whose father may be in jail, and who are going to be servants when they grow up. They are marked out as different; the children know it; the teachers know it; and the Kelveys themselves know it.

Except Kezia does not know it. As the youngest child, she has not yet been inculcated into the rules and norms of society. She does not parrot the adults or

take part in the baiting of the Kelveys by the other children. She asks her mother if she can show the Kelveys the doll's house:

> "Certainly not, Kezia."
> "But why not?"
> "Run away, Kezia; you know quite well why not."[66]

This is the only point in the story at which the mother appears—as a disembodied voice, to say no and you know why not—that is, you know the rules. When Kezia invites the Kelveys onto forbidden territory, she is interrupted by Aunt Beryl whose function is the same as all the adults in the story: negative, rule-enforcing prohibition. Simon During notes Mansfield's "interplay between, and sudden interruptions by, different points of view and moods, especially exchanges or switches between adults and children."[67] This tendency, the shifting between narrative positions, the quotation of one character by another, means that in this scene the narrative focus shifts abruptly from the shame of Kezia to the fear of the Kelveys to the more complex stance of Aunt Beryl:

> The afternoon had been awful. A letter had come from Willie Brent, a terrifying, threatening letter, saying if she did not meet him that evening in Pulman's Bush, he'd come to the front door and ask the reason why! But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming.[68]

To the children, and initially to the reader, Aunt Beryl's fury is out of proportion. But it is then shown to come from elsewhere. "The afternoon had been awful," "a terrifying, threatening letter" is from Beryl's perspective; "he'd come to the front door and ask the reason why!" is Beryl quoting Willie Brent. In the actual house, rather than the controlled and perfect doll's house, unpleasant things can threaten disaster. This introduces a new register associated with a set of relations that the world of the doll's house, and even the world of the school and playground, cannot encompass or understand—that of reputational danger, even sexual danger.

In contrast to "The Doll's House," social markers are less insistent in "At the Bay" (1922). Only Stanley, the father, is still connected to the world of watches and exact measurement, of bus timetables, offices, and need for precision—and he vainly tries to impress upon the relaxed holidaying family his own urgencies: "There's no time to lose. Look sharp!"[69] His presence is a disruption in the general atmosphere: as Linda reflects, living with him is "like living in a house

that couldn't be cured of the habit of catching on fire."[70] As he leaves, the house relaxes: "Their very voices were changed as they called to one another, they sounded warm and loving and as if they shared a secret."[71]

If "Prelude" is structured around movement, the journey from the old house and the family's settling into the new, "At the Bay" is shaped by time, cyclical repetition rather than innovation. The action takes place over one day (as does James Joyce's 1920 *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's 1925 *Mrs. Dalloway*) and as the narrative progresses, its passage is signaled by natural markers: "Very early morning";[72] "As the morning lengthened";[73] "The tide was out";[74] "The sun was still full on the garden";[75] "The sun had set";[76] and, finally, "A cloud, small, serene, floated across the moon."[77]

"Prelude" is about the flux of reshaping and looking forward; "At the Bay" is set in a "summer colony" in marked contrast to the ideal of order in "The Doll's House," the rigidities of "Pearl Button," or even the social stratifications of "The Garden Party" (1921). The tone is that of fluidity, a movement away from social constraints and expectations—certainly no ironing-because-it's-Tuesday. "Prelude" recounts the memorable first two days of the new place; "At the Bay" follows the typical and unexceptional routine of any day of a summer holiday. In contrast to the bustle of the new home in "Prelude," or the sociality of "The Doll's House" with its links to the world of work and school, Crescent Bay is populated by women and children—and only the odd, holidaying man. There are still necessarily routines: the shepherd at the opening section driving his sheep through the mist; the children breakfasting, overseen by the all-competent grandmother; the duties of Alice the servant girl; trips to the beach at communally recognized and prescribed times; the return of the men from the city at the end of the day. But the formal qualities of the story are shaped—or not shaped—by the fluidity of the women's time: affective, episodic, and loose. Gordon calls the story "multi-cellular like living tissue."[78] Smith picks up the imagery of the opening, early morning scene and suggests, "The narrative structure lifts the mist on one person and then drops it, so that the reader glimpses a consciousness and then loses sight of it."[79] This slipperiness is aided by the particular form of its narration. Peter Mathews suggests: "The narrator's voice is ghostly, disembodied, a still small voice that remains anonymous, inaccessible, but also oddly informal at various points."[80] Yet, as in "Prelude" and "The Doll's House," there is continual movement between voices—musing, proclaiming, imitating, satirizing, shifting from a collective voice to an individual, private one, from the expression of commonly and communally held truths to the admission of shameful secrets.

The story—Mansfield referred to it as "my book"[81]—proceeds through narratives of self-description, often of limitation and failure: Angela Smith describes it as presenting "constructions of human experience" where characters "are subjected to scrutiny and revealed as inadequate."[82] Jonathan Trout dwells on "The shortness of life! I've only got one night and one day, and there's this vast garden, waiting out there, undiscovered, unexplored."[83] Mrs. Fairfield, the grandmother, thinks of her dead son while not entirely reassuring Kezia as to her own mortality. Alice, the servant, rages against her lot. Linda thinks longingly of her past, unmarried self. Beryl fantasizes of a future romantic attachment—and plays the same risky game with the mysterious, dissolute Harry Kember as her character does with Willy Brent in "The Doll's House." As in "Prelude" and "The Doll's House," the children in "At the Bay" constitute their own culture which mimics and, through the narrator, satirizes that of their parents. The adults long for impossible transformations; the children effect them, but temporarily and with a characteristic amount of rough negotiation:

> "You can't be a bee, Kezia. A bee's not an animal. It's a ninseck."
> "Oh but I do want to be a bee frightfully," wailed Kezia. …
> "I'm a bull, I'm a bull!" cried Pip. And he gave such a tremendous bellow—how did he make that noise?—that Lottie looked quite alarmed.[84]

On July 23, 1921, Mansfield commented in her notebook on a story she had just written, "An Ideal Family":

> I didn't get the deepest truth out of the idea, even once. […] I shall tackle something different—a long story—<u>At the Bay</u> with more difficult <u>relationships</u>. That's the whole problem.[85]

But are the relationships in "At the Bay" "difficult"? Are they even "relationships," or are they glancing, almost non-existent passes? Linda reflects on her feeling of utter separation from her baby (only to be wooed at the last moment); Stanley spends the day in town under the misapprehension that he has offended his wife; Alice's attempts at sociality are painful and forced; the nature and intentions of the Kembers are mysterious.

The setting of "The Garden Party," in contrast to the "summer colony," is an established, urban location bearing strong similarities to Thorndon where the Beauchamps had moved to in 1907. As in Karori, there is still a certain amount of disconcerting social mixing: Mansfield recalls her mother complaining that "it was a little trying to have ones own washerwoman living next door who would persist in attempting to talk […] over the fence."[86]

The central character, a young girl, Laura, is attempting to mimic her confident, stylish family, to perform the registers and attitudes of adults of a certain class. Thomas Day describes her as "the principal selective assimilator of others' words" in a story that is "riddled with voices variously possessed and dispossessed, aspiring to possess, and striving, sometimes silently, against dispossession."[87] When news comes of a fatal accident in the cottages adjacent to the party, she is dispatched to offer the bereaved working-class family the party left-overs. Even this simple act is fraught with social intricacies and dangers:

> "And, Laura!"—her mother followed her out of the marquee—"don't on any account—"
> "What mother?"
> No, better not put such ideas into the child's head! "Nothing! Run along."[88]

Laura's perspective is that of an outsider—as the mother's stifled warning indicates. The garden party and the "mean little cottages"[89] of the bereaved are both contiguous and separate. Working-class codes of bereavement and mourning, where roles and rituals are known and accepted by all, are encountered by Laura—coming directly from the "kisses, voices, tinkling spoons, laughter"[90] of the garden party—as alien and disturbing. Smith suggests that "in this unfamiliar territory [Laura] loses her middle-class control,"[91] although it is arguable whether, even in the setting of her mother's party, she is more than an anxious ventriloquist of those around her. Urged into the carter's house where she has no place, where even her appearance is inappropriate and susceptible to causing offense—"Forgive my hat" she mutters to the corpse[92]—Laura sees in the dead man both beauty and a remoteness from garden parties: "What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful."[93]

The reader is part of Laura's unformed consciousness. Her experience has not yet given her words to frame and contain her feelings. At the conclusion, Laura's brother Laurie comes to collect her and take her back to the world of the garden party and its codes:

> "Was it awful?"
> "No," sobbed Laura. "It was simply marvellous. But Laurie—" she stopped, she looked at her brother. "Isn't life," she stammered, "isn't life—" But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood.
> "*Isn't* it, darling?" said Laurie.[94]

In this Mansfield could be seen to be returning to the disturbing inarticulacy of her earlier stories. Smith notes that in "Ole Underwood," "The Woman at the Store," and "Millie," "the participants' savagery takes the form of an inability to articulate their feelings."[95] But the problem is, surely, more extreme than an issue of emotional expression—they are unable to produce any kind of meaningful linguistic response of any kind. Ole Underwood shouts "Ah—k [. . .] Ah—k" at the wind;[96] the little girl in "The Woman at the Store" has to draw a picture of what she cannot describe in words; Millie's sudden decision to join the hunt for the murderer she had protected is expressed in hysterical fracture of language: "A—ah! Arter 'im, Sid! A—a—a—h! ketch 'im, Willie. Go it! Go it! A—ah, Sid! Shoot 'im down. Shoot 'im!"[97] In contrast, in "The Garden Party," Laura may not be able to articulate what "life" is, but she has a sympathetic listener who knows instinctively what she means—"*Isn't* it, darling?"

In Mansfield's *Rhythm* stories, "New Zealand" is a literary mode—one she later chose to move way from. From 1918 onwards, she worked with a contrasting "landscape of the mind," a "New Zealand" formed from personal memory and family history. Here, the unformed and evolving nature of modern colonial society provided an appropriate palette for experiment with the shifts and breaks of literary modernism. "Prelude" and "The Doll's House" are set in the raw, socially confused, new suburb of Karori. The community in "At the Bay" has codes of conduct, but they are loose, temporary, and largely female. In "The Garden Party," distinct social worlds are contiguous and collide in mutual misunderstanding. The critic V.S. Pritchett observed: "Who are these people, who are their neighbours, what is the world they belong to? We can scarcely guess."[98] He compared her work unfavorably to that of Chekhov where, he claimed, there is always a sense of "Mother Russia" in the background. But that is the point—there is no "background" to this particular world, no freight of culture and history or connection. The literary style might be modernist, but the setting is modern. Māori ghosts, the "savage spirit" of "The Woman at the Store," remnants of another, pre-existing history, are expunged. In "The Garden Party," Laura directs the workmen who have come to set up the marquee:

> "Look here, miss, that's the place. Against those trees. Over there. That'll do fine."
> Against the karakas. Then the karaka-trees would be hidden [. . .] Must they be hidden by a marquee?
> They must.[99]

In this "New Zealand" colonial sociality and aspiration trumps Indigeneity.

Notes

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4 Katherine Mansfield, "The Education of Audrey," in CW1, 102.
5 Katherine Mansfield, "The Tiredness of Rosabel," in CW1, 133–7.
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15 Katherine Mansfield, "The Woman at the Store," in CW1, 268.
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17 Mansfield, "Woman at the Store," 269.
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19 Ibid., 270.
20 Ibid., 272.
21 Ibid., 269.
22 Ibid., 276.
23 Katherine Mansfield, "Millie," in CW1, 326.
24 Ibid., 270.
25 Ibid., 326.
26 Katherine Mansfield, "Ole Underwood," in CW1, 319; 321.
27 Ibid., 321.
28 Ibid., 320.

29 See Jane Stafford, "'Simplicity and Art Shades Reign Supreme': Costume, Collectibles, and Aspiration in Katherine Mansfield's New Zealand," in *Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader*, ed. Helen Wussow and Mary Anne Gillies (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2014), 77–86.
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31 Ibid., 286
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 288.
34 Ibid.
35 Mansfield, "Woman at the Store," 269.
36 Ibid., 276.
37 CW4, 191.
38 *Letters* 4, 241–2.
39 Katherine Mansfield, "Mary," in CW1, 170.
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41 *Letters* 2, 333–4.
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44 CW4, 191.
45 Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (London: Penguin, 1987), 162.
46 Antony Alpers, *Life of Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Viking, 1980), 189.
47 Mansfield, "Prelude," 61.
48 Ibid., 70.
49 Ibid., 56.
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53 Ibid., 66.
54 Ibid., 61.
55 Ibid., 64.
56 Ibid., 86–7.
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59 Katherine Mansfield, "The Wind Blows," in CW2, 226.
60 Katherine Mansfield, "The Voyage," in CW2, 372.
61 Katherine Mansfield, "Her First Ball," in CW2, 326.
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63 Katherine Mansfield, "The Doll's House," in CW2, 416.
64 Ibid., 415.
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66 Ibid., 418.
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92 Mansfield, "The Garden Party," 413.
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96 Mansfield, "Ole Underwood," 319.
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Part Two

Katherine Mansfield and Her Contemporaries

7

Katherine Mansfield, Garsington, and Bloomsbury

Jay Dickson

Katherine Mansfield often comes across on the written page as a woman alone. Her best-selling posthumous *Journal* that her widower John Middleton Murry brought forth in 1927 emphasizes from its first page what it means to live alone,[1] with such subheadings throughout the text as "Travelling Alone," "Being Alone," "Living Alone," and "Dame Seule," both praising and bewailing what it meant for her to live much of her adult life in isolation.[2] So too do many of her most famous stories pointedly address the *femme seule* theme, including "The Tiredness of Rosabel," "The Little Governess," "Miss Brill," and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel." It is a paradox of her life and career, then, that critics and biographers alike have always known Mansfield in large part by the company she kept. In her short life, she managed to meet, correspond with, and work alongside many of the best-known writers of her era. None have been more associated with Katherine Mansfield and her work, however, than the circuit of famous friends and acquaintances she made during the years of the First World War through the intersecting two bohemian salons gathered about Garsington Manor, the rural Oxfordshire home of Lady Ottoline Morrell, and the residential squares of Bloomsbury.[3]

Although her father, Sir Harold Beauchamp, was a wealthy banker and businessman in New Zealand, in Europe (where she spent her mature years) Mansfield usually found herself impoverished, and she knew her accent marked her every time she spoke as "a little colonial."[4] Compared with the Cambridge-educated milieu of many of the men from the Bloomsbury Group, and the aristocratic background of Morrell (who was the half-sister of the Duke of Portland), Mansfield frequently felt herself an interloper, and was indeed treated as such by many in both circles. The Tudor-built Garsington Manor was offered to its guests by its hostess as a bucolic retreat from the bustle of London, where

they might meet and converse with other writers and artists, and Mansfield often found that setting conducive for the pastoral ideal of *otium,* or leisure[5]; at other times, however, she also found it a threatening space where she felt herself often the subject of judgmental idle talk, particularly from those among the Bloomsbury Group. Yet what became crucial for Mansfield's development as a writer were not simply the sustaining friendships she made at and through her time at Garsington, but her transmutation of its gossip into the stuff of her short stories.

The two overlapping sets of Garsington and the Bloomsbury Group are so often confused that it is worth taking the time here to distinguish between them. Lady Ottoline Morrell's strong interest in the arts, which she shared with her husband, the Liberal Member of Parliament Philip Morrell, distinguished her from other prominent society hostesses of early twentieth-century London. During the Edwardian period, Lady Ottoline would invite writers and artists for a weekly salon held at her London townhouse at 44 Bedford Square. In 1914, the Morrells purchased Garsington Manor, which they restored and decorated according to her eccentric and spectacular tastes, and invited for weekends (up until the Morrells sold the house in 1928) many of the most preeminent artistic figures of her day, including the novelists D. H. Lawrence, Gilbert Cannan, Aldous Huxley, and Edward Sackville-West; the philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell; the poets T. S. Eliot and Siegfried Sassoon; the painters Mark Gertler, Augustus John, Dorothy Brett, and Dora Carrington; and so on. Because the Morrells were dedicated pacifists (Philip had argued on the floor of Parliament against involvement in the First World War), they extended even more permanent invitations for conscientious objectors to work during the week on their estate, including figures from the Bloomsbury Group such as the art critic Clive Bell and the painter Duncan Grant. It was through them, and through a regular visitor to Garsington, her good friend the critic and biographer Lytton Strachey, that Lady Ottoline began to cultivate friendships with other members of the Bloomsbury Group.

This latter circle, already well established by the time the Morrells had bought Garsington Manor, centered upon the Bloomsbury homes of the four youngest children of the critic and editor Sir Leslie Stephen: Thoby, Vanessa, Virginia, and Adrian. After the 1904 death of their father, the four moved from the Victorian upper-middle-class pretensions of his home in Hyde Park Gate to seek out the more airy and less rigidly class-stratified squares of Bloomsbury so that Vanessa might pursue more easily her studies as a painter at the Slade School of Fine Art. During their first year in the neighborhood, the Stephens established

weekly evening salons, inviting many of Thoby's friends from Cambridge, most of whom had been members of the Apostles, the college's famous intellectual society. These friends included Strachey, Bell, the economist John Maynard Keynes, the music critic Sydney Saxon-West, the painter and art critic Roger Fry, and the novelist E. M. Forster. After Thoby's unexpected death in 1906 from typhoid while traveling in Europe, the two adult Stephen sisters intensified their relations with his beloved Cambridge circle and expanded it to include another Cambridge friend, the novelist and critic, Leonard Woolf, as well as (in time) the journalist Desmond MacCarthy and his wife Molly; the Scottish painter Duncan Grant; his lover, the novelist David Garnett; and Strachey's partners in an ongoing *ménage à trois*, the painter Dora Carrington and the British Army major Ralph Partridge. In time, Vanessa Stephen married Clive Bell, and Virginia married Leonard Woolf, while most of the other members of the Group moved to the neighborhood because of their fondness for one another's intellectual conversation. Although none of the Bloomsbury Group was initially famous when it first coalesced, other than Forster (whose relationship with the Group was somewhat tenuous), as they became better known during the Georgian era, they became identified with one another in the British world of arts and letters as "Bloomsberries."

Katherine Mansfield always felt herself to be an outsider with both Garsington and Bloomsbury, despite her familiarity with both circles. She came to know the people in them first through her acquaintance (through the novelist D. H. Lawrence) with Lady Ottoline Morrell, who eventually hosted her regularly at Garsington Manor, starting in 1916. By this means Mansfield better came to know not only Lady Ottoline's circle but also members of the Bloomsbury Group, who themselves began to frequent Garsington during the war years. Her full inclusion in either group, however, was something Mansfield never felt. Although her friendly letters to Morrell were often replete with fulsome praise for the beauty and graciousness of Garsington and its grounds, and she forged vital friendships there, particularly with Lady Ottoline herself, and with such regular visitors as Dorothy Brett and T. S. Eliot, Mansfield at times felt its fishbowl atmosphere and intense conversations oppressive and alienating, particularly when it came to the members of the Bloomsbury Group. Brett, for example, remembers Mansfield during her weekends at Garsington as "afraid of the Bloomsberries, cautious and withdrawn."[6] Despite what were to become enduring relationships with the Woolfs, Lytton Strachey, and Dora Carrington, Mansfield believed herself—correctly—often the subject of the Bloomsberries' sometimes ungenerous conversations. Even so, her immersion in both coteries

(most often at Garsington Manor, but extending to the salons and rented apartments of London) also stoked her own love of gossip about others and of piercing conversation—the two things for which both these groups are often best known, aside from the artistic breakthroughs they made in the early twentieth century. Mansfield's defining encounters with Bloomsbury and Garsington, particularly in the years 1916 and 1917, sharpened her interest in the fictional possibilities for both intellectual discussion and personal gossip in a way that proved particularly beneficial to the series of experimental dialogues she wrote at this time, just before she began the extended period of writing her most mature stories. Mansfield transformed her ambivalent discursive encounters with these artistic assemblages in a way that was to profit her own development as a writer of modernist fiction.

D. H. Lawrence, who knew Mansfield and her husband John Middleton Murry through their work together on the *Blue Review* (the second incarnation of Murry's "little magazine" *Rhythm*), had begun making regular visits to Garsington Manor during that same year. Impressed by the aristocratic pedigree of both the house and its hostess, Lawrence told Lady Ottoline he wanted her house to serve as a kind of intellectual retreat from the ongoing war for her and her guests akin to (in his words) "the Boccaccio place where they told all the Decamerone." As he wrote to Morrell, "Garsington must be the retreat where we come together and knit ourselves together," and he particularly insisted to her that Murry and Mansfield must be part of this new intellectual community.[7] Flattered, Morrell invited first Murry to Garsington for Christmas in 1915; and then Mansfield, who had already struck up a correspondence with Morrell, invited herself to the estate in July of 1916. Guests at Garsington during Mansfield's first weekend there included Aldous Huxley, Dorothy Brett, and several figures from the Bloomsbury Group: Lytton Strachey, a stalwart of that set from its beginning, his friend (and later lover) Dora Carrington, and the novelist David Garnett.

The former two of these three were to become genuine intimates for Mansfield in coming months, although Strachey's first encounter with Mansfield, as he related in a letter soon after to Virginia Woolf, filled him with suspicion:

> Among the rout was "Katherine Mansfield"—if that's her real name—I could never quite make sure. Have you heard of her? Or read any of her productions? […] I may add that she has an ugly impassive mask of a face—cut in wood, with brown hair and brown eyes very far apart; and a sharp and slightly vulgarly-fanciful intellect sitting behind it.[8]

Strachey's description of Mansfield's "mask of a face" was one to be repeated by other habitués of Garsington whom Mansfield would meet in the weeks and months to come, such as Leonard Woolf and Morrell herself.[9] Certainly this guarded aspect was something many saw in Mansfield, but it was particularly marked when she was at Garsington, most likely because of her feelings of being such an outsider in terms of nationality, class, and even gender (in that Lady Ottoline Morrell rarely invited other intellectual women to her home).

Thus Mansfield perpetually had her guard up, usually performing for Morrell's other guests: she would perform ragtime dances and impersonate cabaret singers and Hollywood stars, and according to Dorothy Brett, Mansfield also "'fetched her guitar and sang quaint old folk songs, Negro spirituals, and ballads of all kinds.'"[10] She would regale Morrell and her other Garsington favorites with elaborated stories of her racy past, including her unsuccessful marriage to the music teacher, George Bowden, and her escapades with a traveling light opera company. In her memoir of Mansfield written soon after the latter's death in 1923, Morrell wrote of the writer's time at Garsington, "It was easy for her with her acute and precise observation and gay wit that peppered and salted her talk to 'take off' and to act scenes which she had seen and turn them into mockery. No one could so impersonate her victims and catch the mannerisms, the talk and the superficial absurdities in people as she could."[11] The sense among Morrell and her other Garsington habitués thus was that Mansfield was always acting a part,[12] which may have been appropriate to the milieu given that Morrell herself described her Oxfordshire manor home as "a romantic theatre where week after week a new company would arrive, unpack, shake out their frills and improvise a new scene in life."[13]

Morrell's theatrical metaphor here is important in that, as Janet Lyon has argued, modernist bohemian salons like that Lady Ottoline sustained at Garsington were, importantly, inherently *performative* spaces. Lyon writes,

> The [bohemian] salon, so central to the formulation and dissemination of modernist aesthetics was, at least in its ideal, culturally reproduced form, *a living theater*, a collaborative and palimpsestic space for the display of evolving metropolitan style eccentric costuming and experimental performance, artistic interior design, paratactic social exchange and other vague but unmistakable signifying practices of cultural vanguardism, all of them features of a new set of aesthetic practices.[14]

Part of the point of Garsington was for those gathered to perform their freedom from bourgeois domestic convention, which Morrell herself did through her

habitual wear of what Lyon terms her "ornate Renaissance ensembles cheaply sewn by her talented dressmaker."[15] In this way, modernity was to be enacted not solely through one's artistic production, but also through one's behavior enacted for others within this bohemian space. Mansfield suggested as much in her gently satiric 1917 poem, "Night-Scented Stock," which she sent to Morrell and in which she characterized a skinny-dipping episode at a Garsington party as such a theatricalized space:

> "Wouldn't it be lovely to swim in the lake!"
> Someone whispered to me.
> "Oh, do—do—do!" cooed somebody else
> And clasped her hands to her chin.
> "I should so love to see the white bodies
> All the white bodies jump in!"[16]

The commanding here of bodies to play for one's pleasure, coupled with the affectedness of the directive "Oh, do—do—do!" and of the verb "cooed," indicates Mansfield's awareness that all visitors at Garsington Manor were ultimately performing for one another. The awareness of Brett, Morrell, and others I have indicated above who commented that Mansfield's theatrical behavior was over-the-top suggests to us her inability to feel fully at home in such an atmosphere: that she could not lose herself to the demands of sociability, but remained simultaneously all too aware of herself as both cynical observer and performer.

This was especially so for Mansfield given that a key (and troubling) feature of what Morrell called the "romantic theatre" of Garsington was its dialogue. Lawrence's comparison of Morrell's manor home to the one in Boccaccio was in this way fitting; as Morrell herself wrote in her memoirs of her house guests during her occupancy of Garsington, "They all used to rush in on a Friday or Saturday [...] and then clamour for towels and bathing suits large and small, and run down to bathe in the old fish pond, and afterwards sit or lie on the lawn, endlessly talking, talking."[17] The Bloomsbury Group, themselves already renowned by this time for their great love of conversation and gossip, had already become favored by Lady Ottoline, and so she frequently invited its members to her manor home. By the time of Mansfield's first visit, Bloomsbury—and its conversations—had already firmly anchored its presence within Garsington.

The constant talk was often of literature, art, and politics, of course; but there was also much personal gossip among the Bloomsbury frequenters, as well as among Morrell and her other guests, several of whom were involved

or had been involved with one another romantically. As the poet Siegfried Sassoon, another frequent guest, would write to Morrell in 1920, "'From this distance I look back on [my time visiting Garsington] with something like despair—all those clever people saying ill-natured things about one another—cackle, cackle … '"[18] This cruel gossip was the aspect that made Mansfield most anxious about her initial visits to Garsington, and it was to prove a genuine obstacle for her in her relationships with both the Garsington and Bloomsbury sets. A drunken public flirtation at the Morrells' home with the artist Mark Gertler, for example, quickly became fodder for D. H. Lawrence's use in *Women in Love*, and her intense and flirtatious interpersonal relationship there with Bertrand Russell also elicited much salacious comment among both circles. One of the worst gossips at Garsington was usually Clive Bell, who loved to carry stories about Mansfield's behavior back to Virginia Woolf and other members of the Bloomsbury Group: "What wretched little bones has Clive been stealing from grubby little plates & tossing to his friends now—I wonder," Mansfield wrote acidly to Morrell in May of 1917.[19] Mansfield came to loathe Bell in particular, and also his friends John Maynard Keynes and Desmond MacCarthy for their tale-bearing about her to Virginia Woolf (whom she had met through her connections to Garsington): "[D]on't let THEM ever persuade you that I spend any of my precious time swapping hats or committing adultery—I'm far too arrogant and proud," she wrote to Woolf in August 1917.[20] At nearly the same time, referring to Bell and his gossip with his male cohort, Mansfield expostulated to Morrell, "To Hell with the Blooms Berries," suggesting yet again her frustration with the Group's gossip and her concomitant sense of social exclusion.[21]

For all that, however, it is also clear that Mansfield found important social and artistic connections at Garsington with members of the Bloomsbury Group and the estate's other habitués. Her important writerly friendship with Virginia Woolf has been much documented and analyzed, and her time spent talking about her life's experiences and collecting and cutting lavender with Lady Ottoline was later cherished by both women, despite the rockiness of their friendship over the years. Also meaningful to Mansfield were her friendships forged at the Oxfordshire estate with Strachey, Carrington, Brett, and Gertler, and with T. S. Eliot, whom she also came to know at the Morrells' estate. Despite her fears of keeping up with the intense conversation with the Garsington guests, one of the primary advantages to her time spent there was listening to and participating in the intellectual conversation and even the interpersonal gossip that so characterized the place and its visitors.[22]

This ultimately manifested itself in the extended series of experimental dialogues Mansfield produced in 1917. Mansfield had dabbled with the strict dialogue format in her fiction as early as 1911 with a piece for the satirical journal the *New Age* called "The Festival of the Coronation" on the occasion of the crowning of George V, about two working-class women trading gossip at the event. This piece takes as its subtitle "with apologies to Theocritus,"[23] and Antony Alpers has argued for the piece's debt to that Hellenistic poet's *Idyll XV,* a dialogue between two gossiping Syracusan women at the Alexandrian Adonis Festival (dating from around 250 BCE). Alpers and T. O. Beachcroft have jointly reasoned that this Theocritus idyll clearly influenced Mansfield's later experiments with dialogue form in her fiction.[24] They give no reason why, however, after only just one other (especially bitter) dialogue piece called "Stay-Laces," written in 1915 soon after the horrific death in training exercises of her brother, Mansfield suddenly came forth in late 1916 and then throughout 1917 with a series of fictional dialogues (and even at least two sizable dramatic pieces) that precede her most successful period of writing short stories from late 1917 until her death in 1923. These seem to have begun with the only partially extant playlet called *The Laurels,* performed at Garsington by Mansfield and the other guests during Christmas 1916, which was itself followed up the next year with another play called *Toots*, of which only a fragment survives and which seems to be a depiction of Mansfield's family members back in Wellington.[25] But the most important of these dialogue pieces were written as a series of experimental short stories entitled "Fragments," which represent Mansfield's return in 1917 to writing for the *New Age*: "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please," "The Black Cap," "In Confidence," "The Common Round," and "A Pic-Nic."[26]

All of these pieces show Mansfield experimenting extensively in dialogic form with both what is said and what is pointedly *not* said, and they anticipated her later short stories where such ideas were explored even further. "The Common Round," for example, was substantially re-written in Mansfield's more typical short story form as the 1919 story "Pictures," with a third-person narrator making heavy use of *style indirect libre*. The contrast between them shows how Mansfield originally left unsaid the central character Miss Ada Moss's inner feelings about working as a film extra in London. The heavy reliance on dialogue form during this wartime period is not only something Mansfield learned from Theocritus (or even from the Russian playwrights, such as Chekhov, who influenced the composition of *The Laurels*), but was also importantly given impetus by her time at Garsington and in London, particularly gossiping among the Bloomsberries and Morrell's other guests.

Gossip, as the poems of Theocritus and Virgil make clear, is often a constituent feature of the pastoral world because the withdrawal from the world of work and activity enables the possibilities not just for idle hands but also for idle talk. Although many of the Bloomsberries sequestered at Garsington Manor as conscientious objectors during the weekdays helped work the farmlands on the estate, even they, like the other guests Lady Ottoline wrote about coming from the city, looked forward to the weekends as a time for leisure and conversation. Given the closeness of their bohemian circles, they all would turn often to bickering, spreading rumors, and telling personal stories in such a bucolic setting, just as the shepherds and nymphs do in the works of the classical pastoral poets. But if gossip is thus affiliated with the pastoral mode, as the cultural critic Patricia Meyers Spacks argues,[27] so too is the former also akin to fiction because of the possibilities for conversation it allows within such an intimate world, such that private feelings and relationships can be brought forth into the public realm.

We see exactly this dynamic explored in Mansfield's May 1917 piece for the *New Age*, "In Confidence," her story which as many critics have noted most openly satirizes the Garsington set. While it may seem surprising that Mansfield could have mocked Ottoline Morrell and her guests here so openly,[28] it is important to remember that most of Garsington and Bloomsbury considered that magazine the work of what the genteelly born Leonard Woolf (who belonged to both circles) called Mansfield's entanglement with "the literary underworld, what our ancestors called Grub Street."[29] Thus he, Morrell, and the other members of the two salons were unlikely ever to stoop to read it, and Mansfield could freely hope both to experiment and to freely satirize her friends within the pages of the *New Age*, just as many of her fellow Garsington guests were doing in their own writings (as we shall see).

Mansfield's "In Confidence" is in three parts. First, it depicts "[f]ive young gentlemen … having no end of an argument" over the merits of French and British approaches to literary realism "in a big shadowy drawing room," with two women present but hardly speaking. The hostess, Marigold, "now and again […] murmurs 'How true that is' or 'Do you really think so?'" while another guest at the house, Isobel, only sits while smiling "faintly."[30] In the second section, the men have departed, and Marigold—dressed and made up as extravagantly as Morrell habitually was—walks with Isobel out into the hall and then along a road to a nearby village. During their ensuing encounter, the voluble Marigold deprecates the silliness of the young men's talk and constantly attempts to draw out the enigmatically smiling Isobel, telling her, "I burn to know and sympathise and understand. I feel so strangely that we are very alike in a way."[31] Isobel

never verbally responds, however, which Marigold, for all her yammering about sympathy, does not even notice. In the final section, while Isabel changes her shoes back at the hall, Marigold gossips about Isobel with the Fifth Gentleman, and obtusely notes that she and Isabel "have had the most 'intense' talk you can imagine."[32] The story ends with Isobel re-entering as Marigold and the Fifth Gentleman abruptly switch from their gossip about Isobel to flatter her as to the beauty of her black scarf.

The story delineates between the pompous masculine discussion of literature, which excludes the two women from meaningful involvement, and the more personal, presumably "feminized" interaction Marigold tries to have with Isobel. Isobel's sphinx-like smiling silence throughout suggests that Marigold's prattling has little more effect on her than the men's Bloomsbury-like cultural conversation. In a similar "fragment" for the *New Age* from another issue that same month, "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please," Mansfield also played with the idea of a silent female companion to a talkative "Lady," but there purely for comic effect.[33] Here, though, Isobel's silence is much more enigmatically freighted. Mansfield holds in abeyance what ultimately Isobel is thinking, as if to suggest there were more to what we are reading than the intellectual discourse of the gentlemen or the interpersonal gossip at the story's conclusion between the Fifth Gentleman and Marigold. Indeed, the story's initial male discussion of differing French and English literary approaches to realism—which Chris Mourant has termed "the French question," and which he points out was an apparent obsession among the other writers at the *New Age* during this period[34]—seems to suggest that Mansfield responds to this question, specifically through Isobel's quietness, with what the story pointedly leaves out of the equation. Neither the French nor the English realist traditions can fully account for what Isobel refuses to explain—that is, what she *still* keeps "in confidence," withholding even from Marigold: "Who will confide in me?" the latter woman vainly asks Isobel during their roadside *tête-à-tête*.[35] Pointing toward a departure from both realist traditions, this experimental dialogue stresses not simply what has been said, but also what has been left fully *un*said. As the Fifth Gentleman declares during the opening discussion about literary realism, "There are things, say the English, which are not to be talked about. *Fermez la porte, s'il vous plait*."[36]

This experiment actually *opened* doors for Mansfield, however, by pointing her away from nineteenth-century European literary realism and toward modernist experimentation. We see this through her new approaches in her short stories published later that year involving characters engaged in the bohemian world

(such as "Mr. Reginald Peacock's Day" and "A Dill Pickle") and what they both say and what they cannot. We should be reminded of Virginia Woolf's famous statement of purpose by her writer character St. John Hirst in her novel *The Voyage Out,* published just the year before (and which Mansfield had by that time read),[37] that he wants to write "a novel about Silence [...] the things people don't say."[38] This became more and more the focus of Mansfield's own fiction from 1917 onwards, work that her experiments that year with dialogic form made possible.

We should also note Mansfield was not the only visitor to Garsington at this time who seems to have been prompted to experiment with dialogic literary forms. For example, Gerri Kimber has already noted the similarity of "In Confidence" to Huxley's 1922 "novel of discussion," *Crome Yellow,* which also is set at a country manor much like the Morrells' and features characters much like Lady Ottoline and members of her set.[39] Lady Ottoline had been already hurt by Lawrence's 1916 depiction of herself and Garsington in *Women in Love,* itself very much a novel of Bohemian conversations and ideas. T. S. Eliot's only fictional prose work, "Eeldrop and Appleplex," published in two parts in back-to-back 1917 issues of the *Little Review,* is a dialogue between two male characters (apparently stand-ins for Eliot himself and Bertrand Russell) that mostly concerns itself with an ungenerous analysis of a character which at least two of Eliot's biographers have agreed is based on Katherine Mansfield herself, whom Eliot grew to dislike and criticize.[40] With "Sennacherib and Rupert Brooke" and "King Herod and the Rev. Mr Malthus," both of which he wrote during or shortly after the First World War, Lytton Strachey engaged in at least two experiments with the popular French form of the "dialogue of the dead," which had been pioneered by the ancient Roman writer Lucian.[41] As for Virginia Woolf, as Alpers has argued, one of her own experimental pieces written in 1917 that initiated her mature style, "Kew Gardens," seems to have stemmed from an epistolary interchange between Mansfield and Lady Ottoline about the idea of "a conversation *set* to flowers" which they then apparently shared with Woolf.[42]

We should observe, too, that even at this time the use of literary pieces ostensibly not meant for the stage written up as a dialogue was by no means unusual in English letters. Indeed, the format goes all the way back to early novelistic Menippean satires of the ancient Mediterranean world, such as Petronius's first-century CE *Satyrica*, and thus is very much a part of the development of European prose fiction from its beginnings. During the Romantic period in England, Thomas Love Peacock had famously established into English

letters the satiric novel of discussion in such works as *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) and *Crotchet Castle* (1831). The subgenre had gained particular popularity in the UK during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods with the publication of such works as William Hurrell Mallock's *The New Republic* in 1873, and then with such subsequent instances as Robert Hichens's *The Green Carnation* (1894), Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's *A Modern Symposium* (1905), and H. G. Wells's *Boon* (1915). Mansfield herself certainly knew something of the genre, given her adolescent love for Oscar Wilde's 1890–1 *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* wherein several of the chapters take their shape from the novel of discussion.[43] Finally, one of the most popular novels in Britain in 1917, the year of Mansfield's "In Confidence" and her other dialogic experiments, was yet another example of the subgenre, Norman Douglas's *South Wind*.

Yet unlike Mansfield's "In Confidence" (and also unlike Woolf's "Kew Gardens"), typical novels of discussion depend more upon what is said among bohemians, intellectuals, and aristocrats than what is left unsaid. The achievement of Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf alike was to bring a focus in their fiction to what is left *unspoken* during such scenes of intense intellectual conversation and idle gossip.[44] Such an experiment also led toward the division between spoken public conversational and tacit private knowledge, not just in later short stories of 1917 such as "Mr. Reginald Peacock's Day" and "A Dill Pickle," but also, as Alex Moffett has shown,[45] in Mansfield's well-known later Bloomsbury and Garsington satires, such as "Bliss" (wherein the character of Eddie, as Mansfield proudly wrote her husband, was intended to be "a fish out of the Garsington pond") and "Marriage à la Mode."[46] In these stories, as Moffett has shown, the narrative alternates dramatically between the specious chat of a set of silly bohemian types and their internal conflicts and concerns.

Janet Lyon characterizes modernist bohemian salons such as at Garsington Manor as spaces where modernist artists could free themselves from the constraints of anonymous urban life and bourgeois convention by engaging in playful sociability with one another. Although able to engage in such play, Katherine Mansfield saw herself too much of an outsider ever to separate fully from her observational criticism of such sociability and seemed to feel threatened at losing her private autonomy when subjected to the gossip of others, particularly that of the "Bloomsberries" in attendance there. Yet finally Mansfield was able to transmute this dual consciousness of both the public and private that Patricia Meyers Spacks notes as characterizing gossip to enhance the sophistication and daring of her own fiction. The Garsington and Bloomsbury

sets may not always have met her ostensible desires for happy or easy sociability, but they did in the end provide her with ways for furthering her writerly project.

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Notes

1 See Katherine Mansfield, *Journal*, ed. John Middleton Murry (1927; New York: Ecco, 1983): "To be alone all day, in a house whose every sound seems foreign to you, and to feel a terrible confusion in your body which affects you mentally, suddenly pictures for you detestable incidents, revolving personalities, which you only shake off to find recurring again as the pain seems to grow worse again" (1).

2 The subheadings in the published 1927 *Journal* were mostly Murry's own editorial additions; even so, they reflect the genuine obsession throughout his wife's diaries with her own states of solitude.

3 "Bohemian," as Janet Lyon notes, carries with it two different meanings with regards to artistic sets. In the nineteenth century, "bohemia" was most often used to denote artists living in penury in urban centers (such as those who form the subject of Henri Murger's 1851 collection of stories, *Scènes de la vie bohème,* which popularized the term). In due time, however, "bohemia" also became used for artistic types simply not living according to the styles and mores of the bourgeoisie, so that the comparatively wealthy Lady Ottoline Morrell, with her fondness for artists, writers, and scholars and her penchant for eccentric dress, can be seen as an advocate for the bohemian way of life even in her aristocratic estate in rural Oxfordshire. See Janet Lyon, "Sociability in the Metropole: Modernism's Bohemian Salons," *ELH* 76, no. 3 (2009): 698.

4 Katherine Mansfield's much-quoted description of herself being treated as "the little Colonial walking in the London garden patch—allowed to look, perhaps, but not to linger" comes from a 1919 journal entry. See CW4, 277–8.

5 For more on the idealization of *otium* within the pastoral, see Renato Poggioli, "The Oaten Flute," in *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral* Ideal (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 1–41.

6 Quoted in Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 72.

7 D. H. Lawrence to Lady Ottoline Morrell, *c.* summer 1915, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley (1932; London: William Heinemann, 1934), 239: "Murry can come in [to Garsington] … Murry has a genuine side to his nature: so has Mrs. Murry. Don't mistrust them. They are valuable, I know."

8 Lytton Strachey to Virginia Woolf, July 17, 1916, in *The Letters of Lytton Strachey*, ed. Paul Levy and Penelope Marcus (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2005), 310.

9 Leonard Woolf, *Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911 to 1918* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972): "I liked [Katherine Mansfield] but I think she disliked me. She had a masklike face and she, more than Murry, seemed to be perpetually on her guard against a world which she assumed to be hostile"(204); Lady Ottoline Morrell, "K. M.," in *Dear Lady Ginger: An Exchange of Letters between Lady Ottoline Morrell and D'Arcy Cresswell Together with Ottoline Morrell's Essay on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Helen Shaw (London: Century, 1984): "When in England I think she was conscious of having been a New Zealander, secretly proud of it and cherishing it as a lovely harbor of refuge for her thoughts and imagination to play in, but at the same time it perhaps prevented her from mixing with ease and friendliness amongst us here, and to cover her sensitiveness and her antagonism to people who were not her kin, she hid her real self behind a face that was as expressionless as a finely moulded mask" (118).

10 Quoted in Jeffrey Meyers, *Katherine Mansfield: A Darker View* (1978; New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 133.

11 Morrell, "K.M.," 120–1.

12 For example, in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell, Aldous Huxley writes of an evening out in London spent with Mansfield: "Katherine was delightful and amusing, a little less acting a part than usual." See Aldous Huxley to Lady Ottoline Morrell, May 19, 1917, in *The Selected Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. James Sexton (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007), 51.

13 Lady Ottoline Morrell, *Ottoline at Garsington: Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell 1915–1918*, ed. Robert Gathorne-Hardy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 256.

14 Lyon, "Sociability in the Metropole," 690. My emphasis.

15 Ibid., 694. Lyon adds, "Such costumes [as Lady Ottoline Morrell's], many of them referencing a kind of premodern, or perhaps countermodern, habitus, helped to link bohemian subculture to a whole set of anti-bourgeois postures, including, most obviously, the postures of unassimilated and artistic freedom" (694).

16 Katherine Mansfield, "Night-Scented Stock," in CW3, 110–11.

17 Morrell, *Ottoline at Garsington*, 49.

18 Siegfried Sassoon to Ottoline Morrell, April 6, 1920. Quoted in Bill Goldstein, *The World Broke in Two: Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, and the Year That Changed Literature* (New York: Henry Holt, 2017), 23.

19 *Letters* 1, 308.

20 *Letters* 1, 326. The specification that “THEM” refers to Bell, Keynes, and MacCarthy comes from the volume’s editors.

21 *Letters* 1, 326.

22 Sybille Bedford notes in her biography of Aldous Huxley, “If the atmosphere of the house-parties [Lady Ottoline Morrell staged at Garsington] was light-hearted, it was above all overwhelmingly sophisticated, always exacting, sometimes heartless. If Katherine Mansfield was scared of the Bloomsberries, it does not mean that she did not have her own pretensions” (*Aldous Huxley,* 79).

23 Katherine Mansfield, “The Festival of the Coronation,” in CW2, 221–4.

24 See T. O. Beachcroft, “Katherine Mansfield’s Encounter with Theocritus,” *English* 23, no. 115 (1974): 13–19, and Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (1980; New York: Penguin, 1982), 125–6. Alpers posits that Theocritus’s *Idyll 15* might well have been suggested as a model by other editorial staff members at the *New Age*, “probably [A. R.] Orage” (125). Even so, by 1914 Mansfield wrote to Murry she had been reading more of the Hellenistic poet independently. See *Letters* 1, 134.

25 This may have been the same play Mansfield was apparently writing in April of 1917 entitled “A Ship in the Harbour.” See Mansfield to Lady Ottoline Morrell, April 3, 1917, and also April 24, 1917 (*Letters* 1, 304–6).

26 M. C. Carpentier has also questioned why there should be such a long gap between the 1911 “The Festival of the Coronation” and these 1917 experimental pieces (which Carpentier sees, as I do, as crucial to Mansfield’s literary development). Carpentier ascribes the impetus for the 1917 writings to Constance Garnett’s English translation of Dostoevsky’s satirically inflected novels into English during the war years. See M. C. Carpentier, “Katherine Mansfield’s Satiric Method from *In a German Pension* to ‘Je ne parle pas français,’” *Genre* 45, no. 2 (2012): 299–327. The experimental monologue “Late at Night” also stems from this period of the dialogues and should also be seen as a variant form among them, giving voice to what a young woman thinks to herself when in complete solitude.

27 See Patricia Meyers Spacks, *Gossip* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 1–23.

28 Gerri Kimber notes of the open satire of “In Confidence,” “Did no one at Garsington read the *New Age*? Perhaps not.” See Kimber, “Katherine Mansfield and Aldous Huxley: A Blighted Friendship,” in *Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, ed. Todd Martin (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 59.

29 Leonard Woolf, *Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911 to 1918* (1963; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 203.

30 Katherine Mansfield, “In Confidence,” in CW2, 31. It seems Mansfield had actually first assigned numbers to her five gentlemen according to specific male members of the Garsington set since the characters do not speak in numbered sequential order (as would usually be the case in such a dialogue format), but instead fairly

randomly: in the story, first the 4th Gentleman speaks, then the 2nd, then the 1st, 5th, and then the 3rd.

31 Ibid., 34.

32 Ibid., 35.

33 Katherine Mansfield, "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please," in CW2, 22–4.

34 For more on the terms and stakes of this debate, see Chris Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 76–91.

35 Mansfield, "In Confidence," 34.

36 Ibid., 32.

37 See Alpers, *Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 210.

38 Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (1915; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 249.

39 Kimber, "Katherine Mansfield and Aldous Huxley," 59.

40 See Eliot, "Eeldrop and Appleplex," in *The Little Review Anthology*, ed. Margaret Anderson (New York: Hermitage House, 1953), 102–9; Lyndall Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (1998; New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 106; James E. Miller, *T. S. Eliot: The Making of an American Poet* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 283–90.

41 See Lytton Strachey, "Sennacherib and Rupert Brooke" and "King Herod and the Rev. Mr Malthus," in *The Really Interesting Question and Other Papers*, ed. Paul Levy (1972; New York: Capricorn, 1974), 40–4; 107–10.

42 Alpers, *Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 249–52; see Katherine Mansfield to Lady Ottoline Morrell, August 15, 1917 (*Letters* 1, 325).

43 Mansfield also would have been familiar with Wilde's mock-Socratic dialogues such as "The Decay of Lying—An Observation" (1889) and "The Critic as Artist" (1891), which may well have inspired her experiments with dialogic form during this period. For more on Mansfield's debts to Wilde, see Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 19–35.

44 We certainly see the division between spoken conversation and private sensibility carried out also within Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and her contemporaneous short stories about Clarissa Dalloway's party (later collected in 1975 as *Mrs. Dalloway's Party*). Woolf referred to *Mrs. Dalloway* to Lady Ottoline Morrell as "my Garsington novel," but other than the focus on an aristocratically born hostess married to an MP, *Mrs. Dalloway* has otherwise ostensibly little to do with Garsington. See Virginia Woolf to Lady Ottoline Morrell, August 10, 1922, in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols., ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975–80), 2:543.

45 See Alex Moffett, "Performances of Knowledge in Mansfield's Bloomsbury Satires," in *Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, 201–34. In this essay, Moffett

profitably compares the division between "untrue Bloomsbury gossip" and "a truer, private source of knowledge" that Mansfield possessed in her relationship with Virginia Woolf, which he argues is demonstrated in what he terms the "Bloomsbury satires" of "A Dill Pickle," "Bliss," and "Marriage a la Mode."

46 *Letters* 2, 98. Eddie in "Bliss," with his fey affect and habit of strongly emphasizing certain words in spoken conversation, is almost certainly a satiric portrait of Aldous Huxley; the married couple of William and Isabel, besieged by Isabel's bohemian houseguests in the 1921 "Marriage à la Mode," seem to be an imagined depiction of the Morrells.

8

Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf

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> *What I admire in you so much is your transparent quality—my stuff gets muddy […] I'm always chopping and changing from one level to another. I think what I'm at is to change the consciousness and so to break up the awful stodge. Does this convey anything to you? And you seem to me to go on so straightly and directly […] I feel as if I didn't want just all realism anymore—only thoughts and feelings*—no cups and tables.[1]

Writing, Women, and Splintered Ways of "Thinking in Common"

If there is one thing that we might identify as "common" to the two writers who are the subject of this essay, it is their embrace of the transgressive and the unconventional, in life as in art. Beginning an essay on such iconoclast women writers as Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf with something as innocuous as "cups and tables" might then seem counterintuitive. However, it is this leitmotif that I am bringing "to the table," for even in such domestic concerns the two writers are combatively complementary. Woolf, with rare luminosity, saw the big in the small while Mansfield, with her unerring ironic vision, would never let us lose sight of the small in the big.

Mansfield was a "colonial" from distant New Zealand. In Europe, she occupied the outer edges of metropolitan intellectual structures, and Bloomsbury was certainly one such vanguard formation. It is in these Bloomsbury circles that Mansfield and Woolf met. The relationship between them—now rivalrous and sniping, now intense and stimulating—unfolded against the backdrop of these modernist formations. Their relationship fluctuated between mutual admiration and an acute, even prickly, sense of difference. Woolf sensed a vitality in

Mansfield's art, although in her letters to Vanessa Bell and Vita Sackville-West, she would record her suspicion for the "vulgar" in the colonial interloper. Their relationship suggests an interplay between perception of the other and their developing self-perception as writers. For example, counterbalanced against Woolf's almost sensory reactiveness to the "cheapness" of her contemporary from the colonial backwaters is her admission, indeed agonizing, to Sackville-West in a letter of 1927, of "the lack of jolly vulgarity" in her own work.[2] Mansfield, on her side, would see Woolf as a beneficiary of the privilege accruing to one relatively more entrenched in the artistic hubs of the times. For instance, when writing to Woolf soon after her story "Prelude" (1917) was published by Woolf's Hogarth Press, Mansfield portrays Woolf as masterfully surveying the artistic waters, waiting to see "what the *natives* have to bring aboard."[3] The comment is inscribed with Mansfield's awareness of the "lowbrow" that her metropolitan peers sometimes "sniffily" ascribed to her, but which as I will argue, Mansfield strategically used to vivify her writing, as almost a deliberate counterpoint to the more theorized poise of Woolf.

In so short a space, this preamble can at best be a way of leading into the crux of the argument, that the relationship was a complex balance of commonalty—"how rare it is to find some one with the same passion for writing that you have,"[4] Mansfield excitedly writes in one of her earliest letters to Woolf—and a combativeness of artistic choices and routes. Their interaction, even their sparring, was geared toward establishing different ways of "thinking in common."[5] In my subsequent tracing of how the two writers commonly but divergently negotiated the burning "woman question" of their time, Rita Felski's reminder of the authorial lens possibly being "bottom up rather than top down" is the axis along which my argument will unfold.[6]

The combativeness gives us two different ways of entering the gendered debates of the time. This chapter focuses on how the distinct geo-personal spaces occupied by these writers shaped their response to the very significant juncture in women's histories that they were negotiating. The argument will unfold by taking a step back before it takes a step forward. It will re-enter the contested space of the domestic—those "cups and tables"—before evoking the dramatic transformations of modernity. The two writers were writing at a particularly important moment of gendered transition. The period of modernist fiction coincided with major shifts and ruptures in the area of gender. We know it as a period when the challenge to a gendered public-private divide was at its most intense. The heterodoxies and upheavals of the time necessitated a break from the domestic as a step forward for women. In the compelling narrative

of women laying a claim to public spaces in the early decades of the twentieth century, it might seem counter-intuitive to be "homing" back on the domestic. But the field of women's studies has increasingly become appreciative of the varying temporalities and materialities that govern women's lives, guided by the work of feminist theorists such as Rita Felski and Rosi Braidotti.[7] These recent contestations of any homogenized understanding of women's studies or women's thought provide a framework for how the continuities and discontinuities I suggest between the two writers expand the conversation surrounding women's lives in early twentieth-century Europe. A decided commonalty between the two writers was that, writing against this urgent backdrop of a gendered transformation vis-à-vis the public-private divide, they do equally mine the domestic. Compelling as the moment of transformation as women began to lay a claim to public space was, the two writers frequently turn to a narrativization of the domestic.

To that extent, the work of the two contemporaries, although animated by an equally intense concern with inserting women into the larger historical narrative, also registers a difference of emphases. That difference can be attributed to their differing positionalities. Woolf would record how her share was foreshortened in a patriarchal culture; however, with Leslie Stephen, the famous Victorian man of letters as her father, she belonged to the inner circles of the intellectual establishment of the time. Woolf describes the atmosphere in which she grew up in these terms: "Who was I then? […] born into a large connection, born not of rich parents, but of well-to-do parents, born into a very communicative, literate, letter writing, visiting, articulate, late nineteenth century world."[8] A similar aura of moneyed privilege surrounded Mansfield in her growing up years, but the crucial distinction lay in the "vulgarity" of her connections. Mansfield came to England from far away New Zealand. Admittedly, she came from a privileged albeit non-intellectual background, for her father was a successful and affluent banker; however, as opposed to Woolf's position in the artistic ferment of the time, Mansfield's foray into writing was a departure from the provincial mores of her family. Using emphatic language against the oppressive narrowness of her upbringing, she speaks of her father as a "constant offense" to her sensibility.[9] Angela Smith rightly finds a similarity in their being daughters of domineering fathers with strongly developed notions of bourgeois respectability, but in many ways, their experiences could not have been more different.[10] While Woolf and her siblings grew to be, especially in the move to Gordon Square, habitués of the intellectual world of their time, Mansfield inhabited the edges of this world. Her relationship to it remained one of simultaneous fascination and rejection.

Using these differences of experience as a backdrop, I will explore how the domestic is mediated by the two writers; then, I will turn to women's forays into public space through the figure of the "traveling woman." Yet in keeping an eye out for the fine but appreciable dissimilarities in the way they chart those transformations, the chapter resists the perils of de-contextualization that placing them under a "common" rubric might involve.

The Unruly Domestic: "Un-Domesticating" the Domestic

I couldn't possibly marry a man I laughed at.[11]

My sub-heading is a reference to what, as Rachel Bowlby points out in her essay entitled "Domestication," has come to be attributed conceptually to "domestication"—tameness and a lame surrender.[12] Historically, the rejection of the domestic was a reaction to the ideology of the separate spheres, but in many ways the reversal reified that ideology, with the home becoming the absolute "other" to the rich and significant associated with the outside. When Bowlby points to how this theorization of home "becomes a stagnantly artificial prison or cage for a woman whose fulfilment can only be 'outside,'" her formulation evokes the gender upheaval that marked this definitive moment, but it likewise hints at the perpetuation of such a fixed lens for viewing the domestic.[13] Home came to function as a crossing from identity to non-entity, from non-conformism to abject submission. This was understandable at a historical moment where the domestic had to be dethroned for a wider sphere to be explored by women. In a post-feminist era, we may even be looking at a nostalgic re-enshrining of the domestic.[14] Although this is ground that needs to be treaded carefully—certainly if one is tackling a period so prominently attached to a swerve away from the domestic as defining women's emancipation—difference of treatment coming from women writers from within that era surely contributes to a larger contemporary debate. There are voices urging a more fluid understanding of the space of the domestic. I would contend that the work of Woolf and Mansfield was already attuned to that expanded understanding. Moving away from binaristic thinking, their work suggests that the domestic, too, can be the site of the oppositional. As an intervention into a univocal understanding of the domestic, the engagement here is primarily with the *writing* of the domestic and the work of Woolf and Mansfield as a contestation of an inferiorizing of the domestic as subject matter.

Circling back to the cups and tables, these serve as a metaphor frequently (and famously) used by Woolf to indicate the deadening conventionalism of her male predecessors such as Arnold Bennett. In her essays, Woolf urges that literature "cut adrift of the eternal tea-table."[15] The sloughing off of the tea table, the shattering of the holy grail of domesticity, is declared essential to a different order of life and art. But as this section foregrounds, Woolf did vitally draw on the space of the domestic, even if in a more expansive way. Mansfield's fiction, of course, abounds in cups and tables. Everydayness inheres in Mansfield's inscription of the changing parameters of women's lives. The stories gesture equally as Woolf's toward a transformative moment in women's histories, though more resolutely through the mundane and material than Woolf.

In the Introduction to *The Domestic Space Reader*, Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei probe the etymology of the Latin root "domus" and point out significant variants. If on the one hand it signifies a "belonging" to the home, its alternate derivative is to "dominate." As they point out, "In one French usage, 'domestiquer' means quite simply the subjugation of a tribe to a colonizing power."[16] This immediately wrenches the domestic out of a tapestry of benign stability to being a volatile cauldron of power politics. It is the sharp vision that Mansfield and Woolf bring to bear upon this aspect of the domestic that interests me. There is an unsettledness that incipiently "resides" in these models of settlement, and Mansfield homes in on this with a penetrating eye. As Briganti and Mezei stress in their conceptualization of the domestic, "The home can also provide a fertile site for the subversion of and resistance to convention, stereotype and dogma, whether sexual or ideological."[17]

At a time when women writers were writing to claim public space for women, that iconoclasm meant a rupture from the traditional image of the home-bound woman. The space of the home became the carrier of all that was tradition-bound and confining. But two points of departure can be noted here—one, that we seem to have been bequeathed a framework where the domestic is still viewed as the site of convention and hence shorn of subversive potential. And second, as noted above, that some contemporaneous women writers were also locating the transgressive, or discovering the anti-domestic, within the domestic.

By way of example, let me briefly turn to a debate that broke out in 2005 in the UK over the category of the domestic in women's literatures; it is particularly relevant since it involved a prominent Mansfield aficionado, Ali Smith. The editors of a collection entitled *13: New Writing* published in that year, Toby Litt and Ali Smith, stated in the Introduction that "'On the whole, the submissions

from women were disappointingly domestic.'"[18] An immediate response followed from fellow critics and writers. The editors were seen as being dismissive of domestic subjects. Belying Smith's comment on the domestic in this instance, I read her discussions of Mansfield as in fact quite valuable in recognizing the unruliness and insubordination that can emerge from domestic spaces. When Smith speaks of how Mansfield's yearning for love and connectedness never comes without their "darker twin," her "waspish" and wayward self, her comment illuminates the searing skepticism that Mansfield brings to bear on the domestic.[19] Congregations around "cups and tables" more often than not connote the tenuousness of these structures. This implies something other than the safety of the domestic, thus emphasizing that writers dealing with domestic spaces may in fact be risking breaking the silence around the "unutterable."

The New Woman figure had imprinted itself on the national imaginary from the final decades of the nineteenth century.[20] Placing two prominent women writers of the early twentieth century in relation to this context, we need to reckon with how each seems to choose the domestic as a recurrent setting in her fiction. Drawing an important distinction between Mansfield and Woolf, Sue Roe describes Mansfield as "a realist, not a modernist, a performer rather than an aesthete."[21] She also suggests that in Woolf, with her "seer" like qualities, the reader might not always be an accomplice, but Mansfield seems to draw us into an ironic partnership.[22] This frame serves as a pertinent one to examine the workings of gender in the two writers. Woolf's domestic moments carry the charge of her ideas. They are integrated into her larger vision. If one thinks of *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), the domestic spaces of Clarissa's attic and her salons function as the locus of Woolf's gendered vision. It is in these assemblies, carefully put together and jealously guarded from patriarchal "violation" by Clarissa, that the domestic is given a creative energy by the writer. The region of the "cups and tables" is renegotiated in Clarissa's parties, as these domestic rituals shift from being mundane events to exemplifying a female aesthetics of connection and renewal. For all of Woolf's disavowal of "cups and tables," certain moments within the habitat—mostly centered around the "table"—become a way of recovering the enduring from the transient, or togetherness from separateness. In *To the Lighthouse* (1927), in that important dinner scene, Mrs. Ramsay, in an almost direct echo of Clarissa Dalloway, begins with searching for that elusive cohesiveness: "There was no beauty anywhere […] Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her."[23] As the scene progresses, her efforts are seen as counteracting the divisive force of the masculine fabric: "She let it uphold her

and sustain her, this admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric."[24] In a novel which registers the impact of war, the imagery is significant—it suggests both a clamping down ("iron girders") and a slicing and dividing (lines crossing this way and that). Through Lily Briscoe's eyes, the novel questions the limitations of the "clucking domesticities" in which figures such as Mrs. Ramsay are encased.[25] And yet Woolf's complex vision allows for the counter-narrative to what Woolf always saw as the linear and compartmentalizing forces of patriarchy that can be discovered in everyday, domestic spaces. Importantly, that recognition comes from Lily Briscoe herself after Mrs. Ramsay's death: "There were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one [...] Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together [...] Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent."[26] In the same passage, Lily traces a parallel between her own aspiring to the "permanent" through art and the "crystal of intensity" mined by Mrs. Ramsay from the domestic.[27] Considering that Mrs. Ramsay's domesticity is treated ambivalently, especially through the eyes of Lily herself through most of the text, this is clearly an invested moment in the novel where the linearity of the masculine vision is exposed as limited when juxtaposed against the integrative domestic "art" of Mrs. Ramsay.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the attic becomes a place ideologically inscribed with ideas that lie at the heart of Woolf's vision: female bonds, lesbian love, alternate sexuality, and the contours of the interior consciousness, especially women's. The space of the attic is where Clarissa dwells on her lost intimacy with Sally Seton. This is another way in which women's transgressive desires are infused into the domestic. But what has been somehow overlooked is that the attic is also the place where the otherwise solemn, brooding Clarissa laughs at the foibles of patriarchy. As Richard Dalloway, the adjudicator of normalcy, "slips" momentarily from that pedestal, he is at the receiving end of Clarissa's laughter: "Lying awake, the floor creaked [...] and if she raised her head she could just hear the click of the handle released as gently as possible by Richard, who slipped upstairs in his socks and then, as often as not, dropped his hot-water bottle and swore! How she laughed!"[28]

Laughter as undoing the solemnity of the patriarchal world is used even more wickedly by Mansfield, becoming almost a running strain through her domestic stories. In Mansfield's work, the sanctity of the domestic is dislodged with a particular wryness. The epigraph from "Mr. and Mrs. Dove" (1921)—"I couldn't possibly marry a man I laughed at"—is an intimation of a sound I hear in almost all of Mansfield's stories on the patriarchal-domestic, decidedly

ruffling the "placid" surface of the homely. In stories such as "New Dresses" (1912), masculine authority is undermined from below as the blustering Henry is quietly mocked by the women of the family. Claiming to have made a "colossal joke" with his drinking companions, his complete failure to recall it seems to draw female character and writer together in an ironic wink at his drunkenness *and* his bragging.[29] The relish in Mansfield's writing at women's capacity to see through masculine self-congratulation is quite evident. Laughter seems to be a recurrent trope. In both "New Dresses" and "Mr. and Mrs. Dove," the men claim "wit" and the claim is wryly falsified. And Mansfield pits that against the laughter of women—a giggle that breaks out almost in spite of itself. In "Mr. and Mrs. Dove," as the matrimonial contract is about to be secured, there is an eruption of laughter from the female protagonist, already suggesting how the institution of marriage is being inspected by female skepticism. Unshackling women from the domestic is concomitant in the two writers to complicating our understanding of the domestic, transforming it to a site rife with undercurrents. The irreverent skepticism of women placed within domestic structures permeates the fiction of the two writers, in the muted laughter of Clarissa or in Mrs. Ramsay's apprehension of the "fatal sterility of the male,"[30] suggestive of a challenge to "seriousness" and "univocity" as Luce Irigaray proposes in her thoughts on women's laughter.[31] But in their depiction of the domestic, it may be said that while Woolf's work leans more toward a domestic sublime, Mansfield's fiction remains particularly attuned to what I term the domestic underground, that nether world of unruliness.

That is what rings out in women's laughter in Mansfield's work. There is in the laughter in Mansfield's stories a sound of rupture, of breakage, achieved or impending. If there is a story that in fact summons the weight of patriarchal authority in its very title, it would have to be "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1920). The father's grim, humorless persona governs the story. And yet, in a story where sounds are hushed and muted, almost as if Mansfield is evoking the silenced lives of women caught in patriarchal binds, there is a sound that erupts—Josephine's giggle. This could be read and thereby dismissed as a symptom of nervous hysteria. But when read in the context of Constantia's contemplation of the potential reprisals that might ensue if their father's top-hat is given away to the porter—"The giggle mounted, mounted; she clenched her hands; she fought it down; she frowned fiercely at the dark and said 'Remember' terribly sternly"—it is clear that Mansfield sees the "giggle" as transgressive, the bluster of patriarchal strictures placed under the deconstructive potential of women's laughter.[32]

The twitter, the giggle, the full-blown chuckle, the "hysterical" whoop—to recall the uncontainable, decidedly un-domestic, radiance that Bertha Young feels at the thought of Pearl Fulton—all stretch and pull at the familial web.[33] In "At the Bay" (1921), the disruptions that spill out against the forces of acquiescence operating within the patriarchal domestic emanate from a polyphony of voices. "At the Bay" juxtaposes the domestic underground that seethes in the middle-class Burnell household with the dis-assemblage of the traditional domestic that is voiced by characters lower down in the social hierarchy. The clank of the "cups and tables" forms a part of that rising crescendo as the tea table is the locus of breakage, or at least of the scrutiny to which accepted pieties are subjected. The story begins with the Burnell family congregated around the kitchen table and even the rather dense Stanley Burnell is defeated by the vagueness of his wife, which he reads as perplexingly "unreal." As Stanley gets ready to leave home, he significantly looks around for his "stick" and is perplexed by the odd otherness of his wife: "'Stick, dear? What stick?' Linda's vagueness on these occasions could not be real, Stanley decided."[34] Beryl's laughter as he leaves seems another indication of all that is uncontainable by, or perhaps even a response to, masculine "bluster," a word used in the story.[35]

The story builds up to a crescendo of "recklessness" passing like "infection" from one woman to another.[36] The domestic underground in Mansfield is where craftiness and insubordination brew, and the lower-class women characters contribute as much to the rupturing of the domestic "haven." The encounter between Alice, the servant girl at the Burnell household, and Mrs. Stubbs, who owns a shop selling knick-knacks, is a case in point. Mansfield hands the most irreverent upending of a solemn patriarchy to Mrs. Stubbs. As Alice and Mrs. Stubbs congregate over tea, Mrs. Stubbs looks back at her husband's quest for "bigness," with all its manifest phallic implications. In an exchange delightful for its candidness, Mrs. Stubbs reveals to Alice, sitting befittingly under an enlarged portrait of her husband: "Give me size. That was what my poor dear husband was always saying. He couldn't stand anything small. Gave him the creeps."[37] In his work on household objects, Baudrillard reminds us that the family portrait had a self-legitimizing function within the household.[38] Into that entire domestic tableaux—the tea, the family portraits—enters Mrs. Stubbs's almost exultant chuckle, "'All the same, my dear,' she said surprisingly, 'freedom's best!' Her soft, fat chuckle sounded like a purr. 'Freedom's best,' said Mrs. Stubbs again."[39] Mansfield's "domestic" fiction reminds us that a breaching of taboos can happen in everyday spaces. Mansfield's married women protagonists are frequent visitors of what I term the "marital wilderness"—as they wander skeptically, wickedly, or

despairingly on the outer edges of its illusorily harmonious façade, they are aptly placed to deconstruct its myths.

The category of the "domestic" has and continues to be eagerly contested terrain in women's thought and women's writing. The initial narrative of feminism understandably identified the domestic as the space of women's oppression. Undoing the ideology of "separate spheres" meant that the public had to be claimed and the domestic to be rejected. In recent years, this implicit devaluing of the domestic has made women thinkers uncomfortable. As feminist analysis becomes increasingly skeptical of master-narratives, it argues that the rejection of the domestic discounts differences of positionality among women. As Dana Heller argues, "By seeming to satisfy Western feminism's wish to legitimate and unify its own purposes by naming a singular source of women's social and economic oppression, the private/public separation has fueled the construction of a totalizing narrative, the result of which has been the erasure of differences within and among women."[40] Thus, one has to negotiate one's way between a de-sanctification of the domestic and how the domestic itself can be a space from where heresy and skepticism might emanate. My argument is not to nostalgically recuperate the domestic, but to argue that domestic subjects in women's fiction, on the evidence of these two writers, can be a valid, even visceral, site of critique and transgressiveness.

To "Clasp the Billowy Universe"[41]

> It's the man's view that's represented, you see. Think of a railway train: fifteen carriages for men who want to smoke. Doesn't it make your blood boil? If I were a woman I'd blow some one's brains out. Don't you laugh at us a great deal? Don't you think it all a great humbug?[42]

From an attempted unharnessing of the "domestic" from its traditional accoutrements, this section crosses the threshold and steps into the "unhomely" quite literally. The above epigraph from Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915) is from one of the many conversations about English patriarchy—although the novel's action takes place in South America—between the female protagonist, Rachel Vinrace, and her love interest, Terence Hewet. In an impassioned admission of how the world is tilted toward men, the epigraph reveals how Hewet fumes. Of course, this brings us back to women's laughter as crucially connected to women's discontent, explored in the last section. But this reference also helps shift focus to public space, more specifically to the question of travel. In their

concern with writing women into the changing urban landscape, Woolf and Mansfield offer many vignettes of the woman traveler. But again with fine but noticeable differences. In Mansfield's case, there is a fiercer focus on the imperiled, unchaperoned woman traveler, while the brief transgressive forays of Woolf's women characters suggest a sense of a secure network behind them. With that mesh of security forming the backdrop, Woolf can explore the enabling aspects and the aesthetics of travel. However, Mansfield's nomadism, not always voluntary, exacerbated her feeling of adriftness, so spatial incursions on the part of women are more fraught in her work. It has often been pointed out that Woolf was an inveterate walker of the city, but we are also reminded that she was one of the most stay-at-home writers among the modernists. Mansfield's colonial origins, on the other hand, ensured travel not only to the "mother-country" in the first part of her life, but her entire life once she came to Europe was one of movement and impermanence. Woolf's engagement with travel was of select forays into the unknown while Mansfield knew "unhomeliness" at a more intimate level. In exploring the "excursionary" spirit of modernism, especially as related to the narrative of women's mobility, Joyce E. Kelly points out that the Beauchamps' privileged financial position placed Mansfield in a structure where "the pleasures of travel were indulged."[43] But as we read a story such as "The Little Governess" (1915), the adventurism of travel inter-negotiates with its hard, unromantic realities. The nomadism of Mansfield's later personal life acquainted her with the underside to the travel narrative, and she "walks" that fine line between expansion and enclosure in portraying women's mobility. Frances Bartkowski reminds us that

> Travel is movement […] by those who choose to move and those who are moved by forces not under their control. Travel […] could open up the possibility of removing the term from the class-bound associations with exploitation and pleasure-seeking, and remind us that those exploited are often forced into movement as an integral part of their exploitation.[44]

In Mansfield's oeuvre, that understanding of travel as complexly poised at the borderlines of expansion and entrapment is reflected in stories such as "The Little Governess." In my discussion of women's mobility as delineated by the two writers, the axes of class that Bartkowski suggests modulate the narrative.

The figure of the traveling woman is central to the depiction of the changing landscape of women's lives in the early twentieth century. Travel for early twentieth-century women, real and fictional, is a refusal to "inhabit" given categories. The flux of modern existence as conjoining with the challenge to

entrenched gender paradigms is "commonly" found in the two writers. However, again it is the discontinuities that contribute to a wider understanding of the subject. Here, too, we might turn to Frances Bartkowski's formulations as a useful entry point. Speaking of the "traveler's sublime," Bartkowski distinguishes between travel as suggesting an "affirmative sense of groundlessness" and the "other/underside" of the narrative of mobility—which she explains as "that moment when the headiness of motion turns into fear, into disavowal."[45]

There is an interest in the philosophical resonances of travel in Woolf. This can also be placed against Leonard Woolf's comments on how Woolf's passion for traveling translated into "storing" "those sights and sounds, echoes and visions, which months afterwards would become food for her imagination and art."[46] That leisureliness, that intellectual sifting—to keep class factors in mind—is absent from Mansfield's discussions of travel. With her edgy placement vis-à-vis the imperial metropoles of Europe, her protagonists' experience of travel is often perilous.

When Clarissa's daughter, Elizabeth Dalloway, seized by the desire to be "a pioneer, a stray," boards the omnibus in *Mrs. Dallowa*y, it is with a self-conscious reveling in the thrill of transgression, in both the choice of transport and of the areas she visits.[47] Interestingly, the vocabulary involves a reference to the "piratical," but rather than indicating danger, this is now transferred to denote the woman's spirit of adventure: "Suddenly Elizabeth stepped forward and most competently boarded the omnibus […] The impetuous creature—a pirate—started forward, sprang away; she had to hold the rail to steady herself, for a pirate it was, reckless […] She was delighted to be free. The fresh air was so delicious."[48] Clearly, this is Bartkowski's evocation of "exhilaration" at cutting loose from familiar co-ordinates. Elizabeth's adventure is a contrast to her cocooned, bourgeois environment. What she sees as a thrill arising from novelty would in the eyes of many fellow woman commuters be a necessary "dislocation," a transportation impelled by everyday concerns such as earning one's living. Elizabeth's forays in fact recall her mother's in the text, traveling atop an omnibus with Peter Walsh in her younger days: "Clarissa once, going atop an omnibus […] all aquiver […] spotting queer little scenes, names, people from the top of a bus, for they used to explore London in those days and bring back bags full of treasure from the Caledonian market."[49] The "treasures" are clearly more than material, as travel here is linked to a curating of novelties and oddities.

A novel where Woolf contends with women traveling to a far-away colonial locale is *The Voyage Out*. Leonard Woolf's reference to how travel feeds into

Woolf's artistic vision is a useful filter to study *The Voyage Out*. It is in the colony that the protagonist, Rachel Vinrace, finds herself with "a room of her own." The colonial locale in many ways becomes the backdrop to the stirring of the nascent potentialities in Rachel.[50] The repeated reference to her aunts and the fact that for much of the South American sojourn she is away from the shadow of her father underline liberation from a moribund patriarchy, a setting free from "sheltered gardens and the household gossip of her aunts."[51] In this delineation of the voyage, other spaces and rooms—modernist, feminist, Bloomsburian—superimpose themselves upon the space under consideration.[52]

In all my examples from Woolf, the desire to discover a more unfettered self on the part of women predominates. It is also a more modernist rendering of travel that emerges in Woolf, an intersection of the outbound and the in-turned, as the colonial locale catalyzes an inward crisis in Rachel Vinrace. In this rendering of the travel motif, it is the epistemological that takes precedence. With her personal understanding of dislocation, Mansfield addresses more relentlessly the material indices of travel for women. Hunger for new experiences is intermixed with the awareness of the constraints related to the traveling mode. In 1922, Mansfield wrote in her diary: "Travelling is terrible. All is so sordid and the train shatters one. Tunnels are hell. I am frightened of travelling."[53] Mansfield seems to be touching upon an important paradox here: travel for women as suspended between an opening out and an enclosure, between change and sameness. "The Little Governess" features a hesitant, novice traveler whose admixture of trepidation and excitement sets the stage for the story. The acute consciousness of traveling in the night rather than in the daytime is repeatedly voiced and seems to underline a penetration into the unknown. She has been forewarned by the lady at the Governess Bureau of the traps that may waylay an unaccompanied woman, and she reminds herself of the importance of remaining within the prescribed script. Thus, transgression is not on her mind. As she begins the first part of her journey aboard a steamer, as an aspiring "woman of the world" she is given a lesson on how to watch out for herself. Instructed to aim for the "Ladies Only" cabin on the boat, the story portrays that space through the young woman's eyes as domesticated and cozy, with pink-sprigged couches and the stewardess knitting. With a satisfied sigh at this benign balance between the homely and the foreign, the little governess declares: "I like travelling very much."[54] But as she emerges from the security of the cabin, ready to board the train that will take her to her destination, she is confronted by a mass of humanity. Trying to negotiate her way through that swarm, she suddenly finds herself divested of her luggage. She experiences the

porter's seizing of her dress basket as something of a violation of privacy and tries to assert her right to chart her own course. She also defiantly gives four sous when he clearly expects a franc, and it is to spite her that he tears off the Ladies Only sticker, hence impacting the subsequent course of her journey and the story.

Mansfield writes of a woman's quest for identity and independence taking place in a space over-inscribed with patriarchal attitudes. With her own first-hand experience of the sneer that the figure of the unchaperoned woman invites, Mansfield portrays non-judgmentally the young woman's desire to domesticate her adventure, to blunt its rough, seedy edges. This perhaps allows us to understand the protagonist's eagerness to cast the old man in the role of grandfather as part of a pattern. The young woman's continuing need to co-opt the alien vectors of her outward foray into a comforting narrative makes it hard for her to imagine the old man as anything other than a protector. She reassures herself about his "grandfatherliness" by turning to laid-down scripts—he seems to her as kind as "one out of a book," with the writer of course implying the idea of "mis-reading."[55] The little governess weaves her way through foreignness by measuring the experiential against the textual. When she learns he has a title, she reads it as incontrovertible evidence of his probity. That the class element plays a role in her assessment is an implication decidedly present.

Thus, Mansfield's travel tales might not fit into the high-octane narrative of women's mobility, but do address, along with Woolf, an historically transitional moment of female self-fashioning and the alternately liberating and precarious journey. It certainly contributes to the deepening conversation about the cultural constructs of gender as related to travel. The narrative of increased mobility was integral to the changing graph of women's lives in the period in which Woolf and Mansfield were writing. The canvas of their fiction, with the focus on rail travel and with the location being frequently cafes, hotels, and teashops, pulsates with those changes. But this chapter has also suggested the writers' interest in the domestic as integral to their negotiation of the urgent gender question of their time. Even as they delineate women's claim to the outside, they also discover the unhomely on the inside. At a moment in the discipline of women's studies when "thinking in common" is being increasingly weighed against appreciation of differences beyond the common fact of gender, this chapter has positioned the writings of Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf in a combative complementarity with each other, holding that the combined bequest is the richer for those points of difference.

Notes

1 Virginia Woolf to Katherine Mansfield, February 13, 1921, in *Congenial Spirits: Selected Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Joanne Trautmann Banks (London: Pimlico, 2003), 127–8. My emphasis.

2 Ibid., 205. Woolf's reference to Mansfield as being "too painted and posed," for "spartan" tastes in a letter written in 1919 to Katherine Arnold-Foster is one of such comments on her colonial contemporary. It betrays, as I am suggesting, her ambivalent response to Mansfield's "difference." See *Congenial Spirits*, 113.

3 *Letters* 2, 320. My emphasis.

4 *Letters* 1, 313.

5 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (London: Penguin, 2000), 59.

6 Rita Felski, "Afterword," in *Women's Experience of Modernity, 1875–1945*, ed. Ann L. Ardis and Leslie W. Lewis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 292.

7 See Elizabeth Wingrove, "Materialisms," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 461. Wingrove's essay helps to contextualize this argument.

8 Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 65.

9 CW4, 25.

10 See Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 48–50.

11 Katherine Mansfield, "Mr. and Mrs. Dove," in CW2, 305.

12 Rachel Bowlby, "Domestication," in *Feminism Beside Itself*, ed. Diane Elam and Robyn Weigman (New York: Routledge, 1995), 71–91.

13 Ibid., 88.

14 For a brief overview of these debates, see for instance Stephanie Genz, "'I Am Not a Housewife, but …': Postfeminism and the Revival of Domesticity," in *Feminism, Domesticity and Popular Culture*, ed. Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows (New York: Routledge, 2009), 49–61.

15 Virginia Woolf, "The Art of Fiction," in *Virginia Woolf: A Woman's Essays*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 125.

16 Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei, *The Domestic Space Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 3, 5.

17 Ibid., 8.

18 Quoted in Stephanie Merritt, "Cheap Shots, Rich Pickings," *The Guardian* April 17, 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/apr/17/fiction.alismith.

19 Ali Smith, Introduction, *Katherine* Mansfield: *The Collected Stories* (London: Penguin, 2007), xiv.

20 If statistics are any pointer, Ann Ardis informs us that more than a hundred novels on the New Woman were published at the turn of the century. See Ann L. Ardis, "The Gender of Modernity," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Literature*, ed. Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 70.
21 Sue Roe, *Virginia Woolf and Friends: The Influence of T. S. Eliot and Katherine Mansfield*, Annual Virginia Woolf Birthday Lectures (Fairhaven: Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain, 2011), 10.
22 Ibid., 12.
23 Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927; London: Penguin Books, 1992), 91.
24 Ibid.,115.
25 Ibid., 27.
26 Ibid., 176.
27 Ibid., 144.
28 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925; London: Penguin, 1992), 35.
29 Katherine Mansfield, "New Dresses," in CW1, 293.
30 Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 43.
31 Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 163.
32 Katherine Mansfield, "Daughters of the Late Colonel," in CW2, 266.
33 My reference is to the beginning of "Bliss" and the temptation to "laugh at—nothing" that Bertha Young feels as the story builds up to the entry of the woman who consumes her thoughts, Pearl Fulton. See Katherine Mansfield, "Bliss," in CW2, 142.
34 Katherine Mansfield, "At the Bay," in CW2, 347.
35 Ibid., 212.
36 Ibid., 348.
37 Ibid., 360.
38 Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996), 22–3.
39 Mansfield, "At the Bay," 361.
40 Dana Heller, "Housebreaking History: Feminism's Troubled Romance with the Domestic Sphere," in *Feminism Beside Itself*, 222.
41 Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (1915; London: Penguin, 1992), 98.
42 Ibid., 201.
43 Joyce E. Kelly, *Excursions into Modernism: Women Writers, Travel and the Body* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 190.
44 Frances Bartkowski, Introduction, *Travelers, Immigrants, Inmates: Essays in Estrangement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xxiii.
45 Ibid., xx.

46 Quoted in Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 183.
47 Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 151.
48 Ibid., 148–9.
49 Ibid., 167.
50 Of course, Mansfield's work pertaining to New Zealand too has been read as tensely poised between exoticizing and recording "native" presences.
51 Woolf, *The Voyage Out*, 113.
52 This recalls Caren Kaplan's observation that in Euro-American modernisms, one encounters "aestheticized excisions of location in favour of locale." See Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 28.
53 CW4, 410. There is a note here of tiredness, and the dislocations that resulted from Mansfield's sickness and her search for more salubrious climes for rest and recovery perhaps undergird her observations.
54 Katherine Mansfield, "The Little Governess," in CW1, 423.
55 Ibid., 429.

9

Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence

Andrew Harrison

The short-lived but intense relationship between Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence lasted almost exactly a decade, from January 1913 to Mansfield's death in January 1923. It was by turns affectionate/empathetic and oppositional/antipathetic. In the opening section of this essay, I will provide an account of their interactions, drawing attention to recent biographical re-evaluations which have altered our understanding of their emotional dynamics. I will then describe and evaluate some of the more influential critical accounts of the relation between their writings before offering my own reflections on overlooked similarities in the use of social satire in their short fiction.

Mansfield first made contact with Lawrence in January 1913 in her role as assistant editor of *Rhythm*. She wrote to ask whether he would be prepared to contribute a short story to the journal, indicating that she could not offer payment for it since the journal was in serious financial difficulties at that time. Lawrence offered her a story on condition that she should send him a copy of the journal and allow him to review "something interesting" for its next issue.[1] No story by Lawrence appeared in *Rhythm*, though he did write a review of *Georgian Poetry 1911–12* (a volume in which his own poem "Snap-Dragon" had appeared) for the March 1913 number,[2] and he contributed a short story, "The Soiled Rose," and a review-essay entitled "German Books: Thomas Mann" to the May and July 1913 numbers of the journal's successor, *The Blue Review*.

When Lawrence and his partner, Frieda Weekley, finally met Mansfield in London in June 1913, they soon warmed to her and her partner, John Middleton Murry. The two unmarried couples had a good deal in common. Mansfield and Frieda had experienced recent scandals in their private lives. Before Mansfield met Murry (in December 1911), she had escaped a short-lived marriage to George Bowden and been sent by her outraged mother to a German spa

town, Bad Wörishofen, where she miscarried a child she had conceived out of wedlock with her lover, Garnet Trowell. Frieda was the wife of Lawrence's former Professor of Modern Languages at University College Nottingham, and they had only been a couple since May 1912, when they traveled together from England to Germany (Frieda to attend the celebration of her father's fifty years in the army, and Lawrence to visit cousins on his mother's side of the family). Frieda had subsequently left her husband and three children to be with Lawrence, and in June 1913 they were still suffering the emotional fallout from this situation. Lawrence was a penurious 27-year-old in the early stages of his new career as a professional author (having resigned his post as an elementary school teacher in Croydon on February 28, 1912, due to ill health), so he was well placed to understand the 24-year-old Mansfield's struggle to orientate herself in the London literary scene, and able to sympathize with Murry's recent financial troubles with *Rhythm*. Lawrence paid for Mansfield and Murry to visit him for a weekend in late July 1913 at a flat he had rented in Broadstairs, Kent. He gave them a copy of his recently published third novel *Sons and Lovers* (1913), which they read with interest and admiration on the train home. Under Lawrence's influence, Mansfield began planning and writing an autobiographical novel of her own, entitled *Maata*. Such was the empathy that developed between the couples that Mansfield agreed to act as a go-between for Frieda in her struggle to see her children. She waited outside the school attended by Frieda's son Montague (or "Monty") and surreptitiously passed messages on to him.[3] When Lawrence and Frieda finally got married at Kensington Registry Office on July 13, 1914, Mansfield and Murry acted as witnesses. Frieda gave Mansfield her wedding ring from her first marriage; Mansfield wore it from that day forward and was buried with it on her finger.[4]

The couples lived close to one another for two brief periods during the Great War, first in Buckinghamshire from October 1914 to January 1915 (in rented houses three miles apart), and then in Cornwall (as neighbors) from early April to mid-June 1916. On both occasions, Lawrence was instrumental in arranging for Mansfield and Murry to join himself and Frieda, and keen that they should together establish a small but supportive community. In Buckinghamshire, the two couples grew sufficiently intimate to discuss their relationships together in a frank manner. Mansfield involved herself in an argument between Lawrence and Frieda over Lawrence's intolerance of Frieda's continuing need to see her children; she told Lawrence, "Frieda has asked me to come and tell you that she will not come back."[5] The situation was reversed on Christmas Day 1914, during a party at the home of their other close neighbors, Gilbert and Mary Cannan,

when Mansfield—who had discovered a hurtful comment in Murry's diary and decided to leave him and to visit Francis Carco in France—acted out her animosity to Murry in an improvised playlet involving Murry and the painter Mark Gertler.[6]

Mansfield, though, was unwilling to involve herself with Lawrence's anti-war ideas and schemes. In the New Year of 1915, she expressed resistance to his escapist fantasy to set up an island retreat for himself and his friends (a scheme he initially called "Rananim"); she and Murry "[t]alked over the island idea," but she remained skeptical, confessing that "For me I know it has come too late."[7] She gathered detailed information about suitable islands as a way of scotching Lawrence's enthusiasm.[8] In autumn of 1915, Lawrence and Murry set up a journal together, entitled *The Signature*; it was a vehicle for publishing Lawrence's long anti-war philosophical essay "The Crown," but Murry was also to contribute essays on "social and personal freedom" and Mansfield to write "a set of satirical sketches" (under the pen name Matilda Berry). Mansfield had little interest in the venture, realizing that she was "only the jam in the golden pill."[9] Three numbers were published on October 4 and 18 and November 1, 1915, before it folded due to insufficient subscriptions.

In spring of 1916, Mansfield very reluctantly traveled to Higher Tregerthen in Zennor, Cornwall, leaving behind a contented and productive period in Bandol, in the south of France, to answer Lawrence's passionate request that she and Murry should "unite [their] forces" with himself and Frieda, "and become an active power [...] together."[10] She was deeply unhappy and isolated in her small and damp cottage, and in letters to shared friends such as S. S. Koteliansky and Lady Ottoline Morrell she was scathing about Lawrence's black moods and dogmatism ("If he is contradicted about *anything* he gets into a frenzy") and expressed disgust at his unguarded arguments with Frieda.[11] Mansfield/Murry and Lawrence/Frieda had very different ways of dramatizing their relationships, and Mansfield now reacted strongly against the Lawrences' insistence on openly expressing their disagreements. John Worthen has drawn attention to the tendency of Lawrence and Frieda to quarrel in front of other people: he notes that "Frieda knew how to 'unbottle' the conflicts and tensions," and Lawrence expended his frustrations theatrically in a manner which was exhausting but necessary for their particular "passionate relationship."[12] Mansfield, in contrast, adopted affectionate alternative names and alter egos in her relationship with Murry and sought ways to protect herself against the unmediated exposure of her feelings. Sydney Janet Kaplan refers to the "love-play between them" as "infantilising and deceptively sentimental."[13]

During their time in Buckinghamshire, Mansfield had noted in her diary how "nice, very nice" she had found Lawrence to be when discussing "true sex," but now she was opposed to his theorizing.[14] On May 4, 1916, she told Beatrice Campbell:

> I shall *never* see sex in trees, sex in the running brooks, sex in stones & sex in everything. The number of things that are really phallic from fountain pen fillers onwards! […] I suggested to Lawrence that he should call his cottage The Phallus & Frieda thought it was a very good idea.[15]

Mansfield's animosity toward Lawrence and resistance to his worldview are reflected in a letter of May 11 to S. S. Koteliansky in which she mocks his idea of "the COMMUNITY," calling the state of conflict between Lawrence and Frieda—and his dependence on her—"so *degraded*" and "humiliating."[16] By June 17, she and Murry had left Higher Tregerthen and moved to a house in Mylor, southern Cornwall.

