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KATHERINE MANSFIELD AMONG THE MODERNS: HER IMPACT ON VIRGINIA WOOLF, D. H. LAWRENCE, AND ALDOUS HUXLEY

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KATHERINE MANSFIELD AMONG THE MODERNS: HER IMPACT ON
VIRGINIA WOOLF, D. H. LAWRENCE, AND ALDOUS HUXLEY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
At the University of Kentucky

By
Nicola Tarrant-Hoskins

Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

KATHERINE MANSFIELD AMONG THE MODERNS: HER IMPACT ON VIRGINIA WOOLF, D.H. LAWRENCE AND ALDOUS HUXLEY

Katherine Mansfield among the Moderns examines Katherine Mansfield's relationship with three fellow writers: Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, and Aldous Huxley, and appraises her impact on their writing. Drawing on the literary and the personal relationships between the aforementioned, and on letters, diaries, and journals, this project traces Mansfield's interactions with her contemporaries, providing a richer and more dynamic portrait of Mansfield's place within modernism than usually recognized.

Hitherto, critical work has not scrutinized Mansfield in the manner I suggest: attending to representations of her as a character in other's work, while analyzing the degree to which her influence on the aforementioned authors affected their writing and success. Albeit, her influence extends in vastly different ways, and is affected by gender and nationality. While Woolf's early foray into Modernism is accelerated by Mansfield's criticism of her work, several of Woolf's texts – "Kew Gardens," *Jacob's Room*, and *Mrs. Dalloway* – are similar in certain respects to Mansfield's work – "Bliss" and "The Garden Party." A repudiation of Mansfield, personally, and a retelling of her work are seen in Lawrence's *The Lost Girl* and *Women in Love*. Huxley's *Those Barren Leaves* and *Point Counter Point*, contain characterizations of Mansfield that undermine her writing, and her person: both are affected by the mythical misrepresentation of Mansfield, created by Murry after her death, known as the "Cult of Mansfield."

Using Life Writing, this study asserts that Mansfield had impact on the writing of Woolf, Lawrence, and Huxley. Taking into account the many issues that surround the recognition of this, among them: gender politics, colonialism, marginality by genre, and personal relations – these all, to varying degrees, prevented critics from acknowledging that a minor modernist author played a role in the undisputed success of three major authors of the twentieth century.

KEYWORDS: British Modernism, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield and Aldous Huxley.

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For Roger

Because I promised

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

For Virginia Woolf's works:

DVW1, DVW2, DVW3, DVW4, DVW5 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols.

EVW1, EVW2, EVW3, EVW4, EVW5 *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols.

LVW1, LVW2, LVW3, LVW4, LVW5, LVW6 *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols.

ND *Night and Day*

MB *Moments of Being*

MD *Mrs. Dalloway*

Room *A Room of One's Own*

TG *Three Guineas*

TTL *To the Lighthouse*

VO *The Voyage Out*

W *The Waves*

Y *The Years*

For Katherine Mansfield's works:

CWKM1 *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield. Vol. 1*

CWKM2 *The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield. Vol. 2*

JKM *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*

LKM1, LKM2, LKM3, LKM4, LKM5 *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield. 5 vols.*

SKM *The Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield*

KMN1, KMN2 *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks: Complete Edition.*

LJMMTKM *Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield &*, ed. Cherry A. Hankin (London: Virago, 1983)

LBJMMKM *Letters Between John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield.* ed. Cherry A. Hankin (London: Virago, 1988)

For D. H. Lawrence's works:

LDHL1, LDHL2, LDHL3, LDHL4, LDHL5, LDHL6, LDHL7, LDHL8 *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence.* Ed. James T. Boulton.

PUFU *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious; Fantasia and the Unconscious.*

TLG *The Lost Girl* Ed. John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. Print

TRI, TRII *The Rainbow (Part I & II).* Ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes.

WL *Women in Love.* Eds. John Worthen and Lindeth Vasey.

For Aldous Huxley's works:

SLAD *Aldous Huxley: Selected Letters.* Sexton, James. Ed. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007. Print

LAD *The Letters of Aldous Huxley.* Ed. Grover Smith. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. Print.

BMB *Beyond the Mexique Bay: A Traveller's Journal.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1949. Print.

PP *The Perennial Philosophy.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1945. Print.