If in one mood Mansfield could find the Lawrences "too rough" to "enjoy playing with," Lawrence in turn was increasingly enraged by his perception of her and Murry's duplicitousness and disloyalty.[17] In late January 1920, Lawrence fell out violently with the now-married couple over the rejection of some articles he had sent to Murry for inclusion in the *Athenaeum*, the literary journal Murry was then editing. The incident—which resulted in a breach between Lawrence and Mansfield which lasted over two and a half years—troubled biographers for many years because the intensity of Lawrence's reaction against Mansfield and Murry seemed disproportionate to the context.[18] However, Mark Kinkead-Weekes has argued that we need to understand it in terms of Lawrence's strong reaction to perceived betrayal and double-dealing on Mansfield's part.[19] Lawrence's anger at Murry and Mansfield can be explained by the fact that the package containing Murry's rejection letter and the returned articles—which had been badly delayed by a postal strike in Italy—had been sent to Lawrence from Ospedaletti, where Murry had been visiting Mansfield, causing Lawrence to deduce that it was a joint rejection which was perhaps even initiated by Mansfield. Kinkead-Weekes suggests that the postal strike may have meant that Murry's rejection letter arrived at the same time as a letter from Mansfield in which she described her awful health problems and the fact that she had been rejected by a hotel in San Remo because of her tuberculosis; he speculates that the rejection would have seemed all the more heartless if one of the essays that Lawrence sent had been on the subject of psychoanalysis (a topic over which he had bonded with Mansfield in December 1918, when he had sent her a copy

of Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* and explained the "Mother-incest idea" to her, warning her that it "can become an obsession").[20] To have such intimate material thrown back in his face at the same time that he was called upon to sympathize with Mansfield's situation would have aroused Lawrence's fury. Sydney Janet Kaplan notes that the elimination of Lawrence's voice from the *Athenaeum* in early 1920 was "convenient for Murry, although he would have denied it," since without Lawrence "it could more likely fulfil its implicit role as the organ of Bloomsbury."[21] Lawrence called Murry "a dirty little worm," and Mansfield reported that she received a letter from Lawrence in which he "spat in my face & threw filth at me" and told her "I loathe you. You revolt me stewing in your consumption. The Italians were quite right to have nothing to do with you."[22]

The reactions of Mansfield and Murry to Lawrence's fiction during the period of their estrangement took on a newly critical and censorious tone. The December 17, 1920, number of the *Athenaeum* printed a negative review of *The Lost Girl* (1920) under the title "The Decay of Mr. D. H. Lawrence"; it is unclear whether Mansfield or Murry wrote this piece, but it certainly incorporates Mansfield's strongly negative reactions to the novel.[23] It laments Lawrence's "very obvious loss of imaginative power," reserving special criticism for his central female character, Alvina Houghton, whom it describes as "more the idea of a woman than a woman": a false embodiment of his personal, esoteric, and ugly "sex-theory."[24] A subsequent review in the *Nation and Athenaeum* (August 13, 1921) of *Women in Love* (1920), written by Murry but informed by his discussions with Mansfield, pointedly notes how earlier qualities in Lawrence's writing ("a sensitive and impassioned apprehension of natural beauty, for example, or an understanding of the strange blood bonds that unite human beings, or an exquisite discrimination in the use of language, based on power of natural vision") had been "dissolved in the acid of a burning and vehement passion." *Women in Love* is described as "five hundred pages of passionate vehemence, wave after wave of turgid, exasperated writing impelled towards some distant and invisible end."[25]

Lawrence and Mansfield were reconciled shortly before Mansfield's death. In May 1922, Lawrence—who was living in Australia—told S. S. Koteliansky that being in the antipodes enabled one "to understand Katherine so much better. She is *very* Australian—or New Zealand. Wonder how she is."[26] On August 15, 1922, he and Frieda sent Mansfield a postcard from her birthplace, Wellington, where their ship had docked for one day during their onward journey from Sydney to San Francisco.[27] In a letter of July 17, 1922, to S. S. Koteliansky, Mansfield called

Aaron's Rod (1922) "a living book" and stated that she felt "nearer L. [Lawrence] than anyone else. All these last months I have thought as he does about many things."[28] This statement is reminiscent of her earlier comment that she and Lawrence were "unthinkably alike."[29] Mansfield bequeathed a book to Lawrence in her will, but Lawrence remained ignorant of the bequest (which was never fulfilled). When Lawrence heard of Mansfield's death he told Murry that he "always knew a bond in my heart. Feel a fear where the bond is broken now. Feel as if old moorings were breaking all."[30] He inserted a dedication "to K. M." at the head of the manuscript of his poem "Spirits Summoned West," but then—on second thoughts—deleted it.[31]

Claire Tomalin has suggested that Mansfield may have contracted tuberculosis from Lawrence during their brief time living together in Cornwall in 1916.[32] Mansfield was first diagnosed in December 1917. However, Lawrence was not diagnosed with tuberculosis himself until March 1925. As David Ellis has noted, "[t]o be sure that he was the source, we would have to know not merely that he was already tubercular in 1916, but that his disease was then in an active phase. The surviving evidence casts some doubt on at least the second of these propositions."[33] Mansfield's death, though, haunted Lawrence for some time. On February 2, 1924, during a fortnight spent in Paris, he visited the Gurdjieff Institute in Fontainebleau, where Mansfield had been staying at the time of her death: he thought it "a rotten place."[34] In December 1925, he wrote the short story "Smile," in which he fictionalizes Mansfield's death in order to satirize what he saw as the sham nature of Murry's feelings for her. Lawrence was particularly disturbed by Murry's publication of Mansfield's writing after her death and the central role he played in establishing her posthumous literary reputation. When Murry sent him a copy of *The Doves' Nest and Other Stories* in October 1923, Lawrence thanked him but added, "Poor Katharine [*sic*], she is delicate and touching—But not *Great*! Why say great?"[35] In June 1925, Lawrence told an American interviewer that Mansfield was "a good writer they made out to be a genius"; he suggested that "Katherine knew better herself, but her husband, John Middleton Murry, made capital of her death."[36] In December 1928, after the publication of Murry's two-volume *Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, Lawrence told a friend that he had heard that Murry had inserted "the most poignant passages himself … Quelle blague! [What a joke!]"[37] Lawrence's dislike of Murry's role in lionizing Mansfield's life and work is felt in a late letter of December 26, 1929, to a German correspondent where he states that "she belongs to her day and will fade. I knew her too well, though, to accept her as a saint!"[38]

Critics have typically interpreted the relationship between the writings of Mansfield and Lawrence through the lens of the strong feelings of affection, empathy, suspicion, disgust, fury, and disdain that characterized their personal interactions. In a seminal article published in 1986, Lydia Blanchard argues that Mansfield and Lawrence were involved in an anxious struggle for literary precedence over one another, effecting a "revision, a rewriting, of each other's work."[39] Blanchard suggests that Lawrence deployed a "corrective movement" in his response to Mansfield's fiction;[40] she reads Lawrence's depiction of a courageous female character (Alvina Houghton) taking the initiative in her relationship with the Italian peasant Ciccio Marasca in his novel *The Lost Girl* as a deliberate revision of Mansfield's portrayal of a victimized woman abandoned by two men in "Je ne parle pas français" (1918), a story based on Mansfield's short-lived infatuation with Francis Carco in 1914–15. Lawrence's novel is interpreted as "a swerving away then, not only from Mansfield's life but also from the artistic vision of *Je ne parle pas Français* [*sic*]."[41] Mansfield's negative response to *The Lost Girl* is understood by Blanchard to reflect her realization that Lawrence was deliberately subverting both her fiction and her understanding of her own life. Blanchard implies that Mansfield struck back by offering a very different fictional account from Lawrence of an incident relating to him in which she was directly involved. On September 1, 1916, Mansfield (together with S. S. Koteliansky and Mark Gertler) overheard two men in the Café Royal in London reading out and mocking poems from Lawrence's collection *Amores* (1916); she asked to see the book and then walked out with it. Blanchard argues that Lawrence's fictionalized account of the event in *Women in Love*, in which the book of poems is transformed into a preaching letter, shows the Mansfield-figure (Gudrun) protecting the ideas expressed by the Lawrence-figure (Birkin) from "those who would mock them."[42] Blanchard contends that the original event is differently fictionalized in Mansfield's "Marriage à la Mode" (1921), in which Isabel reads aloud "her husband William's love letter to the mockery of her audience of dilettante friends."[43] Mansfield's alternative version is said to challenge Lawrence's earlier account by revealing "Mansfield's mixed feelings about defending Lawrence."[44]

The strength of Blanchard's approach resides in her awareness of the transformed autobiography that drives the fiction of both writers, and her alertness to the ways in which they used fiction to get a controlling purchase on experience. Its weakness lies in her failure to acknowledge that both writers had a very broad range of literary contacts and influences which belie the kinds of exclusive psychological tussle she detects in their fiction. The different fictional

uses which they made of their own—and each other's—lives arguably reveal fundamental contrasts in their approaches to selfhood and the purpose of fiction rather than simply a narrow battle to revise and subvert one another. The idea that Lawrence was so preoccupied by Mansfield's life, aesthetics, and outlook that he needed to overcome them in *The Lost Girl* before he could move on with his career exaggerates the nature and extent of his engagement with her writing; it also obscures the subversive relationship of *The Lost Girl* to the popular realist fiction of the day and flattens out the complex role it played in helping Lawrence to redefine his relationship to his readers and literary culture more generally in the post-war period.

Like Blanchard, Carol Siegel focuses on the textual rivalry between the two writers, but her focus is on their disagreements about female identity and female sexuality. Siegel notes that Mansfield was "more interested in depicting the dangers than the triumphs of female sexual experience."[45] She reads "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1920) as a riposte to "Daughters of the Vicar" (1914) and *The Lost Girl*, showing how Lawrence's emphasis on Louisa Lindley's rebellious spirit and Alvina Houghton's convention-breaking "sexual energy" contrasts with the emotional subjection of Constantia and Josephine Pinner to their late father and their inability to break free of his patriarchal shadow.[46] The "optimistic mysticism" of "Odour of Chrysanthemums" (1911; revised version 1914) and "The Garden Party" (1921) is viewed as antithetical since "Lawrence emphasizes the importance of marriage as a grappling with life," while "Mansfield reveals the power of death to provide her heroine with a transcendent period of escape from imprisonment by sexuality."[47] In a similar spirit, Siegel argues that while in *Women in Love* "Lawrence advocates a new mode of being in which partners break each other free from an old and disintegrating world," Mansfield's "At the Bay" (1921) "depicts a world of fixed identities."[48]

More recent comparisons of Mansfield and Lawrence have tended to focus on areas of thematic and formal similarity in their writing. Susan Reid challenges Siegel's contention that Mansfield and Lawrence were involved in a straightforward "battle of the sexes" on the topic of female sexuality, stating that "both writers were often ambivalent in their attitudes towards gendered identity."[49] Reid is particularly interested in their shared fascination with an impersonal (and non-gendered) level of selfhood which seems to lie beneath, or behind, social conditioning and biological determinism. Drawing on a range of texts, including "The Garden Party" and "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" (1922), Reid shows that "[i]n the stories of both writers, there are moments when the boundaries of the self dissolve, moments of transcendence, of forgetting self in

order to discover self through the recognition of otherness."[50] She acknowledges, however, that Mansfield "underlines the difficulties of breaking free of conventional gender roles," while Lawrence "is often bolder in his depictions of alternatives."[51]

Carey Snyder suggests that Mansfield's early writing shows that she "initially embraced nostalgic primitivism," sharing Lawrence's sense that "a nostalgic return to the primitive" was necessary in order "to revitalize modern civilization."[52] Snyder argues that the *Urewera Notebook*, in which Mansfield documented her two-month camping trip in 1907 to that region of the North Island of New Zealand, and the short story "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" (1912) idealize the Māoris, covering them in a "[p]rimitivist rhetoric" which perceives them as childlike, beautiful, pristine, and uninhibited.[53] She asserts that Mansfield had discarded this colonial mindset by the time of her first meeting with Lawrence in June 1913, "having been confronted with metropolitan prejudices casting *her* in the role of colonial-primitive."[54] Snyder does not explore Lawrence's own conflicted attitude to colonialism (and to his Englishness), instead referring in rather dismissive terms to his "thoroughgoing primitivism, which worked in conjunction with a degrading view of femininity."[55]

By reinscribing the tumultuous nature of the relationship between Lawrence and Mansfield back into a comparative reading of the fiction, the approaches of Blanchard, Siegel, and Snyder risk distorting aspects of shared complexity in their writing. While Reid is concerned with continuities in the treatment of non-gendered identity between their writings, Neil Roberts focuses on similarities in their experimental modes of narration. Roberts draws attention to Lawrence's recourse in *Women in Love* to what Mikhail Bakhtin termed "character zone," a narrative technique through which a character is ascribed "his own sphere of influence […] that extends […] beyond the boundaries of the direct discourse allotted to him."[56] In *Women in Love*, Lawrence moves outside his characteristic use of free indirect discourse to incorporate characters' competing voices into the very structure of the novel. Roberts notes that Mansfield was "one of the most notable exponents of the 'character zone,'" and he finds it "intriguing" that the character (Gudrun Brangwen) whose voice intrudes most extensively into the narrative of *Women in Love* should have been based on Mansfield.[57] Roberts sounds a note of caution when he moves from tracing "the influence of Katherine Mansfield's personality on *Women in Love*" to suggesting the possible influence of her writing on the novel, but he nonetheless discovers "an attractive symmetry in the idea that Mansfield's fictional practice as well as her personality inspired Lawrence's achievement with the character of Gudrun."[58]

Roberts is surely right to emphasize the foregrounding of different and clashing voices and perspectives in the fiction of Mansfield and Lawrence. His insight here can be extended by noting the two writers' development in their short fiction of an innovative form of multi-voiced and multi-perspectival satire to encapsulate the contested ground of modern relationships. Mansfield's skills as a satirist are widely known and rightly celebrated. In "Bliss" (1918), she makes use of her "character zone" technique to depict the dysfunctional marriage between Bertha and Harry Young at a moment of crisis. From Bertha's perspective, her sexless relationship with her overbearing and chauvinistic husband is perfectly fine because of the mutual adjustments they have made to their expectations of love:

> Oh, she'd loved him—she'd been in love with him, of course, in every other way, but just not in that way. And, equally, of course, she'd understood that he was different. They'd discussed it so often. It had worried her dreadfully at first to find that she was so cold, but after a time it had not seemed to matter. They were so frank with each other—such good pals. That was the best of being modern.[59]

The story's form serves to expose Bertha's naivety (her *youngness*) when, in the shocking conclusion, we realize that Harry's *modus vivendi* is to manage his frigid young wife while having affairs with the emancipated "modern" women who circulate among the men in his artistic set. On one level the story works to expose the uneven gender politics (and predatory male behavior) at play in apparently civilized and liberated middle-class bohemian circles. Yet Bertha's undefined but clearly romantic interest in her husband's mistress (Pearl Fulton) suggests that there is no absolute moral distinction to be drawn between their extra-marital dalliances except that Harry has the self-awareness, pragmatism, and lack of scruples to understand and act on his desires. So, while Bertha's childlike perspective in the majority of the story offers the reader plentiful material for a satirical counterview of the superficiality and brutal sexism of the company she keeps, the ending causes us to realign our perspective with that of Harry and to view Bertha's otherworldliness and misreading of other people's desires and motives as the story's other satirical target.

T. S. Eliot famously dismissed "Bliss" by faint praise, calling it "brief, poignant and in the best sense, slight." For Eliot, the "moral implication" of the story is "negligible" because it stays so close throughout to the perspective of the uncomprehending central character: "We are given neither comment nor suggestion of any moral issue of good and evil, and within this setting this is quite right."[60] Hidden beneath Eliot's condescension is a recognition that the

moral ambivalence generated by the story's form is perfectly suited to its modern subject matter. The implication is that Mansfield's unresolved and relativistic satire in "Bliss" is deliberately deployed to capture the contingent and depthless nature of modern relationships.

Two lesser-known late satirical stories by Lawrence use the "character zone" method in a strikingly similar way to provide an ambivalent satirical commentary on modern relationships. "Two Blue Birds" and "In Love" were written in May and October 1926 respectively, shortly before Lawrence began work on the first version of his final novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). They share in common with "Bliss" a complex combination of satire and sympathy. As Lawrence was to write in his novel, "one may hear the most private affairs of other people, but only in a spirit of respect for the struggling, battered thing which any human soul is, and in a spirit of fine, discriminative sympathy. For even satire is a form of sympathy."[61]

"Two Blue Birds" is focalized through Mrs. Gee, the wife of a novelist—Cameron Gee—who has effectively realized that he cannot live with his wife despite (or perhaps because of) their intimacy and mutual understanding. As the story opens, the married couple are approaching middle age and live apart: Mrs. Gee winters in the south, where she takes lovers, while her husband stays at home in England, subjecting himself to a brutal regime of work in order to meet his debts and settle his wife's expenses. In place of his wife's lovers, Cameron Gee has a devoted 28-year-old secretary, the significantly named Miss Wrexall, who takes down his works by dictation and has moved her mother and sister into his household to cook for him and manage his home and affairs.

During the periods she spends in her marital home, Mrs. Gee feels "like Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth, a sovereign paying a visit to her faithful subjects."[62] Yet the secretary's preoccupation with Cameron's work has become a gnawing source of irritation to Mrs. Gee; she tells herself that a "gallant affair" is no good if you have "a bit of grit in your eye, or something at the back of your mind."[63] She decides to act when she overhears her husband dictating to the secretary in the garden. The words that the husband speaks (for an essay on the future of the novel) are significantly focused on sympathy:

> In every novel there must be one outstanding character with which we always sympathise—with *whom* we always sympathise—even though we recognise it—even when we are most aware of the human frailties—[64]

In "Two Blue Birds," it is Mrs. Gee with whom we sympathize most fully. She sees two blue tits fighting around the feet of Miss Wrexall and takes it as her

pretext for interrupting the dictation. She raises the issue of the secretary's selflessness in front of her husband, making Miss Wrexall confront the reality that most women in her situation would be a rival for her husband's affections. She then invites the secretary to take tea with her and her husband. The two women dress in blue silk, assuming the symbolic status of the fighting birds. Mrs. Gee attacks her husband where he is most vulnerable, suggesting that Miss Wrexall has been writing his novels for him, or else the comfortable and trouble-free life she has created for him has affected the quality of his imagination. By the end of the story, the formidable Mrs. Gee has effectively insulted Miss Wrexall's intelligence and ruined the unsullied—because unarticulated—nature of her devotion to Cameron Gee. However, if the story satirizes her husband's complacency and desire to be served by women, and the secretary's selfless devotion to him (which perhaps masks unspoken, or unspeakable, emotional and sexual feelings), it also leaves us with a sharp satirical awareness of the wife's underlying emotional avoidance:

> What then? What did she want? Why had she such an extraordinary hang-over about him? Just because she was his wife? Why did she rather "enjoy" other men—and she was relentless about enjoyment—without ever taking them seriously? And why must she take him so damn seriously, when she never really "enjoyed" him?[65]

These unresolved questions resonate after the conclusion of the text in the same manner as Bertha Young's desperate final utterance: "Oh, what is going to happen now?"[66]

Neil Roberts comments that "In Love" "reads in part like an imitation of Mansfield."[67] The satirical target of this story is what Lawrence would call "counterfeit love" in his essay "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*"[68]: the false feeling of love (and of being in love) that is created and reinforced by romantic literature and cinema. Lawrence's technique once again echoes Mansfield's in his use of "character zone" to place the reader firmly inside the partial perspectives of his central female characters, Hester and Henrietta. Hester is the 25-year-old older sister of Henrietta and she is engaged to be married to Joe, a soldier-turned-farmer whom she has known since she was a girl. As the story opens, it is a month before their wedding day and Hester is contemplating spending a weekend with her fiancé in the new home he has built for her. The story's opening is focalized through Henrietta as she registers her sister's unease and reluctance to visit Joe. The perspective then shifts to Hester as she spends the first evening with Joe and responds with disgust and outrage to his attempts to spoon with her:

> But Hester felt herself seething in the soft moonlight. Oh! to rush away over the edge of the beyond! If the beyond, like Joe's bread-knife, did have an edge to it. "I know I'm an idiot," she said to herself. But that didn't take away the wild surge of her limbs. Oh! If there were only some other solution, instead of Joe and his spooning. Yes, SPOONING! The word made her lose the last shred of her self-respect, but she said it aloud.[69]

Finally Henrietta intervenes to save her sister, and a separation seems imminent, but at the last moment Joe reveals that he too has been playing a role he dislikes in kissing and cuddling Hester. Once their hatred of the traditional male and female roles "in love" has been expressed, Hester is free to detect "the queer, quiet, central desire" in her fiancé, and it is this evidence that he "*really*" loves her which brings about their reconciliation.[70]

The ending to "In Love" reveals both the formal similarity with Mansfield and an underlying contrast in Lawrence's focus on "Love Triumphant."[71] As in "Bliss," what starts out as a critique of women's humiliating subjection to men turns into a more ambivalent and balanced, sympathetic form of satire with the sudden, shocking introduction of the male perspective. Yet where Mansfield's concluding vision is of a tragic conflict of needs between Bertha and Harry, and a sense of the insurmountable social barriers to self-realization, Lawrence's story ends in the affirmative comic mode in which inauthentic social gender roles are pushed aside to admit another, physical realm of being where feelings and actions coalesce.

Paying fresh attention to the complexity of Mansfield's biographical interactions with Lawrence and recognizing areas of thematic and formal similarity in their fictional practices, without losing sight of key differences in their outlooks, enables one to avoid the confirmation bias which has hitherto plagued comparative studies of the writers. Such bias does a serious disservice to their work. It is important for us to move beyond outmoded accounts which present Mansfield as the feminist and postcolonial foil to the chauvinistic and imperialist Lawrence and attend instead to the shared ambivalence and ambiguity that makes their writing so compelling, challenging, and unsettling.

Notes

1 James T. Boulton, ed., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 508.

2 See Annalise Grice, "'That'll Help Perhaps to Advertise Me': Lawrence's 'The Georgian Renaissance' Review in *Rhythm*," *D. H. Lawrence Review* 40, no. 2 (2015): 34–53.
3 See Andrew Harrison, "'Dear Mrs. Murry': A Little-Known Manuscript Letter from D. H. Lawrence to Katherine Mansfield," *Katherine Mansfield Studies* 3 (2011): 112–17.
4 Frieda Lawrence, "*Not I, but the Wind …*" (New York: The Viking Press, 1934), 77.
5 Leonard Woolf, quoted in Edward Nehls, *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, 3 vols. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957–59), 1:258.
6 For an account of the playlet, see Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 172–3.
7 CW4, 148.
8 Catherine Carswell, *The Savage Pilgrimage: A Narrative of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), 22.
9 *Letters* 1, 198 n3, 218.
10 George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 563.
11 *Letters* 1, 263.
12 John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 156.
13 Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Circulating Genius: John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 67.
14 CW4, 150.
15 *Letters* 1, 261–2.
16 Ibid., 262, 264.
17 Ibid., 261.
18 See, for example, Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 310–11.
19 See Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile, 1912–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 559–63, and "Rage against the Murrys: 'Inexplicable' or 'Psychopathic'?" in *D. H. Lawrence in Italy and England*, ed. George Donaldson and Mara Kalnins (London: Macmillan, 1999), 116–34.
20 James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 301.
21 Kaplan, *Circulating Genius*, 67.
22 Boulton and Robertson, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. III, 467; *Letters* 3, 208–9.
23 See *Letters* 4, 138.
24 "The Decay of Mr. D. H. Lawrence," in CW3, 709.
25 Ibid., 714–19.
26 Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton, and Elizabeth Mansfield, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 241.

27 See Andrew Harrison, "The Lawrences, Katherine Mansfield and the 'Ricordi' Postcard," in *Katherine Mansfield and the (Post)colonial*, ed. Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber, and Delia da Sousa Correa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 148–53.
28 *Letters* 5, 225.
29 *Notebooks* 2, 143.
30 Roberts, Boulton, and Mansfield, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. IV, 375.
31 See D. H. Lawrence, *The Poems*, vol. II, ed. Christopher Pollnitz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1071.
32 Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), 163.
33 David Ellis, *Death and the Author: How D. H. Lawrence Died, and Was Remembered* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 15.
34 Roberts, Boulton, and Mansfield, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. IV, 568.
35 Ibid., 521.
36 Kyle Crichton, quoted in Edward Nehls, *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, 2:414.
37 Keith Sagar and James T. Boulton, eds., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. VII (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 55.
38 Ibid., 610.
39 Lydia Blanchard, "The Savage Pilgrimage of D. H. Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield: A Study in Literary Influence, Anxiety, and Subversion," *Modern Language Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1986): 49.
40 Ibid., 53.
41 Ibid., 56.
42 Ibid., 61.
43 Ibid., 62.
44 Ibid., 61.
45 Carol Siegel, *Lawrence Among the Women: Wavering Boundaries in Women's Literary Traditions* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 100.
46 Ibid., 104.
47 Ibid., 106, 107.
48 Ibid., 109.
49 Susan Reid, "'On the Subject of *Maleness*': The Different Worlds of Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence," in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, ed. Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber, and Susan Reid (London: Continuum, 2011), 149.
50 Ibid., 158.
51 Ibid., 150.
52 Carey Snyder, "Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, and Imperialist Nostalgia," in *Modernism and Nostalgia: Bodies, Locations, Aesthetics*, ed. Tammy Clewell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 131.

53 Ibid., 142.
54 Ibid., 131.
55 Ibid., 134.
56 See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 320.
57 Neil Roberts, "Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield and Free Indirect Discourse," *Études Lawrenciennes* 39 (2009): 170.
58 Ibid., 169, 173.
59 Katherine Mansfield, "Bliss," in CW2, 150–1.
60 T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), 85–6.
61 D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 101.
62 D. H. Lawrence, "Two Blue Birds," in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8.
63 Ibid., 6.
64 Ibid., 12.
65 Ibid., 10.
66 Mansfield, "Bliss," 152.
67 Roberts, "Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield and Free Indirect Discourse," 171.
68 D. H. Lawrence, "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, 314.
69 D. H. Lawrence, "In Love," in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, 141.
70 Ibid., 150.
71 Boulton, ed., *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. I, 490.

10

Katherine Mansfield and Elizabeth von Arnim

Isobel Maddison

> *To her wit and whimsy is added an irrepressible, palpable delight which one can feel and share […] She has a delicate pen that lovingly shapes her phrase, and an instinct that keeps it true to experience.*
>
> Katherine Mansfield, review of Elizabeth von Arnim's In the Mountains (1920)[1]

> The Garden Party and Other Stories *is a delight […] I laughed and rejoiced over it at every delicious remark […] Isn't it queer, I might be your mother in my pride.*
>
> Elizabeth von Arnim to Katherine Mansfield (1922)[2]

Elizabeth von Arnim is probably most readily remembered as the best-selling author of *Elizabeth and Her German Garden* (1898) and the ever-popular *The Enchanted April* (1922). That she was also the elder cousin of Katherine Mansfield has been acknowledged for many years.[3] From around 2013, however, scholarship has begun to reinstate von Arnim into the cultural *milieu* of which she was a significant part,[4] and research into the complex relationship between Mansfield and von Arnim has also increased markedly. This has done much to shed light on the familial, personal, and literary connections between these unlikely friends while deepening our understanding of writing in the early twentieth century. The comparative discussions of their work have also helped move us away from the ways in which critical discourse has sometimes clung to increasingly outdated classifications and ideas that have frequently obscured important and revealing connections.[5] Mansfield is, for instance, usually regarded as a "high modernist," immersed in the *fin-de-siècle* aesthetes and the French Symbolists, a woman writing under the influence of Chekhov and sharing his preoccupations with the modern condition. Until recently, the designation of von Arnim's work as "degraded" popular, best-selling fiction has perpetuated

a particular, and sometimes inflexible, critical response to her writing which renders opaque those connections and similarities between Mansfield and her cousin that are the most unexpected and illuminating. Moreover, for the responsible critic, the "modern" short story form is not always easily aligned with the more lengthy progress of the comedic novel, but engaging with these challenges has opened up comparative discussions in ways that reveal complex associations that extend beyond initial categories of thought, even when negotiating the notoriously tricky territory of literary influence.

We now know that both Mansfield and von Arnim experienced each other as an influential presence, especially between May 1921 and July 1922 when they both lived in Crans Montana in Switzerland. Here, Jennifer Walker suggests, "Mutual respect, encouragement, support and pride in each other's work" increasingly "played a large part in the friendship of Mansfield and von Arnim."[6] We also know the cousins read and commented on each other's work, and Mansfield's critical assessments, later reprinted in *Novels and Novelists* (1930), became part of the wider reception of von Arnim's writing. Furthermore, von Arnim's skill as an author seeped into her cousin's youthful aspirations and her first collection of stories, *In a German Pension* (1911).[7]

The significance of this connection continues to increase the greater the attention we are willing to give to it. In recent years, further resonances have been uncovered, particularly around the cross-cultural presentation of motherhood and maternity,[8] and in the significance of shared musical talents and a wide, knowledgeable appreciation of music.[9] Mansfield and von Arnim were also equally passionate about flowers, poetry, and travel. In their work, they repeatedly explored ideas of freedom and escape, especially for women.[10] Both authors shared a love of Shakespeare, the Brontës, Jane Austen, Wordsworth, and Keats as well as "an all but identical sensitiveness to beauty,"[11] and, in a practical detail, "hot baths" as places of "inspiration."[12] We know, too, they enjoyed "ruminative, and reminiscent" talk alongside a series of wide-ranging artistic interests.[13] Volume 11 of Katherine Mansfield Studies (2019) is devoted to the work of these authors together, building on previous scholarship to offer fresh and welcome insights into the writing of these cousins. The essays in this volume range across several shared preoccupations and include nuanced comparative discussions of gardens, flowers, post-war mourning and recuperation, marriage, abjection, feminism, and the role of the female artist in the first decades of the twentieth century. From this fresh analysis, we can trace a network of personal connections and literary cross-currents that bring these writers closer together in new and interesting ways.[14] Even so, there are still things to discover, and it

is in this spirit that I would like to explore here the significance of fathers and daughters in the writing of these authors, especially in Mansfield's short story, "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1920) and von Arnim's novels, *The Pastor's Wife* (1914) and *Father* (1931), the latter published after Mansfield's early death. By tracing this motif, I hope to raise new questions, opening up this literary association and its significance even further.

Before this, however, perhaps the best place to start for those unaware of the depth of the connection between these cousins is with biography. To begin, both writers were Antipodean and both were members of the Beauchamp family and, as Walker explains, "the Beauchamp connection" goes "a long way back."[15] Arthur Beauchamp, Mansfield's grandfather, and von Arnim's father, Henry Herron Beauchamp, were two of seven brothers who left London for the Southern Hemisphere in the nineteenth century. Arthur settled in New Zealand and Henry Herron went to live in Sydney, Australia, where he became a successful shipping merchant. Kathleen Jones suggests the Beauchamps were "upper-middle-class professionals" and the family was the vigorous "backbone of the Victorian commercial empire."[16] The family seems to have been close: Walker explains that Arthur and von Arnim's father, Henry Herron, kept in frequent touch, even when separated geographically. Henry Herron also became particularly fond of his nephew, Harold, who was Arthur's son and Mansfield's father. Traveling widely, Henry Herron and his family finally settled in Europe where their talented children thrived. Speculating that the success of Uncle Henry and his offspring may have prompted Harold and his wife, Annie, to educate Katherine and her sisters in London, Walker also suggests this may have been, in part, because of von Arnim's early success; her precocious musical talent had been recognized and developed in London, and she became an accomplished young musician, taught at the Royal College of Music by none other than Walter Parratt.[17] As is well known, Mansfield was a fine cellist, and Walker goes on to discuss the musical notation and precise rhythmic patterns of von Arnim's prose and that of her cousin as one strand of familial and creative connection.[18]

We begin to see, then, that in some ways Mansfield and von Arnim were really very alike, even if their initial acquaintance in person was somewhat limited. Records show, however, that as early as 1903 Mansfield spent part of Christmas day with von Arnim's father, her Great Uncle Henry. He writes in his diary, "Three Harold Beauchamp girls in residence," with "High Supper at 7pm" followed by "recitations afterwards by Vera and Kathleen [Katherine]," to which he added, "the latter's very good."[19] The ten-year-old Mansfield was also fully aware of her cousin's success as an author. A month after the publication of

von Arnim's *The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen* (1904), Mansfield borrowed a similar setting from the novel while creating a comparable atmosphere in a story titled, "Die Einsame" which appeared in the Queen's College Magazine. Two years later, Mansfield told friends, "In the future I shall give all my time to writing"[20]—a decision likely to have been sweetened for Mansfield's family by von Arnim's increasing literary success and established celebrity. For now, information about the continuing connection becomes rather scanty in the period immediately following this announcement, but Jones notes that when Katherine arrived in London on August 24, 1908, von Arnim's elderly parents were asked to "keep an eye" on her,[21] while the announcement of the short engagement between Mansfield and George Bowden took place at a "surreal tea party" given by Dr. Saleeby where Bowden was effectively vetted by Henry Beauchamp and his daughter, Elizabeth.[22]

Of particular interest for the relationship and the writing of both women is the period in Switzerland when Mansfield and von Arnim lived on the same mountain, "1/2 an hours scramble away" from each other.[23] It seems likely, as Walker suggests, von Arnim's knowledge of the medical treatments available in Montana-sur-Sierre encouraged Mansfield and her husband, John Middleton Murry, to travel there to seek relief for Mansfield's tuberculosis. It is also worth noting they had all recently met in London following a pleasing review Mansfield had written about von Arnim's novel, *Christopher and Columbus* (1919); Mansfield was particularly admiring of her cousin's narrative economy and skillful use of psychology ("All that she wants she can convey with a comment—at a stroke").[24] And we also know Mansfield was amused to find herself "playing perfect ladies" at the Casetta Deerholm in Ospedaletti, Italy, in 1919, where she boasted nonchalantly (in as "natural a way as you please") that "Elizabeth in her G. Garden is my cousin!!!"[25]

Two years later Mansfield and Murry took a lease on the Chalet des Sapins, situated high in the Swiss mountains, and they became von Arnim's neighbors; for several months each year von Arnim lived a couple of hundred meters directly below Mansfield's chalet in her large and sociable home, the Chalet Soleil, which was set against the glorious and spectacular mountains of Valais. Mansfield and Murry now shared these recuperative surroundings, and relations between the two Beauchamp women warmed, seemingly to the point of near enchantment. Writing to von Arnim in 1922, Mansfield conjures a fairy tale:

> What a perfect glimpse we had of the Chalet Soleil as we bumped here in the cold mountain rain […] all your lovely house is hidden in white blossom. Only

> *heavenly* blue shutters showed through. The little "working" chalet is in an absolute nest of green. It looked awfully fairy; one felt there ought to have been a star on top of a slender chimney. But from the very first glimpse of your own road everything breathed of you. It was like an enchantment.[26]

Momentarily bewitched by the location and the presence of her cousin, Mansfield shares her pleasure with distant friends. Writing to Lady Ottoline Morrell (a well-known patron of the arts), Mansfield explains she and von Arnim exchange "Chateaubriand and baskets of apricots" and have "occasional long talks" like those Mansfield imagines, amusingly, as typical in the "afterlife."[27] And, as the friendship deepens, the Beauchamp women find they have much in common. Letters and records from this period may reveal occasional tension and moments of "falsity,"[28] but there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate mounting mutual respect and growing personal affection between these women. Mansfield's letter to Dorothy Brett in 1921 is especially revealing:

> [Elizabeth] appeared today behind a bouquet—never smaller woman carried bigger bouquets. She looked like a garden walking—of asters, late sweet peas, stocks, & always petunias. She herself wore a frock like a spider's web, a hat like a berry—and gloves that reminded me of thistles in seed […] I have gathered Elizabeth's frocks to my bosom as if they were part of her flowers. And then when she smiles a ravishing wrinkle appears on her nose—and never have I seen more exquisite hands. Oh dear, I do hope we shall manage to keep her in our life. Its terrible how ones friends disappear […] The point about her is that one loves her and is proud of her […] But no doubt Elizabeth is far more important to me than I am to her.[29]

Von Arnim may have admitted later that she was afraid of Mansfield's intellect, and she was genuinely concerned she might bore her in discussion, but in 1922 Mansfield found von Arnim fascinating: "In minute black breeches and gaiters she looks like an infant bishop […] I admire her for working as she is working now, all alone in her big chalet. She is courageous, very."[30]

This was not only a period of growing personal regard, however. It was an important phase of literary activity for both writers. In Switzerland, Mansfield completed "At the Bay," "The Doll's House," and one of her best-known stories, "The Garden Party," while von Arnim wrote her most radical novel, *Vera* (1921) at the Chalet Soleil, as well as working steadily on *The Enchanted April* (1922). For critics interested in this period, the familial and creative relationship between these two authors has prompted questions of literary influence, especially because at this time Mansfield was quick to disavow any

claim suggesting she had helped shape von Arnim's work. In another letter to Brett, Mansfield is clear:

> Only one thing, my hand on my heart, I could swear to. Never *could* Elizabeth be influenced by me. If you knew how she would scorn the notion, how impossible it would be for her. There is a kind of turn in our sentences which is alike but that is because we are worms of the same family. But that is all.[31]

Here, the tentative admission of a shared style is significant and welcome, but the wider statement obviously raises a number of other considerations, not least about the amorphous ways in which the ideas of one individual might creep into those of another, however much one might "scorn" the idea, or actively *believe* or *decide* it is "impossible," as if this is an antidote to some kind of unwelcome literary infection. And, even if Mansfield were to acknowledge an influence, does the transference move in one direction only from an essentially dynamic situation? Is discussion and close proximity or distant—though frequent—correspondence like that typical of Mansfield and von Arnim largely neutral, shorn of all creative implications? And, more widely, is one always completely aware of the source of inspiration? Isn't thought often subtly ignited by another, or by reading and discussions, without a full awareness of its foundation? Can ideas ever be wiped entirely from shared experiences centered on an exchange of thoughts and talk? As Mansfield says of her discussions with von Arnim, "How strange talking is—what mists rise and fall—how one loses the other and then thinks to have found the other—then down comes another soft final curtain," leaving each of us essentially alone.[32]

Such questions and ideas are clearly implicit in Mansfield's claim about her influence, leaving, as she does, all credit for *Vera* with her cousin. These queries and considerations are also intriguing and—in the case of Mansfield's and von Arnim's writing—critics differ in their response to them.[33] Nevertheless, it seems best not to dismiss these questions entirely, especially when they have the potential to enrich our thinking as we work to better understand the significance of the connection between these authors in its fullest sense. Of course, influence is not always linear, obvious, or easily recovered and, in this case, mutual influence may not even be the most pressing matter, although we should be mindful that it is Mansfield who explicitly airs the point. Perhaps, however, resonances and echoes are heavier with intuited meaning than they may initially seem, helping us to unearth textual, attitudinal, and other connections not always directly stated or easily quantifiable. To explain, it might be helpful to consider the opening pages of von Arnim's 1914 novel, *The Pastor's Wife*, and Mansfield's well-known

1918 short story "Bliss." Von Arnim's book opens with a young woman, explicitly twenty-two, walking along a busy London street in an "exalted mood" after a successful trip to the dentist.[34] Acutely aware of her surroundings, "feeling the relish of life," she is "quivering with responsiveness" while von Arnim's use of free indirect speech takes us directly into the young woman's thoughts: "Surely the colour of London was an exquisite thing," "the beauty of it, the *beauty* of it."[35] Von Arnim goes on to tell us, through focalization, that the young woman "had certainly never been more alive. She felt electric. She would not have been surprised if sparks had come crackling out of the tips of her sober gloves."[36] Compare this to Mansfield's later, condensed and more oblique opening to "Bliss," communicated in a mixture of free indirect speech and focalization (and minus a visit to the dentist). When Bertha Young, explicitly thirty, turns the corner into her own London street she is "overcome, suddenly by a feeling of bliss—absolute bliss!" "What can you do," Bertha wonders, when you feel as "though you'd suddenly swallowed a bright piece of the afternoon sun and it burned in your bosom, sending out a little shower of sparks into every finger and particle, into every finger and toe?"[37]

The central idea and stylistic similarities of these openings are easily discovered, and I am not claiming direct or old-fashioned linear influence here. Rather, I am suggesting we remain alert to the possibility of a deeper level of connection between the writing of Mansfield and von Arnim, sometimes captured in resonances and echoes that move beyond backward-looking and blunt literary classifications, because this approach offers the potential to revisit Mansfield afresh while continuing to re-evaluate the writing of her cousin as we increasingly give it due regard.

It is with these ideas in mind that I would like to turn to a discussion of fathers, daughters, and, crucially, escape from overbearing fathers in the work of these authors beginning, chronologically, with von Arnim's novel, *The Pastor's Wife*. In this text, the central protagonist, Ingeborg, is caught in a web of daughterly duty, unquestioning respect, and unrelenting work in support of her father, the Bishop of Redchester. Early on we learn of Ingeborg's arduous responsibilities: "The urgencies of daily life in episcopal surroundings, the breathless pursuit of her duties, the effort all day long to catch them up." Her obligations are extensive and include, "the Bishop's buttons, the Bishop's speeches, the Bishop's departure by trains"; hers is a life of service and religiously sanctioned self-abnegation.[38] Against this background of female exploitation and male entitlement, it is perhaps unsurprising to find her father's frequent demeanor is "frozen offendedness"[39] when conducting his ceremonial duties and "offended resignation" when his

needs are unmet.[40] Von Arnim does not, however, present the Bishop as entirely unappreciative of Ingeborg's efforts since he enjoys the reflected glory of praising his "hardworked"[41] daughter in public, "'She is my Right Hand' her father the Bishop would say at Redchester tea-parties to which her mother couldn't go because of the sofa"—Ingeborg's mother having retired to the couch early to avoid the Bishop's many impositions by enlisting strategic convalescence as a defense.[42]

In the first few pages of *The Pastor's Wife,* the scene is set, and the idea of the quietly exploited, unmarried daughter falls neatly into place. That Ingeborg wishes to escape is entirely explicable given her father's "all-pervadingness" at home, so that an acute toothache and even a visit to a London dentist become a thrilling opportunity for first freedom, particularly because this is without a chaperone.[43] At home, Ingeborg's departure leaves the Bishop wanting "things in vain"; his buttons inconveniently spring from his gaiters in public, important letters remain unanswered, and vital engagements are frustratingly "unkept."[44] Without Ingeborg, the Bishop's schedule is a hopeless muddle and his temper increasingly uneven.

For those familiar with Mansfield's later story, "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1920), there are probably already resonances with von Arnim's 1914 novel, and not just because humor periodically overlays the narrative in both texts. In Mansfield's story, as Josephine and Constantia come to terms with the death of their irascible father, the idea of the long-suffering maiden daughter takes center stage, although this time the effect is doubled by the focus on two sisters. Retrospectively, Josephine, the elder, understands her life "had been looking after father, and at the same time keeping out of his way," while her younger sister, Constantia, recognizes her lost youth has been punctuated by "arranging trays and trying not to annoy father."[45] Where von Arnim is direct in naming the discomfort brought about by the Bishop's all-pervading presence, Mansfield draws the reader into Constantia's subjectivity and the fear that father is lurking "in the top drawer with his handkerchiefs and neckties" or "just behind the door handle—ready to spring," even though she knows he has been dead for a week.[46] That she is genuinely concerned her father will be angry because she and Josephine have buried him ("Father would never forgive them") only serves to highlight how far his commanding voice has been internalized.[47] Or as von Arnim's Ingeborg puts it in *The Pastor's Wife*, "she tried to follow her father's oft-repeated advice and look within herself," although the experience of temporary release from the Bishop's demands and the heady effects of early freedom mean this kind of thinking now "didn't help" Ingeborg that "much."[48]

There is, then, a shift in emphasis in the ways these ideas are communicated by Mansfield and von Arnim, and this is largely because of form. The condensed, subjective, elliptical, and poignant narrative of Mansfield's short story works largely by implication; we intuit meanings that arise in the interplay between dialogue, direct statement, and suggestion so we *feel* more about the situation than is voiced or can be fully understood. The longer prose form of the novel allows von Arnim to work through exposition and development (as well as implication), raising points directly, sometimes augmenting them through further explanation to draw the reader on in a way different to that of Mansfield. In spite of these differences, there are nonetheless similarities beyond mere motif. For example, the writing has a shared timbre as it gently mocks the father/daughter dynamic. Beneath the comedic narrative pose there is also a shared—and serious—focus on the woman's point of view, and this is carefully aligned in the construction of both fathers as men of social standing who seemingly *exact* respect while *compelling* obedience from their daughters through socially sanctioned professional, and specifically male, privilege. In both texts, mothers are absent for one reason or another. Josephine, in Mansfield's story, remembers her mother dying young; in *The Pastor's Wife*, Ingeborg's mother lies quietly immobile on the sofa, submerged in the pages of novels hidden behind religious covers, to circumvent the Bishop's policing. In both texts, there is also a lurking sense, frequently unnamed, of fundamental unease. Moreover, the openings to von Arnim's novel and Mansfield's short story turn on the idea of escape (real or imagined) and subsequent freedom, and this is a specific release from a combination of familial obligation and a largely unspoken fear of displeasing "father."

The passage ushering in the idea of freedom for Josephine and Constantia in Mansfield's "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" is well known: "a square of sunshine, pale red […] stayed, deepened—until it shone almost gold" on the Indian carpet, while "A perfect fountain of bubbling notes shook from the barrel-organ" outside, "round, bright notes, carelessly scattered."[49] This blazing visual and audible moment signals a change of heart and a stream of interior thoughts, gradually loosening from ideas of fragile grief and daughterly duty to those of potential release. We learn that Constantia has often, and secretly, risen from bed during her father's reign to lie on the floor in the moonlight "as though she was crucified"—the perfect biblical symbol of sacrifice and suffering for the Father.[50] Alongside these private moments and brief happy memories of the seaside, Constantia muses that life "seemed to have happened in a kind of tunnel."[51] With father dead, Josephine is thinking too: "Would it

have been different if mother hadn't died?" "might they have married?" And, in a particularly poignant recollection, we learn that "one year at Eastbourne a mysterious man at their boarding-house [...] put a note on a jug of hot water outside" the sisters' bedroom door, but "by the time Connie had found it the steam had made the writing too faint to read" and, in any case, the sisters were not sure to which of them it was addressed.[52]

In von Arnim's earlier *The Pastor's Wife*, Ingeborg's release to the dentist prompts similar thoughts, but of greater freedom: "Audacious imaginings that made her laugh," rather like the release of infectious and sisterly giggling that breaks out in Mansfield's story.[53] For Ingeborg, with ten pounds in her pocket, she can now think of buying forbidden books or going somewhere grand for dinner, or to the theatre, or *even* the music hall; "nobody" can "prevent me," she muses, before deciding this is the full "glory" of her situation.[54] Through subtly shifting focalization and free indirect speech, we follow Ingeborg's escalating imaginings ("a lurid fabric of possible daring deeds")[55] without anticipating just how far her enthusiasm will lead. Geographically distant from her father, "The Bishop [...] seemed to have faded quite pallid," so that responding to an advertisement for a holiday to Lucerne and joining a group of fellow excursionists seem entirely possible, particularly since Ingeborg recalls the convenient excuse of a bold woman traveler (amazingly on skis) in her family background.[56]

In both von Arnim's and Mansfield's texts, the freedom to travel, to imagine, to dream, to laugh, and to act independently are all made possible by the absence of demanding fathers, and it seems the Beauchamp family idea of the "Pa-Man" may well be lurking beneath the textual surface. As Leslie de Charms, the daughter of von Arnim writes, a "Pa-Man" was shorthand in the family for a dominant [male] individual endowed with a highly independent nature and much common sense, even if the "large benevolence" associated with this kind of "Pa" is missing from the portrayal of Mansfield's Colonel and von Arnim's Bishop.[57] Nevertheless, dominant "Pas" are catalysts for ideas of female freedom and escape in the prose of both authors and, in each case, daughters become conduits for an exploration of this topic. It is also worth noting that, in an era when fathers were expected to transfer responsibility for their daughters to their husbands, in both texts there are nods toward the idea of marriage, although this is treated differently by each author. In Mansfield's story, Josephine's recollection of the mysterious man at Eastbourne raises marriage as an impossible dream before the idea swiftly falls away altogether. In von Arnim's novel, Ingeborg never thinks of marriage but, even so, finds herself accidentally, and hilariously, engaged, and then unhappily married to

a controlling Lutheran Pastor she has met on the trip to Lucerne. Essentially she becomes sandwiched, as it were, between two chilly and demanding clerics, and a novel exploring vicarious female living that could initially have been titled *The Pastor's Daughter* becomes all too plausibly *The Pastor's Wife*.

And what about Mansfield's Constantia and her emerging ideas of freedom? The answer to this question is complex mainly because a series of possibilities flit through her mind in an elongated moment replete with significance, but marriage is neither a possibility nor a source of past regret for Constantia. With two sisters in play, Mansfield seems to ask why marriage should always be a woman's preoccupation? Steadily, however, Constantia's awaking instinct for freedom and her rising optimism about the prospects of a bright new future gradually diminish. Her long-repressed thoughts may rise and fall, but the words associated with freedom cannot be spoken. It is not possible to codify the overwhelming feeling of release and optimism for fresh opportunities in language, and so the words dissolve and fade as if in the steam of the Eastbourne jug: "'I've forgotten what it was … that I was going to say,'" she tells Josephine, who responds simply, leaving the story unresolved, "'I've forgotten too.'" The daughters of the late Colonel watch as a big cloud moves "to where the sun had been."[58]

Von Arnim was particularly impressed by Mansfield's collection *The Garden Party*, and it is interesting to find she especially favored two stories. In a letter to a friend, she explains:

> I've just been writing to Katherine about her book—some of the things in it are marvellous—some less so, but still leave a queer, extraordinary impression on one—all are bleeding with reality. The one I think best and so terribly moving is "Ma Parker"—and after that the "Daughters of the Late Colonel."[59]

To which Mansfield responds, "I know of course you are far too generous to me. But oh, dear Elizabeth how you make me long to deserve your praise."[60]

Putting mutual regard and respect aside for one moment, it seems father and daughter relationships, and fictional fathers more generally, hold a certain interest for Mansfield and her cousin. Occasionally, they also become the subject of letters between them. Writing from the Chalet des Sapins, Switzerland, on October 23, 1921, Mansfield praises von Arnim's *Vera* with its tyrannical central character, Everard Wemyss, before telling her cousin, "My little sisters" have just sent a copy of the novel "to my Father. Which makes me gasp. But I expect he will admire Wemyss tremendously and agree with every thought and every feeling and shut the book with an extraordinary sense of satisfaction before climbing

the stairs to my step mother."[61] The comment is amusing, though in the novel Wemyss is terrifying, but we still have a glimpse of Mansfield's father mediated through his daughter's eyes, a perspective she elaborates upon the following year, "We have seen my Papa. He will live for hundreds of years, growing redder and firmer and fatter forever. As to his 'fund of humorous stories' it doesn't bear thinking about. I felt I must creep under the table during lunch."[62] And, von Arnim's recollection of her father is, in some ways, similarly revealing. He was, she writes, a "just but irritable man, with far few skins for comfort, noise easily exasperated him."[63] To acknowledge these comments is not to read biography directly into the fiction, but to situate it within a wider, and loose, frame of familial association and evident textual resonance to help capture the subtle shadings of connection that runs throughout the writing of these authors.

In drawing to a close, I would like to air a couple of additional ideas that seem to flow from this association and from the shared interest in father-daughter relationships in "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" again, and von Arnim's 1931 novel, *Father*, published after Mansfield's untimely death. In Mansfield's short story, when the barrel-organ strikes up on Gower Street outside the Colonel's house, Josephine and Constantia spring to their feet in rapid and instinctive response to stop it, before they remember their father is dead. Then, Josephine

> remembered. It didn't matter […] Never again would she and Constantia be told to make that monkey take his noise somewhere else. Never would sound that loud strange bellow when father thought they were not hurrying enough. The organ-grinder might play there all day and [father's] stick would not thump.[64]

To reiterate, this heightened episode is part of the catalyst for the sisters' thinking about potential freedom and life beyond that of father's care. It is curious to discover, therefore, that in von Arnim's later novel, *Father*, this moment is echoed. Here we find a central, overworked, unmarried daughter, Jennifer, who has spent years tending to the "great Richard Dodge," an author with a "small fastidious public."[65] Like Josephine, Constantia, and Ingeborg before her, Jennifer is trapped by familial duty, her mother having died early. We find father considers Jennifer an "obedient hand-maid waiting on his thoughts […] typing and re-typing, over and over again with dogged patience,"[66] believing "she knew only such words as he dictated to her."[67] When father unexpectedly takes a very young, and star-struck wife ("all eyelashes and alarm"),[68] Jennifer sees her escape route: "Through and beyond father she saw doors flying open, walls falling flat, and herself running unhindered […] along Gower Street, away through London […] into great sunlit spaces."[69] But this is not before she acknowledges

the claustrophobia of life until this moment, and particularly remembers the fact that she and father have lived "an almost inaudible existence" except for the clock ticking and the near-constant "tapping of Jennifer's typewriter."[70] If "street musicians tried to ply Gower Street with music," Jennifer thinks, "on such occasions as they came near enough for him to hear, father went out himself and judiciously addressed them"—the word "judicious" opening out into a wonderful, almost Mansfieldian, ambiguity.[71]

The similarities between this prominent moment in Mansfield's story and this brief episode in von Arnim's *Father* could pass without notice in the layered texture of this comedic novel but, once identified, we can surely argue for a qualification to Mansfield's claim that she "never *could*" influence the writing of her cousin. But, more importantly, by tracing father-daughter relationships through the work of these authors we are able to establish not just a continuum of familial and literary connection, but also of resonance and echoes that help us revisit and reassess the work of these two women separately, as well as together. As I first argued in 2013, reading Mansfield "through the lens of von Arnim's early novels creates a curious, and occasionally disconcerting, sense of *déjà vu*, and this arises cumulatively."[72] On reflection, I remain equally persuaded of this first connection with respect to Mansfield's collection *In a German Pension*, while being increasingly intrigued by the complex ways in which ideas, attitudes, and preoccupations are periodically transposed, transferred, or recast in the wider work of these Beauchamp women even if, as Frank Swinnerton suggested in 1963, von Arnim's "talent lay in fun, satirical portraiture, and farcical comedy, qualities […] scorned by those obsessed [with …] 'the modern dilemma.'"[73]

In closing, it is important to mention that the final letter Mansfield wrote was to von Arnim; and just a few months after his wife's death, Murry would go on to dedicate his first edited collection of Mansfield's poems to her cousin. The epigraph reads: "To Elizabeth of the German Garden who loved certain of these poems and their author."[74] But, perhaps it is best to leave the final words to the living Mansfield writing from the Swiss mountain where her relationship with her cousin deepened and where, in several senses, von Arnim's understanding of Mansfield became a welcome "help and comfort" to her "in dark moments."[75] In a particularly moving letter, she writes of the view from the Chalet des Sapins which must have been so familiar to them both, confident she would meet in von Arnim a complementary sensibility equal to her own:

> I am on the balcony and it's too dark to write or do anything but wait for the stars. A time I love. One feels half disembodied, sitting like a shadow at the door

of one's being while the dark tide rises. Then comes the moon, marvellously serene, and small stars, very merry for some reason of their own. It is so easy to forget, in a *worldly* life, to attend to these miracles. But no matter. They are there waiting, when one returns. Dawn is another. The incomparable beauty of every morning, before human beings are awake! But it all comes back to the same thing, Elizabeth. There's no escaping the glory of Life.[76]

Notes

1 Katherine Mansfield, "A Witty Sentimentalist," in *Novels and Novelists*, ed. John Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1930), 248–9.

2 Elizabeth von Arnim to Katherine Mansfield, 1922, Countess Russell Papers, ER1476-1479, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

3 See Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Cape, 1980), 33, and Kathleen Jones, *Katherine Mansfield*: *The Story-Teller* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 60. Von Arnim was first cousin to Mansfield's father, Harold Beauchamp.

4 For recent discussions of Elizabeth von Arnim's work see, in chronological order: Erica Brown, *Comedy and the Feminine Middlebrow Novel: Elizabeth von Arnim and Elizabeth Taylor* (London: Routledge, 2012); Isobel Maddison, *Elizabeth von Arnim*: *Beyond the German Garden* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Jennifer Walker, *Elizabeth of the German Garden: A Biography of Elizabeth von Arnim* (Leicester: Book Guild, 2013); Juliane Römhild, *Femininity and Authorship in the Novels of Elizabeth von Arnim: At Her Most Radiant Moment* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson, 2014); Isobel Maddison, Juliane Römhild, and Jennifer Walker, eds., "Re-Evaluating Elizabeth von Arnim," *Women: A Cultural Review* 28, Special Issue (June 22, 2017).

5 For the first detailed discussion of Katherine Mansfield's and Elizabeth von Arnim's work together, see Isobel Maddison, "Worms of the Same Family: Elizabeth von Arnim and Katherine Mansfield," in *Beyond the German Garden*, 85–103. This includes a reading of Mansfield's "A Cup of Tea" (1922) which, it is suggested, reflects a moment of occasional tension between the cousins, following von Arnim's comment that Mansfield's "At the Bay" was "a *pretty* little story!" (88–90).

6 Jennifer Walker, "The Beauchamp Connection," in *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe: Connections and Influence*, ed. Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber (London: Palgrave, 2015), 154–68.

7 See Maddison, "Worms," 85–103. Kathleen Jones also notes that a review of *In a German Pension* in the *Spectator* at the time of publication compared "Katherine's sketches to the German stories of her cousin Elizabeth von Arnim" (*Story-Teller* 148).

8 See Isobel Maddison, "Complementary Cousins: Constructing the Maternal in the Writing of Elizabeth von Arnim and Katherine Mansfield," in *Middlebrow and Gender, 1890–1945* (Leiden: Brill/Rodopi, 2016), 79–98.
9 See Walker, "The Beauchamp Connection," 154–68.
10 See, for example, Maddison, "Worms," 99–100. This segment reads the final section of von Arnim's *The Pastor's Wife* and Mansfield's later story, "The Black Cap" (1917), together, establishing a range of connections around the idea of female escape narratives.
11 Leslie de Charms, *Elizabeth of the German Garden* (London: Heinemann, 1958), 220.
12 *Letters* 4, 260.
13 Ibid., 252.
14 Gerri Kimber, Isobel Maddison, and Todd Martin, eds., *Katherine Mansfield and Elizabeth von Arnim*, Katherine Mansfield Studies 11 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019). Authors include Juliane Römhild, Bonnie Kime Scott, Angela Smith, Noreen O'Connor, Karina Jakubowicz, Richard Cappuccio, Alison Hennegan, Ann Herdon Marshall, and Charlotte Fiehn.
15 Walker, "The Beauchamp Connection," 154.
16 Jones, *Story-Teller*, 15.
17 Walker, "The Beauchamp Connection," 156. Sir Walter Parratt was a well-known and respected organist and composer. In 1887, Elizabeth von Arnim was the only female council Exhibitioner to study at the Royal College of Music where she achieved a professional level of performance on the organ.
18 See Walker, "The Beauchamp Connection," 154–68.
19 Ibid., 157.
20 Mansfield to Sylvia Payne, April 24, 1906, quoted in Jones, *Story-Teller*, 86.
21 Jones, *Story-Teller*, 82.
22 Ibid., 99. The twenty-one books written by Mansfield's cousin where signed "By the author of Elizabeth and her German Garden" and later "By Elizabeth," but she was christened Mary Annette, her family called her May, and her work has become known as that of Elizabeth von Arnim.
23 *Letters* 4, 252.
24 Walker, "The Beauchamp Connection," 161; Katherine Mansfield, "Two Novels of Worth," in *Novels and Novelists*, 7.
25 Katherine Mansfield to John Middleton Murry, *Letters* 3, 112.
26 Katherine Mansfield to Elizabeth von Arnim, [June 5, 1922], *Letters* 5, 196. The "little chalet" was where von Arnim worked on her novels.
27 *Letters* 4, 252.
28 After one visit on January 11, 1922, Mansfield wrote in her journal, "Elizabeth came. She looked fascinating in her black suit, something between a Bishop and a

Fly. She spoke of my 'pretty little story' in the *Mercury.* All the time she was here I was conscious of falsity" (CW4, 403).

29 *Letters* 4, 287.

30 *Letters* 5, 12.

31 *Letters* 4, 346–7.

32 Ibid., 252.

33 See, for example, Clare Hanson, *Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), 134n25. Hanson finds the connection between Mansfield and von Arnim obscure.

34 Elizabeth von Arnim, *The Pastor's Wife* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1914), 1.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 2.

37 Katherine Mansfield, "Bliss," in CW2, 142.

38 Von Arnim, *Pastor's Wife*, 7.

39 Ibid., 11.

40 Ibid., 2.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 7.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 3.

45 Katherine Mansfield, "Daughters of the Late Colonel," in CW2, 282.

46 Ibid., 273.

47 Ibid., 271.

48 Von Arnim, *Pastor's Wife*, 14.

49 Mansfield, "Daughters," 280.

50 Ibid., 282.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., 281.

53 Von Arnim, *Pastor's Wife,* 5.

54 Ibid., 4.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 7.

57 de Charms, *Elizabeth of the German Garden*, 9.

58 Mansfield, "Daughters," 282.

59 Quoted in Maddison, *Beyond the German Garden*, 103.

60 *Letters* 5, 89–90.

61 *Letters* 4, 300.

62 *Letters* 5, 254.

63 Elizabeth von Arnim, *All the Dogs of My Life* (1936; London: Virago, 1995), 4.

64 Mansfield, "Daughters," 280.

65 Elizabeth von Arnim, *Father* (London: Macmillan, 1931), 6.
66 Ibid., 2.
67 Ibid., 16.
68 Ibid., 19.
69 Ibid., 4.
70 Ibid., 22.
71 Ibid.
72 Maddison, "Worms," 101.
73 Frank Swinnerton, *Figures in the Foreground*: *Literary Reminiscences 1917–40* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), 55.
74 John Middleton Murry, ed., *Poems of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1923).
75 Katherine Mansfield to Elizabeth von Arnim, [late January 1922], *Letters* 5, 25.
76 Katherine Mansfield to Elizabeth von Arnim, October 16, 1921, *Letters* 4, 297.

Part Three

Katherine Mansfield and Genre

11

Katherine Mansfield and the Short Story

Ailsa Cox

Katherine Mansfield is a key figure in the evolution of the modern short story, which, as Dominic Head has observed, is "a relatively new phenomenon (compared with the longer history of the novel)."[1] Short fiction, as a concentrated prose form, is amenable to literary innovation and to technical experiments that might not be sustainable across an entire novel, and because of the cultural dominance of the long form, short story practitioners have cultivated an artistic self-awareness, exploring and articulating the genre's specific properties. Later in this chapter, I shall discuss the techniques Mansfield uses to exploit those properties, with close readings of "Psychology" (1920) and "Je ne parle pas français" (1918). I focus especially on her ability to suggest complex subjective states through her manipulation of voice and viewpoint as well as her approach to temporality and the subversion of linear narrative. With "Prelude" (1917), "At the Bay" (1921), and "The Doll's House" (1921), Mansfield pioneers the interlinking of stand-alone short stories which has become increasingly significant in the twentieth- and twenty-first century; I conclude with a brief discussion of these texts as a short story cycle. But I shall begin by placing her work in the context of short story theory, alluding to her literary and other artistic influences.

Context and Influences

Short story theorists, from Edgar Allan Poe onwards, have stressed the genre's modernity, its stylistic precision, and its heightened emotional affect. In his much-cited review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* (1842), Poe claims that "all high excitements are necessarily transient" and that short forms are uniquely equipped to attain the "unity of effect or impression" that, for him, is the ultimate goal of literary endeavor:

> In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to be the one preestablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction.[2]

An important influence on French Symbolism, Poe's aesthetic theories provide a convenient link to the plotless short fiction, prose poetry, and sketches of the *fin-de-siècle*. Clare Hanson makes an important distinction between the conventional short story, "those works in which the major emphasis is on plot," and a second category, short fiction "in which plot is subordinate to psychology and mood."[3] In the latter, meaning is constructed through the juxtaposition of images rather than a linear chain of events. Ambiguities are unresolved, and endings are inconclusive, the text both opening and ending *in media res.* The impressionistic prose poems, sketches, and vignettes of the late nineteenth century, often published in small-circulation literary magazines such as the *Yellow Book,* situated the genre within the avant-garde. The small-circulation magazines of the modernist era perpetuated the conception of short fiction as high art; Mansfield's involvement with periodical culture, through *Rhythm* and other magazines, seems to confirm this "short fiction" lineage.

Such generic categories are never watertight, especially given the elasticity and range of short fiction writing in general. More recently, Jenny McDonnell has challenged the supposed distinction between writing for profit and artistic ambition, describing how Mansfield's negotiations with the marketplace produced work that was "formally inventive, commercially viable and accessible to a general reading public" toward the end of her life.[4] But Hanson's classification remains useful in that it maps the development of literary short fiction as primarily a representation of subjective reality. Her claim that "modernist short fiction is the paradigmatic form of early twentieth-century literature, best able to express a fragmented sensibility" moves Mansfield from the margins of the modernist experiment to a place at the center, where she belongs.[5]

Both Mansfield's admirers and her detractors, especially in the years immediately following her death, have placed Mansfield's work in what they perceive as a Chekhovian tradition. The influential American critic Charles E. May argues that "Chekhov's conception of the short-story as a lyrically charged fragment in which characters are less fully rounded realistic figures than they are embodiments of mood has influenced all twentieth-century practitioners of the form" through the legacy of three figures—Katherine Mansfield, James Joyce, and Sherwood Anderson.[6] The key characteristic May

believes has been inherited from Chekhov is the presentation of a character's internal states of consciousness through detailed external description. By way of illustration, May gives a comparative reading of Mansfield's "The Fly" (1922) and Chekhov's "Misery" (first published in Russian, 1886), noting the subtlety with which Mansfield develops the symbolism of the fly itself. May also suggests that the heightened subjectivity of the Chekhovian mode generates, for many writers of short fiction, a perception that reality itself is ambiguous, mysterious, or unstable.

"Misery" is one of the Chekhov stories mostly highly rated by a 1921 review of a volume translated by Constance Garnett, originally signed by John Middleton Murry but now attributed to Mansfield.[7] Her enthusiasm for Chekhov is apparent from the repeated references in her journal and her correspondence, and from her collaboration with S. S. Koteliansky on translations of Chekhov's letters and diary; however, scholars are taking a more balanced view of the lessons she learned from his fiction. Sydney Janet Kaplan has extricated her work from an over-emphasis on the Chekhovian nexus, drawing attention to the formative influences of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater.[8] Sarah Ailwood and Melinda Harvey have provided a nuanced understanding of the complexities of literary influence as manifested in the compositional process.[9] This includes a measured assessment by Harvey of the role Chekhov played in both Mansfield's practice and her reception. She argues that, since Constance Garnett's translations were bringing Chekhov's fiction into wider circulation during a period that coincided with Mansfield's most significant work, the two writers might be regarded as contemporaries:

> Mansfield, in fact, conjures her own lineage by recognising the value of Chekhov's writing and helping to promulgate it. It is the descendant who serves a canon-making function by nominating for herself and for modern short-story writers a potential precursor before that tradition was established. Chekhov became that precursor because Mansfield's own stories made his stories look contemporary.[10]

This recontextualization of Mansfield's place within the so-called Chekhovian tradition enables us to read the two in parallel, rather than in a kind of patriarchal succession.

Mansfield uses Chekhov as an exemplar when she reflects on the art of short fiction, thereby revealing glimpses of her personal poetics, as in this extract from a review of short story collections written for the *Athenaeum* in 1920:

> Suppose we put it in the form of a riddle: "I am neither a short story, nor a sketch, nor an impression, nor a tale. I am written in prose. I am a great deal

> shorter than a novel; I may be only one page long, but, on the other hand, there is no reason why I should not be thirty. I have a special quality—a something, a something, which is immediately, perfectly, recognizable. It belongs to me; it is my essence. In fact I am often given away in the first sentence. I seem almost to stand or fall by it. It is to me what the first phrase of the song is to the singer."[11]

Mansfield does not answer her riddle, nor is she actually looking for an answer (although Hanson's later classification, "short fiction," may come to mind). The three examples of the new genre volunteered by Mansfield in her review are all stories by Chekhov, each containing that indefinable "essence." In the review of Chekhov, she identifies "an aesthetic impulse that is organic," channeling an overflow of emotions—both directly experienced and observed empathically—into the paradoxically impersonal act of creation.[12]

Mansfield's own creative process was often intuitive; writing to John Middleton Murry, she describes dreaming "Sun and Moon," rushing to put the whole story down before it faded from memory.[13] (The concept of intuition, praised in an essay co-written by Mansfield and Murry for *Rhythm*, was a key element in Bergsonian thought, which I shall discuss later in this chapter in relation to her handling of temporality.) But she also made careful technical decisions, as is made clear in this account of the drafting of "Miss Brill" (1920):

> I chose not only the length of every sentence, but even the sound of every sentence—I chose the rise and fall of every paragraph to fit her—and to fit her on that day at that very moment. After Id written it I read it aloud—numbers of times—just as one would *play over* a musical composition, trying to get in nearer and nearer to the expression of Miss Brill—until it fitted her.[14]

Musical analogies such as this imply an organic approach to creativity, marrying instinctual or rhythmic drives with technical mastery. Mansfield also finds parallels in the visual arts, saying, for instance, of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*: "They taught me something about writing, which was queer—a kind of freedom—or rather, a shaking free."[15] These artistic analogies, like Poe's pictorial reference to "one preestablished design," also emphasize the architectural integrity of the short story text, as a complete and self-sufficient creation.[16] Not a single note or brush stroke or word is superfluous—a point Mansfield makes with a memorable simile: "I feel as fastidious as though I wrote with acid."[17]

On the whole, though, Mansfield is less pre-occupied with formal definitions than short story theorists such as Poe, tending to speak more broadly of the writer's art. She was an omnivorous reader, her letters and journals referring

to Shakespeare and Chaucer, as well as to her Victorian predecessors and to Russian literature. Her references to Dickens, and Dickensian echoes in her own fiction, offer further insights into her personal aesthetic; she could learn as much from a master of the long form as she could from those who specialized in short fiction. The observation in her journal that "there are moments when Dickens is possessed by this power of writing—he is carried away—that is bliss" once again stresses intuitive aspects of the compositional process.[18] Michael Hollington suggests that, in her reading of Dickens, Mansfield responds to "a hyperbolic version of metonymy in which the writer literally *becomes* the object or attribute on which he or she focuses."[19] Mansfield's characters also undergo this metamorphosis, the boundaries collapsing between the self, the body, and the external world, as in this passage from "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1920):

> Some little sparrows, young sparrows they sounded, chirped on the window-ledge. *Yeep—eyeep—yeep.* But Josephine felt they were not sparrows, not on the window-ledge. It was inside her, that queer little crying noise. *Yeep—eyeep—yeep.* Ah, what was it crying, so weak and forlorn?[20]

Gerri Kimber has provided a detailed analysis of Mansfield's experiments with Symbolist techniques, for instance her conscious imitation of Baudelaire in "Spring Pictures" (1915), showing how early sketches and vignettes laid the foundations for subsequent renditions of landscape.[21] Nonetheless, a comparison might be made between the opening passage of "At the Bay," describing a misty morning in New Zealand, and Dickens's description of London in the fog on the first page of *Bleak House* (1853). Like Dickens, Mansfield animates landscape and weather, using fractured syntax and staccato sentences for dramatic immediacy, gradually introducing human beings into the natural environment.

The most obvious Dickensian touches in Mansfield are to be found in the parodic and tragicomic elements. The smug intelligentsia are satirized in "Bliss" (1918) and "Marriage à la Mode" (1921). In "Miss Brill" (1920), "Life of Ma Parker" (1921), and "Pictures" (1919), pathos is induced by the contrast between the rich inner life of a marginalized characters and the impoverished imaginations of their social superiors who mock, patronize, or exploit the long-suffering protagonists.

Mansfield considered following in Dickens's footsteps by giving live readings in public, and claimed she'd reduced her schoolmates to tears in her renditions of his work.[22] The performative aspects of her work, evident in her frequent use of musical analogies, include a theatrical element that is manifested both

thematically and formally, and that she also shares with Dickens. In "Pictures," the "fair little baby thing about thirty in a white lace hat with cherries round it" who chats with Ada Moss in the scramble for a job in moving pictures could be one of the theatricals in *Nicholas Nickleby*.[23] The first published version of this story was in dialogue form; many other examples of Mansfield's work, including her final completed story, "The Canary" (1922), may be considered dramatic monologues or dialogues.

Mansfield's influences, as we have seen, are multifarious; there is no single line of literary succession in which she can be placed, despite efforts to categorize her, for instance as a Chekhovian. Broadly speaking, her work belongs within the tradition of relatively plotless, image-based short fiction, but it is also infused with dramatic and performative qualities. She exploits short fiction's affinity with heightened states of consciousness through dynamic, almost hyperreal imagery, and her exploration of psychic states. She utilizes its elliptical properties to maximize the ambiguities of the text. Her stories are written intuitively, yet they are also tightly controlled, both courting and resisting Poe's "unity of effect or impression."[24] How this is achieved is not easy to summarize, but in my first close reading, I shall look in particular at voice and viewpoint before moving on to discuss temporality and narrative structure in the second.

"Psychology": Voice and Viewpoint

Mansfield's texts orchestrate many different voices, not only through first-person narration and extensive passages of direct speech, but also through free indirect discourse—a type of third-person narration that is focalized through the character and fuses their idiolect with the authorial voice. Dominic Head relates this dialogue of voices to what he calls Mansfield's "impersonal style"—her presentation of human behavior as "a focus of confusion and conflict, requiring a polyphonous presentation."[25]

"Psychology" supplies a very clear example of the clash between competing voices. On a superficial level, it is a simple story staging an encounter between two acquaintances. Its conversational setting and almost complete adherence to dramatic unities are reminiscent of stage drama. Yet the multiple ambiguities in voice and viewpoint facilitated by free indirect discourse add complicated interpretive layers, impossible to replicate except in prose fiction.

The story begins *in media res*, hinting at an indeterminate past history that will never be revealed to the reader: "When she opened the door and saw

him standing there she was more pleased than ever before, and he, too, as he followed her into the studio, seemed very very happy to have come."[26] This long sentence encapsulates the irresolvable contradictions of the entire story, illustrating Mansfield's remarks concerning the crucial importance of striking the right note from the very beginning. The man only "seemed" happy, and his state of mind is constantly reassessed, as it is revealed or concealed through speech, gesture, and the speculations of his female interlocutor. Here, the narrative appears to be focalized through the female character, the rather childish "very very happy" replicating colloquial speech. The emotional incontinence implied by his then laying aside his hat and coat "as though he were taking leave of them for ever" casts some doubt over the scale of the pleasure he experiences at their reunion.[27]

The direct speech of the characters is for the most part confined to chit-chat, of both the social and the intellectual kind: "I have been wondering very much lately whether the novel of the future will be a psychological novel or not."[28] However, this outward speech is intercut with passages of inner speech, introduced early in the story:

> Their secret selves whispered:
> "Why should we speak? Isn't this enough?"
> "More than enough. I never realized until this moment … "
> "How good it is to be with you … "[29]

The unattributed speech merges their separate identities, the ellipses implying that words cannot contain the full ecstasy of their communion. Elsewhere, the viewpoint seems to switch back and forth between the two of them. The fractured syntax again mimics colloquial speech to suggest the unmediated flow of thought and emotion: "It was delightful—this business of having tea—and she always had delicious things to eat—little sharp sandwiches, short sweet almond fingers, and a dark, rich cake tasting of rum—but it was an interruption."[30] However, any assumptions about viewpoint are gradually destabilized:

> He wanted it over, the table pushed away, their two chairs drawn up to the light, and the moment came when he took out his pipe, filled it, and said, pressing the tobacco deep inside the bowl; "I have been thinking over what you said last time and it seems to me …."
>
> Yes, that was what he waited for and so did she.[31]

The single-sentence paragraph affirms mutuality, yet it also undermines the reliability of the previous account of his thoughts and motivations. The critic

Nicholas Royle has argued that the short story as a genre is characterized by a radical instability of viewpoint: "the model is always cryptic, haunted […] and, in crucial ways, blind."[32] This instability of viewpoint is strongly pronounced in Mansfield's work. When the female character pictures "those other two"—that is to say, the supposedly authentic, "secret" selves—so vividly "it might have been painted on the blue teapot lid," she is dazzled by the intensity of a purely subjective vision.[33]

At this point, the reader might reasonably conclude that the entire narrative is focalized through the female protagonist, and that her visitor's consciousness is entirely her construction. Yet the narrative returns persuasively to the thwarted mutuality of the "secret selves," the focalization switching back, plausibly, to the male viewpoint:

> There was another way for them to speak to each other, and in the new way he wanted to murmur: "Do you feel this too? Do you understand it at all?" …
>
> Instead, to his horror, he heard himself say: "I must be off; I'm meeting Brand at six."[34]

As he takes his leave, she gazes out into the night, observing "the beautiful fall of the steps, the dark garden ringed with glittering ivy, on the other side of the road the huge bare willows and above them the sky big and bright with stars" and reflecting sarcastically that he "with his wonderful 'spiritual' vision" will be immune to these lovely surroundings.[35] Soon the authorial voice and the speech of both characters are elided to such an extent they become impossible to disentangle:

> She was right. He did see nothing at all. Misery! He'd missed it. It was too late to do anything now. Was it too late? Yes, it was. A cold snatch of hateful wind blew into the garden. Curse life! He heard her cry "au revoir" and the door slammed.[36]

It is impossible to assign a central consciousness in this story, or to establish simple truths. Both characters define themselves as writers—she as a playwright, he as a novelist—yet there is no evidence that they have produced anything. The woman's claim to be working on some wood-cuts is just an excuse to get rid of a second caller, a gushing female friend bringing her a bunch of violets.

Having dispatched her second, unwanted caller, the female protagonist withdraws to her studio, struck once again by the overwhelming beauty of the natural world at her doorstep. The ending of the story is deeply ambiguous. On the one hand, the hyperbolic language continues the parodic undertones running through the text: "even the act of breathing was a joy …."[37] On the

other hand, Mansfield seems to imply a genuine creative breakthrough on the part of the female character, taking the form of a long letter to her male visitor, signing off with the haunting phrase, "Good night, my friend. Come again soon."[38]

The circumstances in which the phrase is first uttered require some careful reading, thanks to the layering of viewpoints and the use of the pronoun, "she." The protagonist has just embraced her second caller "very softly and gently, as though fearful of making a ripple in the boundless pool of quiet."[39] The visitor is naturally startled:

> But as she spoke she was enfolded—more tenderly, more beautifully embraced, held by such a sweet pressure and for so long that the poor dear's mind positively reeled and she just had the strength to quaver: "Then you really don't mind me too much?"
>
> "Good night, my friend," whispered the other. "Come again soon."
>
> "Oh, I will. I will."[40]

"The other" is, on one level, simply a device to avoid repeating "she," but it also muddles the viewpoint a little; surely it is the visitor, the "poor dear" who is "other"? More importantly, "whispered the other" echoes "those other two," visualized so clearly on the teapot lid, along with the "secret selves" who whispered unspoken desires.[41] But this whisper is not unspoken, as the visitor's reply makes clear. Repressed desires are voiced almost as a re-enactment, or a revision, of the previous encounter.

Other echoes of the first encounter resound within the second, for instance the metaphor of the pool, standing for silences that transcend speech. While it is possible to read the second encounter as purely the release of sexual desires repressed in the first, another reading might identify the channeling of those desires into the creative act. The protagonist is writing a letter, not an avowedly fictional text, but her re-purposing of the phrase that concludes both her letter and the text of "Psychology" suggests the fiction-making process as the re-arrangement of material from life into aesthetically pleasing narrative patterns. Although the contents of this impassioned letter are withheld, the writer's receptiveness to voice and the channeling of a heightened emotional state into the creative process reflect Mansfield's own aesthetic beliefs, as expressed in her response to other writers and her account of her own process. This self-reflexive aspect of her work is something I shall return to in my discussion of "Je ne parle pas français."

"Je ne parle pas français": Temporality and Digression

Mansfield's fiction, like that of many other modernist writers, engages with time as flux or Bergsonian duration. The writings of Henri Bergson (1859–1941), hugely fashionable amongst the *cognoscenti* of the early twentieth century, contested mechanical concepts of scientific reality. Real time was, in his view, an interpenetration of past and present, memories and perceptions, rather than a succession of discrete quantities. Bergson also posited a dynamic life force, the *élan vital,* and believed that artists were uniquely able to commune with an essential reality: "between nature and ourselves, nay between ourselves and our own consciousness a veil is interposed; a veil that is dense and opaque for the common herd—thin, almost transparent, for the artist and poet."[42]

Modernist short fiction's temporal fluidity, its ability to slip between present-day perceptions and memories of the past, often using sense impressions, is its most significant formal legacy. Bergsonian ideas about contact with a deeper and more elusive reality—in other words, the experience of pure duration—may also be related to the literary concept of the epiphany. Originally coined by James Joyce, the term describes a spontaneous instant of transformational insight, triggered within the mundane and unobservable to the external eye. In image-based modernist short fiction, the narrative turning point is delivered through the epiphany rather than external events or plot development. Mansfield frequently subverts the epiphanic moment in "Psychology," retaining some skepticism toward self-consciously elevated states. In his study of Mansfield's relationship with periodical culture, Chris Mourant discusses Mansfield's ambivalence toward the Bergsonian values espoused by *Rhythm* through a reading of "Je ne parle pas français." The first-person narrator, Raoul Duquette, is revealed to be an egotistical scoundrel whose ideals about high art are "entangled," as Mourant explains, "with projected notions of racial and sexual otherness."[43]

Mansfield herself regarded this text as a breakthrough in her practice, and its drafting seems to have been a particularly fraught process: "Oh God—is it good? I am frightened. For I stand or fall by it. Its as far as I can get at present and I have gone for it, bitten deeper & deeper & deeper than I ever have before."[44] Yet the narrative unfolds in a seemingly effortless fashion right from the start: "I do not know why I have such a fancy for this little café. It's dirty and sad, sad. It's not as if it had anything to distinguish itself from a hundred others; it hasn't."[45] The as-yet anonymous first-person narrator appears to be recording random impressions and philosophical aperçus within a stream of consciousness. A

self-reflexive element is introduced as he floats from present tense into past: "Anyhow, 'the short winter afternoon was drawing to a close,' as they say, and I was drifting along, either going home or not going home, when I found myself in here, walking over to this seat in the corner."[46]

The desire to commit his words to paper is frustrated when he finds no writing pad available, just "a morsel of pink blotting-paper, incredibly soft and limp and almost moist, like the tongue of a little dead kitten, which I've never felt."[47] The fabricated image of the kitten's tongue signals inauthenticity. It is also an excellent example of Mansfield's fondness for animal imagery, foreshadowing later sections of this story. These chronicle the relationship between the "little perfumed fox-terrier of a Frenchman" who is the story's narrator with an English couple, Dick and the oddly named Mouse.[48]

A scribbled phrase on the scrap of blotting paper, "Je ne parle pas français," prompts an epiphanic moment: "There! It had come—the moment—the *geste*! And although I was ready, it caught me, it tumbled me over; I was simply overwhelmed. [...] Just for one moment I was not. I was Agony, Agony, Agony."[49] The ordinary French phrase rehearses what the reader will later discover to be the first, and the final, words spoken by Mouse to the narrator. By his own account, it unleashes powerful emotions, transcending time and space, and certainly, as a literary device, its repetition throughout the narrative connects past and present. Yet, despite his perpetual self-examination, the narrator's insights remain purely superficial, and the reader will eventually discover the extent to which the narrator exploited Mouse after Dick abandoned her in Paris.

"Je ne parle pas français" is marked by seemingly random shifts, not only in time but also in style and tone. Some pages into the story, the narrator finally announces his name, revealing some of his dubious history in a confessional passage that suggests memoir or even *Bildungsroman:*

> When I was about ten our laundress was an African woman, very big, very dark, with a check handkerchief over her frizzy hair. When she came to our house she always took particular notice of me, and after the clothes had been taken out of the basket she would lift me up into it and give me a rock while I held tight to the handles and screamed for joy and fright.[50]

This nostalgic account suddenly changes into a memory of sexual abuse, and Duquette's subsequent self-invention as "a writer about the submerged world," which is interrupted, in turn, by digressions about drinking whisky and a song he associates with his friend Dick.[51] Chronological recollections of this relationship are constantly disrupted by digressions, often marked by abrupt temporal or

spatial transitions. Descriptive passages, such as the disjointed yet lovingly detailed portrait of Dick and Mouse in the cab, decelerate narrative progression.[52] There are snatches of stage-script and sentimental fiction: "According to the books I should have felt immensely relieved and delighted. ' … Going over to the window he drew apart the curtains and looked out at the Paris trees, just breaking into buds and green …. Dick! Dick! My English friend!'"[53] The letter Dick leaves the abandoned Mouse is also included. Duquette frequently addresses the reader directly: "Of course you know what to expect. You anticipate, fully, what I am going to write."[54]

Most readings of "Je ne parle pas français" focus on Duquette's self-serving cynicism. According to Miroslawa Kubasiewicz, "Raoul's existence is inauthentic as he lets others define his identity—as a pimp and a prostitute. He knows that these roles are socially unacceptable, and that he needs a better identity, but by choosing the role of some one socially acceptable, a writer, rather than genuinely being a writer, he only confirms society's definition of himself."[55] The titles of Duquette's books, *False Coins*, *Wrong Doors*, and *Left Umbrellas,* do indeed convey inauthenticity and failure. He himself is the ultimate unreliable narrator whose word cannot be trusted and who congratulates himself on "looking the part."[56] However, insofar as anything in this deeply ambiguous text can be read at face value, there is no reason to believe that he is any less genuinely creative than Dick or Mouse, or any other writerly figure invented by Mansfield. Mansfield's presentation of character is especially multi-faceted in this case; he cannot be read simply as if he were a realist character, equipped with a consistent personality shaped by innate moral attributes. In some senses, he does stand for the figure of the writer, as the arch-performer, and the direct address to the reader invites our complicity in his mingling of observation, confession, and fantasy.

The story's closing passages return to the café setting of the opening pages. Mansfield's stories often close with a single image or a memorable gesture—the lamp at the end of "The Doll's House" (1921), the embrace in "The Garden Party" (1921)—hinting at an underlying unity or even the possibility of an ultimate resolution. Here, the narrative splinters into a disconnected series of random images, prompted by tunes that remind Duquette of Mouse:

> A little house on the edge of the sea, somewhere far, far away. A girl outside in a frock rather like Red Indian women wear, hailing a light, bare-footed boy who runs up from the beach.
> "What have you got?"
> "A fish." I smile and give it to her.

> … The same girl, the same boy, wearing different costumes—sitting at an open window, eating fruit and leaning out and laughing.[57]

These fragments recall, perhaps, his fondness for the "American cinema."[58] They are swiftly interrupted by Duquette's attempt to pimp Mouse to a fellow customer, and finally by a brief consideration of the *patronne's* sexual allure. The closing lines juxtapose the sentimental with the abject as he decides against seducing her: "she'd have large moles. They go with that kind of skin. And I can't bear them. They remind me, somehow, disgustingly, of mushrooms."[59]

"Je ne parle pas français" is a particularly striking example of non-linear structure in the short story, fully exploiting its elliptical properties and its resistance to unitary meaning. Mansfield simultaneously subverts and appropriates modernist tropes such as the epiphany and the use of sense-impressions to bring the past to life within the present moment.

Pushing the Boundaries of Form

Many short story writers, to this day, feel the pressure to prove their literary credentials by completing a full-length novel. Mansfield's "The Aloe" (1915) is the first draft of a novel that was put aside and completely re-written as the long story, "Prelude" (1917). Following the death of her brother in the Great War, Mansfield rejected the discursive approach she had used in "The Aloe." In order to do justice to her material, making family life in New Zealand as vivid on the page as it was in her memory, she returned to the fragmentary, image-based structure she had developed in short fiction.

The transformation of "The Aloe" into "Prelude" is the best-known example of Mansfield's exploration of intermediate prose forms, on the border between the novel and short fiction. Gerri Kimber has grouped some of Mansfield's stories as short story cycles, collections of stand-alone stories that are linked by setting, recurring characters, or theme. This is another genre that crosses that territory between novel and story, creating a tension between unity and fragmentation. Its modern origins are usually traced to James Joyce's *Dubliners* (1913) and Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919). Later examples include Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) and Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), which is sometimes, like many other examples of the form, regarded as a novel. Kimber points out that Mansfield's *In a German Pension* (1911) was marketed as a "six-shilling novel."[60] As the title suggests, the

stories are linked by their setting, and additionally by a first-person narrator. Kimber also proposes reading clusters of other stories as cycles, particularly those set in New Zealand.

"Prelude," "At the Bay" (1921), and "The Doll's House" (1921) form a sub-set within this cycle since they each center round the Burnell household. In "The Doll's House," the landscape widens to include the school attended by Isabel, Lottie, and Kezia. It is set almost entirely in the world of the children, with the adults—sometimes literally—at the margins. Both longer stories are structured as a series of twelve episodes, with the final paragraph of "At the Bay" presented as a thirteenth in later editions. All three stories intersperse the voices of the characters with the authorial voice, creating a network of relationships, and negotiating a variety of competing viewpoints on a more ambitious scale than is possible in "Psychology." "The Doll's House" is slightly more conventional in form in that it focuses on a single climactic incident, Kezia's attempt to show off the Burnells' doll's house to children from a family of outcasts. The episodic structure used in "Prelude" and "At the Bay" seems, by contrast, almost random, with abrupt transitions between characters and, sometimes, between waking and dream-states.

Section V of "Prelude," for example, is narrated largely from the standpoint of the children's mother, Linda, using a type of free indirect discourse that dips in and out of her consciousness. The sequence opens with a description of the early morning landscape, seen from an impersonal, extradiegetic perspective. This external reality converges with the internal world of Linda's dream through the image of the birds, described in ornithological detail in the opening passage, but less distinctly perceived by the sleeping Linda:

> "How loud the birds are" said Linda in her dream. She was walking with her father through a green paddock sprinkled with daisies. Suddenly he bent down and parted the grasses and showed her a tiny ball of fluff just at her feet.[61]

The bird Linda's father discovers in the grass metamorphizes into a human baby, prefiguring the anxiety surrounding her pregnancy that will be revealed later in the story. The male figure in the dream is also a shape-changer, crossing the liminal space between dreams and reality: "her father broke into a loud clattering laugh and she woke to see Burnell standing by the windows rattling the Venetian blinds to the very top."[62] She watches her husband performing his morning exercises before getting dressed for work, Stanley's own inner voice seeming to interject within a sentence that is primarily focalized through Linda: "He began parting his bushy ginger hair, his blue eyes fixed and round in the

glass, his knees bent, because the dressing table was always—confound it—a bit too low for him."[63] Through these ambiguities of focalization, Mansfield builds a narrative hall of mirrors; who is it who is looking at those eyes reflected in the glass?

The intermingling of the present moment with images of the past, through the figure of Linda's father, presents time, once again, as Bergsonian duration, in which there can be no mathematically pure instant that is not infused with memory. The dissolution of linear time fractures linear causality. Patterns of cause and effect may be constructed by reading across the text as a whole but are not as explicit as they sometimes are in "The Doll's House."

For example, in "Prelude," the snobbish Beryl rejoices in ticking off the servant, Alice, for forgetting to use lace doilies at teatime. The rhythms of Alice's suppressed anger resonate through the pattern of short and drawn-out sentences and the use of repetition: "Oh, Alice was wild. She wasn't one to mind being told, but there was something in the way Miss Beryl had of speaking to her that she couldn't stand. Oh, that she couldn't."[64]

Similarly, in "The Doll's House," Beryl vents her fury on the Kelvey children—and on Kezia herself—when Kezia brings them home. Just like her telling-off of Alice, Beryl's speech is a melodramatic performance, out of all proportion to the supposed offence: "At the back door stood Aunt Beryl, staring as if she couldn't believe what she saw. 'How dare you ask the little Kelveys into the courtyard?' said her cold, furious voice."[65] The "cold, furious voice" recalls Beryl's "voice of ice" in Section VII of "Prelude," when her daydreaming is interrupted by Alice coming in to lay the table.[66] In "Prelude" the narrative switches, without explanation, to the make-believe conversation of the children playing outside, and several pages will intervene before the showdown over the doilies. In fact, "Prelude" is almost a short story cycle in itself; Section IX can certainly be read as a self-contained short story.

In "The Doll's House," the cause of Beryl's displaced anger is made explicit:

> A letter had come from Willie Brent, a terrifying, threatening letter, saying if she did not meet him that evening in Pulman's Bush, he'd come to the front door and ask the reason why! But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone.[67]

Nonetheless, much is left implicit or ambiguous in "The Doll's House," especially in its use of silence. The socially marginalized Kelvey children hardly speak at all, their voices just faintly infiltrating this polyphonic text through the name

assigned to one of the two girls, "our Else."[68] After the unpleasant scene with Beryl, both girls remain subdued, even when they have escaped the Burnells' territory: "Dreamily they looked over the hay paddocks, past the creek, to the group of wattles where Logans' cows stood waiting to be milked. What were their thoughts?"[69] Most readers will attribute "their thoughts" to the cows rather than the girls, but the single sentence spoken by Else is cryptic. "I seen the little lamp" seems to imply a bond with Kezia, who is fixated on the miniature lamp in the doll's house.[70] But did Else actually lay eyes on the lamp? Kezia hardly had a chance to open up the doll's house before Beryl stormed in. Like so many other Mansfield texts, this is a story that touches on the power of language itself—Isabel's descriptions of the new toy, given for the benefit of her envious school friends. Kezia didn't think she said enough about the lamp, and that no one was listening when she did. But perhaps Else was listening.

There is much more to say about the intersections between "Prelude," "At the Bay," and "The Doll's House"—about Pat, for instance, the Irish servant who is in the second sentence of both "Prelude" and "The Doll's House." There is always more to say in Mansfield. She resisted definitions of all kinds and understood the multivalency of even the simplest utterance. She took full advantage of the spaciousness of short fiction as a linguistic playground and its affinity with the ever-changing present moment. The stylistic intensity, the immediacy, the structural flexibility, and the limitless potential for ambiguity made the short story a perfect fit for Mansfield's aesthetic ideals. In making the short story her own, she also ensured its place at the forefront of literary innovation. As Elizabeth Bowen said, "her imagination kindled unlikely matter; she was to alter for good and all our ideas of what goes to make a story."[71]

Notes

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12

Katherine Mansfield as Critic

Chris Mourant

In 1930, the short story writer and literary critic V. S. Pritchett wrote a review of *Novels and Novelists*, a collection of book reviews written by Katherine Mansfield in the years 1919–20, now collated and published for the "book-borrowing public" by John Middleton Murry.[1] Wryly noting that "reviewing a reviewer's reviews" might be considered to be "the inmost circle of perversion," Pritchett is nevertheless swept away by Mansfield's prose, observing:

> Her book disposes once more of the gibe that critics are artists who have failed. In criticism, indeed, she was an artist, never dully making a balance sheet of a book's virtues and defects or a Baedecker of its story; but, with much cunning, creating an appropriate atmosphere and letting the story rise or fall in it like a toy balloon.[2]

Mansfield's reviews are unlike anything that was being produced at the time: directly addressing the reader in a light, disarmingly conversational tone, her critical writings are shot through with a searing, acerbic wit that quickly deflates many of the "toy balloons" under appraisal. A surface reading of the reviews, with their lightness of touch and wicked sense of humor, coupled with the fact that the majority of the books that Mansfield reviewed have not stood the test of time, might lead one to dismiss these writings as trivial or unimportant, and this is how they have often been judged. Yet Mansfield was a critic who was uncompromising in holding works of literature to the highest of aesthetic and ethical standards. She was also incredibly prolific as a reviewer, especially given the shortness of her writing career. Between April 1919 and December 1920, Mansfield wrote over 120 reviews for publication in Murry's periodical *The Athenaeum*, putting her own creative writing on hold. This time spent reviewing others' work was followed by Mansfield's most important period as a short story writer, the final years of her life in which she composed and published some of her most innovative and most celebrated stories, collected in *The Garden*

Party and Other Stories (1922). These last years of dazzling creation, however, have cast a long shadow over the preceding phase in Mansfield's development as a writer, when she was steadily and seriously engaged in the weekly task of reviewing books.

The substantial body of writing that is Mansfield's criticism, I argue in this chapter, deserves greater scholarly attention, in particular because the reviews help shed further light on Mansfield's position as an important modernist writer: first, as a detailed record of her response to the social, political, and economic forces of early twentieth-century modernity; and second, as texts that are themselves original, creative acts. As Pritchett suggests, Mansfield defied many of the accepted conventions of literary criticism and was always striving to make the genre new and exciting: as critic, she was an artist.

Re-viewing Mansfield's Reviews

After the publication of *Novels and Novelists*, it took over fifty years before Mansfield's reviews were again reprinted. Although prefaced with a scholarly introduction that offered contextualization and interpretation, Clare Hanson's edition *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* (1987) was far from comprehensive, publishing only a selection of the reviews and thereby presenting only a partial picture of Mansfield as critic. Only with the publication in 2014 of volume 3 of *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, edited by Gerri Kimber and Angela Smith, were all of Mansfield's critical writings published together for the first time, beginning with the first book reviews Mansfield wrote for Murry's magazine *Rhythm* in 1912. These first reviews are short pieces that often rely heavily on quotation. In this early period, Mansfield also wrote two reviews for the *Saturday Westminster Gazette*, in September 1912 and July 1913; and in May, June, and July 1918, she published three reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement*. When Murry took over the editorship of the established periodical *The Athenaeum* in 1919, however, Mansfield came into her own as a critic, writing a review for the journal almost every week for the next two years. Kimber and Smith's edition reprints all of these reviews, together with three final pieces of criticism, all published in 1921: two reviews of works by D. H. Lawrence, both co-authored with Murry and published in *The Nation and the Athenaeum*; and a review of John Galsworthy's *In Chancery* that appeared in the *Daily News*. The occasional reviews that book-end Mansfield's period working for *The Athenaeum* should indicate the importance of this periodical in her career as a critic.

In the last ten years, the reviews Mansfield wrote for *The Athenaeum* have been the subject of increasing, but still relatively limited, scholarly attention. In a 2009 article, Angela Smith read the reviews as a continued articulation of the Fauvist aesthetic that Mansfield had developed during her time at *Rhythm*. In an article also published in 2009, and then in her 2010 book *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace*, Jenny McDonnell provided an in-depth analysis of the reviews, seeing them in the context of Mansfield's negotiation of "popular" and "literary" markets. And in my 2019 book, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture*, I situated Mansfield's critical writings in the context of a wider cultural response to the First World War, as well as in direct dialogue with the essays and reviews that Virginia Woolf was writing over the same two-year period. This necessarily brief overview of existing scholarship on Mansfield's critical writings highlights the fact that her role as a literary critic has yet to receive the kind of sustained scholarly attention that has been afforded to many of her immediate contemporaries, such as Woolf, Murry, and T. S. Eliot. As McDonnell explains, this is largely due to distortions made by many late twentieth-century commentators who were inclined to emphasize "the biographical contexts" for Mansfield's engagement with *The Athenaeum*, which were "often based on an overly-romanticized and sensationalist portrait of her relationship with Murry."[3] Marysa Demoor, for example, implies that Mansfield's decision to work for the periodical was motivated by a desire to "establish her husband's renommée as an editor," rather than any concern for her own career.[4] Similarly, Oscar Wellens interprets Mansfield's commitment to reviewing for *The Athenaeum* as a sign that she "gave her active support to her husband's performance of his editorial obligations" and that, later, her decision to resign from the paper was due to the romantic fallout caused by Murry's rumored affair with Elizabeth Bibesco.[5] "Such melodramatic representations of Mansfield as the devoted, but scorned, wife of the editor," as McDonnell notes, "underestimate the professional significance of her association with the *Athenaeum*, and give insufficient consideration to the material that she published in the paper."[6]

Similarly, the hundreds of contributions that Mansfield made to *The Athenaeum* over two years of her writing career have often been reduced to a single review. In "A Ship Comes into the Harbour," Mansfield argues that Virginia Woolf's novel *Night and Day* (1919) fails to account for the "scars" of the First World War. Using the extended metaphor of the ship, Mansfield imagines the "strange sight" of the novel "sailing into port serene and resolute on a deliberate wind. The strangeness lies in her aloofness, her air of quiet perfection, her lack of any sign that she has made a perilous voyage—the

absence of any scars."[7] The use of personal pronouns to describe the novel/ship has the unfortunate effect of drawing an implicit connection between the author and her work. Justifiably, Woolf took the criticism personally, writing: "A decorous elderly dullard she describes me; Jane Austen up to date."[8] Subsequently, this review has been seen through the terms of a personal rivalry between Mansfield and Woolf. Invariably interpreted as an expression of Mansfield's feelings of resentment toward the older writer's burgeoning success, the review of *Night and Day* has led scholars such as David Dowling to argue that the entirety of Mansfield's critical writings were blinkered by feelings of jealousy toward contemporaries and feelings of inadequacy toward writers of the past, such as Anton Chekhov.[9]

As McDonnell notes, the reduction of almost two years of Mansfield's writing career to "the composition of a solitary review" has also led scholars to "overlook the extent of her engagement with the journal, to which she contributed despite her illness throughout 1919, offering advice on how it should be run until the end of 1920."[10] Although not officially sitting on the editorial board of the periodical, Mansfield was highly involved in its running and in shaping its direction and editorial philosophy. She certainly viewed the periodical as a joint enterprise, describing it to Murry in her letters from abroad as "our paper" and stating: "We are both *slaves* to the Athene."[11] Mansfield tells Murry that she is "always thinking of the paper & wondering about it" and asks practical editorial questions, such as: "How is our circulation?"[12] In the spring of 1920, having returned to London, she writes to Sydney and Violet Schiff describing how she is "buried alive under the Athenaeum": "this week is covered under manuscripts to be read, poems, essays to choose 'finally,' novels to review, schemes to draft, [and] an article to write on *why we intend to publish short stories*."[13] In these letters, Mansfield highlights just how enthusiastically she endorsed and stoked the youthful idealism of the periodical under Murry's editorship:

> We discussed all the way home, a new Athenaeum—the idea of throwing overboard all the learned societies and ancient men and reviews of Dull old Tomes, and opening the windows to the hurrying sounds outside, and throwing all the old gang into the river.[14]

This quotation shows how Mansfield looked to counter the staid, English upper-middle-class male values embodied in conventional literary criticism. Instead, she wanted reviews in *The Athenaeum* to be in touch with life, to be open to the world and to record personal, felt impressions. In December 1920, for instance, she wrote to Murry:

> In my reckless way I would suggest all reviews were signed & all were put into the first person. I think that would give the whole paper an amazing lift up. A paper that length must be *definite*, *personal*, or die. It can't afford the "we," "in our opinion." To sign reviews, to put them in the 1st person stimulates curiosity, *makes for correspondence*, gives it (to be 19-eleventyish) GUTS.[15]

This is a reference to *Rhythm*, which was founded in 1911 on what Murry called the "'guts' and bloodiness" of youthful artistic vigor.[16] In her letter of 1920, as Angela Smith notes, Mansfield is recommending "a return to the dynamism of *Rhythm*, with its sharply defined objectives": "She wants a pared-down magazine with sharp lines, posing questions rather than answering them, avoiding conventionality and cant, committing the writers to responsibility for their opinions."[17] While Mansfield often adopts the editorial "we," she invariably frames her reviews as a personal response to the text. For instance, reviewing R. O. Prowse's *A Gift of the Dusk*, a novel set in a Swiss sanatorium that depicts a relationship between two patients suffering from tuberculosis, one of whom is dying, Mansfield responds with the insight and sensitivity of a fellow sufferer of the disease.

Mansfield was therefore clearly devoted to *The Athenaeum* in a way that far exceeded any sense of a marital obligation to Murry as editor-husband, and her letters are filled with emphatic opinions about her reviewing which indicate how seriously she engaged with this work. Writing from Italy, she tells Murry: "Its a thousand times harder for me to write reviews here […] I have to get into full divers clothes & rake the floor of the unprofitable sea. All the same *it is my life: it saves me*."[18] In October 1920, she emphasizes: "*I could not live here without it*."[19] Similarly, Mansfield's notebooks from this time evidence how seriously she took the practice of reviewing, containing remorselessly self-critical assessments of her own criticism: "Not good enough. Uneven, shallow, forced. Very thin, pocket muslin handkerchief vocabulary!"; "I did not say what I set out to say. It is not close knit enough"; and "Shows traces of hurry, & at the end, is pompous!"[20] Likewise, she regularly writes to Murry imploring him to be harsh in his criticism of her reviews and to haul her "over the very hottest coals."[21] For Mansfield, reviewing was not a task turned to lightly, but a craft that required discipline and unremitting hard work.

The fact remains, however, that the majority of books that Mansfield was given to review by Murry were, in the words of her first review for *The Athenaeum*, nothing more than "little puppets, little make-believes, playthings on strings with the same stare and the same sawdust filling."[22] When she wrote

to Murry as the centenary of George Eliot's birth approached in late 1919, asking him to send a life of the author and some of the novels so that she could write the leader that would undoubtedly be published in *The Athenaeum*, for instance, Murry not only failed to send these books but also gave the leader to Mansfield's cousin, Sydney Waterlow. The letter that she wrote to Murry expressing her disappointment gives a tantalizing glimpse of the review she would have written, reimagining and commenting on a passage from *The Mill on the Floss*:

> I dont think S.W. brought it off with George Eliot. He never gets under way. The cartwheels want oiling. I think, too, he is ungenerous. She was a deal more than that. Her English, warm, ruddy quality is hardly mentioned. She *was* big, even though she was "heavy" too. But think of some of her pictures of country life—the breadth—the sense of sun lying on warm barns—great warm kitchens at twilight when the men came home from the fields—the feeling of *beasts* horses and cows—the peculiar passion she has for horses (when Maggie Tullivers lover walks with her up & down the lane & asks her to marry, he leads his great red horse and the beast is foaming—it has been hard ridden and there are dark streaks of sweat on its flanks—the *beast is the man* one feels SHE feels in some queer inarticulate way).[23]

Mansfield makes Eliot's book come alive: her retelling is full of the warmth and light of the countryside, the "sweat" of horses and the "ruddy" earth, creating a picture that is immediate and felt. As Smith has observed, Mansfield's letters to Murry at this time also contain a wealth of astute observations about Shakespeare, Chekhov, Dickens, and Keats, "all of which cry out for fuller treatment" in *The Athenaeum*.[24] In the face of this apparent refusal to entrust Mansfield with appraising illustrious, canonical writers, scholars have often adopted a rather indignant attitude toward Murry on Mansfield's behalf, inferring that he did not consider her to be sufficiently intellectual or well educated enough to handle such material. In 1920, for instance, Mansfield wrote to Murry with discernible resentment: "Not being an intellectual, I always seem to have to learn things at the risk of my life."[25] She is referring here to Murry's book of critical essays, *The Evolution of an Intellectual* (1920), and, as Hanson suggests, "distancing herself from the kind of professional criticism produced by Murry."[26]

While it may indeed have been the case that Murry doubted Mansfield's ability to appraise "heavy-weight" material, it is also undeniable that he recognized the unique place Mansfield's book reviews occupied in the periodical, writing to her:

> I reckon on you absolutely for the novels. Your novel page, I know, is one of the features most appreciated in the paper, and any interruption of it would do us great harm. To me, you seem to get better & better every time. You are so *sure*,

> besides being so delicate. It's quite unlike—in a different class to—anything that's being done in the way of reviewing anywhere today. What I feel, and what a great many other people feel, is that as long as your novel page is there, there can't be a really bad number of the *Athenaeum*.[27]

At dinner parties, guests would agree that Mansfield's "novel-reviews were the finest in England" and Murry reported to Mansfield how a "hardened professional journalist" at the *Weekly Dispatch* had told their friend H. M. Tomlinson that he thought *The Athenaeum* "jolly good, but one thing especially. He would buy it for K.M.'s article alone, every week."[28]

What Murry and others saw in Mansfield's reviews was a conscious attempt to counter the snobbishness and, sometimes, disingenuousness of established literary criticism. In a letter to Murry, Mansfield positions her reviews against the "sneering" of other critics, referring to the Bloomsbury writers Lytton Strachey and Woolf:

> One must have an open mind. Its so difficult not to find a *sneerer*. Whats the good of sneering? Imagine what Strachey or V.W. would think of a man like [Francis] Brett Young—but hes WORTH considering. One must keep a balance—i.e. one must be critical. Theres your mighty pull over your whole generation—and there's what's going to make the Athenaeum what it is in your imagination.[29]

Mansfield viewed the openness of her "novel page" to all kinds of writing, including the popular and middlebrow, as integral to the success of *The Athenaeum*. In October 1919, likewise, Murry wrote to Mansfield: "I want the *Athenaeum* to be judicial, to praise what is really good *wherever* it comes from."[30] The following month, she writes: "Thats what I like about the A.—the way it *steadies* opinion."[31] While the majority of books that Mansfield was given to review were often disappointingly mediocre and formulaic, she viewed the task of appraising such books as important in fostering a "critical" attitude in the periodical. Echoing the idea of the "sneering" critics quoted above, for example, Mansfield writes in one of her reviews that in "seeking for pearls in such a prodigious number of new books":

> What is extremely impressive to the novel reviewer is the modesty of the writers—their diffidence in declaring themselves what they are—their almost painful belief that they must model themselves on somebody. […] One would imagine that round the corner there was a little band of jeering, sneering, superior persons ready to leap up and laugh if the cut of the new-comer's jacket is not of the strangeness they consider admissible. In the name of the new novel, the new sketch, the new story, if they are really there, let us defy them.[32]

At the same time as writers should defy the "sneering" of established literary criticism by summoning the courage to write something truly new, Mansfield also admonished critics, encouraging them to be more critical and less forgiving, to praise the good and criticize the bad. In an unsigned leader for *The Athenaeum* published in late August 1920, at the end of "the Critic's year" when "the publishing season is so exhausted," for example, Mansfield ventures this "stout resolution": that in the new year, critics in England "should harden their hearts; that they should have a little less charity, a little less tenderness and sympathy and desire to help the weak. For to such extremes has their tenderness carried them that it really would seem that they cannot turn aside from a single bad book."[33] As a literary critic, then, Mansfield was motivated by her belief that the majority of contemporary reviews were poorly written and dishonest. In 1918, she writes: "But oh! how *ignorant* these reviewers are" and notes "how shockingly ill the novels are reviewed."[34] In particular, Mansfield reserved her scorn for the reviews printed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, which she described as a "filthy scandal" of "*disgraceful* dishonesty."[35]

Mansfield's belief that "one must be critical" was part of a wider commitment across the pages of *The Athenaeum* to revivifying literary criticism. In an article titled "Critical Interest," for instance, Murry writes: "In the phrase 'critical interest,' as we use it, the emphasis is upon the adjective, for in our own opinion the present age is in danger of becoming definitely uncritical."[36] Mansfield echoed this idea in her own reviews, imploring Dorothy Easton, for example, "in these uncritical days, to treat herself with the utmost severity."[37] T. S. Eliot, likewise, unequivocally declares in *The Athenaeum* that "modern criticism is degenerate" and "the amount of good literary criticism in English is negligible."[38] Similarly, Frank Swinnerton argues that the convention of reviewing is "too well-established" and produces "stumbling criticism."[39] These opinions about contemporary literary criticism were shaped, primarily, in response to the First World War, and what Murry identified as the "war-coarsening" that had "roughened and abraded" the "spiritual fibre of the world" and "worn away" the "sense of distinction between right and wrong."[40] As David Goldie has argued, Murry became editor of *The Athenaeum* at a time when many commentators were arguing "that the written word, in all its forms, had not come out of the war entirely untarnished; that, in fact, the written word, like the truth it purported to convey, had become one of the prime casualties of total war."[41] Newspaper slogans and reductive distortions of events during wartime had unsettled public trust in the press and in the "truth" of the written word. This brought new focus on the function of literary criticism and the

role of the literary critic. In an unsigned article printed in *The Athenaeum*, for instance, A. de Sélincourt observed: "We have bitter need at the present time for a reconsideration of critical principles; for a non-partisan criticism to disperse the miasma of name-worship and of chaotic emotionalism, which are the part-legacy of the war."[42]

Under Murry's editorship, *The Athenaeum* looked to counter the debasement of the "word" within the press at large and, specifically, the "dishonesty" of other literary journals; contributors to the periodical did this by promoting critical principles of permanence, such as "truth," "value," and "standards." If Murry argued that the "most marked characteristic of the present age is a continual disintegration," then the rehabilitation of "immutable standards" in literary criticism would provide constancy and integrity.[43] Mansfield clearly subscribed to this idea, invoking a post-war *Zeitgeist* to describe the unprecedented difficulties faced by the literary critic: "the spirit of the age is against us; it is an uneasy, disintegrating, experimental spirit."[44] In his first leader for *The Athenaeum*, Murry called for the creation of a new "aristocracy" of writers, artists, and intellectuals able to "defend the truth" and "the universality of the ideal."[45] Mansfield reiterates this idea throughout her reviews, asserting that the task of the author is "to keep faith with Truth," for instance, and that "the novel which is not an attempt at nothing short of Truth is doomed."[46]

In his writings as editor of *The Athenaeum*, Murry argued that "a standard should be once more created and applied," that the "function of true criticism is to establish a definite hierarchy among the great artists of the past, as well as to test the production of the present," and that "the first essential is to apply the corrective of disinterested criticism to that capacity for self-deception which seems to have become infinite under the stress of war"; only then can an "intellectual renascence" begin.[47] *The Athenaeum* under Murry's editorship, therefore, promoted the idea that a rehabilitated criticism would pave the way for a "renascence" of literary innovation. Indeed, Murry understood the widespread interest in "the present condition of literary criticism" as "symptomatic of a general hesitancy and expectation" in the contemporary "world of letters," in which everything is "up in the air, volatile and uncrystallised": before the war, he writes, "one had a tolerable certainty that the new star, if the new star was to appear, would burst upon our vision in the shape of a novel"; "[t]o-day we feel it might be anything" and that "it has no predetermined form."[48] As such, "if the *lusus naturae*, the writer of genius, were to appear, there ought to be a person or an organization capable of recognizing him, however unexpected": in other words, there ought to be critics receptive to the "new" and unforeseen.[49]

In a review titled "Wanted, a New Word," published in June 1920, Mansfield reiterates Murry's ideas about the "new star" on the horizon. Hanson has described this review as "virtually the only 'manifesto' KM produced for the kind of fiction she herself wrote."[50] Reviewing Elizabeth Robins's *The Mills of the Gods*, Arnold Palmer's *My Profitable Friends*, and Dorothy Easton's *The Golden Bird*, Mansfield begins by imagining the "new word" as having no predetermined form, as being "neither a short story, nor a sketch, nor an impression, nor a tale," as "written in prose" but "a great deal shorter than a novel."[51] The examples of this "new word" that Mansfield cites are all stories by Chekhov; by contrast, none of the writers Mansfield is reviewing come anywhere close to satisfying her vision of the "new word." This review is significant because it is one of only a few that Mansfield wrote in which she directly discusses the short story form. It also highlights the way in which, across her critical writings, Mansfield turns the task of appraising mediocre, disappointing books into occasions for articulating her own ideas and her own developing vision about what literary experimentalism might look like after the war; reading Mansfield's reviews in *The Athenaeum*, as Hanson notes, "one comes fully to appreciate the climate of mingled dearth and expectation in which *The Garden Party*, *Jacob's Room* and *Ulysses* were so rapturously received" in 1922.[52] Directly echoing the language used by Murry, of the "new star" of an "intellectual renascence," Mansfield writes: "We are told also that we are on the eve of a literary renascence. True, no star has been seen in the sky, but the roads are thronged with shepherds. This is the moment of attention."[53] Mansfield viewed her critical writings within this context: she considered her work as a reviewer to be part of a vital post-war project of rehabilitating critical standards in anticipation of the "new star," the "new word."

Throughout her reviews, Mansfield imagines what the "new word" might look like by contrasting it with what she terms the "pastime novel." In her first review for *The Athenaeum*, for instance, she writes: "Reading, for the great majority—for the reading public—is not a passion but a pastime, and writing, for the vast number of modern authors, is a pastime and not a passion."[54] *Hope Trueblood* by Patience Worth is "almost too good an example of the pastime novel."[55] Similarly, *The Ancient Allan* by Rider Haggard is described as a "variety of the pastime novel."[56] What defines the "pastime novel" is the want of "truth," that standard for critical judgment that is so important in *The Athenaeum* after the war. Mansfield writes: "It is not as though the pastime novel were out to tell the truth and nothing but the truth."[57] Mansfield attributes this vacuity to the forces of modernization, including the expansion of a reading public desperate

for "entertainment" to occupy their leisure time. By mid-1920, for instance, she observes that "a long acquaintance with pastime novels forces us to make the distinction between amusement and distraction": "By far the greatest number of them aim at nothing more positive than a kind of mental knitting—the mind of the reader is grown so familiar with the pattern that the least possible effort is demanded of it."[58]

This frustration with formulaic prose was bound up with Mansfield's antipathy toward popular, mass culture. In an unsigned leader titled "The Stars in Their Courses," for example, she expresses her exasperation at how Hollywood actors Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks are "worshipped" as "symbols" of "Romance" and "Adventure": "People cannot keep their eyes on the agonies of Europe; it is too much to ask. Who shall blame them for seeking sensational distractions from the strain of living?" Mansfield asks ironically.[59] Similarly, rather than seeking out "good books, the books that are written by honest writers, men and women of talent, sincere artists, or a genius even," the public are too ready to accept "poems that reek of sentimentality" or "a costume novel, bombast and blarney, that we have read a hundred times."[60] In a letter to Sydney Schiff sent on November 3, 1920, likewise, Mansfield contrasts the many popular romance fictions she has read over the autumn, those novels by "LADY writers that might all be called *How I lost my Virginity*!" with the work of a handful of "honest writers" that she hopes are waiting to be discovered: "I wish there were 6 or 7 writers who wrote for themselves and let the world go hang."[61]

Mansfield is always ready to recognize the attempt made by a writer to create something new. While she ultimately finds Francis Brett Young's novel *The Young Physician* "readable to a fault" and too focused on providing entertainment for an "impatient public,"[62] for instance, in a later review of another work by the same writer, Mansfield concedes that one may discern in *The Young Physician* "a very honest sincere attempt to face the great difficulty which presents itself to the writers of to-day—which is to find their true expression and to make it adequate to the new fields of experience": "That Mr. Young did not succeed in this attempt did not surprise us. But what he did put a keen edge on our anticipation of the next time."[63] Elsewhere, Mansfield writes:

> [W]e live in an age of experiment, when the next novel may be unlike any novel that has been published before; when writers are seeking after new forms in which to express something more subtle, more complex, "nearer" the truth; when a few of them feel that perhaps after all prose is an almost undiscovered medium and that there are extraordinary, thrilling possibilities ….[64]

Throughout her reviews, Mansfield argues that writers must attempt to find "new forms" able to adequately express the "new fields of experience" created by the war. Writing at the beginning of 1921, for example, Mansfield states: "I believe the only way to *live* as artists under these new conditions in art and life is to put everything to the test for ourselves [...] if artists were really thorough & honest they would save the world."[65]

It is in these terms that Mansfield's review of Woolf's *Night and Day* must be understood, as written according to the logic of a firmly held belief that writers must attempt to find new literary forms that adequately express the new fields of experience created by the war. With its conventional marriage plot, Mansfield observes, *Night and Day* is "a novel in the tradition of the English novel"; it neither embodies a "new form of expression" nor accepts "the fact of a new world."[66] Writing directly to Murry, she clarifies her ideas about the novel:

> My private opinion is that it is a lie in the soul. The war has never been, that is what its message is. I dont want G. forbid mobilisation and the violation of Belgium—but the novel cant just leave the war out. There *must* have been a change of heart. It is really fearful to me the "settling down" of human beings. I feel in the *profoundest* sense that nothing can ever be the same that as artists we are traitors if we feel otherwise: we have to take it into account and find new expressions new moulds for our new thoughts & feelings.[67]

Rather than being motivated by personal jealousies and petty rivalries, the review of *Night and Day* was entirely consistent with Mansfield's other critical writings, in which she argues that literature must be "true" and "honest" in confronting the realities of the post-war world.

The idea that literature has an ethical dimension, articulated across Mansfield's reviews, was also integral to how she viewed Murry's editorial mission and the cultural significance of *The Athenaeum*. In November 1919, she writes to Murry: "we have a chance to stand for something; lets stand for it"; "lets be honest on the paper and give it them strong."[68] And in October 1920, she writes:

> The change has *come*. Nothing *is* the same. I positively feel one has no right to run a paper without preaching a gospel [...] I want to make an appeal to all our generation who do believe that the war has changed everything to come forward and lets start a crusade.[69]

Mansfield viewed her reviews as contributing to a post-war project of cultural rejuvenation, as "preaching a gospel" in anticipation of an envisioned future. While often focusing on rather forgettable novels, the reviews themselves were not considered to be trivial or unimportant by either Mansfield or her readers. Rather, Mansfield's critical writings were motivated by her sense of the ethical

responsibilities of writers after the war; as Hanson notes, Mansfield believed "that the 'true' artist's work would make an ethical 'impression,' and that it was the duty of the critic to register this impression and measure its depth and quality."[70]

Battling worsening ill health throughout 1920, the weekly grind of reading and appraising so many books took its toll on Mansfield, and in December she wrote to Murry to resign from *The Athenaeum*, noting that it was "grim to be reviewing [E. F.] Benson when one might be writing ones own stories."[71] In criticism, however, Mansfield was an artist. The reviews often register the "impression" of a book by vividly creating an atmosphere, focusing on a single detail that evokes the world of the novel, or pivoting around a central, extended metaphor that demonstrates Mansfield's ability to playfully generate associations in the mind of her reader. By employing such techniques, many of the reviews read like short fictions in the style of Mansfield's own stories. When a novel fails to create an impression, when it fails to elicit an emotional response from the reader, Mansfield simply resorts to retelling the plot, letting the story quietly expose its own deficiencies; she can be withering in her quick dismissal of the conventional, plot-driven, and formulaic. But when she finds something to praise, Mansfield is generous, repaying the author's efforts by creating her own iridescent impression of the book. At the very least, the reviews are worth revisiting for the joy of reading such well-judged, vibrant prose. More than this, though, the reviews are valuable as a detailed record of Mansfield's attitudes to writing and her understanding of the ethical efficacy and formal possibilities of literature in the post-war world.

Notes

1 V. S. Pritchett, "Toy Balloons," *The Spectator* 145, September 6, 1930, 315.

2 Ibid.

3 Jenny McDonnell, "'Wanted, a New Word': Katherine Mansfield and the *Athenaeum*," *Modernism/Modernity* 16, no. 4 (2009): 728.

4 Marysa Demoor, *Their Fair Share: Women, Power and Criticism in the* Athenaeum, *from Millicent Garrett Fawcett to Katherine Mansfield, 1870–1920* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 145.

5 Oscar Wellens, "'The Brief and Brilliant Life of *The Athenaeum* under Mr Middleton Murry' (T. S. Eliot)," *Neophilologus* 85 (2001): 142.

6 McDonnell, "'Wanted, a New Word,'" 729.

7 Katherine Mansfield, "A Ship Comes into the Harbour," in CW3, 532.

8 Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 1, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth Press, 1977), 314.
9 David Dowling, "Katherine Mansfield's Criticism: 'There Must Be the Question Put,'" *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 6 (1988): 158–60.
10 McDonnell, "'Wanted, a New Word,'" 729.
11 *Letters* 3, 84; *Letters* 2, 344.
12 *Letters* 3, 104; *Letters* 4, 74.
13 *Letters* 4, 17; 8.
14 Ibid., 20.
15 Ibid., 135.
16 John Middleton Murry to Phillip Landon, April 1911, quoted in F. A. Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (London: Methuen, 1959), 24.
17 Angela Smith, "GUTS—Katherine Mansfield as a Reviewer," *Katherine Mansfield Studies* 1 (2009): 6–7.
18 *Letters* 3, 73–4.
19 *Letters* 4, 68.
20 *Notebooks* 2, 176–7.
21 *Letters* 3, 31.
22 Katherine Mansfield, "Three Women Novelists," in CW3, 444.
23 *Letters* 3, 118.
24 Smith, "GUTS," 9.
25 *Letters* 3, 216.
26 Clare Hanson, ed., *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 1.
27 C. A. Hankin, ed., *The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1983), 210.
28 Ibid., 280; 185.
29 *Letters* 3, 48.
30 Hankin, *Letters of JMM*, 194.
31 *Letters* 3, 104.
32 Katherine Mansfield, "First Novels," in CW3, 627–8.
33 Katherine Mansfield, "The Critics' New Year," in CW3, 738.
34 *Letters* 2, 88; 124.
35 *Letters* 3, 80–1; *Letters* 4, 73.
36 M. [John Middleton Murry], "Critical Interest," *Athenaeum* 4686, February 20, 1920, 233.
37 Katherine Mansfield, "'Wanted, a New Word,'" in CW3, 622.
38 T. S. Eliot, "The Perfect Critic," *Athenaeum* 4706, July 9, 1920, 40; T. S. E. [Eliot], "Criticism in England," *Athenaeum* 4650, June 13, 1919, 456.
39 Frank Swinnerton, "The Difficulties of Criticism," *Athenaeum* 4699, May 21, 1920, 662.

40 Anon. [John Middleton Murry], "Notes and Comments," *Athenaeum* 4723, November 5, 1920, 607.
41 David Goldie, *A Critical Difference: T. S. Eliot and John Middleton Murry in English Literary Criticism, 1919–1928* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 18.
42 Anon. [A. de Sélincourt], "Common-Sense Criticism," *Athenaeum* 4704, June 25, 1920, 827.
43 M. [John Middleton Murry], "The False Dawn," *Athenaeum* 4680, January 9, 1920, 37.
44 Katherine Mansfield, "A Backward Glance," in CW3, 493.
45 Anon. [John Middleton Murry], "Prologue," *Athenaeum* 4640, April 4, 1919, 130–1.
46 Katherine Mansfield, "Old Writers and New," in CW3, 694; "New Season's Novels," in CW3, 668.
47 J. M. M. [John Middleton Murry], "Poetry and Criticism," *Athenaeum* 4691, March 26, 1920, 408; "The Function of Criticism," *Times Literary Supplement* 956, May 13, 1920, 290; M. [John Middleton Murry], "The False Dawn," *Athenaeum* 4680, January 9, 1920, 38.
48 Murry, "The Function of Criticism," 289.
49 Ibid.
50 Hanson, *Critical Writings of KM*, 136.
51 Mansfield, "'Wanted, a New Word,'" 620.
52 Hanson, *Critical Writings of KM*, 13.
53 Katherine Mansfield, "A Woman's Book," in CW3, 599.
54 Mansfield, "Three Women Novelists," 445.
55 Ibid.
56 Katherine Mansfield, "Mystery and Adventure," in CW3, 576.
57 Katherine Mansfield, "Entertainment—and Otherwise," in CW3, 670.
58 Katherine Mansfield, "On the Road," in CW3, 578–9.
59 Katherine Mansfield, "The Stars in Their Courses," in CW3, 734–5.
60 Mansfield, "Critics' New Year," 738.
61 *Letters* 4, 99.
62 Katherine Mansfield, "A Plea for Less Entertainment," in CW3, 522.
63 Katherine Mansfield, "Fishing as a Fine Art," in CW3, 666.
64 Mansfield, "A Plea," 520.
65 *Letters* 4, 173.
66 Mansfield, "A Ship Comes into the Harbour," 532.
67 *Letters* 3, 82.
68 Ibid., 81.
69 *Letters* 4, 82.
70 Hanson, *Critical Writings of KM*, 11.
71 *Letters* 4, 136.

13

Katherine Mansfield's Letters and Journals

Anna Jackson

"J. and my work—they are all I think of," Mansfield wrote in a diary entry of February 19, 1918, then added in parentheses, "mixed in with curious visionary longings for gardens in full flower." This was the day she confirmed her fear of tuberculosis, and as she describes the moment in which she finds herself coughing up blood, she concedes to herself, "Oh, yes, of course I am frightened."[1] This chapter will look at how Mansfield's letters and journals answer her need, in the face of illness and the fear of death, for relationship as well as the need to write, and will consider too the place of the aesthetic and visionary in Mansfield's writing. As Vincent O'Sullivan writes in his introduction to the first volume of the *Collected Letters*, "by the time [Mansfield] completed *Prelude* in 1917, she had brought her prose to the point at which some of her contemporaries were then directing poetry—to the order in what appears random, the unity possible in the apparently disparate."[2] We can see Mansfield developing this aesthetic of the disparate and the random in a form already free of the novel's conventions of plot and characterization, in the hundreds of letters she wrote. Letters allowed such experimentation *because,* in part, of their purposes besides the purely literary. A letter is always an action as much as a description, the rhythms of daily life described in the letters including the rhythms of letter-writing itself, interrupting and interrupted by everything else that is going on.

An aesthetic of the disparate and the random also characterizes Mansfield's journal writing. Virginia Woolf, in her review of John Middleton Murry's 1927 edition of Mansfield's *Journal*, notes the movement between the different kinds of writing the journal allows: "In it she noted facts—the weather, an engagement; she sketched scenes; she analysed her character; she described a pigeon or a dream or a conversation, nothing could be more fragmentary; nothing more private."[3] Yet "as the scraps accumulate" the reader begins to connect what seemed "fragmentary and separate" as the writer again and again finds a way

to allow "the moment itself [to] suddenly put on significance."[4] Exactly how "fragmentary and separate" her journal writing was became known to readers only much later, when the manuscripts on which Murry's edition had been based were deposited in the Alexander Turnbull library. Describing the 1927 edition as "a brilliant piece of literary synthesis and editorial patchwork," Ian Gordon concluded in 1959 that it should be considered "as much Murry's work as Katherine Mansfield's."[5] Murry's 1927 edition, along with the *Scrapbook* of additional material he published in 1939, and the 1954 *Definitive Journal*, including yet more material from the manuscripts, have been largely superseded, first by Margaret Scott's 1997 edition of what she entitled *Notebooks*, and then by Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison's Edinburgh Press edition of *The Diaries of Katherine Mansfield* in 2016.

Yet it is the 1927 edition that was to be so influential to writers like Virginia Woolf, influencing experiments in diary writing by her and other modernist women writers, and it is not as far from Mansfield's actual practice as a diarist as the later editions lead readers to believe. What exactly Mansfield meant when she wrote "I want to keep a kind of minute note book—to be published some day" is a question this chapter will return to.[6] In wishing, as she does in this 1916 entry, to move beyond conventional genres and experiment with a more daily kind of writing, declaring her intention to write "No novels, no problem stories, nothing that is not simple, open,"[7] we see Mansfield already anticipating the dissatisfaction she would later feel for Woolf's 1919 novel *Night and Day*.

Writing on Modernism and Emotion for the *Bloomsbury Companion to Modernist Literature*, Kirsty Martin singles out Woolf's 1927 essay, "Poetry, Fiction and the Future," for the way it offers an enlarged concept of the psychological:

> For under the dominion of the novel we have scrutinized one part of the mind closely and left another unexplored. We have come to forget that a large and important part of life consists in our emotions towards such things as roses and nightingales, the dawn, the sunset, life, death, and fate; we forget that we spend much time sleeping, dreaming, thinking, reading, alone; we are not entirely occupied in personal relations; all our energies are not absorbed in making our livings. The psychological novelist has been too prone to limit psychology to the psychology of personal intercourse; we long sometimes to escape from the incessant, the remorseless analysis of falling in love or falling out of love, of what Tom feels for Judith and Judith does or does not altogether feel for Tom.[8]

We know from Woolf's own letters and journals how stung she was by Mansfield's criticism of exactly this conventional focus on relationships in *Night and Day*, which Mansfield dismissed in a review as "Miss Austen up-to-date,"

marveling at the discovery so late in the day of a ship "on the great ocean of literature […] that was unaware of what has been happening."[9] Woolf's 1927 essay demonstrates how far she has come since 1919, and with its list of what our emotions might be directed toward—"roses and nightingales, the dawn, the sunset, life, death and fate," not to mention "sleeping, dreaming, thinking, reading"—she could be outlining the parameters of Mansfield's *Journal.* In Mansfield's letters, we see the same movement between the concrete—roses and nightingales, or blood clots and gardens in flower—and the abstract, the fear of death and the need for love. The letters further show how this movement between images, sketches, analysis, and description—this bringing together of the disparate and the fragmentary—could be directed *toward* relationships: the "psychology of personal intercourse" can be understood, in part, in terms of style, and in terms of rhythm.

The Letters

It is a sign of how important her personal correspondence was to Mansfield that her letters are so often addressed from her bed first thing in the morning. She writes at all times of day, and in all kinds of locations—she begins her letter to Murry of May 8, 1915, "I shall write you my letter to-day in this café Biard, whither I've come for shelter out of a terrific storm"[10]—and she often writes late at night, last thing before going to bed. Even when she has written the night before, however, she will often pick up her pen again the next morning, before getting up. Sometimes of course this is because she was not well enough to get out of bed. Often she was apart from Murry because of her health, and the traveling often took a further toll on her strength. "I am better but still in bed, for there is a bitter east wind blowing to-day and I feel it is not safe for me to start my normal life in it," she writes in December 1915.[11] Even when perfectly well, however, she writes in bed. Several days after the bitter east wind, she begins a letter, "From sheer laziness I am sitting up in bed. The 'l'eau chaude' is warming its enamel bosom before a fresh-lighted fire, and I ought to be up—but it's so pleasant here and the smell of burning wood is so delicious and the sky and the sea outside are so pearly."[12] A letter written later the same winter extends for several pages before she reveals she is still in bed. "*Make* me wash and dress," she implores Murry, then confesses she has lit another cigarette, and goes into a fantasy lasting many more sentences about Murry arriving at the door and joining her in the house before she applies herself again to her intention of getting up:

> Now I am going to get up. I've got some *awful* toothpaste. It is called Isis and it has funny woodeny birds on the tube. It has all come out the wrong end, too. And it's *much too pink.*[13]

Clearly, writing to Murry is an indulgence for Mansfield, whether she is daydreaming about having him with her, giving him an account of what she has been doing, or complaining about the toothpaste.

To receive letters *from* him is a necessity. Ideally, she will start the day reading as well as writing letters: "I count on your letters in the morning and always wake up early and listen for the postman. Without them the day is very silent."[14] She is insistent on her need for a constant supply of letters, and it is up to Murry to make up for the shortcomings of the postal service. Writing soon after her arrival in Bandol in winter 1918, she opens the letter, "You are to write as often as you can at first—see? Because letters take so long, so long, et je suis malade."[15] When she doesn't get a letter, even the weather seems part of the conspiracy against her happiness: "A cold wild day, almost dark, with loud complaining winds and no post. That's the devil! None yesterday, none to-day!"[16] She has had unwelcome visitors staying "till a darling brown horse dragged them away at 8 o'clock last night," but only manages a few lines of complaint about them before bursting out again with the cry, "Oh, why haven't I got a letter? I want one *now now*—this minute, not tomorrow!!"[17]

Indeed, almost every letter to Murry describes either her disappointment if a letter hasn't come, or her relief and joy if one has. The letter of May 31, 1918, describes both at once—the first line, "No post"—has an arrow shooting out of it, leading to a drawing of an explosion and the words "YES. see later," with a further arrow leading to further fireworks, stars, and kisses. Her despondent opening to the letter with "not real complaints […] only laments" over the absence of a letter, followed by a fairly unenthusiastic account of her plans for the day, is then interrupted by a drawing of, she explains, "one immense wave which lifted me right up into the sun & down again. Mrs Honey brought me a letter after all!"[18] Letters from Murry make her days apart from him possible and are an essential part of the cure that is, after all, the point of her stays in France:

> The Lord took Pity on me to-day and sent me a letter from you […] I read it from beginning to end and then from end to beginning—upside down and then diagonally. I ate it, breathed it, and finally fell out of bed, opened the shutters and saw that the day was blue and the sun shining […] I still have an appalling cold, cough and flat-iron, but your letter was the best medicine, poultice, plaster, elixir, draught I could have had.[19]

She is not as demanding, of course, to any other correspondent in her requests for letters as she is in writing to Murry, and there is no one else she writes to with the same frequency, but she does keep up a large number of extended correspondences, and her gratitude for letters received, immediate replies or apologies for delays in replying, and the occasional outright request for a letter make it very clear how much these correspondences meant to her. On the arrival of a letter from Dorothy Brett, she writes: "I read this one to Murry as we drank our coffee last night and on the wings of it away we flew, up the snow mountains to some place like *this*" and she draws a funny little sketch of a cottage under mountains.[20] The purpose of all her letter-writing, then, is not literary but personal. The literary strategies that she uses, however, allow her to feel herself in the presence of those she loves even when she is apart and to maintain her relationships with them, resulting in some of her most exceptional writing that fits with, and perhaps allows, the developing aesthetics of her fiction writing.

The importance of memory and depth, for instance, which she emphasizes in two reviews she wrote in 1919, the review of Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* and a review of Dorothy Richardson's *The Tunnel*, is not only a thematic concern of her letters but can be seen as a structuring principle.[21] Letters move between the present moment of writing and the memory of shared experiences, and in one letter to Ottoline Morrell, she connects the importance of memory with a deeper sense of significance, even while the memories she selects are memories that are very specific to that relationship:

> There is something at the back of it all—which if only I were great enough to understand would make *everything* everything indescribably beautiful. […] Do you remember the day we cut the lavender? And do you remember when the Russian music sounded in that half empty hall?[22]

In her own writing, Mansfield had been developing an aesthetic of depth at least since she began writing "Prelude," originally "The Aloe," in 1915. Her letter to Murry describing "the great day" when she "fell into the arms of my first novel" conveys both her excitement and her uncertainty about the new way of writing she was working toward, as she drew on her own childhood memories:

> I have finished a huge chunk but I shall have to copy it on thin paper for you. I expect you will think I am a dotty when you read it—but—tell me what you think—won't you? Its queer stuff. It's the spring makes me write like this. Yesterday I had a fair wallow in it and then I shut up shop & went for a long walk along the quai—very far. It was dusk when I started—but dark when I got home. The lights came out as I walked—& the boats danced by. Leaning over the

> bridge I suddenly discovered that one of those boats was exactly what I want my novel to be—Not big, almost "grotesque" in shape I mean perhaps *heavy* — — with people rather dark and seen strangely as they move in the sharp light and shadow and I want bright shivering lights in it and the sound of water. (This, my lad, by way of uplift) But I *think* the novel will be alright. Of course it is not what you could call serious—but then I cant be just at this time of year & Ive always felt a spring novel would be lovely to write.[23]

At the same time, the letter is a work of art in itself, and all the more so for the way the description of the boats—and the vivid evocation of the sensation of *seeing* them as she did—is embedded in a narrative of wallowing in writing, walking out into the dark, and then the return to her hopes and concerns about the work she is doing, framed too in terms of her relationship with Murry. The opening of the letter offers a further framing, beginning with a response to Murry's description of home improvements and offering the address of an upholsterer, and concluding with her management of her budget—"Cooked vegetables for supper at 20 the demi-livre are a great find and I drink trois sous de lait a day"—and her account of being lent an umbrella in the Luxembourg gardens the day before.[24]

It is this kind of movement between memory and the present, depth and surface, visionary thinking and mundane details, that makes each letter so alive and conveys such a sense of the relationships the letters both reflect and sustain. Mansfield is as alert to the rhythms of her writing in her letters as she is in her fiction. The importance of rhythm to modernist literature, as well as to painting, was something Mansfield of course was very conscious of. *Rhythm* was the title of the modernist journal Murry edited from 1911 to 1913, and indeed Mansfield first corresponded with Murry as a contributor to the journal before they met in person. In her own fiction, and perhaps even more in her letters, Mansfield not only *describes* how visual impressions—the rhythm of lines and colors in a scene—give rise to feeling (including the feeling, or tone, she wants for the novel she is writing), but *arranges* visual impressions in relation to events, associations, and ideas so as to share and evoke emotion. She is attentive not only to the rhythms of the images she describes—the darkness, the people "seen strangely" as they move in sharp light and shadow, the contrast between the heaviness of the boats and the "bright shivering lights" and movement of the water—but attentive, too, to the rhythm of her prose, at the level of the sentences: the long, fragmentary sentence about the boats balanced by the short sentences on either side for instance, and at the level of the letter as a whole, moving as

it does between domestic details and narrative accounts, movement and stasis, action and vision, solitude and conversation "(This, my lad, by way of uplift)."

When Mansfield's copy of the *Athenaeum* arrived in November 1919, she wrote to Murry, "The paper has come. May I talk it over a little."[25] And she goes on to give her views on the contributions, finding, for instance, Waterlow's review of George Eliot disappointing for missing the warmth and detail of Eliot's descriptions, "the feeling of *beasts*, horses and cows—the peculiar passion she has for horses."[26] Always the letters are alive with this sense of the conversational exchange of ideas as well as Mansfield's own detailed scene-setting. She not only describes the present-tense scenes in which she writes, but adds to the sense of immediacy by interrupting her writing with further digressions and observations. Before remarking on her struggle to write her review for the *Athenaeum*, she sets the scene with a description of the fire she has just lit—"Do you smell the blue gum wood and the pomme de pin? It's a perishing coal-black day, wet, dripping wet, foggy, folded, drear. The fire is too lovely: it looks like a stag's head with two horns of flame"—and then interrupts herself first to comment on her own hunger, and then to tell Murry about a fly:

> I wish the Albatross would produce lunch: it's nearly *one* and lunch is at 12 and I'm shaking like a leaf and trembling with want of it. Now a fly has walked bang into the fire—rushed in, committed suicide.[27]

Writing to Ottoline Morrell from Switzerland in December 1921, Mansfield confesses:

> I have just found the letter I wrote to you on the first of November. I would send it to you as a proof of good faith but I re-read it. Grim thing to do—isn't it? There is a kind of fixed smile on old letters which reminds one of the bridling look of old photographs. So it's torn up and I begin again.[28]

For readers now, it is the freshness of the letters that is so striking, and no doubt the letter that Mansfield tore up would have seemed as fresh as this one she wrote in its place. Far from fixed in their emotions, the letters are constantly in motion, even when describing, as she does for Morrell, the regular routines of her life with Murry—"We write, we read, M. goes off with his skates, I go for a walk through my field glasses and another day is over."[29] There is always the quick, throwaway wit of her phrasing—the comparison of Murry's skating with Mansfield's walk she takes "through my field glasses"—and the movement between description and reflection, as she goes on to consider the effect of "living among mountains," the need it compels to work—"to bring forth a mouse."[30] Descriptions of the

place, as well as the life, are gifts of friendship, both allowing Morrell to picture Mansfield in Switzerland and allowing Mansfield to offer her brilliant similes written for no one but Morrell as the recipient: "All the streams are solid little streams of ice, there are thin patches of snow, like linen drying on the fields."[31] Later in the same winter, after a long illness, her descriptions of the landscape are no longer so enchanted: "I suppose the snow is very good for one. But it's horrid stuff to take and there's far too much of it. Immense fringes of icicles hand at our windows. Awful looking things like teeth."[32]

The Journals

The winter Mansfield was in Switzerland, writing to Ottoline Morrell about the snow and the icicles, she was also keeping a journal in which notes about the weather sit resonantly alongside analyses of her emotions or the emotions of Murry, and alongside her accounts of her writing progress. The brevity of the entries can in part be explained by the fact she was writing in a stationer's diary, with limited space allotted for each day's entry; yet, given the constraints, the entries fit in a surprising amount of detail and range with more flexibility than the space would seem to allow between very different kinds of material. The complete first entry is a good example of the movement between dreams and weather, regrets and aspirations, reading and writing, and the determination to *remember* the most fleeting impressions that characterize the entries in the diary more generally:

> SUNDAY, JANUARY
> I dreamed I *sailed* to Egypt with Grandma, a very white boat.
> Cable
> Cold, still. The gale last night has blown nearly all the snow off the trees, only big, frozen looking lumps remain. In the wood where the snow is thick bars of sunlight lay like pale fire.
>
> I have left undone those things which I ought to have done and I have done those things which I ought not to have done e.g. violent impatience with L.M.
>
> Wrote The Dove's Nest this afternoon. I was in no mood to write; it seemed impossible, yet when I had finished three pages they were "alright." This is a proof (never to be too often proved) that once one has thought out a story nothing remains but the labour. Wing Lee disappeared for the day. Read W.J.D.'s poems. I feel very near to him in mind. I want to remember how the light fades from a room—and one fades with it, is expunged, sitting still, knees together, hands in pockets …[33]

More even than in the letters, the diary form allows for metaphorical readings that are suggested by the juxtapositions, but not spelled out. The gale that blows away the snow and lets the sun through "like pale fire" is an apt image for the gales of impatience Mansfield feels for L.M. The clearing of the gale seems to have cleared a space, too, for Mansfield to write, to work on "those things which I ought to have done," despite not being in the mood to write—the bars of sunlight suggesting imprisonment as much as release, and the "pale fire" suggesting a certain pallor of inspiration. (Mansfield's journals are full of references to Shakespeare, whose plays she describes in a 1922 letter to Murry as "my Cathedral"; the one play she never quotes from is *Timon of Athens*, in which the phrase "pale fire" is used to describe the light the moon steals from the sun.) Whether Mansfield herself intended, or was even aware of, the possibility of such metaphorical readings, I am not certain, but what is certain is how attracted she was to the form that allowed them, the juxtapositions of exactly these kinds of resonant details and the movement between these kinds of disparate subjects.

Mansfield's promise in 1920 to lend Virginia Woolf her diary, which Woolf remembered again on hearing of Mansfield's death in 1923, represents something of a puzzle in the light of the manuscripts from which the *Journal* editions of 1927 and 1954 were assembled. Clearly Mansfield could not have intended to hand over exercise books full of story fragments, accounts, and recipes, or bundles of loose-leaf papers, including doodles, rhymes, unposted letter fragments, and notes to herself. Margaret Scott's transcription of this material as *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks* seemed only to confirm earlier judgments that Murry's edition, as Ruth Mantz argued, "might as well be classified as fiction," involving the construction, as Philip Waldron wrote, "of a temperamentally ethereal figure" with no relation to the personality of the real Mansfield.[34] While Scott made no claim for her transcriptions of this material in *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks* as representing anything like a diary, offering only "raw material" for "an infinite number of investigations" by Mansfield scholars,[35] the effect of printing these fragmentary, incomplete, private pieces of writing in the covers of two published volumes, in a single font, allowed for a reading of them as life-writing and as representing, in some sense, Mansfield's life and personality. Far from a "temperamentally ethereal figure,"[36] the Mansfield of the notebooks comes across as constantly distracted from her willed ambition to write by thoughts of clothes and food, laundry and shopping, reading lists, accounts, and recipes for stodgy puddings. The ethereal, too, seems less a matter of temperament and more an artificial style, as early experiments with Oscar Wilde aphorisms give

way to mostly second-rate poetry ("Strange flower, half opened, scarlet / So soft to feel and press / My lips upon your petals / Inhaled restlessness"[37]).

When Mansfield instructed Murry to "publish as little as possible and tear up and burn as much as possible," to "leave all fair," she may not have had the publication of either the briefer 1927 *Journal* or the longer 1954 *Definitive Journal* in mind, nevertheless either one of the Murry editions comes closer to satisfying her "love of tidiness" than the *Notebooks*.[38] Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison's edition of what they call "The Diaries" for the Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works is much more clearly focused than is the Scott edition on the actual diary-material that can be identified, in part because much of the poetry and fictional material—scenes and drafts for stories—has already been included in the earlier volumes of *The Collected Fiction* and *The Poetry and Critical Writings.* Whereas the first appearance of anything that really resembles the keeping of a diary is only made toward the end of the first volume of the *Notebooks*, with the entries from the 1914 diary she kept, the Edinburgh edition begins with what is clearly diary material from the start, and the relatively sustained diary-keeping that Mansfield undertook in the stationer's diaries takes up a larger proportion of the volume as a whole. Even so, a fair amount of material is included that could be thought of as incidental, such as accounts, shopping lists, unposted letters, and vocabulary lists.

Mansfield herself read both the letters and diaries of other writers, turning again and again to the letters of John Keats and the journals of Dorothy Wordsworth. In 1920, she copied into her own journal this commentary on the Wordsworth journals by the editor, to which she adds her own acerbic note:

> "All the journals contain numerous trivial details, which bear ample witness to the 'plain living and high thinking' of the Wordsworth household—and, in this edition, samples of those details are given—but there is no need to record all the cases in which the sister wrote, 'To-day I mended William's shirts,' or 'William gathered sticks,' or 'I went in search of eggs,' etc. etc." (W. Knight: Introduction to *Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal*).
>
> There is! vool!

And then she added a couple of extracts from the journal itself:

> I went through the fields, and sat for an hour afraid to pass a cow. The cow looked at me, and I looked at the cow, and whenever I stirred the cow gave over eating. (Dorothy Wordsworth.)
>
> "I have thoughts that are fed by the sun." (Dorothy Wordsworth.)[39]

A year later, writing to Elizabeth von Arnim, Wordsworth's imagery is still in Mansfield's mind as she describes how "In the folds of the mountains little clouds

glittered like Dorothy Wordsworth's sheep."[40] If Mansfield saw Wordsworth's glittering sheep belonging together with notes on mending shirts and searching for eggs, she might have been equally pleased to read, in another published diary, the lists of expenses which do give such a sense of a life's material needs and pleasure, as when one of Mansfield's own lists unexpectedly includes "slippers" after bread, butter, eggs, "veal & ham," and cake.[41]

It is unlikely, however, that Mansfield intended such material to be included in her plan she described in 1916 to write "a kind of minute note book—to be published some day."[42] Her plans of course are hardly to be taken as the measure for what she writes, and this plan in particular seems to have been put aside as she focused on redrafting *The Aloe*. According to C. K. Stead's meticulous reconstruction of the chronology, Mansfield wrote the first draft in Paris in March and May 1915 (in April she was back in London), when she was staying in Francis Carco's apartment.[43] In Bandol the following year, trying to find her way back to the novel, before the discovery of the 1915 draft enables her to begin again on what will become "Prelude," she asks herself "what is it that I do want to write." The only thing she seems sure of in this moment of writing is that it isn't a story—"the plots of my stories leave me perfectly cold." She wants to write "recollections of my own country" and about the people she loved; she wants to write poetry ("I feel always trembling on the brink of poetry"); she wants to write "a kind of long elegy to you [her brother, Leslie] perhaps not in poetry … almost certainly in a kind of special prose" (anticipating Woolf's idea, as she planned *The Lighthouse* in 1925, to come up with a form to supplant the novel—"But what? Elegy?"); and finally she wants to write the minute notebook. Expecting to start "any of this" at "any moment,"[44] instead she writes nothing for weeks, before her revisions of *The Aloe* give her what will be the opening story of her 1920 collection *Bliss and Other Stories*.

Yet if Mansfield never did work on a notebook for publication, as she planned, her interest in the kind of writing she imagined for it—"nothing that is not simple, open," and nothing generic, "no novels, no problem stories"—may be as relevant to the writing she *did* undertake as a diarist as her thoughts about elegy, memoir, and the movement beyond plot were to the writing of "Prelude." Mansfield did, in fact, return again and again to the diary form, before and after this diary entry, and in particular she returned again and again to the format of the stationer's diary. It is this that accounts in part for the brevity of so many diary entries and the poetic effect this creates when several dated entries, each made up of a few images and events, are read one after the other. In the 1927 *Journal*, Murry adds to this effect by editing the entries further, reducing many into one image. The original entry for January 23, 1915, for instance, reads:

> No letter. The old man breaking stones is here again. A thick white mist reaches the edge of the field. I have spent hours waiting for the post. Jack went to Chesham. I did nothing. After tea Rose went out & came back with a letter and a photograph. I came up here & simply felt my whole body go out to him as if the sun had suddenly filled the room, warm and lovely. He called me "ma petite Cherie"—my little darling. Oh, God, save me from this war and let us see each other soon. I talked with Jack, playing with the fringe of his lamp. But he refused to take it at all seriously. The dinner was good, the fire burned. The rain stopped. I sat after in the corner by the fire on a black pillow and dreamed. His photograph I put in the corner of the landscape picture, leaning against a wattle tree, his hands in his pockets.[45]

These details are restored in the 1954 edition, but the corresponding entry in the 1927 edition simply reads: "The old man breaking stones again. A thick white mist reaches the edge of the field."[46]

This is a particularly extreme example and can be partly accounted for by Murry's cover-up of the affair with Francis Carco; the only letters Mansfield ever waited for with as much impatience as she waited for letters from Murry were those from Carco, letters that defined the worth of a day—again and again the entries for January 1915 begin with the words "A letter!" or "No letter." Murry's editing toward an almost haiku-like effect in entries like this one is, however, found in many other instances where Francis Carco is not mentioned, and there is no obvious reason beside an aesthetic one for paring down the details of everyday life to focus on more singular images. Even so, in the 1954 edition, as in the most recent Edinburgh Press edition, the quality of "purity" Murry saw in her work—"as though the glass through which she looked upon life were crystal-clear"[47]—remains apparent. The 1954 edition of the January 23 entry, after all, does begin with the image of the old man breaking stones and the white mist extending to the edge of the field, and the focus on detail continues to bring the entry alive as it goes on. What could have been a long or lengthily analyzed account of the conversation with Murry for instance is replaced by the single, telling detail of his "playing" with the fringe of the lamp.

The format of the stationer's diary, of course, simply wouldn't allow for a lengthy analysis of what must have been a significant conversation. Yet rather than think of this as an accidental result of Mansfield's use of this particularly formatted stationery item, it is worth considering why Mansfield returned so often to this format. As the manuscript collection demonstrates, she did, after all, generally have several exercise books only sparsely written in at any one time in her life, as well as a constant supply of loose-leaf paper, which she did sometimes

use for longer diary-like writing. The stationer's diaries she wrote in are designed as appointment books, to plan and keep track of future engagements, rather than write up scenes and impressions from the days already past. When she plans to keep a "minute note book," C. K. Stead understands her to have another such generic stationery item in mind:

> Minute books were sold to keep the minutes of meetings, abbreviated notes of who spoke about what and what resolutions were passed or put to the vote and defeated. At the start of the next meeting the minutes of the previous meeting were often read and confirmed. That's the kind of book K. M. has in mind; and her intention is to keep a record of her life, I suppose, in brief note form.[48]

Vincent O'Sullivan, in contrast, writes: "I'm sure she didn't mean a 'minute book,' although she'd have seen enough of them in Father's office. 'Attending to small things,' or 'things on the wing,' is more or less how I take it."[49]

In either case, "A record of her life [. . .] in brief note form," "'attending to small things' or 'things on the wing'" is exactly what Mansfield uses the stationer's diaries for, which she keeps regularly from March to April 1914 (with additional entries in August and November), from January to February 1915, from January to April 1920, and in January, February, and September 1922. "What a vile little diary," she remarks of the 1915 volume, "But I am determined to keep it this year." And, on the fly-leaf, she inscribes her name and the note, "I shall be obliged if the contents of this book / Are regarded as my private property."[50] Such resolutions to write regularly, and such notes against trespassing, can be found in the other journals too, as well as in the notebooks and exercise books that are—at least initially—set aside for a similar diary-keeping purpose: in 1918 she kept a notebook of regular diary entries from April to October; in 1919 an exercise book of dated entries was supplemented with a kind of diary-like scrapbook; and in 1921 she kept several exercise books of dated entries, including a series of entries in July, a September journal, dated and named, and an entry dated November 13 that was clearly *intended* as the beginning of another diary: "It is time I started a new journal," she begins, "Come, my unseen, my unknown, let us talk together. Yes, for the last two weeks I have written scarcely anything." Later, in the same long entry, the only entry in fact made in this particular attempt at diary-keeping, she writes:

> I must make another effort, at once. I must try and write simply, fully, freely, from my heart. Quietly, caring nothing for success or failure, but just going on.I must keep this book so I have a record of what I do each week. (Here a word. As I re-read At the Bay in proof it seemed to me flat, dull, and not a success at all. I

> was very much ashamed of it. I am.) But now to resolve! And especially to keep in touch with Life. With the sky and the moon, these stars, these cold candid peaks.[51]

It has become a critical commonplace to dismiss the "iconized, sanitized, flawless Katherine insisted on by Murry," as Claire Tomalin puts it, and to value "the sharp impersonality, the clarity and concision of the best stories" on which her reputation is founded,[52] and because of which scholars continue to look to the letters and journals for the "infinite number of investigations" Scott suggests they allow.[53] In England, where Mansfield's literary reputation was already well established—"I'm puzzled to say K.M. (as the papers call her) swims from triumph to triumph in the reviews" Woolf wrote in 1921[54]—and where she was known as a person as well as a writer in literary circles, Murry's "hagiographic" approach to Mansfield's legacy was criticized from the beginning, even before the publication of the first editions of the journal and the letters; the later revelation of how extensive the role of Murry's editing was only confirmed this view. In Europe, the *Journal* and *Letters* were translated—first into French, in which language they were widely read in and beyond France—at the same time as the stories were translated, and Mansfield's reputation has been much more inseparable from the status of the *Journal* as a minor classic, and the resulting "myth" of Mansfield's purity of vision and character.[55]

Paradoxically, if a literary rather than a biographical approach were to be taken to Mansfield's diary-writing, and if the question of how misleading a representation the journals might give of Mansfield's "character" could be put aside, Murry's editing could be seen as less of a fiction than it has been supposed. Were an editor to put together an edition of the writing Mansfield herself evidently intended as diary-writing, it would be somewhere between the 1927 and 1954 editions in length and would contain much of the same material. The same arrangement of visual impressions to evoke feeling, the same movement between present and past, intention and interruption, that structures the letters would be apparent as a structuring principle of the journal writing too. It would be, as Woolf described the 1927 edition: fragmentary, impressionistic, "terribly sensitive," often dialogic, a little impersonal, untroubled by literary reputation, searching, focused on the demands of craft, on what it means to be a writer, under the pressure of illness, and aiming for what Woolf herself describes as "the crystal clearness which is needed to write truthfully."[56] If this is a fiction, it is a fiction which Mansfield developed and sustained over years of writing letters and over years of experimentation with the diary form.

Notes

1 CW4, 241.
2 *Letters* 1, xiii.
3 Virginia Woolf, "A Terribly Sensitive Mind," in *Collected Essays*, vol. 1, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), 356.
4 Ibid.
5 Ian Gordon, "The Editing of Katherine Mansfield's Journal and Scrapbook," *Landfall* 13 (1959): 64.
6 CW4, 192.
7 Ibid.
8 Woolf, "Poetry, Fiction and the Future," cited in Kirsty Martin, "Modernism and Emotion," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Modernist Literature*, ed. Ulrike Maude and Mark Nixon (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 83–4.
9 Katherine Mansfield, "A Ship Comes into the Harbour," in CW3, 534.
10 *Letters* 1, 178.
11 Ibid., 214.
12 Ibid., 217–18.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 123.
15 *Letters* 2, 8.
16 Ibid., 115.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 205–6.
19 Ibid., 11–12.
20 Ibid., 283.
21 See Anna Jackson, "'Not Always Swift and Breathless': Katherine Mansfield and the Familiar Letter," in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 202–13.
22 *Letters* 2, 254.
23 *Letters* 1, 167–8.
24 Ibid., 168.
25 *Letters* 3, 118.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 96.
28 *Letters* 4, 343.
29 Ibid., 344.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 *Letters* 5, 20.

33 CW4, 397–8.

34 Ruth Mantz, "K. M.—Fifty Years After," *Adam* 38 (1972): 127, and Philip Waldron, "Katherine Mansfield's *Journal*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 20, no. 1 (1974): 18, both cited by Davide Manenti, in *Rewriting Mansfield: Writing, Editing and Translation*, Doctoral Thesis, Victoria University 2015.

35 Margaret Scott, Introduction, in *Notebooks* 1, xv.

36 Waldron, "Katherine Mansfield's *Journal*," 18.

37 *Notebooks* 1, 219.

38 See Kathleen Jones, "The Mansfield Legacy," in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism* (London: Continuum, 2011), 168.

39 CW4, 318–19.

40 *Letters* 4, 301.

41 *Notebooks* 1, 267.

42 CW4, 192.

43 C. K. Stead, "Katherine Mansfield and the Art of Fiction," in *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Jan Pilditch (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 155–71.

44 CW4, 191–2; Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, eds., *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 3: 1925–30* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 34.

45 *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield, Definitive Edition*, ed. J. Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1954), 71.

46 *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. J. Middleton Murry (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), 22.

47 Ibid., xv.

48 C. K. Stead, email correspondence, June 13, 2019.

49 Vincent O'Sullivan, email correspondence, June 14, 2019.

50 CW4, 146.

51 Ibid., 387–8.

52 Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (London: Viking, 1987), 241–2.

53 Scott, "Introduction," xv.

54 Anne Olivier Bell, ed., *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 2: 1920–24* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 87.

55 See Gerri Kimber, *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), and *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe*, ed. Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber (Houndmills, Basingstoke and Hampshire: Palgrave, 2015).

56 Woolf, "A Terribly Sensitive Mind," 356.

14

Katherine Mansfield's Poetry

Erika Baldt

Although best known today for her short stories, Katherine Mansfield felt herself "always trembling on the brink of poetry":[1] Her blurring of the line between art and life, poetry and prose, seems to have been accepted as a given by both friends and critics alike. In his introduction to the first collection of her poetry, published in the same year as her death, Mansfield's husband and editor, John Middleton Murry, wrote, "Perhaps her poetry is not quite poetry, just as her prose is not quite prose. Certainly, whatever they are, they belong to the same order."[2] While never one to see his wife's work objectively, Murry does at least draw attention to the inextricable link between the different genres of Mansfield's writing. William Orton, at one time her lover, declared, "All her writing was a kind of poetry, not so much in respect to form or content as in its extreme intensity and accuracy of realization."[3] Edward Wagenknecht, meanwhile, claimed that Mansfield "understood as the poets do."[4] Indeed, it was through poetry that Mansfield began to establish "stepping-stones"[5] toward her writing "philosophy," concentrated in only five words in a journal entry in 1920: "the defeat of the personal."[6] Poetry provided Mansfield an emotional outlet that she did not allow herself in her fiction, as, according to Vincent O'Sullivan in his introduction to *Poems of Katherine Mansfield*, "Mansfield wrote much of her verse primarily for the moment of expression and often with no desire to revise."[7] At the same time, however, even the most personal of her poems became the seeds that grew into some of her best short stories, in which this "philosophy" reached its height. While, as Katherine Anne Porter argued in 1937, Mansfield's "work itself can stand alone without clues or notes as to its origins in her experience,"[8] it is impossible to ignore the connections between her personal life, her poetry, and her fiction. Rather, this essay will follow O'Sullivan's lead in his claim that "all biography is text, after all, as much as fiction is, and a reader may pass from one to the other

without large claims of psychological uncovering. One is simply remarking on the continuity of pattern between text and text, the commerce of signs appropriate to both."[9] O'Sullivan suggests that a "continuity of pattern" can be found across Mansfield's biography and fiction, and I will here extend that to include her poetry, as well. Because Mansfield wrote over 200 poems, this essay will follow a loosely chronological pattern, focusing on the collections that Mansfield herself grouped together, "Little Fronds," her Children's Book of Verses, and *The Earth Child* cycle, as well as thematic groupings of her later poems, to show the ways in which poetry contributed to Mansfield's growth as a writer.

Little Fronds

The title of her first collection of poems, "Little Fronds," is an apt reflection of the early stages of Mansfield's poetic development. The poems date from Mansfield's school days in London, when she was still known by her given name, Kathleen Beauchamp, and although she was just a teenager when she wrote them, readers can recognize aspects of the more mature writer in her friend Ida Baker's description of the girl who "read poetry and even wrote it—and stories too! She also played the 'cello and was an avid correspondent. Amongst her letters were some to 'Caesar,' young Arnold Trowell, her friend from New Zealand and great romantic idol."[10] All of these aspects of Mansfield's personality are in evidence throughout "Little Fronds." The theme of young love is displayed in the poems "To M" and "To Grace," written for another of Mansfield's "romantic idol[s]," Maata Mahupuku, also known as Martha Grace, while "Music" and "Love's Entreaty" grew from Mansfield's musical interests, the latter having been set to music by Mansfield's sister Vera.[11] All four of these follow a traditional hymn meter pattern, which, though hardly revolutionary, shows the beginnings of Mansfield's tendency to compose "poems for the ear rather than for the eye, taking delight in parodying and pastiching the voices and idioms of an era."[12]

More interesting, perhaps, are the poems that seem to presage Mansfield's later life. "The Chief's Bombay Tiger," a seemingly humorous account of life onboard the ocean liner that brought Mansfield and her family to England in 1903,[13] both anticipates Mansfield's later persona as one of "the Two Tigers," a nickname she used both professionally and personally for most of her life,[14] and at the same time displays one of her first attempts at connecting animals with human sexuality:

And at night when the ladies
Have gone to bed
This great Bombay tiger
Prowls round overhead.
At six and seven, he's heard to roar
At the ladies' porthole or cabin door
But the lady passengers venture to say
They never feel safe till that tiger's away.[15]

Although the rhythm and rhyme scheme make the poem sound like a nursery rhyme, the form belies the content, as the ladies described can be read as both physical and sexual prey. Echoes are found in Mansfield's 1917 story "Prelude," for, just like the ladies of the poem who only fear the tiger at night, Linda views her husband Stanley as a Newfoundland dog that she is "so fond of in the daytime," but who is "too strong for her [...] There were times when he was frightening—really frightening."[16] It is the threat of another pregnancy and childbirth that Linda fears from Stanley's "jump[ing] at her,"[17] but unlike the speaker of "The Chief's Bombay Tiger," who, though acknowledging that it is "horribly rude," uses the imperative to demand that the owner "just keep your dear tiger in No. 2 hold,"[18] Linda is far from forthright. To actually articulate her emotions is incomprehensible, as the closest Linda comes to telling her husband how she feels about his advances is a fleeting thought that "She could have done her feelings up in little packets and given them to Stanley."[19] The directness of the young Kathleen Beauchamp's poem gives way to a more nuanced understanding of the communication between adults in her later work as the writer herself matured.

While "The Chief's Bombay Tiger" has specific personal and professional associations, other poems in "Little Fronds" connect more generally to Mansfield's later work. The second poem in the collection, "The Sea," in which the speaker repeats "I feel for thee, O Sea,"[20] is the first of many to describe a preternatural connection between the individual and the elements.[21] Referring to a storm that, according to Beauchamp family lore, raged during Mansfield's birth, Murry and Ruth Elvish Mantz claim that Mansfield "might have been born of the wind and the sea on that wild morning. 'The voice of her lawless mother the sea' called to her all of her life; she was 'the sea child' of her early poem."[22] Although they are referring to Mansfield's later work here, the "voice" of the sea is heard even in this early poem, with its iambic lines:

In calm and tempest and in storm and strife
In all the bitter changeful scenes of life

> In death's dark hour before Eternity
> I feel for thee, O Sea.[23]

The effect is rhythmic as the waves or as a human heart and is repeated in Mansfield's 1921 story, "At the Bay":

> Ah-Aah! sounded the sleepy sea. And from the bush there came the sound of little streams flowing, quickly, lightly, slipping between the smooth stones, gushing into ferny basins and out again; and there was the splashing of big drops on large leaves, and something else—what was it?—a faint stirring and shaking, the snapping of a twig and then such silence that it seemed some one was listening.[24]

The sibilant alliteration of "slipping between the smooth stones" and "such silence that it seemed some one was listening" conjures up the sound of water, while the iambic pattern, like that of "The Sea" ("And **from** the **bush** there **came** the **sound** of **lit**-tle **streams**"), supports Murry's claim that Mansfield's poetry and prose were of "the same order." Like Mantz and Murry, O'Sullivan notes that "The sea is present in Mansfield's writing [...] on hundreds of occasions,"[25] and he suggests that "The presence of the sea is a disposition of her mind, part of her way—in the words she had applied to Chekov—of taking 'a *long look* at life.'"[26] It is almost as if, rather than reflecting a parting from or returning to the sea of her New Zealand birth, Mansfield's work suggests that it was always part of her, "a disposition of her mind." So although "Little Fronds" represents Mansfield's first foray into the world of poetry, it provides readers with several glimpses of images and associations that will deepen in her later verse and fiction.

Children's Book of Verses

Mansfield's second poetry collection, compiled when she returned to New Zealand in 1907, was intended to be an illustrated book for children. Claire Tomalin's appraisal that it is "essentially a pastiche of Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*, with touches of Hans Christian Andersen,"[27] has been generally accepted, with Gerri Kimber adding that the poems "have no literary merit."[28] However, the collection is essential to Mansfield's development in that it introduced ideas to which she returned throughout the rest of her career. As Tomalin suggests, the poems themselves adhere closely to Stevenson's themes. Mansfield's "The Black Monkey," for example, shares a similar scenario with Stevenson's "Good and Bad Children," in which an adult connects badly behaved

children with animals. While Stevenson's speaker suggests that bad children "grow up as geese and gabies,"[29] the speaker of "The Black Monkey" attributes his daughter's conduct to the eponymous creature who "swings / Right on her sash or pinny strings" and "makes her such a naughty child."[30] Diverging from Stevenson's model, Mansfield suggests that the child herself remains innocent and, as in "The Chief's Bombay Tiger," it is the animal that is responsible for the disturbing behavior. Mansfield returned to this idea in one of her early children's stories, "The Thoughtful Child" of 1909,[31] suggesting that these early poems were a place to experiment with imagery that would eventually be expanded in her fiction.

The same could be said of her depictions of race and class, an unexplored aspect of Mansfield's collection. Not unlike Stevenson, who addresses class disparities and ethnic differences in *A Child's Garden of Verses*,[32] Mansfield introduces contemporary attitudes to race from a child's point of view in poems like "Song of the Little White Girl" and "Grown Up Talks," in which two children discuss how babies are made, deciding that "God makes the black ones / When the saucepan isn't clean!"[33] While it could be argued that poems such as these are harmless reflections of a child's perception of the New Zealand population, comprised as it was of both white European and Maori individuals, there are more explicit references to race throughout the collection.

Mansfield infuses racialized imagery into even the most banal of subjects. "The Pillar Box," for example, opens with the stanza

> The pillar box is fat and red,
> The pillar box is high;
> It has the flattest sort of head
> And not a nose or eye,
> But just one open nigger mouth
> That grins when I go by.[34]

The rest of the poem describes how the pillar box eats "letter sandwiches," in particular those that the speaker drops in its mouth on behalf of her mother when her father goes away.[35] Another poem in the collection, "Song by the Window Before Bed," continues the same pattern of assigning racial associations to inanimate objects, as the speaker, addressing a "little star" in the night sky, claims "The trees are just niggers all / They look so black, they are so tall" in the second stanza, and "The nigger trees are laughing, too" in the third.[36] The editors of the *Collected Poems* claim in a note that while "there are linguistic choices, such as 'nigger' here, which are obviously unpleasant and troubling

to the modern ear and mindset [. . .] they reflect the idiom of the day and its often unquestioning attitude to racial stereotypes."[37] The appearance of "The Pillar Box" in a 1910 issue of *Pall Mall Magazine*,[38] amidst advertisements for "Blackie's Books for Children"[39] and photographs in the Victorian style titled "Childhood,"[40] certainly supports this reading. What is interesting, however, is that, although the collection as a whole was not published,[41] Mansfield thought this particular poem was good enough to submit on its own when she returned to London three years later.

In fact, Mansfield returned to the imagery in "The Pillar Box" and "Song by the Window Before Bed" again and again over the years. She reused the laughing trees from "Song by the Window Before Bed" in "An Indiscreet Journey" of 1915, although she made the language slightly more palatable,[42] but it is the image of the grinning mouth that made a lasting impression. Just a few months after writing the poem, Mansfield went on a camping trip through the New Zealand bush and had several encounters with Maori families. Writing to her mother in November 1907, she described a Maori baby—"such a darling thing—I wanted it for a doll"—with whom she engaged in a "great pantomime": "Kathleen—pointing to her own teeth & then to the baby's—'*Ah*!' Mother—very appreciative—'*Ai*!'"[43] Using "thing," "it," and "doll" to describe a living child suggests that, here and in the poems written a few months earlier, Mansfield was referencing the golliwogg, "a doll and book character" created in the 1890s whose "pop-eyes, jet-black skin and hair, and bright red mouth announced his minstrel ancestry, while his red, white, and blue outfit quoted the American flag."[44] Mansfield's 1912 story, "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped," uses the same imagery, as the eponymous child protagonist fixates on the smiling mouths of the two Maori women who abduct her: "The women smiled at her and Pearl smiled back. 'Oh,' she said, 'haven't you got very white teeth indeed! Do it again.'"[45] However, it is in her 1918 story "Je ne parle pas français" that Mansfield takes the imagery to its extreme in the figure of the African laundress who corrupts the French narrator Raoul Duquette: "very big, very dark, with a check handkerchief over her frizzy hair."[46]

Duquette's attitude to life, he claims, is "the direct result of the American cinema acting upon a weak mind,"[47] so it is likely that his description of the woman who "kissed away" his childhood[48] would be influenced by self-consciously American figures like the golliwogg, which became "a massive consumer phenomenon" on both sides of the Atlantic,[49] rather than reality. In this way, Mansfield opens up a gap behind the grinning mouth, creating an ironic revision to "The Pillar Box." In Urmila Seshagiri's reading of "Je ne parle pas français," "With the image of a white French child being kissed violently by

a frizzy-haired African laundress in an outhouse, Mansfield renders porous the boundaries that would traditionally mandate the sexual separation of black from white, servant from employer, adult from child."[50] Thus, in the decade between the child verses and "Je ne parle pas français," Mansfield's "unquestioning attitude to racial stereotypes" seems to have been transformed. Writing to Murry, Mansfield claimed that it was "a mystery" where the story came from but that "The african laundress I had a bone of,"[51] suggesting that she may have been looking back to her earlier work for inspiration, developing what readers today might consider the casual racism of the poems into a larger critique of socially constructed identities.

Although Mansfield, like her critics, did not see the child verses in a favorable light, her own analysis of the book was not completely negative. Writing in her personal notebook she states, "And I have written a book of child verse—how absurd. But I am very glad—it is too exquisitely unreal."[52] Although she describes it as "absurd" and "unreal," Mansfield's assessment is balanced by the caveat, "but I am very glad," suggesting that the experience itself was worthwhile. If nothing else, the book provided Mansfield with material that she revised and developed throughout the years, these early poems setting her on a path that took her work, in her words, "as far as I can get."[53]

The Earth Child

If "Little Fronds" and the book of child verse represent Mansfield's first poetic exercises, *The Earth Child* is where she began to hone her craft in earnest. The collection is composed of dozens of poems, only nine of which were published during her lifetime, that display both a continuation of previous themes and a deepening of her technique as she began to "forge a new literary voice assembled from personal memory, intercultural experimentation and contextual echoes."[54]

One of the ways that the note of "personal memory" blends into Mansfield's "new literary voice" is in her use of fairy tales. Claire Davison argues that "Mansfield's own scenes […] begin as what appear to be records of experience, only to shift into a more transfigured, fairy-tale world."[55] Many of the poems follow an unidentified speaker negotiating various fantasy landscapes and encountering otherworldly creatures. The first lines of poems V and IX, for example, begin with the same pattern: Poem V begins, "In an opal dream cave I found a fairy,"[56] and poem IX continues, "In a narrow path of a wood I met a witch,"[57] but rather than going on to prove himself or herself or overcome some obstacle which would then lead to a happy ending, the speaker in Mansfield's

poems rarely receives such closure, as Mansfield herself was at a crossroads. Having been banished to Bavaria at the time many of these poems were written so that "the breath of scandal" created by the fact that she was pregnant by a man who was not her husband "should not be wafted overseas,"[58] Mansfield would most likely have been drawn to fairy tales with unhappy endings like those of Hans Christian Andersen, who was already, as Tomalin noted, an influence on her poetry.[59] Thus, poem V, which was published in *Rhythm* as "The Opal Dream Cave," bears a strong resemblance to "The Little Mermaid" in that, when removed from her cave, the fairy the speaker finds

> became thistledown
> Then a mote in a sunbeam
> Then—nothing at all …[60]

much like the little mermaid herself, whose corporeal form ultimately ceases to exist when she, too, is separated from her home.[61]

This bleak outcome seems to mirror Mansfield's own relationship to her new environment. Writing to the father of her ultimately stillborn child, Garnet Trowell, in June of 1909, only one impression comes through: "Some day when I am asked—'Mother, where was I born'. and [*sic*] I answer—'In Bavaria, dear', I shall feel again I think this coldness—physical, mental—heart coldness—hand coldness—soul coldness."[62] Andersen's "The Snow Queen," then, with its tale of a heart turned to ice, is a fitting reference, and several of Mansfield's poems in the cycle share similarities with the original tale. Poem XV, for example, a dialogue between a girl and her reflection, echoes the very premise of "The Snow Queen" in which the devil bewitches a mirror that then shatters, and "whenever [the fragments] flew in any one's eye they stuck there, and those people saw everything wrongly, or had only eyes for the bad side of a thing."[63] In Mansfield's poem, the speaker cannot reconcile her own cheerful expression reflected in an otherwise sorrowful face:

> Why are you smiling so?
> Girl face in the shadow
> Your open brow, your smoothly banded hair
> The painful shadow under your eyes,
> These do not speak of joy—
> Yet your mouth is tremulously smiling.[64]

The answer to the speaker's question is, "Because I lie asleep on the quiet heart of Oblivion,"[65] a fate that nearly befalls "The Snow Queen's" Kay, in whose eye and heart a fragment of mirror lodges.[66] Indeed, one of the later poems in

The Earth Child, XXII, reads like a description of Kay's escape with the Snow Queen after attaching his sledge to hers, as the two figures in Mansfield's poem, "curled up under the bear skin rugs" in a sleigh, "drove—it seemed—through the foam that breaks over the world edge."[67] Yet while "The Snow Queen" ends happily with Kay's rescue, *The Earth Child* ends where Andersen's story begins: with a broken heart. The last poem, "To KM," describes the death of a bird whose heart was pierced by a bramble,[68] reflecting Mansfield's own "heart coldness." Louise Edensor's suggestion that "Mansfield's use of the fairy-tale lexicon could be considered pastiche, indicating perhaps her intuitive experimentation with writing in attempting to puzzle out issues of the self"[69] seems apt here as Mansfield was wrestling with her identity as both a woman and a writer during the composition of the collection.

In addition to other genres, though, Mansfield also intentionally looked to other writers in all aspects of the collection. Her choice of prospective publisher, for example, "is revealing. Elkin Mathews was a well-established figure […] His catalogue included names such as Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons and John Davidson."[70] So while Mansfield was clearly seeking to align herself with established poets, the work itself, according to Kimber and Davison, is "mov[ing] away from her earlier youthful influences of Oscar Wilde and fin-de-siècle symbolism, towards the more complex neo-Romanticism and early modernism of continental Europe."[71] Indeed, Davison has provided extensive evidence of the debt the collection owes to German poet Heinrich Heine. She notes that "his careful organisation of apparently stand-alone poems into sequences or cycles linked by an overriding sense of quest, or the phases of love, or revisited memory and desire" can be applied to *The Earth Child*, and that "many of Heine's characteristic themes," including the sea, travel, enchantment, and loneliness, "would also become Mansfield's."[72]

Davison also suggests that Mansfield shares Heine's sense of "play with changeling forms, using disconcerting doppelgangers, masks, outcasts and outsiders, who feel their displacement and dispossession intensely, and yet cultivate it too."[73] Although one of the last poems in *The Earth Child* collection is called "The Changeling," an even better example of the use of masks and displacement can be found in some of the poems in the collection that were published individually. Poems II ("The Earth-Child in the Grass"), VI ("Very Early Spring"), XX ("There Was a Child Once"), "Jangling Memory," and "To God the Father" all appeared in *Rhythm* as "translations" from Russian by Boris Petrovsky.[74] According to Murry, the creation of this "imaginary Russian" was the result of Mansfield's poems having been refused by another editor "because they were unrhymed," which made "her very reserved about her verses."[75] Davison's

interpretation above supports Richard Cappuccio's suggestion that "Boris Petrovsky was a deliberate mask."[76] Indeed, Chris Mourant has traced the origin of that pseudonym to the journal *New Age*, the editor of which, A. R. Orage, is the one who rejected Mansfield's poems originally. Yet, as Mourant explains, the situation is much more complicated. He argues that Mansfield invented "Boris Petrovsky" by reversing and expanding the name of the poet Petr Bezruč, whose poems were translated by Paul Selver and published in the *New Age* in May 1911 as "Poems from the Slavonic." According to Mourant,

> These allusions to Selver's translations suggest that Mansfield first intended the Petrovsky poems to be included in the regular "Pastiche" section at the back of the *New Age*, to which she contributed on several other occasions. Whilst the Petrovsky poems were Mansfield's own creations, therefore, they were also intended to be read as imitations, with all the exaggeration that their categorisation as "Pastiche" facilitated.[77]

The published poems thus serve two functions. As part of the larger *Earth Child* sequence, they represent pieces of a puzzle of Mansfield's own creation. As "imitations" they are repurposed to contribute to a dialogue between poets, between publications, and between the different professional identities of their author. Like many of the other *Earth Child* poems, the published works were based on Mansfield's own personal experience, but the pseudonym of "Boris Petrovsky" allowed readers to interpret them in the "Russian" context created for *Rhythm*, and this, Mourant argues, was intentional: "The conflation of the autobiographical with the pseudonymous […] gestures towards the way in which Mansfield utilised 'Boris Petrovsky' as a strategy for cultivating a certain poetic voice and style that could be transferred into verses penned under her own name."[78] Here again we see Mansfield honing her craft, developing the imagery and influences of her earlier poetry to the point that she is "perhaps at the height of her poetic powers."[79] Now, though, we also see Mansfield using deliberate "strategy" to test new voices and new personae. The poems are still personal, and, indeed, reflect a period of emotional distress, but her control over her art is that much greater with this collection.

Uncollected Poems

For all of the strides she made with *The Earth Child*, the fact remains that the collection as a whole was rejected by the publisher and was only rediscovered in 2015.[80] The poems for which Mansfield is best known today were uncollected.

One that has ties to *The Earth Child*, though, is her 1909 poem "To Stanislaw Wyspianski," an elegy to the Polish artist whose early death of syphilis inspired Mansfield's sympathy and whose design for a stained glass window in the Franciscan church in Krakow inspired Mansfield's poem "To God the Father" in that collection.[81] According to Jeffrey Meyers, the elegy has as much to do with Mansfield's childhood as it does with its ostensible subject:

> "To Stanislaw Wyspianski" is a youthful poem written in long rhythmic lines comprising eight sentences, which shows the powerful influence of Walt Whitman, whom she had read in Wellington in 1907. The poem is more about Katherine Mansfield and New Zealand than about the Polish playwright, of whom we learn very little.[82]

Supporting Meyers's reading, the poem's first eight lines do not mention Wyspianski at all, focusing instead on the origins of the first-person speaker, "a woman, with the taint of the pioneer in my blood," whose "little land" is

> Making its own history, slowly and clumsily
> Piecing together this and that, finding the pattern, solving the problem,
> Like a child with a box of bricks.[83]

As in her earlier work, "the powerful influence" of other poets is evident, but the notable aspects of this particular poem are the themes that come to take on much greater significance in Mansfield's later poetry and fiction: New Zealand, childhood, and death.

Childhood memories are woven throughout much of Mansfield's poetry. In poems like "The Grandmother" and "Butterflies," Mansfield revisits the realm of her earlier child verse, where, though children may act out, like the speaker who jealously "wanted to be in the place of Little Brother,"[84] they still maintain an innocent joy in everyday family occurrences:

> In the middle of our porridge plates
> There was a blue butterfly painted
> And each morning we tried who should reach the butterfly first.
> Then the Grandmother said: "Do not eat the poor butterfly."
> That made us laugh.[85]

Although the poems' characters and setting are vague, Mansfield later reworked scenes like these into the New Zealand story "At the Bay," where "The Grandmother" becomes Mrs. Fairfield,[86] about whom C. A. Hankin suggests, "There is something archetypal about her, as she creates security, order and

pattern both in the dwelling and in the emotional lives of its inhabitants."[87] Although Hankin is referring only to the story here, the word "archetypal" fits the figure of "the Grandmother" in both Mansfield's poetry and her life, as it was to thoughts of her own grandmother that she often turned for "security" and comfort,[88] both before and after she left New Zealand for good.

Yet while Mansfield often returned to her family for inspiration, the death of her brother made this return to childhood, specifically childhood in New Zealand, that much more urgent. The connection with her favorite sibling, though strong in life, grew even more intense after Leslie was killed in a tragic grenade accident during the First World War in 1915,[89] and she wrote several poems to him in the months that followed. The best known, "To L.H.B. (1894–1915)," combines the elements common to Mansfield's poems—memories of childhood ("We were at home again beside the stream") and the sea ("I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar / Of the dark water tumbling on the shore")[90]—into a kind of otherworldly sonnet in which the first fourteen lines could stand alone as a description of the speaker waking from a dream about her brother. The fifteenth and last line, however, breaks the traditional form and seems to come from beyond the grave, as the brother finally speaks, inviting the speaker to eat the berries they called "Dead Man's Bread": "These are my body. Sister, take and eat."[91] Although the last line reflects Mansfield's intense grief at the loss of her brother and her feeling, described in her diary, of being "just as much dead as he is,"[92] it also holds the promise of new life in that, according to Anne Mounic, "Her brother calls for resurrection in her imagination, stories and poems."[93] Aimee Gasston takes the idea a step further:

> Appropriating eucharistic imagery, Mansfield embraces a creative construction of cannibalism to forge a link between herself, her dead brother and New Zealand. When placed against the context of wider material from the journal, it is clear that the poem articulates Mansfield's desire to revivify her brother, through ingestion, to create a particular type of fiction, a "kind of special prose."[94]

Both suggest that a direct line can be drawn between "To L.H.B" and the New Zealand stories like "Prelude" and "At the Bay" as Mansfield transforms her brother from death to life, from poetry to prose.

Yet though Mansfield may have been able to "revivify" Leslie in these stories, she could not escape the shadow of death, as only two years after writing "To L.H.B." she was diagnosed with the tuberculosis that would eventually kill her.[95] Interestingly, although her first responses to the threat of her own death were written in prose in her notebook, the short pieces are preceded by the words "no

good,"[96] and she then revised them into poems like "Malade" and "Arrivée." These poems written shortly after her diagnosis deal explicitly with her "complaint,"[97] but later poems, like "The Wounded Bird," take up familiar imagery to express her impending death more obliquely.

"The Wounded Bird" is most often read as a companion to Mansfield's final story, "The Canary," with the note that she frequently referred to her lungs as "wings" after contracting tuberculosis.[98] As we have seen, however, Mansfield regularly links the figure of the bird and the speaker of the poem, as in the aforementioned "To KM" of *The Earth Child* cycle, and "When I Was a Bird." I would suggest that a more apt pairing for "The Wounded Bird" is not "The Canary" but "To KM," in that it is here readers can see Mansfield edging ever closer to her "philosophy" of "the defeat of the personal." Both poems focus on a bird who has received a fatal wound to its heart, and both make reference, again, to waves and the sea. However, the obviously biographical title of the earlier poem is replaced by something more general in the later, just as metaphor ("She is a bird")[99] gives way to simile ("She is like a wounded bird resting on a pool").[100] It is in the last two lines, though, that the nature of the revision becomes clear, for while "To KM" ends "'A moment—a moment … I die' / Up and up beat her wings,"[101] the end of "The Wounded Bird" reverses the earlier poem's closing lines and, in so doing, removes any sense of closure: "O my wings—lift me—lift me / I am not so dreadfully hurt … "[102] The bird's inevitable fate, though explicit in the first poem, is left to the reader's imagination in the second, as the dissonance provided by the ellipsis does not resolve. For even though "The Wounded Bird" slips between third and first person, as the "she" of the first line becomes "I," the effect of the poem as a whole is less personal and more universal. Writing of Mansfield's late work, Hankin suggests, "The death which she faced alone had to be seen in the wider, universal perspective of the death—and renewal—of all natural forms. Thus individual suffering, individual regret, give way […] to a greater but shared pain at the knowledge of life's shortness."[103] In her last poem, Mansfield transformed her own suffering into poetry that could stand on its own, the personal having finally been defeated.

Conclusion

It has been more than thirty years since Vincent O'Sullivan published *Poems of Katherine Mansfield* and reminded contemporary readers that their beloved short story writer wrote poetry, too. Of her verses O'Sullivan concluded,

> We may regard her poetry now as Mansfield herself tended to think of it—unassuming, often slight, serviceable enough for occasional published excursions into inherited effects and derived styles, yet capable too of unexpectedly inventive turns and intensity. Or we may read it for its vivid biographical facets, the quick clarities of her attention as it catches at angles of memory or self-scrutiny.[104]

Since then, an entire collection of her poetry has been unearthed, the correct timeline of her known work has been restored,[105] and new poems continue to be discovered.[106] Is it time, then, for a reappraisal of Mansfield's poetry that looks past the "slight" and "serviceable" to see the "alchemy, as sights, sounds and memories are transmuted into literature?"[107] Although, as I have attempted to show here, her poetry was born of her own life experiences, her reading of other writers, and, in a way, necessity, it was "technique [that] brings before the reader the shapings that art makes of memory"[108] as Mansfield worked tirelessly to become the artist she always longed to be.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

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13 Katherine Mansfield, "The Chief's Bombay Tiger," in CW3, 17n.
14 See Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (1980; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 146.
15 Mansfield, "The Chief's Bombay Tiger," 16.
16 Katherine Mansfield, "Prelude," in CW2, 87.
17 Ibid.
18 Mansfield, "Bombay Tiger," 16–17.
19 Mansfield, "Prelude," 88.
20 Katherine Mansfield, "The Sea," in CW3, 12.
21 See, for example, "The Sea-Child," in CW3, 79–80; "Sea," in CW3, 82; and "Pic-Nic," in CW3, 119–20.
22 Ruth Elvish Mantz and J. Middleton Murry, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable & Company, 1933), 63.
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29 Robert Louis Stevenson, "Good and Bad Children," in *A Child's Garden of Verses* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 50.
30 Katherine Mansfield, "The Black Monkey," in CW3, 39.
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35 Ibid.
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Part Four

Katherine Mansfield and the Arts

15

Katherine Mansfield's Musical World

Claire Davison

> *With despair—cold, sharp despair—buried deep in her heart like a wicked knife, Miss Meadows, in cap and gown and carrying a little baton, trod the cold corridors that led to the music hall. Girls of all ages, rosy from the air, and bubbling over with that gleeful excitement that comes from running to school of a fine autumn morning, hurried, skipped, fluttered by; from the hollow classrooms came a quick drumming of voices; a bell rang; a voice like a bird cried, "Muriel." And then came from the stair case a tremendous knock-knock-knocking. Someone had dropped her dumbbells.*[1]

"The Singing Lesson" was written in 1920 when Mansfield was at the height of her literary powers and beginning to enjoy the public success for which she had yearned. Its opening paragraph alone offers a splendid introduction to the intense world of music that shimmers beneath the surface of so much of her writing. Here is a world where sound, syntax, and semantics are as tightly, but subtly imbricated as in a metaphysical poem: the first sentence has no sooner gotten underway ("With despair …") than it is bluntly interrupted, rendered ponderous and doleful by a heavy apposition butting in like a tolling bell ("cold, sharp despair"); this marks the arrival of the musician—Miss Meadows, the music teacher, ominously armed with her baton. Sentence two as quickly dispels the false start's disarmingly grim effect; the knell gives way to a hubble-bubble of life, made tangible by the performance of words as they ring and resound in a babbling flow—scurrying activities, the pitter patter of voices, the chiming of bells, and the pounding of dumbbells: waves of sound in a "hollow classroom" that acts as a soundboard, amplifying noises. In a few lines—which we might be tempted to call a prelude, or overture, but which we might also liken to an orchestra tuning up before a performance begins—the incipit thus conjures up

a rich acoustic background or soundscape as the setting for a tale about music and musicians, and the power of music to express and inflect on the emotions.

Like so many of Mansfield's stories, "The Singing Lesson" reads like a theatrical script; it invites performance by foregrounding dialogue, song, and a choir of voices that call, sigh, sob, and drawl as part of a rich soundtrack of ambient noise. Furthermore, as is so characteristic of Mansfield's literary poetics, the harsh realities of the contemporary socio-political world resound subtly in the background, coded into the compact language of the short story. From the significantly named Miss Meadows and her martial behavior relentlessly forcing physical and emotional obedience onto her young and vulnerable "troops" to the sergeant major imposing discipline in the battlefield, there is but a short step, especially in the immediate post-war years. Mansfield thus reminds her reader that music is not only "the food of love" and the bringer of harmony; its ruthlessly imposed rhythms are the finest way to get soldiers marching in step to the frontline. Here, then, is an impressive illustration of Mansfield's musical imagination: her ability to record the dense fabric of sounds in the contemporary world and explore the connotations of musical expressivity, drawing on the formative years of her childhood to do so.

The intricate interrelations between music in the world Mansfield grew up in and the intensely auditory sensibility which infuses all her written work is what this chapter sets out to explore. In biographical terms alone, it is no exaggeration to claim that music accompanied Mansfield throughout her life. In one of her earliest love letters she exclaims that her "inner life pulsates with sunshine—and Music & Happiness";[2] a month later, writing to her cello teacher, she evokes music both literally and as a metaphor for the path of life: "I think of that little Canon of Cherubini's as a gate—opened with so much difficulty & and leading to so wide a road."[3] Her passion for music far outlasted actually playing an instrument; it extends to the last day of her life. Some of her last recorded words are, "I want music. Why don't they begin?" as she waited impatiently to see the dances performed by fellow residents at the Gurdjieff Institute for Harmonious Development in Fontainebleau.[4]

While the part music played in her formative years is essential,[5] this chapter focuses on the lifelong impact that music had on her distinctive, musically inflected literary sensibility. Examples recur throughout her writing: in letters to musicians about music; in diary jottings about musical performances (street music, snatches of song overheard, professional concerts); and in the musical forms and metaphors she draws on to expand the powers of verbal expression—acoustically attuned sketches, lyrics and song-forms in poetry, and richly

sonorous, soundscaped stories. Nor is music ever a mere signpost pointing to her individual apprenticeship and creative imagination. It places her work firmly at the vanguard of the dawning modernist era, recalling how, in a world newly transformed by sound technology (when the telephone, gramophone, phonograph, the first experiments with radio, electric bells, and mechanized transport were becoming daily features in contemporary life), the artistic imagination was fast changing too, exploring new modes and means to render impressions of the times.

Conversely, whether consciously or not, Mansfield and her modernist peers were also recording in print the sounds of a vanishing world: the popular ballads and jaunty songs of the late Victorian and early Edwardian music hall, the brass band in public parks, and rattling, clip-clopping horse-drawn carriages sounding alongside the jangling bells and horns of the first omnibuses and motor-cars. To features like these should be added the amateur music-making that was so integral a part of late nineteenth-century domestic life, especially once the piano, previously an item of hand-crafted beauty and luxury, was being manufactured industrially, making it affordable by any socially aspiring family. A respectable musical education and the ability to play an instrument had long been seemly feminine attributes that enhanced daughters' marriageability. These socio-economic factors and their role in the patriarchal scheme that dominated in Wellington and London were all part of the musical setting that shaped the way Kathleen Beauchamp would become Katherine Mansfield.

Music as a Literary Apprenticeship

Mansfield's musical education began from the cradle: hymns in church, nursery rhymes, street vendors and singers, parlour games, her elder siblings' music making, and stories told by the professional musicians who circulated in the select circles of Wellington's upper middle classes. The Beauchamp family's collections of sheet-music (some of which survives to this day) give a fair idea of their domestic musical tastes: it includes popular songs, Edwardian music-hall favorites, popular classics for the piano, and even pieces composed by the children. Two such songs, "Love's Entreaty" and "Night," so pleased Harold Beauchamp that he got them printed professionally in Germany: the lyrics are by Mansfield, the music by her sister Vera, both then in their early teens. In musical and literary terms, the predictable tunes and sentimental lyrics are conventional indeed, as the second verse of "Night" suggests:

O night how I love and adore thee;
Why dost thou so short a time stay;
My sorrows come crowding back o'er me
E're the shades of the night pass away.
I hope I may die in the darkness
When the world is so quiet and still,
And my soul pass away with the shadows
E're the sun rises Over the hill.[6]

Irrespective of the clichés, *Two Songs* (the title of the published pieces) was a milestone, giving their author the thrill of seeing her own compositions transformed into published works; it is thus a first indication of how a musical background—listening to music, singing, and playing—could extend into Mansfield's later desire to write professionally with and for music. The lyrics also show her nascent talent for rendering the lilting rhythms, sing-song patterns, and mock archaisms of the Victorian and Edwardian popular song repertoire, and thus point to an essential moment in her formative years when imitation is poised to become pastiche—which of course went on to become a hallmark of her mature literary voice.

A copy of *Two Songs* now at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington also reveals another vital clue in Mansfield's musical apprenticeship: her handwritten dedication, "To Tom from Kathleen," dated 1904. Here we find a trace of one of Kathleen's first schoolgirl crushes: (Thomas) Arnold Trowell, a cellist and child prodigy in New Zealand, who went on to become one of the country's foremost cellists and composers. Doubtless keen to imitate her beloved, and perhaps to defy conventional associations of music and femininity, Mansfield likewise chose to learn the rather unfeminine cello, taking lessons with Arnold's father, Thomas Luigi Trowell. A 1904 notebook gives a clear idea of how her musical and literary passions were evolving in parallel. In two successive columns, she lists "Books I have read" and "Music I have studied," each entry giving fascinating insights into her creative and imaginative tastes:

Books I have read.

Name	Author	Date
* *Life & Letters of Byron v. I*	Thomas Moore	B. J.14th F. J.17th
* *Aftermath*	J. Lane Allen	B. J.17 F. J.17th
* *Dolly Dialogues*	Anthony Hope	B. J.17th F. J.18th
Poems	Jean Ingelow	B. J.13th F. J.14th
* *Life & Letters of Byron v. II*	Thomas Moore	B. J.17th F. J.19th
* *How Music Developed*	Henderson	B. July 16th F.
* *The Choir Invisible*	J. Lane Allen	B. July 18th F. 20th

[…]

N.B. All books which I have enjoyed are marked thus:— *

Music I have studied

Caprice	Noel Johnson
"Warum"	David Popper
"Le Désir" (part only)	Servais
"Variations Symphoniques"	Boëllman[7]

For a while, her romantic feelings for Arnold ("Tom") appear to have been mildly reciprocated: Arnold dedicated one of his early works, a suite of cello pieces later published and classified as "Six Morceaux pour Violoncelle, Opus 20," to her. Other early compositions named after folk legends and fairy tales likewise suggest affinities with the sketches and other short story forms that Mansfield was then trying her hand at.[8] This musically and romantically driven friendship then prompted the young Mansfield to follow suit when Thomas Trowell senior took his sons to Europe to launch their musical careers. Playing on the conventional, colonial, middle-class conviction that finishing one's education in Britain was a valuable social attribute, she convinced her parents to let her and her sister Vera, duly chaperoned by their maiden aunt, to set off to London. Again, as sketches, semi-fictional reveries, and musical doodles in her notebooks of the time attest, music remained foremost in her imagination. These musical passions were then stoked by new love interests: Mansfield switched her attentions from the studious cellist Arnold to his younger brother Garnet, a violinist. Here a real love affair developed, to the extent that when Garnet set off on tour with the highly popular, well-respected Moody Manners Opera Company, Mansfield broke bounds again by sometimes accompanying him.

For her readers today, these characteristically impulsive adventures offer revealing insights into the ways she transposed transgression into literary creation. When Garnet and Mansfield were apart, she wrote him passionate letters in which music, love, and romantically charged literary composition intermingle. The finest example is a letter written in early November 1908, in which she depicts the creative bridge taking shape in her mind between the musician's craft and the sounds of music on the one side, and literary poetics on the other. She begins:

> I have been writing some words for two songs of Tom's so I send you a copy. The one called a "Song of Summer"—I thought of you and me—waking in the morning—with the sun in our room in the country—so you will understand it. The other had to exactly fit the music—which it does—he's delighted and says I have caught his thought exactly—but it's a morbid thought and not at all as I feel.[9]

This initially straightforward description then opens up to evoke not *what* she is writing, but *how* she pictures its staging and performance, blending lyrical theatricality, age-old story-telling techniques, a dramatic sense of timing, and an intricate blend of volume, tone, and voice color. The quotation is long, but is worth reading in full to appreciate the later development of her literary art. From today's more theoretical perspective of modernist studies, it reads as a perfect example of what Daniel Albright calls the "figure of consonance" which was so predominant in the modernist period when the realms of music, language, and painting interwove and intermingled, creating a transmedial aesthetic practice rooted in contemporary science and philosophy:[10]

> I have a strange ambition—I've had it for years—and now, suddenly here it is revived—in a different way—and coming hammering at my door—It is to write—and recite what I write—in a very fine way […] Revolutionise and revive the art of elocution — — — take it to its proper plane—Nothing offends me so much as the conventional reciter—stiff—affected—awkward—but there is another side to it—the side of art—A darkened stage—a great—high backed oak chair—flowers—shaded lights—a low table filled with curious books—and to wear a simple, beautifully coloured dress—You see what I mean. Then to study tone effects in the voice—never rely on gesture—though gesture is another art and should be linked irrevocably with it—and express in the voice and face and atmosphere all that you say. TONE should be my secret—each word a variety of tone — — — — […] I would like to be the Maud Allen of this Art—what do you think. Write me about this—will you? You see—I could then write just what I felt would suit me—and could popularise my work—and also I feel there's a big opening for something sensational and new in this direction — — — — —[11]

Again, the fin-de-siècle is clearly crossing paths with early modernist experimentation, but the simple example of her idiosyncratic punctuation points to the way Mansfield was trying to think beyond what words said or signified on the page; foregrounding the embodiment, emotions, and senses of performance, she makes sounds, inflections of the voice, the pace of phrasing, and the context of utterance as essential to story-telling as print.

In fact, the letter's lay-out and its materialization of language appeal to its reader (i.e., Garnet, a violinist in an orchestra accompanying operatic performances) in the same way that a score addresses a musician: the words and dashes on the page are like notes of music, the series of dashes resembling rests and the markers of a pulse or beat which indicates a rhythm to be followed. Any reader familiar with Emily Dickinson's idiomatically punctuated poetic voice or Gerard Manley Hopkins's sprung rhythm will instantly recognize a comparable

effect here being caught in prose. Indications such as these are just one of the multiple ways in which music would go on "speaking" in Mansfield's literary world. Some of her most powerful and most frequently anthologized stories make recurrent use of this sort of sound-and-rhythm-inflected punctuation as well as being explicitly musical in terms of characters, events, and musical compositions: key examples include *Juliet* (1906), "The Modern Soul" (1911), "Mr. Reginald Peacock's Day" (1917), "The Wind Blows" (1920), "The Singing Lesson" (1920), "Miss Brill" (1920), "Her First Ball" (1921), "The Garden Party" (1921), and "The Canary" (1922).[12]

The list is much longer if it includes stories with a musical form or structure, or with song lyrics and background music woven into the dynamics of "plot." The term "plot," however, is ill-suited to Mansfield's narrative technique, her stories reading more like "impressions" seized on the moment, or "moments of being" as Virginia Woolf would call them,[13] or evocations of a mood, memory, or emotion, than a chain of events. And although such "impressions" are easily equated with visual or painterly modes of art, they are also fine examples of the rich analogies between the modernist short story and the favorite short musical forms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: "Preludes," "Nocturnes," "Sketches," and "Scenes"—along with explicitly narrative "programme music" by composers like Chopin, Debussy, and MacDowell, all of whom Mansfield refers to explicitly.[14]

Writing "Music": Performance as a Narrative Art

While Mansfield's friends evoke her talent for verbal recital and performance,[15] her aspirations to become the "Maud Allen" of her art were never realized. However, one comic masterpiece, "The Modern Soul," a story from her 1911 *In a German Pension* collection, provides the perfect fictional setting for a similarly melodramatic, stage-struck performer being shrewdly observed by a rather sardonic narrator—as if Mansfield herself, now working as a writer in London, were looking back wryly on her rapturous imaginings. There is nothing excessive, however, about the story's exalted musical leitmotifs and references in an archly conventional, Bavarian spa town setting. Although increasingly a political antagonist in the dawning twentieth century, Germany had stood unrivalled as the musical heart of Europe since the early nineteenth century, its world-renowned conservatories, orchestras, and composers attracting musicians from the world over. This musical prestige, along with a more caustic appraisal of the

musical scene and would-be musicians now past their heyday in the provinces, is one of the leitmotifs of "The Modern Soul," with its cast of comic-opera stock characters, its lightweight comic plot (a tale of flirtation among spa guests and patients who spend their time performing, admiring each others' performances, and recalling their former glories as artistes), and a script whose comic repartee and ribald humor would be perfectly suited to the late Victorian music hall.

Beneath this surface simplicity, however, runs a host of subtle satirical undercurrents, most of which are musical, as a closer reading of the first paragraph shows:

> "Good-evening," said the Herr Professor, squeezing my hand; "wonderful weather! I have just returned from a party in the wood. I have been making music for them on my trombone. You know, these pine-trees provide most suitable accompaniment for a trombone! they are sighing delicacy against sustained strength, as I remarked once in a lecture on wind instruments in Frankfort. May I be permitted to sit beside you on this bench, gnädige Frau?" He sat down, tugging at a white paper package in the tail pocket of his coat. "Cherries," he said, nodding and smiling. "There is nothing like cherries for producing free saliva after trombone playing, especially after Grieg's "Ich Liebe Dich." Those sustained blasts on "liebe" make my throat as dry as a railway tunnel. Have some?" He shook the bag at me.[16]

The comedy-of-manners-type prologue is sonically rich, appealing directly to the auditory imagination. The buffoonish trombone-playing professor, for instance, is aptly surnamed "Windberg," meaning "windy hill," creating an entertaining echo amongst the "sighing delicacy" of trees, as well as underscoring his blustery long-windedness. The sonic backcloth gains in depth once he starts drooling (audibly?) over his cherries and recounting his music practice and lecturing. He also evokes the story's first explicit musical intertext "Ich liebe dich" ["I love you"], one of Grieg's most popular romantic songs, the gentle delicacy of which hardly suits "blasts" on the trombone, as the contemporary reader would know.

Muffled hints of sound and seduction are heightened by deftly satirical cultural allusions, such as the German and Viennese fin-de-siècle, which Mansfield's readership in the *New Age* magazine (where the story first appeared) would have seized easily. There is a densely packed send-up of Freudian symbolism, for example, from the pinewoods themselves (playing on the verb "to pine," and the French slang "pine" ["penis"], which had long been a conventional source of innuendo in both languages), to the solitary exertions of trombone practice, "sustained blasts on 'liebe'" that leave the throat dry, and juicy worms in

the bag of cherries deftly clasped between the professor's knees.[17] Such allusions are enhanced by psychoanalysis-inspired innuendo throughout the story. The most obvious example is the classic mother-and-daughter duo, Frau Godowska and her daughter Sonia, and their titillating mentions of emotion, clothing, and reticules. Similarly, allusions to Vienna's musico-theatrical scene highlight the smoldering decadence associated with the fin-de-siècle.

Mansfield's musical background and her keen observational skills are most obvious during the musical event around which the story is constructed—an evening concert given by the spa guests. Every item on the hilariously recounted program, along with the near farcical performance-audience dynamic, is rich with explicit and implicit musical allusions.[18] The focus here will be on the atmospheric performance given by Fräulein Sonia. While most readers would agree that it is "melodramatic," it is worth recalling what "melodrama" meant in those days. It did not just mean excessively sentimental and theatrical: it implied a formal merging of *melos*—melody—and drama, and it was a popular musico-dramatic effect in all stage arts, from the musical hall to lyric opera. A specific type of melodrama consisted of declamation over musical accompaniment—exactly the sort of musically enhanced, declamatory stage performance that Mansfield evoked in her letter to Garnet. Her ambitions, however, had clearly evolved. Rather than merely performing her lyrical compositions, she builds a musico-theatrical story around a melodramatic event, thereby giving the textual, written poetics of the short story a more intermedial, musically resonant materiality.

Close readings of the concert pieces show how this works in practice. Being the central showpiece of the concert, Sonia Godowska's performance is carefully framed by the pieces before and after. These all come from the song repertoire of the era and were likely to be familiar to contemporary readers; this would give extra sonic depth to the words on the page, bringing to mind the sounds, rhythms, and dynamics of the lyric intertexts. First comes a song sung by Frau Oberlehrer:

> "Yes, I know you have no love for me,
> And no forget-me-not.
> No love, no heart and no forget-me-not,"
> sang the Frau Oberlehrer, in a voice that seemed to issue from her forgotten thimble and have nothing to do with her.[19]

While not explicitly identified, the lyrics are from "Das Vergissmeinnicht" ["The Forget-Me-Not"], a poem by the Viennese actress and opera singer Anna

Grobecker, which had been set to music by various contemporary composers, including Grobecker's friend and compatriot, the highly popular composer Franz von Suppé; this version could be found in a variety of contemporary song books. Grobecker, often nick-named "the Queen of Trouser Roles" on account of her many successful stage appearances in male roles (a detail likely to have fascinated Mansfield), had died in 1908, the year before Mansfield's extended stay in Germany. This makes it all more likely that Mansfield was familiar with accounts of her life and times and used choice details to enrich her story's mesh of musical allusions. The "voice that seemed to issue from [the Frau Oberlehrer's] forgotten thimble and have nothing to do with her" for instance, perhaps conveys a haunting echo of Grobecker's own voice from beyond the tomb, recalling the fin-de-siècle fascination with psychical events, ventriloquism, and the occult.

This song and these slightly supernatural overtones set the tone for Sonia's declamatory performance, as do the syntax, pace, and tone of Mansfield's own narrated introduction:

> The piano was closed, an arm-chair was placed in the centre of the platform. Fräulein Sonia drifted towards it. A breathless pause. Then, presumably, the winged shaft struck her collar brooch. She implored us not to go into the wood in trained dresses, but rather as lightly draped as possible, and bed with her among the pine needles. Her loud, harsh voice filled the salon. She dropped her arms over the back of the chair, moving her lean hands from the wrists. We were thrilled and silent.[20]

The rather unworldly, melodramatically staged recitation is as lyrically excessive in manner as it is comically grotesque in seductive innuendos, poking fun both at the heightened lyricism of the fin-de-siècle and at the immature writer's former romantic reveries.

Further comic, sexual, and musical pastiche-effects also emerge after the event, in the concert pieces which follow. First comes an apparently impromptu, and rather sexualized, climactic outburst of virtuoso trombone-playing by the Herr Professor, which "wallowed in the soul of Sonia Godowska."[21] This is followed by an aria sung by a young man announcing in a "piping" tenor voice that he loved somebody, "with blood in his heart and a thousand pains."[22] Although unidentified within the narrative, the lyrics are probably from the most famous aria in *Hans Heiling*, then a much-loved opera by the very popular German composer Heinrich Marschner. In Act One, Hans, the tragic hero from the Underworld (a deep baritone rather than a higher-pitched tenor) expresses his overwhelming, but destructive, unrequited passion for the heroine Anna, majestically claiming, "I love you with a thousand pains," and "I love you with a

bleeding heart."[23] The aria closes with an impassioned orchestral passage during which Anna and her mother speak rhythmically in time with the music, that is, melodramatically. This musical reference doesn't only enhance our appreciation of the concert atmosphere; it reinforces the formal interest of melodrama throughout "The Modern Soul," while also enhancing Sonia's previous invitation "not to go into the wood in trained dresses, but rather as lightly draped as possible, and bed with her among the pine needles"; it also prepares the comic dénouement of Mansfield's story in its pinewood setting. Like Sonia with her marriage-plotting mother, Anna in *Hans Heiling* is misguidedly persuaded by her mother, Gertrud, to get betrothed to Heiling, despite being in love with the hunter Konrad. Wandering alone in the pine forest, Anna learns the true identity of Hans and faints (just as Sonia will after her performance), before being taken home by Konrad; in Act Three, they are then married in the forest chapel. The opera's finale thus invites reading in parallel with the story's closing lines: "Fräulein Sonia and the Herr Professor had gone off for a day's excursion in the woods. I wondered."[24]

Like many of the story's musical subtexts, the tightly packed reference with its playful pastiche effects and intertextual, intermedial resonance would not necessarily have been clear to Mansfield's contemporary reader, and one century later it is far more obscure. However, once the embedded musical allusions are opened up, they vastly increase our appreciation of how fast the young writer's literary craftsmanship was evolving. They provide valuable insights into Mansfield's extensive literary and musical knowledge, and a fine illustration of how successfully she was experimenting with a "sensational and new genre" bridging the gap between traditional musical forms and conventional story-telling.

Rhapsody—Music between the Lines

However subtle and evocative in intertextual terms, music's role in "The Modern Soul" is primarily comic, providing the context, tone, and symbolic accompaniment for nearly all the wry humor, laugh out loud innuendo, farcical behavior, and comic opera repartee. In this final section, however, a very different use of literary music is being studied, which recurs increasingly in Mansfield's later oeuvre—the association of music, emotion, and memory. The domain is rich and complex, reflecting how Mansfield, like so many of her modernist contemporaries, incorporated the rhythms and dynamics of musical fragments

into their literary compositions, thereby foregrounding emotional undertones and epiphanical intuitions beyond the power of words. Conversely, they also use music as an irreverent or sardonic counterpoint, undercutting lyrical uplift to highlight the dissonant undertones of the contemporary world. Focusing on just one poem by Mansfield written in 1917, we shall see how a musical soundscape expands the structural boundaries of print. Whether recording the spoken voice or unheard melodies, sonic resonance thus creates alternative modes of self-expression and self-representation while recording the dissonances of the socio-cultural and political world.

Like "The Modern Soul," "Night-Scented Stock" can be read as a veiled biographical sketch. Mansfield sent the poem to Lady Ottoline Morrell after one of her many house-parties at her home near Oxford, Garsington Manor, during the war years. The Garsington parties and their lavish hospitality quickly became something of a myth in Bloomsbury folklore,[25] but it is important to recall their political significance. Morrell and her husband, the liberal politician Philip Morrell, were outspoken pacifists, and they purchased the manor house with the intention of making it into a working farm and rest home for conscientious objectors and war-traumatized artists. The relaxed party atmosphere, plentiful food, exuberant dancing, and ambient music were, in other words, part of a clearly defined political project, offering nourishment, shelter, and uplift to those whose lives were being devastated by the war.

A poetically sensitive reading of "Night-Scented Stock" does not require familiarity with the story of Garsington and the circles of Bloomsbury intimates who flocked there to enjoy Morrell's seemingly extensive wealth and generosity.[26] Certain contextual details can, however, enhance our appreciation of the scene as Mansfield captures it, "White, white in the milky night" with a "big dark house" half-hidden behind the trees. The opening stanzas run as follows:

> White, white in the milky night
> The moon danced over a tree
> "Wouldn't it be lovely to swim in the lake!"
> Someone whispered to me.
> "Oh, do—do—do!" cooed somebody else
> And clasped her hands to her chin.
> "I should so love to see the white bodies
> All the white bodies jump in!"

— —
The big dark house hid secretly
Behind the magnolia and the spreading pear-tree[27]

As Mansfield and Morrell's letters at the time reveal, the two friends were regularly exchanging thoughts on the power of music to transform the evocative impact of writing:

> Ah, my lovely friend, it was such an enchanting letter. It was so wise and so perfect that it took my breath away. It "went to my heart" like Music—and I seemed to see, in the dark pool of silence that lies between us, our wonderful friendship that we so very nearly achieved, shining, gleaming, heavenly, and longed for, like the moon in the trembling water of the pond.[28]

> [T]here are lovely things in all three [of the works Morrell had written and sent to Mansfield]—flying glimpses, flowers tossed one knows not whence—a perfume from hidden bushes—shadows moving, gleaming, mysterious—
>
> In all three I think the opening is best—the "attack"—musically speaking—of Desire is wonderfully free and passionate.[29]

"Night-Scented Stock" thus reads as the continuation of their conversations, while transposing their form. The operative, transformative function of music as a literary device, however, extends well beyond these passing musical references, as a close-up observation of the third stanza shows:

The big dark house hid secretly
Behind the magnolia and the spreading pear-tree
But there was a sound of music—music rippled and ran
Like a lady laughing behind her fan
Laughing and mocking and running away—Come into the garden—it's as light as day![30]

The setting, tone, rhythm, and meter of the poem are entirely transfigured once the music strikes up. The first two stanzas, quoted above, are conventional in structure: written in ballad form, they alternate rhyming lines in trimeter and tetrameter, giving a safely contained, sing-song pulse to the slightly mysterious setting. The third stanza starts in the same vein, evoking "The big dark house"; in line three, however, all conventional, familiar, or regular metrical shaping disappears; the reader has no choice but to follow the line of words which scuttles off ahead:

> [...] music rippled and ran
> Like a lady laughing behind her fan
> Laughing and mocking and running away—[31]

In technical terms, this is an enjambement, one line running into another; in terms of story-telling technique, it is an evocative example of imitative harmony. Like the line of verse, the unknown laughing lady runs off in front of us, teasingly calling us into the garden, tantalizingly hiding behind her fan. In other words, the regular, structured rhythm of the music has given way to a much more modern sound and tempo, irregular, free-flowing, yet strangely pulsating, haunting, and enveloping.

Just as metrical convention is swept up into a more innovative, improvised free rhythm, so too are words freed from their regular, rhyming patterns: some lines close on simple clichéd rhymes typical of traditional folksongs or nursery rhymes: tree / me; chin / in; dishes / fishes; tall / wall; sea / tree. Others, however, embrace disarming half-rhymes creating bold but slightly surreal, disconcerting associations: secretly / pear-tree; gloom / mushroom; the other say / threw it away; pattern / left of them. Midline echoes likewise add disarming overtones, both acoustically and visually:

> His white feet flicked in the grass like fishes
> [...]
> And another, shadowy—shadowy and tall
> Walked in the shadow of the dark house wall,
> [...]
> "How sweet the flowers smell!" I heard the other say—
> Somebody picked a wet, wet pink
> Smelled it and threw it away—[32]

After the unexplained throw-away gesture, a new shift occurs. The music stops, and the musically transfigured scene and the elusive, unnamed cast of characters who had been prompted into life by the sound of music come just as abruptly to a halt, like mythological figures turned into stone, or trees: "The music stopped and there was nothing left of them."[33]

Only the moon—rich, generous, signifying yet silent—continues its dance over the trees. Just like the first stroke of midnight in many fairy tales, the central enchantment of the poem thus transfigures time, capturing the feel of "life itself" at a magical, midsummer's midnight hour, brought to life by an unknown musician.[34]

The tightly packed musical textuality of "Night-Scented Stock" offers an exquisite example of literary ekphrasis, when one aesthetic medium transforms into another: sound becomes words and colors, musical phrasing becomes syntax, metaphors come alive (the piping voice of a flute), the flowing sequence of phrases becomes dance, scenes become sound. Overall, the sketchy montage of disparate, disconnected snippets of voice reflects the underlying tempo of music—no longer the traditional story-telling pulse of ballads as in the first stanzas, but the music of jazz (the musical novelty of the era) perhaps, with its shifting rhythms, off-beat pulse, unexpected syncopations, and improvised half-echoes.

Alternatively, following the lead of "that Hungarian stuff," the medley of literary music invites analogies with rhapsody, a short musical form popularized in the late nineteenth century and directly associated with vivid emotion, collective memory, and impulsive emancipative counter-rhythms that broke with classical forms, Liszt's and Brahms's Hungarian rhapsodies being the most obvious analogies. Nor is the comparison with rhapsody merely a convenient label. As a musical form, rhapsody is characterized by its episodic structure and impetuous, unconventional tempo which so favored the rendering of retrospective evocations of impassioned feeling and heightened dream-like fantasy. Its revival in late nineteenth-century Central Europe, moreover, had bold political resonances, recalling the musical forms and cultural identities that nineteenth-century political hegemonies had tried to silence. Furthermore, as a formal device, the musical rhapsody bears echoes of its classical origins, when the rhapsoder was a performer declaiming in a rapturous, theatrical manner, recounting tales of epic adventures in an extended tale, part music, part poetry. In other words, once again, we return to the sort of melodramatic performance which the schoolgirl Kathleen Beauchamp dreamt of in her letters to Garnett Trowell, and which the stage-struck artist Sonia Godowska embodied in "The Modern Soul."

From the broadly political to the intimately personal, here are some fine networks of musically heightened association running through Mansfield's works and expanding their thematic, structural, and metaphorical density. Musical motifs and echoes also create rich intertextual, intermedial resonances across her oeuvre, pointing to the evolution of her musical expressivity and auditory imagination. Nor should such a musically alert, acoustically heightened investigation of her writing stop at merely reviewing Mansfield's own works. Her rhapsodic poem "Night-Scented Stock" deserves to be set alongside other key works from the experimental years of early modernism, which so illuminate

our understanding of how the modern world was "striking a contemporary" as Virginia Woolf later put it:

> It is an age of fragments […]
>
> We are sharply cut off from our predecessors. A shift in the scale—the war, the sudden slip of masses held in position for ages—has shaken the fabric from top to bottom, alienated us from the past […]
>
> Much of what is best in contemporary work has the appearance of being noted under pressure, taken down in bleak shorthand which preserves with astonishing brilliance the movements and expressions of the figures as they pass across the scene. But the flash is soon over.[35]

Our appreciation of Mansfield's oeuvre is greatly enhanced by setting the emblematic "Night-Scented Stock" alongside short stories and essays by Woolf, James Joyce ("The Dead," for example), T. S. Eliot ("Prufrock," and the less familiar but intensely rhapsodic, Paris-and-Garsington inspired "Preludes," "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," and "Conversation Galante"), and the rhapsodic "Breadalby" chapter in Lawrence's *Women in Love*, to name but the better-known figures in early Anglophone modernism. It also reminds us how urgently the writers, musicians, and artists of the day strove to make sense of a world in ruins, in fragments, and drew on music to do so. They took inspiration from the lyrical, appeasing, intimately emotional power of music to embody and preserve memory, but they also used its fragmented, immaterial dissonance and disconnection to give a paradoxically lasting yet ephemeral feel to a world on the brink of destruction. Musical intermezzos, musical events, musical forms, and half-heard musical memories thus became the ideal, intangible, yet indelible shapes and voices to give to the random, irregular, disarming sounds of a world which seemed to be so determinedly marching in time with the war-mongers.

This surely is what we can still hear, silently echoing on, not only in Mansfield's musical writing, but in the accounts that Mansfield's contemporaries left of their friend living in the intensity and vulnerable ephemerality of a musical world.

> That evening after much persuasion, Katherine consented to sing. She fetched her guitar and sang quaint old folk songs, Negro spirituals, ballads of all kinds. She sang in a low whispering voice, all caution momentarily forgotten, her quick expressive face rippled with light and fun, her humour bubbling over. Then suddenly she felt something or thought she felt an antagonistic criticism and abruptly stopped. Everyone tried to get her to sing again but nothing would induce her, the guard was up, the face became a mask, the eyes watchful, and a sort of discomfort fell upon us all.[36]

Notes

1 Katherine Mansfield, "The Singing Lesson," in CW2, 235.
2 *Letters* 1, 24.
3 Ibid., 25.
4 "Olgivanna" [Hinzenburg, Olga Lazovich], "The Last Days of Katherine Mansfield," *Bookman* 73 (1931): 12.
5 See in particular Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 18–49, and Gerri Kimber, *Katherine Mansfield—The Early Years* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 91–8; 151–64.
6 Katherine Mansfield, "Night," in CW3, 15.
7 CW4, 16–17. See CW4, 15–17 for the full entry, plus insights into the different works.
8 For the only detailed study of Trowell's music to date, with valuable links to Mansfield's own biography, see Martin Griffiths, "Arnold Trowell: Violincellist, Composer and Pedagogue," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Waikato, 2012).
9 *Letters* 1, 83–4.
10 Daniel Albright, "*Untwisting the Serpent*"*: Modernism in Music, Literature and Other Arts* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 5–8.
11 *Letters* 1, 84.
12 For excellent critical analyses of the musicality of many of these stories, see Delia da Sousa Correa, "Katherine Mansfield and Music: Nineteenth-Century Echoes," in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*, ed. Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2011), 94–8; Delia da Sousa Correa, "Performativity in Words: Musical Performance in Katherine Mansfield's Stories," *Katherine Mansfield Studies* 3 (2011): 21–34; Delia da Sousa Correa, "Katherine Mansfield's Germany: 'These Pine Trees […],'" in *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe*, ed. Janka Kaskacova and Gerri Kimber (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2015), 99–113; and Vanessa Manhire, "Mansfield, Woolf and Music: 'The Queerest Sense of Echo,'" *Katherine Mansfield Studies* 3 (2011): 51–66.
13 See Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past," in *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (New York: Harcourt, 1976), 61–160.
14 See, for instance, CW4, 43; 83; 98–9, and *Letters* 1, 48–9; 81–3.
15 See Ida Baker, *Katherine Mansfield: The Memories of LM* (1971; London: Virago Press, 1985): "Katherine was able to use her great gift for recitation, mimicry and music, as in those days hostesses often provided entertainment for their guests. When Katherine's gift was discovered through the friends she made at the lodge, she was soon offered professional invitations, at a guinea an evening. These were tempting propositions and she accepted a number of them" (39). It is worth noting

that George Bowden, whom Mansfield met after one of his chamber concerts, was also a successful singing teacher (Baker, 45–6).

16 Katherine Mansfield, "The Modern Soul," in CW1, 214.

17 Ibid.

18 For broader coverage of Mansfield's musical life, expanding numerous references evoked here, see Claire Davison and Joseph Spooner, *Katherine Mansfield and Music*, Katherine Mansfield Birthday Lectures, vol. 7 (Bath: Katherine Mansfield Society Publications, 2016), and da Sousa Correa, "Katherine Mansfield's Germany."

19 Mansfield, "Modern Soul," 218.

20 Ibid.

21 See the professor's exclamation "under cover of tumultuous applause": "'There you have it. She is a flame in the heart of a lily. I know I am going to play well. It is my turn now. I am inspired. Fräulein Sonia […] you are my inspiration. Tonight you shall be the soul of my trombone. Wait only.'" Speaking of the ecstasies her performances can trigger and "the mysterious perfume" of inspiration, Sonia confides to the narrator, "'My spirit starves for want of that'" ("The Modern Soul," 218–19).

22 Ibid., 219.

23 See Heinrich Marschner, "Act One, III Arie," *Hans Heiling*, Op. 80. (Berlin: Hofoper, 1833), 57–63.

24 Ibid., 221.

25 See, for example, "Breadalby," the eighth chapter of *Women in Love*, in which D. H. Lawrence reworked his memories of Ottoline's home, her theatrical manner, and her generous party-giving as fiction, and as a crueler form of caricature. (D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* [1916; London: Penguin, 1995], 82–109).

26 See Ottoline Morrell, "K.M.," in *Dear Lady Ginger*, ed. Helen Shaw (London: Century, 1983), 117–25. Morrell's recollection of the evening, written in 1936, makes many of the referential features more explicit. Her tone and wording, however, suggest that her memories were also shaped retrospectively by Mansfield's poem:

> She wrote a little sketch of an evening at Garsington—a hot moonlight night when we all went into the garden […] dressed up in fancy clothes, of which I had a store, and danced a wild lovely ballet on the lawn, their white limbs shining in the moonlight against the great elm tree and the dark pond beyond the yew hedges. The music floated out through the windows into the garden. Katherine walked up and down under the house where the night-scented stock had opened its pale flowers, fanning herself with a little black transparent fan. (Morrell, 124)

27 Katherine Mansfield, "Night-Scented Stock," in CW3, 110–11.

28 *Letters* 1, 303.

29 Ibid., 318.

30 Mansfield, "Night-Scented Stock," 111. For detailed explanatory notes, see *The Collected Poems of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 223–4.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Such epiphanic transfigurations of the everyday world characterize Woolf's "moments of being"; see also T. S. Eliot's comparable use of "unheard music" in the rose-garden epiphany in his later *Four Quartets* cycle in *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (1936; London: Faber, 1974), 189–90; 213.

35 Woolf, "How It Strikes a Contemporary," in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York and London: Harvest Harcourt, 1994), 236–7.

36 Dorothy Brett, quoted in Sean Hignett, *Brett: From Bloomsbury to New Mexico, A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), 105.

16

Katherine Mansfield and Post-Impressionism

Angela Smith

Encountering a painter's work for the first time can produce a heart-stopping moment, when the picture and personal experience intersect. Eleven years after the event, Katherine Mansfield recalled, in a letter to her friend the painter Dorothy Brett, the revelation caused by seeing Van Gogh's painting *Sunflowers*:

> Wasn't that Van Gogh shown at the Goupil ten years ago? Yellow flowers—brimming with sun in a pot? [...] That picture seemed to reveal something that I hadn't realised before I saw it. It lived with me afterwards. It still does—that & another of a sea captain in a flat cap. They taught me something about writing, which was queer—a kind of freedom—or rather, a shaking free. When one has been working for a long stretch one begins to narrow ones vision a bit, to fine things down too much. And its only when something else breaks through, a picture, or something seen out of doors that one realises it.[1]

The painting of the sunflowers, vibrant with both bloom and potentiality as some of the flowers have become seed heads, is alive in Mansfield's consciousness as a life-changing moment. The sunflowers are spiky and angular, not gracefully arranged as they would be in a conventional flower study; their pot is outlined in red and both pot and background are as assertively yellow as the flowers, flat and without perspective. The "sea captain" is a portrait of Van Gogh's friend, *The Postman Roulin*, whose cap and postal uniform have a nautical air, and whose idiosyncratic beard and long restless fingers are as animated as the sunflowers.

Mansfield saw the paintings in 1910, not in the Goupil but in the Grafton Galleries; twenty-one of Van Gogh's pictures were included in the exhibition that opened in London, appropriately on Bonfire Night, November 5, curated by Roger Fry and entitled "Manet and the Post-Impressionists." Virginia Woolf recorded its comparable significance for her when she asserted in her essay, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," that "in or about December 1910, human character changed."[2] Both writers recognized that the art they encountered in the first

Post-Impressionist exhibition altered them as writers, shook them free from the conventions of writing fiction and depicting characters in English. As Woolf claims: "The literary convention of the time is so artificial—you have to talk about the weather and nothing but the weather" although in "one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder."[3]

The work of the artists that was on show in the exhibition had been well known for a decade in other parts of Europe, but it was the first opportunity for the British public to see this new art that violated the conventions of realism and expressed disordered and disturbing emotion. The pages of the *New Age*, edited by A. R. Orage and to which Mansfield contributed, were for several weeks filled with debate, outrage, and enthusiasm on the subject of the exhibition. The first reviewer anticipates, using a phrase from Hamlet, Woolf's response:

> If there is still time, fly to the Grafton […] Then go forth and pass along the streets about and note how flat, stale and unprofitable have become all those engravings, pictures and statues in the art dealers' windows, that represent the bare photographic semblance of reality, with dramatic meanings laid on it, not drawn out from it.[4]

Fireworks explode in the letters pages: Huntly Carter defends "the Post-Savages' […] power to feel, enjoy and express the elemental emotions of life, to stand naked and unashamed as it were, in a blazing carnival of colour and light."[5] Among the six letters to the editor in response, E. Wake Cook's violent diatribe accuses both the positive reviewers and the artists of uncivilized incompetence: "The Post-Savages are the apaches of art, and the place for their self-expression is the pavement."[6]

The exhibition was organized almost accidentally because the Grafton Galleries had an unexpected gap in their program. Fry and Desmond MacCarthy put together work that, in some cases, they had not seen previously to produce what MacCarthy called "the Art-Quake of 1910."[7] They did not know what to call it: "At last Roger, losing patience, said: 'Oh, let's just call them Post-impressionists; at any rate, they came after the Impressionists.'"[8] This rather haphazard approach, however, belies the seriousness of Fry's engagement with a range of artists whose work differed significantly from that of the Impressionists, as he explained in his preface to the "Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition" in 1912. The crucial difference is between Impressionism and Expressionism; Fry wrote of the way in which the public was disorientated by an art that was new to them:

> The difficulty springs from a deep-rooted conviction due to long-established custom, that the aim of painting is the descriptive imitation of natural forms. Now, these artists do not seek to give what can, after all, be but a pale reflex of actual appearance, but to arouse the conviction of a new and definite reality. They do not seek to imitate form, but to create form; not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life.[9]

This resonates with Woolf's rejection of artificial literary conventions that aim at replicating familiar experience rather than creating form which surprises the recipient into new ways of perceiving the world. Mansfield's alignment with Post-Impressionism rather than Impressionism is trenchantly expressed by Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr:

> Her writing is most often described as though it were a kind of verbal equivalent of an Impressionist painting, and stress is laid on the physical "surface" of her work—its tone, colour and texture […] But it can more usefully and accurately be compared to Post-Impressionist rather than to Impressionist painting, for we need more emphasis on the solidity of the structure of her stories and on their weight of implication. In this Cézanne, whom she admired, is a better parallel than Renoir, whom she did not.[10]

The early Post-Impressionists whose work was most widely represented in the exhibition were Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. To refer to three paintings that were shown, Cézanne's *The Viaduct at L'Estaque* moves away from an Impressionist depiction of landscape to the interest in deep structures expressed in his Cubist work. Gauguin's *Three Tahitians* shows the back of a man framed by two women, one of them wearing a scarlet dress, holding a mango, and looking over her shoulder out at the viewer, and the other, naked to the waist, gazes with an inscrutable expression at the man. The sky is bright yellow with patches of muted pink. The image is mesmerizing but enigmatic, inviting interpretation but also withholding it. Van Gogh's *Vase with Irises* is electrifying in its impasto[11] and intensity of color, and non-realistic in its evident brush-strokes and lack of perspective. The Impressionist Monet said: "'For me a landscape does not exist in its own right, since its appearance changes every moment. But its surroundings bring it to life—the air and the light, which vary continually.'"[12] The Impressionists, therefore, aim to capture a fleeting impression of light, weather, or human gesture and expression; Post-Impressionists, by contrast, are concerned with deep structures in the landscape or the human psyche created in images that probe and disturb as much as they delight.

In the introduction to the catalogue for the exhibition, Desmond MacCarthy offers a lucid explanation of the difference between Impressionism and Post-Impressionism:

> The Post-Impressionists consider the Impressionists too naturalistic [...] Impressionism encouraged an artist to paint a tree as it appeared to him at the moment under particular circumstances. It insisted so much upon the importance of his rendering his exact impression that his work often completely failed to express a tree at all; as transferred to canvas it was just so much shimmer and colour. The "treeness" of the tree was not rendered at all.[13]

Contrasting these "exact impressions," MacCarthy focuses his praise particularly on the Post-Impressionist paintings of Matisse, suggesting that in them a search "for an abstract harmony of line, for rhythm, has been carried to lengths which often deprive the figure of all appearance of nature. The general effect of his pictures is that of a return to primitive, even perhaps of a return to barbaric, art."[14]

The work of Matisse was of particular interest to the Scottish painter, J. D. Fergusson, who had settled in Paris in 1907 because something "new had started and I was very much intrigued. But there was no language for it that made sense in Edinburgh or London—an expression like 'the logic of line' meant something in Paris that it couldn't mean in Edinburgh."[15] He particularly admired Matisse and his group, known as the Fauves (wild beasts). In a review, he compared Whistler and his followers who "'make their oils go with the dining room furniture'" with Matisse and the Fauves who "'insist on expressing themselves frankly and fearlessly.'"[16] The Fauves fulfilled Fergusson's search for "paint that is living and not merely a coat of any sort of paint placed between containing lines like a map."[17] By chance he met the young John Middleton Murry in Paris in December 1910, when "Manet and the Post-Impressionists" was causing uproar in London. Murry was an Oxford undergraduate who was in Paris to be within the ambience of the influential philosopher Henri Bergson. His ambition was to found a magazine with a Bergsonian import that stressed the interdependence of the arts. The young sponsor of the magazine, Michael Sadler,[18] Murry's fellow student at Oxford, called at Fergusson's studio in Paris with Murry and persuaded him to act as the art editor of the new magazine which they agreed should be called *Rhythm*.

The title of the new magazine makes sense to a contemporary reader looking at the presence of the magazine online.[19] Fauvism privileged color, but Fergusson compensated for its lack in the pages of *Rhythm* by an intense focus on line

Figure 1 *Creation*, 1911, André Derain (1880–1954), woodcut. *Rhythm* 1, no. 3 (1911): 28, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159897952781647.pdf.

and texture, using the deckle-edged paper of the journal to create a density of expression in the images that were often wood-cuts, for instance the Fauvist André Derain's *Création* (Figure 1).[20] There is a rhythmical pleasure for the reader of the magazine in that full-page images appear, often unrelated to the text but with an oblique link, as when Sadler's essay on Van Gogh's letters in the second issue is followed by a compelling woodcut by Jessica Dismorr of Isadora

Figure 2 *Isadora*, Jessica Dismorr (1885–1939), woodcut. *Rhythm* 1, no. 2 (1911): 20, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159900695373048.pdf.

lifting angular drapery in front of an equally angular black curtain (Figure 2).[21] Dismorr's work suggests that dance can be as challenging as Van Gogh's demanding landscapes. Other images are playful, such as the rhythmically repeated vaguely medieval little faces as headers, a tiger catching a monkey by its tail at the beginning or end of a piece, and an illuminated capital T opening an essay. The concept of rhythm was crucial to Murry and Fergusson from the beginning of their project:

> One word was recurrent in all our strange discussions—the word "rhythm." We never made any attempt to define it […] For F- it was the essential quality in a painting or a sculpture; and since it was at that moment that the Russian Ballet first came to Western Europe for a season at the Châtelet, dancing was obviously linked, by rhythm, with the plastic arts. From that it was but a short step to the position that rhythm was the distinctive element in all the arts, and that the real purpose of "this modern movement"—a phrase frequent on F-'s lips—was to reassert the pre-eminence of rhythm.[22]

The Russian Ballet became particularly famous or notorious, depending on the response of different audience members, for the throbbing rhythms of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*; there was a riot at the first night of the *Rite* in May 1913 because the music seemed barbaric to part of the audience and exhilarating to others, and Vaslav Nijinsky's choreography defied the rules of classical ballet. The radicalism of the Russian Ballet chimed with the ambition expressed in the first issue of *Rhythm* by Middleton Murry: "'Before art can be human it must learn to be brutal.' Our intention is to provide art, be it drawing, literature or criticism, which shall be vigorous, determined, which shall have its roots below the surface, and be the rhythmical echo of the life with which it is in touch."[23] Anne Estelle Rice wrote an article for *Rhythm* on the Russian Ballet, analyzing the achievement of Léon Bakst, the set and costume designer, astutely: "A painter in line, a painter in movement, a painter in forms, he knows the value of line to give energy and force, the value of a dominant colour and shape, the value of daring juxtapositions to create life and movement in masses of colour."[24]

Sadler was the co-editor, with Murry, of *Rhythm*, and he knew what to make of the "Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition" mounted by Fry in October 1912, this time including many works by Matisse and Picasso. In a series of trenchant essays, he begins by attacking the insipidity of the term "Post Impressionism" which "strikes me as futile and misleading. It suggests at once connexion and no connexion with the preceding school; it implies mere chronological sequence or diluted similarity."[25] The term has caused problems because it has come to cover such incompatible movements as Futurism and Fauvism. In his essay "After Gauguin," Sadler suggests that the Fauves are in a tradition created by Gauguin; in the work of Derain the "human form is sometimes a series of angles, sometimes merely a movement, but in every case one aspect of reality is retained and its truth emphasized by the skilful simplification."[26] This leads to the assertion that an art which, in Fergusson's phrase, has "a logic of line" will distort the familiar practices of realism: "An art intent on expressing the *inner* soul of persons and things will inevitably stray from the *outer* conventions of form and colour; that is to say, it will be definitely unnaturalistic, anti-materialist."[27]

Mansfield's first appearance in the pages of *Rhythm*, her story "The Woman at the Store" and two poems by Boris Petrovsky "translated by Katherine Mansfield," was in the fourth issue that also included Sadler's "After Gauguin." It seems to me that she found the professional relationships that were most significant for her with the artists, writers, and critics who were involved in the second wave of Fauvism and in *Rhythm* such as Murry, J. D. Fergusson, Anne Estelle Rice,

and Frederick Goodyear. Some critics have argued that Mansfield is a literary Impressionist, not Post-Impressionist:

> An impressionistic impulse is behind "Prelude"; the characters are presented in terms of the intersection of light and shade […] Identity in the story is as impermanent as the dappled monuments in a Renoir or a Manet, and the temporary look of things—people, objects, social relations—is all that the narrative claims to know with any certainty.[28]

A counter-argument might assert that it is precisely the "*inner* soul" of Kezia's uncertainty about her mother's love for her, and of Linda's terror of Stanley's sexual demands on her, that is conveyed by the story. A trauma rather than just a shade is evident in Linda's first sight of the aloe that she sees as "the fat swelling plant with its cruel leaves and fleshy stem."[29] Her repressed fear of Stanley's capacity to swell has already been implied in her impression that the poppy stem and bud on the wallpaper are bursting: "Things had a habit of coming alive like that."[30] In one of Mansfield's later entries in her notebook, she sums up the Post-Impressionist aesthetic, linking the visual arts and literature:

> [R]eality cannot become the ideal, the dream, and it is not the business of the artist to grind an axe, to try to impose his vision of Life upon the existing world. Art is not an attempt to reconcile existence with his vision: it is an attempt to create his own world in this world. That which suggests the subject to the artist is the unlikeness of it to what we accept as reality. We single out, we bring into the light, we put up highe[r].[31]

Impressionism was a nineteenth-century movement; Mansfield always stressed her own engagement with modernity: "I am a very MODERN woman."[32] In emphasizing the unlikeness of the subject to reality, she is articulating a Post-Impressionist aesthetic.

Such stories as "The Woman at the Store" (1912) and "Ole Underwood" (1913), published in *Rhythm,* and "Millie" (1913), published in the *Blue Review,* begin to encode aspects of Mansfield's insight into life in the backblocks of New Zealand with a psychological insight. They have a conventional plot, however, in that all have a denouement that concludes the story; the reader does not see Ole Underwood's revenge, but it is clear that he will take it. After this, Mansfield begins to take absolute control of the design of her stories, their line, tempo, and rhythm; in 1915, two of her experiments with form give evidence of her developing confidence. Previous stories position the reader contextually, albeit in a minimal way, but with "An Indiscreet Journey" (1915) we are plunged into the situation without knowing where we are: "She is like St Anne. Yes, the concierge

is the image of St Anne."[33] The abrupt sentence structure conveys haste, possible danger, and excitement, but contextual details have to be picked up in passing: "That Burberry was very significant. It did not belong to me. I had borrowed it from a friend. My eye lighted upon it hanging in her little dark hall. The very thing! The perfect and adequate disguise."[34] If we had time, we might wonder about the speaker commandeering her friend's talismanic coat, especially as the concierge thinks that she and the coat are on their way to prison and death by bayonets, but we career on with her as she boards a train. She sees a scene from the window: "Are all these laughing voices really going to war? These dark woods lighted so mysteriously by the white stems of the birch and the ash—these watery fields with the big birds flying over—these rivers green and blue in the light."[35] The jaunty voice rattles on, taking the ribbons on soldiers' graves in a cemetery for cornflowers, poppies, and daisies, and mocking her fellow passengers, one of whom tells her that if soldiers consort with women behind the lines they are executed by the authorities. She arrives at a control post staffed by two colonels where she intends to meet her lover, a military postman, behind those very lines, and she seems increasingly excited by her anticipated sexual encounter. She stays on after they have spent the night together, and the shadow that she has ignored begins to show in her muted description of the restaurant where she meets her lover. She has put a bunch of violets in a glass on a table, possibly a half-conscious gesture as violets are often used to symbolize grief and remembrance. She looks at her fellow diners. A waiter spills a bottle of wine: "the drip-drip of the wine from the table on to the floor. It looked very strange dropping so slowly, as though the table were crying"[36]—or bleeding. Reflecting this image, a soldier who has just had a bandage removed is shading his eyes: "Slowly his hand fell. In his white face his eyes showed, pink as a rabbit's. They brimmed and spilled, brimmed and spilled."[37] The narrator's bravado continues to the end, but the story is increasingly unsettling for the reader, who recognizes that the narrator is deliberately refusing to acknowledge the menace and suffering all around her. The effect is rather like that of Gauguin's painting, *The Spirit of the Dead Watching* or *L'esprit veille,* which was part of the first Post-Impressionist exhibition. It shows a woman lying on her front, facing away from a black figure seated by the bed. The narrator of the story seems to have intimations of what she is ignoring, but she disregards the warning of the woman in the café at the end: "'You are mad and you will end in prison.'"[38]

A similar duality in the design and narrative voice appears in "Autumns: II" which was published in *Signature* in 1915 under the pseudonym Matilda Berry.[39] Here there is virtually no plot, and the design of the story challenges the reader

to interpret the confusion of adolescent mood swings. The images offered of the setting are distorted by the narrator Matilda's hysteria which is communicated through the abrupt plunge *in medias res*: "Suddenly—dreadfully—I wake up. What has happened? Something dreadful has happened! No—nothing has happened—it is only the wind shaking the house, rattling the windows, banging a piece of iron on the roof and making my bed tremble."[40] This could be just the experience of waking suddenly from a nightmare, but Matilda's use of the present tense and of present participles, her trembling bed, and her observation of the girl next door suggest psychological disturbance:

> Marie Swainson runs into the garden next door to pick the "chrysanths" before they are ruined. Her skirt flies up above her waist; she tries to beat it down, to tuck it between her legs while she stoops, but it is no use—up it flies [...] she is quite distracted. She doesn't mind what she does—she pulls the plants up by the roots and bends and twists them, stamping her foot and swearing.[41]

The reader guesses that they are both fifteen, angry and sulky with their families, and frightened of the ways in which their bodies are changing. The tone is conveyed as much by the rhythm of the disjointed prose as by the content. When Matilda enters the apparently comforting music teacher's room, the previous pupil blushes as Mr. Bullen leans over her; Matilda's fingers tremble and her blouse is lifted up and down by her beating heart. Matilda's perplexed self-consciousness infects the reader who may well become wary of Mr. Bullen's "fresh hand with the ring on it [...] I watch his hand—it is a very nice hand and always looks as though it had just been washed."[42] The repetition of "kind" and "kindly," the fact that Mr. Bullen takes Matilda's hands and she rests her head on his shoulder, and his murmuring about "that rare thing a woman," all these hints are both ominous and nauseating, as is his use of the same phrase "little lady" for all his pupils as they arrive.

Matilda goes home but is haunted by sexual menace: "It's the bed that is frightening" partly because it has "all those stockings knotted up on the quilt like a coil of snakes."[43] Snakes on the bed are not a reassuring image after the description of Marie Swainson desperately trying to hold her skirt down. A total change of tempo comes when Matilda's brother asks her to go for a walk; within this trusted relationship, she enjoys the wind:

> We cannot walk fast enough. Our heads bent, our legs just touching, we stride like one eager person through the town, down the asphalte zigzag where the fennel grows wild and on to the esplanade. It is dusky—just getting dusky. The wind is so strong that we have to fight our way through it rocking like two old drunkards.[44]

Sentences lengthen as they relish their unity; jagged punctuation disappears as the prose enacts their stride. In an unexpected and beguiling sleight of hand, Mansfield transforms the brother and sister's view of a big black steamer making for the channel out of the harbor to their view of the town from the deck of the ship. Time shifts: "There's the esplanade where we walked that windy day."[45] The final paragraph of the story, because of the earlier specific sense of place and mood, indicates how absolute the rite of passage is for the young colonial subject in a ship driven by the wind: "Now the dark stretches a wing over the tumbling water. We can't see those two any more. Good-bye, good-bye—Don't forget … but the ship is gone, now. The wind—the wind!"[46] Looking back, the travelers cannot see their childhood world because the dark is closing over it. The elegiac tone differs radically from the voice of the stroppy teenager at the beginning, an exercise in mood music that Mr. Bullen might not appreciate.

"Autumns: II" was admired by Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, and Bertrand Russell; their praise encouraged Mansfield to revise it and reprint it as "The Wind Blows." She had already asserted ownership of her design when Murry had urged her to cut an entry for the *Blue Review*: "you cant cut it without making an ugly mess somewhere. Im a powerful stickler for form in this style of work. I hate the sort of licence that English people give themselves – – to spread over and flop and roll about. I feel as fastidious as though I wrote with acid."[47] Editing with acid after her brother's death in France, she cut "The Aloe" and transformed it into "Prelude" (1917), ruthlessly removing all the explanatory links such as: "The Fairfields were a large family of boys and girls; with their beautiful mother and their gay, fascinating father […] they were quite a 'show' family."[48] In the new version, published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at their Hogarth Press, Mansfield frees the reader's intuition and imagination to make the links. Not long before her death, Mansfield wrote to her friend S. S. Koteliansky: "I am always conscious of this secret disruption in me,"[49] the sense of being divided, an in-between person who recognizes ambivalence and incompatible impulses. Although she deplores it, it enabled her to create a new form for the short story, for instance in "Prelude" subtly exploring Linda's fear and her fantasy of escaping it, which would leave Kezia motherless. The reader guesses that the Burnells' bourgeois life will continue but also knows what haunts its largely unruffled surface.

Some Post-Impressionist portrait painters such as Picasso and Braque shifted the traditional mode of portraiture by viewing a face from multiple perspectives at once, or breaking up its elements and re-assembling them. Mansfield's method is less violent, but her shifts are angled to enable the reader to perceive

ambivalence. The opening of "The Garden Party" (1921) could seem like an Impressionist painting of an idyllic summer day: "And after all the weather was ideal. They could not have had a more perfect day for a garden party if they had ordered it. Windless, warm, the sky without a cloud. Only the blue was veiled with a haze of light gold, as it is sometimes in early summer."[50] The picture is only slightly marred by the phrase "if they had ordered it" which could almost be substituted by "if they had paid for it." Then the tone becomes clearer: "As for the roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden parties; the only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing. Hundreds, yes, literally hundreds, had come out in a single night."[51] No speaker is identified, but we become aware that the narrator has adopted the hyperbolic style of Mrs. Sheridan when we hear her response to the news that a man has been killed: "'*Not* in the garden?'"[52] The pictures that are juxtaposed against the opening idyll are both seen from Laura's perspective after the party, as she takes the left-overs to the grieving family and tries to trust her mother's judgment: "The lane began, smoky and dark. Women in shawls and men's tweed caps hurried by. Men hung over the palings; the children played in the doorways. A low hum came from the mean little cottages. In some of them there was a flicker of light, and a shadow, crab-like, moved across the window."[53] The picture is sinister; Laura has picked up the family phrase "mean little cottages" and sees inanimate things as having a threatening agency: "the lane began," "tweed caps hurried by." Shadowy figures are invertebrates, not human. Laura herself looked a picture in the hat that beguiled her into accepting her mother's view of the carter's death, and she is still wearing it; now the dead man's sister-in-law assures Laura that "'e looks a picture.'"[54] To Laura's surprise he does, and she sees his corpse as wonderful. In the complex conclusion, when Laurie comes to meet her and interrupts her as she fails to articulate what she has partly understood, there is a challenging moment of disruption. She is of course brave to have confronted a rite of passage on her own and to attempt to make sense of it, but the dead handsome prince had a wife and five children; his body is not a marvel to them. As Vincent O'Sullivan writes in the introduction to his edition of Mansfield's New Zealand stories: "The experience is deeply, egotistically, about Laura and nothing else. But the workman's corpse sustains it, a final service from poor to rich, the final appropriation by the wealthy from the impoverished."[55] Although the story is often read "in terms of its lingering colonial charm," O'Sullivan asserts that "the narrative will not allow us to regard the Sheridans as other than pampered, conventional, smugly riddled with the certainties of a class for whom the rest of society exists in a tributary role."[56] Eventually the title appears ironic

in that it prioritizes what matters to the Sheridans rather than focusing on the much more significant death of the carter.

The design of the finely crafted story, "The Garden Party," vindicates Mansfield's intensity about proofreading her stories herself and rejecting alterations suggested by publishers. Her metaphor in a letter to Murry who had forwarded a request from Sadler at Constable reveals her sense that a story is alive: "Shall I pick the eyes out of a story for £40. Im *furious* with Sadler. No, Ill never agree. Ill supply another story but that is all. The *outline* would be all blurred. It must have those sharp lines."[57] In a much later letter, written to her brother-in-law, Richard Murry, she shows how alert she is still to the rhythm the group had been preoccupied with nearly ten years earlier as part of their craft:

> In Miss Brill I chose not only the length of every sentence, but even the sound of every sentence—I chose the rise and fall of every paragraph to fit her—and to fit her on that day at that very moment. After Id written it I read it aloud—numbers of times—just as one would *play over* a musical composition, trying to get it nearer and nearer to the expression of Miss Brill—until it fitted her.[58]

In a mature story whose sharp lines and fluctuating rhythms challenge the reader to interpret its closing enigma, "Bliss" (1918), Mansfield uses the perspective of a character who misguidedly thinks she understands and can interpret what she sees. What is particularly demanding for the reader of "Bliss" is the discordant rhetorical strategy that Mansfield employs in the story. The perspective is mainly that of Bertha Young who is thirty but is bouncing childishly along the street in the sun, feeling bliss: "How idiotic civilization is! Why be given a body if you have to keep it shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle?"[59] This seems a curious question for a married woman with a child to be asking herself, and domestic life takes over as she fails to answer it. What she has is an aesthetic sense and an ability to create a still life, although the self-indulgent materialism of the image may take the edge off its beauty for the reader:

> There were tangerines and apples stained with strawberry pink. Some yellow pears, smooth as silk; some white grapes covered with a silver bloom and a big cluster of purple ones. These last she had bought to tone in with the new dining-room carpet [. . .] When she had finished with them and had made two pyramids of these bright round shapes, she stood away from the table to get the effect—and really it was most curious. For the dark table seemed to melt into the dusky light and the glass dish and the blue bowl to float in the air.[60]

She thinks how happy she is, but again there is a discordant note that chimes with her unanswered question about the fiddle in its case when she reflects that

she and Harry "got on together splendidly and were really good pals."[61] This sounds like the school hockey captain rather than a lover. She has delighted in the beauty of the slender pear tree in her garden, against a jade green sky, but been repelled by one cat slinking after another.

The story's register changes with the arrival of the guests and moves into parody: Mrs. Norman Knight looks "like a very intelligent monkey—who had even made that yellow silk dress out of scraped banana skins."[62] Eddie claims that he "'saw myself *driving* through Eternity in a *timeless* taxi.'"[63] This resembles Mansfield's parody for *Rhythm,* "Sunday Lunch." The juxtaposition is jarring for the reader, and it continues, with Harry's coarse behaviors, "his 'shameless passion for the white flesh of the lobster'"[64] providing a disruptive man-of-the-world code that asserts his difference aggressively. Bertha, in green and white, has dressed in harmony with the flowering pear tree; when the last guest, Pearl Fulton, arrives, she shines like the moon as she is "all in silver, with a silver fillet binding her pale blond hair."[65] As her guests gather at her dinner table, Bertha, still in a state of bliss, "longed to tell them how delightful they were, and what a decorative group they made, and how they seemed to set one another off and how they reminded her of a play by Tchekof!"[66] To the reader, they may only seem decorative in that there are bizarre contrasts between them, one looking like a monkey, another screwing his eye down with a monocle, another drinking coffee with an anguished expression, while the aptly named Pearl "sat there turning a tangerine in her slender fingers that were so pale a light seemed to come from them."[67] The resemblance to a scene from Chekhov seems to come from the fragmented conversation in which each guest pursues his or her own preoccupation. Bertha's perplexing confidence that the evening is a success is accompanied by an equally confusing insight into her psyche. We are told of Pearl that "Bertha had fallen in love with her, as she always did fall in love with beautiful women who had something strange about them,"[68] yet in the course of the evening for "the first time in her life Bertha Young desired her husband."[69] As with the thought about the rare, rare fiddle, and distress about her baby being held in another woman's arms, Bertha's sense of imminent ecstasy prevents her from pursuing these contradictory impulses and she simply assumes that Pearl is in sympathy with her. An image reminding the reader of the two women's clothes captures Bertha's aspiration to know Pearl:

> And the two women stood side by side looking at the slender, flowering tree. Although it was so still it seemed, like the flame of a candle, to stretch up, to point, to quiver in the bright air, to grow taller and taller as they gazed—almost to touch the rim of the round, silver moon.[70]

Here Pearl seems like the unattainable moon goddess of chastity, Diana. Then Bertha discovers that her husband and Pearl are furtive lovers, like the two cats she was repelled by earlier, and the reader is left to wonder about the story's powerful images, its ironic title, and its jangling, discordant conclusion.

This story epitomizes Katherine Mansfield's participation in the modernist movement that was signaled in Britain by Fry's "Manet and the Post-Impressionists" exhibition. "Bliss" expresses, in Mansfield's phrase, the unlikeness of the subject to what we accept as reality. It has the counterpart of Van Gogh's impasto in its intensely colored images; it has conflicting speech rhythms; it enigmatically probes the deep structures of the psyche. In Roger Fry's formulation, like Post-Impressionist painters Mansfield does "not seek to imitate form, but to create form; not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life."[71]

Notes

1 *Letters* 4, 333.
2 Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in *Collected Essays*, vol. 1, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), 320.
3 Ibid., 334, 336.
4 George Calderon, "The Post-Impressionists," *New Age*, November 24, 1910, 90, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/114081397715867.pdf.
5 Huntly Carter, "The Post-Savages," *New Age*, December 8, 1910, 141, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1140813979921819.pdf.
6 E. Wake Cook, "Post-Impressionism," *New Age*, December 15, 1910, 166, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1140813981437676.pdf.
7 Desmond MacCarthy, "The Art-Quake of 1910," *The Listener*, February 1, 1943, 124.
8 Richard Cork, "From 'Art-Quake' to 'Pure Visual Music,'" in *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, ed. Christopher Green (London: Merrill Holberton, 1999), 58.
9 Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (1920; London: Penguin, 1937), 195.
10 Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr, *Katherine Mansfield* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 24–5.
11 Paint layered on thickly, often showing the marks of the brush or palette knife, giving dense texture to the surface of the painting.
12 Quoted in Belinda Thomson, *Impressionism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 249.

13 Quoted in Peter Stansky, *On or about December 1910: Early Bloomsbury and Its Intimate World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 198–9.
14 Ibid., 199.
15 Quoted in Margaret Morris, *The Art of J. D. Fergusson* (1974; Perth: J. D. Fergusson Art Foundation, 2010), 46.
16 Quoted in Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 78.
17 J. D. Fergusson, *Modern Scottish Painting* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1943), 31.
18 Michael Sadler later changed the spelling of his name to Sadleir, to avoid confusion with his father who was an academic and patron of the arts, owning a collection of Expressionist painting before it was exhibited in Britain.
19 See https://library.brown.edu/cds/mjp/render.php?id=mjp.2005.00.118&view=mjp _object.
20 See *Rhythm* 1, no. 3 (1911): 28, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159897952781647.pdf
21 See *Rhythm* 1, no. 2 (1911): 16–20, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159900695373048. pdf.
22 John Middleton Murry, *Between Two Worlds, an Autobiography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), 155–6.
23 [John Middleton Murry], "Aims and Ideals," *Rhythm* 1, no. 1 (1911): 36, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159900641984744.pdf. Murry's is a slight misquotation from J. M. Synge's Preface to "Poems and Translations" which reads "before **verse** can be human again it must learn to be brutal." J. M. Synge, *J. M. Synge's Plays, Poems, and Prose* (1909; London: J. M. Dent, 1941), 219.
24 Anne Estelle Rice, "Les Ballets Russes," *Rhythm* 2, no. 7 (1912): 107, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159898883359.pdf.
25 Michael Sadler, "Fauvism and a Fauve," *Rhythm* 1, no. 1 (1911): 14, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159900641984744.pdf.
26 Michael Sadler, "After Gauguin," *Rhythm* 1, no. 4 (1912): 24, https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159898450891023.pdf.
27 Ibid.
28 Kate Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986), 64.
29 Katherine Mansfield, "Prelude," in CW2, 73.
30 Ibid., 68.
31 CW4, 346.
32 *Letters* 4, 272.
33 Katherine Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," in CW1, 439.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., 440.
36 Ibid., 447.

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 450.
39 It was revised and published as "The Wind Blows" in the *Athenaeum* no. 4713 (1920): 262–3.
40 Katherine Mansfield, "The Wind Blows," in CW1, 454.
41 Ibid., 454–5.
42 Ibid., 456.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 457.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 458.
47 *Letters* 1, 124.
48 Katherine Mansfield, "The Aloe," in CW1, 486.
49 *Letters* 5, 304.
50 Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden Party," in CW2, 401.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 408.
53 Ibid., 411.
54 Ibid., 413.
55 Vincent O'Sullivan, ed., *Katherine Mansfield: New Zealand Stories* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997), 10.
56 Ibid., 9.
57 *Letters* 3, 273.
58 *Letters* 4, 165.
59 Katherine Mansfield, "Bliss," in CW2, 142.
60 Ibid., 142–3.
61 Ibid., 145.
62 Ibid., 146.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 148.
65 Ibid., 147.
66 Ibid., 148.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 144.
69 Ibid., 150.
70 Ibid., 149.
71 Fry, *Vision and Design*, 195.

17

Katherine Mansfield and the Cinematic

Faye Harland

The dissolution of the boundaries between various artistic forms is a type of experimentation that is often associated with works of the modernist period. However, it can be argued that the shift to intermediality in the arts is not solely a modernist phenomenon, instead having its roots in far earlier social and cultural change. In his study *Film and Fiction*, Keith Cohen points out that intermedial approaches to art were apparent from at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, as visual artists, musicians, and writers searched for inspiration from a variety of sources in an attempt to reinvent conventional forms. According to Cohen, the most fascinating observations in nineteenth-century aesthetic and cultural theory were taking place on the boundaries of the arts.[1] Early discussions of the interrelations between artistic forms appear in Hegel's "Aesthetics," in which he proposes that disparate media should be examined in terms of their similarities; in Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total or ideal work that provided a synthesis of all the arts; and later in Méliès's comments on the cinema's capacity to draw upon all other media, from painting and sculpture to mechanics. Cohen supports Méliès's beliefs, arguing that despite the evidence of earlier convergences in the arts, the cinema was the catalyst that most significantly accelerated this intermedial approach. Cohen interprets the effect of the cinema as a two-way process, writing, "if the cinema could, and still can, be seen as a hodgepodge of various artistic impulses, its finished product has at the same time been capable of shocking the other arts into awareness of their own potentials."[2] Early accounts of the new medium also support this, referring to the cinema as "a powerful synthesis" and "an extended expression of all the arts."[3]

This "expression of all the arts," however, relates to a far longer history of visual entertainment. In a 1925 essay on the fiction of Robert Louis Stevenson, Bertolt Brecht argues that the influence of visual media technologies on literature did

not originate with the birth of cinema, as contemporary critics suggested. Brecht remarks that "it is ridiculous to claim that cinematic technology introduced a new visual perspective into literature," as "filmic optics existed on this continent before the cinema itself."[4] Karin Littau comments on Brecht's concept of "filmic optics," or cinematicity, suggesting that "what is specific to the phenomena of cinematicity, to which Brecht draws our attention, is the conjunction of movement and vision regardless of the medium in which these figure."[5] As Littau suggests, consumers throughout the nineteenth century created a demand for moving images, a simulacrum of life that transcended the limitations of both painting and photography.

The visual impact of both the cinema and its predecessors is evident in Katherine Mansfield's writing. This chapter will provide an introduction to the rich history of nineteenth-century visual entertainment, connecting technologies like the magic lantern and the zoetrope to the experimental effects used in Mansfield's short stories. I will then examine Mansfield's relationship with the cinema proper, discussing her fiction as a product of twentieth-century advancements in visual culture. In Mansfield's body of work, I argue that a new style of fiction emerges in which difficult subjects are confronted obliquely through symbolic visuals.

"Dissolving Views": Mansfield and Pre-Cinematic Visual Technologies

In the nineteenth century, various forms of visual technologies began to dominate popular entertainment, both in the home and in public. On a commercial scale, the market was flooded with various optical toys, which are an example of the inherent intermediality of this period, bringing together both art and science as they were designed to be both visually pleasing and educational. These toys were marketed to children to teach them about physics and the "persistence of vision" effect, which was believed to be the way by which such devices trick the eye into seeing still images in motion, and it is likely that such toys would have been played with in Mansfield's middle-class family home.[6] Optical toys are also representative of the inventive spirit of the age and the desire to create increasingly complex forms of motion picture entertainment, as the inventors of new devices created hybrids between older optical toys and other forms of visual media. The zoetrope is an example of this, featuring a strip of images within a slotted cylinder which appeared to move when the cylinder was spun. The zoetrope was also known as the "wheel

of life," emphasizing the strong connection in the minds of the Victorians between movement and the illusion of life. Variations on the zoetrope, such as the praxinoscope, further advanced these technologies through the addition of a circle of mirrors within the cylinder and a central light which allowed the moving images to be projected on to a blank wall, effectively making this the first animated cartoon.

While these optical toys were common features of the Victorian nursery, similar forms of visual entertainment were developing parallel to these for display to both children and adults in the public sphere. The most successful of these motion picture technologies was the magic lantern, which can be considered the most direct ancestor to cinema, using projection technology to provide a mass viewing experience. The magic lantern operated by using a concave mirror to direct a beam of light through a glass slide onto which an image was painted, allowing the image to be projected onto a wall or a screen. These projected images were shown sequentially, much like a picture book, often with added sound effects and either a lecture or orchestral accompaniment. In a similar style to silent cinema, slides with text were interspersed with the image slides to allow scenes to be established or provide snippets of dialogue.

The magic lantern predates the nineteenth century, with mentions of lantern devices that could project an image of a demon appearing in the 1640s. With the technological advances of the Victorian age, however, the lantern saw a huge resurgence in popularity around 1860, as the use of limelight in lantern projection became widespread, allowing for brighter and clearer images. The development of the magic lantern show also paralleled that of the cinema: as it grew in popularity, it became primarily a storytelling medium, using images to recreate familiar narratives. Magic lantern narratives commonly featured as acts in music hall variety shows, and lanterns were also used to provide special effects in theatre, pantomime, and dioramas. The diorama was a new type of theatrical display established by Daguerre in 1822, which used colored lanterns behind multilayered panels to make landscape paintings appear to come to life, with effects like the transition from day to night or summer to winter. Besides the diorama, this obsession with recreating "life" led to the development of a variety of increasingly creative ways to incorporate moving images into lantern shows. While this is not widely acknowledged, a substantial amount of the visual language of the cinema was established during this period: the invention of double- and triple-lensed lanterns allowed for dissolves between one scene and the next, then known as "dissolving views," and many of the more elaborate lantern narratives featured effects like double exposure, inserts, and establishing shots.

Mansfield is described as belonging to a canon of "cinematic" writers, yet the claim that she was inspired by the cinema proper is anachronistic, at least in her earlier fiction. Although she may have seen films as part of variety shows during her childhood, there were no cinemas in her native New Zealand prior to 1903 when she left New Zealand to attend school in London, as discussed below. Despite this possible late introduction to the cinema, Mansfield's earlier fiction is still undeniably cinematic, suggesting that it is the product of a cultural shift that began long before the birth of the cinema in 1895. While there is little written evidence of Mansfield's childhood, it is likely that she was aware of the magic lantern, which was as influential a form of popular entertainment in Australia and New Zealand as it was in Europe. It is therefore possible to trace the influence of pre-cinematic visual technologies on Mansfield's writing, as she makes use of projection-like effects and seemingly supernatural transformations in order to illustrate her characters' patterns of thought.

Cohen argues that "the pleasure of seeing objects in motion is a primordial one and, according to some commentators, may sometimes correspond to the pattern or form that human thought takes: that is, succession through space provides a concrete embodiment of that vaguely felt process of mental succession."[7] The connection between the magic lantern and the visualization of thought patterns was also made by John Locke, who stated that "our ideas do, whilst we are awake, succeed one another in our minds at certain distances, not much unlike the images in the inside of a lantern, turned round by the heat of a candle."[8] The idea of thought being a succession of visions is frequently explored in Mansfield's fiction. Her characters remain static while imaginatively "watching" narratives take place, as in "The Tiredness of Rosabel" (1908), as Rosabel gazes through her window and sees her future life projected before her eyes. Mansfield also uses literary superimpositions as a means of distorting time in her narratives in "At the Bay" (1921) as Beryl imagines future relationships: "Beryl saw so plainly two people standing in the middle of her room. Her arms were round his neck; he held her. And now he whispered, 'My beauty, my little beauty!'"[9] Beryl's ability to "plainly see" this projected future occurring within the present moment is suggestive of the magic lantern. Slides featuring an insert image which revealed a scene from a character's imagination were often used in lantern narratives. Mansfield herself experiences similar "visions": she dreams of attending a Tchaikovsky concert and seeing the music as "a great flock of black, wide winged birds" that "fly screaming over the orchestra," as well as describing the launch of a battleship as prompting "strange visions of the victories and defeats—death—storms."[10]

Visual Transformations in "The Yellow Wall-Paper" and "Prelude"

Mansfield's fascination with animation and visual effects in her writing can be studied with reference to Littau's arguments in her essay on the cinematicity of modern fiction in which Littau examines the precinematic through a study of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wall-Paper" (1892). In "The Yellow Wall-Paper," the protagonist's sense of entrapment is suggested in visual terms, through her obsession with the wallpaper in the room where she is staying for a "rest cure." As she gazes at the wallpaper, it appears to move, with both the patterns in its design and the shadows that fall upon it apparently coming to life and revealing a series of dead or imprisoned women. Gilman's use of these visual effects to provide a critique of the institution of marriage and women's inferior social position are similar themes to those found in Mansfield's fiction, suggesting that "cinematic" writing was essential to the cultural zeitgeist of feminist modernism. This emerging trend of women's writing with a focus on the visual could be a response to the traditional silencing of women's voices, a situation experienced by the protagonist of "The Yellow Wall-Paper" as well as Gilman herself, as both the character and author's mental illnesses were dismissed as feminine hysteria. The focus on the visual as a form of displacement is therefore a means of allowing women to articulate their emotions and experiences without the need for direct speech.

A similar insight into the lack of understanding surrounding mental illnesses appears in Mansfield's short story, "Prelude" (1917), through the character Linda Burnell. Bruce Harding suggests that Mansfield's intentions when writing "Prelude" were in the same polemical spirit as Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938), as Mansfield reflects on men's and women's roles in society and the damaging results of the corresponding restrictions on women.[11] Linda's subjectivity breaks down as she examines the world around her, allowing her to transcend herself and become the thing she looks at. Littau's notion of viewing an old medium through the lens of a new medium is evident as Linda contemplates the wallpaper and furniture in her room, anthropomorphizing still images and objects and seeing them "move." This imaginative transformation has clear parallels with "The Yellow Wall-Paper," and similar parallels can also be drawn between the lives of Linda and Gilman's protagonist: both have been prescribed "rest cures" due to an unidentified, anxiety-related illness; both are resentful of their roles as wife and mother and feel stifled by the confinements of domesticity. Linda is denied human interaction and activities that are considered too taxing for the

brain, and is therefore occupied by cinematic hallucinations, which begin as she traces the outline of a poppy on her wallpaper and feels it "come alive,"[12] gaining the appearance and texture of a living flower. The hallucinatory associations of poppies are evoked as Linda gazes around her room and sees the transformation of other everyday objects:

> Things had a habit of coming alive like that. […] How often she had seen the tassel fringe of her quilt change into a funny procession of dancers with priests attending …. For there were some tassels that did not dance at all but walked stately, bent forward as if praying or chanting. How often the medicine bottles had turned into a row of little men with brown top-hats on; and the washstand jug had a way of sitting in the basin like a fat bird in a round nest.[13]

These descriptions of "living furniture" are highly reminiscent of early trick films, such as Méliès's *Le Manoir du Diable* (1896) or J. Stuart Blackton's *The Haunted Hotel* (1907), in which innovative special effects were showcased through the animation of inanimate objects, often to suggest a supernatural presence. Christine Hamelin also argues that the animation of Linda's room is significant as it "represents the unactualized potentials of her life."[14] Linda's world and ambitions have diminished following both her marriage and illness, and instead of being a participant in life, she can now only observe it from afar. The miniature world that she imaginatively creates is now the only aspect of her life over which she retains control.

However, Mansfield implies that even this control is flimsy through Linda's interpretation of the washstand jug as "a fat bird in a round nest." Linda's nightmare from earlier in the narrative is recalled, in which she is overwhelmed by grotesque, child-like birds, representing the endless demands of motherhood that have sapped her strength and freedom. Linda's daughter, Kezia, is disturbed by similar bird imagery, as Mansfield emphasizes the strangeness of the family's new home when Kezia walks down "a square hall filled with bales and hundreds of parrots."[15] While the parrots are subsequently revealed to be part of the wallpaper's design, they still appear to be in motion, as they "persisted in flying past Kezia with her lamp."[16] The fact that the passage of the lamp creates the movement of the parrots is suggestive of projection technology, like the magic lantern or the zoetrope, with birds in flight being a popular subject of study in these media.

Both Kezia and Linda's horror of animals rushing toward them is also alluded to, with the parrots acting as a link between Linda's bird nightmare and her comparison of her husband's sexual advances to a large dog leaping on her.

Following the transformation of the jug into a bird, Linda feels that the "living objects" in her room have become hostile. Like Gilman's protagonist's sensation that the wallpaper has eyes—"those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere"[17]—Linda too becomes paranoid that her every action is under scrutiny. In a sinister reversal of observer and observed, the animated world that she has created turns to watch her, controlling her every movement. The hallucinatory effects of illness and confinement were also experienced by Mansfield herself, as she writes in her journal that being ill and bedridden causes her mind to create "pictures" or "detestable incidents."[18]

Both Mansfield and Gilman push the boundaries of the definition of representation in their fiction, creating a sense of ambiguity around the moments their characters describe: are these happening in reality or within the mind of a character, and if events are imagined, does this necessarily make them less important to the narrative? This defiance of direct representation anticipates the works of surrealist artists like René Magritte, whose painting *The Treachery of Images* (1928–9) famously proclaims "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." Magritte challenges the relationship between words and things—the pipe in the painting is not a pipe, but merely a representation of a pipe. Although labels and images have the power to produce meaning, they are unable to fully evoke the experience of an object or capture the multiple layers of subjective meaning that are applied to an object by each individual who encounters it. This subjective representation is frequently explored in Mansfield's works, such as in "Bliss" (1918), in which Bertha's subjective vision of the table and the bowls of fruit challenges our presuppositions about material objects in their movement: "the dark table seemed to melt into the dusky light and the glass dish and the blue bowl to float in the air."[19] The visual consciousness of Mansfield's fiction allows her to experiment with representation: like Gilman's protagonist in "The Yellow Wall-Paper," the meaning of the world around her characters changes depending on their domestic situations and mental states.

According to Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, we are able to understand objects and entities by creating written, spoken, or drawn representations of them; thus "the material world has meaning and can be 'seen' by us only through representations. The world is not simply reflected back to us by representations that stand in for things by copying their appearance. We construct the meaning of things through the process of representing them."[20] If, as Sturken and Cartwright suggest, we construct meaning through the process of representation, then how can women's lives and experiences be fully understood if so few written and artistic representations have been created by women? The ubiquity of a white,

upper-class, Western male perspective in the arts led writers like Mansfield and Gilman to search for new methods of representation, exploring the ways in which women are silenced in their society and visually representing the barriers that they are forced to face.

"A Prodigious Biograph Show": Mansfield and the Cinema

While the zoetrope, the magic lantern, and other nineteenth-century visual technologies changed the ways in which people thought about vision and movement, perhaps the most influential modernist medium was the cinema. Debuting in Paris in 1895 with the Lumière brothers' one-shot *actualité* films, the cinema swiftly developed into the most popular form of public entertainment, evolving from a music hall curiosity into an experimental and innovative new medium. According to many modernist writers, cinema was the most significant cultural event of the early twentieth century: Vachel Lindsay described modernity as a culture of images, commenting that the world around him was becoming "more hieroglyphic every day,"[21] while Gertrude Stein asserted, "I cannot repeat this too often any one is of one's period and this our period was undoubtedly the period of the cinema."[22] Others, however, condemned the new medium or dismissed it as a gimmick, such as Ezra Pound, who believed that art was characterized by its stasis, and thus to create art is to create a work that will "stand a long and lively inspection." Pound referred to cinema as an "assault" on "every one of the senses" which denied viewers the time for contemplation that art should provide, bombarding them with images too rapidly to allow any meaningful conclusion to be drawn.[23] Laura Marcus, however, interprets these rapidly changing images as a vital element of the zeitgeist of modernity, suggesting that the cinema's effect on training the eye and brain to be attentive is "essential for the successful management of modern life, with its unprecedented speed and motion."[24]

As well as helping to attune the human eye to the fast pace of modern life, the cinema also exerted considerable influence over other art forms, much like its predecessor the magic lantern. According to Leslie Kathleen Hankins, cinema offers "another way to consider the upheavals of Dada and surrealist performance art, the energy of cubism and other visual art movements, the celebration of the machine […] the call to 'make it new,' and Imagism's concentration on the visual close up."[25] In addition to providing a new lens of interpretation for visual art, poetry, and performance, it is possible that the popularity of the cinema was also

connected to the increased demand for short stories and short story collections, which, like an early film program, often featured montage-like examinations of time and space through a series of often disconnected narratives. Although cinematic adaptations of novels were much maligned—Woolf condemns a film adaptation of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* as "the scrawl of an illiterate schoolboy" in her essay on the cinema[26]—the potential for exchange between film and fiction offered a far wider variety of possibilities than simply recreating a narrative from one medium in the other. H. D.'s series of "Projector" poems (1927) equated the cinema with Greek myth, creating psychologically and technologically aware updates of classic texts; D. W. Griffith's use of montage draws on the works of visually conscious nineteenth-century authors like Dickens, as Sergei Eisenstein points out; and modern social and psychoanalytic theory displays a cinematic tendency, from Marx's references to the *camera obscura* in his theory of ideology to Freud's descriptions of images being projected onto a "dream screen" in his subjects' minds. Several stylistic and technical features of film were also adapted for use in modernist fiction, from "cross-cutting" between different places and temporalities to close-ups on symbolic objects, allowing character to be developed in subjective, visual terms.

Although there were no picture houses in New Zealand prior to Mansfield's departure in 1903, it is likely that she may have encountered films in vaudeville shows and traveling attractions, and almost certain that she would have been familiar with the cinema's predecessors such as the magic lantern, as discussed above. However, during Mansfield's school years in London, 1903–6, cinemagoing became an increasingly popular activity, with over 500 cinemas existing in London alone by 1914. Sarah Sandley contends that the earliest evidence of Mansfield's relationship with the cinema appears in a letter dated from March 1912, in which Murry asks her out to "the pictures."[27] It is however possible to trace this engagement back even further. During Mansfield's trip into the New Zealand bush in November 1907, she writes to her mother to describe what she has seen: "trees hung wreathed with clematis and rata and mistletoe," a creek with "sides all smothered in daisies," a beautiful garden where "a Māori girl with her hair in two long braids" sits shelling peas. The following day, she considers these unusual sights again, reflecting that "looking back at yesterday I cannot believe that I have not been to a prodigious biograph show."[28] Biograph and bioscope were terms for early film projectors, while virtual tourism, often imperialist forays into "untouched" lands and "native villages," was a popular subject for film narratives. It is therefore likely that by making this comparison, the young Mansfield is drawing on a series of cinemagoing experiences. Her

qualifier "prodigious" also implies the high esteem with which she regards these visual narratives, recognizing their unique transportational potentials.

Throughout Mansfield's body of work, references to the cinema frequently appear, both directly and indirectly. During a period of particularly debilitating illness, she wishes to let "this month & February & March stream by like a movie picture."[29] In a similar turn of phrase to Woolf's "moments of being," she refers to symbolic objects in her fiction allowing for moments of epiphany-like realization through an "interrupted moment [...] like a cinema."[30] Less explicitly, the focus on the visual in Mansfield's writing can be interpreted as cinematic, as her characters experience visually immersive moments where they appear to "see" an imagined place or object appearing before their eyes, as mentioned in relation to her characters Rosabel and Beryl. Her personal writing is similarly visually conscious, as she frequently asks the recipients of her letters whether they can "see" the scene she is describing, as well as interpreting her own writing process as observational: describing her work in her journal, she notes "sat on the divan and *saw* rather than wrote."[31]

In addition to the references to cinemagoing that appear throughout her letters and journals, Mansfield also had first-hand experience of the film industry, acting as an extra in early 1917. While her discussions of this are brief and offhand ("tomorrow I am acting for the movies—an 'exterior scene' in walking dress"; "my last day with the 'movies'—walking about in a big bare studio in what the American producer calls 'slap up evening dress'"[32]), her subsequent short story "Pictures" (1917) reveals the influence of these acting experiences on her imagination. However, as Mansfield's health began to worsen, she retired from this active engagement in film culture, instead taking on roles virtually through her writing. In a letter to her cousin Sylvia Payne, she asks, "would you not like to try *all* sorts of lives—one is so very small—but that is the satisfaction of writing—one can impersonate so many people."[33] In her later years, her forced isolation as she moved between various European countries resulted in a yet more cinematic engagement with the world around her, and her private writing from this time is peppered with moments from the lives of others. Often unable to engage in life due to illness, she took to experiencing other people's lives vicariously, with her window becoming a virtual cinema screen. Much like her engagement with art, Mansfield's relationship with the cinema allowed her an imaginative escape from the restrictions imposed on her both by her poor health and by her lack of freedom as a modern, sexually liberated woman in a society still living in thrall to Victorian family values. For Mansfield and many other modernist women, the cinema represented a welcome escape from a world

controlled by patriarchal regulations, as well as a lens through which to explore the ways in which women see and are seen in her society.

Surrealist Transformation in Film and Mansfield's Fiction

Besides the direct references to a cinematic way of seeing in her writing, Mansfield's fiction is also aligned with cinema through its focus on subjective impressions of reality. In "The Cinema" (1926), Woolf praises visual representations of madness in *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, but suggests that this should have been taken further, expressing her regret that "a monstrous quivering tadpole" that momentarily appeared on the screen was a fault on the film stock rather than a completely abstract visualization of subjective thought as she had initially supposed.[34] Perhaps the closest that cinema comes to Woolf's speculations can be found in the films of the French surrealists, who aimed to reject direct representation in favor of more symbolic interpretations of the workings of the human mind. In a study of surrealist film theory, Lee Jamieson discusses the surrealists' mistrust of realism, suggesting that by representing a thought in art or literature, the thought's intended meaning is destroyed, much like with Magritte's pipe: "This materialization of art separates it from the body and distances it from its original conception; consequently, it dies, unable to sustain its sensuality in the physical universe. Ultimately, the act of representation reduces the final (art)efact (be it visual or literary) to an empty shell—a mere tombstone marking its former life."[35] This interpretation of representation as the death of meaning anticipates poststructuralist theory, as well as echoing Mansfield's words when she insists that she is unable to tell anyone "bang out" about the "vast deserts" in her mind when confronting the devasting impact of the war.[36] The aims of the surrealist movement are outlined in André Breton's *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (1969), in which he suggests that surrealist works must "express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought [...] Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought."[37] It seems, therefore, that the cinema would have been the ideal medium with which to explore these ideas: in its early years, the cinema relied on a combination of unspoken words, images, and music in order to convey meaning; allowed thoughts and dreams to be expressed in visual form; and created narratives that moved freely in time and space and between fantasy and reality.

Although Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's infamous *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) is generally considered to be the first surrealist film, Jamieson points out that this film was preceded by, and heavily borrows from, Germaine Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928); however, as a female film director in the 1920s, Dulac's work has not been canonized to the extent of Buñuel's. Dulac believed that the aim of cinema was to "visualize the events or the joys of inner life. One could make a film with a single character in conflict with his impressions."[38] *The Seashell and the Clergyman* is the direct result of this manifesto, exploring the tortured inner life of a priest who is torn between his religious duties and his obsession with another man's wife. Much like *Un Chien Andalou*, the film's visualization of the priest's interiority is alternately dreamlike and shockingly visceral. Jamieson proposes that "*The Seashell and the Clergyman* penetrates the skin of material reality and plunges the viewer into an unstable landscape where the image cannot be trusted […] The result is a complex, multi-layered film, so semiotically unstable that images dissolve into one another both visually and 'semantically,' truly investing in film's ability to act upon the subconscious."[39] In the film, these dissolving images take on violent undertones as an image of the priest's rival is bisected, split down the center, and the priest's own face appears between the two halves. The priest's desire to transcend his pious role is suggested, but Jamieson points out that this striking visual could represent not only a desire to replace his rival but also a possible collision of identities—the two men are not distinct individuals, but rather two halves of a whole. The viewer questions whether the rival and the object of the priest's affections are presented as real characters or merely facets of the priest's own troubled mind.

Similarly, surreal visual displacements occur throughout Mansfield's body of work, perhaps most strikingly so in "At the Bay," in which Beryl's confused mental state and subconscious desires are suggested as her friend, Mrs. Harry Kember, appears to grotesquely transform into her husband:

> "I believe in pretty girls having a good time," said Mrs. Harry Kember. "Why not? Don't you make a mistake, my dear. Enjoy yourself." And suddenly she turned turtle, disappeared, and swam away quickly, quickly, like a rat. […] Beryl felt that she was being poisoned by this cold woman, but she longed to hear. But oh, how strange, how horrible! As Mrs. Harry Kember came up close she looked, in her black waterproof bathing-cap, with her sleepy face lifted above the water, just her chin touching, like a horrible caricature of her husband.[40]

Mansfield's affinity with surrealist methods is evident here, as she avoids directly explaining Beryl's relationship with Mrs. Kember, instead illustrating

her thought process through this disturbing visual transformation. Much like Dulac's priest, Beryl is intoxicated by the forbidden nature of this friendship; her comparison of Mrs. Kember to rats and poison implies that, at one level, she is aware that it is dangerous to be associated with a woman of her reputation, yet she is still drawn to her, experiencing a "longing" which she is unable to articulate. It seems possible that Beryl's confusion could relate to her developing sexuality. All of her previous musings on potential romantic relationships fall within socially acceptable parameters as she pictures anonymous men watching her admiringly, playing a protective role, rescuing her from her humdrum life. However, in contrast to these somewhat sterile and detached visions, the feelings that Mrs. Kember arouses in Beryl seem far more passionate; she feels inexplicably shy around her, she thinks of herself as "a little beauty" after Mrs. Kember repeatedly compliments her, and she experiences "a quick, bold, evil feeling" when Mrs. Kember persuades her to ignore propriety and change into her bathing suit in public.[41] It remains ambiguous whether Beryl's reactions to Mrs. Kember simply stem from the thrill of rebellion or whether this is something more, although the transformation of Mrs. Kember into her husband—who, interestingly, is described earlier as "like a mask rather than a man"[42]—could be read as Beryl's attempt to repress her homosexual desires. The fact that Beryl refers to her friend only by her husband's full name, Mrs. Harry Kember, adds to this uncanny doubling effect between husband and wife, with Mrs. Kember's belief in "pretty girls having a good time" foreshadowing the potential violence of Beryl's encounter with Mr. Kember at the end of the narrative.

A similar visual doubling appears in Mansfield's journal, as she discusses her struggle to find a new sense of self following her brother Leslie's death, as well as the sensation that a part of herself has also been destroyed. Mansfield's belief in her connection with Leslie is so strong that she describes waking from a dream about him and feeling physically transformed: "I felt my face was his serious, sleepy face. I felt that the lines of my mouth were changed, and I blinked like he did on waking."[43] Much like surrealist cinema, both Beryl and Mansfield's own visions do not have one explicit interpretation. As Breton asserts, the human thought process is too complex to deal in absolutes; therefore, representations of this sort must be equally multifaceted. Beryl is comparable to Dulac's priest, as she too, in the words of Dulac, is "in conflict with her impressions." By presenting Beryl's inner life as ambiguous, Mansfield emphasizes the liminality of her existence: an adolescent woman, she is poised between childhood and adulthood, and due to her social position and upbringing she has not been offered the language or understanding she requires to interpret her desires.

In examining the cinematic qualities of Mansfield's work, it is possible to argue for the particular significance of the visual in women's fiction, as Mansfield and her female contemporaries made use of gendered subjectivities and cinematic visual effects in order to challenge the male-established conventions of language and develop a new literary voice. According to Maurizio Ascari, "innovation in literature is often the outcome of hybridization, not only between genres, but between genres, arts and media."[44] The influence of a variety of arts and media on Mansfield's writing is therefore what makes her work so unique; she turns to the visual in order to explore how women see and are seen, as well as commenting indirectly on controversial topics through visual metaphor. Through their focus on the visual, Mansfield's short stories provide a unique and experimental glimpse into her characters' subjective realities, inviting her readers to draw their own conclusions and challenge what they are taught to regard as truth.

Notes

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Part Five

The World of Katherine Mansfield

18

Katherine Mansfield and New Zealand

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A Little Island

Katherine Mansfield spent half her life living in New Zealand and the other half writing about it. In exile in Europe, Mansfield declared that she loved her own country so much she wanted to recreate it in fiction and make it "live" in the minds of her readers. She told her friend, the painter Dorothy Brett: "I have a perfect passion for the island where I was born."[1] But her worst nightmares were about being stranded in Wellington without a return ticket. This ambivalence is apparent in her notebooks and letters. Although New Zealand provided the source material for some of her greatest fiction, it also created lifelong emotional conflict.

Mansfield was born Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp on October 14, 1888, at a time when New Zealand was still a Crown Colony. She automatically became a British citizen, even though her parents had been born in Australia. Her father was an upwardly mobile businessman, soon to become chairman of the Bank of New Zealand and occupy many other prestigious positions. The family mixed in the highest social circles—the prime minister was a relative by marriage—but New Zealand at that time was a very mixed society, and the Thorndon district of Wellington, where the family lived, reflected this. At the bottom of the garden in Tinakori Road there was a gully where some of the poorest citizens, manual laborers and domestic servants, lodged. On the southern side of the Beauchamp's villa lived their washer-woman, who would "persist in attempting to talk to Mother over the fence."[2]

After an outbreak of cholera, which killed Mansfield's baby sister Gwen and several members of her father's family, Harold Beauchamp moved his wife and children out to Karori, a village just outside Wellington, where the children

attended the local school with contemporaries ranging from a judge's daughters to the impoverished McKelveys, who appeared in Mansfield's story "The Doll's House" (1921) as Lil and "our" Else Kelvey. This social mix had a tremendous influence on Mansfield's character and her future work. Wellington and its rural hinterland, the environment that shaped her and formed her moral compass, was wind-blown, earthquake-prone, "wild, exploitative, imperialist, racist, geographically tough."[3] But for Mansfield, it was "the seedbed, the blood and bone fertiliser of everything that came later."[4]

New Zealand society was built around the three pillars of colonial life—the British Empire, the Church of England, and the British Constitution.[5] As Vincent O'Sullivan put it, the Beauchamps were constantly "checking themselves in the mirror," measuring themselves against Britain—more specifically England—and English values. That was what it meant to be a colonial and it created a fractured identity.[6] The New Zealand author, Robin Hyde, remarked that "you were English and not English. It took time to realize that England was far away. And you were brought up on bluebells and primroses and daffodils and robins in the snow."[7] One of Mansfield's first stories, "Enna Blake" (1898), published in her school magazine when she was only nine, reflects this confusion. It is supposedly set in Torquay, although Mansfield herself had never been to England. The girls in the story go out "ferning"—a particularly New Zealand occupation. New Zealand writers such as Robin Hyde and Katherine Mansfield grew up "in this false, unreal atmosphere."[8] For a great part of the twentieth century, ambitious young people would leave for the Old World, as Robin Hyde recorded: "Our north is mostly England. Our youth, our best, our intelligent, brave and beautiful, must make the long migration, under a compulsion they hardly understand."[9]

There was another aspect of colonial identity. The Beauchamps and their contemporaries were not members of the indigenous Māori culture, but defined as "Pākehā"—the "other." And for Mansfield, there were additional exclusions. She never felt wholly comfortable with her parents' social class (what she referred to as that "undeniable trade atmosphere")[10] but, because of her privileged upbringing, she could never be a member of the working class either. She might go to school with the McKelveys, but she wasn't allowed to play with them. She was living on the interface between different cultures. Mansfield's fiction vividly describes the subtle class differences created by snobbery, and the little cruelties inflicted on those who are poor and unprotected—social observations that would inform all her stories, not just those set in New Zealand. Her first commercially

published story, "His Little Friend," which appeared in the children's pages of the *New Zealand Graphic* in 1900 when she was eleven years old, already had the themes of social injustice and untimely death that would appear in her more mature fiction.

Although New Zealand was the first country in the world to give women the right to vote in 1893, it remained class-ridden and misogynistic. Mansfield's upbringing as the child of an upwardly mobile New World entrepreneur gave her an awareness of class snobbery, racism, and gender inequality. The immediate family context—her unmarried aunt, her overburdened mother and grandmother, the grooming of her older sisters for marriage—also created an acute awareness of the trap of romantic love for women, and the "waste of life" that was the domestic sphere so many were confined to. Girls, like Mansfield's character Tui in a draft story called "Young Country," had limited ambitions. Tui hopes to be taken to Sydney when she's sixteen and marry a rich Englishman.[11] In an early letter to her friend Sylvia Payne, Mansfield wrote: "I am so keen upon all women having a *definite future*—are not you? The idea of sitting still and waiting for a husband is absolutely revolting [. . .] I just long for power over circumstances."[12]

The teenage Beauchamp daughters were sent to school in England, to Queen's College in Harley Street, to acquire a London polish to enhance their positions at the top of the social scale in New Zealand. There Mansfield instantly fell in love with London, its history, its literary traditions, its anonymity, its cosmopolitan cultural mix. But at the same time she reveled in being, as one of her tutors called her, "a little savage from New Zealand."[13] It gave her a unique identity.

Mansfield's return to New Zealand after two years was a jolt. She described herself as "friendless—and disheartened."[14] Old friends had made new friends and she felt isolated, but, more than that, she found her home country parochial and Wellington a dreary cultural backwater. "It seemed to me a small petty world."[15] From that distance London "shone, mystical, dreamlike."[16] There, Mansfield had been able to discuss books and ideas, visit museums and theatres, and feel very much at the cutting edge of literary developments. In Wellington, there was no one she felt she could talk to about the things she cared for. She wrote to her sister in despair: "I am ashamed of Young New Zealand, but what is to be done. All the firm fat framework of their brains must be demolished before they can begin to learn."[17] She became angry and disruptive, feeling that she had been taken away from the one place where her talent could flourish. "*London*—it is Life!"[18]

Urewera

It was while she was in this rebellious, homeland-hating mood that Mansfield accepted an invitation from her friend Millie Parker to go on a camping trip in the remote Urewera region of the North Island in November 1907. Her parents made no objections and perhaps thought it a good idea for Mansfield to gain more knowledge of her native country. Mansfield, who had begun the habit of keeping a journal to record her thoughts and experiences after she returned to New Zealand, took a new notebook with her and wrote in it, often perched precariously on one of the wagons as it lurched through the bush on rough tracks. The contents of this early notebook found their way into her mature stories, particularly "The Woman at the Store" (1912) and "At the Bay" (1921). Her impressions were jottings, mnemonics rather than descriptions, recording her immediate reactions to the unspoiled territory she passed through: "the quivering air—the solitude—Early bed—the strange sound—the utter backblocks—Fear."[19] The notebook also included vignettes and draft letters, as well as a daily catalog of wet clothes, soaked boots, plagues of mosquitoes, a lack of sanitation, and the demands of self-catering. Mansfield admitted that she had never so much as made a cup of tea or peeled a vegetable, but she had to take her turn with the chores alongside the others.

Mansfield referred to her traveling companions as "ultra-Colonial,"[20] distancing herself from them. She scattered Māori phrases throughout her notebook and viewed the interiors of their houses with considerable curiosity. But Mansfield's gaze was still European, constantly referencing Europe and England, although her response to the Urewera has to be seen in the context of her Pākehā culture and the attitudes of the historical time she lived in. Her future brother-in-law, James Mackintosh Bell, also visited the Urewera within a year or so of Mansfield's visit and published a book about his trip which illustrates this. His vocabulary is consistently that of the colonial. He refers to a "Māori half-caste" child and his "dusky mother."[21] He writes of the Māori as a once brave race that has "degenerated" and is now being replaced by a superior European culture. This degeneration is apparent "mainly in a deteriorated physique" and a disinclination to do any real work. He accuses them of "loafing" for months on end and says that "Work of any kind for long periods [. . .] is not usually the Māori *métier*."[22] His recorded impressions during the journey are in direct contrast to Mansfield's. Bell finds nothing to challenge his assumptions; Mansfield's mind is open and curious.

She had been intrigued by the Māori since she was a child and had once declared that she was going to become a Māori missionary. One of Mansfield's earliest pieces, called "A True Tale," written in 1903 and addressed to "my little Saxons," is the tale of Motorua, an invented Māori mythical figure, probably based on the story of a great chief called Te Ropiha Moturoa, one of the signatories of the Treaty of Waitangi. The street that ran alongside Mansfield's school was named after him. The story imagines a time before Europeans, when New Zealand was inhabited by only "tall, stately, copper coloured men and women, who sailed all round their country in great, curved canoes and hunted in the woods for game."[23]

Prejudice against the Māori was commonplace among the Pākehā population. In the schoolroom, Mansfield and her classmates sewed "cheap flannelette chemises for the Maori Mission" on Wednesday afternoons because, of course, the women would have to wear modest European clothes as part of the process of becoming Christian New Zealanders:

> They are as long as nightdresses, very full, with huge armholes and a plain band round the neck—not even a lace edging. Those poor Maoris. They can't all be as fat as these chemises! But Mrs Wallis, the Bishops wife, said when she gave the newspaper pattern to the headmistress "It is wiser to reckon on them being fat."[24]

Mansfield was living in the borderlands between European colonial attitudes and the traditional world of indigenous Māori people whose practical life and psychology fascinated her. Her identity, as Pākehā, was defined by theirs. Feeling trammeled by the restrictions of her own culture, she was drawn to what she saw as their wild, untamed visceral nature, often describing Māori during her Urewera trip in terms of exaggerated romanticism: "She sits—silent—utterly motionless—her head thrown back—All the lines of her face are passionate violent—crudely savage—but in her lifted eyes slumbers a tragic illimitable peace."[25] Mansfield's vignette, "In the Botanical Gardens" (1907), shows her awareness of their cultural juxtaposition; the Māori are always in the shadows of the wild bush that surrounds her, and she describes herself, the narrator, as "the thief of their birthright."[26]

At this point in her life, apart from a few vignettes and sketches, Mansfield had written very little that was recognizably of New Zealand. The problem was her obsession with London as the pinnacle of literary influence in the English-speaking world. She wrote to the editor of the *Native Companion* that "practically there is nothing local—except the 'Botanical Garden' Vignette—The reason is that for the last few years London has held me—very tightly indeed—and I've

not yet escaped."[27] The vignette was published in the *Native Companion* shortly after her return from the Urewera. But, if her parents had hoped that Mansfield's experience of the backblocks would change her attitude to New Zealand, they were to be disappointed. Even among the flowering manuka, the birdsong, and the waving toi-toi, something laid "cold fingers about her heart—it is the wizard London."[28] In her Urewera notebook, she referred to herself as a restless spirit: "a vagrant—a Wanderer, a Gypsy."[29] New Zealand and the "Suitable Appropriate Existence"[30] were never going to be enough for her.

When Mansfield's father eventually relented, and a suitable young women's hostel had been found in London, she was allowed to leave, aged nineteen. The society columns of the local papers recorded the farewell events given for her, the garden parties and bridge parties. Mansfield commented that it was almost glamorous: "But, seeing the people now so much I realise even more fully—is that possible?—How glad I am to go."[31]

The "Little Colonial"

The "little Colonial" was an identity that Mansfield had been assigned at school in London and it set her apart. Even after years of living in London, she never felt that she belonged. "I am the little Colonial walking in the London garden patch—allowed to look, perhaps, but not to linger […] a stranger—an alien […] a little girl sitting on the Tinakori hills, and dreaming."[32] She was as much the "other" in London as she had been in New Zealand. Ottoline Morrell, one of the hostesses of the Bloomsbury circle, wrote very perceptively on this aspect of Mansfield's character: "When in England I think she was conscious of being a New Zealander, secretly proud of it […] a harbour of refuge for her thoughts and imagination, […] but at the same time it perhaps prevented her from mixing with ease and friendliness amongst us here."[33]

In Europe Mansfield was surprised to find herself haunted by her home country. When the wind blew in London, she felt "that frightful sensation of grief that used to come over me in Wellington."[34] On a ferry from Dieppe to Newhaven, she remembered trips from Wellington to Picton and was "caught in a web of a thousand memories."[35] George Bowden, Mansfield's first husband—a marriage of convenience in an attempt to disguise her pregnancy by another man—remembered the startling persona that Mansfield presented on his second meeting with her, dressed in what he believed to be Māori costume at a party. Among her possessions in the Alexander Turnbull Library is a white Māori

heitiki, a necklace carved from whalebone, with paua shell eyes. Her sister Vera wrote that it was worn by Mansfield and sometimes herself in London when "we wished to be identified as New Zealanders." Mansfield also owned more than one *whatu*—bags woven from flax, part of a "Māori kit" she had purchased in the Urewera.[36] There were also differences in language: the accent that had to be smoothed out, the expressions she sometimes used, partly in fun, such as "cross my heart straight dinkum,"[37] giving "a squiz"[38] and all the other "New Zealand queer 'uns like calling the Savoy the Sävoy, or talking of the aeryeighted bread shops."[39] Mansfield's accent was mocked by Rupert Brooke and Edward Marsh[40]; she in turn mocked the English upper class for pronouncing carriage as "kerridge."[41]

Almost as soon as Mansfield arrived in London, she began an intense love affair with another New Zealander, Garnet Trowell, one of two brothers, both musicians, whom she had known in Wellington. It ended in pregnancy and a breach with the Trowell family, who would not allow the young lovers to marry. Mansfield abandoned George Bowden on their wedding night and appears to have given birth prematurely in the German spa town of Bad Wörishofen. The baby did not survive. Being an unmarried mother was the ultimate disgrace for a woman of any class, and from then on Mansfield was that terrible cliché, the "scarlet woman" of her later fiction, whose proximity might taint the reputations of her sisters.[42] Mrs. Beauchamp cut Mansfield out of her will. There was no longer the possibility of returning to New Zealand even if she had wanted to: "all that irretrievably gone now."[43]

Back in London, writing for the *New Age*, Mansfield published poems, sketches, and vignettes, and for a while it seemed as though she was leaving behind her New Zealand identity as she searched for a sense of belonging, sometimes giving herself a Russian name, on other occasions adopting a Japanese persona. Emmanouil Aretoulakis suggests that, in order to find her own identity, she had first to lose herself in a "maze of far more extreme otherness."[44] According to friends, her emotions at the time were despairing. In a poem she described herself as a "stranger in a foreign place"[45] and confided to a friend that she felt lost: "I want to begin another life."[46] Her notebooks from this period were destroyed, but lines from drafts of her early novel "Rewa" record that London had begun to seem alien: "After my terrible sorrow London seemed to lose all her reality."[47]

A series of stories she had written in Bad Wörishofen, *In a German Pension*, based on the characters in the boarding house where she had stayed, became her first published collection in 1911. The satirical stories are the observations

of an expatriate poking fun at foreign habits. This collection also contained one New Zealand story, "A Birthday," which—even though the main character has a German name—is recognizably located on the Tinakori Road in Wellington. It was during this period that Mansfield submitted the first of her New Zealand "murder" stories, the "Woman at the Store" to a new *avantgarde* magazine, *Rhythm*, edited by John Middleton Murry. A dark, brooding story, based on notes from her Urewera notebook, it caught the remote atmosphere of the New Zealand backblocks perfectly. Mansfield followed it with "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" (1912), "Ole Underwood" (1913), and "Millie" (1913). Antony Alpers observed that these stories were ground-breaking. Written "in a cultural isolation that was total for their author: no one who read them in London could have known what in fact they achieved."[48]

Murry and Mansfield began to live together, even though she did not divorce Bowden until 1918, and began a literary collaboration, co-editing *Rhythm* magazine. Mansfield established a reputation for herself as a writer and reviewer, making friends with D. H. and Frieda Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and other members of the Bloomsbury circle. The perspective of *Rhythm* was European, formed around the philosophical ideas of Henri Bergson. Encouraged by Murry, Mansfield had greater freedom of expression and the opportunity to experiment. Living in another culture changes how writers view not only their host country, but also the country they have left. Mansfield wrote in a review of H. M. Tomlinson's *Citizens of the Sea* that the writer in exile can never be other than a foreigner. The eye of the exile is "a wondering glance; and what they discover is not the familiarity of things, but their strangeness."[49] This gave her work considerable originality and power. The reception of her New Zealand stories persuaded Mansfield to try to publish her work more widely in periodicals such as the *Westminster Gazette* and, eventually, the *Athenaeum*. One of the first of these stories was "Old Tar"(1913), featuring James Tarr, Mayor of Karori, who was notorious for "furious driving" and eventually died under the wheels of his own buggy.[50] Mansfield was well aware of her appropriation of actual characters for her fiction and wrote to her sister Jeanne: "Don't leave the paper on the Karori road or I shall be taken up for libel."[51]

The "real" people back in New Zealand, whose lives she "borrowed" for her stories but who remained recognizable to those who knew them, were offended, although they acknowledged the clarity of her portraits. "You think she is a writer; she simply described the things she knew here," one of them told biographer Ruth Mantz.[52]

Bereavement and Exile

In 1915, a few months after the outbreak of the First World War, Mansfield's young brother, Leslie, came over from New Zealand to enlist. He died in France when a grenade exploded during a training session. Mansfield was devastated. Her relationship with Murry was not going well, and she went to France to begin an affair with a French writer, Francis Carco, and stayed in his Paris flat while he was fighting on the front line in order to have space to write, something she was finding more and more difficult to do in London. "My light goes out, in England, or its a very small & miserable shiver."[53] For the next seven years of her life, she would spend less and less of her time there. In France, bereaved and homesick, Mansfield channeled all her emotions through memories of her brother. Leslie's death altered Mansfield's relationship with her native country; it was no longer an identity she struggled with in a search for belonging, or merely the source of material for sketches and unusual stories—her grief caused her to look back on their shared childhood, in a land now closed to both of them, as a lost paradise. Her mind was in elegiac mood when she wrote:

> I want to write recollections of my own country. Yes I want to write about my own country until I simply exhaust my store—not only because it is a "sacred debt" that I pay to my country because my brother & I were born there, but also because in my thoughts I range with him over all the remembered places. I am never far away from them. I long to renew them in writing.[54]

Mansfield went to Bandol in the South of France in order to write but found it hard to begin. "I have written practically nothing yet & now again the time is getting short. There is nothing done [...] I keep half doubting my will to perform anything."[55] The story that caused her so much difficulty had been in her mind for some time. It appears in her notebooks, in lists of future work, as "The Aloe," eventually published as "Prelude" (1917). It is a recreation of the Beauchamp's childhood home at Karori first described in her early notebooks in a piece written prior to 1903, which began, "It was a big bare house."[56] Mansfield struggled to find the right voice and form for her idea when she returned to it after Leslie's death: "the form I would choose has changed utterly. I feel no longer concerned with the same appearances of things [...] The *plots* of my stories leave me perfectly cold."[57] She re-visited Karori constantly in her memory, but the story would not reveal itself until Mansfield had discovered a new narrative

structure, which she called "the Prelude technique," abandoning traditional European narrative modes she had learned from Chekhov—classic short stories with a firm narrative voice and the expected "turn" at the end. When the breakthrough came, her relief was profound: "I *found* the Aloe this morning."[58] This new way of story-telling was the form she adopted from now on. There would be no descriptions, no explanations: "It just unfolds and opens," she told Murry's brother Richard.[59]

In beginning to write these New Zealand stories, bringing back to life all the remembered places and people, Mansfield could easily have fallen into the trap waiting for exiled writers, described by another New Zealand writer, Janet Frame, who observed that leaving one's native land can be a hindrance. "The writer […] may find herself spending a lifetime looking into the mists of a distant childhood."[60] But Mansfield was not driven by nostalgia. Edward Said talked about writing in exile as "a construction of realities"; the writer building "a home of words" to dwell in.[61] James Joyce rebuilt a city in his mind while he lived in exile; Mansfield re-created a country, although it was not contemporary New Zealand, which had grown and changed; it was the country a certain Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp had left almost a decade earlier. For the writer, Gillian Tindall observed, "actual countries become countries of the mind, their topography transformed into psychological maps, private worlds."[62] Psycho-geography was part of the writing process for Mansfield. She wrote to her friend Ida: "Its rather nice to think of oneself as a sailor bending over the map of one's *mind* and deciding where to go and how to go."[63]

After being diagnosed with advanced tuberculosis in 1917, Mansfield was advised to live in a warmer climate and spent most of her time in France, Italy, or Switzerland, in search of health. Since she had left New Zealand, she had rarely had a settled home for long. She was always moving on, re-packing her trunks, writing in a permanently liminal space. In the will she wrote during her last year, she refers to "my camping ground,"[64] which was perhaps how she saw the nomadic nature of her life and perhaps also a reference to her Urewera journey. New Zealand became the only fixed point on her compass. The landscape of her homeland, which had been mapped through the senses and internalized in the first eighteen years of her life, could be navigated again and again in memory. Experiences, sounds, images, scents, emotions, characters, even stories became linked to specific locations. This inner world became important as illness increasingly restricted Mansfield's external life. She claimed that she could close her eyes and be back in any of her favorite places. In her mind, she ran down

to Lambton Quay with her brother Leslie, lay in the hot sun on Island Bay, embarked once more at Lyttelton Harbour for Southampton:

> It often happens to me now that when I lie down for sleep at night instead of getting drowsy I feel wakeful and lying here in bed I begin to *live* over little scenes from real life or imaginary scenes. Its not too much to say they are almost hallucinations: they are marvellously vivid […] far realer, more in detail, *richer* than Life.[65]

Mansfield chose to carve out a new technique in a country where the old ways of doing things were still strong, and her work was not always approved by critics such as Virginia Woolf. Janet Frame observed that young writers often went to Europe because it seemed a fertile place for the imagination, with its long literary tradition, but that was not necessarily the case. The European map of the imagination was a crowded place, while "exploring a new country with not so many layers of mapmakers"[66] gave much more space for experimentation and exploration; "the first layer of imagination mapped by the early inhabitants leaves those who follow an access or passageway to the bone." To be there at the beginning of a literary tradition was to be living "in an age of mythmakers."[67]

Mansfield seems to have recognized the pitfalls as well as the opportunities that existed for colonial writers. In her review of Jane Mander's *The Story of a New Zealand River,* published in 1920, she accuses the author of leaning "too hard on England." The author has missed the opportunity that colonial fiction offers to create "the new sketch, the new story."[68] Mansfield also criticizes the way that the landscape is only a backdrop, rather than part of the story. "The scene is laid in the back-blocks of New Zealand and, as is invariably the case with novels that have a colonial setting, in spite of the fact that there is frequent allusion to the magnificent scenery, it profiteth us nothing […] laurel-like puriri" and "lacy rimu" and "oak-like ti-toki" convey nothing to the English reader and produce no emotional reaction.[69] As Mansfield stressed in her review, scenery is just decoration if not embedded in the character and the action. Much of Mansfield's skill was in using the landscape to establish character. In "The Garden Party" (1921), the reader sees foliage and flower through Laura's eye as she tries to discourage the workmen from erecting a marquee that would hide the beautiful geometry of the Karaka trees. The lavender in the borders is there to demonstrate to Laura that workmen have sensibilities too. Not a flower or a leaf of New Zealand is there gratuitously.

In "Prelude," the magnificent aloe at the center of the story is a metaphor for "what is permanent in the soul."[70]

A "Better Karori"

After 1918, Mansfield's deteriorating health forced her to spend as much time as possible near the Mediterranean, often in Menton where two of her Beauchamp relatives lived and owned a small villa she could rent. She observed: "There's a kind of whiteness in the sky over the sea. I loved those days when I was a child—I love them here. In fact I think Menton must be awfully like NZ—but ever so much better."[71] She reveled in the warmth and the clarity of the light, the exotic vegetation, and the proximity to the sea. In the wild garden of Villa Isola Bella, she felt "intoxicated," writing that it "was like a better Karori."[72] She also found it beneficial for her creative life, generating a calm that freed her imagination:

> One is conscious of [this place] as I used to be conscious of New Zealand. I mean if I went for a walk there and lay down under a pine tree and looked up at the wispy clouds through the branches I came home plus the pine tree […] Here its just the same.[73]

To her brother-in-law, Richard Murry, she admitted that she loved the South of France "as Ive never loved any place but my home."[74] To her husband, living in London and now editor of *The Athenaeum*, who would have preferred her to live with him, she declared: "Ive *done* with England. I don't even want to see England again."[75]

Mansfield knew how ill she was, even though she was reluctant to admit it. She was very conscious of time running out and was eager to capture this sense of urgency in her fiction. Mansfield was still thinking of Chekhov and referred to the final scene of *The Cherry Orchard* as an example of the atmosphere, or tone, that would convey how she felt: "Its too late to beat about the bush any longer. They are cutting down the cherry trees; the orchard is sold."[76] Confronting the reality of her own death was a painful process she addressed in a review of R. O. Prowse's novel *A Gift of the Dusk*. "What is the present when the future is removed, when life is haunted, not by Death in the fullness of time, but by Death's fast encroaching shadow?"[77] Mansfield thought long and hard about how to make the most of every minute, reaching the conclusion that her passion for life had to be poured into her work. Fiction allowed her to escape; "to get as far as possible away from *this* moment."[78] She was commissioned to write a journal for

publication but gave it up because "I dare not tell the truth."[79] It was too painful. She began destroying letters and putting her affairs in order. "It is hard—it is hard to make a good death."[80]

Mansfield's marriage to Murry was in trouble and rumors had reached her of his flirtations with other women, her friend Dorothy Brett and Princess Elizabeth Bibesco. Murry, celibate and with a wife too sick to be a companion except on paper, found living alone very hard. He earned his living from literary journalism and, although he wanted to write his own books, found the income as well as the social life difficult to give up. Mansfield missed the man she regarded as her soul mate. She was lonely, urging him to come and live with her. When it became obvious that Mansfield would never be able to live permanently in England again, Murry went to Switzerland where Mansfield had moved in May 1921 to try the Swiss air. Mansfield had heard that there was a doctor in Crans Montana who might be able to cure her. She was finding the heat of the Mediterranean taxing and attracted to the pure air of the mountains that had traditionally helped TB patients. She refused to go to a sanatorium, preferring a kind of "sanatorium at home" approach, looked after by her lifelong friend and companion Ida Baker. "Im a desperate man now," she admitted to her sister Vera.[81] But the specialist she consulted in Montana would only tell her that she still had only a chance. "He would not say I can get better."[82]

Mansfield and Murry rented the Chalet des Sapins at Sierre, close to Mansfield's cousin, Countess Russell, better known as the author Elizabeth von Arnim. There, on the mountainside "living in the eye of the Lord,"[83] Mansfield wrote some of her mature stories, many of them rooted in New Zealand. Ill and exhausted, her thoughts and imagination turned more and more to her own country in order to write. "Always my thoughts and feelings go back to New Zealand—rediscovering it, finding beauty in it, re-living it."[84] But her stock of memories was running dry. She told Ida Baker that she would like to return to New Zealand with Murry. "I wish I could work it. […] I dream of driving out to Karori in an open cab and showing Jack the Karori school."[85] As a respectable married woman and published author, Mansfield could now have returned. Her health prevented it. She was confined to bed most of the time, suffering from tachycardia and "congestion of the lungs," but made use of this by writing a series of stories for *The Sphere*—money she needed for her medical bills—as well as several New Zealand stories for her next collection.

Night after night, Mansfield dreamed vividly of New Zealand, possibly a side effect of the opiate mixture she was prescribed to control her cough and dull the pain. Her homeland was constantly in her thoughts during the day, too.

Her sisters, Chaddie and Jeanne, sent photographs of the family. Mansfield was stirred to share her own childhood memories—the birthday when her sister Jeanne had bitten her; Mansfield's own rage that had sent a doll's pram rocketing over the garden. "Anyone who says to me 'do you remember,' simply has my heart. I remember everything."[86] She received a surprise letter from the family of her old school friend Marion Ruddick that provoked memories of the girls playing together, bathing their dolls in a rock pool at Island Bay, and eating cream buns for tea. She began writing a new story called "At the Bay" (1921) which she hoped was "full of sand and seaweed and bathing dresses hanging over verandas & sand shoes on window sills."[87] But it is in "At the Bay" that the young Kezia has a conversation with her grandmother about the inevitability of death.

Murry swung between refusing to face the reality of Mansfield's impending death to pessimistically deciding it was imminent. In one letter she accused him of having already sealed her in a coffin; in another she complains that he refuses to acknowledge how ill she really is. The chalet was bitterly cold in the winter and Mansfield found it hard to endure. The wind brought "painful memories" of Wellington and her brother. "I would leave here tomorrow but where can one go? One begins the wandering of a consumptive—fatal! Everybody does it and dies."[88] Cold and longing for health, Mansfield moved to Paris to try a controversial new procedure in search of the cure she longed for, but she secretly knew was unlikely. She talked about trying the "mind over matter" approach of Coué if her treatment failed and joked about the comic tendency to try everything, however preposterous. But she was gradually coming to the conclusion that there could be no physical health without spiritual well-being. While in Paris she wrote "The Fly," a New Zealand story about a bank manager, reminiscent of her father, who has lost his son in the First World War, and "The Canary," inspired by a woman Mansfield watched from her hotel window who had a canary in a cage. Mansfield writes that the bird has come from an exotic place, far away, over "the immense, perfumed sea," before being caged.[89] It is difficult to read either story without sensing an autobiographical reference. New Zealand was very much on her mind; to her sister she wrote that she felt as tired as if she had swum the whole width of the bay in the wake of the Wellington ferry, the Duco, which features in some of her unfinished fictional fragments.[90]

A letter from her father, enclosing correspondence from her South Island cousins, aroused powerful emotions; "those Beauchamps down the Sounds are right. They are inheriting the earth. How I wish I could drive off in a little spring cart and have tea and scones with them."[91] Once, the simplicity of their

provincial lives had been anathema to her—she couldn't wait to escape its trap. Now many of her letters and notebook entries criticized the falseness of the sophisticated, urban society life she had once longed for. She wrote to her father about her changed feelings for her birth country: "the longer I live the more I turn to New Zealand. A young country is a real heritage, though it takes one time to recognize it. But New Zealand is in my very bones. What wouldn't I give to have a look at it!"[92] Mansfield viewed her connection with New Zealand as essential to her work. Without roots, she wrote, a writer skims only the glittering surface of the grain, "but there are no sheaves to bind."[93] The "home of words" would still exist, but there would be very little to furnish it with. She was still talking about going back, "if I manage to keep above ground."[94]

Back in Sierre, where the damson trees in blossom reminded her again of Karori, Mansfield had lost faith in any kind of medical treatment. The only hope was to find some alleviation for the mental anguish that she suffered. The life of an invalid deprived her of any stimulation and material for her work and the New Zealand lode was running out. "I am at the end of my source," she wrote to Murry in October 1922. "My work is dying from poverty of life [...] and I want to escape from my terrible illness."[95] Escape took the form of a retreat, to the Gurdjieff Institute at Fontainebleau, in search of a new way to live, where she died, without completing any further work, in January 1923.

Notes

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11 *Notebooks* 2, 65.

12 *Letters* 1, 18.
13 *Notebooks* 2, 31.
14 [Katherine Mansfield] to Thomas Trowell, September 26, 1907, MS-Papers-8964, Katherine Mansfield Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library.
15 *Letters* 5, 80.
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22 Ibid., 109.
23 Katherine Mansfield, "A True Tale," in CW1, 15.
24 *Notebook* 2, 25–6.
25 *Notebooks* 1, 148.
26 Katherine Mansfield, "In the Botanical Gardens," in CW1, 85.
27 *Letters* 1, 26.
28 *Notebooks* 1, 145.
29 Ibid., 146.
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31 *Letters* 1, 53.
32 *Notebooks* 2, 166.
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50 *Auckland Star*, July 25, 1889.

51 *Letters* 1, 132.

52 Mantz, *An Exhibition*, n.p.

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73 Ibid., 89.

74 Ibid., 42.

75 Ibid., 145.

76 Ibid., 50.

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81 *Letters* 5, 119.
82 *Letters* 4, 234.
83 *Letters* 5, 219.
84 Ibid., 80.
85 Ibid., 92.
86 *Letters* 4, 294.
87 Ibid., 261.
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89 *Letters* 5, 76.
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91 *Letters* 5, 84.
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93 Ibid., 80.
94 Ibid., 219.
95 Ibid., 305–9.

19

Katherine Mansfield and Empire

Janet M. Wilson

The importance of empire and European imperialism in relation to Katherine Mansfield's colonial upbringing in New Zealand and her adult life in Europe where she pursued her art is crucial for understanding her place as one of the major figures of literary modernism who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, towered over both modernism's colonial and metropolitan forms. These geopolitical formations have inspired the key perception of Mansfield as a colonial-metropolitan modernist writer with dual affiliations to her provincial society of origin and the metropolitan homeland of England, which enabled her to reshape and extend the filiative ties of empire into dynamic relations cutting across or challenging hierarchies of gender, ethnicity, and class.[1] Indeed, it can be argued that her elusive, ambivalent responses to the ideology of imperialism might be explained by her colonial orientation which encouraged her to adopt a chiastic cross-over position between both sensibilities, colonial and imperial, overlapping different geographies and temporalities, and looking both ways to forge a distinctive aesthetic irony. This includes hybrid discourses anticipatory of postcolonial resistances and alternative subjectivities[2] as in the citation of new locations of habitation and consciousness and the signifiers of race in stories like "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" and "Je ne parle pas français," and in the anti-colonial satire of "The Daughters of the Late Colonel."[3]

Recent scholarship has offered expanded frameworks for analyzing modernism and empire, seeing them as linked to form a compatible "discursive base/superstructure dyad," further challenging the Manichean binaries of provincial and metropolitan, center and periphery.[4] Perspectives of empire as dominated by global structures of power leading to its legacy of power imbalance—"informal" imperialism consisting of financial and commercial expansion, anticolonial resistance movements as alternative forces of authority—inform new interpretations of Mansfield's place in literary

history.[5] Contemporary conditions of mobility and rootlessness that challenge the assimilationist ideologies of the nation-state point to the expansiveness of the global empire-building project: its diverse and dispersed networks and rhizomatic, lateral trajectories that cross empire's boundaries and overlap with the back and forth center-colony movement.[6] Elleke Boehmer argues in favor of a more globally reconstituted model of empire than the empire-colonial configuration as "multiply mediated by diversified exchanges between nations on the margins,"[7] another perception that urges reconsideration of Mansfield as a mobile world traveler whose global modernist orientation encouraged a chiastic orientation toward space and time, history and location. The center-periphery binary was also superseded in the political workings of the imperial world system which, as Frederic Jameson and others note, consisted of a rivalry between nation-states that masked the exploitation of colonial territories; this is detectable in the veiled animosities of Herr Rat in Mansfield's story, "Germans at Meat."[8] Mansfield may also have been aware that Britain and its empire were being provincialized due to the rise of continental world powers, Russia and the United States, another indication of imperialism's shifting dynamics prior to the First World War. To critic Simon During, these broader horizons for locating Mansfield's work give her the distinction of being a world literature writer.[9]

Modernism is likewise increasingly perceived as a transnational phenomenon, not just the product of Anglo-American culture but as functioning through multiple zones of cross-border interactivity in diverse imperial and colonial locations, as a result of the global contexts that shaped its emergence. Modernism's uneven engagement with otherness and difference, according to Boehmer, with "a modernist-other interface or contact zone," means that it may be "more consistently read as situated and conducted in the perspective of Empire" than as a distinctive aesthetic movement and constellation of European, metropolitan literature.[10] Narratives from colonized nations when examined from these angles suggest modernism's diffusion and venacularization, effected through the globalized interface of colony and empire: Declan Kiberd has written of James Joyce's challenge to the norms of Irish nationalism in his interpretation of British imperialism and the project of Euro-modernism, including the use of the traditions and linguistic terms of the Celtic twilight in tension with international modernism; Jane Stafford and Mark Williams see Mansfield's early composite style as blending formal innovation from Wilde and the symbolists with the indigenous idioms and terms of Maoriland writing in a transformed version called colonial modernism.[11]

Mansfield's arrival in London in 1908 coincided with the era of high Empire (1870–1918), which was to end with the Great War, a world-threatening crisis that ultimately undermined the power of imperialism. Her modernist experimentation and critique were informed by cultural and intellectual currents associated with the two avant-garde journals in which she first published: A. R. Orage's *The New Age,* and then John Middleton Murry's *Rhythm*. Both preached new aesthetic and political gospels and the latter, with its manifesto adapted from John Synge, "'Before art can be human it must learn to be brutal,'" was of seminal importance for her evolving modernism such as in her colonial stories about the white settler negotiation of the imperial legacy.[12] But it was the profound shock of the First World War, mainly due to the tragic death of her brother, that elicited her most highly charged critical response. She saw the war's widespread devastation as changing everything, transforming the age: she wrote to John Middleton Murry, "I feel in the *profoundest* sense nothing can ever be the same, that as artists we are traitors if we feel otherwise."[13] Her late story, "The Fly" (1922), exposes the unsustainability of imperial myths of sacrifice and glory that mobilized a generation of young men to go to their deaths.

As a colonial outsider from the furthest margin of empire who relocated in metropolitan England, Mansfield's position from the outset was compromised by her complicity with imperial values and power structures. Accustomed from her privileged background to wealth and freedom, her transnational mobility as a traveler between England and European metropolitan destinations meant that she was often taken for English, enabling her to enact a metropolitan identity that concealed her colonial New Zealand one; she would have experienced empire as a multiply-constructed entity in interaction with its colonies and effecting cross-border exchanges between nations on its boundaries, as well as those beyond them. Her apparent anonymity and national invisibility, also enabled by her role-playing and name-changing, explain the multi-locatedness of many stories: permeable national and imperial borders underpin the images of cultural foreignness and constructions of national belonging and alienation in those from *In a German Pension* (1911) and later ones like "A Dill Pickle" (1917) and "Honeymoon" (1922), and her collaborations in translation projects with S. S. Koteliansky constitute further explorations in cultural and linguistic difference. Artistically, therefore, Mansfield was globally oriented and moved beyond the perimeters of European empires to discover the divisions between the west and non-west as sites of creative possibility. In particular is her passion for Russian writing and the transformative effect upon her early work of Chekhov, most famously seen in the story, "The-Child-Who-Was-Tired," while

her translations from Russian into English of golden age literature by masters like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy also undoubtedly shaped her writing.[14] Mansfield's diverse journeys in Europe and her discovery of its cultures, therefore, took her constantly beyond the binary framework of empire and colony at the same time as her colonial worldview was being reshaped by memory, longing, and the past of her New Zealand childhood.

Using a chronological-biographical approach to the shifting frameworks of colony and empire in Mansfield's work, and in order to consider her as a writer who negotiates various resistant, complicit, or oblique responses to imperial assumptions, this chapter will compare the European stories in her earliest collection, *In a German Pension*, with two New Zealand "regional" stories, "Woman at the Store" (1912) and "Millie" (1913). It argues that the ideology of empire as articulated in the collection through the discourses of nation, race, and gender is radically revisited and rewritten from the colonial perspectives of the latter stories in ways consonant with Mansfield's fluid manipulation of both positions, and their narrative ellipses and silences hint at unrecorded experiences that anticipate later postcolonial representations that "subtend yet transcend the colonial encounter."[15]

In a German Pension

The European stories published in *In a German Pension* provide a reimagining of self-other relationships and alternative cultural representations to those found in the stories and sketches that Mansfield wrote before she left New Zealand which synthesize the idioms, motifs, and Polynesian myths of "Maoriland" writing with a Wildean, late-Victorian literary aesthetics. Focused on her stay at the Pension Müller in the little spa town of Bad Wörishofen[16] in Bavaria where she lived for six months in 1909, the stories conceal the chaotic upheaval in her life then. Abandoned by her lover, the musician Garnet Trowell, by whom she was pregnant, and having briefly married the singing teacher, George Bowden, on the rebound on March 2, 1909, she was removed in May from this difficult situation by her mother, who had arrived from New Zealand and accompanied her to the spa town for a health "cure."[17] Written in a state of isolation, the stories suggest she was grappling with an overwhelmingly strange and foreign environment. She wrote to Garnet Trowell in June 1909, not long after she arrived, of her psychic dislocation and visceral bodily suffering, possibly as the result of the miscarriage she suffered there:

> To be alone all day, ill, in a house whose every sound seems foreign to you—and to feel a terrible confusion in your body which affects you mentally, suddenly pictures for you detestable incidents—revolting personalities—which you only shake off—to find recurring again as the pain seems to diminish & grow worse.[18]

Mansfield's separation from her provincial colonial beginnings and metropolitan influences with their familiarizing and estranging perspectives marked her stay in Wörishofen. In the stories, she satirizes and impersonates "revolting personalities" and "detestable incidents" at the pension through a comic-critical optic, introducing unfamiliar character types and diverse self-representations. Underlying her mocking, biting satire is a probing investigation of otherness, an alterity that includes herself. Estranged from all that was familiar, she developed a mode of apartness as she had done in New Zealand before she left by the cultivation of a literary persona; this may have been affected by an alienating, depersonalizing paralysis, described as "this coldness—physical, mental—heart coldness—hand coldness—soul coldness."[19]

Seven out of the thirteen stories feature a first-person narrator who exploits the communicative gaps caused by cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contact with the Germans in the Pension. The narrator, a persona of Mansfield, represents herself as a *femme seule* of mysterious identity, with little apparent reason for taking the cure or "bad." She consistently "passes" as English and refuses to acknowledge her national origin, reinforcing a common misunderstanding among the Germans she meets. On being introduced to a character called the Advanced Lady, who proclaims, "'I think you are English?'" the narrator simply agrees—"I acknowledged the fact"[20]—thus deflecting attention from the question of her identity. But in "The Luftbad," her anonymity is challenged. Upon being asked by the Vegetable Lady whether she is an Englishwoman or an American, and answering evasively, "'Well hardly—,'" she is told, "'You must be one of the two; you cannot help it.'"[21] This tart response implies a certain German purism about national identity, and wariness of colonial hybridity that Mansfield/the narrator may embody as a form of cultural difference.[22] The narrator's questionable assertions made in other stories—that she has been a vegetarian for three years of marriage (in "Germans at Meat") and her "virgin conception" (announced to Frau Fischer) of a husband who is "a sea-captain on a long and perilous voyage"[23]—contribute to the impression of unreliability. Whether her self-inventions and evasions are a self-protective device or part of a self-conscious performance to exploit cultural misunderstanding and misinterpretation for satirical ends, they are a significant source of the structural ambivalence that Andrew Harrison identifies as a cohering principle of the collection.[24]

Mansfield's oblique obfuscation through the voice of her narrator by reinventing herself as "other" to her earlier self, however, allowed her to develop a more artistic response to the perceived threat to her hybrid colonial-metropolitanism that the encounter represented. In this context, the Pension Müller can be identified as a cultural contact zone, "a social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."[25] Like the third space of diaspora or migration promulgated by Homi Bhabha, this is an intercultural, translational zone, neither metropolitan nor colonial, in which Mansfield and her proxy narrator might engage in the politics of identity and difference, involving negotiation and contestation about position and selfhood with the Pension's German residents. Framing these encounters with Bhabha's postcolonial theory of cultural difference, therefore, encourages the perception that the narrator's effacement of her external identity belies the activity of an interior space of subjectivity to formulate private responses to the entrenched and culturally determined beliefs held by the Germans[26]; this appears in her oscillation between engagement with and withdrawal from their pronouncements and conversations, and in asides about her indifference, such as "I did not care one way or another."[27]

Mansfield's disequilibrium also appears in the inconsistency of her satire on German pretensions and assumptions and uneven deployment of a narrative strategy aimed to engage the readers' sympathy on the one hand while maintaining a critical distance on the other. This stems in part from the narrator's indeterminate role, whether as distanced, observing outsider, objectified stranger, or actively engaged participant. Acting as a foil for stereotypes of Englishness, she reveals German imperialism's sinister intent: Anglo-German tensions prior to the First World War are implied by "the cold blues eyes" of Herr Rat, and his "expression which suggested a thousand premeditated invasions."[28] On domestic topics, the German point of view is insidiously mocked; she ironically takes on the "burden" of the "nation's preposterous breakfast" described in "Germans at Meat," confiding to readers: "I who drank a cup of coffee while buttoning my blouse in the morning."[29] Assertions of national deficiency that might threaten her metropolitan identity appear: the English nation is "so unmusical," it avoids discussing bodily functions, and is "'Fish-blooded […] Without soul, without heart, without grace.'"[30] Satire yields to issues of identity in "The Modern Soul" when she is introduced to Frau Godowska and her daughter by Herr Professor, being "othered" as "the stranger in our midst," and told that we "have often observed you through the bedroom window."[31] Yet there is a yearning to belong,

as Todd Martin notes, significantly when a symbol of imperial power, the portrait of the Kaiserin Elizabeth, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary, is removed from her room in "The Sister of the Baroness," making the narrator feel "outside the pale," and branded "as a foreigner."[32] The narrator is both like and unlike the Germans, differentiating herself from characters like Frau Godowska, Frau Fischer, and the Vegetable Lady by her ironic poise, while exhibiting similarities to others who also dissemble. By sharing the same material reality as that of her satirical targets and surviving by a seeming compliant yet resistant response to their ideology, Mansfield was able to develop a more potentially political subjectivity in her inner space.

The narrator's variable positioning is especially evident in two stories, "The Sister of the Baroness" and "The Baron," whose eponymous characters, mirroring her deceptions and evasions, are literary doubles. Both concern the powerful impact of the German aristocracy as high-ranking figures who can hoodwink or puzzle those around them. They turn on moments of revelation: in "The Sister of the Baroness," her dressmaker's daughter is impersonating the baroness, a fraudster passing herself off as an aristocrat and gaining the adulation of the student from Munich and the poet from Bonn. In "The Baron," the unbaronial-looking Baron, a self-selected outsider like the fascinated narrator confesses to her that he hides away to conceal his gross appetite; her conversation with him wins her admiration from the others who rank social status above all else. Like the more confrontational attitudes of "Germans at Meat," "Frau Fischer," and "The Luftbad," the atmosphere of suspicion and insinuation in these less overtly satirical stories implicates the reader who cannot completely disidentify from gullible and earnest Germans like Frau Fischer who are being satirized or deceived, whether by the narrator or other characters. Harrison's observation of "an uncanny dynamic" pervading the collection, due to the erratic "strangeness and animosity" of the narrator,[33] encourages further interpretation of the Pension as an intercultural contact zone, informed by Bhabha's concept of "the *uncanny* structure of cultural difference" where the familiar yields to the strange, and where collaboration and contestation also occur. Citing Levi-Strauss, Bhabha says that "the unconscious" provides "the common specific character of social facts [… I]t enables us to coincide with forms of activity which are *both at once ours and other*."[34] The narrator's encounter with dominant, metropolitan modes of representation as molded by Bavarian middle-class assumptions is marked by the uneven irruption into the satirical surface of her "angry vibrations,"[35] her repressed interpretations and sudden appropriations.

Mansfield, then, can be seen as intermittently struggling to create a counter-imaginary to the Catholic society of early twentieth-century Bavaria in contesting the Pension residents' proclamation of hegemonic imperial attitudes and assumptions which may have seemed "consecrated" and "fossilized."[36] Her compromises are constituted in the narrator's ambivalent self-representations and enigmatic stance. They may be traced to Mansfield's unease about gender inequality and injustice, reflecting her own trauma at being trapped in a female body: fears of homelessness and isolation, abandonment on becoming pregnant, marital rape, financial dependency on men, and childish rage. A concern with what "the modern" means for women appears in stories such as "The Advanced Lady" and "The Modern Soul," and although not consistently thematized, can be linked to a narrative antipathy toward sexuality when privileged as the principal category of consciousness. This is the basis of stories about male sexual drives that highlight women's gendered expectations, sexual naivete, and social conditioning as in "Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding" and "At Lehman's."

The narrator's most explicit attack is reserved for pronouncements revealing the biological essentialism that decrees women as destined for matrimony and motherhood, reflecting the ideology associated with imperial rule that elevates family and childrearing as supreme values. Presented as though unshakeable truths are Frau Fischer's claims that "every wife ought to feel that her place is by her husband's side" and that "handfuls of babies" will ensure marital stability, because "as the father of a family he cannot leave you"[37]; while the Traveller's assertion, "Germany […] is the home of the Family,"[38] categorically reinforces national pride. Hostility toward the exploitation of child labor dominates "The-Child-Who-Was-Tired" where it is represented as a form of slavery that leads to murder. The stories focus on the female inability to contest male power, and Mansfield's satire exposes how such transgressive urges have become "naturalized" within empire's heteronormative culture while simultaneously permitting hypocrisy and moral evasion.

One target is the ironically labelled "The Advanced Lady," a writer and intellectual who claims to be a voice of modernity while distancing herself from others in the Pension and neglecting her child and husband. This deeply "unmodern" figure may be a caricature of a European intellectual who was then advancing anti-feminist views under the guise of being modern, namely, the German writer Laura Marholm, whose *Studies in the Psychology of Women* (1899) Mansfield borrowed from the General Assembly Library in Wellington during 1906–8. According to Sydney Janet Kaplan, Marholm's thesis was that

men and women are innately and biologically different, and her full argument, that women's so-called "emancipation" was a displacement of their emotional energies due to the enfeeblement and demasculinization of men in a post-industrial "degenerate" age, would have troubled Mansfield.[39] One similarity between them is that the Advanced Lady claims to be writing a novel "upon the Modern Woman,"[40] and Marholm's work opens as if it is a novel. The Advanced Lady's modernist beliefs, however, are misguided, for her pretense at improving women's condition does little more than reinforce the essentialist notion that women are biologically destined agents of reproduction, even as she ignores her own child. She glorifies women's capacity for self-sacrifice saying, "our gifts of giving are for the whole world—we are the glad sacrifice of ourselves,"[41] provoking the narrator's retaliation "that theory of yours about women and love—it's as old as the hills—oh, older."[42] This criticism may reflect modern socialist thinking, for despite her negativity about women's suffrage after attending a suffragist meeting in London in September 1908,[43] Mansfield was of the view, even before she left New Zealand, that women "truly, as yet, have never had their chance. Talk of our enlightened days and emancipated country. Pure nonsense."[44]

More savage portraits can be traced to Mansfield's social outrage at abuses of power and the exploitation of vulnerable children and women, as in the Chekhovian story, "The-Child-Who-Was-Tired," in which a very young girl laboring under impossibly harsh conditions smothers the baby in her care in order to find release. A trenchant critique of masculine power and imprisoning attitudes toward women—offering a more sinister angle on the Advanced Lady's advocacy of female sacrifice and willing victimhood—appears in "Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding." Frau Brechenmacher's unspoken fears of her husband's sexual power, manifested in frightened domestic subservience and psychological dependence, and transferred to her oldest daughter, create a female cycle of oppression.[45] Herr Brechenmacher's monstrous sexual appetites are registered in the underlying violence with which he exerts control over the drunken, raucous wedding celebration, while the silence due to inarticulate fear contributes to a symbolic portrayal of Frau Brechenmacher and the other female guests as "dumb in their captivity under bestial sexual norms."[46] The point is reinforced in Frau Brechenmacher's final gesture when she "lay down on the bed and put her arm across her face like a child who expected to be hurt as Herr Brechenmacher lurched in."[47]

Mansfield's preoccupation with issues of gender inequality, and by implication with entrenched Catholic values concerning women's maternal and domestic roles that she encountered in the Pension Müller, has a symbolic counterpart

in the complex linguistic makeup of the stories; her narrators and characters constantly engage in acts of cultural translation and linguistic border crossings, and their in-between positioning in the space of translation that is the Pension is reflected in the cultural hybridity of the narratives. Communication is marked by discontinuity and rupture; sudden sounds and monosyllabic utterances represent moments of crisis or confusion. For example, "Ach," an exclamation with a negative emphasis, is repeated seven times throughout the stories, but the louder shriek "achk," in "At Lehman's" from the sexually innocent Sabina when the Young Man touches her breasts reflects a more enigmatic disturbance.[48] The awkwardness of some translations indicates the struggles to communicate effectively in this multi-lingual zone. Herr Rat, for example, talks of taking a "knee bath" and "an arm bath" while untranslated words contribute to erratic, halting exchanges. The day's "kur" ("cure") is the subject of intense discussion in "The Baron," while in "Germans at Meat" the untranslated terms "magen" ("stomach") and "Mahlzeit" ("Enjoy your meal") appear, but the narrator's struggle for the German equivalent for "the preliminary canter" in trying to explain the idiom "warming the teapot" ends in silence.[49] Linguistic instability due to being in a translational space pervades the stories; in the process of translation words as signifiers become untethered from their signifieds, and linguistic slippages point to incomplete or disrupted communication. This sense of the unreliability of language, the mixing of linguistic registers and fusion of different codes, symbolically disturbs the inward-looking monocultural, monolingual monopoly of the German speakers, and adds to the effects of strangeness and uncanniness that can be discerned below the linguistic surface and the narrator's superficial familiarity.

The disjunctive communication between the narrator and her German interlocutors culminates in a performative gesture when she abruptly walks away from the Vegetable Lady's interrogation in "The Luftbad." Flying into the air on a swing, she defies the earthly circle below, elated by the animating flows of wind, the scent from the pine trees, and rhythmical movements of the branches; this becomes an ecstatic moment of fusion, of oceanic belonging:

> I got up and climbed onto the swing. The air was sweet and cool, rushing past my body. Above white clouds trailed delicately through the blue sky. From the pine forests streamed a wild perfume, the branches swayed together rhythmically, sonorously. I felt so light, and free and happy—so childish! I wanted to poke my tongue out at the circle on the grass who, drawing close together, were whispering meaningfully.[50]

As an early epiphany in Mansfield's fiction, this is unusual for its refusal to collapse inward, although it also resists transcendence;[51] it remains an image of abandonment and rebellion through the narrator's elevation—literally and metaphorically—from the pedestrian mind-set and inconsequential chatter of the women. This might be an "outlaw" moment, according to Fullbrook, based on the narrator's insight into a discrepancy between this self-perception and previous ones, and her discovery of previously unrecognized elements of consciousness, so setting her apart.[52] But in fact, the narrator's seeming dissolution of self into the elements in a Freudian oceanic moment and her infantile swinging and desire to poke her tongue out suggest a detachment from the realm of language and a reversion to a pre-oedipal symbolic order through a loss of sovereignty or control. This may be associated with Bhabha's view that in the border zones of diasporas such as the third space, in the context of transcultural negotiation, the non-sovereign self is needed in order to articulate difference and to live with it, for "it is only by losing the sovereignty of the self that you can gain the freedom of politics that is open to the non-assimilationist claim of cultural difference."[53] Such seeming detachment from the value system of the Germans suggests a new model by which to articulate foreignness and strangeness emerging from Mansfield's/the narrator's incomplete or inauthentic reconfigurings of her earlier narratives of origin and subjectivity. That is, the different forms of cultural and linguistic hybridity in the stories associated with the third space—the mocking of hierarchies implied by aristocratic titles, the blends of languages and speech codes, and the tropes of doubling and mirroring implicit in the narrator's masks and duplicity—all imply an undermining of the German values of Aryanism, genetic purity, cultural superiority, and racial whiteness. They signify Mansfield's search for a consolidated position from which to recuperate her threatened cosmopolitanism and approach an alternative ideology that, as these stories show, demands constant cross-cultural, self-other negotiation.

Although attitudes associated with empire—such as white racial power, linguistic and cultural supremacy—can be traced in Mansfield's sarcastic comments on German spa life, these explorations of social and national identities that hint at incomplete or unknown individual subjectivities and the concealment of cruelty, injustice, and domestic oppression suggest a non-partisan distance from the powerful structure of German military imperialism.[54] The wave of anti-German feeling that swept Britain in 1910 is alluded to in "Germans at Meat" by the Traveller in his comment on the English fear of an invasion and the play

staged in London that fanned this fear,[55] and Mansfield, when writing up the stories in London that year, was evidently aware of the growing militancy about the threat that the Germans posed to England's sense of its empire. Despite elements of critique implied by the hybridized doubled position of the satirical narrator, her narrative tactics can only be read indirectly as a challenge to imperial values.[56] Mansfield's caricature of Germans and lampooning of individual and institutional stereotypes were held in check partly by her ambivalence toward European politics at a time when tensions were building up to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.[57] Nevertheless the Pension stories occupy a pivotal place in her artistic evolution, for they show her responses to imperial cultural supremacy obliquely linked to assertions of German superiority and military power being made then and which she explored in the domestic sphere through culturally specific narratives about sexual dominance and compliance.

"The Woman at the Store" and "Millie"

Mansfield's counter-imaginary to the "imperial" orientation in the Pension stories takes shape in the two New Zealand outback stories, "The Woman at the Store" and "Millie," published in *Rhythm* in 1912 and the *Blue Review* in 1913. They are set in outback New Zealand on the edges of empire, a lawless zone where marital relations unravel and savage, primitive urges involve sex crimes and murder. An oppositional reading of their setting, character, genre, and style to her subtle stories anchored in the gemütlich, well-ordered world of the Pension with its rules, regulations, and wholesome, life-building regime of diet, exercise, and cold baths shows that the norms of gender, marriage, and childbirth associated with empire, when transported to the colonial context, become grotesquely deformed, leading to violent death. The domestic violence in stories like "Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding," child abuse in "The-Child-Who-Was-Tired," and the ambivalent sexual gropings in "At Lehman's" are revisited in stories of denatured womanhood, the consequence, it is implied, of an over-masculinized society in which indifference, brutality, and violence underlie all relationships. Satire is now reconfigured in terms of the colonial Gothic in forms of ghostly disturbances, abnormal climatic and environmental conditions, sensations of terror, and threats of the unexpected, reflecting the transgressive gender practices of a newly formed colony. The social conventions and formal politeness of the German society of Wörishofen are stripped away as Mansfield develops her response to the aesthetic of the primitive and brutal

associated with the manifesto of *Rhythm* in these studies of imperial and colonial barbarism. These types of ab/normality cross over each other chiastically, marked by more insistent rhythms of savagery in the colony. They will surface "most monstrously in that ultimate deformation, the Great War where they are played out on a world stage."[58]

Both stories draw on the colonial narrative phenotype, as Lydia Wevers points out,[59] such as the yarn or the tale associated with the *Bulletin* "horse and saddle" genre or Barbara Baynton's bush studies, while "The Woman at the Store" shows thematic and narrative affinities with Henry Lawson's short story "The Drover's Wife"; however, their images of gender deviation are also born out of the disturbing attitudes of their immediate predecessors, such as the Advanced Lady's attack on "those violent creatures who deny their sex."[60] The deformings of biological gender and sexual transgressions due to cultural and social isolation in the colony are met with violent, fatal retaliation. In "The Woman at the Store," the abject, violated woman who, it is rumored among the three travelers, knows 125 "different ways of kissing"[61] is revealed as a murderer, having killed her husband who has brutalized her. Symbolically outside the bounds of civil society, as a non-woman, her radical dehumanization is suggested by the narrator's comparisons of her to a puppet or "wax doll," as "nothing but sticks and wires under that pinafore,"[62] and by her aggressively phallic gesticulations with the gun and threat to the child if she dare expose her secret. The denatured, masculinized eponymous Millie is also armed with a gun and epitomizes the menacing spirit of an environment which leaves little room for women's reproduction, tenderness, or maternal instincts. Millie wonders at her lack of fertility, but she dismisses her inability to bear children as "natural," saying "'I've never missed them,'" implying that her husband Sid who is "softer" might have.[63] In these ambivalent characters, the "lying garb of false masculinity" that the Advanced Lady denounces,[64] is resurrected as a symbol of the barbaric and primitive in Mansfield's colonial counter-imaginary.

These isolated figures have associations with but no real knowledge of their originary homeland of the British empire. Jameson says of these colonial dislocations that the colonial subject is "unable to register the peculiar transformations of the first world, or metropolitan life which accompany the imperial relationship."[65] Mansfield marks out the colony's distance from its mother-culture with iconic symbols of imperial and national authority that signify colonial "belonging" (so counterpointing the narrator's feelings of exclusion when the portrait of Kaiserin Elisabeth is taken from her room in "The Sister of the Baroness"). In "Millie," the painting of Windsor Castle with

"three Union Jacks" and "the old queen" causes Millie to ask, "'I wonder if it really looked like that?'" before turning to the photograph of her wedding day with its national landscape signifiers: "fern trees, waterfall and Mount Cook."[66] "The Woman at the Store" also codes the colony/empire dyad as contrasting national reference points: a special issue of an English periodical of Queen Victoria's jubilee in the large room behind the store is adjacent to "a coloured print of Richard Seddon,"[67] New Zealand's Liberal prime minister until his death in 1906, above the mantelpiece.

The dismantling of opposites is a structural principle of the narratives. "Millie" operates through reversals of the moral and social hierarchy of empire and colony: it is the newly arrived English "johnny," laboring on the farm, who is on the run and whose extreme youth, vulnerability, and terror arouse Millie's maternal feelings as she reaches out to comfort him as the child she never had. Heteronormative gender relations associated with imperial rule are undermined by the ambiguous relationship at the heart of the story that takes place off stage, in what is implied is a queer relationship between the Englishman and Mr. Williamson, whom Millie recalls as "such a one for a joke. Always having a lark."[68] Only an external perspective, *hors de texte*, informs us that Millie's naïve curiosity about the motive for the murder would be at odds with the usual suspicions that such relationships arouse.

The narrative of "The Woman at the Store," by contrast, is manipulated by a narrator who is ambiguous in gender, moving between masculine and feminine, first as a traveler to the store in the company of two male companions, and then revealed as a woman in her most primitive and vulnerable state of being naked, by the woman's six-year-old daughter who claims to have seen her sunbathing after swimming in the creek. This wandering, sexually ambivalent figure displays the same doubled metropolitan/colonial identity as Mansfield and, like her, is able to negotiate the psychological and cultural differences between colony and empire. Speaking as a cosmopolitan traveler, she denigrates the menacing situation and deformed characters—"the hideous room, the rat of a child, the mangy dog"[69]—recoiling from empathy or pity as might be proffered by one woman to another, and hinting at masculine abhorrence: the woman is "ugly […] a figure of fun […] mad" and the child's drawings is "repulsively vulgar […] the creations of a lunatic."[70]

In "Millie," the biological drives of maternal affection resurface with the force of the repressed when Millie empathizes with the hunted man's fear, but in the story's conclusion, her sudden, disconcerting reversal and rejection of him lead her to identify with the chase as her husband and a posse hunt him down. Like

the narrator's antipathy to the woman and child in "The Woman at the Store," which suggests fear of contamination and an attempt to maintain a moral and physical distance, Millie's part in the fate of the young boy is symbolically that of a mediating or threshold figure, demarcating a boundary between empire and the colonized world.[71] In both cases, there is a realization that the abject "other" must be refused despite suggestions that the self-other relationship is simultaneously transformative and destabilizing. Both narratives mark only a temporary reprise from the status quo: Millie can only reclaim her subjectivity by restoring her masculinized defeminized self; the woman in "The Woman at the Store" can only recover her previous self by attempting to seduce Jo, one of the three travelers.

Mansfield's Bavarian sojourn in the heart of the German empire as recorded in the *In a German Pension* stories inspired her to return to the colonial world with a stronger feminist commitment to exposing the consequences of colonial "othering" and desexing of women in stories about domestic violence. Like one of those "neobarbarians" espoused by Frederic Goodyear in *Rhythm*, she writes to "familiarise us with our outcast selves."[72] In what Blankley defines as the "queered space" inhabited by the narrator in "The Woman at the Store,"[73] the empire's self-representations are challenged by a nascent counter-narrative: an ambivalent metropolitan-colonial worldview that exposes gender transgressions and violations without the protective hypocrisies of Victorian morality. In "Millie," where the narrator is not a character, a similar queered space can be glimpsed beyond the borders of the text in the strange relationship between the colonial Mr. Williams and the English johnny. Its "barbaric" outcome paradoxically enables Millie's unexpected discovery of her essential female side, although she is oblivious to the social boundary that ostracizes and condemns so-called indecent sexual practices. The unspoken question of sympathy toward such oppressed relationships amidst likely homophobic revulsion ironizes her final words. "'A—ah! Arter 'im, Sid! A—a—a—h! Ketch him, Willie. Go it! Go it! A—ah, Sid! Shoot 'im down. Shoot 'im!'"[74]

Mansfield's early writing is inspired by the insight that domestic violation and transgression occur in both the imperial metropolitan centers and the colonies. But in her colonial stories, she developed a colonial-modernist angle in the critique of empire which is buried beneath the satirical gaze of the Pension stories, manipulating the structural principles of ambivalence, masking, and insinuation to indicate the depths of criminality that underlie the domestic world of the colony. In advancing from the "foreign" present to reinterpret the "familiar" past, she inscribes a metropolitan dimension into her colonial

narratives of savagery, exploring the opposition between the imperial "cooked" and colonial "raw" categories (to adapt Levi-Strauss's terms of mythological structures), transforming them through irony and queerness. Finally, in hinting at spaces beyond the text from which alternative subjectivities and resistances will be opened up, her endeavor recalls another modernist axiom, "to see that the present is pregnant of the future, rather than a revolt against the past"[75]; these experimental stories anticipate later critiques like "Je ne parle pas français" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," as well as the discourses to come of later postcolonial writers and critics.

Notes

1 See Lydia Wevers, "'The Sod under My Feet': Katherine Mansfield," in *Opening the Book: New Essays on New Zealand Writing*, ed. Mark Williams and Michelle Leggott (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995), 31–48; Lydia Wevers, "How Kathleen Beauchamp Was Kidnapped," in *Critical Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Rhoda B. Nathan (New York: G. H. Hall & Co, 1993), 37–47; Bridget Orr, "Katherine Mansfield, Colonial Modernist," in *A History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. Mark Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 71–81.

2 See Janet Wilson, "Introduction," in *Katherine Mansfield and the (Post)colonial*, ed. Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber, and Delia da Sousa Correa. Katherine Mansfield Studies 5 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 1–14; Elleke Boehmer, "Mansfield as Colonial Modernist; Difference Within," in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2011), 57–71; Saikat Majumdar, *Prose of the World: Modernism and the Banality of Empire* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2013); Elyse Blankley, "Gendered Violence and Narrative Complicity in Katherine Mansfield and Leonard Woolf" (paper presentation, Katherine Mansfield: Inspirations and Influences, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, July 2019). I am grateful to Elyse Blankley for allowing me to read a copy of her paper.

3 See Gaurav Majumdar, "Marking Absence: Mansfield's Feminine Informality vs. Lockean Liberalism," in "Katherine Mansfield: The Gift of Breath," ed. Aimee Gasston, Gerri Kimber, and Janet Wilson, special issue, *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 38, no. 1 (2020).

4 Jed Esty, *Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 30.

5 See Mark Williams, "Mansfield in Maoriland: Biculturalism, Agency and Misreading," in *Modernism and Empire*, ed. Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby

(Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 249–74; *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899–1939*, ed. Richard Begum and Michael Valdez Moses (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007); Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National and the Postcolonial 1890–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

6 James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 3–4.

7 Boehmer, *Empire, the National and the Postcolonial*, 4.

8 Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, ed. Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward Said (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 48.

9 Simon During, "Katherine Mansfield's World," *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 33 (2015): 49.

10 Boehmer, *Empire, the National and the Postcolonial*, 174; Orr, "Colonial Modernist," 72.

11 Declan Kiberd, "Postcolonial Modernism," in *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature*, 269–87; Williams, "Mansfield in Maoriland," 255–60; Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature 1872–1914* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006), 157.

12 [John Middleton Murry], "Aims and Ideals," *Rhythm* 1, no. 1 (1911): 36.

13 *Letters* 3, 82.

14 Galya Diment, "Introduction," in *Katherine Mansfield and Russia*, ed. Galya Diment, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 2.

15 Ato Quayson, "Introduction: Changing Contexts of the Postcolonial Novel," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Postcolonial Novel*, ed. Ato Quayson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 3.

16 Henceforth "Wörishoften," as the town was known in 1909; "Bad" was conferred on March 6, 1920, by a decree issued by the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior.

17 It is not known whether her mother, Annie Beauchamp, knew Mansfield was pregnant. Almost all of Mansfield's letters from this period were destroyed, and her diary entries are minimal.

18 *Letters* 1, 92.

19 Ibid.

20 Katherine Mansfield, "The Advanced Lady," in CW1, 236.

21 Ibid., 177.

22 See Todd Martin, "'Unpacking' the First-Person Narrator of *In a German Pension*," in *Katherine Mansfield and the (Post)colonial*, 81. This conflation of colonial and "imperial"/metropolitan subjects suggests the limited recognition of New Zealanders in Europe then. The New Zealand accent was first noticed among

schoolchildren only in 1911–12, after Mansfield had left. See Elizabeth Gordon and Tony Deverson, *New Zealand English: An Introduction to New Zealand Speech and Usage* (Auckland: Heineman, 1985), 15–17.

23 Katherine Mansfield, "Frau Fischer," in CW1, 198; 197.
24 Andrew Harrison, "Ambivalence, Language and the Uncanny in Katherine Mansfield's *In a German Pension*," *Katherine Mansfield Studies* 4 (2012): 51–2. Harrison frames his observation in terms of the Freudian uncanny.
25 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 7–8.
26 See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).
27 Mansfield, "Frau Fischer," 195–6.
28 Katherine Mansfield, "Germans at Meat," in CW1, 165.
29 Ibid.
30 Mansfield, "Frau Fischer," 195; Katherine Mansfield, "The Modern Soul," in CW1, 216.
31 Mansfield, "Modern Soul," 215; 216. The historical spelling is Elisabeth. Kaiserin is the wife of a Kaiser or king in Germany, but in Austria, as the wife of Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, Elizabeth's title was Empress.
32 Martin, "'Unpacking' the First-Person Narrator," 83; Katherine Mansfield, "The Sister of the Baroness," in CW1, 190.
33 Harrison, "Ambivalence, Language and the Uncanny," 54.
34 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 163. Emphasis in original.
35 Mansfield, "Advanced Lady," 240.
36 Esty, *Modernism and National Culture*, 26, citing Perry Anderson on imperialism as a force of traditionalism in culture, *English Questions* (London: Verso, 1992), 24.
37 Mansfield, "Frau Fischer," 197; 198.
38 Mansfield, "Germans at Meat," 166.
39 Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 133–4.
40 Mansfield, "Advanced Lady," 239.
41 Ibid., 240.
42 Ibid., 241.
43 *Letters* 1, 59–61. In *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction*, Kaplan points out that she acknowledged other aspects of oppression, such as victimization, rape, venereal disease, and various types of dependence (127–9).
44 CW4, 91.
45 Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Ltd, 1986), 54.
46 Ibid., 56.
47 Katherine Mansfield, "Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding," in CW1, 189.

48 See Harrison, "Ambivalence, Language and the Uncanny," 59–60; Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield*, 57–8.
49 Mansfield, "Germans at Meat," 164; 167; 165.
50 Katherine Mansfield, "The Luftbad," in CW1, 177.
51 During, "Katherine Mansfield's World," 45–6.
52 Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield*, 32.
53 Homi Bhabha, "The Third Space," Interview with Jonathan Rutherford, in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, 1990), 212.
54 Martin, "'Unpacking' the First-Person Narrator," 77, citing Lee Garver, "The Political Katherine Mansfield," *Modernism/Modernity* 8, no. 2 (2001): 228.
55 The play is identified as Guy du Maurier's *An Englishman's Home*, CW1, 168n3.; Martin, "'Unpacking' the First-Person Narrator," 78.
56 This may explain why later in life she refused to have the stories reprinted. See Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield*, 52–3.
57 Martin points out that New Zealand did not display anti-Germanic sentiments before the war. See Martin, "'Unpacking' the First-Person Narrator," 80.
58 Email conversation with Anna Smith, November 23, 2019. I would like to thank her for reading a draft of this chapter and suggesting the chiastic metaphor.
59 Lydia Wevers, "Katherine Mansfield Is the Problem," in *Teaching Australian and New Zealand Literature*, ed. Nichola Birns, Nicole Moore, and Sarah Shieff (New York: Modern Language Association, 2017), 91.
60 Mansfield, "Advanced Lady," 239.
61 Katherine Manfield, "The Woman at the Store," in CW1, 272.
62 Ibid., 270.
63 Katherine Mansfield, "Millie," in CW1, 327.
64 Mansfield, "Advanced Lady," 239.
65 Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," 60.
66 Mansfield, "Millie," 327.
67 Mansfield, "Woman at the Store," 270.
68 Mansfield, "Millie," 327.
69 Mansfield, "Woman at the Store," 271.
70 Ibid., 271; 274.
71 Blankley, "Gendered Violence and Narrative Complicity," n.p., citing Anne McClintock *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 1995), 24.
72 Frederick Goodyear, "The New Thelema," *Rhythm* 1, no. 1 (1911): 3.
73 Blankley, "Gendered Violence and Narrative Complicity," n.p.
74 Mansfield, "Millie," 330.
75 [Murry], "Aims and Ideals," 36.

20

Katherine Mansfield and the Great War

Christine Darrohn

"I feel in the *profoundest* sense that nothing can ever be the same," Katherine Mansfield averred after the Great War.[1] "[A]s artists," she claimed, "we have to take it into account and find new expressions new moulds for our new thoughts & feelings."[2] Mansfield's assertions suit the magnitude of this war. With fighting occurring in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and, to some extent, Central Asia and the Far East, the 1914–18 conflict was truly global.[3] Approximately 70 million men served in uniform, and 9 million of those were killed.[4] Unprecedented not only because of its scale, the war featured fearsomely lethal innovations—machine guns, tanks, combat airplanes, and poison gas—and trench warfare immured soldiers in inconceivable suffering. On the home front, tumult occurred in many ways—in the grief of those who loved the soldiers who suffered and died, in the horror of noncombatant populations that came under direct military attack, in the social upheaval of challenged class and gender conventions.

This chapter explores the remarkable heterogeneity of Mansfield's experiences and writings of a watershed event. Mansfield mourned friends who died in the war and, most keenly, her beloved brother, Leslie. Given the staggering casualties of the war, her experience of bereavement was all too common. Much less common, Mansfield illicitly entered the war zone to pursue a romantic affair. In France, she experienced air raids and bombardment by long-range cannon of a civilian population. Mansfield's varied war experiences are reflected in her varied writings. In letters, diaries, poems, and short stories with wide-ranging tones, she honed her literary techniques as she conveyed "thoughts & feelings" that were shaped by the war. Moreover, given Mansfield's embrace of fictional obliqueness (novels need not include "G. forbid mobilisation and the violation of Belgium"[5]), Mansfield's Great War oeuvre includes not merely texts that are explicitly about the war but also texts that seemingly lack any connection to the war yet subtly and profoundly register its seismic impact.

Examining the "expressions" and "moulds" of Mansfield's diverse writings, this chapter showcases the manifold ways Mansfield "t[ook …] into account" the Great War.

"Is there really such a thing as war?" asks the unnamed narrator of "An Indiscreet Journey" (1915) as she travels by train toward the *Zone des Armées*, the military zone (but not the front line), which women were generally forbidden to enter.[6] Her question expands: "Are all these laughing voices really going to the war? These dark woods lighted so mysteriously by the white stems of the birch and the ash—these watery fields with the big birds flying over—these rivers green and blue in the light—have battles been fought in places like these?"[7] In the lushness, where varieties and even contraries harmonize—dark and light, woods and fields, abundant waters, dynamic aerial life—war's destruction is almost inconceivable even though alliteration inextricably links its "battles" to the landscape of "birch," "big birds," and "blue." Evidence of battles is present although difficult for the narrator to grasp. "Big wooden sheds" look like places of social entertainment, "rigged-up dancing halls or seaside pavilions," but, as evinced by the Red Cross men and wounded, these are, in fact, medical facilities.[8] Cemeteries appear to be beautifully full of flowers until the narrator must recalibrate her vision, reinterpreting sights within the new circumstance of war: "What beautiful cemeteries we are passing! They flash gay in the sun. They seem to be full of cornflowers and poppies and daisies. How can there be so many flowers at this time of the year? But they are not flowers at all. They are bunches of ribbons tied on to the soldiers' graves."[9] Despite these adjustments in perception, the narrator's prevailing mood, excitement about her illicit tryst with her lover, is unchanged at this point. As she leans against the train's window rail, "[o]ne cheek burned as in infancy on the way to the seaside," linking her to her prewar interpretations of seaside pavilions and gay cemetery sunlight.[10]

War's perplexing reality—"Is there *really* such a thing as war? Are all these laughing voices *really* going to the war?" (emphasis added)—is explored in "An Indiscreet Journey" and Mansfield's other wartime writings. Set in various war zones (a term that I use to denote all places impacted by war), these texts capture the reality—often incongruous, elusive, and Protean—of the Great War, especially as experienced by noncombatants.

War's human toll, viewed from a distance early in "An Indiscreet Journey," comes into closer focus later in this story when an injured soldier enters the café where the narrator waits for her lover. In her diary, where Mansfield explores the event that inspired this story (her journey to Gray, France, to pursue a romantic affair with Francis Carco, the French writer who was serving in the army), she

mentions only briefly "the soldier with the strange eyes,"[11] but in her short story, she describes at length the character that is presumably based on that soldier:

> He shrugged and walked unsteadily to a table, sat down and leant against the wall. Slowly his hand fell. In his white face his eyes showed, pink as a rabbit's. They brimmed and spilled, brimmed and spilled. He dragged a white cloth out of his pocket and wiped them.[12]

The description continues, demanding the reader witness war's damage and underscoring the witnessing that occurs within the scene:

> His comrades watched him a bit, watched his eyes fill again, again brim over. The water ran down his face, off his chin on to the table. He rubbed the place with his coat-sleeve, and then, as though forgetful, went on rubbing, rubbing with his hand across the table, staring in front of him.
>
> And then he started shaking his head to the movement of his hand. He gave a loud strange groan and dragged out the cloth again.[13]

Certainly one reality of the Great War was its human damage, abundantly manifest in this soldier. His watery eyes, as Helen Rydstrand notes, evoke "both physical and emotional trauma."[14] Ceaselessly "brim[ming] and spill[ing], brim[ming] and spill[ing]," they attest to unmitigable damage. Another reality was the human capacity to ignore war's human damage. Although the comrades "[watch]" the soldier "a bit," they soon direct their attention elsewhere. "Watch," the verb that is used twice in the above quotation, recurs a third time to punctuate the shift in their focus to an erotic sight.[15] Hand imagery underscores the neglect of the injured soldier: whereas the soldier's hand falls away from his eyes, revealing his injury,[16] the café proprietress's "pretty hands" flirtatiously attend to the lace at her bosom, drawing the other soldiers' attention to her,[17] and the narrator's hand is clasped affectionately by her lover.[18] Not only is the injured soldier ignored, but he ignores others, disregarding their initial affable greetings.[19] The nonassimilation of the soldier is notable given the immersive description. The soldier's suffering is evoked in a rhythmically repetitive prose that parallels the soldier's rhythmically manifest damage.[20] Thus, narrator and reader alike enter the rhythm of war's damages. Despite that immersion, characters and ultimately the story itself turn their attention elsewhere.

Aloof and neglected, the injured soldier is, nonetheless, linked to the people around him, as conveyed by delicately repeated language and rhyme. Before his entrance, the café "slowly filled" with customers.[21] This description is echoed when the soldier's hand moves "slowly" and his eyes "spilled […] spilled" and again "fill."[22] Thus, the café is filled both with war's damages and with people

who shun those damages. The soldier is linked to the previous "spilling" of wine from a broken bottle (which evokes the cataclysm of war)[23] and to a soldier with remarkable, but undamaged, eyes, "the blue-eyed soldier," who soon enters the story.[24] The blue-eyed soldier's quest for pleasure without suffering, through the liqueur that does not produce a hangover but instead "leaves you feeling gay as a rabbit next morning,"[25] recalls, contrastingly, the suffering of the injured soldier, whose eyes are "pink as a rabbit's"[26] (while also harkening back to the "gay" street where the narrator stays with her lover and even farther back to the "gay" cemeteries that she initially notices[27]). Thus, the injured soldier makes war's damages explicit, and (in the story's shift from him to the blue-eyed soldier) reveals war's Protean effects. Moreover, the injured soldier's "white face" and "white cloth" are connected to the romantic space of the narrator and her lover, the "white" room in the "quite white" house on "a strange white street," and to the harmonious natural space in which war's presence is difficult to grasp, the dark woods that are illumined by the "white stems of the birch and the ash."[28] Through such expansive repetitions of language and variations of image, incongruous connections are elastically made, and "An Indiscreet Journey" depicts the *Zone des Armées* as an unstable space of war's pervasive and Protean effects, a place where damage occurs profusely but is difficult to face and fathom.

While "An Indiscreet Journey" lyrically probes the difficulty of grasping the war, "Stay-Laces" (1915) and "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please" (1917), set on the home front of London, are satires which unequivocally mock civilians' self-centered obtuseness about the war. In their protagonists' dialogue, we glimpse war's impacts—such as conscription, wounding, and death of soldiers;[29] erosion of class privilege (stockbrokers' "thing-ma-bobs have fallen so dreadfully since the war started,"[30] and the well-to-do use public transportation because their cars are "on war work"[31]); expanded employment opportunities for women;[32] and freer conventions for public discourse[33]—but the protagonists convey little concern for others' suffering. The Lady of "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please" aids wounded soldiers, but only condescendingly and superficially: "I trot out the wounded every Tuesday," she says and then clarifies that this task is delegated to a servant.[34] Even more outlandishly, Mrs. Busk of "Stay-Laces" enthuses, "I *love* the wounded, don't you? Oh, I simply love them. And their sweet blue and red uniforms are so cheerful and awfully effective, aren't they? I can't *think* who thought of that bright red tie against that bright blue. It's such a note, isn't it?"[35] The form of these texts, a dialogue for one voice (with each protagonist's comments given in full and the responses of her interlocutor represented by ellipses that are sometimes followed by question marks or exclamation points),

directs full attention to the protagonist and allows readers to recognize her flawed perspective without narratorial commentary. "Late at Night" (1917), a monologue set on the home front, is perhaps less acerbic, yet it too features a self-absorbed character. Virginia is offended when a soldier informs her that he has given to a comrade the socks that she sent him. The physical comfort of Virginia's room, in which "her boots are faintly steaming in the fender"[36] as Virginia bemoans her dislike of getting her feet wet,[37] implicitly and ironically contrasts with the conditions of the front line. More irony is present when Virginia is unable to burn the soldier's letter because "the fire's gone out," an echo of the popular patriotic song "Keep the Home Fires Burning."[38]

Not evident in these home front texts, but explored powerfully in Mansfield's letters, is a defining characteristic of the Great War home front: direct military attack. In March 1915, while she was in Paris, Mansfield witnessed some of the earliest military uses of Zeppelins against a civilian population. Later in the year, she and John Middleton Murry watched a Zeppelin over London.[39] In March and April 1918, Mansfield was again in Paris as the city was subjected to both bombing by airplanes and shelling by long-range cannon.

Mansfield's epistolary writings about Zeppelins vividly capture diverse impressions.[40] The raids are "extremely terrifying," even to the point of physical illness.[41] They are abhorrent: "It seems so cruel and senseless—and then, to glide over the sky like that and hurl a bomb—n'importe où—is diabolic—and doesn't bear thinking about."[42] On the other hand, they are wondrously surreal. Comparing the aircraft to "the Ultimate Fish" (an image in a Byron poem), Mansfield merges the aerial and the aquatic as she describes its "flying high with fins of silky grey."[43] Its sound is "almost soothing."[44] The Zeppelin's allure is explicit: "I longed to go out & follow it."[45] A scene of shared sublimity unfolds with "the people leaning out," "the rush of heads & bodies turning upwards," and even, fantastically, the "house stretching up."[46] People seem on the verge of a fantastical transformation: "I thought that everyone, quite suddenly, was going to fly."[47] After the danger is over, the physical relief is "boundless," comparable to what follows a geological catastrophe, "the aftermath of an earthquake."[48]

By March 1918, when Mansfield was again in Paris while it was under attack, her circumstances had changed greatly. Friends (such as Rupert Brooke and Frederick Goodyear) had died in the war, and, most devastatingly, so had her brother (to be discussed in detail later). Her physical health was impaired due to the tuberculosis that would eventually claim her life. She was fatigued, from both her worsening health and the stress of arranging travel through wartime

France. In light of these circumstances, it is not surprising that her experience of the bombing and shelling of Paris is far different from the earlier sublimity of Zeppelin raids. Writing about the cellars where people sat out the air raids and bombardments, she notes physical discomfort, "[t]he cold and agony of those stone dusty steps,"[49] and disgust with humanity, bluntly writing, "[T]he place was packed with hideous humanity. *So* hideous indeed that one felt a bomb on them wouldn't perhaps be as cruel after all."[50] Mansfield describes the destruction of a house, emphasizing surreal incongruities: The trees "had just come into their new green. A great many branches were broken but on the others strange bits of clothes and paper hung. A nightdress—a chemise—a tie—they looked extraordinarily pitiful dangling in the sunny light."[51] Whereas Mansfield previously evoked a wondrous collective response to Zeppelins, here she notes a disturbing collective humor, which hinges on more incongruity: a workman, clearing up the debris, retrieves "a woman's silk petticoat" and "put[s] it on & dance[s] a step or two for the laughing crowd."[52] Mansfield is appalled: "That filled me with such horror that Ill never never get out of my mind the fling of his feet & his grin and the broken trees and the broken house."[53]

Air raids and bombardments are not explicitly included in Mansfield's fiction, but a Zeppelin does make a brief appearance in "Spring Pictures" (1915). Amongst the array of items sold in a Parisian street are "toy cannons and soldiers and Zeppelins."[54] Cannons and soldiers are, of course, traditional martial toys. The subsequent reference to Zeppelins updates the toy assortment to reflect the recent addition to the Great War arsenal, yet these nonchalantly mentioned Zeppelins do not provoke the awe conveyed in Mansfield's letters. Aerial bombardment is shifted to the natural realm: "It is raining. Big soft drops splash on the people's hands and cheeks; immense warm drops like melted stars."[55] These drops are neither explosive nor incendiary, unlike ordnance; they are, instead, "soft" and "warm." Aerial wonder is present—raindrops of a sublime size ("immense") that afford human contact with the heavenly ("melted stars")—but does not depend on military menace.

One war zone from which Mansfield was excluded was the trenches, yet in powerful epistolary passages she imagines herself and other noncombatants in this frontline space. Mansfield "do[esn't] believe it [the war] ever will end until we are all killed as surely as if we were in the trenches."[56] Even more emphatically she writes, "I see us *all* in the trenches for ever and the Germans victorious."[57] In contrast to these bleak references to trenches, Mansfield jocularly adopts the discourse of trench warfare. Describing her attempt to return to England from France, she heads one of her letters "*Bulletin du Front*" and then narrates, "I

advanced to the consul and gained a local success, taking the trench as far as Paris. I expect to advance again under cover of *gas* on Saturday. The enemy is in great strength but the morale of the Wig [Mansfield's nickname] is excellent."[58] She adds, "Now I must go back to the trenches & go over the top to the station."[59] In playfully employing frontline discourse, Mansfield uses humor to cope with the stress of her travel difficulties. The frontline discourse is apt, for Mansfield's travel is, of course, inevitably impacted by military offensives and troop movements.

Jocular and despairing, entranced and appalled, Mansfield's writings richly probe a war zone that blurs home front and battlefront. Another aspect of the war experience that Mansfield probes is bereavement. The Lady of "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please" is callous about the plight of the bereaved. She breezily mentions "the most heart-rending letters" parents send to the War Office and then elaborates on the office workers' attention to their own bodily pleasures, "mak[ing] their own tea, and get[ting] cakes in turn from Stewart's."[60] In the Lady's comment, Mansfield points to troubling aspects of civilians' bereavement. The British government decided that the bodies of killed soldiers would not be repatriated, denying families the traditional solace of viewing and burying a loved one's body. Notification of death was sometimes delayed, and sometimes contradictory information arrived piecemeal.[61] As hinted in the Lady's vagueness about whether her friend's job entails "notifying the deaths, or finding the missing," fundamental distinctions were unsettled by the Great War.[62] Shells exploded with a force so tremendous that soldiers were sometimes obliterated; with no corpse remaining, these war dead were classified as "missing." While the categories "dead" and "missing" in other contexts might be distinct, in the Great War, as Allyson Booth notes, "missing" could be "a way of dying."[63]

Mansfield knew the anguish of bereavement. Her brother, Leslie Beauchamp, died early in the war in October 1915 after only three days at the front; he was twenty-one years old. As a junior officer, he was leading a training exercise on grenades when a grenade accidentally detonated, killing him and his sergeant. Although he was not utterly "blown to bits,"[64] his severe injuries led to his death within forty-five minutes. He was buried near the site of his death. Mansfield learned of his death from a telegram, and additional details were provided in letters from one of Leslie's friends, who also sent her a piece of moss from Leslie's burial site.[65] Mansfield grappled with the loss of her brother in multiple kinds of writing. In her diary, she writes poignantly about—and often directly to—him. Repeatedly she affirms a closeness that transcends the boundary between life and death and surpasses her connection to the living: "Dearest heart, I know you

are there and I live with you […] Other people are near, but they are not close to me—to you only do I belong just as you belong to me."[66] At times, the closeness aligns Mansfield with death: "[T]hough he is lying in the middle of a little wood in France and I am still walking upright, and feeling the sun and the wind from the sea, I am just as much dead as he is."[67] More often a resurrected Leslie vibrantly joins Mansfield: "You are more vividly with me now this moment than if you were alive & I were writing to you from a short distance away."[68] Sometimes the union of Mansfield and her brother is absolute, as on one morning when she is him: "I felt my face was his serious, sleepy face. I felt that the lines of my mouth were changed & I blinked like he did on waking."[69] In an elegiac poem, entitled with Leslie's initials, "To L.H.B.," Mansfield captures the allure and threat of communion.[70] The speaker warns her brother of poisonous berries, but he fills his hands with them and offers them to her. Emphatically Christ-like, he says, "These are my body. Sister, take and eat."[71] With an erratic rhyme scheme that includes jumbled partial elements of Italian and English sonnets and with a slightly excessive number of poetic lines (fifteen), the quasi-sonnet is fractured and swollen, suggesting a disorienting connection to a broken past.

Mansfield found solace in her belief that she and Leslie shared a commitment to her writing. She affirms her desire to write—in particular, about the New Zealand of her childhood—as a union with her dead brother: "[I]n my thoughts I range with him over all the remembered places."[72] Thus, the past is recoverable, and comfort is found in resurrecting it. Soon after a night when Mansfield experienced a disturbing vision of Leslie "dotted all over the field" below her window (essentially a battlefield vision in which Leslie is "now on his face, now huddled up, now half pressed into the earth"),[73] she returned to her New Zealand story "The Aloe" (which ultimately would be published as "Prelude" [1918]): "I know that it is what you would wish me to write," Mansfield tells Leslie.[74] In the year following Leslie's death, she also wrote poems that recreate childhood experiences with "Little Brother."[75] In subsequent years, more New Zealand stories followed, including "At the Bay" (1921) and "The Doll's House" (1921).

Another, "The Garden Party" (1921), is worth special note. Without overtly referring to the war, this story grapples with war-produced bereavement, not merely personal loss but also the loss of social certainties. In the "wonderful, beautiful," and "peaceful" corpse of a carter who dies in a confrontation with mechanized modernity (his horse shies at a traction engine), Mansfield creates a solacing image of male death after a modern war of mass, mechanized killings.[76] The image revises her brother's wartime fate, using language that echoes

Mansfield's diary. "There lay a young man, fast asleep," begins the description of the dead carter.[77] In the diary, "there he [Leslie] lay" in the field, and in her bed, he "l[ies] fast asleep."[78] In the diary, Mansfield urges, "Awake awake! my little boy."[79] In contrast, the narrator of "The Garden Party" commands, "Never wake him up again," and the dead man (as viewed by a young middle-class woman) concurs: "'Happy … happy …. All is well,' said that sleeping face."[80] The significance of this figure of peaceful male death goes beyond Leslie's individual circumstance. In displacing death onto a working-class man while keeping Laurie—the middle-class, Leslie-like character—alive, Mansfield wrestles with the middle-class trauma of a war that overturned traditional understandings of social class by distributing the bodily burdens of society beyond the working class, demanding that men of all classes face the threat of industrialized death and women of all classes mourn such deaths. The story both celebrates social egalitarianism (figured in the protagonist, who inchoately resists her family's elitism) and worries over lost social privilege.[81]

In bereavement, wars persist long after armistices and peace treaties. Mansfield explicitly and trenchantly explores post-war mourning and memorializing in "The Fly" (1922), which focuses on "the boss," a businessman whose son died in the Great War over six years ago (just as Leslie had died roughly six years prior to the story's composition). Consolation for the fathers of the war dead is available, as evident in "old Woodifield," the friend who visits the boss. This frail stroke survivor, who is compared to an infant,[82] finds comfort in his son's grave even though he himself has not visited it.[83] He becomes energized, "heaving himself out of" the pram-like chair when he tells the boss about his daughters' visit to the cemetery where both men's sons are buried.[84] In his description of the cemetery, it is clear how this important form of memorialization can meet emotional needs of survivors: "There's miles of it […] and it's all as neat as a garden. Flowers growing on all the graves. Nice broad paths."[85] The cemetery's vastness, measured in miles, accommodates unprecedented numbers of war dead. The cemetery's "neat[ness]" restores order after the war's tumult. "Flowers growing on all the graves" is an egalitarian honoring of each soldier (reflective both of a distinctive feature of Great War interment, which departed from the custom of burying ordinary soldiers in mass graves while burying officers in individual graves, and of the involvement of the famous landscape gardener Gertrude Jekyll in the design of British Great War cemeteries).[86] With "[n]ice broad paths," the cemetery is clearly designed for substantial numbers of visitors. Woodifield especially "like[s] a nice broad path";[87] thus, although he has not visited the cemetery, he appreciates memorialization as an act to be conducted

in public, communal spaces. His excited sharing of this information about the cemetery with the boss is arguably his way of engaging in a shared experience of loss.

The public, communal memorialization that appeals to Woodifield is antithetical to the boss, for whom mourning is intensely private and solitary.[88] The boss has never visited the Belgium cemetery. He hides his distress when Woodifield mentions it and plans to cry in private after Woodfield leaves.[89] The boss—truly a boss—expects to control mourning, as evinced in his methodical approach to crying: "He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep …."[90] When Woodifield mentions the grave of the boss's son, he impinges on the boss's control and privacy; the boss feels as though the comment has been "spr[u]ng" on him, and the "terrible shock" is "as though the earth had opened"—a cataclysmic event—and "he had seen the boy lying there with Woodifield's girls staring down at him"—a macabre violation of privacy.[91] At the very moment Woodifield describes the cemetery as a peaceful restoration of order, the boss experiences the opposite.

The boss does engage with two forms of conventional memorialization: photography and a common conceit of death. In his office is a photograph of "a grave-looking boy in uniform," his son.[92] "Grave" suggests both the somberness of the boy's service in the military and the ultimate end of that service. "Grave-looking" also points ironically to what the boss is unwilling to do: look at his son's grave.[93] Instead, the boss, engaging in a conventional trope, imagines his son "lying unchanged, unblemished in his uniform, asleep for ever."[94] When the boss looks at the photograph in an attempt to provoke weeping, the photograph fails to accomplish the aim. The boss, in fact, thinks the photograph, featuring an "unnatural," "cold, even stern-looking" "expression," is not an accurate likeness of his son.[95] For the reader, though, the photograph attests to the transformation of the idealistic young soldiers in the "unnatural" circumstances of the war, which demanded of them "cold[ness]" and "stern[ness]." Although the boss imagines his son "unchanged, unblemished" in death, the photograph suggests the young man was changed by war even before he died.[96]

Ultimately, both forms of memorialization fail the boss because he does not expect or want his grief to diminish. The boss's crisis begins when he discovers he can no longer weep on command, when he is on the verge of recognizing that his grief is abating, in contrast to his expectation of his grief's perpetuity (because he believes his loss is uniquely keen). At this point, the boss becomes distracted by a fly that has fallen into an inkpot. In the incident that follows, the boss obliterates

the memory of his recent pain while also dramatizing the fatal consequences of deeply ingrained cultural values that sustain wars. The inkpot is described as "broad," the very adjective that earlier Woodifield used to describe the cemetery paths, encouraging us to compare Woodifield's public, communal memorializing with the boss's torturous exercise.[97] At first the boss helps the fly, pulling it out of the inkpot, but after the fly has arduously cleaned itself, the boss deliberately blasts it with a drop of ink to see what it will do. As more rounds of recovery and bombardment follow, the boss admires the fly's resilience: "That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die."[98] The parallels between this drama and the Great War are readily apparent.[99] Like the fly, the boss's son and all the Great War soldiers were expected to persevere in the relentless travails of the Great War. Ink drops recall, in particular, the aerial bombing and long-range shelling that were central to the war. A father's foisting this tribulation on an anthropomorphized fly accords with the generational dynamic of the war, a generation of male national leaders sending a generation of young men to war. The incident showcases the values—courage and endurance—that were instilled in young men and led those young men to serve their country in a horrific war.[100] At the same time, the fly is the boss, persevering after his son's death leaves him "a broken man, with his life in ruins."[101] Aerial imagery evokes the father's loss—"the whole place crashing about his head"—suggesting a connection to the fly, whose torment comes aerially.[102]

This incident that compacts the torments of war and of grief produces no redemption. The fly dies, and the boss promptly "fl[i]ng[s]" the "corpse" into the waste-paper basket.[103] Following this unceremonious burial, the boss feels "grinding […] wretchedness" and fear.[104] However, he deflects this feeling, continuing to eliminate the traces of the incident by replacing the ink-drenched blotting sheet. He is unwilling or unable to acknowledge his and his generation's culpability, which the incident has dramatized so vividly. Indeed, the boss cannot even remember "what it was he had been thinking about before."[105] The precise phrasing of the story's final sentence—"For the life of him he could not remember"—suggests that his self-preservation demands such amnesia.[106] However, such self-preservation leaves the culture unchanged, its values that sustain wars (and thereby produce heart-rending losses) unchallenged and intact.[107] Cultural stasis is suggested by the boss's speaking to his office messenger with the same phrasing that he used when futilely trying to rouse the dead fly—"Look sharp!"—and speaking "sternly,"[108] just as his militarized son looked "stern" in his portrait.[109]

What the boss ultimately does—forget—is exactly what Mansfield believed no one, especially no writer, must do. "[N]othing c[ould] ever be the same" after the war, she believed, and artists were "traitors if [they] fe[lt] otherwise."[110] In two letters written just before and after the first anniversary of the Armistice, Mansfield articulates a post-war literary credo. She asserts, "[N]ew expressions new moulds" are needed, but "one can lay down no rules" because "[i]ts not in the least a question of material or style or plot."[111] She elaborates:

> [W]e have died and live again. How can that be the same life? It doesn't mean that Life is the less precious of [*sic*] that the "common things of light and day" are gone. They are not gone, they are intensified, they are illumined. Now we know ourselves for what we are. In a way its a tragic knowledge. Its as though, even while we live again we face death. But *through Life*: thats the point. We see death in life as we see death in a flower that is fresh unfolded. Our hymn is to the flower's beauty—we would make that beauty immortal because we *know*.[112]

After a war that blurred multiple distinctions, this floral image aptly interfuses supreme contraries, life and death. The importance of confronting the war was magnified for Mansfield because she saw parallels with her struggling health: "We have to face our war [… O]ur whole strength depends upon our facing things. […] I fail because I don't face things. I feel almost I have been ill so long for that reason."[113]

Mansfield faced her war. In doing so, she developed writerly nimbleness, exploring the war in various kinds of writing with various tones and honing literary techniques that she used widely throughout her oeuvre (such as repetition of language and image, through which significance richly accretes; prosaic rhythm that accentuates meaning; and dialogue that reveals, sometimes excoriatingly, character—techniques that eschew direct explanation and instead pull readers into an experience that they must muse on). The war may not have spawned these techniques (Mansfield was experimenting even before the war), but it was a substantial factor in their cultivation. This point becomes clear when we bear in mind that what we typically consider Mansfield's mature works were produced during the Great War and the first few years of its aftermath.[114] To read Mansfield's war oeuvre, as well as the entirety of her mature oeuvre through the lens of her war-forged literary credo, is to recognize how profound and wide-ranging an individual's experience of the Great War could be and also to realize how potently language can be harnessed to answer probingly and capaciously, "Is there really such a thing as war?"

Notes

1 *Letters* 3, 82.
2 Ibid.
3 Santanu Das, *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.
4 J. M. Winter, *The Experience of World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7.
5 *Letters* 3, 82.
6 Katherine Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," in CW1, 440. "An Indiscreet Journey" is featured in classic studies of women's Great War literature, such as Claire Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914–64* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990), 85–91 and Angela K. Smith, *The Second Battlefield: Women, Modernism, and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 164–70. Recent scholarship continues to probe the story's representation of war; see Josiane Paccaud-Huguet, "'By What Name Are We to Call Death?': The Case of 'An Indiscreet Journey,'" in *Katherine Mansfield and World War One*, ed. Gerri Kimber, Todd Martin, Delia Da Sousa Correa, Isobel Maddison, and Alice Kelly (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 13–25 and Helen Rydstrand, "Ordinary Discordance: Katherine Mansfield and the First World War," in *Katherine Mansfield and World War One*, 55–68. Extending previous scholarship, I delineate more emphatically the story's intricate repetition of language and images.
7 Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," 440.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 441.
10 Ibid.
11 CW4, 161.
12 Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," 447. Vincent O'Sullivan suggests this is an early representation of the effects of chlorine gas, first used in combat by the Germans in April 1915; see *Katherine Mansfield's Selected Stories* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 71n1. Although Mansfield possibly witnessed soldiers recovering from that attack while she was staying in Paris and incorporated details into the story, she mentions "the soldier with the strange eyes" in a diary passage that seems to have been written in February or March 2015, prior to the first gas attack (CW4, 161). Whether based on a gas attack victim or not, the description resonates with the horrifically new kind of injuries sustained in the Great War.
13 Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," 447.
14 Rydstrand, "Ordinary Discordance," 64.
15 Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," 448.

16 Ibid., 447.
17 Ibid., 448.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 447.
20 Rydstrand explores the significance of rhythm in "An Indiscreet Journey" as well as "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please," highlighting the way it "enact[s] the simultaneous continuance of the ordinary and its violent disruption during the war" ("Ordinary Discordance," 66).
21 Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," 447.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.; Paccaud-Huguet, "'By What Name Are We to Call Death?'" 18.
24 Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," 448–51.
25 Ibid., 448.
26 Ibid., 447. Tylee notes the rabbit imagery (*The Great War and Women's Consciousness*, 90–1).
27 Mansfield, "An Indiscreet Journey," 445, 441.
28 Ibid., 447, 445, 440.
29 Katherine Mansfield, "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please," in CW2, 22, and Katherine Mansfield, "Stay-Laces," in CW1, 460.
30 Mansfield, "Stay-Laces," 460.
31 Mansfield, "Two Tuppenny Ones," 22.
32 Ibid., 24.
33 Mansfield, "Stay-Laces," 460.
34 Mansfield, "Two Tuppenny Ones," 24.
35 Mansfield, "Stay-Laces," 460.
36 Katherine Mansfield, "Late at Night," in CW2, 24.
37 Ibid., 24, 26.
38 Ibid., 26.
39 J. Lawrence Mitchell, "Katherine Mansfield's War," in *Katherine Mansfield and World War One*, 33.
40 For discussion of Mansfield's epistolary writings about the Great War, including Zeppelin raids, see Alice Kelly, "Mansfield Mobilised: Katherine Mansfield, the Great War and Military Discourse," *Modernist Cultures* 12, no. 1 (2017): 78–97.
41 *Letters* 1, 164.
42 Ibid.
43 *Letters* 1, 159.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 *Letters* 1, 161.

48 *Letters* 1, 159.
49 *Letters* 2, 150.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Katherine Mansfield, "Spring Pictures," in CW1, 435.
55 Ibid.
56 *Letters* 2, 64.
57 *Letters* 2, 46.
58 *Letters* 2, 130.
59 Ibid., 131.
60 Mansfield, "Two Tuppenny Ones," 23.
61 J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 29–42; Antoine Prost, "The Dead," in *Civil Society*, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 567–8.
62 Mansfield, "Two Tuppenny Ones," 23.
63 Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space between Modernism and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 30.
64 Beatrice Lady Glenavy in her memoir, *Today We Will Only Gossip* (London: Constable, 1964), reports that Mansfield, when asked about her brother a few days after his death, said, "Blown to bits!" (82–3).
65 For discussion of Leslie's death and Mansfield's response, see J. Lawrence Mitchell, "Katie and Chummie: Death in the Family," in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*, ed. Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 28–41 and Mitchell, "Katherine Mansfield's War," 35–40. For broader discussion of women's Great War writings about dead brothers, see Kate Kennedy, "'A Tribute to My Brother': Women's Literature and Its Post-War Ghosts," *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 8, no. 1 (2015): 7–23. Historians have discussed Mansfield's experience: see Joy Damousi, "Mourning Practices," in *Civil Society*, 362–4 and Sandy Callister, "Picturing Loss: Family, Photographs and the Great War," *The Round Table* 96, no. 393 (2007): 674–6.
66 CW4, 171.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 203–4.
69 Ibid., 203.
70 An alternate version of the poem is "'Last night for the first time since you were dead,'" in CW3, 96–7.
71 Katherine Mansfield, "To L.H.B," in CW3, 96, line 15.

72 CW4, 191.
73 Ibid., 203.
74 Ibid., 205.
75 See “The Grandmother,” “Butterflies,” “Little Brother’s Secret,” “The Man with the Wooden Leg,” “Little Brother’s Story,” and “When I Was a Bird,” in CW3, 104–9.
76 Katherine Mansfield, “The Garden Party,” in CW2, 413.
77 Ibid.
78 CW4, 203.
79 Ibid., 171.
80 Mansfield, “The Garden Party,” 413.
81 I develop these claims in detail in “‘Blown to Bits!’: Katherine Mansfield’s ‘The Garden-Party’ and the Great War,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 44, no. 3 (1998): 513–39.
82 Katherine Mansfield, “The Fly,” in CW2, 476.
83 In contrast, in a despairing letter written in July 1919 as Britain prepared to celebrate the peace treaty, Mansfield refers to “the wretched little picture” of Leslie’s grave as she laments “all that beautiful youth feeding the fields of France” (*Letters* 2, 339).
84 Mansfield, “The Fly,” 477.
85 Ibid.
86 Prost, “The Dead,” 570, 572.
87 Mansfield, “The Fly,” 477.
88 Avishek Parui highlights the private (indeed, “masturbatory”) mourning ritual of the boss in a discussion of a post-war masculinity crisis; see “‘For the Life of Him He Could Not Remember’: Post-War Memory, Mourning and Masculinity Crisis in Katherine Mansfield’s ‘The Fly,’” in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 114, 120.
89 Mansfield, “The Fly,” 477, 478.
90 Ibid., 478.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 476.
93 Angela Smith notes “a terrible pun on ‘grave’”; see “Katherine Mansfield at the Front,” *First World War Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): 70.
94 Mansfield, “The Fly,” 478.
95 Ibid., 479.
96 Paulette Michel-Michot makes a similar point; see “Katherine Mansfield’s ‘The Fly’: An Attempt to Capture the Boss,” *Studies in Short Fiction* 11 (1974): 88.
97 Mansfield, “The Fly,” 479.
98 Ibid.
99 Smith draws similar parallels (“Katherine Mansfield at the Front,” 70–1).

100 Sara Krolewski makes a similar point; see "The Boss's Office: Space, Power, and Trauma in Katherine Mansfield's 'The Fly,'" *Tinakori: Critical Journal of the Katherine Mansfield Society* 3 (2019): 21, fn7.
101 Mansfield, "The Fly," 479. Parui makes a similar point ("'For the Life of Him,'" 122).
102 Mansfield, "The Fly," 479.
103 Ibid., 480.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid. Others have commented similarly on this sentence. See John T. Hagopian, "Capturing Mansfield's 'Fly,'" *Modern Fiction Studies* 9, no. 4 (1963–4): 388 and Todd Martin, "'What Was It?': The *avant-texte* and the 'Grinding Feeling of Wretchedness' in Katherine Mansfield's 'The Fly,'" *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 59, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 29.
107 Parui also claims the story castigates the boss's self-preservation ("'For the Life of Him,'" 119).
108 Mansfield, "The Fly," 480.
109 Ibid., 479.
110 *Letters* 3, 82.
111 *Letters* 3, 82, 97.
112 *Letters* 3, 97.
113 *Letters* 3, 82. Elsewhere Mansfield uses military language to discuss her illness, as when she refers to her lungs as "the old battlefield" (*Letters* 2, 184). Kelly explores military discourse in Mansfield's writings about illness ("Mansfield Mobilised," 90–3).
114 This chronological coinciding is noted in Con Coroneos, "Flies and Violets in Katherine Mansfield," in *Women's Fiction and the Great War*, ed. Suzanne Raitt and Trudi Tate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 198.

21

Katherine Mansfield and the East

Tracy Miao

Images of China and the East populated Katherine Mansfield's writings, decorated her living space, and adorned her person; such Oriental references appear too often to be dismissed as inadvertent associations. That China and Japan were particular favorites of Mansfield was not an anomaly, for she lived and wrote in a cultural *milieu* that mystified the Oriental in literature, painting, dance, fashion, and the material culture at large. Imaginings of the exotic East corresponded with the modernist vision of remaking a literary and artistic legacy that departed from classical European heritage and created reverberations in the arts that also found their way into Mansfield's life and works.

Using the term "Oriental" seems to imply a moral risk and a slant toward imperialist bias in contemporary critical discourse. Ever since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism,* scholars have avoided this term out of an apprehensive critical sensitivity. Therefore, Anne Witchard believes that the lack of discussion on the "longstanding interplay involving East and West, chinoiserie, and its role in modernist ways of looking or seeing" is due to "a fear of 'Saidian orientalism'" that resulted in "a critical avoidance of modernist engagement with the Far East."[1] Zhaoming Qian, too, argues persuasively that Said's "Orient is specifically the Muslim Orient," and "[his] model of Orientalism," while helpful in the study of many cultural and political subjects, lacks a literary dimension where the Far East's influence on high Modernism can be readily associated and discussed.[2] Qian maintains that a number of modernists, including Yeats, Pound, and Eliot, saw greater poetic possibilities in China and Japan rather than seeing the "Otherness in the Other."[3] Qian's recalibration of Orientalism focusing on the Far East is a more suitable lens through which to examine literary modernism. My use of the Oriental or East is along the line of Qian's analysis where he sees China and Japan "not as foils to the West, but as crystallizing examples of the Modernists' realizing Self."[4] In addition to Qian's circumference of Modernism's

relation to the East, I am also using the Oriental as imagined landscapes and tropes that would have made sense to most modernist writers and artists at the time when their own creative endeavors were explicitly or implicitly saturated with motifs they associated with the East, regardless of historical accuracy or contemporary moral judgment. It was in this sense that Mansfield used "China" and "Japan" in her life and works. Also the Oriental in this sense is more closely akin to Anne Witchard's updated definition of chinoiserie as a key to unlock the modernist cultural engagements with an idealized East.

Numerous references to the East in modern literature have a larger contextual link with modernism as a trans-national and trans-art movement. In 1910, the year that "human character changed" according to Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry called for a shift of aesthetic focus in modernism: "We can no longer hide behind the Elgin marbles and refuse to look at the art of China, India, Java, and Ceylon. We have no longer any system of aesthetics that can rule out, a priori, even the most fantastic and unreal artist forms."[5] Fry acknowledged the existing aesthetic framework's inadequacy to examine Oriental art, and by extension modern art, but he also implied the strangeness and fascinating appeal of Eastern art. Virginia Woolf, like Mansfield, embraced this fantastical allure of the Oriental. After reading Pu Song-Ling's (1640–1715) Chinese ghost tales, Woolf commented: "It's like walking over the bridge on a willow pattern plate."[6] China, among other Oriental influences, became modernism's Wonderland that opened its portals via art, poetry, fashion, and *objets d'art*. Woolf further affirmed modernism's need to view things afresh by bestowing "Chinese eyes" on Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*. Yet, while contact with China or imaginings of the East mostly stemmed from second-hand sources, the Oriental, whether as an abstract ideal or a collection of concrete yet apparently indecipherable images, was already the replenishing force that European art and literature needed to remake themselves. Witchard claims: "[b]y the time modernism erupted in the early years of the twentieth century, European artists already owed a profound debt to other civilisations."[7] China was one of these civilizations that propelled Modernism's movement toward new visions and expressions.

Mansfield's own fascination with the East began to take shape in her formative years. In 1906, after finishing her education at Queen's College in London, Mansfield returned to New Zealand but grew anxious to go back to England. Her father, Harold Beauchamp, in an attempt to distract her, sent her on a tour to the backwaters of New Zealand. Her journals and sketches written at this time were later published as *The Urewera Notebook*. They also became source materials for stories such as "The Woman at the Store" (1912) and "At

the Bay" (1921). At the end of her tour, Mansfield recorded in her journal that she "read a little book called *The Book of Tea*—it is wholly adorable—".[8] This book by Kakuzo Okakura remained one of Mansfield's favorites for the rest of her life.[9] Gerri Kimber points out an often-neglected detail in Mansfield's unfinished early novel *Juliet*, indicating that her early infatuation with the Orient was a prescient and conscious choice. In *Juliet*, the title character is a young writer in the making, and after she arrives at her boarding school room in London, she undresses and "suddenly longed to write just a few lines of her impression. So she slipped into her kimono and drew out her notebook."[10] The kimono "anticipates, even at this early age, KM's fascination with the Orient."[11] Later, of Arthur Waley's translation of Chinese poetry, Mansfield wrote to John Middleton Murry, "Oh how lovely these Chinese poems are. I shall carry them about with me as a sort of wavy branch all day—to hide behind—a fan—."[12] She would have also been familiar with the poems of Yone Noguchi who was a contributor to *Rhythm*, where Mansfield and Murry worked as editors and contributed stories.

Like many of her contemporaries, Mansfield did not distinguish China from Japan as long as a collective notion of the East suited her aesthetic taste and imagination. This fascination with things oriental was manifested partly in the way she dressed. Wearing Chinese robes or Japanese kimonos suggests subtle meanings beyond frivolous fashion; Oriental dress has both an intimate relation to the body and created a new artistic persona for Mansfield. According to Claire Tomalin, in 1910 Mansfield began to adopt "a Japanese air of her own" after seeing a Japanese exhibition; she "began to receive guests in a kimono, with a bowl of chrysanthemums beside her," and she cropped her hair short in a "style that was to become her hallmark long before short hair became generally fashionable."[13] Rebecca West recalls Mansfield's performance in Freda Strinberg's Cave of the Golden Calf in 1913, noting that "'[Mansfield] did not do it very well, but looked very pretty in a Chinese costume.'"[14] The Oriental robes and a Japanese air were useful and charming masks behind which Mansfield's creative corporality could operate. "Chineseness," according to Sarah Cheang, "is presented as a fact of feminine modernity."[15] Chineseness was able to fashion a new female image that was previously dictated by the classical tradition in European art. Images of women in classical art, Cheang analyzes, reflected male conception and creativity.[16] But the modern shell of Eastern dress offered possibility of new identities that grew out of the hidden, dark, yet roomy spaces under the generally oversized robes that downplayed femininity. Eastern fashion in this sense became a useful agent to bypass classical, Victorian, or patriarchal

structures by lodging the socially Other in the cloak of the culturally Other. Mansfield, dressing the most visible parts of her social body, figure, and hair, made voluntary choices that freed her from Victorian and Edwardian sartorial traditions as well as their intellectual framework.

Much scholarship has been devoted to Mansfield's penchant for impersonating or inhabiting different characters. As reflected in her diaries and letters, Mansfield often slipped on her "self" as if it were a cloak. She recognized first and foremost that the artist's self is made up of multiple "selves." Not only did Mansfield dress herself in this modernist version of an imagined East, but she also imaginatively dressed others in exotic oriental outfits during the early stage of her career. One particularly striking example is Edna Smith whom Mansfield nicknamed Lais. Mansfield wore her "Japanese doll" disguise as she flirted with both William Orton and his then girlfriend, Lais. She wrote to Orton that Lais "made me feel eighteen. What very pretty hair! I expect I shall see her quite often and take her to concerts and I am sure I shall take her to the National Gallery. *Now* you understand."[17]

A year later, Mansfield painted an exotic portrait of Lais in the colors of an oriental princess:

> O, what a pity [Lais] is not a princess—with little white boots tipped with ermine and a silver shirt and a blue petticoat embroidered with pink apple blossom and a long flowing gown of pale green velvet worked with golden dragons and lined with vivid orange. A live snake for her girdle with eyes made of diamond-shaped emeralds—her hair flowing and caught at the ends with tassels of pink corals. She would ride in an ebony sleigh lined with the feathers of wild parrots—flamingoes would fly over her head for a canopy. One day she shall be my inspiration for fairy tales.[18]

Such extravagant color-combinations were all the rage during the first decades of the twentieth century. Fashion exulted in oriental imaginings and in adorning occidental female bodies, just as Mansfield delighted in dressing Lais in extravagantly oriental attire and placing her in exotic imaginings. Motifs such as "pink apple blossom," "golden dragons," colorful "feathers of wild parrots," and pink tropical birds are essential to Mansfield's imagination of the East.[19]

The colors represented in Mansfield's flamboyant portrait of Lais were often labeled Eastern, and by extension erotic. Cheang considers "chinoiserie as a counterweight to modernism, and fashion as a counterpart to art within modernity."[20] Modernism here is equivalent to Western modern technological speed that is contrasted with Chineseness or old China, which appeared in

relative stillness. Speed is anti-color, for it creates movements that transform all scenery and objects into grey blurs. It is also counter-art because only in repose can color fully exert its impression.[21] Vivid colors are composite parts of a Chinese robe. Contemplating a 1929 *Vogue* photo of a Mrs. Oliver Locker-Lampson in a Mandarin robe, wearing strands of pearls and an intricate headpiece, Cheang suggests that the purpose of such a visually stimulating medley of colors, although the photo is black-and-white, is to pursue "heightened sensory effects, drama and an appeal to embodiment and emotions."[22] Mansfield's image of an Oriental princess was steeped in the modernist milieu of the erotically colorful. However, Mansfield's imaginary portrait of Lais appears to be in motion. Not all Western imaginings of China emphasize stillness, and what Mansfield demonstrates is how not to lose the vitality of such exotic color combinations in motion. In this sense, she is Van Gogh's counterpart in literature, for when we look at *The Starry Night* and *The Night Café* we do not see exuberant colors in passivity, but how these colors stir movements on canvas and in our minds' eyes.

Mansfield also attended the Ballets Russes performances in London in 1912 and 1913. In 1912 Anne Estelle Rice, Mansfield's Fauvist painter friend, wrote an essay on the ballet for *Rhythm* magazine. The essay specifically addresses the bold colors on stage and its visual reference to the East: "The Russian ballets are elemental to the last degree, full of the visions of Asia, […] where realism and fantasy combine and multiply into a fluidity of moving reds, blues, oranges, greens, purples, triangles, squares, circles, serpentine and zigzag shapes."[23] Rice's article pays particular attention to how Leon Bakst uses masses of pure saturated colors, and yet these colors, instead of creating noisy effects, are harmonized through strong regulating lines in the stage design, achieving a highly expressive and unapologetic effect. She further highlights the significance of "line" in this harmony of exuberant colors, claiming that all modern art forms aspire to a search for "lines."[24] Rice's appreciation of pure colors and strong rhythmical lines resonates with the training of Chinese artists who began by mastering variations of lines in expressing form, emotion, and movement. Among the vibrant posters designed for the *Ballets Russes,* one Alhambra poster stands out with its obvious reference to the East. It features a dancer wearing a pagoda-like tri-colored hat, donning a broad Chinese jacket with wave and sunlight motifs in white, red, and orange, wide pants, and black Chinese shoes. Advertising the oriental became part of the Russian Ballets' selling point as the performances caused reverberations throughout Modernist world of arts.[25]

Mansfield has yet another link to oriental robes via the visual arts. In 1908 and 1909, the Scottish colorist, John D. Fergusson, later to become a lifelong

Figure 3 *The Red Shawl*, 1908, John Duncan Fergusson (1874–1961), oil on canvas (200 x 84.8). Courtesy of The Fergusson Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council. © Perth & Kinross Council.

Figure 4 *Le Manteau chinois*, 1909, John Duncan Fergusson (1874–1961), oil on canvas (195.5 x 97). Courtesy of The Fergusson Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council. © Perth & Kinross Council.

friend of Mansfield, produced two oil paintings titled *The Red Shawl* (Figure 3) and *Le Manteau chinois* (Figure 4). The former portrays a geisha-like figure who wears her hair in a Japanese knot. Draped loosely across her shoulder is an enormous scarlet shawl. The woman's face is pale and mask-like, while her red lips are fore-grounded. Her neck and shoulders are bare—the most erotic parts of the female body in Japanese culture. The second painting is more demure. It portrays Ann Estelle Rice in a lavish blue Chinese coat and a "Chinese" hat with decorative flowers as background. A conspicuous green line hugs Rice's face, paying homage to Henri Matisse's 1905 *The Green Stripe.* Exhibited together in 1912, the two paintings' doubly exotic images of white women in oriental dress figure the invented Japan and the imagined China in a chromatic harmony that was decidedly modern. Anthony Alpers calls Fergusson "[o]ne of the first British painters to be influenced by the postimpressionists" and an "art philosopher."[26] Rice, Fergusson, and Mansfield all shared a love for the oriental that has a more definitive silhouette when rendering China and Japan but also loosely draws on the arts of Egypt, Russia, and Arabia. Fergusson's paintings capture striking visions of Japan and China in figurative forms. These white female bodies clad in oriental robes, either subtly sensual or mysteriously languid, piqued interest in exotic contrasts between Western corporality and Eastern design, between the modern and the ancient.

Sarah Cheang argues that the European fascination with the Chinese images was an answer to modernism's need for a vehicle of imagination. This imagination was by no means accurate, as the Republic of China during this time was conversely adopting Western fashion. Yet this inaccuracy did not prevent China from becoming "a static source of inspiration for Western renewal."[27] Women in particular were painted and photographed in these colorful oriental robes and they are turned into, as Cheang puts it, "full-blooded European modalities of modernity."[28] Both Fergusson's iconic images of white women in Oriental attire and Mansfield's deliberate choice to wear a Japanese kimono or dress Lais in a Chinese costume demonstrate their participation in the inventive exercise of modernity's search for new aesthetic identities.

Yet it was one thing for Mansfield to design fashionable outfits for her own artistic persona, but quite another to utilize sartorial designs in her fiction. Two stories by Mansfield, when juxtaposed, suggest a growing confidence in representing Eastern fabric and Western bodies. "Frau Fischer," a satirical piece written in 1910, was later included in Mansfield's first collection, *In a German Pension* (1911). The story poses a rather problematic treatment of

body and oriental fabric. Herr Rat is seen "angelically clad in a white silk suit." Frau Fischer remarks on the beauty of the suit and the gentleman replies: "I brought the silk from China—smuggled it through the Russian customs by swathing it around my body."[29] The way silk is wrapped around Herr Rat's body creates a cocoon-like effect, restricting and banal. Perhaps this effect is analogous to Mansfield's own authorial anxiety of dealing with her creative fabric, like a tailor at a nonplus. The vitality in dressing Lais is missing. Although the fabric is next to human skin, no sensual intimacy is felt; rather an awkward blank is drawn for the narrator to fill with meaningless words such as "angelic," cool, or beautiful. As intuitive as Mansfield felt about the relation between the fabric and the body, her early use of the oriental, specifically Chinese silk and chinoiserie, was as colorless and lacking in design as Herr Rat's white silk suit.

A later story, "Je ne parle pas français" (1918), is exemplary of a more sophisticated use of the oriental robe. The narrator, Raoul Duquette, aspires to be "a writer about the submerged world." In reality he is a male prostitute whose clientele include "little prostitutes and kept women and elderly widows, and shop girls and wives of respectable men, and even advanced modern literary ladies," and he boasts of promiscuous experiences—his wealth.[30] He describes himself as having "olive skin, black eyes with long lashes, black silky hair cut short," and without clothes he is "rather charming. Plump, almost like a girl, with smooth shoulders, and I wear a thin gold bracelet above my left elbow."[31] This is not a quintessential image of a Frenchman, but rather exotically oriental. Raoul's ambiguous sexuality is revealed when he befriends an Englishman, Dick Harmon, to whom he finds himself attracted.

When Dick tells Raoul he plans to go back to England, Raoul is suddenly cast in the role of a rueful woman or wife: "I felt hurt. I felt as a woman must feel when a man takes out his watch and remembers an appointment that cannot possibly concern her, except that its claim is the stronger."[32] Only two days pass before Raoul receives a letter from Dick, "saying how he missed me and counted on our friendship, on keeping in touch."[33] A psychologically revealing moment occurs as Raoul reads the letter but soon pauses in a narcissistic gaze:

> I read it standing in front of the (unpaid for) wardrobe mirror. It was early morning. I wore a blue kimono embroidered with white birds and my hair was still wet; it lay on my forehead, wet and gleaming.
>
> "Portrait of Madame Butterfly," said I, "on hearing of the arrival of *ce cher Pinkerton.*"[34]

Raoul makes a conscious connection between himself and Puccini's tragic Japanese geisha in the opera *Madame Butterfly* (1904). The kimono and wet hair complete this provocative look. Yet, instead of being elated in this new fanciful role, opening the curtains and verbalizing his romantic sentiments about Dick, Raoul feels "a little sick."[35] He is, after all, only the Butterfly imposter.

The story then introduces a Mansfieldian Madame Butterfly—a young, fragile English woman nicknamed Mouse—Dick's girlfriend. She is described through Raoul's eyes:

> For Mouse was beautiful. She was exquisite, but so fragile and fine that each time I looked at her it was as if for the first time. She came upon you with the same kind of shock that you feel when you have been drinking tea out of a thin innocent cup and suddenly, at the bottom, you see a tiny creature, half butterfly, half woman, bowing to you with her hands in her sleeves.[36]

The description evokes the English fascination with Chinese porcelain, particularly Charles Lamb's essay in which he describes old china as "azure tinctured grotesques," and the figures and architecture that disregard perspective. More importantly, however, this image of Mouse at the bottom of a teacup recalls the fragility of Puccini's romanticized version of a geisha who can be a hybrid of butterfly and woman, hiding her hands in her big sleeves as she curtseys in Japanese fashion. The end of the story also echoes that of *Madame Butterfly* as Dick abandons Mouse for a woman chosen for him by his mother.

Compared to "Frau Fischer," "Je ne parle pas français" employs more subtle and subliminal oriental tropes. Images of Japan and China are now more naturally intertwined in the narrative fabric through the lucid chromatic reflection of Raoul dressed in a kimono, and the surreal miniature of a victim—an English Butterfly—trapped in an imaginary teacup. Mansfield wrote to Murry regarding this story on February 11, 1918: "what [I] felt so curiously as I wrote it was—ah! I am in a way *grown up* as a writer."[37] Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan point out that "KM herself considered the story a turning point in her writing."[38] I believe this is not only because Mansfield dealt with complex issues of human sexuality and corruption, but also because now she truly knew how to weave glossy oriental threads into the texture of her own writing. Murry's response to the story suggests that it can be categorized with the psychological novel. He writes to Mansfield: "Here you seem to have begun to drag the depths of your *consciousness.* […] The world is shut out. You are looking into yourself."[39] Mansfield finds a new confidence in her new "*approach* to a story" as she completes "Je ne parle pas français."[40] This confidence harkens back to a letter

she wrote to Lais in 1911 about searching for her art through hints of the East surrounding her as she is left alone with her creative impulse:

> But not yet do I know *what* it is that clamours for utterance at the gates of my heart—rather there are so many—with such richness of spoil in their hands (& the East! quite suddenly) that I still pause—deliberating—terribly grave. [...] Art! Art! Do you too exult in the very word and lift your proud head—It is not an anodyne: it is an elixir.[41]

It is as if Mansfield drank the elixir years before its magical potential is fully realized in "Je ne parle pas français." She now began confidently coloring her tale, throwing proportion, narrative order, realistic size, and propriety out of the window.

In the same letter to Lais, Mansfield surveys her living space and describes to Lais her Buddha room and the skull that she used as a candleholder. Besides clothes and hair, interior décor that combines the occidental and the oriental was another manifestation of a desire for the East. An artificially hybridized vision of an oriental interior creates yet another nuanced background against which her characters' psychological states may be explored.

Eastern fabric is the thread that links Western corporality and domestic interior. Reclining women surrounded by exquisite objects in an intimate indoor setting is a favored motif in classical pictorial art. A broader lens is needed when examining the white female figure clad in oriental robes as we question who originally wore these robes and under what circumstances. A *Punch's Almanac* comic "The Mantle of Wu" (1924) represents the transaction of a mandarin's robe from an oriental male body to an occidental female body. Included in the same comic is the shift of interior set-ups in which the different bodies rest in or interact with the space. The mandarin Wu, plump and studious, sits erect on what looks to the Western eye a quite uncomfortable stool, whereas "Joan the exquisitely fair" who now wears the robe purchased from China sinks into her soft upholstered sofa amongst cushions, her eyelids drooping as she reads in a position that induces slumber rather than concentration. Cheang comments that loose-cut Chinese robes "lent themselves to fashion illustrations of young women reclining in oriental interiors, and the suggestion of an opiated haze."[42] Body postures are also contrasted, Cheang continues to observe, and the chinoiserie elements are transferred to an English interior: Wu's teacup finds its English equivalent in a larger blue tea bowl on the lower tea table, and the calligraphy that hangs on his study wall now decorates Joan's cushion cover. The poem that accompanies this drawing emphasizes that no change occurs in

the Chinese gown itself, but the gown's attractiveness increases now that Joan inhabits it as she is situated in a cozy European (if not just English) interior. Objects that served oriental aesthetic rituals now become purely decorative.

The *Punch* comic touches upon another strand of using oriental motifs in suggesting a contrast between oriental and occidental bodies, as well as male and female bodies at rest. Cushions and the female body need to be considered in the context of modernist writing, especially how the soft materials aid in the induction of a hypnotic state. In Mansfield's "Psychology" (1920), the contrast of the male and the female postures and their discordant psychological states are explored according to similar principles that frame the two bodies in the comic. "Psychology" was based on Mansfield's friendship with Bertrand Russell. By the time the story was written, Russell had embarked on a journey to China and Japan, whereas Mansfield only had what could be best described as a chinoiserie—or second hand—experience through her fiction and the oriental objects around her.

The story depicts two unnamed characters—a man and a woman—who spend an afternoon in the woman's art studio. The story opens with a conversation between them:

> "Have a cigarette? I'll put the kettle on. Are you longing for tea?"
> "No. Not longing."
> "Well, I am."
> "Oh, you." He thumped the Armenian cushion and flung it on to the *sommier*. "You are a perfect little Chinee."
> "Yes, I am," she laughed. "I long for tea as strong men long for wine."
> […]
> It was delightful—this business of having tea.[43]

Tea, an Armenian cushion, and a *sommier* immediately evoke a modernist cosmopolitan interior that prioritizes the act of having tea. Tea's origin in China can be traced back to mythological times. Together with the blue porcelain, it inspired occidental imaginings of the oriental since its introduction in early seventeenth-century Britain. "Psychology" structures its setting with an oriental touch to set off the tension between a masculine and a feminine rhythm—the *yin* and *yang*—represented by the unnamed "he" and "she." The story gravitates around these two elements and how they are perpetually out of tempo with each other. The male character jokingly calls the woman who provides tea "a perfect little Chinee." The woman agrees with such identification, saying that her thirst for tea is as strong as a man's longing for wine. A mutual agreement between the

characters is shared that equates tea to the female gender and being Chinese, while wine is for "strong men."

As they sit down for tea, the male character is "leaning back," "taking his ease among the cushions," while the female character "[curls] up *en escargot* in the blue shell arm-chair."[44] The two bodies at rest denote chinoiserie connections even though neither is clad in Mandarin robes, for the image of them "was so clear and so minute it might have been painted on the blue teapot lid."[45] Cushions and the *sommier* play subtle yet revealing roles in this feminized oriental interior. It does not require much to attain physical comfort than mental ease with indolence. However, the force that drives the man to push the conversation forward is the same as that behind the engine of modernity: "Weren't they just a little too quick, too prompt with their replies, too ready to take each other up?"[46] Do the cushions, poufs, and *sommier* compromise the man's masculinity and scholastic air? Does he, like Wu in the comic, prefer stiff, alert concentration rather than languid and relaxed submission? "Cushions and poufs may have been retained within modern interiors as necessary to the feminine body" because they fulfill functions that are associated with "perceived physical demands of the human body," argues Cheang.[47] To recline, relax, and submerge oneself in cushions and plush material becomes a gendered necessity. For the same reason, the *Punch* comic positions Joan and not Wu amongst cushions.

The interior of the woman's studio is enveloped by an atmosphere of tranquility, or slowness, yet the conversation is propelled by a desire for acceleration, resulting in the rather miserable effect despite each character's effort to catch up with a non-existent and unnecessary speed. The woman utters an inner cry for things to slow down so that she can capture the vivid image of themselves in the calm atmosphere:

> And yet she couldn't hurry. She could almost have cried: "Give me time." She must have time in which to grow calm. She wanted time in which to free herself from all these familiar things with which she lived so vividly. For all these gay things around her were part of her—her offspring—and they knew it and made the largest, most vehement claims. But now they must go. They must be swept away, shooed away—like children, sent up the shadowy stairs, packed into bed and commanded to go to sleep—at once—without a murmur![48]

Cheang suggests a reading of similar texts through the contrast between Western speed and Eastern repose in the early twentieth century, for the "frenetic Western world" is thrust ever forward by the machine of modernity.[49] Cheang's insight

helps shed light on the woman's will to slow down in "Psychology." In Cheang's analysis, Chineseness and chinoiserie represent a slower "contemplative" and "leisurely" rhythm clad in heavily embroidered robes and trailing skirts.[50] In addition to falling behind, the woman in "Psychology" also feels a need to hide part of herself that is neither superior nor spiritual. Like Charles Lamb, who confessed his passion for old china as a feminine weakness, the woman's living room filled with *bric-a-brac* becomes embarrassing because it underscores femininity. These small, insignificant articles and their decorative or sentimental function are equivalent to Woolf's "Persian Cat"—another exotic creature—once the woman writer or artist has acquired a room of her own. This room in Mansfield's story is a clearly oriental one. The woman in "Psychology" is an artist whose fashionable studio is an artistic space that tolerates diverse cultural elements.[51]

What frustrates the woman deeply is the man's blindness to what she sees, even after a dose of an Eastern elixir—tea—combined with a cake that may have been created in Genesis. The man is not fully hypnotized or synchronized to her vision: "She saw the beautiful fall of steps, the dark garden ringed with glittering ivy, on the other side of the road the huge bare willows and above them the sky big and bright with stars."[52] The blue-willow-like vision is reiterated after the concluding visit from another woman—a pathetic and "elderly virgin" who "idoliz[es]" the artist.[53] The artist hugs this elderly woman gently so as not to disturb the tranquil and poetic image of the willows. She then returns to her studio with "half-shut eyes […] as if she had woken up out of a childish sleep."[54] Dreaming, childlikeness, her feminine identity, and the Other are all tied in this one description. The state in-between dream and wakefulness with partly closed eyes also recalls the image of Joan in the *Punch* comic. The woman then puts the "untidy" *sommier* and "[a]ll the cushions 'like furious mountains'" in order before writing a reconciliatory invitation to the man.[55] Her trance-like visits to the willows and dark garden indicate a crossing-over to a liminal state, recalling Woolf's description of reading Chinese ghost stories as crossing the bridge on a blue-willow plate. Trance, sleep, or drowsiness are keywords that unlock a feminine imagining as these women are given license to roam freely in the invented landscape of chinoiserie.

Although Mansfield never responded critically to Okakura's *The Book of Tea*, she responded creatively to him in "Psychology." In the book, Okakura places the artist in a liminal state so that "he transcends himself. At once he is and is not. He catches a glimpse of Infinity, but words cannot voice his delight, for the eye has no tongue. Freed from the fetters of matter, his spirit moves in

the *rhythm* of things."[56] The repeated vision of the willows, stars, and steps in "Psychology," bridged by a dreamlike encounter and refreshed return to reality, is akin to Okakura's metaphysical roaming and unspeakable "glimpse of Infinity"; vision subjugates speech, and physical boundary is blurred by the character's chinoiserie imagining.

The ending of "Psychology" suggests that this imagined communion with "Infinity" is superior to, or replaces, actuality. Mansfield often wrote about wanting to visit China and Japan. She was enthusiastic to hear Bertrand Russell's account of the Far East. All her "experiences" with the orient were secondary and imaginary, but such fanciful roaming added rather than diminished the visionary quality of her writing.

Fantastical roaming to the East is often given a more prominent position in Mansfield's works, and in "A Dill Pickle" (1917) this contrast between actual and imagined visits is embodied by two characters. Vera, the poor artist/musician, is restricted by social and economic conditions from traveling to the East, but her former lover whom she meets after six years has all the advantage of real experience, although his comments and behavior are infected by artificiality and vulgarity that no travel can cure. The story is set in a public space that evokes an oriental atmosphere: "And then, after six years, she saw him again. He was seated at one of those little bamboo tables decorated with a Japanese vase of paper daffodils."[57] Mansfield probably had one of those popular Edwardian tearooms in mind when she decided the setting, but this choice cannot be haphazard as a detailed flashback occurs in Vera's point of view. The memory is of their first afternoon together at Kew Gardens: "A great many people taking tea in a Chinese pagoda, and he behaving like a maniac about the wasps—waving them away, flapping at them with his straw hat, serious and infuriated out of all proportion to the occasion. How delighted the sniggering tea drinkers had been. And how she had suffered."[58] What is ironic about this scene is that the man claims to be a lover of oriental culture and art as Vera is, yet he could not sit still for a Chinese ceremony that aims to induce the tea drinkers into a meditative, tranquil state.

Roger Fry once commented on his pleasure of including Chou (1046–256 BCE) bronze art as part of his décor, especially enjoying the close proximity of an ancient art form in a domestic setting, and the fact that one does not need to move: "There is a great delight in enjoying the exotic thrill without stirring from one's own armchair, and this being so, we have the added thrill of antiquity. The imagination of our times is, it would seem, more easily and instantly stirred by great antiquity than by any other appeal."[59] This attitude of quiet absorption

of ancientness is the kind that Vera most likely had in mind for a tea ceremony in a Chinese pagoda. But the male character's restlessness contrasts Vera's attitude of tranquility that is apropos of the occasion. He recalls the unnamed man in "Psychology," though with his impatience more manifest in comparison, for such masculine discomfort at full immersion in things East wars against the appreciation of superficial details or his analytical or intellectual instinct. Does his behavior betray a subconscious distrust of oriental culture's ritualistic aspects? As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that this man is a fraudulent enthusiast of Eastern culture. One's conflicting attitudes toward Eastern culture have also been acknowledged by Fry: the "Chinese […] complicate the matter themselves by their excessive love of […] esthetic rather than religious ritual."[60] He confesses:

> One feels that one must be a little on one's guard with people who invented the "tea ceremony," people who deliberately hypnotised themselves into an attitude of expectant esthetic adoration. They would say, no doubt, that this hypnotic business of walking along the garden path in silence to the tea-house only served to produce a due receptivity, only put one into a favourable attitude. But that is just it; they are always getting one into too favourable an attitude, hypnotizing away one's critical common sense. They have a way of making things seem precious even before they are cunningly mounted and tastefully displayed.[61]

A critical mind cannot fully trust or easily become immersed in this "hypnotic state" that engages with the emotional, subjective, and communicative faculties of one's psyche—something with which Vera in "A Dill Pickle" does not struggle. There seems to be a fully imaginative trust in her that enables her to render a more aesthetically truthful if not geographically truthful experience of the oriental.

Later contrasts between the man's actual experience and Vera's imaginative supplication of subjective details support this view. The man provides rather mundane details of the Volga river in Russia, a place they spoke of going, but Vera fills the Russian river life with visual and acoustic details: "She shivered, hearing the boatman's song break out again loud and tragic, and seeing the boat floating on the darkening river with melancholy trees on either side …."[62] As he describes another evening sitting for a picnic with friends by the Black Sea, and a coachman offers them a dill pickle, Vera sees herself at that time and place "beside the mysteriously Black Sea, black as velvet, and rippling against the banks in silent, velvet waves."[63] In Vera's fantastical vision, the Black Sea becomes haptic material, and its grotesque appeal seems more fitting an image than the

real and authentic. She then imagines the moonlight reflected on the faces and hands of the picnic group, a "folded parasol, lying on the grass like a huge pearl crochet hook," and even sees in her mind's eye the dill pickle, although she has never had one, in "the greenish glass jar with a red chili like a parrot's beak glimmering through."[64] These descriptions parallel Mansfield's vivid imagining of Lais in oriental attire and surroundings; the key was to disregard faithful description of the real, but delight in the freedom to create unlikely shapes and colors. "A Dill Pickle," read in this light, is Mansfield's own version of a literary blue willow pattern that cares only for an oriental glaze coated in the kiln of imagination.

We only need to peruse Mansfield's stories to see how frequently she brings up China and Japan. It served her creative landscape better precisely because she had never actually visited these countries so that she, like Vera, could fully indulge in her vivacious, colorful, and exotic yet aesthetically genuine journeys to the imagined East. Granted such overt exoticizing of the East can be problematic. Mansfield's and her characters' imaginative roaming fabricates fantastical visions of the East, and her fictional forgery may elicit unwelcome responses in Chinese or Japanese readers whose main criticism could be her inaccuracy. But what better places could Mansfield and her women characters go to release their imaginative powers? In these women's inventive re-designs, they acquire a creative freedom that no longer falls into the jurisdiction of the real. The East becomes a vehicle of imaginative agency that deliberately disregards accuracy.

Mansfield used the phrase "sailing up a river in China" in one of her most well-read stories, "Prelude" (1917), as a potential place of escape. The character given this promise is Linda Burnell, who was based on Mansfield's mother, Anne Beauchamp. A biographical link exists between this imagined river of China, Linda, and Anne. In a 1919 notebook entry, a conversation between Mansfield and her mother takes place:

> She sat on the end of the box ottoman buttoning her boots. Her short fine springy hair stood out round her head. She wore a little linen camisole and a pair of short frilled knickers. "Curse these buttons," she said, tugging at them. And then suddenly she sat up and dug the handle of the button hook into the box ottoman. "Oh dear," she said, "I do wish I hadn't married. I wish I'd been an explorer." And then she said dreamily, "The Rivers of China, for instance." "But what do you know about the rivers of China, darling," I said. For Mother knew no geography whatever; she knew less than a child of ten. "Nothing," she agreed. "But I can *feel* the kind of hat I should wear."[65]

"China" became code for the land of mysterious potential even if neither Linda nor Anne had ever traveled there, as was also true of Mansfield. But it does not matter, for they can still play dress-up games and reach an ideal, fantastical land in their dream-like wondering, possibly wearing multi-colored Chinese robes.

But to say that Mansfield never had any real contact with China is not entirely true. In 1922, a Chinese poet Xu Zhimo visited the ailing Mansfield in her Hampstead flat. He immortalizes this short interview as "the undying twenty minutes."[66] Xu, in his memoir, remarks upon Mansfield's striking Eastern beauty—she struck him as being Chinese in her manner and style.[67] Xu combines his appreciation of Mansfield's work with that of her personal "light," saying that she gave him a "purest aesthetic feeling."[68] Mansfield's smooth, black hair also fascinated Xu as he suspected that she purposefully emulated an earlier Chinese style. But to describe Mansfield's beauty with words is impossible, recollects Xu, and he tried vainly to use a number of images with which to compare the purity of her soul. But he did remember her piercing gaze, and in that short twenty minutes, he felt hypnotized.[69] For the first time in her life, Mansfield was face to face with someone who could accurately and rightfully represent the real China. Yet it was not the Chinese poet who performed hypnotic oriental magic, but Mansfield herself who initiated a genuine communion that charmed him.

Upon his return to China, Xu introduced Mansfield's stories to Chinese readers, and they embraced the poetic quality in her work, ready to take her as one of their own. Patricia Laurence explains China's reciprocal love for Mansfield from the perspective of how the Chinese audience considered her tuberculosis "a 'romantic' illness."[70] But also more importantly because "[Mansfield's] spare style has a 'Chinese' quality. Her writing captures filigree emotions and nuances in a way that Ming painters or Song poets who often wrote beautiful melancholy verse. She combines then the sentimental exploration of states of mind and a delicately nuanced poetic style."[71] While Roger Fry detects "'modernity' in Chinese Song landscapes," the Chinese critic Xiao Qian sees Chineseness in Mansfield.[72] Xiao Qian further compares her "stories as Song portraits."[73] After a life-time of dreaming of and looking at an imagined East, Mansfield finally received its gaze in return. Such mutual love between her and the East is not a pure aesthetic coincidence because Song aesthetics have had profound influence on Japanese art, especially the paring down process of delineation of objects and the pursuit of ultra-simplicity. Much more can be said along this line of aesthetic dialogues between East and West via art and literature, but that goes beyond the scope of this chapter.

Mansfield's love for the East began with kimonos, Chinese robes, and tea among other things. These objects represented for her a tangibility that is, like the woman artist in "Psychology" claims, "a part of her." Mansfield loved an embroidered black shawl given to her as a Christmas present by Lady Ottoline Morrell in 1917. It is, describes Mansfield, "embroidered very thickly with flowers and fruits and birds in the most lively yet delicate colours imaginable."[74] She misidentified the article, always calling it her "Spanish shawl," whereas it was in fact Chinese. When she died of tuberculosis, this Chinese shawl covered her coffin in Fontainebleau. From the early stage of her career, Mansfield adorned her own person, her fictional bodies as well as real bodies, fancifully with exotic fabric. It is more than appropriate for her to have chosen the Chinese shawl for herself in the end. Historical accuracy and authenticity in using oriental tropes became a secondary concern for her; she used covers or embroideries to adorn imaginary bodies in her fiction that is itself, like chinoiserie or Mansfield's imagined Orient at large, an artifice.

Notes

1 Anne Witchard, "Introduction: 'The Lucid Atmosphere of Fine Cathay,'" in *British Modernism and Chinoiserie*, ed. Anne Witchard (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 1.

2 Zhaoming Qian, "Prologue: The Place of the Orient in the Modernist Movement," in *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham and London: Duck University Press, 1995), 17.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., 18.

5 Quoted in Patricia Laurence, *Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes: Bloomsbury, Modernism, and China* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 347.

6 Quoted in Patricia Laurence, "Shared Affinities: Katherine Mansfield, Ling Shuhua and Virginia Woolf," in *Modernism and Chinoiserie*, 37.

7 Witchard, "Introduction," 1.

8 CW4, 78.

9 Gerri Kimber, *Katherine Mansfield—The Early Years* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 230.

10 CW1, 44.

11 Ibid., 126.

12 *Letters* 2, 220. "The *New Statesman*, May 18, 1918, published ten translations from Chinese by Arthur Waley," which is most likely what Mansfield references here

(220n1). However, Waley published *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* the same year, of which she writes, “We ought to have that chap’s book, you know” (*Letters* 2, 219). The following year, she wrote, “I *long* to do [a review of] Waley. There is a flower out in the garden which is the first sentence,” likely referring to his second book, *More Translations from the Chinese* (*Letters* 3, 56).

13 Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 87.

14 Rebecca West to Jeffrey Meyers, February 4, 1977. Quoted in Jeffrey Meyers, *Katherine Mansfield: A Darker View* (New York: Copper Square Press, 2002), 52.

15 Sarah Cheang, “Fashion, Chinoiserie and Modernism,” in *British Modernism and Chionoiserie*, 139.

16 Ibid., 138.

17 *Letters* 1, 100.

18 CW4, 120–1.

19 Apple blossoms are used in traditional Chinese fabric because the first character in “apple” sounds like “peace.”

20 Cheang, “Fashion,” 144.

21 Ibid., 143–5.

22 Ibid., 145.

23 Anne Estelle Rice, “Ballets Russes,” *Rhythm*, August 1912, 108. doi: https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1159898883359.pdf.

24 Ibid., 107.

25 Anne Witchard, “‘Beautiful, Baleful Absurdity’: Chinoiserie and Modernist Ballet,” in *British Modernism and Chinoiserie*, 108. See plate 6 for reference.

26 Anthony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Viking, 1980), 151.

27 Cheang, “Fashion,” 141.

28 Ibid., 152.

29 Katherine Mansfield, “Frau Fischer,” in CW1, 196.

30 Katherine Mansfield, “Je ne parle pas français,” in CW2, 117.

31 Ibid., 118.

32 Ibid., 121.

33 Ibid., 122.

34 Ibid., 122.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 126.

37 *Letters* 2, 66.

38 Ibid., 134–5n1.

39 Cherry Hankin, ed., *Letters between Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1988), 113.

40 *Letters* 2, 71–2.

41 *Letters* 1, 107.

42 Cheang, "Fashion," 142.
43 Katherine Mansfield, "Psychology," in CW2, 193.
44 Ibid., 194.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 195.
47 Cheang, "Fashion," 149.
48 Mansfield, "Psychology," 194.
49 Cheang, "Fashion," 143.
50 Ibid.
51 The man also mentions "that marvel of a sleeping boy's head" in the studio. This detail evokes association with Man Ray's *Noire et Blanche* (1926) in that Mansfield represents a meeting between the Self and the Other in a dreaming state.
52 Mansfield, "Psychology," 197.
53 For further information on the blue-willow plate, modernism, and China, see Patricia Laurence's *Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes: Bloomsbury, Modernism, and China,* especially chapter 4 where Laurence discusses the quasi-Chinese origin of the pattern and its relation to modernist imaginings of Chinese landscapes.
54 Mansfield, "Psychology," 198.
55 Ibid.
56 Okakura, *The Book of Tea* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 64–5.
57 Katherine Mansfield, "A Dill Pickle," in CW2, 97–8.
58 Ibid., 99.
59 Roger Fry, *Transformations: Critical and Speculative Essays on Art* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), 92.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., 92–3.
62 Mansfield, "A Dill Pickle," 100.
63 Ibid., 101.
64 Ibid.
65 CW4, 273.
66 Xu Zhimo, *Xu Zhimo Quan Ji*, vol. 3 (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1983), 23.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 13.
69 Ibid., 16.
70 Laurence, *Lily Briscoe*, 203.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., 370.
73 Ibid.
74 *Letters* 2, 17.

Katherine Mansfield and Russian Mystics

Galya Diment

In Mansfield's 1917 story "A Dill Pickle," which Joanna Woods legitimately called "the most Russian of all her stories,"[1] a former lover tells the female protagonist about his travels through Russia, where they dreamed of going as a couple before they went their separate ways. He then proceeds to give her his explanation, gained through the wisdom acquired there, as to why their relationship was doomed from the start:

> But what seemed to me so mysterious then is perfectly plain to me now. […] It simply was that we were such egoists, so self-engrossed, so wrapped up in ourselves that we hadn't a corner in our hearts for anybody else. […] I began studying a Mind System when I was in Russia, and I found we were not peculiar at all. It's quite a well known form of ….

He does not finish the sentence because, "thunder-struck," and "astounded beyond words," he realizes that "She had gone."[2] "A Dill Pickle" appeared in the *New Age,* edited by A. R. Orage, an early and enthusiastic English Theosophist, in early October of 1917. It would be the last story Mansfield published before her late December diagnosis of tuberculosis. Interestingly enough, "A Dill Pickle" may actually serve as a metaphorical demarcation of sorts between Mansfield's pre- and post-diagnosis attitudes toward mysticism in general and famous Russian mystics in particular.

The "Mind System" referred to here is, most likely, one that Orage would have been quite familiar with: Madame Helena Blavatsky's theosophical teachings on Mind, or "Manas," the Sanskrit name by which it was often called. It is not for nothing that the male protagonist throws around words like "egoists," "self-engrossed," and "wrapped up in ourselves." If he was not stopped in his tracks by the realization that his interlocutor was no longer there, he probably would have finished the sentence by stating that it was "quite a well known form

of … " the so-called "Lower Ego," which in Blavatsky's metaphysical system stood for egoism, as opposed to "The Higher Ego," which denoted "selfhood" but without selfishness. A similar distinction was drawn by Blavatsky and her disciples between the Lower Ego-driven "Personality" and Higher Ego-driven "Individuality," or "Egoity," defined, again, as "the opposite of egoism and 'selfishness.'"[3]

Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophy were of course the most visible Russian metaphysical exports in Western Europe in the first quarter of the twentieth century, but the fertile Russian culture was in a constant process of breeding more mysticism. Thus in the 1910s, around the time "A Dill Pickle" was written, one of the most intriguing concepts which fascinated many Russian intellectuals, including the great Russian Modernist writer Andrei Bely, was that of the so-called "Fourth Dimension," which combined elements of Theosophy, Eastern religions, and freemasonry; its main proponent was Pyotr Ouspensky, a Blavatsky disciple, who challenged the common belief that we live just in a three-dimensional physical space. The Fourth Dimension, attainable only by the human spirit (similar to Blavatsky's "Mind"), was, according to Ouspensky, one's path to achieving immortality. Ouspensky was at first not sure about any effective practical ways to trigger the fourth dimension, but fortuitously (as he believed at the time) in 1915 he met George Gurdjieff, who was then in St. Petersburg developing his regimen of prescribed movement and "sacred dances" to achieve what he called "the harmonious development" of one's inner self.

Other than his indisputable charisma and drive, everything else in Gurdjieff's personality and life circumstances has been rather murky, including the existence of three different years of birth (covering a span of about ten years in the 1860s and 1870s). His heritage was most likely Greek and Armenian, but some believed he was actually a Tartar. Whereas Blavatsky's and Ouspensky's paths toward Theosophy and Fourth Dimension lay through intellectual pursuit, Gurdjieff was by no means a traditional thinker. To the contrary, he often made fun of people like Ouspensky who thought that everything could be learned from books or that writing your own books was important. According to Ouspensky, Gurdjieff told him:

> If you understood everything you have written in your own book I should come and bow down to you and beg you to teach me. But *you do not understand* either what you read or write. You do not even understand what the word "understand" means.[4]

Gurdjieff's general emphasis appeared to be more on one's body and movement than on one's mind and intellect. The dances that Mansfield would fall in love

with originally had no definitive metaphysical implications. "My ballet is not 'a mystery,'" Gurdjieff explained to Ouspensky when they met. "The object I had in view was to produce an interesting and beautiful spectacle. Of course there is a certain meaning hidden beneath the outward form but I have not pursued the aim of exposing and emphasizing this meaning."[5]

The meaning "hidden beneath" was that these seemingly exotic dances and movements, most of them Eastern or Oriental in their appearance or origin, could be used as one tool toward "awakening," since Gurdjieff believed that most people lived in the state of "walking sleep" and therefore could not perceive all dimensions of human existence. He maintained that only a "harmonious development" of a unified consciousness, which combined the strong physical, emotional, and intellectual elements, could shake off persistent dormancy and propel one to true "understanding." He also taught that in order to become "real," people had to ruefully strip off layer after layer of falsehood that they had accumulated in life. Ouspensky was largely impressed and soon became Gurdjieff's pupil and collaborator, contributing to their now joint "System" his own theory, subsequently renamed the "Fourth Way." There was a certain degree of unease, though. Reflecting on his initial reaction to Gurdjieff in *In Search of the Miraculous*, Ouspensky wrote, "There were ideas which I could not accept and which appeared to me fantastic and without foundation."[6] After the Bolshevik Revolution, both Ouspensky and Gurdjieff relocated to Western Europe where their ideas started reaching wider audiences, Katherine Mansfield among them.

It is not made clear in "A Dill Pickle" why the female protagonist walks out precisely at the moment when her former lover starts talking about his studies of a Russian "Mind System." And, likewise, the whole question of just how much Mansfield was attracted to occult ideas of any kind before being diagnosed with tuberculosis is still not fully settled either. Some Mansfield scholars do believe that Mansfield's general predisposition toward mysticism had preceded her more particular interest in its Russian variety. Thus, one of Mansfield's biographers, Ruth Mantz, postulates that "Many of [Mansfield's] early diaries [...] already reflect a desperate personal need for a mystical philosophy."[7] Similarly, Gerri Kimber, in her article "'A Child of the Sun': Katherine Mansfield, Orientalism and Gurdjieff," traces Mansfield's liking of mysterious exotica (here with Buddhist and Zen overtones) to the effect the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition had on her. Kimber also suggests that Mansfield's interest in mysticism may have been kindled further very soon after that exhibition when she befriended Orage in 1911, when Orage offered her a job as a theater critic for the *New Age,* where "A Dill Pickle" would eventually appear.[8]

And yet, while it is indeed likely that Mansfield's predisposition toward mysticism was there quite early, it is also starkly obvious that her much more heightened craving for it fully materialized only when she had to deal closely with her very personal brushes with mortality—first, in 1915, with the death of her brother Leslie who was killed in Flanders when a grenade he was using to train others accidentally exploded in his hand, and then two years later with her own medical death sentence. "I believe in immortality because he is not here," Mansfield wrote in her notebook soon after Leslie's accident, "and I long to join him. […] Dearest heart I know you are there, and I live with you." "I think," she continued a bit later,

> I have known for a long time that life was over for me but I never realized it or acknowledged it until my brother died. Yes, though he is lying in the middle of a little wood in France and I am still walking upright, and feeling the sun and the wind from the sea, I am just as much dead as he is.[9]

A hint of her belief in his otherworldly presence, here entering through her dreams, is palpable in the poem she wrote in 1916:

> Last night for the first time since you were dead
> I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.
> We were at home again beside the stream
> Fringed with tall berry bushes, white and red.
> "Don't touch them: they are poisonous," I said.
> But your hand hovered, and I saw a beam
> Of strange, bright laughter flying round your head
> And as you stooped I saw the berries gleam.
> "Don't you remember? We called them Dead Man's Bread!"
> I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar
> Of the dark water tumbling on the shore.
> Where—where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?
> By the remembered stream my brother stands
> Waiting for me with berries in his hands …
> "These are my body. Sister, take and eat."[10]

A more vigorous embrace of mysticism by Mansfield would not, however, take place until she became aware that her own life was very much in danger as her health was rapidly deteriorating.

In 1921, already out of Russia, Ouspensky separated himself from Gurdjieff. His *In Search of the Miraculous* provides a somewhat vague and broad reason as to why he felt like distancing himself from Gurdjieff following the Bolshevik

Revolution: "For a whole year something had been accumulating and I gradually began to see that there were many things I could not understand and that *I had to go*." Gurdjieff, we then can deduce, was, in the long run, simply not intellectual enough for Ouspensky: "A man has to wait until he meets *a guru* whose specialty *he is able* to study, a specialty which suits his tastes, his tendencies, and his abilities."[11] Subsequently Ouspensky moved to London, where he started his own group, thus becoming a guru in his own right. In the meantime, Orage had progressed from being just a Blavatsky follower to also becoming a fan of Ouspensky, whose lectures during this time Orage often attended.[12]

Gurdjieff meanwhile was still moving around, trying to establish centers in several European capitals. In February 1922, he came to London and Ouspensky, for the sake of their friendship and old collaboration, helped him in establishing his Institute in France. He also introduced him to Orage who quickly became a recruiter of sorts for Gurdjieff.[13] Via Orage, then, both Ouspensky and Gurdjieff would come to play a significant role in Katherine Mansfield's expanding system of mystical beliefs as her medical condition worsened. Ouspensky remembered their conversation preceding her move to Prieuré well:

> I had given her G[urdjieff]'s address myself. She had been to two or three of my lectures and had come to me to say that she was going to Paris. [… O]ne was struck by the striving in her to make the best use even of these last days, to find the truth whose presence she clearly felt but which she was unable to touch.[14]

Mansfield, despite her apparent search for "the truth," undoubtedly never became as serious a student of Russian Mysticism as was Orage, even though in 1922 she did, as Ouspensky states, join Orage in attending several of Ouspensky's lectures. The same year she also read, with great fascination, a theosophical book published a year earlier that Orage had sent her husband, John Middleton Murry, for a possible review at the *Athenaeum* which Murry edited. The book was *Cosmic Anatomy and the Structure of the Ego* by "M. B. Oxon," a pen name of Lewis Alexander Richard Wallace, a theosophist from Scotland. It was largely (as the title suggests) a treatise on the Lower and Higher Egos, as well as "Personality" and "Individuality"—here, therefore, "A Personal Ego" and "An Individual Ego"—the very same concept on which, it appears, the female protagonist in "A Dill Pickle" impatiently walks out of the café. But back in 1917 Mansfield must have just heard about these concepts secondhand because they were so much in the air among many members of her circle. Now she herself was reading about them in detail—and with much interest—for the first time. The language in *Cosmic Anatomy* is often quite tortured, and Mansfield, who was such a

perfectionist when it came to writing, must have had to suspend the judgmental part of herself as a professional craftsman in order to finish it. "[T]he Ego may be looked on diagrammatically as a dumb-bell shape," the author explains in a typically awkward manner, "'the bells' being the 'quasi-unevolvedness' above and below, while the handle is the spark or bridge. The upper bell is the Individual Ego, the lower the Personal Ego."[15]

While it may feel like a full circle for Mansfield to make herself struggle through the poorly crafted elaboration of the "System" and not walk out on its author, as her female protagonist seems to be doing in "A Dill Pickle," Mansfield's notes on her reading *Cosmic Anatomy* in January 1922 still betray plenty of ambiguity about the ideas it presented. "I have read a good deal of Cosmic Anatomy," she wrote in the beginning of January. "To get even a glimpse of the relation of things, to follow that relation & find it remains true through the ages enlarges my little mind as nothing else does." Then, as if to assure herself that her reading material was not all that odd, she added: "Its only a greater view of psychology. It helps me with my writing."[16] By early February, however, Mansfield stated that *Cosmic Anatomy* was involved in "Something ha[ving] been built—a raft, frail and not very seaworthy, but it will serve." She reflected further, "Before, I was cast into the water when I was 'alone.' I mean during my illness, and now something supports me."[17] Yet this new, albeit still hesitant, openness to largely Russian occult philosophies and practices was being challenged not only by her husband and some close friends, including Samuel Koteliansky, but also by her devotion to a very non-mystical Russian, Anton Chekhov, who, as she knew all too well, would have disapproved of her reaching for the supernatural in order to cope with the disease from which he himself died. Mansfield's letters and notebook entries during this time, when her condition was worsening, reveal her constant inner argument with her literary idol in an attempt to justify her rare lack of confidence in him. It was as if she needed to shake off at least some of Chekhov's influence before she could take a timid step toward this new ideology.

"Risk! Risk anything!" she wrote in her notebook on October 14, 1922. "Care no more for the opinions of others, for those voices. Do the hardest thing on earth for you. Act for yourself. Face the Truth. True, Tchekhov didn't. Yes, but Tchekhov died."[18] It was the 1920 volume of *Letters of Chekhov to His Family and Friends*, translated by Constance Garnett, that must have planted the first seeds of Mansfield's belief that Chekhov simply may have had the wrong attitude toward his disease at the end.[19] In a "Biographical Sketch," which preceded the letters and was written apparently by Garnett herself, Chekhov was virtually

blamed for hastening his own death: "It is quite possible that if Chekhov had taken care of himself his disease would not have developed so rapidly or proved fatal […] Like all invalids, he ought to have gone on living in the same place […] until he was better […] He was dying but he spent the time dreaming of going to the Italian lakes."[20] Mansfield's take on Chekhov's letters when it came to his dreams was dramatically different. The need for them, no matter how unrealistic or daring, she fully understood and shared. What she was devastated by in this collection was, in fact, its opposite—what she perceived as Chekhov's deflated pessimism in his final days. The last letters were "terrible," she wrote to Murry immediately after reading them. "All hope was over for him."[21] In the October 14 journal entry, she further elaborated on her sense of Chekhov's emotional bleakness before his death: "[R]ead the final letters. He has given up hope […] There is no more Tchekhov. Illness has swallowed him."[22]

In Mansfield's notebooks for 1922, observations about reading *Cosmic Anatomy* were often intermixed with her comments about the stories she had recently written or was writing at the time. Thus about the process of finishing "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1920), published two years earlier, she noted: "[A]t the end I was so terribly unhappy that I wrote as fast as possible for fear of dying before the story was sent."[23] Not surprisingly for a writer dealing with her own fears of dying, many of these late stories, including, of course, "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," do feature death as a prominent theme. And most of those already feature glimpses of some kind of afterlife. In "The Daughters," for example, this glimpse is embedded in Constantia's "favorite Buddha" on the mantelpiece:

> And the stone and gilt image, 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. He knew something; he had a secret. "I know something that you don't know," said her Buddha. Oh, what was it, what could it be? And yet she had always felt that there was … something.[24]

In "The Garden Party" (1921), finished a couple of months before she started reading *Cosmic Anatomy*, a man just killed in a horse carriage accident is described as not dead but just happily dreaming:

> There lay a young man, fast asleep—sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away […] Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again […] He was given up to his dream […] He was wonderful, beautiful […] Happy … happy …. All is well, said that sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content.[25]

In "The Doves' Nest" (1922), which she was writing while reading *Cosmic Anatomy,* there is not just a memory of the recently departed husband and father, but also a palpable presence of him for both his wife and his daughter Milly. The wife feels she could almost hear him giving her instructions when an American male acquaintance of his stops by to say "hello," unaware that his English friend had passed away: "'It was so strange,' said Mother […] 'I suddenly seemed to hear Father say to me "Ask him to lunch." And then there was some—warning […] I think it was about wine. But that I didn't catch—very unfortunately,' she added, mournfully […] 'Father is still so near,' she whispered." At the end of their lunch, she also "could not help hoping that Father saw what a successful little lunch party it was. He did so love to see Milly happy, and the child looked more animated than she had done for weeks."[26]

One more story from that period of her pondering *Cosmic Anatomy* was "The Fly" (1922). One of Mansfield's last completed works,[27] written in February of 1922, "The Fly" is about the death of a young man during the First World War, who, like Leslie, was buried in Belgium, far away from his family. And yet, here the grieving father is not given a gift of any hint of the otherworldly "presence" or "secret," and he is not even allowed a sufficiently warm memory. Quite the contrary, six years later the father is so emotionally deflated that he can no longer weep as he used to: "Something seemed to be wrong with him. He wasn't feeling as he wanted to feel. He decided to get up and have a look at the boy's photograph. But it wasn't a favourite photograph of his; the expression was unnatural. It was cold, even stern-looking. The boy had never looked like that." Instead of weeping, the father proceeds to torture a fly by slowly and methodically pouring more ink on it until the fly is also dead. The father then "lifted the corpse on the end of the paper-knife and flung it into the waste-paper basket. But such a grinding feeling of wretchedness seized him that he felt positively frightened."[28] In a letter to her friend, William Gerhardi, several months later Mansfield confessed that she "*hated* writing it"[29] but never explained why. Unlike some of her other protagonists dealing with a loss of their loved one, the father here is deprived of any solace. Was it because for Mansfield the death of a child, as opposed to a parent or a spouse, was so unimaginable that even a supernatural hint would be of no avail? Or was it a manifestation of how fleeting and shaky her own newly acquired metaphysical "raft" was?

The letters she wrote to her friends and family while at Gurdjieff's newly established Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fontainebleau, which she joined in mid-October of 1922, can probably provide some guidance in answering this question. In a letter to Koteliansky in October of 1922, she

tried to justify her decision to throw in her lot with someone her Russian friend considered a total con man by using Gurdjieff's very own terms of how people who are not conscious of themselves are doomed to "live in sleep" instead of "waking": "This world to me is a dream and the people in it are sleepers. I have known just instances of waking but that is all. I want to find a world in which these instances are united. Shall I succeed? I do not know. I scarcely care. What is important is to try […]"[30] Knowing her Russian friend's famous impatience with discourses of this kind, it is easy to imagine that were they seated in a café like the protagonists in "A Dill Pickle," he would have been the one walking out before Mansfield could finish her invocations of Gurdjieff's "Mind System."[31]

Unlike Koteliansky, however, one does not need to pass a judgment on how credible or honest Gurdjieff's pursuits were to evaluate their effects on Mansfield. Gurdjieff and his Institute obviously held a special attraction to her that went beyond his quasi-metaphysical doctrines. This attraction was not primarily intellectual, as it was with her interest in Ouspensky's lectures or in her reading of *Cosmic Anatomy*; it was viscerally emotional, aided, as it was, by her reaction to Gurdjieff's "harmonious" movements and dances. Watching people dance, even though she herself was often too weak to participate, lifted Mansfield spirits like nothing else could at this time when she feared (and was in fact) dying. If *Cosmic Anatomy* was in her opinion "a greater view of psychology," Gurdjieff was probably a greater view of psychotherapy. The dances also gave her "quite a different approach to writing," she informed Murry: "There is one which takes about 7 minutes & contains the whole life of woman—but everything! Nothing is left out. It taught me, it gave me more of woman's life than any book or poem."[32] Whether or not one could access the "Fourth Way" through Gurdjieff's methods must have seemed almost beside the point. "Here the philosophy of the 'system' takes second place," she informed her husband in late October.[33] In fact, when in December, a month before she died, Mansfield made herself read Ouspensky's 1912 *Tertium Organum* which elaborates his theory of the "Fourth Dimension," she had to confess that "for some reason it didn't carry me away."[34]

Similarly, Gurdjieff himself did not always carry her away either. On the one hand, she did believe that "Mr Gurdjieff is the only person who can help me."[35] On the other, while grateful to him for allowing her to stay despite her being so gravely ill and not being able to participate in most activities at the Institute, she was not particularly close to him: "I couldn't say he was *near* and *dear* to me! He is the embodiment of the life here, but at a remote distance."[36] And she even admitted that "sometimes I wonder if we 'make up' Mr Gurdjieff's wonderful

understanding."[37] What made her happy—and that is the word that she uses a lot in her last letters—was therefore not really the "mystery" or "the secret" at the foundation of it all, but watching people she liked, most of them Russian and very warm and understanding toward her despite the language barrier—"There is another thing here. Friendship. The real thing that you and I have dreamed of," she informed Murry[38]—not only perform these remarkable dances, but also make crafts, engage in hard physical labor, and, in general, be what she had learned from Gurdjieff to call "real."

"Real" and "truthful" are two other words she used as often as "happy" in her letters from Fontainebleau. She also now echoed Gurdjieff in her stated belief that one can hardly learn anything from reading or writing books, a rather unsettling conclusion for a dedicated writer and reader like Mansfield. "[A]ll I [am] doing now is trying to put into practice the 'ideas' I have had for so long of another and a *far more truthful* existence. I want to learn something that no books can teach me," she insisted when Murry, again and again, attacked Gurdjieff and his doctrines.[39] Around the same time she wrote in her notebook, referring to herself in third person:

> Let me take a case of K.M. She has led, ever since she can remember, a very typically false life. Yet through it all, there have been moments, instants, gleams, when she has felt the possibility of something quite other […] Haven't I been saying, all along, that the fault lies in trying to cure the body and pay no heed whatsoever to the sick psyche. Gurdjieff claims to do just what I have always dreamed might be done.[40]

Then, in one of her very last letters she wrote to Murry: "*I want to be REAL*. But this place has taught me so far how unreal I am."[41]

The critical views of Gurdjieff's true impact on Mansfield during these last months of her life usually fall into two stark categories. The first consists of critics and Mansfield biographers who believe that Gurdjieff was an outright charlatan who hastened her death by not being solicitous enough about her physical needs while practicing what amounted to a quasi-spiritual fraud. One biographer, Jeffrey Meyers, even states that Mansfield's "attraction to Gurdjieff was the fatal culmination of her life-long passion for Russians,"[42] seemingly implying that it was Gurdjieff and not tuberculosis that killed her. Mansfield scholars in this group largely subscribe to Edmund Wilson's characterization of Gurdjieff's methods in *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the 20s and 30s*:

> He combined making his clients uncomfortable in various gratuitous ways such as waking them up in the middle of the night and training them to perform

> grotesque dances with reducing them to a condition of complete docility, in which they would hold, at a signal, any position, however awkward, that they happened to be in at the moment. They were promised, if they proved themselves worthy of it, an ultimate initiation into the mysteries of an esoteric doctrine.[43]

On the other end of the spectrum, there is James Moore, a disciple of Gurdjieff and the author of his "official" biography,[44] who argues in his 1972 book, *Gurdjieff and Mansfield*, that Gurdjieff's spiritually beneficial influence on Mansfield was both real and very deeply felt by her. As a testimony to that he cites a recollection by Olgivanna (Olga Ivanovna Hinzenberg, who later married Frank Lloyd Wright), an ardent Gurdjieff follower who at some point shared a room with Mansfield: "'Did you know,' Olgivanna asked Katherine in mid-September, 'that you have been here more than two months already'? 'Two months?' said Katherine. 'Two thousand years you mean.'"[45] Gerri Kimber largely agrees with Moore:

> Mansfield was happy at Fontainebleau, that much is clear from her letters, notebooks and the testimonials of many of the other inhabitants of the Prieuré. After her death, and with initial stereotyping by the French critics, which thus instigated the process of hagiography, she was assigned, as Moore states, "the sheepish role of wronged woman to Gurdjieff's predatory male." From all we know of Mansfield and her determined personality, together with the above recollections, this scenario is impossible to countenance.[46]

Another Mansfield scholar, Pierce Butler, likewise believes that Gurdjieff proved to be a very significant spiritual guru for her. "During the last months of her life," he writes in his article in *Katherine Mansfield and Russia*, "Mansfield underwent what might be termed an examination, or perhaps an *experience,* of conscience that led her to an unflinching acknowledgement of her own shortcomings." He also suggests, "Based on her observed life recorded so perceptively in her notebook, she must have understood that 'self-remembering' involved an additional step: the mobilization of the attention, the attempt to turn one's attention inward in order to see the mechanic psyche at work."[47]

The truth, as is often the case, is probably somewhere in between. Even though there are definite echoes of Gurdjieff's teachings in her letters and notebooks during her residency at the Institute, Mansfield never really became fluent in the "System." And while there was most likely simply not enough time for that, given that she died slightly less than three months after joining Gurdjieff, it could have also been a testimony to how uncertain she still was about it all. In her correspondence from Fontainebleau, Mansfield is in fact very honest with herself, something which is a far cry from the image of a "hypnotised"[48]

or downright brainwashed person that her husband and some friends believed her to be at that point. “What do you mean by us meeting ‘on the other side’?” she quizzed Murry when he used his sarcasm after suggesting they were drifting apart because of her newly acquired interest in the occult. “Where […]? You are much more mysterious than I!” In these late communications, she definitely sounded like a person who was well aware that her openness to mystery and miracles was so much more about her illness and her dying than about any desire for further philosophical and metaphysical explorations. “I want to try and escape from my terrible illness,” she told Murry in the same letter.[49]

Were she to write “A Dill Pickle” after she was diagnosed with late stages of tuberculosis, read *Cosmic Anatomy*, met Ouspensky, and joined Gurdjieff, she probably would have planned the actions of her female protagonist somewhat differently—as a competition between “A Mind System” and that “something” that Buddha on the mantel in “The Daughters of the Late Colonel” embodies. I believe Mansfield would have still preferred that more subtle and less systematic “something.” In that, her private “otherworld” was probably quite similar to that of Vladimir Nabokov who, likely also influenced by Ouspensky’s *Tertium Organum* when still a very young man in Russia,[50] sought not a “System” but a firm conviction that produces “a salutary little chill” of “know[ing] more than one can express in words.”[51] This “little chill” appears indeed quite akin to Mansfield’s “queer feeling […] almost a pain and yet a pleasant pain” in “The Daughters.” And while Gurdjieff’s “System” is open to all kinds of very legitimate objections, there is no doubt that his “sacred dances” and what we now call “Gurdjieff movements,” as well as the general friendly and uplifting spirit of the place he and his mostly Russian followers established in Fontainebleau, helped to affirm Mansfield’s intuitive belief in this mysterious “something,” without which her last months would have been even more dreadful.

Notes

1 Joanna Woods, *Katerina: The Russian World of Katherine Mansfield* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 2001), 145.
2 Katherine Mansfield, “A Dill Pickle,” in CW2, 103.
3 H. P. Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary* (1892; CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017), 111.
4 P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G. I. Gurdjieff* (New York: Harcourt, 1949), 20. Emphasis in original.

5 Quoted in Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, 16.
6 Ibid., 28.
7 Ruth Mantz, "K.M.—Fifty Years After," *Adam International Review* 38 (1972): 121.
8 See Gerri Kimber, "'A Child of the Sun': Katherine Mansfield, Orientalism and Gurdjieff," in *Katherine Mansfield and Russia*, ed. Galya Diment, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 41–65. As Kimber points out, a year after she met Orage, "Mansfield had written a poem for Ida Baker called 'The Secret,' 'inscribing it,' as the latter notes, 'inside the cover of a small book of occult wisdom, which was always one of my treasures.' This book was a little theosophical volume called *Light on the Path and Karma*, written by Mabel Collins in 1886" (50).
9 CW4, 171.
10 Katherine Mansfield, "To L.H.B," in CW3, 96. I would like to thank The Society of Authors, the Literary Representative of the Estate of Katherine Mansfield, for allowing me to quote the poem in full. For more on the relationship between Mansfield and her brother, see, among others, J. Lawrence Mitchell, "Katherine Mansfield's War," in *Katherine Mansfield and World War One*, ed. Gerri Kimber, Todd Martin, Delia da Sousa Correa, Isobel Maddison, and Alice Kelly (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 27–41.
11 Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, 373, 374. Emphasis in original.
12 For more on Orage and Ouspensky, see John Carswell, *Lives and Letters: A. R. Orage, Katherine Mansfield, Beatrice Hastings, John Middleton Murry, S.S. Koteliansky 1906–1957* (New York: New Directions, 1978), where Orage is the central figure of the narrative.
13 For more on Gurdjieff and Orage, see Paul Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff and Orage: Brothers in Elysium* (York Beach, ME: Weiser Books, 2001).
14 Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, 386.
15 "M. B. Oxon," *Cosmic Anatomy and the Structure of the Ego* (London: John M. Watkins, 1921), 143.
16 CW4, 399.
17 CW4, 414. For more on Mansfield reading *Cosmic Anatomy*, see Maurizio Ascari, "A Raft in the Sea of Loneliness: Katherine Mansfield's Discovery of *Cosmic Anatomy*," in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 38–55.
18 CW4, 434.
19 Some of this discussion appeared in my article "Katherine Mansfield's Russian Healers," in *Katherine Mansfield's French Lives*, ed. Claire Davison and Gerri Kimber (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2016), 40–57.
20 Constance Garnett, "A Biographical Sketch," in *Letters of Anton Chekhov to His Family* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 36, 37.

21 *Letters* 5, 299.
22 CW4, 434.
23 CW4, 405.
24 Katherine Mansfield, "Daughters of the Late Colonel," in CW2, 280–1.
25 Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden Party," in CW2, 413.
26 Katherine Mansfield, "The Doves' Nest," in CW2, 452, 460.
27 In October 1922, just less than three months before her death, Mansfield wrote to Murry: "I have only written long or short scraps since '*The Fly*.'" *Letters* 5, 305. Emphasis in original.
28 Katherine Mansfield, "The Fly," in CW2, 479, 480.
29 *Letters* 5, 206. Emphasis in original.
30 *Letters* 5, 304.
31 For more on Koteliansky and Mansfield, see Galya Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury: The Life and Times of Samuel Koteliansky* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2011).
32 *Letters* 5, 322.
33 Ibid., 304.
34 Ibid., 332.
35 Ibid., 309.
36 Ibid., 323.
37 Ibid., 336.
38 Ibid., 319.
39 Ibid., 309. Emphasis in original.
40 CW4, 436–7.
41 *Letters* 5, 341. Emphasis in original.
42 Jeffrey Meyers, *Katherine Mansfield: A Biography* (New York: New Directions, 1978), 242.
43 Edmund Wilson, *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the 20s and 30s* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952), 494.
44 James Moore, *Gurdjieff: A Biography* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1999).
45 James Moore, *Gurdjieff and Mansfield* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1980), 158.
46 Kimber, "'A Child of the Sun,'" 60.
47 Pierce Butler, "'The Only Truth I Really Care About.' Katherine Mansfield at the Gurdjieff Institute: A Biographical Reflection," in *Katherine Mansfield and Russia*, 125, 126. Emphasis in original.
48 *Letters* 5, 323.
49 Ibid., 309.
50 For more on that, see Vladimir Alexandrov, *Nabokov's Otherworld* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).
51 Vladimir Nabokov, 1964 *Playboy* interview, in Vladimir Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (New York: Random House, 1973), 45.

23

Katherine Mansfield and France

Gerri Kimber

The Priory. Here is the pine tree. Here the beech,
The flowerbed, the roof, the sad water of the pond …
Oh Mansfield, was it really there that you went to die?
Was it there that you closed your eyelids for the last time?
Alas, how many regrets haunt the doorways of stone![1]

Introduction

In *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France*,[2] I offered the first book-length study of Katherine Mansfield's reception in France, assessing why the author's reputation in France has always been greater than elsewhere and questioning why her persona, in many instances, was idealized to the point of hagiography. By contrast, in England, generally unfavorable reviews of her husband John Middleton Murry's factory-like production of Mansfield volumes started the evolution of a dismissal of her work in general, and this negative opinion dominated, for the most part, English literary appreciation of her writing until the late 1950s (i.e., until after Murry's death in 1957). Thus, the seeds of an "other-worldly" personality were never allowed to germinate, since Mansfield's reputation was increasingly tainted by the fact that she was Murry's deceased wife. As Jenny McDonnell notes, "Sylvia Lynd described Murry's generation of a Mansfield industry as 'boiling Katherine's bones to make soup,' while Lawrence claimed he 'made capital out of her death.'"[3] The French, however, were unburdened by the hordes of family, friends, and acquaintances of Mansfield lurking behind every cupboard door in England. Instead, they seized upon this pretty, young New Zealand writer who, in their eyes, had died so tragically on their own soil and who had apparently written

so charmingly about France and the French. (Indeed, the few who had actually met her, such as Francis Carco, made much capital out of their acquaintance.) Aided by Murry's selective editing, they more or less invented a persona of Mansfield still revered in France today. In particular, the early French critics grasped any salient biographical trifle in order to substantiate their growing hagiography—her beauty, her ill health, her supposed love of France and the French, her romantic yet doomed love affair with Murry, her search for the spiritual. But the fact remains that the writer they were slavishly promoting, with very little critical dissent, bore only a passing resemblance to the figure known to her family and friends. The legend in France appeared to breed, fractal-like, in an ever-widening genealogy of related links. Mansfield as a personality was reduced to little more than a literary pawn, outmaneuvered by Murry's editing of her work and by the speculative, ideological maneuvers of the French critics themselves. Indeed, those critics who attempted to oust this popular perception saw their viewpoints submerged by the huge tidal wave of French critical opinion, determined to uphold this falsely created personality at whatever cost to historical accuracy. In addition, this critical opinion was almost exclusively a Catholic and reactionary one.

Over time Murry became progressively more disliked in English literary circles, scathingly caricatured, for example, in Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point* (1928) as Denis Burlap.[4] As early as May 1925, writing in the *Nation & The Athenaeum*, Huxley's aversion to Murry's hagiography of his dead wife was already plainly evident:

> Each of Miss Mansfield's stories is a window into a lighted room. The glimpse of the inhabitants sipping their tea and punch is enormously exciting. But one knows nothing, when one has passed, of what they are really like. That is why, however thrilling at a first reading, her stories do not wear.[5]

The main reason for Murry's literary ostracization was precisely this over-exposure of his dead wife's work and his aim to publish as much of her literary remains as the public could stomach, while at the same time editing out any material which he felt did not correlate with the image of her he was trying to put across. This attitude was summed up by Katherine Anne Porter in 1937:

> The misplaced emphasis [… is perhaps owed …] to her literary executor [Murry], who has edited and published her letters and journals with a kind of merciless insistence, a professional anxiety for her fame on what seems to be the wrong grounds, and from which in any case his personal relation to her might have excused him for a time. Katherine Mansfield's work is the important fact

> about her, and she is in danger of the worst fate that an artist can suffer—to be overwhelmed by her own legend, to have her work neglected for an interest in her personality.[6]

In spite of such criticism, however, Murry's editorial stance remained more or less the same until his death in 1957.

The Mantz/Murry Biography

In 1933 *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* by Ruth Mantz and John Middleton Murry was published,[7] offering the first real evidence of Murry's proprietorial editorial stance regarding his dead wife. This was the first biography of Mansfield to be published, quickly translated into French in 1935, and titled much more appropriately *La Jeunesse de Katherine Mansfield* (*The Youthful Years of Katherine Mansfield*), since the book only covers the years up to 1912 and the beginning of Mansfield's relationship with Murry.[8] For all biographical material after 1912, the authors referred the reader to the editions of Mansfield's *Letters* and *Journal*, severely edited by Murry. Of Mansfield's troubled life from 1908 to 1911, much is left unsaid or else left to speculation on the part of Mantz. This is not a book to destroy myths, nor was it ever intended as such. It is this volume, more than any other, which raises the stakes in the hagiography of Mansfield's life in France, and for which Murry was directly responsible.

In *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*, Mantz, a young, inexperienced American postgraduate student and passionate Mansfield devotee found herself at the mercy of Murry's editorial power when it was suggested by her publisher, Constable, that he rewrite parts of it. Thus, Mantz's original intention of writing—on her own—a full biography of Mansfield's life eventually became a rather fanciful, romantic—and, in places, inaccurate—distortion of the author's early life, which Murry made the decision to end in 1912, the beginning of Mansfield's relationship with him. For Mantz, the collaboration with Murry was a frustrating and unhappy experience, and the rest of her life, until her death in 1979, was, to a large extent, taken up with the writing of numerous versions of the biography as *she* would have written it, though sadly she was never able to find a publisher for any of her manuscripts.

The book ended up as a sycophantic portrayal of an almost fictional character, so little does Mansfield as portrayed in the book resemble the Mansfield known to her family and friends. In the introduction, Murry played down his role: "I

do not really deserve the position of collaborator [...] but since my contribution has been rather more than a mere revision [...] it has been thought best that we should share the responsibility for the work."[9] The religious element is brought in almost immediately:

> Such candour and transparence are the product of a long travail of soul—of an incessant process of self-purgation, of self-refinement into that condition of crystal clarity for which Katherine Mansfield unconsciously struggled and towards the end of her life consciously prayed.[10]

Of her early misdemeanors and constant risk-taking, Murry writes: "This is the voice of the Life within urging Man to yet more Life. This is the voice to which Jesus of Nazareth was himself obedient unto death."[11] Continuing the annexation of Mansfield to Christ, he argues:

> What has Jesus to do with Blake, with Keats, with Katherine Mansfield? He has everything to do with them. They belong to his pattern. They are the life-adventurers, who turn from the wisdom of prudence and seek the wisdom of experience.[12]

In mentioning Mansfield's name alongside such literary luminaries as Blake and Keats, and bringing Jesus into his argument for good measure, Murry entwines her life with theirs, so that by the end of the introduction it is hard not to see Mansfield as a wholly religious writer, whose "journal" (though in fact no such thing had ever been written by Mansfield), was a consciously written spiritual undertaking. He goes further:

> Katherine's little boat, Lawrence's small ship—fraught with the essential soul in its act of desperate choice—these, this (for it is one single thing, one single power, frail as a thread, yet of force to bind the universe and move the world)—this is God.[13]

So, Mansfield's name is not just linked with that of Jesus, but also now with God. Following its translation into French in 1935 it is here, in this short introduction, that "saint Katherine" undergoes her ultimate step to canonization in France. Finally, adding weight and authority to his introduction, Murry plays his master card; it is he whom Mansfield married, he to whom she entrusted her life. The final sentence of the introduction ends thus: "'In spite of all,' she wrote to her husband in a letter found among her belongings, to be opened only after her death; 'no truer lovers ever walked the earth than we were—in spite of all, in spite of all.'"[14] Incorporating his own name into this saintly mix, Murry adds

a certain patina and air of authority; she is telling him in that final letter how special their relationship was, and now he, in his turn, is telling the world.

After Mansfield's death, Murry underwent a spiritual conversion of sorts; as Frank Lea, Murry's biographer, notes: "Murry made at least four reputations—as an artistic and literary critic in his twenties, a religious in his thirties, a socialist in his forties, and a pacifist in his fifties."[15] He goes on to explain how by the 1930s an opinion poll taken at Cambridge revealed Murry to be "the most despised literary figure of the time," and by the 1950s he was "either unmentionable or else forgotten."[16] Murry's crises of faith, coupled with his interest in the spiritual, were marked by the publication of several religious volumes around this time, including *The Life of Jesus*, *Things to Come*, and *God: An Introduction to the Science of Metabiology*.[17] In 1938, he wrote *Heaven and Earth*, a collection of essays assembled and amplified to substantiate the thesis that "ours is a Christian civilisation. The Christianity it implies is explicitly Pauline."[18]

The early 1930s, as mentioned above, marked the nadir of Murry's reputation in England, as a result of the merciless promotion of his dead first wife and also because of his subjective writing on D. H. Lawrence.[19] As Lea acknowledges, "Both in England and France, the rise of Lawrence's and Katherine's reputations undoubtedly contributed to the decline of Murry's."[20] William Godwin also points out that "Murry has not only been underestimated for his own contribution to literature, but has been adversely, even bitterly, criticised for not being the friend or the husband he should have been."[21] Murry wrote extensively on his relationship with Lawrence, though at the time of Lawrence's death the pair had had little contact for many years.

A document purporting to be a "biography" of Murry by Lawrence, under the pseudonym "J. C." (Jesus Christ), was privately printed in 1929.[22] This "biography," entitled *The Life of J. Middleton Murry*, consists of one A4 sheet folded in half, with the title on the outside. Opening the page, one finds the following printed on the right-hand side:

> John Middleton was born in the year
> of the Lord 1891? It happened also
> to be the most lying year of the most
> lying century since time began, but what
> is that to an innocent babe![23]

Murry's new-found "spirituality," together with the incessant promotion of his dead wife, was more than Lawrence and most of his literary friends and

acquaintances could stomach, and they were determined to lampoon him for it. Murry's spirituality played well, however, in France, where Mansfield's own (mostly invented) spirituality was the main concern for most of the then reactionary, Catholic critics promoting her work. Thus, Murry's spiritual conversion of the 1930s indirectly fed into the reputation of Mansfield in France, since his editing of her work promoted a spiritual slant. All it achieved in England was to make him even more of a figure of ridicule, and by association to taint Mansfield's reputation.

New Evidence

In 2011, the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand, purchased a substantial amount of previously unknown manuscript materials from Murry's heirs (who remain, to this day, the copyright holders of Mansfield's literary estate). This included correspondence between Murry and several French editors and exponents of Mansfield's work in France. This new material revealed for the first time how intimately involved Murry was with certain aspects of the French promulgation of Mansfield's false persona in France. However, as I shall expose, even Murry's assiduous attentions over his dead wife's literary estate could not prevent unfavorable material being published. In addition, documents held in the University of Edinburgh's Special Collections offer even further evidence of Murry's in-depth involvement with Mansfield-related activity across the Channel.

The material mentioned above offers a treasure-trove of new information. For example, handwritten on a single sheet of paper is the following candid note by Murry, sadly undated:

> The instructions were conflicting. I had the choice between doing entirely what I liked with her papers and destroying as much as possible. But what did "possible" mean? It was "possible" for me, in one sense, to destroy them all; in another, more intimate sense, it was morally impossible for me to do any such thing. Quite deliberately, I chose to preserve them all, and to publish as much as I believed to be of value to the world. For that choice I take full responsibility.[24]

The "instructions" Murry discusses above refer, of course, to Mansfield's infamously vague letter, written to him on August 7, 1922, just five months before her death, but sent to Mr. Kay, her father's colleague at the Bank of New Zealand in London, who had been a stalwart father-figure in Mansfield's life

since her arrival in London in 1908, and which Kay forwarded to Murry after her death. Part of the letter reads:

> All my manuscripts I leave entirely to you to do what you like with. Go through them one day, dear love, and destroy all you do not use. Please destroy all letters you do not wish to keep & all papers. You know my love of tidiness. Have a clean sweep, Bogey, and leave all fair—will you?[25]

In addition, in Mansfield's actual will, drawn up a week later (August 14, 1922), she had made the following equally ambiguous request, also referenced in the above note by Murry: "All manuscripts notebooks papers letters I leave to John Murry likewise I should like him to publish as little as possible and to tear up and burn as much as possible. He will understand that I desire to leave as few traces of my camping ground as possible."[26] Given that Murry's note seems to offer a rebuttal to criticism of his numerous posthumous Mansfield publications, it was probably written in the 1950s. Indeed, the general public's reaction to Murry's publications (as in the quotation below, regarding his second, 1951 edition of Mansfield's letters to him) drew a mixed post bag. Not everyone was complimentary. On September 17, 1951, a Mr. Anthony Berle had written thus to Murry:

> I see you have now decided to publish the unexpurgated love letters of your poor late wife, K. Mansfield. I should have thought you would have preferred to die of starvation in a garret rather than do this. The reaction of all decent people will be anger and disgust. Think for a moment what so sensitive a woman as K. Mansfield would have felt about this exploitation of her private feelings![27]

It is interesting to speculate why Murry chose to keep such a letter amongst his papers when he could have destroyed it. I have included it in this essay since it demonstrates a marked contrast with the overwhelmingly fawning French reception of any book related to Mansfield.

It was against such a background that Murry edited Mansfield's papers. He remained absolutely insistent on having full control of Mansfield's estate as her literary executor, as another document proves. An undated letter from Murry to Mansfield's Canadian nephew Andrew Bell (the son of her eldest sister Vera), written around October 1950, had been penned in response to a letter from Bell regarding his possible publication of some manuscripts of Mansfield's in the possession of Garnet Trowell, with whom she had an affair in the winter of 1908–9, leading to a pregnancy and a subsequent stillbirth. Garnet had emigrated to Canada, and it seems contact had been made with Andrew. Murry decided he was clearly going to be firm from the outset with the publication request:

> With regard to Mr Garnet Trowell's Katherine Mansfield MSS, it is important to be clear on one point, at the outset. The copyright in all K.M's MSS, no matter who possesses the actual manuscripts, belongs to me; and it rests with me to decide whether they shall be published & on what terms.[28]

His determination to remain fully in control of his dead wife's literary estate was unwavering, and the Trowell-related documents were never published by Bell. In France, however, Murry's connection to Mansfield made him a key player in the Mansfield cult, as I shall reveal, although Francis Carco would be one Frenchman who steadfastly refused to play ball.

Murry's French Correspondence

On January 11, 1946, Murry received a letter from the French publishers, Albin Michel, who were in the process of publishing posthumously Odette Lenoel's book, *La Vocation de Katherine Mansfield* [*Katherine Mansfield's Vocation*]. Lenoel had been tragically killed on May 28, 1944, during a German aerial bombardment of her hometown of Angers, France. They were now requesting a photo of Mansfield to use in the book. The volume is an emotionally charged and biased Catholic reading of Mansfield's spiritual evolution, concentrating on the ways in which her life was shaped by ill-health and suffering, and thus wholly part of the French hagiographical tradition of Mansfield criticism. Later that year, Murry wrote to the Catholic critic Henri Daniel-Rops, who had written the preface, stating how he had read the greater part of the book: "I had a brief correspondence with Mdlle Lenoel some years ago; and I was deeply impressed by her penetration into the inwardness of Katherine Mansfield's work. I was grieved to hear of her tragic death."[29] On February 19, 1947, Murry replied to a letter from the sister of Odette Lenoel (who had returned three letters from Murry to her sister), regarding the latter's book, stating, "In my opinion it is the best study of Katherine Mansfield which has so far been written."[30] Sadly those three letters do not appear to have survived, but such a response only served to affirm that the puppet master of Mansfield's posthumous reputation was cementing—and even encouraging—a hagiographical, spiritual response to his dead wife's life and work.

On October 9, 1950, Murry's brother Richard sent him a letter from France where he had recently met Roland Merlin, the author of yet another sycophantic French book on Mansfield: *Le Drame secret de Katherine Mansfield* [*Katherine*

Mansfield's Secret Drama].[31] In the book, Merlin considers the last ten years of Mansfield's life in an all too familiar pattern of biased descriptions and suppositions. Richard Murry's letter is on the whole disparaging:

> There is a funny little man here who has written a funny little book on Katherine Mansfield. […] I think he is un "esprit loyal" who could be counted on to try to do the right thing. As to his discretion, I am not so sure. He strikes me as rather näif. But he certainly does take pains to try to be accurate.[32]

In fact, Murry had written to Merlin on September 12, 1950, in another example of his asserting authority over all aspects of his dead wife's life and literary remains, explaining that he had read the book, that it had interested him, but outlining several factual errors which included a false attribution to a photo of Mansfield and a falsely presented "letter" by Mansfield, which was in fact a fictitious diary entry. He corrected the misapprehension that Mansfield's room at the Prieuré had been in a stable (which of course would only have added to her saintliness), asserting that she only rested in the stable during the day. He was also firm in correcting the notion that he had "attacked" D. H. Lawrence during his lifetime, or that he had been callously indifferent to the thought that Mansfield might die. He concluded the letter by stating: "This list is not exhaustive. It must not be taken as implying that I admit that all the other statements of fact in your book are correct."[33] Merlin replied on September 26, 1950, thanking Murry for his letter and offering to correct the errors in any subsequent edition, though on the whole, he said, he stood vehemently by his book.[34] As can be seen, Murry corrected facts, but did nothing to dispel the saintly aura which permeated this and other similar volumes.

In response to an unknown recipient, requesting a copy of an essay on Mansfield by the French critic Edmond Jaloux, Murry replied on September 29, 1953:

> I am afraid I cannot really help you. I have a fairly vivid memory of Edmond Jaloux entertaining Katherine Mansfield and myself to lunch at the Boeuf a la Mode in 1922 (May?), and I remember his writing an essay upon her work which (if it is not accessible to you already) I might be able to find. It was published in book form. And it is certainly true that he was one of the very first French critics to recognise her genius. (In general she was much more highly esteemed in France than in England.)[35]

This letter is of interest for two reasons: first, in its tone and vocabulary ("highly esteemed," "genius") Murry's letter feeds the flames of the French Mansfield cult,

and second, it reveals that Jaloux, one of the main architects of the Mansfield myth in France, had actually met Mansfield and Murry in Paris during the last year of Mansfield's life, an encounter not previously noted elsewhere.

The literary editor at the French publishing house Stock, which published most of Mansfield's works in France, was the poet and novelist André Bay, with whom Murry had a cordial working relationship.[36] In October 1953, Bay wrote to Murry with several translation queries regarding their soon-to-be published translation of Mansfield's letters to Murry, which Constable had published in 1951. Murry replied on November 6, 1953, answering the queries and also giving his opinion on the recent biography of Mansfield written by Antony Alpers ("on the whole good," but "inaccurate in various details which will need correction if you contemplate publishing a translation"), and another volume on Mansfield by the French writer Anne-Marie Monnet ("I did not think the book as a whole was successful").[37] On February 12, 1954, Bay wrote to Murry, sending him three copies of the first volume of the new French Mansfield letters edition and also enquiring about the "Definitive" version of the *Journal*, which Constable were now advertising and which would be published in England later that year, as well the possibility of publishing a French omnibus edition of Mansfield's stories with a print run of 8,000 copies, to which Murry readily agreed.[38] Mansfield's works were certainly big business for Stock, and sold well. The royalties for Murry as her literary executor would have been considerable.

One aspect of Mansfield's life—or rather her death—which touched the French, was the fact that she had died and was buried on French soil. On October 5, 1954, Murry wrote to the Mayor of Avon, M. Georges Lucquin, requesting information regarding the possibility of acquiring a new tombstone for Mansfield. He had been prompted in his action by the visit to Mansfield's grave by one of Vera's sons (note he never actually went there himself): "He told me the stone has weathered so much over the course of time, that the inscription is now barely visible."[39] Murry asked for advice as to the possibility of renewing the stone, indicating he would be happy to pay all the costs. On October 10, 1954, Lucquin wrote back to Murry, expressing his devotion to the memory of Mansfield: "I am also proud to be the guardian of her venerated remains; she has become a true idol in our town. In January 1953, we devotedly celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of her death."[40] He then went on to confirm that the words on Mansfield's tombstone had become so worn and illegible that it was hard to make any of them out, continuing, "It is to be regretted, however, that her tomb is barely visible; its location is unfavourable and there is no actual headstone. Many visitors look for it in vain. [...] The stone is indeed horizontal and it is

difficult for rainwater to seep away (Figure 5)."[41] In another letter, Lucquin put Murry in contact with a local stone mason and waxed lyrical about Mansfield: "This enchanting writer full of simplicity, truth and sometimes poetry is already well-known in France; some of her most beautiful stories appear in the text books of young students. Also, I can never repeat enough how proud we are to be the guardians of her precious remains."[42] On October 13, replying to Lucquin, Murry sent further details about the new headstone he wanted for Mansfield's grave, noting that, following a separate correspondence with the stonemason, he was relieved it was not going to be in granite: "Katherine hated granite—she said it was always so cold."[43] On February 4, 1955, Murry wrote to Lucquin again, this time thanking him for having sent photos of Mansfield's newly restored grave (Figure 6), and by way of appreciation, sent him a deluxe French edition of Mansfield's stories, in which he stuck one of Mansfield's personal calling cards, with her signature on it.

The epistolary friendship between the two men continued. On April 29, 1955, M. Lucquin wrote to Murry, stating: "We have devoted to your dear Katherine a cult that grows every day." He continued: "Her body of work enjoys immense success with intellectuals who consider it one of the most remarkable of our time. The magnificent book that you have graciously sent […] is my bedside book."[44] Later in 1955, replying to a letter from Lucquin who had sent Murry a

Figure 5 Katherine Mansfield original gravestone, before headstone added. The cemetery, Fontainebleau-Avon. Ref: PAColl-6826-29. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Figure 6 The cemetery, Fontainebleau-Avon, showing Katherine Mansfield's grave today, front left, and G. I. Gurdjieff's, back right (two standing stones). Bernard Bosque Collection.

photo of the street in Avon bearing the name of Mansfield, together with a copy of her death certificate, Murry wrote:

> How right you are! Katherine Mansfield had no procedures for arriving at the living truth of her stories and letters. As for her stories, she put a lot of hard

> work into them—but silent and almost half-conscious, sometimes lasting weeks. But when she started writing, the creation was so fast that she could not form whole words. Her writing became a kind of hieroglyphic typing, almost unreadable: it was only by copying that she used her normal writing, that it was quite beautiful.[45]

On March 27, 1955, André Bay wrote to Murry again, requesting his approval for a new and complete edition of Mansfield's *Journal*, twice the size of the one published by Stock in 1933, to be published by Le Club des Librairies Associés (a press set up by Bay himself).[46] Murry was in contact with Bay later in 1955, the latter having written to him asking him for a particular photo of Mansfield—in which Mansfield has a large daisy in her dress lapel—together with the list of Russian words that Mansfield had written down in one of her notebooks during her last days at the Prieuré. Murry replied on August 22, 1955, stating that he had sadly mislaid both items, but was sending substitute images.[47]

A strange couple of letters offer proof that Murry was not always able to control publications across the Channel. In a letter dated September 24, 1954, to a Mme A. Duguet-Huguier, who had inquired about a volume he had written called *Katherine Mansfield et Moi*, Murry replied:

> I have never written anything under the title *Katherine Mansfield et Moi.* But the publication to which you refer is probably an extract from an unfinished autobiography of mine, called Between Two Worlds. Since I have never seen the French version I am unable to say how complete it is.[48]

And it would appear that as late as 1956 Murry was apparently completely unaware of the French version of his autobiography *Between Two Worlds* (1935), which had been published in France under the completely new of title *Katherine Mansfield et Moi* (1941). In response to a letter sent to him by a M. Henri Devaux on the subject, he had replied:

> No such book as *K.M. et moi*, written by myself, exists. I have seen other references to it; but it remains a mystery to me. I can only suppose that somebody has detached certain chapters (without authority) from my autobiography […] But this is only supposition on my part, since I have never seen the book.[49]

This seems an extraordinary statement to make and suggests that the French edition of the biography, published by Fernard Sorlot, and with an introduction by René Lalou, had been published illegally, and without Murry's permission.

There was even more troubling news for Murry the following year. In 1956, the publisher André Sauret published a deluxe edition of *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, in a smart slipcase. Murry's copy, now in the Alexander Turnbull

Library in Wellington, contains pencil annotations disparaging parts of the Preface, which had been written by Francis Carco. Here are the sentences to which Murry added an annotation:

> Carco: "At that time, she was certainly not rich and lived sparsely on articles from English newspapers and novels that a London publisher published in a popular collection."
> Murry: "quite untrue."[50]
> Carco: "John had, in Paris, before he met Katherine, a real passion for the girls of the Latin quarter. He changed them regularly and pushed the habit to the extent of sending flowers every morning to each conquest from the night before."
> Murry: "quite untrue."[51]
> Carco: "That evening, John, or rather Jack, seemed drunk with happiness."
> Murry: "Which evening?"[52]
> Carco: "[…] so much did she look around her, as if she had wanted to remember her way."
> Murry: "When was all this? 1913?"[53]
> Carco: "This friendship [with Mansfield], a little extravagant, I admit, bound us passionately together up until the day when John Middleton Murry took umbrage. It was only at that time, during the war, that he married her."
> Murry: "Quite untrue. We were married in 1918."[54]
> Carco: "One day, on the terrace of the Weber, on the rue Royale, Jack, who occupied the neighbouring table and who I had not noticed, put his hand on my shoulder."
> Murry: "This is, possibly, true."[55]
> Carco: "'We are just passing through,' she continued. 'Tomorrow I have to go and visit a sanitorium … near Avon.'"
> Murry: "No: this was while she was with Manoukhin."[56]

Such inaccuracies gnawed away at Murry. On March 17, 1956, he felt compelled to write to Carco, expressing his displeasure: "I want to put on record that there are some serious misstatements in this preface. If they had appeared in English, and in England, I should have been compelled to challenge them publicly."[57] He goes on to list the errors, including the ones annotated in his copy of the book. He is particularly strong in his condemnation of the sentence about the apparently multiple casual love affairs in Paris he is supposed to have had before meeting Mansfield, stating: "This is romance, not fact. I had but one 'conquest,' as I remember only too well. Her name was Marguéritte. Since it was a painful affair for both of us, my memory is vivid and accurate."[58] Carco did not

reply to Murry's letter, and it is clear that what Murry perceived to be lies and misrepresentations in the preface continued to eat away at him. On April 16, 1956, Murry wrote to his son-in-law, Jean de Coninck in Brussels, requesting he ask his father for advice:

> If this preface to which I so violently object had been published in England, I should immediately have commenced proceedings for libel; but since it is published in France, I do not know what I ought to do. […] I had expected to receive a reply from Carco, and had at any rate hoped that he would be prepared to make a public withdrawal of his statements; but since I have had no reply to my letter […] I have more or less made up my mind to take what legal action I can in the matter.[59]

Jean replied, saying that his father advised caution in taking legal action against Carco in France since, so many years after the events in question, it would be hard for Murry to prove that what Carco had claimed was false and that moreover Carco would almost certainly *welcome* the publicity. Indeed, on May 11, 1956, Jean's father replied personally to Murry, confirming the above and suggesting that Murry write to Carco one more time, and if there was still no response, then he should consider publishing an article in a Parisian paper exposing the errors in Carco's Preface. The extant documents do not reveal any further trace of this correspondence, and of course, less than a year later, on March 12, 1957, Murry died.

Conclusion

As I have argued, apart from the early months following her death, Mansfield never really had the same sort of posthumous reputation in England that she had in France, except the negative one of being Murry's wife. It was Murry who provided the details, in his edited books of Mansfield's posthumous works, in his introductions to innumerable volumes, in his letters to French critics, together with his own autobiography, which fed the information eagerly absorbed by so many French critics.

The first French critical reviews, and especially the translation of the Mantz/Murry biography, instigated a myth surrounding Mansfield's persona which has more or less continued to the present day, as I revealed in *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France*. However, when I wrote that book, even I was not aware of the amount of correspondence that flowed between Murry

and the French writers, critics, editors, and translators of her work, of which just a small collection of letters remains extant, and how involved Murry was with his wife's posthumous French publications. Recently accessible archival material also reveals how Murry did his utmost to control his dead wife's literary estate, mostly successfully. It is strangely ironic, then, that the one Frenchman Murry came to loathe above all others—Francis Carco—the only man whom Mansfield had an affair with during her eleven-year relationship with Murry (that we are aware of), was able to publish scurrilous misinformation and seemingly get away with it, as a result of Murry's death. As Murry's star waned in England, there remained comforting letters of admiration to rely on from across the Channel.

Notes

1 Dominique Renouard, "La Tombe de Katherine Mansfield: En revenant de la tombe de Katherine Mansfield et du Prieuré" ["Katherine Mansfield's Tomb: On returning from Katherine Mansfield's tomb, and from the Priory"], *Nouvelle Revue*, 161 (1938): 58. My translation.

2 Gerri Kimber, *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France* (Bern and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008).

3 Jenny McDonnell, *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace: At the Mercy of the Public* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 170.

4 Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1928). Denis Burlap is a facetious and hypocritical individual who idolizes (and thinks himself like) Saint Francis. In his biography of Murry, Frank Lea states: "[Murry] had been more outraged by Burlap than he cared to admit. His first impulse had been to challenge Huxley to a duel." See Frank Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (London: Methuen, 1959), 159.

5 Aldous Huxley, "The Traveller's Eye-View," *Nation & Athenaeum* 37, May 16, 1925, 204.

6 Katherine Anne Porter, "The Art of Katherine Mansfield," *Nation* 145, October 23, 1937, 435.

7 Ruth Elvish Mantz and John Middleton Murry, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1933).

8 Ruth Elvish Mantz and John Middleton Murry, *La Jeunesse de Katherine Mansfield*, trans. M. T. Guéritte (Paris: Stock, 1935).

9 Mantz and Murry, *The Life,* 1.

10 Ibid., 2.

11 Ibid., 10.
12 Ibid., 11.
13 Ibid., 12–13.
14 Ibid., 15.
15 F. A. Lea, *Lawrence and Murry: A Twofold Vision* (London: Bentham Press, 1975), 51.
16 Ibid., 52.
17 John Middleton Murry, *The Life of Jesus* (London: Cape, 1926); *Things to Come* (London: Cape, 1928); *God: An Introduction to the Science of Metabiology* (London: Cape, 1929).
18 Philip Mairet, *John Middleton Murry* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1958), 38. John Middleton Murry, *Heaven and Earth* (London: Cape, 1938).
19 As well as numerous articles on D. H. Lawrence, Murry also wrote *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Cape, 1931), *Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Cape, 1933), and *Love, Freedom and Society: An Analytical Comparison of D. H. Lawrence and Albert Schweitzer* (London: Cape, 1957). Of the *Reminiscences*, Mairet states: "The personal reminiscences occupy less than half the book. The rest comprises Murry's answer to the attacks upon him which followed the publication of *Son of Woman*" (*John Middleton Murry*, 38).
20 Lea, *Lawrence and Murry*, 53.
21 Quoted in Ernest G. Griffin, *John Middleton Murry* (New York: Twayne, 1969), 21.
22 D. H. Lawrence ("J. C."), *The Life of J. Middleton Murry* (privately printed, 1929). Quoted in Warren Roberts and Paul Poplawski, *A Bibliography of D. H. Lawrence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 183–4.
23 Lawrence ("J. C."), n.p.
24 Handwritten note by Murry, n.d., Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-094. Alexander Turnbull Library.
25 *Letters* 5, 234–5.
26 Quoted in *Letters* 5, 235n1.
27 Anthony Berle to Murry, September 17, 1951, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library.
28 Murry to Andrew Bell, n.d., Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library.
29 Murry to Henri Daniel-Rops, November 13, 1946, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-080. Alexander Turnbull Library.
30 Murry to Mlle Lenoel, February 19, 1947, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-080. Alexander Turnbull Library.
31 Roland Merlin, *Le Drame secret de Katherine Mansfield* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1950).

32 Richard Murry to Murry, October 9, 1950, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-075. Alexander Turnbull Library.
33 Murry to Roland Merlin, September 12, 1950, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-075. Alexander Turnbull Library.
34 Roland Merlin to Murry, September 26, 1950, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-075. Alexander Turnbull Library.
35 Murry to unknown recipient, September 29, 1953, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-075. Alexander Turnbull Library.
36 See Kimber, *The View from France*, 86.
37 Murry to André Bay, November 6, 1953, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library.
38 André Bay to Murry, February 12, 1954, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library.
39 Murry to Monsieur Lucquin, October 5, 1954, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library. My translation.
40 Monsieur Lucquin to Murry, October 10, 1954, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library. My translation.
41 Ibid. My translation.
42 Monsieur Lucquin to Murry, October 16, 1954, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library. My translation.
43 Murry to Monsieur Lucquin, October 13, 1954, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library. My translation.
44 Monsieur Lucquin to Murry, April 29, 1955, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library. My translation.
45 Murry to Monsieur Lucquin, May 11, 1955, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library. My translation.
46 Andre Bay to Murry, March 27, 1955, Murry Family: Literary and Personal Papers, MS-Papers-11326-079. Alexander Turnbull Library.
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Part Six

Critical Approaches to Katherine Mansfield

24

Katherine Mansfield and Reading

Rishona Zimring

Katherine Mansfield read with fierce dedication and a remarkable power to describe reading's pleasures. Recent scholarship on her involvement with periodical culture has illuminated Mansfield's skills as a commentator on the art of reading in her role, for example, as reviewer for the *Athenaeum*.[1] Between 1918 and 1922, she wrote over one hundred book reviews in which she sharpened her descriptive vocabulary, often using gastronomic and tactile metaphors to emphasize reading as a sensual joy. She compared a book to jam that "should be really good jam—none of your familiar mixtures from a dreary pot, but some exquisite preserve of the author—black cherry, Frimley peach, sharp, sweet quince."[2] She praised a novel by Joseph Conrad by likening it to a bottle of wine: "this sweet, sparkling, heady mixture in the strange-shaped bottle with the fantastic label."[3] In another review, she reveled in the chance to describe a book's upper-middle-class milieu as a "certain large shop in London": "Here one may linger, stroking the languid velvet; staring at embroideries that seem to come to ever richer, more intricate flowering the longer one looks; sighing over chiffons, soft as the shadows on sea water."[4] Mansfield's reviews were opportunities to describe reading, in lavish displays of stylized prose, as a sensual response to the material world. Her descriptions are grounded in the look and feel of fabrics, in exquisite tastes of delectable foodstuffs.[5] Her embodied reading invites consideration of her talents for "surface reading," a term in contemporary literary criticism for a practice "grounded in documentation and description" that provocatively resists habits of interpretive reading between the lines or beneath the surface for hidden or coded meanings.[6] Mansfield revels in surfaces and descriptions, bringing her even closer than surface reading's advocates do to what the essayist Susan Sontag called an "erotics of art."[7] If Mansfield's sensual pleasure in commentary was a modernist version of surface reading, it was

certainly conspicuous in the published reviews in which she assumed a seasoned voice of authoritative connoisseurship. That pleasure is also found in much of her personal writing, going all the way back to her earliest journals.

Before she was the author Katherine Mansfield, she was the precocious teenager Kathleen Beauchamp, who wrote passionate accounts of reading as an accompaniment to the delights of music. As a student at Queen's College, London, she was becoming enamored of music and literature as gateways to a wide world of kindred spirits beyond her family with whom she had sailed from a New Zealand that felt remote and isolated to her. In an essayistic journal entry of 1903, the young Mansfield begins with apparent appreciation: "The man that I really have a great admiration for in a Brass Band, is a cornet player. There is such a stern and sober air of reality about himself and his instrument, and I really think that the way in which he has his feelings under control is marvelous!!"[8] But further along in the passage she warns: "Players of the cornet should never attempt anything approaching what is commonly termed 'light' music. They should steadily stick to 'Funeral Marches,' 'Lamentations' and a few of the average 'Coronation Odes.'" And she concludes with a return to admiration: "Dear cornet players, long may I hear your thrilling strains. You keep us in touch with the old world melodies. Good luck to the Swannee River [*sic*], & to you!!!"[9] She refers here to the American composer Stephen Foster's popular 1851 song, "Old Folks at Home." Having expressed her appreciation for the best of the music with this celebratory finale, she adds her reading—lines by the German Romantic poet Heinrich Heine—to these three exuberant exclamation points:

> Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht
> Das Leben is der schwüle Tag
> Es dunkelt schon, mich schläfert
> Der Tag hat mich müd gemacht.
> (Death, which is the cooling night
> Life, which is the sultry day
> Night falls already and I am sleepy
> Daylight has made me tired).[10]

While undoubtedly infusing her journal with *gravitas*, these lines also provide a strong example of the generative entanglement of reading and writing for the young Mansfield, an entanglement to remain consistent throughout her creative career.

Her prose and quoted poetry convey what would become Mansfield's ongoing descriptive practice of surface reading: a deeply engaged, exhilarated

sense of self-making in the role as enthusiast and connoisseur, taste-maker and expert. Her tone expresses confidence in her range of reference and her ability to convey delight. The reference to a popular minstrel song and indeed the very juxtaposition of a brass band with the poet Heine indicate the categories of "light" versus serious, or low versus high.[11] As would become characteristic of many modernist writers, Mansfield desires to distinguish *between* entertainment and art, but also to appreciate the delights of *both* entertainment and art. To be an active participant in both the popular and the rarefied is a hallmark of literary modernism, and the young Mansfield proudly proclaims her allegiance to this burgeoning sensibility of broadly participatory pleasure with her eager literary entrepreneurship.

Mansfield's insistence on inserting Heine's poem into her music appreciation and criticism is not (merely) an attempt to prove her neo-Romantic sensibilities when it comes to an enthusiastic appreciation for music's power to please. Along with her other Romantic poetic allusion in this notebook entry, it is to frame the listener's response as informed and strengthened by a literary knowingness—a confident range of reading references—and thus a heightened delight. Her description's second paragraph begins:

> The patience that the man has, is another matter of great wonder to me. Often "when on my couch I lie in vacant or in pensive mood," I have heard a man next door, play "Way down upon the Swannee River," with various other tunes, I believe, <u>called</u> variations, twenty times without stopping. <u>Then</u> he has only ceased because I have threatened to have him evicted if he does not change his tune. Frequently, after a dose of this kind, I have had nothing but the "Swannee River" on the brain, for weeks. I wake up with the "Swannee River," eat it with every meal I take, and go to bed eventually with "all de world am sad and weary" as a lullaby.[12]

The phrase "when on my couch I lie in vacant or in pensive mood" assumes that the implied reader knows Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," familiar to many British students at the time from childhood requirements to memorize it in school. She warns that music and poetry can become numbingly dull; they risk losing their power to thrill through over-familiarity. Reading must resist that loss. Hence the exoticism of the Heine poem, the second stanza of which Mansfield also transcribes in the original German:

> Über mein Bett erhebt sich ein Baum
> Drin singt die junge Nachtingall
> Sie singt von lauter Liebe
> Ich hör es sogar im Traum.[13]

The Heine lines about the nightingale's song in their original German counteract the Wordsworth fragment: they restore a sense of otherness. As a reader and listener, Mansfield above all seeks the "thrilling strains." These originate with the music, heard as if for the first time, and with the literary language, read with the demands of encountering a language other than the reader's native or mother tongue. Defamiliarization—a kind of shock effect—is another term for "thrilling strains." We find it celebrated and longed for throughout Mansfield's mature non-fiction writing, in published reviews as well as unpublished diaries and drafts. Reading becomes an abiding practice of sensing and describing with newfound reserves of exhilaration and curiosity.

The excitement of this notebook entry is a feeling that consumed the young Mansfield upon her arrival as an ardent teenager in London, the place that would come to mean the realization of an as-yet only vaguely imagined literary life. She exudes exaltation in a letter she wrote to a school friend in Wellington, its tone conveying euphoria at being transported into an environment dizzying in its stimulations and possibilities. She relishes the challenge of describing the indescribable, the surface or sense of things that elude her vocabulary and make writing all the more ambitious:

> I wish that I could give you an idea of London. It is totally beyond description. It is most marvelous!!! [...] How interested you would be in the British Museum [...] All the sculptures everywhere, was a huge revelation, to me. O the indescribable beauty of form and attitude, that can be hewn out of a block of marble. And [...] the pictures. My dear they take away all my adjectives!!!!!![14]

To read was to be surrounded by London in a room she went on in her letter to describe: "The room where we study is carpets with thick Turkey carpeted, great armchairs everywhere, neat little tables, rugs, and charming pictures. Even Latin would be interesting in this room."[15] Perhaps the young Mansfield is showing off to a friend stuck back home, but that would not contradict her genuine delight in her gorgeous and sharply stimulating new surroundings. Her adjectives may be challenged, as she claims, but her precisely described and detailed observations suggest acutely attentive senses that make her all the more open to reading as a source of inspiration and words of all kinds (including but not limited to adjectives). This observant, sensing teen is on the brink of a literary life, poised to read with the passion of an ingénue in the metropolis who marvels at newfound riches of art and dazzling movements.

Biographers and scholars of Mansfield's work provide important perspectives on the efflorescence of artistic self-fashioning and the passion for reading in

this formative period in her career as a writer. Drawing on impressions of her husband, John Middleton Murry, and her lifelong friend, Ida Baker (whom she first met at Queen's), Mansfield's biographer Antony Alpers emphasizes that her enthusiasm at Queen's College had much to do with the influence of her German teacher there, Walter Rippmann, who invited pupils to gatherings at his *art nouveau*-decorated house. Alpers cites especially a 1907 story by Mansfield as evidence of Rippmann's ability to shape her literary sensibility. In it, a "woodcutter's daughter" is "introduced by a Rippmann-like figure to the works of Shaw and Ibsen […] Arthur Symons, Oscar Wilde, and Paul Verlaine—the 'Decadents.'"[16] In this version of Mansfield's career as a reader, almost nothing comes before Rippmann's liberation of her imagination and her art through his introduction to her of late nineteenth-century breakthrough figures of aestheticism and early modernism. A later biographer of Mansfield, however, attributes more stimulation to her home life: Angela Smith stresses that before she arrived to experience great freedom in London, "[t]he Beauchamp children were well educated for their period; though there was an emphasis on respectability and gentility, music, painting, debate and social awareness were part of the intellectual context that their father offered them."[17] Both versions of reading are at play in the back and forth between London and Wellington. Back at home in New Zealand in 1906–7 after her time at Queen's College, the "access to libraries and plenty of time to read" might now be understood as a period influenced by the metropolitan pleasures and illuminations—the "thrilling strains"—she had experienced as so "marvelous!!!" in the London of her boarding school years. Henceforward, Mansfield could associate place with literary practice and the emergence into autonomy and into a challenging, stimulating world. Mansfield the artist steps onto the stage in a state of heightened receptivity, always partially located in this early formation of aesthetic awakening and a desire to return to it—the portal to which is reading.

What did she read, and why did she read it? Alongside other interpreters of Mansfield's early reading career, Smith cites the *fin-de-siècle* figure Oscar Wilde as a dominant influence and inspiration; Wilde's presence is conspicuous in Mansfield's diaries in what Smith calls "pages of quotations from him defining the life of an aesthete."[18] Sydney Janet Kaplan frames Mansfield's "adolescent obsessions" and "idolization" of Wilde not only in terms of stylistic influence, but also of sexual liberation, citing the New Zealand period 1906–7 as the years of her "most active lesbian experiences." Her reading of Wilde, then, was tied to "secret pride in her defiant identification with 'Oscar.'"[19] The theme of reading as liberation persists in interpretations of the launching of Mansfield's literary

self-fashioning; it is also liberation from the constraints of identity shaped by what Saikat Majumdar calls "boredom as a colonial condition," a product of colonial "subordination to metropolitan modernity" that creates a "play of desire, distaste, longing, and disillusionment that shaped [Mansfield's] back-and-forth movement between New Zealand and Europe."[20] From Majumdar's perspective, Mansfield's feelings of thrill and marvelousness stem from an ambivalent mixture of constriction, guilt, and even self-loathing that derive from the complex interplay of privilege and insecurity lurking beneath the apparently stable identities of white settlers like the Beauchamps. Aestheticism, sexual experimentation, and settlers' ambivalent longings all inform Mansfield's surface reading practice, a rebellious devotion to "thrill" over convention and dominant norms.

It is hard to disentangle Mansfield's reading passions from her adolescent desires for freedom, whether cultural or sexual. Some of the important literary figures of her adolescence were Romantic (as with Heine), some modern (as with Wilde and Ibsen), some Anglo-Irish (Wilde, Shaw), and some non-English (Verlaine, Ibsen, Heine). Of the non-English literary figures most often cited as her influences, none loom larger than the Russians. The biographer Alpers cites a brief mention of Tolstoy during her Queen's College years, and also points to an as-yet passing acquaintance with Russian fiction evident in a 1907 diary entry in which Mansfield expresses sexual desire for her Māori school friend Maata: "My mind is like a Russian novel."[21] It is well known that Mansfield would grow into her life as a fiction writer, journalist, and translator through her deeply engaged reading of Russian writers, including Tolstoy, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and especially Chekhov. During the adolescent period, before she came to these more mature reading experiences, she read another Russian writer who inspired her: Marie Bashkirtseff, whom Alpers describes as "that other young artist of passionate ambition" who eventually died of tuberculosis.[22] Bashkirtseff's life in European health resorts and Paris, her Russian nobility and cultural exile, her passion for painting, her passion in general—all were on display in the heavily edited two-volume diaries posthumously published by her mother in France in 1887. Bashkirtseff's journal became a bestseller and was translated into English a mere three years later in 1890, creating a cult following not only in Europe but in North and South America and enjoying a sustained popularity with both male and female readers up to the 1930s.[23] Bashkirtseff influenced readers with her account of living a life of two femininities, as the scholar Sylvia Molloy explains:

> What dominates in the final version [of Bashkirtseff's published journals] is a femininity based on girlish emotion, a combination of sensitivity, delicacy, and disorder, in a way an "older" construction of woman, with an aura of nostalgic charm [...] Yet in spite of the editors' efforts, this reassuringly traditional construct does not totally eclipse manifestations of the strong-willed "new woman": sense of self, artistic ambition, desire for independence, and acute awareness of double standards in questions of gender: terms that were recognized more willingly by a female readership than by a male one.[24]

Bashkirtseff's journal shaped Mansfield's sensibilities in ways that figure her attraction as a New Zealander to the stimulations of an "old world" that was new and exciting to her. It also aided the quest for being modern, ambitious, and independent, a quest that informs her geographical, sexual, cultural, and literary travels, and thus her voracious and wide-ranging delight in reading.

Mansfield's adolescence was full of eclectic reading adventures. During her London sojourn, at the age of fifteen, she recorded in her diary of July 1904 a "Holiday Work and Reading" list, labeled "(Private!)."[25] Under "Books I have read" she listed titles, authors, and the dates she began and finished each book, often reading one in a single day and never taking more than a few days to finish most. The list includes a biography of the English Romantic poet Byron, a collection of his letters, the Victorian writer Charlotte Brontë's novel *Villette*, the French novelist Alexandre Dumas' *Captain Pamphile*, and poems by the early nineteenth-century Gothic American writer, Edgar Allan Poe. A number of the authors on her list are American, some now obscure: William James Henderson, a music critic and historian whose 1898 music history appears on the list; Gwendolen Overton, a California writer of military life on the frontier, whose 1904 *The Captain's Daughter* tells the story of a "forward young woman"; the novelist Francis Marion Crawford; and the popular regionalist writer James Lane Allen, who entertained audiences with novels of Kentucky written in a vernacular, sentimental style—three of whose Kentucky novels appear in "Books I have read."[26] The presence of so many Americans on the list suggests an affinity for New World, frontier, and regionalist authors, an intriguing affiliation for a displaced New Zealand writer, reading in London, perhaps subconsciously thinking of the home she has left behind.[27] This American literary bond would submerge and reappear throughout her career, and is best exemplified by Mansfield's later reading of the great American poet Walt Whitman.

While the American phase of 1904 is important, Mansfield's reading practice was dominated generally by English and European writers throughout her life,

indicated in the early book list by authors like Byron and Dumas. She would go on to become a passionate reader not only of Heine, Wilde, Byron, and Charlotte Brontë, but also of Shakespeare, John Keats, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Walter Pater, Arthur Symons, Thomas Hardy, Colette, the Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence (the latter two her friends and sometimes rivals).[28] Her comment that her mind was like a Russian novel points toward her long involvement in reading Russian literature and studying the Russian language. She would come to be a particularly linguistic kind of reader when she collaborated on translating Russian works into English with the Ukrainian Jewish emigré S. S. Koteliansky.[29] Eventually, her journal would conclude with lists of Russian words and simple sentences and their English translations. Poignantly, the 1923 final diary entries suggest that in the severely weakened state of physical collapse from tuberculosis, a kind of minimalist reading—at the level of the sentence and the word—may have offered consolation. Mansfield composed the lists at the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at Fontainebleau, France, run by the Armenian-Greek mystic healer G. I. Gurdjieff. Like the Kathleen Beauchamp who had come to an unfamiliar and exciting world of new knowledge and reading at Queen's College in London, the ailing Katherine Mansfield arrived at a final school, to renew the inspiring contact with linguistic otherness, at Fontainebleau.

Her journals provide windows onto other crucial episodes in the history of her reading life. In 1908–9, for example, she exhibited her devotion to the English poet and essayist Arthur Symons, whose major works of criticism, published between 1899 and 1906, inspired the young Mansfield with their interpretations of art, music, and literature. Thus, we find transcribed or paraphrased Symons's pronouncements, an aesthete's guide to reading and living: "You do not necessarily get to your destination by taking the right turning at the beginning of a journey" (from Symons's "Drama: Professional and Unprofessional") or "The music of Wagner has human blood in it. What Wagner tried to do is to unite mysticism and the senses, to render mysticism through the senses. That is what Rossetti tried to do in painting—that insatiable crying out of a carnal voice" (from Symons's "Parsifal and the Pathetic Symphony").[30] As with her insertion of Heine's lines into her reflection on listening to music, the copying out of strong passages from Symons illustrates how Mansfield constructed authors as mentors to develop her own critical stance and style.

Other important episodes include periods of despondency, such as the dismal wartime days of 1915, when Mansfield, already ensconced in her long-

term relationship with Murry, desperately awaited letters from her French lover Francis Carco. This intense episode is marked by a lack of reading notes: her diary entries often begin "No letter" or "A LETTER" and her dependent mood prevents her from concentrating; she seeks distraction instead, noting trips to the Hippodrome, the Pantomime, and the cinema. "After I worked & wasted my time and went to bed wretched with myself. It was terribly cold. Jack interrupted me all day with my work. I did practically nothing. Wrote and sent a piece of my hair."[31] The lack of any reading notes during this time throws into relief the generally consistent practice of reading and writing that Mansfield sustained through other fluctuations of circumstance and mood. The affair with Carco catapulted her into a state of non-reading that speaks to the effects of passionate longing that are, after all, the stuff of literature. Later in 1915 her beloved younger brother, Leslie Heron Beauchamp, was killed in a grenade accident in October, a crisis that superseded the affair. Mourning launched her into another phase of reading, a renewal of creative purpose, and reconnection with the profound, life-affirming pleasures of her surface reading practices.

After the death of Leslie and the re-stabilization of her relationship with Murry, Mansfield's notebooks return to their more consistently literary endeavors. Now they became redemptive in the context of loss, marked by the phrase "Et in Arcadia ego" ("I [death] too am in Arcadia") inserted among descriptions of the Mediterranean retreat of Bandol, France, where she and Murry sought refuge and rejuvenation.[32] Restored to her writing self, Mansfield took up purposeful reading again, filling pages with notes on Dostoevsky in 1916:

> How did Dostoievsky know about that extraordinary vindictiveness, that relish for bitter laughter that comes over women in pain? Its a very secret thing but its profound, profound. They don't want to spare the one whom they love […] Are his women ever happy when they torment their lovers? No. They too are in the agonies of labour—they are giving birth to their new selves, and they never believe in their deliverance.[33]

Later in 1916, her notebook pages contain quotation after quotation from Shakespeare: from *Antony and Cleopatra*; *As You Like It*; *Henry IV, Part I*; *Henry V*; *Troilus and Cressida*. If Mansfield and Murry were in an Arcadia (and one haunted by loss), theirs was a paradise of reading together; the editors of Mansfield's diaries explain that many of the quotations are in Murry's handwriting and that Mansfield was reading the lines aloud to him.[34] It was indeed a year of voracious reading, together and alone.[35]

Mansfield renewed her sensual delight in reading during this period. As if Dostoevsky and Shakespeare were not enough to fill idyllic Mediterranean days, Mansfield read the American novelist Henry James, too:

> I bought a book by Henry James yesterday and read it, as they say, "until far into the night." It was not very interesting or very good, but I can wade through the pages and pages of dull, turgid James for the sake of that sudden sweet shock, that violent throb of delight that he gives me at times. I don't doubt this genius: only there is an extraordinary amount of pan and an amazingly raffiné flash.[36]

The young Mansfield's enthusiasm returns: the language of "thrill"-seeking from her notebooks' beginnings resonates with the vocabulary of "throb of delight." During 1916, she searched within herself and her past for her own literary formation, commenting directly on her time at Queen's College to remember and re-assess it as a "vivid and detailed memory" full of inspirations but incomplete in retrospect. To the more mature Mansfield, these early influences now seem like a scattered and incoherent jumble of impressions lacking a "coherent account of the history of English Literature." As she distances herself from her student self at Queen's, she turns to a different path: "Now—now I want to write recollections of my own country." She frames this as a desire to stay connected with her lost brother: "because in my thought I range with him over all the remembered places. I am never far away from them. I long to renew them in writing."[37] "My own country" and "all the remembered places" are joined by her famous statement: "Oh, I want for one moment to make our undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the old world."[38] Nourished by her memories and by Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, James, and others, Mansfield would go on to write her greatest stories, many of which were indeed about the "remembered places" of New Zealand. Reading was crucial, but so was the time before Queen's College and London, a time and place to which Mansfield returned in her writing with enduring magnificence. In retrospect, 1916 can seem like a sanctuary in Mansfield's life: a time when she recovered from the loss of her brother, sought respite in an idyllic refuge in the south of France, and revived her creative process through reading and remembrance. It was a window of opportunity when loss haunted her and she struggled to renew a sense of purpose and meaning (in part through reading great literature), and before she was diagnosed with the fatal illness, tuberculosis, with which she would live the rest of her days, knowing her diagnosis, from the last months of 1917 forward.

After her diagnosis, Mansfield entered a second period of intense creativity and renewed passion for reading. An almost manic productivity arose in this

phase, during which Murry took on editorship of the *Athenaeum* in 1919. By virtue of her work as *Athenaeum* book reviewer, Mansfield read and reviewed works by now well-known modern writers (including E. M. Forster, Anton Chekhov, Gertrude Stein, Edith Wharton, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Joseph Conrad, W. Somerset Maugham, Knut Hamsun, and Sigrid Unset). Along with her letters to Murry from rented dwellings in Italy and France, Mansfield conveyed throughout this period an intense pleasure in surface reading, a re-entry into a state of heightened receptivity and acute sensual observations. The voice of delighted descriptiveness is given full expression by the labor and role of book reviewer and taste-maker. As *Athenaeum* reviewer, she converted the effort of reviewing into the life-affirming pleasure of surface reading, asserting her command of the descriptive skills needed to succinctly persuade the reader of her authority to make aesthetic judgments. Her comparisons of books to food, wine, and fabric (in the excerpts cited previously at the beginning of this essay) insist that the reader base such judgments in sensual pleasure. Mansfield's creative effort as reviewer provides the published, professional expression of the same passion for reading that reoccurs throughout her life as expressed in her private writings. This passion oriented her as a reader for whom texts were encounters with and enhancements of, not escapes from, the material world.

Her notebooks reveal her non-professional passion for reading during this period as well. She read Shakespeare, Goethe, and M. A. Oxon's mystic guide of spiritual development, *Cosmic Anatomy and the Structure of the Ego*, published in 1921 and sent to Murry (and intended for Mansfield) by A. R. Orage, who had published her early stories as editor of *The New Age*.[39] Her tone sustains vigor and vitality in the midst of struggle, a quality of her post-diagnosis diary entries that would make them lastingly inspiring as life-guides for future readers when they were curated and edited by Murry for posthumous publication. A sample entry from February 1922 reads:

> First quarter of the moon. Wrote at my story, read Shakespeare. Read Goethe, thought, prayed. The day was cold and fine but I felt ill and could do nothing but be still all day. This going to Paris [for treatment] has been so much more important than it seemed. Now I begin to see it as the result, the ending to all that reading. I mean that even Cosmic Anatomy is involved. Something has been built—a raft, frail and not very seaworthy, but it will serve. Before, I was cast into the water when I was "alone." I mean during my illness, and now something supports me. But much is to be done. Much discipline and meditation is needed. Above all it is important to get work done. Heard from

> Pinker that Cassells had taken a Cup of Tea. Wrote giving my change of address to various people. Thought about French women and their impudent confidence in the power of sex.[40]

Reading oriented Mansfield in her illness, sustaining her sense of herself as an avid worker who kept practicing her considerable skills, no matter the obstacles of physical duress. She was rewarded with recognition—the diary entry notes that a story has been accepted for publication. She remained social by sending her change of address to various people. The "result" of "all that reading" is to keep her in motion, indeed to keep her afloat, or on the surface: "seaworthy."

If the raft that reading built for Mansfield was seaworthy, it would take her to New Zealand, referred to in 1916 as "my own country," "all the remembered places," and, quoting *Hamlet*, "our undiscovered country." "Remembered places" meant not only New Zealand, but the origins of creativity present in but not fully accounted for in the zealous reading phase she entered into as a teenager in London. That phase developed into a surface reading practice of intense delight that would help her build her "raft" of selfhood realized in sustaining literary work. How to connect that self with the creativity associated with the "undiscovered country" of New Zealand? Reading provided a language with which to defamiliarize and describe place, to awaken the writer to surfaces anew. Mansfield sought a return to that which is indeed undiscovered: to the encounter with the unknown.

In a 1916 letter to the fashionable Bloomsbury hostess Ottoline Morrell, Mansfield wrote: "I re-read some poems by Walt Whitman this week. He is tremendously good at times—don't you think?"[41] Now ensconced in London's literary life, Mansfield doesn't simply discover new worlds through reading: she returns to them through re-reading. It is worthwhile to consider when, how, and why Mansfield read and re-read the American poet of self-invention and sublimity. Alpers makes reference to her "first Whitman phase," which according to him took place upon her second arrival in London in 1908, when she pursued an artistic life as a music student with literary and theatrical ambitions.[42] Alpers sees Whitmanesque elements in one of her poems from this period, and connects Mansfield's interest in the American poet to her friendship with a fellow music student and Whitman enthusiast. He also points to Mansfield's 1909 involvement with the Polish *littérateur* Florian Sobieniowski, a "fervent admirer" of Whitman.[43] Mansfield's reading of Whitman goes back further, though—as we can see from her notebooks—to the formative stage of her teens, and to the back-and-forth journey between London and New Zealand.[44] Recall the 1904 "Books I have read" with its many American authors. An affinity for

an American voice and subject matter reappears evocatively in a reference to Whitman in one of the most important of all her journals.

In November and December 1907, having returned home to her family in late 1906, Mansfield kept a "Rough Note Book" of her camping trip in the Māori territory of New Zealand's North Island, the Urewera. Now known as the *Urewera Notebook*, the journal vividly recorded Mansfield's detailed impressions of the landscape and the indigenous Māori people whom she encountered there, and whom she described as exotic Others. Somewhat jarringly, this record of travel through the exotic and unfamiliar opens with a slightly misquoted epigraph from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian* Gray: "A woman never knows when the curtain has fallen."[45] The aphorism suggests that Mansfield the writer/actress is on stage, or that what she sees on her journey, including Māori women, is a theatrical show. Just as significant as the Wilde allusion is a prominent reference to Whitman early in the notebook, another literary spirit presiding over this whole artistic endeavor:

> On a white road once a procession of patient cattle—wended their way, funereal wise—and behind them a boy rode on a brown horse—something in the poise of his figure—in the strong colour of his naked legs reminded me of Walt Whit. Everywhere on the hills—great masses of charred logs—looking for all the world like strange fantastic beasts a yawning crocodile, a headless horse—a gigantic gosling—a watchdog—to be smiled at and scorned in the daylight—but a veritable nightmare in the darkness—and now & again the silver tree trunks—like a skeleton army, invade the hills—[46]

This remarkable passage shows the young Mansfield, not yet the London literary figure longing to write about "all the remembered places" of New Zealand, locating herself through writing and allusion (reading) in the imaginative, fantastical description of place that transforms the real into the visionary. That the visionary American poet should preside over such mythologization is entirely apt. Mansfield borrows Whitman's sublime style and sweeping visions of nineteenth-century American vistas, both peopled and unpeopled, in order to mine New Zealand for creative inspiration and the development of voice.

In 1909–10 Mansfield produced poems that bear traces of both Whitman and her journey. The entanglement of poetry and place—of reading Whitman through New Zealand, and New Zealand through Whitman—is especially vivid in Poem XVII, the first twelve lines of which read:

> In the savage heart of the bush
> The tui lifts her white throat

> Three bell-like notes—then the answer she knows so well
> And sings for herself—the love answer of laughter.
> Her children—wreathed with the green garlands of sorrow—
> Answer her call.
> They troop from the valleys and plains
> From the stupid cities they never have fashioned
> From the wharves where the strangers ships find mooring.
> From the green isles they pass in procession,
> They kneel at altars white with clematis flower,
> At brackish pools they drink their sacrament.[47]

The anaphoric lines ("From … From … From … ") signal a clear engagement with Whitman's poetics. The reading and re-reading of Whitman goes further: the birds who sing of loss allude to Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and its bereft mockingbird, an occasion and figure for the poet's creative acts (and itself an allusion to—or reading of—an American precursor, Poe's "The Raven"). This consideration of the Whitmanesque in Mansfield invites further reading of the many birds who populate Mansfield's writing, from the nightingale in the Heine poem she quoted in 1907, to the conspicuously symbolic bird of "Prelude," to the eponymous figure of her very last story, "The Canary." The birds offer a version of Mansfield's Shakespearian rhetoric of the "undiscovered country" through an American symbolism of colonial history: as transcript and polyphonic song of violence and sorrow. Just as importantly, the poem's imagery offers a version of artistic origins, which for Mansfield is a formative answer to the call of literature and the profound, sometimes melancholy, pleasure of reading: of sensation restored to the surface, setting in motion a creative effort, sometimes struggle, to which she remained dedicated throughout her life.

Notes

1 See especially Chris Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).
2 Katherine Mansfield, "The Public School Mixture," in CW3, 462.
3 Katherine Mansfield, "A Backward Glance," in CW3, 493.
4 Katherine Mansfield, "An Exoticist," in CW3, 471.

5 For an astute commentary on alimentary metaphors in Mansfield's writing, see Aimee Gasston, "Consuming Art: Katherine Mansfield's Literary Snack," *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 31, no. 2 (2013): 162–82.
6 Heather Love, "Close but Not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn," *New Literary History* 41, no. 2 (2019): 371–91.
7 Susan Sontag, "Against Intepretation," in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), 14.
8 CW4, 11.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid. Translation by Kimber and Davison.
11 For an influential example of this perspective, see Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).
12 CW4, 10–11.
13 Ibid., 11. The editors of CW4 provide this translation: "Over my bed grows a tree / Where a nightingale sings / It sings boldly of love / I can hear it in my dreams."
14 *Letters* 1, 4–5.
15 Ibid., 5.
16 Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Penguin, 1982), 32.
17 Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 28.
18 Ibid., 31.
19 Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 21–2.
20 Saikat Majumdar, *Prose of the World: Modernism and the Banality of Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 78.
21 Quoted in Alpers, *Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 49.
22 Ibid., 50.
23 For a brief synopsis of the publication history of Bashkirtseff's diaries, see Valerie Raoul, "'Review' of Sonia Wilson, *Personal Effects: Reading the Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff*," *Biography* 34, no. 2 (2011): 343–6. For Bashkirtseff's influence on Mansfield, see Jay Dickson, "The Last of Katherine Mansfield: The Affective Life in the Journal and the Letters," in *Modernism and Autobiography*, ed. Maria DiBattista and Emily O. Wittman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 149–50. For Bashkirtseff's influence on adolescent readers more generally, see Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (New York: Viking, 2007), 4–7, 11–13, 69–70.
24 Sylvia Molloy, "'De sobremesa,' Hysteria, and the Impersonation of Marie Bashkirtseff," *Latin American Literary Review* 25, no. 50 (July–December 1997): 19–20.

25 CW4, 16.

26 Ibid.

27 Alpers notes Mansfield's enthusiasm for another American writer, the Kentucky-born suffragette writer Elizabeth Robins, whose *Come and Find Me* Mansfield read in Wellington after she returned from Queen's. See Alpers, *Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 61.

28 For a recent assessment of the wide-ranging literary influences on Mansfield, see Sarah Ailwood and Melinda Harvey, ed. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

29 For recent interpretations of Mansfield's involvement in Russian literature and culture, see Galya Diment, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin, ed. *Katherine Mansfield and Russia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017) and Caroline Maclean, *The Vogue for Russia: Modernism and the Unseen in Britain 1900–1930* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015). See also Joanna Woods, *Katerina: The Russian World of Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Penguin, 2001).

30 CW4, 89–9.

31 Ibid., 149.

32 Ibid., 173n1.

33 Ibid., 186.

34 Ibid., 192.

35 The idea of "Arcadia" is echoed later, in 1918, by her rhetoric of "Heavens" when she reads Chekhov: "Ach, Tchekov! Why are you dead! Why can't I talk to you—in a big, darkish room—at late evening—where the light is green from the waving trees outside. I'd like to write a series of Heavens: that would be one" (CW4, 254). I am grateful to Jay Dickson for pointing out this passage to me.

36 CW4, 201.

37 Ibid., 188–91.

38 Ibid., 191.

39 Ibid., 435n3.

40 Ibid., 414.

41 *Letters* 1, 309.

42 Alpers, *Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 76.

43 Ibid., 100.

44 On this journeying, see Kirsty Gunn, *My Katherine Mansfield Project* (Devon: Notting Hill Editions, 2015). My thinking on place is also influenced by Gunn's keynote lecture on the "Rush of the Short Story" at the 2019 Mansfield conference in Krakow, Poland.

45 CW4, 59.

46 Ibid., 60.

47 Katherine Mansfield, "XXVII," 481.

25

Katherine Mansfield and Sexuality

Claire Drewery

In a notebook entry dated eight years after the death of Oscar Wilde, Katherine Mansfield outlined her intention of writing a sketch or short story in which a dual existence enabled the protagonist to discover "the truth of all." The sketch, she anticipated, would be filled with "climatic disturbance, & also of the strange longing for the artificial."[1] This pronouncement is an illuminating one in an era which saw traditional, humanist notions of identity increasingly challenged by contemporary intellectual, scientific, and popular discourses. The climactic disturbance referred to in the same 1908 notebook entry conceivably anticipates Mansfield's own engagement with the epochal shift in beliefs about human subjectivity occurring from around the late nineteenth century and intensifying in the wake of Wilde's two notorious trials of 1895.[2] It is thus not coincidental that the pages of the notebook immediately preceding her professed longing for artificiality contain numerous transcriptions from Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), most notably the declaration that "[b]eing natural is simply a pose and the most irritating pose I know."[3]

The idea of naturalness as an artificial pose famously characterizes Wilde's work and is a dominant feature of *Dorian Gray*, as well as his *Intentions* volume of four essays published a year later in 1891. This seeming paradox receives fuller explanation in the artistic manifesto Wilde sets out in the first of these essays, "The Decay of Lying," in which he writes that "life imitates art rather than vice versa [… A] great artist invents a type, and Life tries to copy it, to reproduce it in a popular form, like an enterprising publisher."[4] For Wilde, identities perceived as natural are thus artificial, and it is significant that the metaphors he uses here to denote "life's" means of imitation are those of reproduction, popular form, and publishing. Such a process of perpetuation might be traced through the controversy building around the Wilde trials, when burgeoning dandy and camp identities increasingly converged and public hostility toward them intensified,

fueled by a censorious media. Ironically, the reviling of the Wildean dandy also served to disseminate its existence, exposing the process by which, as Rhonda K. Garelick has concluded, "[t]o write a dandyist text is to produce more dandies."[5] The "dandy" identity is thus reiterated through the repetition of a series of acts, poses, and costumes associated with that image, which are then re-enacted and disseminated through art, literature, and the popular media. Likewise, in Mansfield's writing, the perpetuation of both normative and taboo identities was to remain as much a preoccupation as the notion that human subjectivity might be interpreted as a series of "acts."

A consistent emphasis in the work of these writers upon artificiality, performance, and re-enactment marks out both as unmistakable predecessors of late twentieth-century queer theory. Specifically, Judith Butler's model of identity as constructed through performative acts is a clear articulation of similar representations of subjectivity dominating Wilde's and Mansfield's work of almost a century earlier. According to Butler, a necessary condition for successful performativity is "the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force," perpetuated "through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices."[6] In Mansfield's stories, such historically specific, authoritative practices as those invested in the theatrical and sartorial fashions of her day are distinctive features sustained from her early dramatic sketches through to her mature short stories. A striking example is the 1915 sketch "Stay-Laces," which juxtaposes a frivolous concern with shopping, fashion, and corsetry against the backdrop of the brutality of the First World War. In "Bliss" and "Je ne parle pas français"—two better-known stories begun only weeks apart in early 1918—Mansfield continues to develop this theme, using enhanced, exaggerated artificiality, theatricality, and performance to exploit the comedic trope of Wildean dandyism.

As this chapter will seek to illustrate, the Mansfield stories most obviously indebted to the dramatic form are those in which the metaphoric motifs of performance and clothing frequently and symbiotically recur. Her writing can thus be seen to anticipate not only Butler's later theories on the formulation and regulation of sexuality, but also studies of fashion such as J. C. Flügel's *The Psychology of Clothes*, Roland Barthes's *The Fashion System*, and Anne Hollander's *Seeing through Clothes*, all of which position clothing as an important site of cultural investment. For Mansfield, contemporary fashion was both politically and poetically symbolic, as evidenced in its consistent representation in her work as a mechanism for physically, metaphorically, and culturally constraining and reshaping the human subject. In other words, clothing is essential to the process

of acting and re-enacting identity, a point made implicitly by Roland Barthes in his assertion that clothes function "simultaneously as the body's substitute and its mask."[7]

The mask as a metaphor for clothing in general is significant in view of its etymological similarity with "masquerade," which in turn suggests a close affinity between costume and performance. J. C. Flügel's 1950 study of *The Psychology of Clothes* sheds further light on this connection, using the example of the masked ball to illustrate how masks reduce inhibition, permitting "less restrained expression of certain tendencies."[8] As Flügel concludes, "the very word 'personality' […] implies a 'mask,' which is itself an article of clothing."[9] Clothing thus performs the dual function of disguising the gendered, sexual body, while simultaneously operating as a mechanism for performing gendered identity. In a similar vein, Wilde contended in "The Critic as Artist" that "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."[10]

For Mansfield also, the closely related metaphors of clothing, masks, and disguise contain within themselves the capacity for superseding performative acts with "truth". As she states in a journal entry:

> So do we all begin by acting and the nearer we are to what we would be the more perfect our *disguise*. Finally there comes the moment when *we are no longer acting*: it may even catch us by surprise. We may look in amazement at our no longer borrowed plumage.[11]

In Mansfield's observation, the blurred distinction between act and disguise illustrates the capability of the actor's "plumage" to mask as well as *un*mask contingent, performative identities. This aesthetic device, clearly translating to her short fiction and owing much to Wilde's influence, is most striking in her depictions of the contemporary fashions of dandyism and Victorian corsetry, both of which have a symbolic resonance with the transition from Victorian to modernist conceptualizations of identity and sexuality. By the time of Wilde's 1895 trials for gross indecency, dandyism was beginning to converge with the "camp" discourses which, according to Moe Meyer, already encoded a homosexual subject when the word first appeared in J. Redding Ware's 1909 dictionary of Victorian slang.[12]

Wilde's cultivation of his own self-image as an aesthete and dandy undoubtedly contributed to this encoding process, but more immediately he achieved two ends. As David Schulz has noted, Wilde spearheaded "through the media a movement of like-minded men," but at the same time, this act of

dissemination enabled negative representations of dandyism resulting from the controversy building around the trials. As Schulz further points out, "the mediation performed by the journalistic texts was not only theatrical but homophobic and censorious, creating a stylistic mix of insinuating innuendo and melodrama."[13] In the face of these contemporary discourses of aberrant sexuality, Wilde, together with the perceived discourses of effeminacy he stood for, became increasingly subject to public disgust which would later culminate in the convergence of aesthete, dandy, and camp identities into the pejorative label "queer." By 1922, the transition from contingent discourse to identity-marker had definitively occurred: the first use of "queer" as a colloquialism for homosexuality can be traced to a US government publication of that date.[14]

The concurrent process of dissemination and censorship instigated by the Wilde trials, moreover, clearly prefigures Butler's twofold model of performativity. According to her theory, pre-existing social discourse functions on the one hand as a sanction upholding "desirable" (namely heteronormative) identities; on the other, it operates as "the shaming taboo which 'queers' those who resist or oppose that social form as well as those who occupy it without hegemonic social sanction."[15] By this definition, Butler exposes how media censorship and the reviling of the Wildean dandy also served to perpetuate its existence both within and beyond literature.

The image of the corset is similarly ambiguous, contradictory, and self-perpetuating. Unlike the dandy, however, whose effeminacy was perceived as a threat to patriarchal masculine norms, the corset symbolizes a less subversive, more socially sanctioned image of femininity. This regulatory function is conceivably why the corset received a backlash from Wilde as early as 1882 on the grounds that "there is hardly any form of torture that has not been inflicted on girls, and endured by women, in obedience to the dictates of an unreasonable and monstrous Fashion."[16] By the early twentieth century, this manner of opposition had grown to the extent that the corset was generating contested meanings, as noted by Jill Fields in her claim that corsetry "affected women's lives as they struggled to alter the shape of femininity and gender relations."[17]

Mansfield's "Stay-Laces" negotiates just such a struggle. Published a month after the death of her brother in a grenade explosion, the sketch derives power from its tragi-comic, acerbic representation of the trivialities associated with women of the leisured classes: their superficial gossip, glib attitudes to war, and preoccupation with clothing. It is noteworthy that each of these considerations also underpins Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in which a devotion to consumerism, obliviousness to suffering, habit of dominating conversations, and

exertion of a pernicious influence are precisely the vices Lord Henry encourages Dorian to adopt. In "Stay-Laces," the protagonist embraces similar hedonistic qualities under the mask of the benign activity of shopping and the veneer of respectability she intends to buy, both of which are manifest in the form of the corset. The narrative consists mainly of a one-sided dialogue between the vulgar, opinionated Mrs. Busk, whose conversation focuses almost exclusively on the trivialities of fashion and female-specific medical complaints, and her silent companion, Mrs. Bone.

The sketch—one of eight experiments in dialogue Mansfield contributed to the *New Age*—marks one of her earliest experiments in the dramatic form. T. O. Beachcroft has cited Theocritus as a key influence on Mansfield's work from this point onward, but conceivably her indebtedness to the dramatic form stems at least in part from Wilde.[18] There are marked similarities, for instance, between the narrative structure of "Stay-Laces" and that of Wilde's essay, "The Decay of Lying," the latter of which uses Socratic dialogue to interrogate the opposition between art and nature. Although presented as a conversation between an artist and his critic, the essay largely consists of a long monologue by the main speaker, Vivian, punctuated at intervals with the brief observations of an interlocutor.

In "Stay-Laces" the interlocutor does not speak at all. Mrs. Bone's discourse is represented entirely by ellipses interspersed with punctuation, but the sub-text of her wordless interjections may, nonetheless, be inferred from the protagonist's responses in the various contexts of expostulation, protestation, or interrogation. Mrs. Busk's comments on Mrs. Bone's hat, for instance, are interspersed with " … !," and Mrs. Bone offers no commentary on the corset. She is not defined in terms of her costume except in terms of Mrs. Busk's interpretation of it, neither does the interlocutor articulate an identity of her own.

The dynamic played out here between speech and silence is complex, however, as Mrs. Bone's silent, apparently complicit status is nonetheless subversive. Her elliptical, non-linguistic side of the dialogue represents both the narrative and social spaces from which taboo or contingent identities might be recognized, if not articulated; this places her in stark opposition to the regulatory discourses symbolized by the corset. The symbiotic relationship between the two characters is, moreover, evident from their names: Busk and Bone representing separate integral fixtures of the corset, each of which is dependent upon the other. The rigid, inflexible busk suggests that, despite Mrs. Busk's dominance of the dialogue, her place in the power dynamic is secondary to that of the multiplicity and malleability of the corset boning which, the narrative spaces in the text imply, offer numerous, more flexible, and potentially subversive possibilities.

The corset metaphor illustrates Nancy Gray's point that for Mansfield, objects "often have an almost animate presence that forms a relationship with the characters' selves, one that adjusts and shifts with the contingencies generated by interactions with the socially produced spaces in which the self must encounter its possibilities."[19] The controlling mechanism of the corset as ubiquitous symbol, of both sexual desirability and subservient femininity, is constantly re-inscribed upon the female form in the most powerfully physicalized terms: shortening the breath, altering the waist shape, and displacing the spleen and ribs. At the same time, the changing shape of the corset in "Stay-Laces"—its transition from back lacing to the front-fastening style and ultimate superfluity in the face of changing twentieth-century fashion—is testimony to the role played by costume in the negotiation of changing social spaces and their attendant subjectivities.

In a rare moment of insight, Mrs. Busk recognizes this point. Against the context of the war raging beyond the confines of the text, she acknowledges: "it's awfully bad taste to go on buying just as usual at a time like this."[20] Yet the demands of consumerism ultimately take precedence. Mrs. Busk immediately counters herself: "there are necessary things you simply can't do without—like corsets, for instance."[21] As a symbol of the excesses of consumer culture, an undergarment which remains hidden from view but produces a clear physical imprint on the body is not an arbitrary distinction, a point made manifest through Mrs. Busk's negotiations with the regulatory discourses the corset upholds. Ostensibly, she appears to perpetuate the idealized, middle-class, "respectable" feminine subject, as exploited to comedic effect in an exchange with a fellow-shopper she mistakes for a sales assistant:

> Aren't the assistants extraordinary here? I mean lots of them are university women, or daughters of very wealthy men—[…]. Which is the Corset Department, please?
>
> *Acid Lady*: Ask an assistant. I am trying on a hat.
>
> *Mrs Busk*: Good heavens! What an awful mistake! But, really, she had something of the shop assistant about her, hadn't she? The earrings—and that enormous colored comb ….[22]

In this dialogue, Mrs. Busk's snobbish misreading of the codes communicated by dress accords with Flügel's observation that clothing superficially reveals something of the wearer's "sex, occupation, nationality, and social standing," and thus enables an adjustment of the observer's behavior accordingly.[23] Inevitably, however, the mask slips. The spectacle of Mrs. Busk trying on a corset, straining at the seams and uncomfortably tight, illustrates the failure of her comic wrestle with this traditional

image of femininity. The scenario appears to pre-empt Butler's point that there is no individual agency in performative acts; the reading of "performativity" as willful and arbitrary choice misses the point that the history of discourse and chain of iteration constitute its power to enact what it names.

In "Stay-Laces," clothing itself may be interpreted as such a site of contestation. As noted by Fields, sartorial fashion is "both a system of signification and a set of regulatory practices" and thus "an arena of social struggle over meaning."[24] The ferocity of Mrs. Busk's personal struggle is conveyed through this comedic scene, in which the discomfort of trying to squeeze into the "new" style of front-fastening corset leads her to assert: "I don't think it is a good idea to have them fastening down the front. You see, I don't see what is to prevent little blobs of flesh from poking through the holes. One is so much softer in the front than at the back."[25]

The corset's inability to contain Mrs. Busk, both physically and metaphorically, suggests a good deal about her character. Her name implies rigidity, her title indicates that she is either married or widowed, her thickening waistline hints at the onset of middle age, and her propensity to indulge in fantasy implies her own sexual frustration. For her, the backdrop of war represents merely a convenient opportunity for the removal of social inhibition: to admire men in uniform and indulge in fantasy about an "enormous Indian creature in khaki."[26] The "blobs of flesh poking through the holes" are therefore illustrative not only of the subversion of the ubiquitous, narrow-waisted, Victorian feminine silhouette, but also of a subjective identity breaking through its previous generational constraints. Inevitably, then, by end of the narrative the corset has *not* been bought, an indecision appearing to echo the sentiment of Lord Henry in *Dorian Gray* that "the costume of the nineteenth century is detestable. It is so sombre, so depressing. Sin is the only real color-element left in modern life."[27]

The failure of Mrs. Busk's attempt to bind herself into a restrictive model of Victorian femininity accords, despite her efforts to the contrary, with her asserted rights as a "modern" woman to indulge in sexual fantasy and speak openly about previously taboo subjects. The strains placed upon the corset suggest that, willingly or otherwise, Mrs. Busk is resisting the constraints placed upon her by the demands of respectable femininity. The same dilemma is confronted in "Bliss," which, like "Stay-Laces," draws upon the themes of clothing, tragi-comedy, and theatricality. Also like "Stay-Laces," "Bliss" satirizes superficiality, this time focusing upon a pretentious Bloomsbury clique of "modern, thrilling friends, writers and painters and poets" who ultimately turn out to be shallow, trite, and vaguely ridiculous.[28] Through the protagonist's painful negotiations

with her own half-acknowledged bisexuality, the story negotiates not only her inability to recognize and articulate her identity, but also the absence of any available discourse through which to do so.

In "Bliss," clothing is a prominent reminder of the tension between socially sanctioned modes of sexuality and those which are rendered taboo. Just as Mrs. Busk can't squeeze into her front-fastening corset, neither the protagonist of "Bliss," Bertha Young, nor her contemporary, the camp poet Eddie Warren, fits into the molds of gender and sexuality society has cast for them. The tension between Bertha's latent bisexuality and her desire to maintain her socially designated, heterosexual roles of wife and mother is embodied within her false sense of "bliss," the motif for which is the pear tree she immediately identifies with as a symbol of her own life. Significantly, the clothing of both Bertha and Pearl Fulton, the friend for whom Bertha cultivates a powerful sexual attraction, emulates the "tall, slender pear tree in fullest, richest bloom" standing against the wall in a moonlit garden "as though becalmed against the jade-green sky."[29]

Bertha unconsciously mimics the moonlit tree in her clothing, accessorizing her white dress with a "string of jade beads, green shoes and stockings," whilst Pearl arrives in a moon-like ensemble "all in silver, with a silver fillet binding her pale blonde hair."[30] The connections Bertha later makes between herself, her choice of attire, and the tree's "wide open blossoms," together with the sensation derived from her clothing that "her petals rustled softly into the hall" as she moves downstairs to greet her guests, have implicitly sexual connotations.[31] While strikingly at odds with her status as a frigid wife, however, her costume takes on resonance in the light of the mutual lesbian attraction Bertha is sure she shares with Pearl.

Bertha's dilemma reflects a social context in which male homosexuality was contingent but female homosexuality was, as Jeffrey Weeks observes, still a generation away from a "corresponding level of articulacy."[32] Hence, while the discourses pitting the hegemonic norms of wife and mother against sexually taboo identities like "lesbian" and "mistress" are conveyed through the figures of Bertha and Pearl, the association between Eddie Warren and the Wildean masks of aesthete and dandy is unmistakeable. The inflections of Eddie's speech, his artistic pretensions, and dandyish dress-sense all accord with Rhonda Garelick's definition of the "over-acted quality" of camp, albeit in a contemporary context these codes signified effeminacy but not yet homosexuality.[33] Such mannerisms are overtly adopted by Eddie—who is usually in "a state of acute distress"—and are discernible as he first addresses his hostess:

> "I have had such a *dreadful* experience with a taxi-man; he was *most* sinister. I couldn't get him to *stop*. The *more* I knocked and called the *faster* he went. And *in* the moonlight this *bizarre* figure with the *flattened* head *crouching* over the *lit-tle* wheel … " He shuddered …[34]

The affectations of Eddie's speech and his melodramatic shudder here re-enact the core signifying practices of Wildean dandyism—speech, gesture, and posture—attributable to François Delsarte's nineteenth-century school of actor training. As Moe Meyer further notes, following Wilde's turn to Balzacian dandyism and subsequent development of homoerotic representation, he added a fourth code: costume.[35] Thus, in addition to his exaggerated speech and the gesture of the shudder, the reader's first introduction to Eddie sees him adopting the fourth code in taking off an "immense white silk scarf" carefully matched to the "happy socks" that seem in his eyes "to have got so *much* whiter since the moon rose."[36]

A further attribute of camp discourse is, according to Alan Sinfield, an appreciation of art, which "fits well because posh culture is recognized, implicitly as being a leisured preserve, though perhaps impertinently invaded."[37] Hence Eddie's effusive passion for "a *new* poem called *Table d'Hôte*" leads him, to Bertha's obvious bewilderment, to proffer the interpretation that "[t]omato soup is so *dreadfully* eternal."[38] This acerbic representation of Eddie is doubtless attributable to the fact that he is, as Mansfield's biographer Antony Alpers points out, a satire of Aldous Huxley, whose letters written from Eton are testimony to his own dandyism, referring to his "jauntily facetious, precocious-schoolboy tone" and "chic" appearance in "tail coats mouldy collars and white ties."[39]

Eddie Warren is, however, more than merely a satire of Huxley. He is an experimental canvas on which the contingent identity of "camp"—together with the Delsartean codes of speech, gesture, posture, and costume—is played out. Like Bertha Young and Mrs. Bone, Eddie represents narrative gaps around which contingent subject positions such as dandyism and lesbianism might be formulated. Bertha's struggles to negotiate these contingencies are palpable, as evidenced in her frequent protestations of "being modern" which are not unlike Mrs. Busk's pretentions to modern openness about taboo subjects. Yet, like Busk and Bone, Bertha is unable to find a language to express her own urges or physicality. All she can articulate is her frustration toward the social exclusion of regulatory norms with the assertion, "How idiotic civilisation is! Why be given a body if you have to keep it shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle?"[40]

Like the corset, Bertha's metaphorical fiddle-case represents an enclosed space, a receptacle for containing conventional femininity and also for satirizing these constraints. By these definitions, Mansfield draws attention to the desires which social strictures render Bertha unable or unwilling to articulate. The inevitable result is the re-assertion of normalizing discourses of sexuality which serve to dismantle Bertha's illusions and restore her back into the paradigm of the middle-class female. This transition occurs in the penultimate scene, when she witnesses a scene appearing to expose Pearl's affair with Harry Young:

> He tossed the coat away, put his hands on her shoulders and turned her violently to him. His lips said: "I adore you," and Miss Fulton laid her moonbeam fingers on his cheeks and smiled her sleepy smile. Harry's nostrils quivered; his lips curled back in a hideous grin while he whispered: "Tomorrow," and with her eyelids Miss Fulton said: "Yes."[41]

This scene is particularly striking in that Bertha interprets what she sees and hears on the basis of *gesture*: the tossing aside of the coat; a touch; a smile. The language is corporeal: the phrase "his lips said" as opposed to merely "he said" offers the possibility of a metaphorical interpretation, an impression heightened by Pearl's responding "with her eyelids." Bertha's inability to interpret her own and others' sexuality is magnified in this passage, which is, significantly, communicated through all four Delsartean codes adopted by Wilde in his public and literary articulations of the performative. Moreover, for someone who desires her husband, the depiction of Harry and his "hideous grin" through Bertha's eyes is scarcely complimentary. As a form of performance, with Bertha as unseen audience, this scene comes close to farcical melodrama, a theme receiving earlier emphasis through the dinner conversation of the "theatrical" Mr. Norman Knight whose humorous speech at dinner highlights the centrality of performance as a narrative trope in "Bliss." Alluding to the same theme of gluttony as Eddie's predilection for poetic tomato soup, Norman regales his fellow dinner-guests with the synopsis of a follow-up play to *Love in False Teeth*:

> One act. One man. Decides to commit suicide. Gives all the reasons why he should and why he shouldn't. And just as he has made up his mind either to do it or not to do it—curtain. […]
>
> "I think I've come across the same idea in a little French review, quite unknown in England."[42]

The subtext contained within this brief interjection has numerous significances, not only to the narrative of "Bliss" but to Mansfield's wider oeuvre. The reference

to the "French review" gestures toward the developing culture of censorship surrounding effeminacy and the avant-garde, both of which were influences emanating from France. There is, moreover, a discernible parallel between the theme of suicide in Mansfield's hypothetical "play" and the actress Sibyl Vane in *Dorian Gray* who kills herself when it transpires the protagonist loves only her art and not the "shallow and stupid" woman he perceives behind her acted parts.[43] The name of the actress is clearly symbolic. Her surname, Vane, plays on vanity as well as the changeability of a weather vane, while her forename recalls the mythological Cumaean "Sybil" to whom Apollo granted immortality but not eternal youth. The actress Sibyl's dependence on her own appearance and the fate of her body as she ages reflects both Dorian's own vanity and the disfigurement seen on the rapidly degenerating portrait onto which he projects his vices, acting as a reproachful manifestation of the shallow superficiality he despises most in himself.

The interrelated theme of self-absorption and reflection consistent throughout *Dorian Gray* and reflected in "Bliss" through reference to the monologue of one character in the play anticipates both the themes and form of "Je ne parle pas français." The title of this story recalls the "French review" in "Bliss" and also refers obliquely to France's perceived association with homosexual discourse.

The story contains numerous parallels with *Dorian Gray*, the most significant of which are emphases on dandyism and narcissism. The book Lord Henry gives to Dorian in Wilde's novel—unnamed but reputed to be *À Rebours* by Joris-Karl Huysmans—is a key influence upon the protagonist's increasing hedonistic and narcissistic tendencies and is described in *Dorian Gray* as "a novel without a plot, and with only one character, being, indeed, simply a psychological study of a certain young Parisian."[44] "Je ne parle pas français" is such a study: the dramatic monologue of a single character in the shape of the overtly homosexual Parisian dandy, Raoul Duquette. Like Bertha Young and Eddie Warren, Raoul performs in accordance with preconceived discourses, but in contrast to the naïve Bertha he is an arch-manipulator as well as a consummate performer. Living in genteel poverty yet excessively concerned with his appearance, he refers on several occasions to his importance as an aspiring writer whose newest work will "stagger" the critics.[45] The numerous contradictions he embodies are emphasized through the recurring metaphor of the mirror, an oft-repeated motif in *Dorian Gray*. Dorian's kissing of his portrait, for instance, is described as a "boyish mockery of Narcissus" with the portrait itself viewed as "the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul."[46]

Raoul's habit of cultivating his dandy persona is consistently framed within mirrors, such as when he brushes "the velvet collar of my new indigo-blue overcoat" and knots "my black silver-spotted tie" in the mirror.[47] The double-meaning of the word "reflection" to suggest both duplication and contemplation recurs throughout the narrative, emphasizing its role in the protagonist's identity-formation through both his clothing and performances. These self-observations lead him to contemplate several searching ontological questions: "How can one look the part and not be the part? Or be the part and not look it? Isn't looking—being? Or being—looking? [...] This seemed to me extraordinarily profound at the time, and quite new."[48]

The relevance of Raoul's discovery that looking equates with being and vice versa is conveyed not only through his numerous, consciously performed personae and their attendant sartorial guises, but also through his allusions to theatrical culture. This point is emphasized through a quotation from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, in which Raoul reflects upon his own writing process: "[i]t comes from the pen so gently; it has such a 'dying fall'" (63). The allusion is apt in the light of Viola's exhortation in the play to "conceal me what I am"—resulting in her subsequent disguise as the eunuch Cesario—and her recognition that "such disguise as haply shall become the form of my intent."[49] For Raoul, disguise and concealment similarly become the means by which his gendered identities, sexuality, and romantic intentions might be fulfilled.

These intentions are invariably thwarted. Ironically, his infatuation with the Englishman, Dick Harmon, leads Raoul to cast aside his disguises, showing his would-be lover "things about my submerged life that really were disgusting and never could possibly see the light of literary day."[50] These revelations—gradually revealed to the reader through Raoul's cynical, bitter monologue—implicitly result in Dick's abrupt departure from Paris, leaving Duquette feeling, in his own estimation, "as a woman must feel when a man takes out his watch and remembers an appointment that cannot possibly concern her, except that its claim is the stronger."[51] When Dick re-enacts the same scenario, leaving his fiancée "Mouse" in Raoul's company under identical circumstances, Raoul follows suit and leaves her in an act of revenge for his friend's earlier, precisely similar abandonment of himself.

The cliché of the abandoned woman is again brought to prominence through allusion to theatricality, this time in a reference to Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. The images of ships and shores which dominate Puccini's opera also surround Dick's abandonment of Raoul, from his "lightly swaying upon the step

as though the whole hotel were his ship, and the anchor weighed" to his act of standing "on the shore alone."[52] The affectionate letter he later receives from his friend recalls the image of the mirror to reflect another guise, this time the embodiment of the abandoned Cio Cio San as she waits for her husband's ship to return. Puccini's opera is overtly alluded to as Raoul poses in a kimono—experimenting with fluid gender identities—and turns his abandonment by Dick into the commonplace tragedy of the abandoned female:

> I read it standing in front of the (unpaid for) wardrobe mirror. It was early morning. I wore a blue kimono [...]. "Portrait of Madame Butterfly" said I, "on hearing of the arrival of *ce cher Pinkerton.*"[53]

Significantly, Raoul's various guises—each of which transgresses gender boundaries from the effeminacy of the dandy to cross-dressing in the role of the tragic heroine—are contemplated in front of a mirror bought on credit. His efforts to subvert regulatory discourses of sexuality are largely comedic but nonetheless have tragic undertones. The metaphor of the mirror and its flat, two-dimensional reflections conveys these to a degree, but it is through various forms of the empty receptacle that Raoul interrogates the discourses of contingent subjectivities most poignantly.

Raoul's "submerged life" conceivably relates to the blurred divide in the story between the literary aesthetes and dandies who hover on the borders of social respectability and the illegal sexual activity he alludes to later in the narrative: homosexuality and exploitation. The language used to convey his suggestion of his childhood experiences is revealing in the context of the "African laundress" who buys his affections in the outhouse with "little round fried cake[s] covered with sugar." Tellingly, Raoul desires to bury his childhood memories "under a laundry basket instead of a shower of roses and *passons oultre.*"[54] The *Twelfth Night* allusion suggests that concealment is the condition under which clothing, when filled and animated, enables performance to be re-enacted, but the laundry basket is merely an empty receptacle for further receptacles: worn disguises since cast aside.

This suggestion of emptiness colors Raoul's bleakest assertion. In a passage which recalls Bertha Young's fiddle-case and Mrs. Busk's corset as receptacles, he states:

> I don't believe in the human soul. I never have. I believe that people are like portmanteaux—packed with certain things, started going, thrown about, tossed away, [...] until finally the Ultimate Porter swings them on to the Ultimate Train and away they rattle ....[55]

Here, in a parody of the Faustian pact reminiscent of Dorian Gray's wish to transpose his youth onto an inanimate portrait, the human soul itself is reduced to baggage. Like Duquette's laundry basket, the portmanteaux amounts merely to a void, poignantly emphasizing the empty spaces in Raoul's narrative and his identity. In addition to the train, these metaphors recall the problems of identity posed by the notorious handbag in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). Revealed as the metaphorical parental lineage of Jack Worthing, the bag's discovery in a cloakroom in Victoria Station—a potential scene for social indiscretion as the play makes clear—is deemed to show "contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life."[56] Empty receptacles in both Wilde and Mansfield resonate with future possibilities, but as revealed through the subtlety of Mansfield's covert allusions to the emptiness of the human soul, these momentary subversions carry a considerable cost.

The position Raoul occupies in his own narrative is thus one held in common with Mrs. Bone, Bertha Young, and Eddie Warren: that of metaphorical spaces, receptacles for spent disguises which nonetheless offer contingent possibilities. Through Raoul's various poses and re-enactment of scenarios from theatrical culture, Mansfield draws attention to the lack of available language through which he might articulate his "submerged life." The reason for his major epiphany—its centrality to the story emphasized by the use of the phrase which forms its title—thus becomes clear:

> If you think what I've written is merely superficial and impudent and cheap you're wrong. [...]. If it were, how could I have experienced what I did when I read that stale little phrase written in green ink, in the writing pad?[57]

The "stale" little phrase referred to here is *Je ne parle pas français*, the sole French utterance in a story set in France and which, significantly, is articulated by Mouse, who cannot speak Raoul's language but shares his predicament as the abandoned beloved. The expression, relating merely to a *lack* of capacity for speech, understanding, and translation, causes overwhelming emotion in Raoul, inspiring him to reflect: "Am I capable of feeling as strongly as that?" His inevitable conclusion is that he is unable to find a language in which to express this feeling—"I hadn't a phrase to meet it with!"[58]—thus raising pertinent questions about the narrative gaps falling between socially sanctioned norms of identity for which there is, as yet, no language or place.

In Mansfield's writing, the motifs of corsetry and dandyism serve as clear markers of performativity. The mask *becomes* the masquerade, clothing being a necessary mechanism for re-enacting discourses of gender and sexuality as

dictated by changing fashions and social conventions. Mansfield's short fiction consistently illuminates this process, adopting clothing as a form of sartorial mask which simultaneously obscures, reveals, and aids re-enactment of the subtle, shifting, contingent discourses which radically transformed modernist representations of the human subject. In the context of Wilde's acknowledged influence on twentieth-century conceptualizations of sexuality, Mansfield's contribution to literary modernism might now be seen as having left its own lasting impression upon this process of transition. The predicaments of Mrs. Busk, Bertha Young, and Raoul Duquette all suggest that the possibility of articulating contingent discourses against regulatory norms of identity is curtailed by an absence of discourse through which to speak. As Butler was later to contend, performativity is not definable as "the efficacious expression of a human will in language"; rather, it is "a specific modality of power as discourse" which amounts to a series of "complex and convergent chains in which 'effects' are vectors of power."[59]

As Butler suggests, the lack of will or autonomy over the discursive powers governing identity means the convergence of aesthete, dandy, and camp and their transition into a discrete homosexual identity could not have been anticipated by Wilde during his lifetime. The chain of signification underpinning his legacy—forged within Wilde's own body, his Delsartean poses, and his cultivation of the dandy image—began its linking process only after his death. Katherine Mansfield's dramatic short fiction forms an important early link in this chain. Considered together, these three stories embody her complex response to the problem laid out in her early notebook: the sense of how "the truth of all" might be glimpsed through the submerged lives and dual existences accessible only by means of masks, masquerades, and performativity. The dramatic form—traceable from her earliest experimental sketches to her most celebrated mature stories—is what made possible Mansfield's subtly intriguing interrogation of sexual identity. It was also, I would suggest, the means through which her "strange longing for the artificial" was ultimately realized.

Notes

1 *Notebooks* 1, 112.

2 See Moe Meyer, *The Politics and Poetics of Camp* (London: Routledge, 1994); Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

3 *Notebooks* 1, 99.
4 Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," in *Intentions* (London: Methuen, 1934), 1–2, 31.
5 Rhonda K. Garelick, *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siecle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 15.
6 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993), 226–7.
7 Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 236.
8 J. C. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), 1.
9 Ibid.
10 Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," in *Intentions* (London: Methuen, 1934), 185.
11 CW4, 344.
12 Meyer, *Politics*, 65–6.
13 David Schulz, "Redressing Oscar: Performance and the Trials of Oscar Wilde," *The Drama Review* 40, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 45–6.
14 William Sayers, "The Etymology of Queer," *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews* 18, no. 2 (2005): 18.
15 Butler, *Bodies*, 226.
16 Oscar Wilde, "Slaves of Fashion," in *The Woman's World*, No. 1, ed. Oscar Wilde (London: Cassell & Company, 1888), 40.
17 Jill Fields, "'Fighting the Corsetless Evil': Shaping Corsets and Culture 1900–1930," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 356–7.
18 T. O. Beachcroft, "Katherine Mansfield's Encounter with Theocritus," *English Journal of the English Association* 23, no. 115 (March 1974): 16, 19.
19 Nancy Gray, "Un-Defining the Self in the Stories of Katherine Mansfield," in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, ed. Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber, and Susan Reid (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), 84.
20 Katherine Mansfield, "Stay-Laces," in CW1, 460.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Flügel, *Psychology,* 15.
24 Fields, "Fighting," 357.
25 "Stay-Laces," 461.
26 Ibid.
27 Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Simpkin, Marshall Hamilton, Kent & Co Ltd., 1913), 37.
28 Katherine Mansfield, "Bliss," in CW2, 145.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 147.
31 Ibid., 146.

32 Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*. 2nd ed. (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 115.
33 Garelick, *Rising Star*, 144.
34 Mansfield, “Bliss,” 146.
35 Meyer, *Politics,* 79–81.
36 Mansfield, “Bliss,” 147.
37 Sinfield, *The Wilde Century,* 79–81.
38 Mansfield, “Bliss,” 152.
39 Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford University Press, 1987), 274; Nicholas Murray, *Aldous Huxley: An English Intellectual* (St Ives: Abacus, 2003), 25.
40 Mansfield, “Bliss,” 142.
41 Ibid., 151.
42 Ibid., 148.
43 Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, 99.
44 Ibid., 141.
45 Katherine Mansfield, “Je ne parle pas français,” in CW2, 117.
46 Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, 99, 118–19.
47 Mansfield, “Je ne parle pas,” 122.
48 Ibid., 123.
49 Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 1.2.9–11.
50 Mansfield, “Je ne parle pas,” 120.
51 Ibid., 121.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 122.
54 Ibid., 116.
55 Ibid., 112.
56 Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays*. (London: Penguin, 1986), 268.
57 Mansfield, “Je ne parle pas,” 118.
58 Ibid., 115.
59 Butler, *Bodies*, 187.

26

Katherine Mansfield and Ecocriticism

William Kupinse

Katherine Mansfield's writing cultivates an ecological sensibility. From her earliest extant sketch, written at the age of nine, in which two young girls collect ferns and moss, to her last completed story, in which a canary's song attests that sadness is a trans-species phenomenon, Mansfield's fiction attends keenly to the living world, as do her poems, letters, and journal entries.[1] Mansfield's biography charts a similar course, from a trip to the rugged interior of New Zealand when she was nineteen, recorded in *The Urewera Notebook* (1907), to the conservationist ethic implicit in the will she wrote the year before her death from tuberculosis: "I desire to leave as few traces of my camping ground as possible."[2]

Mansfield's writing both anticipates and is illuminated by ecocriticism, the study of how texts represent the human relationship to the environment. By *environment*, ecocriticism encompasses both natural and humanly built spaces, as well as everything in between—agricultural settings, for example, like George Gurdjieff's commune in Fontainebleau, France, where Mansfield spent her last days tending cows and goats. One of the most valuable services ecocriticism can provide is to remind us that terms like "environment" and "nature" are not self-evident categories, but rather concepts produced by particular socio-historical conditions. The socio-historical conditions under which the New Zealand-born Mansfield wrote the majority of her work—first as transplant to England, then, driven by illness and war, as episodic expatriate in Germany, France, Italy, and Switzerland—are the conditions of European modernity in the early decades of the twentieth century, which constitute the environment out of which modernist literature grew. These conditions include technological innovations, such as the telephone and automobile; demographic shifts reflecting the consolidation of human populations in cities; global impacts of the intensification and fracturing of European colonialism; and the mass trauma of the Great War. While a recent

wave of scholarship has remedied the charge that modernist studies lacks interest in environmental matters, modernist ecocriticism is still a nascent field of study—a surprising state of affairs, given that modernism and the *anthropocene*, the geological period in which the human impact on the environment became effectively permanent, get underway at roughly the same time.

Mansfield has fared better than most modernist writers when it comes to ecocritical attention, with more than a dozen articles and book chapters appearing in the last decade. Amid this surge of interest, however, one can discern an imbalance of emphasis. As its name suggests, ecocriticism is interested not only in environments as places, but as ecologies of living beings. Perhaps because of her vivid depictions of animals, ecocritical scholarship on Mansfield has tended to prioritize fauna over flora. The recent Mansfield scholarship that does consider flora often does so in the form of gardens—an important focus to be sure, and one that has shed light on gender roles, social class, and colonialism.

While not eschewing gardens entirely, this chapter takes a different approach by examining plants not as artfully arrayed, aesthetically pleasing objects that happen to be alive, but as vibrant beings that possess experience and exercise agency. Specifically, my argument is that Mansfield depicts plants in a manner unique among modernist writers by aligning two eco-aesthetic paradigms of the Romantic era with developments in botanical science of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In my reading of Mansfield's work, plants are more than just entities that we desire, that we need, or that move us; they are beings that *themselves* desire, need, and, quite literally, move. Exploring the role of agentic plants in Mansfield's fiction reveals a worldview discounted by the dominant ideologies of our present moment, one whose recovery has much to contribute at a time of ecological crisis.

We see evidence of agentic plants throughout the writing Mansfield published during her lifetime, from the singing grass in "The Earth-Child in the Grass" (1912)[3] to the grapevine whose "tiny corkscrew tendrils" twine their way into the scullery kitchen in "Prelude" (1917).[4] Her letters, which record the flora around her with a botanist's precision, likewise describe plants as feeling, thinking, doing. The bellflower is, in Mansfield's words, a "delicate creature."[5] Growing on a Swiss mountainside too steep for trains or automobiles, "the very flowers seem to me to know" that they are protected from rich tourists and "even the wild strawberry doesn't bother to hide."[6] Standing beneath an autumn tree, Mansfield finds herself startled when "suddenly one leaf made the most ethereal advances to me and in another moment we were kissing."[7]

The idea that plants possess agency—much less sentience—seems such a far-fetched proposal that we are inclined to dismiss statements of this kind as metaphor or wry personification. This reaction is a culturally learned response that Mansfield's art productively challenges. From Aristotle's *De Anima* onward, Western thought has dismissed the possibility of plants as meaningful subjects.[8] Paradigms as diverse as Bacon's empiricism, Descartes's rationalism, and Linnaeus's classification maintained that plants were without feeling or volition, existing solely for the use of humans and animals.[9]

Today the notion of plant agency and experience is undergoing an epistemic shift as the result of the emerging field of plant neurobiology. This research is overturning long-held assumptions about how intelligence is measured, what constitutes goal-directed behavior, and how to delineate the subject of investigation. In particular, it suggests that studying plant networks, rather than individual plants in isolation, is essential to understanding complex plant behavior.

Although the dominant view of plants as insensate held sway during Mansfield's era, a small but influential body of research, the forerunner of present-day plant neurobiology, was challenging the orthodoxy of the time. In *The Power of Movement in Plants* (1880), Charles Darwin and his botanist son, Francis, explained the process by which plants responded to light, gravity, and other stimuli, and even explored the subject of sleep in plants. The Darwins demonstrated that plant tropisms result from modifications to *circumnutation*, the rhythmic helical motions that many growing plants exhibit on an almost continual basis.[10] Francis Darwin allowed for even further possibilities of plant agency, suggesting that complex plant behaviors could indicate the presence of phenomena thought to be the exclusive domain of animals: memory, learning, and consciousness. Building upon the work of the Darwins and others, Jagadish Chandra Bose detailed his groundbreaking experiments on plant "irritability" in works such as *Plant Response as a Means of Physiological Investigation* (1906).[11] Bose developed scientific instruments that allowed him to measure the comparatively slow growth and subtle movement of plants, applying this technology to two plants famous for their movement: *Mimosa pudens*, known as the "sensitive plant" for its ability to fold shut its leaves, and *Dedans gyrans*, the "telegraph plant," reputed by folk belief to "dance[] to the clapping of the hand."[12] Subjecting these plants to stimuli from acids to alcohol, Bose concluded that "there is hardly any phenomenon of irritability, observed in the case of animal tissues, which is not also to be discovered in some simple form in the case of the plant."[13]

This research on plant agency was widely publicized at the time in both New Zealand and England. In 1902, the year before Mansfield traveled to London to attend Queen's College, an article on "Up-to-Date Science" in Wellington's *New Zealand Mail* summarized Francis Darwin's address to the British Association in Glasgow on "The Movements in Plants," which the scientific journal *Nature* had recently published. In its interpretation of Darwin's work to a popular audience, the *Mail* emphasized the continuity of plant and animal response to stimuli, concluding that "wherever we have life we find sensitiveness" and leaving the door open to the possibility of "plant mind."[14] Upon her return to England in 1908, after a miserable eighteen months in New Zealand, Mansfield could have opened up the pages of *The New Age*, the journal that would soon launch her literary career, and read about another of Francis Darwin's addresses to the British Association, this time in Dublin. "[T]he main issue discussed will probably become popular in a very little while," the journal predicted. "Are plants intelligent? Have they a psychic life?" *The New Age* was inclined to answer yes to both questions, noting that while "Dr. Darwin admitted his evidence might appear 'both weak and fantastic' […]; now that the direction of research has been clearly indicated, we may expect evidence to accumulate."[15] The *Times* of London, which Mansfield continued to read even after moving to the continent, regularly featured Bose's research, explaining in one article that Bose's work affirms a "fundamental unity of life reactions […] between plants and animals" as "shown by the spontaneous pulsation in certain plant tissues which in animals is heartbeat."[16]

These journalistic accounts of scientific research into plant sensitivity and sentience would have held special resonance for readers raised, as Mansfield was, on British Romantic poetry. For William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley, plants possessed feelings and the agency to act upon them. The *New Zealand Mail* article had made explicit this literary connection when it explained that "Wordsworth may, after all, have been nearer the truth than even poetic fancy dreamt of when he declared that 'Tis my faith that every flower/Enjoys the air it breathes.'"[17] While William Wordsworth deemed plant subjectivity a universal satisfaction in natural processes, his sister Dorothy emphasized the diversity of affective responses, even among individuals of the same species—in this entry from her *Grasmere Journals*, the daffodils that her brother would famously exalt: "some rested their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing."[18] Coleridge imagined a

formidable potentiality when describing his visit to Gibraltar, where residents planted living fences of "that strange vegetable monster, the prickly aloe"—a phrase that Mansfield, whose story "Prelude" features an agentic aloe, would have appreciated.[19] From his medical training, Keats knew well the powers of chemically agentic plants such as the deadly belladonna, the "nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine" in "Ode to Melancholy."[20] Shelley, whose poem "The Sensitive Plant" anticipates Bose's research, built upon the Romantic conceit that the true artist experiences the world's beauty and sorrow with heightened intensity. In this regard, the sensitive plant serves as a metaphor for the poet, whose permeability confers empathy and insight, but at the risk of experiencing anguish so intensely as to threaten annihilation.

In giving his review of *The Journals of Katherine Mansfield* the title "The Sensitive Plant," Richard Church positions Mansfield herself as such a floral specimen, her already keen psychic recording apparatus even more finely tuned through suffering.[21] Church is correct in emphasizing Mansfield's poetic sensibility, which shapes her stories as much as it does her actual poems. It is fitting, then, that the aesthetic informing Mansfield's short fiction revises two of the dominant aesthetic theories associated with Romantic poetry: negative capability and the pathetic fallacy.

Although the term "negative capability" may sound oxymoronic, for Keats it represents the essence of the poet's creative process. In an 1817 letter to his brothers, Keats defined negative capability as the state in which the poet is "capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after facts & reason."[22] Writing to Richard Woodhouse the following year, Keats makes clear that by "negative," he means the evacuation of the poet's sense of individual selfhood, clearing a space through which profound empathy can allow the writer to take on the experience of another. "As to the poetical Character itself," Keats writes, "[…] it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated." He explains that a "Poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity—he is continually in for—and filling some other Body."[23] The word *body* is a careful choice. The poet may occupy the subjectivity of another person, as Shakespeare did in channeling the characters of his plays, but the poet may also inhabit the body of a non-human entity: a season, a bird—or, as "light and shade" suggests, a plant.

Mansfield's own theorizing about the process of artistic creation echoes closely Keatsian negative capability. The true artist, Mansfield explains, "must

accept Life, he must submit—give himself so utterly to life that no personal *qua* personal self remains."[24] Upon learning that Dorothy Brett had turned to painting still lifes, Mansfield offered her friend an expanded account of the process:

> What can one do, faced with this wonderful tumble of round bright fruits, but gather them and play with them—and become them, as it were. When I pass the apple stalls I cannot help stopping and staring until I feel that I, myself, am changing into an apple, too—and that at any moment I may produce an apple, miraculously, out of my own being […] When I write about ducks I swear that I am a white duck with a round eye, floating in a pond fringed with yellow blobs and taking an occasional dart at the other duck with the round eye, which floats upside down beneath me. In fact this whole process of becoming the duck […] is so thrilling that I can hardly breathe, only to think about it. For although that is as far as most people can get, it is really only the "prelude." There follows the moment when you are more duck, more apple […] than any of these objects could ever possibly be, and so you create them anew.[25]

Drawing examples from flora and fauna, Mansfield extends Keats's negative capability, proposing that subjective becoming is a necessary precondition for artistic creation, but not on its own a sufficient one. Rather, the writer must cultivate a surfeit of the assumed identity—become "more duck, more apple"—so that overabundance of subjectivity can energize their re-presentation.

"Prelude," the story to which Mansfield alludes, wrestles with the problem of what to do with negative capability once initiated. The Burnell family has just moved house, leaving central Wellington for the rural suburbs. Linda Burnell, the story's reluctant matriarch, walks through the yard of her new home only to find her daughter Kezia mesmerized by a strange plant.

> Linda looked up at the fat swelling plant with its cruel leaves and fleshy stem. High above them, as though becalmed in the air, and yet holding so fast to the earth it grew from, it might have had claws instead of roots. The curving leaves seemed to be hiding something; the blind stem cut into the air as if no wind could ever shake it.[26]

To the intuitive reader, "fat swelling plant" and "fleshy stem" are symbolically legible, as is Linda's sense that the plant, an enormous aloe, is "hiding something." Preoccupied with a pregnancy that she does not want and has yet to disclose to her husband, Linda sees the aloe as an image of her own expectant body.

We might be tempted to read Linda's perception of the aloe as psychological projection akin to the art critic John Ruskin's concept of the pathetic fallacy, a Victorian theory that draws heavily on Romantic poetry. For Ruskin, the

pathetic fallacy arises when we reject the "ordinary, proper, and true appearances of things to us" in favor of "the extraordinary, or false appearances, when we are under the influences of emotion, or contemplative fancy." False appearance, Ruskin explains, is "unconnected with any real power or character in the object, and only being imputed to it by us."[27] Often the pathetic fallacy leads us to attribute intentionality to non-human entities. As with negative capability, the term "pathetic fallacy" sounds more pejorative than it did when first coined. *Pathetic* here means related to pathos, emotional; *fallacy* stands for inaccurate representation, what Ruskin calls "false appearance." The pathetic fallacy is not something a poet must always avoid, although Ruskin believes that the greatest poets transcend it. When sincerely felt, pathetically fallacious description can resonate powerfully.

By way of example, Ruskin quotes a couplet by Charles Kingsley:

> They rowed her in across the roiling foam—
> The cruel, crawling foam[28]

"The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl," writes Ruskin, suggesting that ascribing these qualities to seafoam can only happen when one's "reason is unhinged by grief." All strong feelings, he maintains, similarly skew our perceptions.[29]

What then should we make of Linda's impression of the aloe's "cruel leaves"? Despite the similarity of appearance to Kingsley's vexed line, what we see through Linda's perspective is closer to botanical fact than emotive delusion. When Linda revisits the aloe that evening, this time in the company of her own mother, she imagines that the plant is a ship sent to rescue her. Remarking again on the spiny leaves, Linda's heart hardens and we learn that she "particularly like[s] the long sharp thorns." Yet the next sentence clarifies that Linda's appreciation of the thorns is not gratuitous cruelty: "Nobody would dare to come near the ship or to follow after."[30] Much as the aloe's leaf-edge spines defend the plant from being consumed by animals, Linda wishes for protection from the serial pregnancies that have robbed her of her physical and mental health. Specifically, she wants relief from the insistent overtures of her husband Stanley. Her vision of the aloe-as-ship further suggests a broader entreaty to be spared from the procreative duties imposed upon settler colonial women.

By connecting with the aloe's evolved defenses rather than imputing human qualities to it, Linda's imaginative encounter with the plant tends more toward negative capability than pathetic fallacy, although the two processes inhabit the

same spectrum. Registering the similarities between herself and the possibly budding aloe, Linda imagines the advantages of more complete identification with the agentic plant: the strength of the unwavering stem, the protection of the long sharp thorns, the release from reproduction that a plant that flowers "once every hundred years" would offer.[31] Her fantasy of rescue by the plant-turned-ship is one of literal incorporation, to be "caught up out of the cold water into the ship with the lifted oars and the budding mast." The rowing motion of the aloe leaves mirrors the helical movements of root and stem apexes that the Darwins investigated in their research on circumnutation, while the rhythmic aspect of this motion recalls Bose's discovery of a heartbeat-like pulsation in plants. By visibly enacting the usually imperceptible process of plant movement, the aloe's oar-strokes evoke the physical response of special-case plants such as *Mimosa pudens* and *Dedans gyrans*, only in more muscular form.

Linda's process of inhabiting the body of the plant-turned-ship is ecstatic—"Ah, she heard herself cry: 'Faster! Faster!' to those who were rowing"—yet she ultimately abandons the endeavor.[32] Receiving no corroboration that her mother shares her epiphany, Linda relents, giving in to the demands of patriarchy and empire: "I shall go on having children and Stanley will go on making money and the children and the gardens will grow bigger and bigger, with whole fleets of aloes in them for me to choose from."[33] When Linda's mother does share her thoughts, the image evoked privileges domestic duty over shared female interest. To appease Stanley's desire for "home products," Mrs. Fairfield is considering making jam from the garden's "splendid healthy currant bushes," putting their symbolic agency into the suspended animation of glass jars.[34]

"Prelude" thus dramatizes the tragedy of Keatsian negative capability thwarted before it achieves fulfillment. Linda tastes the "thrilling" prospect of inhabiting the aloe's radical alterity, a prospect whose verisimilitude is heightened by parallels between Linda's fantasy of defense and escape and the ongoing scientific research into plant response. Whether due to social conditioning or to the absence of solidarity from her mother, Linda stops short of the pivotal moment when she would become *more* aloe than the aloe itself, thereby achieving a negatively capable critical mass that would enable her message to carry forth. In this regard, Linda's plight mirrors that of the woman writer who must overcome external and internal obstacles for her writing to reach a receptive audience.

Hope in "Prelude" rests upon Kezia, a poet of flora, if not yet of words. For Kezia, plants are fellow people and she treats them accordingly. Musing that the family's new garden will afford the material for a favorite project—a matchbox diorama for her grandmother—Kezia reviews the steps involved: "First she would

put a leaf inside with a big violet lying on it, then she would put a very small white picotee, perhaps, on each side of the violet, and then she would sprinkle some lavender on the top, but not to cover their heads."[35] Even as she incorporates these flowers into her art, Kezia's provision of a leafy bed and floral company suggests an ethic of care. The anthropomorphic "heads" notwithstanding, Kezia's diorama-making is a far cry from Ruskin's pathetic fallacy. Absent is any hint of the "violent emotion" that Ruskin believes warps perception. What might seem "contemplative fancy"—for Ruskin a milder form of distortion—proves upon closer examination to be the empathy the Romantics saw as a natural birthright, albeit one that the social world would inevitably diminish. For the moment, Kezia's natural empathy remains intact as she exercises the inherited faculties of negative capability through artistic practice.

The late Victorian context illuminates the significance of Kezia's creative play. In the early part of the nineteenth century, a complex system of floral symbolism developed around a popular genre of books that proposed to explain the "language of flowers," reaching the height of its popularity in the 1880s. Combining poems, historical vignettes, and illustrations, these "language of flowers" books centered around a copious glossary listing the symbolic import of each species—a resource one could use to decode the more complex floral message of a bouquet. The floral meanings were remarkably consistent throughout the century. While there were female-authored guides in circulation when "Prelude" is set, the meanings of particular flowers—some culturally evolved, others arbitrary—were established by the early lexicons, largely written by men and promoting rigid gender roles. For Kezia to disrupt this male-authored symbolic code by cultivating her own meaning through attention to the experience of violet and picotee is a radical act.

Unhappily single, Kezia's aunt Beryl also chooses flowers as the medium for her art only to find herself thwarted by these preexisting cultural associations and her own interpersonal blindness. Beryl's impasse does not result from lack of practice. In "Prelude" alone she imagines a lover handing her a bouquet, wears a black silk rose, adorns a dress with red cloth poppies, and is revealed as the painter of a still life of "surprised-looking clematis."[36] But what Beryl intends as original performances of floral self-fashioning emerge as a derivative semiotic muddle. This aesthetic failure is further complicated by Beryl's broader deficiency of empathetic imagination, apparent in the way she treats the Burnells' domestic help, but no less present in the way she treats non-human entities. Beryl views the arums as she does Alice: objects to be manipulated at will. Posing before the arums in a dress pinned with pansies, Beryl "tosse[s] her bright head

and pout[s]" as she plays cribbage with Stanley, her gesture recalling William Wordsworth's daffodils "[t]ossing their heads in sprightly dance." As with her other floral allusions, Beryl would embody what she sees as their essence—evidently the uniform joy of William Wordsworth's "host of daffodils," rather than the dynamic individuality of Dorothy Wordsworth's journal entry.[37] But the effect of Beryl's impersonation more closely recalls the symbolism assigned to daffodils by the host of "Language of Flowers" glossaries: "regard," what Beryl so desperately seeks.[38] Instead of inhabiting the flowers themselves, Beryl enacts a parody of negative capability, assuming instead the role of a predetermined signifier, the dominant culture's idea of what a flower means.

In "At the Bay," the companion story to "Prelude," we find Beryl continuing to struggle with her project of floral self-fashioning, though within a much different environment. The mist-clad hills, dew-dappled grass, and supplicating flowers with which the narrative opens evoke the pastoral, a mode of representation harking back to Theocritus's *Idylls* in which an idealized depiction of country ways amid easeful Nature promises—though does not always deliver—respite from the tribulations of town life.[39] Obligingly, in Mansfield's story, a flock of sheep emerges, herded by an aged sheepdog. His master follows in turn, raising the pipe that signals another convention of the genre, the panpipe being the standard-issue wind instrument for any pastoral shepherd. But when the shepherd of "At the Bay" fills his pipe with tobacco, exhaling smoke instead of song, we sense that something is amiss in Mansfield's modern pastoral.

For Beryl, the pastoral's promise of respite still holds appeal, although she seeks relief not from the urban life she craves but from her exile in the suburbs. Still living with her sister's family, Beryl has followed the Burnells to Crescent Bay. Despite its remoteness, the summer community offers some new faces to distract Beryl, notably the cosmopolitan Kembers. Ironic, unkempt, and perpetually smoking, Mrs. Harry Kember both fascinates and repulses Beryl—repulses with her horsey laugh, fascinates by the rumors surrounding her impossibly handsome young husband and by the compliments she lobs at Beryl. "[W]hat a little beauty you are!" she tells Beryl, appraising her body as Beryl dons her bathing dress. "I believe in pretty girls having a good time," Mrs. Harry Kemper tells Beryl, then swims off, leaving in her wake the parting words "Don't make a mistake. Enjoy yourself."[40]

As with "Prelude," the end of "At the Bay" focuses on Beryl. Once again, we find her pining for the romance and economic security of a husband. Alone in her room late at night, Beryl has the thrilling feeling that she is a conspirator. She hallucinates that she sees two figures kissing—presumably herself and her

imaginary lover. Attempting to shake off the vision, Beryl goes to the open window and looks out on the moonlit garden, but her fantasy persists. Every element of the outdoor scene seems to Beryl to be an ally of her secret cause: "the beautiful night, the garden, every bush, every leaf, even the white palings, even the stars, were conspirators too." The flowers sprawl in erotic languor as the "shadow of the nasturtiums, exquisite lily-like leaves and wide-open flowers, lay across the silvery veranda."[41] Plagued by loneliness, Beryl's emotional state is surely charged enough to alter her perception according to Ruskin's terms. A straightforward reading of the scene would see Beryl projecting onto the moonlit garden her own desire for romance and sexual adventure.

What follows, however, complicates this interpretation of the scene as simple pathetic fallacy. No longer gazing at the individual bushes of the garden, but at the collective "bush" beyond (the equivalent of "woods" in US English), Beryl notices that the bush is "sad," as the bush itself confirms when it speaks to her. Beryl's immediate reaction is to dismiss what she has witnessed as the result of her loneliness, telling herself, "It is true when you are by yourself and you think about life, it is always sad."[42] We would do well to distrust Beryl's own explanation that the sorrowful talking bush is the result of pathetic fallacy, in part because it seems too easy for a modernist text to explain itself so readily, but more so because the free indirect discourse that surrounds Beryl throughout this section reveals the unreliability of her other rationalizations. Nor can the talking bush be dismissed as another version of the mirage of the lovers kissing, since that image grew out of a well-worn fantasy Beryl herself initiated. By contrast, the talking bush surprises Beryl, and it is far from obvious what fantasy might be rehearsed in its strange, prophetic utterance: "'We are dumb trees, reaching up in the night, imploring we know not what,' said the sorrowful bush."[43]

Instead of following Beryl in explaining away this enigmatic sentence, we would do well to explore it further, for the sentence raises fundamental questions about subjectivity, representational form, and identity. Most immediately, we see that the sentence is founded on a logical contradiction: its communicative content is at odds with its framing. "We are dumb trees," the sentence begins, the word "dumb" standing here for "voiceless," the sense in which Mansfield uses it throughout her writing. Setting aside for the moment the perplexing shift from the plural "trees" to the collective noun "bush," the import of the quoted speech is that the trees are voiceless and lack intentionality, yet they engage in symbolic action nonetheless, "reaching" and "imploring." How do we know this about the voiceless trees? From the statement's attributive tag: the bush told us. Given its impossible provenance, we are left uncertain how to assess the knowledge

we have received about the mute, intentionless, but signifying trees. And since that epistemological uncertainty is the result of the trees/bush disrupting the anthropocentric division of the world into human subjects and non-human objects, this glimpse of an ecocentric alternative invites us to interrogate prevailing ontological assumptions.

The epistemological and ontological challenges the sentence raises are more than philosophical abstractions. Rather, considerations of the conditions of knowledge and the foundations of being have immediate practical application to Beryl's situation. If Beryl were to condense the dilemma she faces in "At the Bay" into a single question, it would be something along the lines of "Who should I listen to?" Should she listen to Victorian-colonial gender codes, which tell her that a woman without a husband is irrelevant? Should she listen to Mrs. Harry Kember's carnal *carpe diem*? Or, since humans give such conflicting advice, should she follow the Romantics and turn to the natural world for guidance? And if so, which natural entities should she listen to, and how should she interpret their message?

Beryl's dilemma points to two pivotal areas of contest in "Prelude" and "At the Bay": who counts as a subject and how that subject's perspective is represented. Both Linda and Beryl's efforts to convey their experiences are frustrated by gender constraints: Linda and her mother cannot move beyond the domestic patterns available to them, and although Mrs. Harry Kember professes to disdain convention, the objectifying gaze she directs at Beryl replicates patriarchal power dynamics and disregards Beryl's interest. But while gender formations impede the ability of these two women to communicate, class and racial privilege confers an assumption of subjective relevance not guaranteed to other characters: Alice, whose complaint about Beryl's snobbishness must remain interior; Chung Wah, whose viewpoint is unavailable to us when Beryl's disparages the paintings he gave to Stanley; the Māori displaced by New Zealand's colonial settlement, whose very existence is effaced from both stories.

Given the obstacles human beings face in eliciting recognition of their subjecthood and communicating their experience to a receptive listener, the obstacles to validating and representing non-human subjectivity are formidable. When that subjectivity and perspective belong to plants, the difficulties are greater still. Far from mere fanciful undertakings, negative capability and the pathetic fallacy are Romanticism's pragmatic attempts to harness human faculties to move beyond the boundaries of the human. Informed by objective study and guided by intuition, negative capability discards the sense of a stable self so that imagination can launch the poet into the subject-position of the non-human

being. Because language joins perceiving subject to its conscious object, feeling becomes integral to representation, with the result that "sensitive figuration"—a better term than pathetic fallacy—is both the poet's ethical imperative and a means of psychic exploration.

As aesthetic strategies, negative capability and the pathetic fallacy bring advantages of immediacy and approachability, but it is important to acknowledge their limitations. If the goal of negative capability is to become the non-human entity, what happens to human language in that process? Wouldn't genuine negative capability need to relinquish the means of communicating what it discovers? And whether we accept Ruskin's assumption that absolute objectivity is possible, or whether we side with the Romantics' belief that all of nature is a feeling subject, doesn't the human form of human language inevitably shape the lens through which we apprehend our extra-human subjects?

Mansfield, I suggest, understood well the pitfalls of both strategies, but found their advantages overcame their shortcomings. With the notable exception of her husband John Middleton Murry, most of her contemporaries took pains to distance themselves from the Romantics, whom they found too subjective, too earnest, too recent. Nearly alone among modernists in claiming the Romantics as her forbearers, Mansfield was committed to their project of engaging extra-human subjectivity. But if Romanticism's project was to continue, it would need to be brought into alignment with modernism's attention to language's materiality—in particular, modernism's insight that language, used conventionally, is not a transparent means of expression but a medium that itself structures our thoughts. Mansfield's innovation was to combine Romanticism's endeavor with modernism's linguistic critique. If, as modernism insisted, language provides both the means and limits of our thoughts, Mansfield resolved to make use of language's contradictions, its blind spots, its anthropocentric biases to limn the contours of what lies beyond the human realm—in the case of plants, both above and beneath it.

Mansfield's Beryl Fairfield is not the first person to find epiphany in a talking bush whose meaning resides in the riddle of linguistic form. As we have seen with the form of the sentence, the logical paradox inherent in the bush/trees' statement troubles conventional understanding as to who counts as a subject and what registers as signification. That these two concerns, subjecthood and representation, are intimately connected is suggested by the shared etymological origin of *sentience* and *sentence*. To be aware is to articulate thought—that, at least, is the human assumption. But the bush/trees suggest that cognition is not the sole criterion for either consciousness or understanding. The bush/

trees may not know the intellectual content of what they implore, but the visual shape of their reaching skyward signals gesturally a desire whose object may be unspecified—to connect, to be seen, to thrive are all possibilities—but is all the more powerfully *felt*. It is no accident that the trees' uplifted branches mirror the universal sign made by prelinguistic children for a parent to pick them up, a figuration that appears throughout "At the Bay": the waving arms of Linda's infant son, Beryl's arms stretched out into the water when she swims with Mrs. Kember, the uplifted arms of the woman in Beryl's hallucination clasping the neck of her rescuing lover. By embedding the key to this pattern within a sentence expressed in human language—albeit it one "spoken" by trees—Mansfield's story insists upon a continuity between the felt experience of people and plants.

At the same time the bush/trees' emphasis on feeling unsettles our belief that signification is equivalent to thought, their blurring of the lines between singularity and multiplicity troubles our conception of identity. By fracturing the singular *bush* into the bush that is an association of trees, Beryl's moonlit vision challenges our expectation that a signifying subject must be an individual. The model of collective signification that emerges allows for affiliative possibilities that would remedy Beryl's isolation, and it anticipates the research currently underway on networks of plant communication—the so-called "wood-wide web."[44] Beryl is despondent because she cannot see her way beyond the belief that as an uncoupled individual, she is a part without a whole. "You see, it's so frightfully difficult when you've nobody," Beryl tells herself.[45] Yet in articulating her loneliness, Beryl stumbles upon a contradiction that offers a way out of her situation. Note that Beryl says, "when you've nobody," instead of using the more expected syntax "when you don't have anyone." Beryl's formulation relies on the capacity of human language to embody negative abstraction, so that the verb *to have* can here take as its direct object the null set, *nobody*. The result is a sentence that denotes absence through a syntax that connotes presence.

Lost again in the defense of fantasy, Beryl is surprised by the appearance of Harry Kember, who entreats her to come outside with him. Goaded by an inner voice, Beryl relents, only to discover that the garden is no longer her romantic co-conspirator: "The moonlight stared and glittered; the shadows were like bars of iron." Faced with this scene of cold scrutiny and confinement, Beryl has second thoughts and refuses to walk with Kember. When Kember responds by approaching her roughly, the now "stern garden" reacts with disbelief, asking Beryl, "What was she doing? How had she got here?"[46]

The garden's abrupt transformation invites two interpretations: that it has registered Kember's predation and is responding with alarm; or that Beryl has

a change of heart which in turn influences how she sees moon and garden—in other words, that the pathetic fallacy inflects her free indirect discourse. Each of these opposing possibilities resonates within the story's broader context. Beryl's notion that the plants and other entities in the garden are conspirators to her romantic reverie raises the sinister prospect that there is an analogous conspirator to Harry Kember's failed seduction of her—namely Mrs. Harry Kember. Such parallelism could suggest corresponding alliances of human and non-human interest that support the idea of the garden's sentience; alternately, Beryl could be disowning her knowledge of Mrs. Kember's designs by imputing a more innocent conspiracy onto the garden. The fact that the garden asks essentially the same question of Beryl that Harry will ask when she escapes his grasp, pronouncing him "vile, vile"—"Then why in God's name did you come?"—reinforces this interpretative dichotomy of sentient garden versus Beryl's pathetic fallacy.[47] If we take the same question posed by different speakers as an illustration of how the varying subject positions of male privilege and botanical subalternity result in fundamentally different speech acts—respectively, a warning and attempt at self-justification—then we have another argument for the garden's sentience. If the similar language of the question indicates that Beryl has internalized cultural norms of female victim-blaming, then we add to the case for the pathetic fallacy mediating Beryl's experience of the garden.

The story's refusal to settle on either of these opposing interpretations should not lead us to mistake its lack of closure for evasion. In foregrounding the problem of the ineluctably subjective basis of our knowledge of the external world, Mansfield's rendering retains the raw irreducibility of truth, cautioning us against the danger of too easily imputing to the natural world what we believe it should say.

This caveat does not preclude the representation of non-human perspectives—to the contrary, it clears a space for them on more transparent terms. By allowing for interplay between the perceiving subject and an object world that itself comprises other perceiving subjects, this understanding offers a more nuanced model than Ruskin's assumption of an inert object world skewed by human feeling. As with the speech of the bush/trees, the sentence that immediately follows Harry Kimber's "stammer[ed]" question reveals how modernist linguistic play might open ground for non-human voices: "Nobody answered him."

While a conventional reading of "At the Bay" will take this to mean that Beryl refuses to respond to Kember, that she does not know why she momentarily gave in to his cajoling, or that she has left the scene altogether, an interpretation

attentive to Mansfield's interest in extra-human subjectivities offers another, more hopeful possibility. As with Beryl's earlier phrase "when you have nobody," we can imagine smoother permutations of the section's final sentence: "She did not answer him," "There was no answer," "No answer came." We should therefore consider just what Mansfield's wording provides. If Beryl has nobody, and nobody answers Kember, that combination allows for the possibility that an answering of a kind does take place, with the bush/trees acting as that "nobody." We have seen how the anthropomorphic assumptions linking signification to cognition and sentience to individuality exclude the bush and other plant networks from subjecthood. How might the bush—which has *no* singular *body*—answer Kember? Not aurally, if the bush's statement "we are dumb trees" means that the bush lacks the capacity for audible speech. Yet in that earlier passage, the bush did communicate to Beryl, her rationalizations notwithstanding, which suggests that the bush signifies to those able to discern its message.

When "At the Bay" first appeared, the story had just twelve sections; "Nobody answered him" was followed by four sentences that broaden the narrative lens to encompass sea and sky. Mansfield's decision to set the final four sentences apart as a thirteenth section when the story was collected in *The Garden Party and Other Stories* sharpens the role of non-human agency in the penultimate and final sections. Ending section XII with "Nobody answered him" has the effect of positioning readers as auditors to the silence that follows, inviting them to cultivate discernment of the subjective experience communicated by the bush that so unsettles Beryl. This move is consistent with Mansfield's belief that modernist writing must resist closure in favor of making the reader an active participant in the development of textual meaning. In this interpretation, plant sentience and the possibility of agency are registered in language, but they are not contained by language, hovering instead at the margin of the text, just as the bush itself looms beyond the borders of the garden.

Notes

1 Katherine Mansfield, "Enna Blake," in CW1, 3–4, and "The Canary," in CW2, 511–14.

2 *The Urewera Notebook*, ed. Anna Plumridge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Will of Katherine Mansfield Murry, MS-Papers-7224-06, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22810882.

3 Katherine Mansfield, "The Earth-Child in the Grass," in CW3, 69.
4 Katherine Mansfield, "Prelude," in CW2, 80–81.
5 *Letters* 2, 396.
6 Ibid.
7 *Letters* 4, 105.
8 Matthew Hall, *Plants as Persons: A Philosophical Botany* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011), 22–7.
9 Ibid., 43–50.
10 Charles and Francis Darwin, *The Power of Movement in Plants* (London: John Murray, 1880), 569–71.
11 Jagadish Chandra Bose, *Plant Response as a Means of Physiological Investigation* (London: Longmans, 1906), 40.
12 Ibid., 4.
13 Ibid., 743.
14 Andrew Wilson, "Up-to-Date Science," *New Zealand Mail*, January 22, 1902, 29, https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/new-zealand-mail/1902/01/22/29.
15 "Notes of the Week," *The New Age*, September 12, 1908, 383.
16 "Anaesthetics for Trees," *The Times of London*, December 17, 1919, 11.
17 Wilson, "Up-to-Date Science," 29; William Wordsworth, "Lines Written in Early Spring," in *Poems of Wordsworth*, ed. Matthew Arnold (London: Macmillan, 1879), 130.
18 Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals*, ed. Pamela Woof (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 85.
19 Ernest Hartley Coleridge, ed. *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1895), 476.
20 John Keats, "Ode to Melancholy," in *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats*, ed. Horace Scudder (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1899), 126.
21 Richard Church, "Sensitive Plant," *The Spectator*, August 20, 1927, 288–9.
22 Hyder Edward Rollins, ed. *The Letters of John Keats: 1814–1821*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 193.
23 Ibid., 387.
24 *Letters* 4, 181.
25 *Letters* 1, 330.
26 Mansfield, "Prelude," 73.
27 John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 1856), 169.
28 John Ruskin, *Alton Locke*, vol. 2 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1850), 56.
29 Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 170.
30 Mansfield, "Prelude," 87.
31 Ibid., 73.
32 Ibid., 87.

33 Ibid., 88.
34 Ibid., 85; 88.
35 Ibid., 72.
36 Ibid., 86.
37 Ibid., 85; "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," in *Poems of Wordsworth*, 125.
38 John Ingram, *The Language of Flowers* (London: Frederick Warne, 1887), 358.
39 *The Idylls of Theocritus*, trans. James Henry Hallard (London: Longmans, 1874).
40 Katherine Mansfield, "At the Bay," in CW2, 352; 353.
41 Ibid., 368.
42 Ibid., 369.
43 Ibid., 369.
44 Robert McFarlane, "The Secrets of the Wood Wide Web," *New Yorker*, August 7, 2016, https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/the-secrets-of-the-wood-wide-web.
45 Mansfield, "At the Bay," 369.
46 Ibid., 370.
47 Ibid., 371.

Annotated Bibliography of Selective Criticism

Aimée Gasston

A Note on Primary Texts and Selection of Critical Works

In addition to the work detailed below, Mansfield's primary texts are integral to any understanding of her life and work. All of her creative and critical output is available in the four-volume *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield*, edited by Gerri Kimber, Vincent O'Sullivan, Angela Smith, and Claire Davison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012–16). Volumes 1 and 2 feature her stories in chronological order rather than as they appeared in her published books, and include stories and fragments not previously collected. The third volume focuses on Mansfield as critic, translator, and poet, drawing together all of her poetry and songs, literary translations including those she did of Anton Chekhov, parodies and pastiches, and her substantial critical work, while the fourth volume contains her diaries. The revised version of the diaries replaces the two-volume edition of the Notebooks that was published in 1997 by Margaret Scott, which made such a huge contribution to Mansfield studies but did not present the diary entries and related loose papers in chronological format partly because Mansfield returned to and reused the same books over a number of years. The revised edition therefore makes for a far more fluent and accurate scholarly reading. Her letters are currently available in the five-volume *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, edited by O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984–2008) but, at the time of writing, a revised and expanded edition is being prepared for publication by Edinburgh University Press, under the editorship of Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison. The new edition will be arranged by correspondent rather than chronologically as the O'Sullivan and Scott edition, and it will incorporate additional material such as newly discovered letters and biographical information. For their edition, Davison and Kimber will be re-transcribing the letters from the source materials and fully annotating them, taking into account the volume of recent Mansfield scholarship unavailable to previous editors.

The sections that follow detail key works in life writing and criticism. With the occasional exception, these were published in or after the year 1988, which marks the centenary of Mansfield's birth. Given the restrictions of space, I have also focused on books and special collections rather than individual journal articles.

Biography and Life Writing

Alpers, Anthony. *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1980.
This significantly expanded second edition of Alpers's biography includes additional material which was excluded from the first edition to protect the privacy of those living individuals described in it (and to mitigate against the corollary legal risks); it also draws on additional archival documents. Winner of the 1981 New Zealand Non-Fiction Book Award, Alpers's work was described by Angela Carter as "exhaustive, especially gynaecologically exhaustive,"[1] in view of his proclivity to explain her temperament by means of mapping it to her menstrual cycle. While Carter's concern that Alpers displays a defensive reverence for his subject is occasionally justified, this is a rigorous, compelling, and perspicacious "life" that is full of life.

Baker, Ida. *Katherine Mansfield: The Memories of LM*. London: Virago, 1971.
We are so used to other people's versions of Ida Baker that it is tempting to follow the lead of Mansfield's cruel moniker for her—The Mountain—in imagining her as a mute physical object. This detailed and increasingly moving account corrects easily made assumptions, revealing Baker in recollection as honest, thoughtful, and conscientious. It reveals unique detail enabled by Baker's intimate perspective, such as the fact that the original manuscript of "Daughters of the Late Colonel" contained a dedication to Dr. Sorapure, since lost to the wastepaper basket.

Harris, Laurel, Mary Morris, and Joanna Woods, eds. *The Material Mansfield: Traces of a Writer's Life*. Wellington: Random House, 2008.
Produced by the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace Society, this book is a virtual exhibition of the things that accompanied Mansfield throughout her life, comprising a photographic presentation of the extant possessions alongside text from letters, notebooks, and recollections. Featuring a panoply of objects including her black cloak, brass pig, fruit knife, traveling trunks, and color reproductions of postcards, it is a material treasure trove that inevitably sheds fresh light on Mansfield's everyday experiences.

Jones, Kathleen. *Katherine Mansfield: The Story-Teller*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
This biography makes space to tell the story of Mansfield's husband, John Middleton Murry, and goes beyond the point of Mansfield's death to examine Murry's shaping

of her afterlife. It also counters Claire Tomalin's claims that Mansfield's tuberculosis was linked to an early gonorrhoea infection, as well as previous theories about her early miscarriage and Anton Chekhov plagiarism.

Kimber, Gerri. *Katherine Mansfield—The Early Years*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.
This book carefully sets out Mansfield's early trajectories, filling in gaps left by previous biographies, as it details her family history and formative years in New Zealand up to 1908. In so doing, it rebalances a traditional emphasis on Mansfield's experiences in Europe. It provides generous citations from original sources which are a gift to scholars, navigating deftly between the macro- and microscopic and importantly carving out the details Mansfield would have valued herself: the minutiae of clothing, the mascot penguin at Thorndon Baths, the child writer playing at being a dragon, rock-pools at Day's Bay, a lily lawn bordered with violets.

Laing, Sarah. *Mansfield and Me*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2016.
This graphic memoir is a beautiful object, telling the story of its author (in riotous color) alongside Mansfield's biography (mainly presented in monochrome) in a more visual way than we are accustomed to. It offers a vibrant interpretation of Mansfield's life and work that are illuminated by an interweaving with Laing's own, drawing out unexpected resonances between the experiences of two Wellingtonians born a century apart. Laing offers a careful yet joyous treatment of Mansfield, and the book incorporates an illuminating clarity and punk aesthetic that sit easily alongside Mansfield's oeuvre.

Meyers, Jeffrey. *Katherine Mansfield: A Darker View*. New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002.
Meyers' biography seeks to undo the saintly portrayal of Mansfield crafted posthumously by Murry, shining a light on the more shadowy aspects of their relationship to include the affairs each of them had, and drawing on detail from interviews with individuals such as Dorothy Brett whom he visited in Taos, New Mexico, and correspondence shared with him by Margaret Scott. The first edition was published in 1978, with the edition referenced above containing a new introduction. Meyers's vision of Mansfield was "more rebellious and daring, more cruel and capable than the figure in the legend" (xxi).

Tomalin, Claire. *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*. London: Penguin, 1988.
Tomalin's biography is a lucid and compelling read, which is both dispassionate and lively in its treatment of Mansfield and her varied contradictions and complexities. It lends an additional emphasis to Mansfield's friendship with D. H. Lawrence, as well as those relationships she had with women, and gives a refreshingly feminist take on her life in its various guises. Tomalin's explanation that Mansfield's difficult relationship with Floryan Sobieniowski and her refusal to republish *In a German Pension* were linked—because Sobieniowski threatened to make public news of her alleged Chekhov plagiarism—has been a source of contention.

Woods, Joanna. *Katerina: The Russian World of Katherine Mansfield*. Auckland: Penguin, 2001.
This biography explores Mansfield's life and style through a Russian lens, examining her Russophilia as it is manifest through music, literature, and fashion, from the influence of Chekhov on her work to her decision to enter the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man.

Yska, Redmer. *A Strange Beautiful Excitement: Katherine Mansfield's Wellington 1888–1903*. Otago: Otago University Press, 2017.
This book takes its title from a line of "Prelude" and, like that story, encapsulates the ambivalence of the Wellington that the young Mansfield knew, concerned equally with the beauty as the horror. Creatively rendered and incorporating the author's own biography as much as Mansfield's, this book uses the city as an effective organizing principle to reveal the Wellington that Mansfield knew as a "mildly fevered inter-mingling" of "the magic past and the rotten past" (57).

Critical Works

Ailwood, Sarah and Melinda Harvey, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.
This stimulating collection includes chapters on Mansfield's literary dialogue with a range of authors, including Evelyn Waugh, Elizabeth Bowen, Virginia Woolf, S. S. Koteliansky, Elizabeth von Arnim, Colette, Anton Chekhov, Nettie Palmer, Eve Langley, William Shakespeare, and Frank Sargeson. With parts dedicated to ambivalence, exchange, identification, imitation, enchantment, and legacy, and contributions from a range of well-known scholars, this book is wide-ranging and valuable. In its mapping of influence, it fills a gap previously left by reticence to address issues relating to plagiarism and the need to stress Mansfield's innovation and difference rather than explore the continuities that exist between her and other writers.

Ascari, Maurizio. *The Cinema and the Imagination in Katherine Mansfield's Writing*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
This book does valuable work to reappraise the influence of the cinema upon Mansfield's career, using it as a critical lens through which to examine her aesthetic evolution and the affinities between the generic properties of the short story and the medium of film. Devoting sections to dreams, post-impressionism, dialogue, Charlie Chaplin, and the cinema industry, Ascari ultimately argues that Mansfield's writing is inflected by "two complementary drives—impersonation and impersonality" (92) and that cinema was integral to her ambition of full, authentic, and multi-faceted representation.

Bennett, Andrew. *Katherine Mansfield*. Tavistock: Northcote House in association with the British Council, 2004.

This slim volume is a valuable introduction to Mansfield's stories which focuses on the connection between life and writing in her work, engaging with questions of personal identity and the poetics of impersonation which particularly inform her late work. Drawing on sexual as well as colonial theory, this book does delicate and deliberate work to interrupt and complicate our picture of Mansfield, with chapters focusing on the concept of strangeness (so palpable in the work of Mansfield's literary descendants such as Elizabeth Bowen) and hatred (which fueled Mansfield's ferocious satires). The concluding chapter is particularly resonant, in which Bennett argues that "Mansfield transforms the short story genre to elaborate a poetics of lack" with "personal identity, narrative structure, and the so-called symbolic or symbolist dimension of the narratives all resist finality, consummation, closure" (81).

Burgan, Mary. *Illness, Gender, and Writing: The Case of Katherine Mansfield*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Mary Burgan argues that Mansfield's "experience of pain gave a sharp edge to her representation of physical sensation" (174–5). Burgan takes a feminist-psychoanalytical approach in this bold work, making wide-ranging and incisive observations about Mansfield's relationship with the body, although with a reliance on terminology (such as "hysteria") that is vexed from a twenty-first-century viewpoint. It is a book with less of an emphasis on what we might naturally conceive of as illness than its title may suggest, focusing more on experiences of pregnancy, maternal relations, food, and sexuality. Burgan's argument that Mansfield's engagement with everyday sensation was key to her aesthetic is an important one, but her tendency to conflate distinctions between physical, psychological, and psychic wellbeing—as Mansfield herself did toward the end of her life—can lead to a confusion of focus. That said, Burgan's conception of the New Zealand stories as a "therapeutic project" (93) is a compelling one, as is her overarching thesis that Mansfield "would have written without mortal disease," but "she would have written differently" (xvi).

Davison, Claire. *Translation as Collaboration: Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and S. S Kotelianksy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

The networks of Russophilia which peaked in the early twentieth century are illuminated in this methodical examination of collaborative translation practices, an area which has received only limited scholarly attention. Between 1916 and 1923, Koteliansky collaborated on translations with John Middleton Murry, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, as well as Mansfield; given the labor and effort involved, it was both meaningful and significant to them. For example, Mansfield and Koteliansky co-translated a considerable number of works over a five-year span, including Chekhov's diary and letters and both correspondence and works by Maxim Gorky and Fyodor Dostoevsky, with Mansfield's participation not always attributed in the publications that followed her death. In this exciting

work, Davison examines the poetics of translating, arguing that "experimenting with style, voice, textual rhythm and editing turned translation into a modernist laboratory, where 'exercises in literature' enabled writers to think across traditions, styles and genre" (7). The focus on the collaborative process lends emphasis to shared achievements rather than individual personalities and, in spotlighting the cross-fertilizing relationship between Koteliansky and Mansfield and Woolf, Davison deftly shows how translation—an "exercise in strategic otherness" (173)—inflected their modes of thinking and creating.

Davison, Claire and Gerri Kimber, eds. *Katherine Mansfield's French Lives*. Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016.
This rich edited collection explores the far-reaching influence of French culture upon Mansfield, considering formative life experiences, her literary representations of France, and the inflection of writers such as Colette, Marcel Proust, and Charles Baudelaire upon her literary development.

Drewery, Claire. *Modernist Short Fiction by Women: The Liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.
This work focuses on the liminal aesthetic in the modernist short story and does so using an engaging mix of well- and lesser-known fiction. Exploring "liminality as a trope through which modernist short fiction by women explores crises of identity encapsulated in moments or interludes of transition" (1), Drewery takes liminality not just as an example of a uniting theme, but of the mechanics and roots of the marginal short story genre, whose elasticity is well suited to capturing the rangy states of indeterminacy and transition. Drewery suggests that the obliquity and ambiguity of the experimental short form offer a "powerful creative potential" to women writers (13). Rather than offering a chapter on each author, the book is grouped into loose themes: pilgrimage, mourning, mortality, inner discourse, and the revelatory moment. As such, this work has much to offer to Mansfield scholars in its examination of the form to which Mansfield was so dedicated but which so often manages to hide in plain sight.

Dunbar, Pamela. *Radical Mansfield: Double Discourse in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997.
Dunbar's work rightly focuses on the revolutionary and subversive aspects of a writer who can too easily be read as "writer of mere 'chocolate-box' pieces" (ix–x). With sections on "Alienation," "Isolation," "The Self," "Couples," and "The Family", the book also includes two appendices—a time line and a previously unpublished Mansfield story.

Farjardo, Adam, Philip Keel Geheber, and Jessica Martell, eds. *Modernism and Food Studies: Politics, Aesthetics and the Avant-Garde*. Florida: University Press of Florida, 2019.
One chapter of this volume, described as a whole by Catherine Keyser as making a "bold and clear case for the theoretical and historical importance of food studies

to modernism," explores eggs in Mansfield's biographical writings and fiction in relation to her embryonic feminism. The egg is posited as a protein-packed symbol of female creation, with textual analysis of "Feuille d'Album" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" exposing instances of eggs working in the stories to facilitate moments of potential transformation for characters and readers.

Ferrall, Charles, Anna Jackson, Harry Ricketts, Marco Sonzogni, and Peter Whiteford, eds. Special issue on Katherine Mansfield, *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 32, no. 2 (2014).
This is a comprehensive gathering of Mansfield scholarship following the Victoria University conference of 2013: Katherine Mansfield Masked and Unmasked. Janet Wilson's apposite article "Veiling and Unveiling: Mansfield's Modernist Aesthetics" explores this accessory in Mansfield's stories as a crucial trope, examining the ways in which Mansfield combines durational time with phenomenological time to emphasize the moment and links the veil to perception, illusion, and mortality. Angela Smith's comprehensive article, "Katherine Mansfield and *Rhythm*," complements Wilson's to set out the extensive influence of Henri Bergson on Mansfield's thinking. Taking up the material theme which pervades the collection, Sarah Schieff's article, "Katherine Mansfield's Fairytale Food," considers biographical material as well as fiction such as "A Suburban Fairy Tale" to explore Mansfield's use of food in the context of a dark, Wildean underworld. John Horrocks's article, "'In Their Nakeds': Katherine Mansfield, Freud and Neurasthenia at Bad Wörishofen," is a richly researched and illustrated account of *In a German Pension*'s place in the history of spa literature, which engages with the young Mansfield's satirical treatment of the body and health care.

Hammond, Meghan Marie. *Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.
Examining the work of Henry James, Dorothy Richardson, Mansfield, Ford Madox Ford, and Virginia Woolf, this book argues that each of these writers reconfigures ideas of intersubjective experience, moving toward empathetic forms of literary representation. Favoring psychology over psychoanalysis in her approach, in the chapter on Mansfield, Hammond examines the "communities of feeling" that exist in her stories.

Head, Dominic. *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
This is a seminal study for scholars of experimental short fiction, with core chapters on Mansfield as well as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Wyndham Lewis, and Malcolm Lowry. As one might expect for a genre study, Head's preoccupation is with formalism, and he sees the literary effects of modernist stories as being produced by the "tension between formal convention and formal disruption" (26). Chapter 4, titled "Katherine Mansfield: The Impersonal Short Story," explores the ways in which suppression and omission operate in her short fiction. Head also examines her use of fantasy as delusion and her undermining of straightforward symbolism

and ideology. This reading of Mansfield as inherently subversive is apposite and elucidating, as is the steady focus on her contribution as a technical innovator.

Hunter, Adrian. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
This work takes a view of anglophone short fiction that spans from the nineteenth century to today, from Charles Dickens to Alice Munro. This is a far more resonant and engaging work than one might expect from an introductory text that considers one genre across three centuries, and is characterized by wide-ranging, fluid, and diligent scholarship. The chapter on Mansfield features a number of insightful observations, such as the following: "More than a formal device, the 'question put' creates an interrogative space in a Mansfield narrative that is insusceptible to the rationalist-materialist world-view—space in which the self can be preserved against the inauthentic, mass-mediated representations that threaten to swamp it" (81). Readers may question, however, the lumping together of Mansfield with Woolf in its conclusion that each used the short story form to "reflect the values and ambitions of the cultural elite" (83).

Kaplan, Sydney Janet. *Circulating Genius: John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
Erudite in its exposition, this study examines the reciprocal network of Mansfield, Murry, and Lawrence, examining the ways in which "modernist literary history looks different when Murry is at its centre" (9), an intervention carried out not because Murry deserves increased privilege but because he complicates and extends our understanding of the era. It provides new insights on aesthetics, homosexuality and homosocial desire, and publication contexts. Lively yet meticulous, this book enriches our comprehension of these important interrelationships and the ways they shaped the circuits of cultural production of the modernist age.

Kaplan, Sydney Janet. *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
This bold work was early to resituate Mansfield within an experimental, modernist context by examining her contribution in the light of the *fin de siècle* influences that shaped her developing literary consciousness. Kaplan notes the significant influence of Oscar Wilde on the teenaged Mansfield in personal and literary senses, emphasizing homosexuality as a basis for this connection, which Kaplan views as Mansfield's principal stylistic influence during her formative years. Mansfield's allegiance with Wilde is viewed as bound up with both her homosexual urges and the more subversive elements of her creativity and is placed in contradistinction to her affinity with Chekhov, whom Kaplan places within the patriarchy. The book argues the case for Mansfield's sexual poetics while conducting a comprehensive examination of Mansfield's "[f]eminist [a]esthetics" (145).

Kimber, Gerri. *Katherine Mansfield and the Art of the Short Story*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

This pithy text is a comprehensive introduction to the work of Katherine Mansfield, with sections dedicated to her role as short fiction innovator, narrative and dramatic techniques, and the epiphanic moment, as well as an apposite and inspiring introduction by Claire Davison. Incorporating close textual analysis and exploring themes such as war and death, feminism, sexuality, nature, and humor, this is a crucial appraisal of Mansfield's contribution to modernism.

Kimber, Gerri. *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2008.
This comprehensive work considers all aspects of Mansfield's engagement with France and that nation's assessment of her literary merit, arguing that this was to a large extent based on myth-making and hagiography, particularly as enabled by Catholic and right-wing literary critics. Mansfield's ambivalent relationship with France and the French, acted out in literature as in her life, comes under the microscope in this enlightening contribution, which exposes the ways in which "[s]ubjective editorial decision-making controls Mansfield's personal writing in translation" (230). Appropriately, given Mansfield's own preoccupation with the theme of miscommunication, emphasis is given to instances of mistranslation which affected her posthumous reputation and reception. The book also features a number of useful appendices including a list of French authors known to have been read by Mansfield, potted histories of prominent French literary critics, and a chronology detailing concurrent significant cultural events in France and England.

Kimber, Gerri and Janet Wilson, eds. *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
This collection is divided into four sections—Biographical Readings and Fiction, Mansfield and Modernity, Psychoanalytical Readings, and Autobiography and Fiction—and contains contributions from scholars such as Vincent O'Sullivan, Elleke Boehmer, Clare Hanson, and Anne Mounic. It combines a diverse range of approaches to Mansfield's work including those relying on musicology and epistolatory studies, as well as philosophical and cinematic perspectives.

Kimber, Gerri and Janet Wilson, eds. *Re-forming World Literature: Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Short Story*. Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2018.
This diverse collection contains thirteen chapters that cover subjects from ink to fairy tales, music to tenderness, and includes contributions from Enda Duffy, Claire Davison, and Ailsa Cox. Cox's chapter on Mansfield's legacy in the UK is elucidating in its demonstration of the influence of Mansfield on fiction being produced today by authors such as Ali Smith, Tessa Hadley, Janice Galloway, and A. S. Byatt. Elsa Högberg's chapter on food politics in "A Suburban Fairy Tale" is extremely compelling with its argument that the animistic uncanny is the "realm where the social consciousness of Mansfield's work emerges most forcefully" (255) and its exploration of Mansfield's engagement with wartime food and health policies.

Kimber, Gerri and Todd Martin et al., eds. *Katherine Mansfield Studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013 onward.

Established as a journal in 2009, *Katherine Mansfield Studies* has been available as an annual book publication from Edinburgh University Press since 2013. The first four journal issues contain important contributions from prominent critics such as Sydney Janet Kaplan and Angela Smith. The book series contains a rich selection of the latest Mansfield scholarship and in recent years has attracted high-profile guest editors and diverse and lively scholarship which is stimulated by an annual essay prize. Refreshingly, creative pieces are published alongside criticism. Its homepage on the Edinburgh University Press website contains details on the latest publications, with summaries of editions published in the series to date included below in order of publication.

- Kimber, Gerri, Susan Reid, and Delia da Sousa Correa, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 1 (2009).
  The inaugural publication of the series focuses on Mansfield's European connections, influences, and reception, including scholarship that reassesses her contribution in the light of work by Henri Bergson and Marcel Proust.

- Kimber, Gerri, Susan Reid, and Delia da Sousa Correa, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Modernism*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 2 (2010).
  Taking a broad approach, this volume examines Mansfield's relationship with experimental modernism, including work on D. H. Lawrence and modernist magazines.

- Kimber, Gerri, Susan Reid, and Delia da Sousa Correa, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and the Arts*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 3 (2011).
  Looking toward the visual arts and music, this resonant collection examines the work of J. D. Fergusson and Claude Debussy along with that of Mansfield to consider the contribution of alternative art histories to Mansfield's unique literary style.

- Kimber, Gerri, Susan Reid, and Delia da Sousa Correa, Gina Wisker, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and the Fantastic*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 4 (2012).
  Gothic motifs and tropes are the core focus of this volume which looks at the influence of fairy tale and Freudian ideas of the uncanny on Mansfield's literature.

- Wilson, Janet, Gerri Kimber, and Delia da Sousa Correa, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and the (Post)colonial*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 5 (2013).
  Including work on cannibalism, Edith Wharton, expatriation, death, and impurity in the light of postcolonial scholarship, this rich publication also includes a story by Witi Ihimaera, a report by Fiona Oliver, librarian at the Alexander Turnbull Library, on the 2012 Mansfield/Murry archival acquisitions, and a piece by Andrew Harrison on the "Ricordi" postcard which Lawrence sent to Mansfield on August 15, 1922.

- Kimber, Gerri, Todd Martin, Delia da Sousa Correa, Isobel Maddison and Alice Kelly, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and World War One*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 6 (2014).
  This collection brings rightful focus on Mansfield as a war writer and the influence of the First World War upon her writing practice and form. Contributions consider martial metaphor, ideas of home, mythology, and the lived experience of wartime, with a fascinating report by David Bradshaw that reassesses the relationship between Mansfield and J. N. W. Sullivan, a man Woolf deplored for his concerning attitudes toward women and who would become one of the most respected scientific commentators of his age.

- Davison, Claire, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Translation*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 7 (2015).
  This collection does important thematic work and includes Chris Mourant's prize-winning chapter on Mansfield's use of the Boris Petrovsky pseudonym, as well as work on trauma, Czech and Slovak translation, representations of travel, and idiolects, humor, and punctuation.

- Hanson, Clare, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 8 (2016).
  In her own contribution, guest editor Clare Hanson explores the influence of vitalist psychology on Mansfield's work, looking specifically at William James and Henri Bergson. Hanson's article draws out the relevance of Bergson to Mansfield's stories with regard to his redefinition of freedom "in terms of being able to act in the moment with the entirety of one's being" (35). Other chapters explore feminine *jouissance*, post-war memory and mourning, class and alienation, and Mansfield's engagement with M. B. Oxon's *Cosmic Anatomy and the Structure of the Ego* (1921).

- Diment, Galya, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Russia*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 9 (2017).
  This volume explores the fascination with Russian literature and culture that was shared by Mansfield and her contemporaries. With scholarship including work on Fyodor Dostoevsky, Anton Chekhov, Maxim Gorky, George Gurdjieff, William Gerhardi, Marie Bashkirtseff, and the Ballets Russes, this vibrant collection also features a critical miscellany of new insights and archival discoveries.

- Froula, Christine, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 10 (2018).
  Guest editor Christine Froula joins Gerri Kimber and Todd Martin to oversee this collection which features contributions from critical heavyweights such as Maud Ellmann, Maria DiBattista, and Sydney Janet Kaplan and chapters that explore the

captivating personal and professional relationship between Woolf and Mansfield. Aside from the criticism, a soaring highpoint of the volume is a transcript of a talk Ali Smith gave at the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2014 entitled "Getting Virginia Woolf's Goat," which ruminates on what Smith calls "the most timely meeting of writers in the history of literature" (142).

- Kimber, Gerri, Isobel Maddison, and Todd Martin, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Elizabeth von Arnim*. Katherine Mansfield Studies 11 (2019).
  The 2019 volume draws together innovative scholarship on an underexplored element of Mansfield's life—her cousin, Elizabeth von Arnim. Considering questions of influence and feminism, as well as shared thematics such as the botanical, this volume features work by Angela Smith and Bonnie Kime Scott, as well as a compelling critical miscellany including pieces by Chris Mourant and Andrew Thacker on Beatrice Hastings and Jean Rhys respectively.

Kimber, Gerri, Janet Wilson, and Susan Reid, eds. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
This, the first Historicizing Modernism volume dedicated to Mansfield studies, includes sixteen chapters divided into four themes: philosophy and fiction; self, voice, and other; class and gender; and biography and autobiography. Highlights include Jenny McDonnell on periodical publishing, Anne Besnault-Levita on voice and affect, and the final chapter by Melinda Harvey on the alterity of animals, which suggests a possible reading of Mansfield's stories as "a safehouse for endangered species" both "human and animal" (209).

Kirkpatrick, B. J. *A Bibliography of Katherine Mansfield*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
This wide-ranging bibliography is arranged chronologically and includes books, pamphlets, articles, fiction, and translations of Mansfield's work, as well as more unexpected material such as that relating to radio, television, film and stage productions.

Lohafer, Susan. *Reading for Storyness: Preclosure Theory, Empirical Poetics and Culture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
One chapter of this book examines "Ma Parker," which Lohafer considers to be one of Mansfield's less successful stories. By examining moments of "preclosure"—instances identified as points at which the story *could* have ended—to complicate a piece that can be read as overly simplistic and sentimental, Lohafer demonstrates a range of textual directions that might otherwise have been left uncovered. Lohafer's unpretentious and rigorous analysis is an important contribution to short story theory and genre studies, an important aspect of Mansfield's work that receives scrutiny here from a critic keenly aware of structure, aesthetics, modes of reception, and the story as a human institution and object of cultural exchange.

Martin, Todd, ed. *Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

This collection of illuminating scholarly essays looks at Bloomsbury from the margins, as Mansfield would have herself. Part One examines specific relationships formed by Mansfield's contribution to the rhizomatic Bloomsbury alliances, considering her engagement with stalwarts such as Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, T. S. Eliot, and Walter de la Mare, as well as lesser-known contemporaries such as Millar Dunning and W. L. George, employing a shifting contextualizing lens which takes in feminism, spirituality, and the practice of literary criticism. Part Two focuses more on spheres of artistic influence, examining the cross-pollination of ideas between Woolf's and Mansfield's critical writings and the effect of Post-Impressionism upon the latter's aesthetic approach. The book closes with three chapters that engage in an extended interrogation of Mansfield's fictional presentation of the "Blooms Berries" in her sardonic stories.

Martinson, Deborah. *In the Presence of Audience: Self in Diaries and Fiction*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003.

In this work, Martinson probes the relationship between autobiography and literary art, examining texts by Woolf, Mansfield, and Violet Hunt, as well as the diaries of Doris Lessing's fictional character Anna Wulf. Arguing that the diaries of each were always intended to be read, Martinson proposes that, as such, they are imbued with a sort of patriarchal policing which should recalibrate notions of assumed authenticity in supposedly private writing.

McDonnell, Jenny. *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace: At the Mercy of the Public*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

This original and wide-ranging work perceptively tackles Mansfield's increasingly strategic engagement with the literary marketplace, positing that it was through her negotiations with the publishing world that she struck a balance between literary and popular forms. Roughly organized around the publications with which she held longer-term relations (the *New Age*, *Rhythm*, *Signature*, the *Athenaeum*, *London Mercury*, and the *Sphere)*, the monograph also contains a helpful appendix detailing Mansfield's major periodical publications. McDonnell argues that a reinvigorated commitment to the short story was explicitly and publicly articulated by Mansfield in a short story review "Wanted, a New Word" of June 1920, arguing that the piece offers a "blueprint" for fiction and particularly demonstrates her "endorsement of the short story rather than the novel as the genre most adaptable to experimentation in the post-War world" (123).

McGee, Diane. *Writing the Meal: Dinner in the Fiction of Early Twentieth-Century Women Writers*. Buffalo, London, and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

This lively and engaging work explores the importance of alimentary acts and rituals in the fiction of Edith Wharton, Kate Chopin, Virginia Woolf, and, of

course, Mansfield. McGee reads Mansfield's presentation of eating more broadly as indicative of wider cultural shifts which affected female roles and the ritual of the sit-down meal, demonstrating "a pervasive anxiety about home, security and loneliness" (106) with "[f]ailed, insufficient or non-existent meals mean[ing] that meaningful communication suffers as well" (107). Crucially, in a hypothesis not explored at length, McGee notes that "from the reader's perspective, the novel, novella, or story may present itself as an invitation to dine" (148).

McLoughlin, Kate, ed. *The Modernist Party*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
This scintillating collection features a range of work by prominent critics including Jean-Michel Rabaté and considers the party as a model of creative production. Angela Smith's chapter examines pivotal moments in Mansfield's party stories, arguing that they dedicate themselves to probing "ways of seeing" (79) rather than maintaining an ironical distance from their subjects. The book as a whole will be valuable to Mansfield scholars because chapters speak to each other and feature work on Sylvia Beach, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Aldous Huxley.

Moran, Patricia. *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1996.
This work approaches the prevalence of food in Mansfield's work from an explicitly feminist point of view, with Moran relying on a Kleinian psychoanalytic model, revealing women as threatened by their own bodies. While conceding that acts of eating and feeding can function as "metaphors for writing and female creativity" (28), above all, for Moran, it is "alienation [which] is frequently expressed in food" (86). Readers interested in this subject matter should also attend to Moran's earlier article, "Unholy Meanings: Maternity, Creativity, and Orality in Katherine Mansfield" (1991).

Mourant, Chris. *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019.
This scholarly text considers Mansfield not only as a short fiction writer but in her roles as producer of essays, poems, and aphorisms, as well as editor and translator. Arranged into broad chronological sections devoted to Mansfield's association with the publications the *New Age*, *Rhythm*, and the *Athenaeum*, as well as her posthumous appearances in the *Adelphi*, Mourant's careful work unveils the impacts of the cross-fertilizing currents of periodical publication on her development, putting her voice into dialogue with the polyphony that the magazines enabled. Featuring archival discoveries and an attentive examination of Mansfield's feminism which was bound up with critiques of colonialism, this is a valuable and original contribution to Mansfield studies. Above all, the book shows the ways Mansfield's work evidences the ways in which "those who were located on the fringes of metropolitan culture or occupied an ambivalent relation to the literary establishment" were able to "use the mediating spaces of print to contest dominant ideologies and spatial imaginaries, play with different authorial identities,

make subversive interventions within established discursive contexts, and articulate fantasies of global movement" (264).

Murray, Heather. *Double Lives: Women in the Stories of Katherine Mansfield*. Otago: University of Otago Press, 1990.
Heather Murray argues that "there are no radical females in Katherine Mansfield's fiction" (3). Relying heavily on the unfinished 1921 piece "A Married Man's Story" as evidence, she suggests that rebellion is a project engaged with only by Mansfield's male characters. Murray argues that rebellious activities by various groups of females (infant, single, married, invalid, "modern") all ultimately fail. This is a negative appraisal of Mansfield's feminism but one which is of historical significance within the critical canon.

Nathan, Rhoda B., ed. *Critical Essays on Katherine Mansfield*. New York: G. K. Hall, 1993.
This anthology of essays, many of which were first published elsewhere, contains diverse contributions from an impressive range of critics including Clare Hanson, Antony Alpers, Gillian Boddy, and C. A. Hankin, as well as contributions from John Middleton Murry and Frank O'Connor. Themes include colonial approaches and studies of influence and aesthetics.

New, W. H. *Reading Mansfield and Metaphors of Form*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
In this work, New argues that Mansfield appropriates a metaphorical use of literary form in order to convey social and psychological trauma in a theory that has parallels with Eliot's "objective correlative." Examining a number of aesthetic strategies, such as reversal, negation, and deferral, the book contains a number of close critical readings including the New Zealand stories.

Pilditch, Jan, ed. *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996.
This stellar collection documents the critical reception of Mansfield's work from 1911 and features a chronology, anonymous reviews of Mansfield's work, as well as commentary by Mansfield's contemporaries such as J. W. N. Sullivan, Rebecca West, Conrad Aiken, and Virginia Woolf. Tantalizing contributions from writers, Katherine Ann Porter, Brigid Brophy, and Witi Ihimaera, short story theorist Eileen Baldeshwiler, and biographer Claire Tomalin are also featured.

Robinson, Roger, ed. *Katherine Mansfield: In from the Margin*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.
Featuring contributions from Gillian Boddy, Cherry Hankin, and Vincent O'Sullivan, this rich collection seeks to place Mansfield at the center of modernist scholarship and, being one of the first to do this, covers a wide range of themes including migration, exile, feminism, war, trauma, identity, and the cinema. O'Sullivan perceptively connects Mansfield's thinking with the existentialist philosophy of Martin Heidegger while Sarah Sandley's lucidly refreshing and

engaged investigation of Mansfield's "glimpses" makes a compelling case for Mansfield to be primarily credited with the development of free indirect discourse over James Joyce or Virginia Woolf.

Rydstrand, Helen. *Rhythmic Modernism: Mimesis and the Short Story*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

This monograph is a nuanced and engaged exploration of the concept of rhythm at the heart of the short stories of Mansfield as well as those of her friends and contemporaries, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. The chapter on Mansfield, "Katherine Mansfield and the Rhythms of Habit," examines her conception of life as involving art, nature, and everyday routine and explores her views on the necessity of active experience and engagement as a route to full living. It also argues for the importance of mimicry and musicality to her aesthetics. The underpinning concept of "rhythmic mimesis" aims to offer "an understanding of experimental literature as grounded in the material and as having a material effect on the world" (196), joining Mansfield's twin preoccupations of artistic innovation and worldly engagement together.

Sage, Lorna. *Moments of Truth: Twelve Twentieth Century Women Writers*. London: Fourth Estate, 2001.

Mansfield takes her place here in the third chapter which sits between commentaries on Virginia Woolf and Jean Rhys. Sage's intention in this book is to focus on these writers' processes of self-invention and becoming, and the chapters inform and elucidate each other. Sage's prose is lucid and luminescent, describing Mansfield's stories as "intensely crafted and evocative objects-on-the-page" (53) and noting her "pleasure in the [short story] form" where she "felt at home," "being so little at home anywhere else" (53). Sage covers vast ground in a small space, balancing incisive critical commentary alongside the anecdotal, such as her pen portrait of Mansfield and Ida Baker's late-night feast of egg sandwiches and tea after the completion of "Daughters of the Late Colonel" in the winter of 1920. Her summation that "Mansfield's work speaks about what's irretrievably lost, material, mortal, unless it is turned to artifice" (81) gives some indication that this is as wise an introduction to Mansfield's work and life as one could hope for.

Scott, Bonnie Kime, ed. *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

One of twenty-six chapters is dedicated to Katherine Mansfield, with a critical introduction by Clare Hanson preceding excerpts of primary texts (305–15). The collection as a whole is still engaging, illuminating, and relevant, and Hanson's salient contribution fits well within it. The volume is an important document not only for modernist studies today, but also to the history of modernist studies. In her short introduction, Hanson uses Mansfield incisively as a case study that expresses the generic importance of the short story as a "form of exclusion and implication"

whose "technical workings mirror its ideological bias, its tendency toward the expression of that which is marginal or ex-centric to society" (300). Hanson explores the under-appreciation of short stories, particularly by women writers, as indicative of generic prejudice that is linked to the privileging of the mainstream over the peripheral point of view. She also highlights Mansfield's commitment to the quotidian and the creation of a "common language, the small change, as it were, of gesture and speech through which, for most of us, the deeper things of life are intimated and expressed" (301).

Smith, Angela. *Katherine* Mansfield: *A Literary Life*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2000.

This lively and salient work delivers high returns for its modest size, refreshing our understanding of Mansfield in luminescent ways and drawing on relevant theorists such as Henri Bergson and Julia Kristeva, and drawing on fauvism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, expressionism, and (post)colonial theory as it progresses through five key periods in Mansfield's life, from childhood and young adulthood to the final period of increasing illness and creative intensity. Sensitive and innovative readings of the fiction are woven deftly with life writing and analysis that adjust traditional perceptions of Mansfield's oeuvre. For instance, Smith asserts that Mansfield had a "food complex" that was exacerbated by the First World War, noting a "shift in her attitude to the war, from excited curiosity to an almost anorexic fear of eating as cannibalism" (99), elsewhere noting that the peripatetic metaphors that invade her late-stage discussions of aesthetics indicate a broadening creative freedom and mental expansiveness in contradistinction to her increasingly restrictive physical health.

Smith, Angela. *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Putting the relationship between Mansfield and Woolf under the spotlight, which was so important for literary modernism more widely, Smith carefully details the confluence and reciprocity that characterize this alliance. Smith's feminist work shows how parallels even existed between them posthumously through the reputation management carried out by their husbands, and she details continuities and divergences between their early and mature work. Focusing not only on their professional output but also on their personal and critical writing, Smith examines the importance of the uncanny to each of them, relying heavily on the psychoanalytic work of Julia Kristeva in her readings of their fiction. In nuanced prose, this work shows how Mansfield helped Woolf to find her own voice, and how each writer should be considered writers of the threshold, each fascinated by boundaries and limits, by transgression and return. Smith concludes that their shared fascination with notions of colonization and empire is due to the fact that the "colony itself is the foreigner within, not a child, not primitive, both the same and different, the double and the stranger" (230).

Raitt, Suzanne and Trudi Tate, eds. *Women's Fiction and the Great War*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

This twelve-essay collection explores the influence of the First World War upon a range of women writers, including Virginia Woolf, Mansfield, H. D., Vernon Lee, Frances Bellerby, and Mary Butts, working to rebalance conceptions of the conflict as a male concern and taking a democratic approach to genre and tradition, including both Edwardians and modernists. Con Coroneos's chapter, "Flies and Violets in Katherine Mansfield," examines the dynamics of mourning in "The Fly" and ties this to Mansfield's interest in war medicine and parasites.

Snaith, Anna. *Modernist Voyages: Colonial Women Writers in London, 1890–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

This work argues that London was home to new forms of feminist anticolonialism in the modernist period, showing how women writers—in engaging with the city through their texts—recalibrated the position of women within the empire. Considering writers such as Jean Rhys, Mansfield, Olive Schreiner, and Christina Stead, this project maps the networks surrounding the subversive travel of cultural forms from the colonies back to Britain.

Note

1 Angela Carter, "The Life of Katherine Mansfield," in *Nothing Sacred* (London: Virago, 1982), 158.

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