DOP *Doors of Perception.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1954. Print.

PCP *Point Counter Point.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1928. Print.

TBL *Those Barren Leaves.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1925. Print.

AMS *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* London: Chatto & Windus, 1939. Print.

CEAH Jerome Meckier ed. *Critical Essays on Aldous Huxley.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966. Print.

Chapter One: Introduction

New Zealand Context – Woman Alone

“How hard it is to escape from places. However carefully one goes they hold you – you leave little bits of yourself fluttering on the fences...little rags and shreds of your life...”

-Katherine Mansfield to Ida Baker, 1922¹

“But why should they make me feel a stranger? Why should they ask me every time I go near: ‘And what are *you* doing in a London garden? They burn with arrogance and pride. And I am the little Colonial walking in the London garden patch – allowed to look, perhaps, but not to linger. If I lie on the grass they positively shout at me: ‘Look at her, lying on *our* grass, pretending she lives here, pretending this is her garden, and that tall back of the house, with the windows open and the coloured curtains lifting, is her house. She is a stranger – an alien. She is nothing but a little girl sitting on the Tinakori hills and dreaming: “I went to London and married an Englishman, and we lived in a tall grave house with red geraniums and white daisies in the garden at the back.” *Im-pudence!*”²

Both of these epigraphs point to the problem of where Katherine Mansfield belongs – where she, herself, felt she belonged, and the place to which the literary community of her contemporaries relegated her – “allowed to look, perhaps, but not to linger.” Was she merely a minor writer on the fringe of modernism, and, as D.H. Lawrence suggests “delicate and touching – But not great!”³ Or, did her personal relationship with Lawrence and other major writers of her time affect her standing and reputation in the literary canon, in *addition* to theirs? This dissertation addresses this problem; moreover, considers the extent Mansfield’s interactions with three particular

¹ Ida Baker eventually became known as Lesley Moore – a combination of her mother’s maiden name, and of Mansfield’s brother’s name. Mistakenly, in some texts the LM is assumed to stand for “little mouse” (Alpers 29). Mansfield met Baker during her time at Queen’s college in 1903, and they remained friends until her death. Baker has been described as Mansfield’s devotee, housekeeper, doormat, nurse, slave, even albatross. Speculation on whether their relationship was sexual or not has endured for the length of their friendship, and still is studied – for the most part – with inconclusive results.

² (JKM: 159), May 1919.

³ Lawrence to JMM, 25 October 1923 (LDHLA: 521)

authors – Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, and Aldous Huxley – can be considered actually influential on their work. Examining Mansfield in relation to the aforementioned authors, especially for the purpose of evaluating her impact, entails analyzing influence in three ways: Mansfield’s direct influence on Woolf’s work, Mansfield’s work and life as an influence on Lawrence’s work, and Mansfield’s representation, as character, in Huxley’s work. Using Life Writing – diaries, letters, memoirs – to throw light on the personal lives of all the aforementioned authors, this form of historicism – a kind of biographical reading that is grounded in knowledge of the personal lives of the author and her friends and associates – offers a powerful and rich interpretation. This mode of reading is based on the theory of the intimate connection between the life and the work, between Life Writing and Fiction.

While the balance of this dissertation is concerned with scrutinizing Woolf, Lawrence, and Huxley’s work, obviously a background to Mansfield is necessary, as part of the “problem” of Mansfield has, in part, been due to her *background* – her colonial roots. This project, with Mansfield at the center, came to me persistently. As a native born New Zealander, I grew up reading Katherine Mansfield’s short stories. Every school curriculum – from primary through to college—contained Katherine Mansfield. Having also left New Zealand at a similar age to Mansfield,⁴ I could readily understand her

⁴ Katherine Mansfield to Sarah Gertrude Millin, March 1922: “I am a ‘Colonial’. I was born in New Zealand, I came to Europe to ‘complete my education’ and when my parents thought that tremendous task was over I went back to New Zealand. I hated it. It seemed to me a small petty world; I longed for ‘my’ kind of people and larger interests and so on. And after a struggle I did get out of the nest finally and came to London, at eighteen, *never* to return, said my disgusted heart” (*LKM5*:80)

At the age of 19, Katherine Mansfield left New Zealand for England. It was her second journey, having attended Queen’s college school in London from 1903-1906. As Chris Mourant states: “Compared to the provincial tedium of life in New Zealand, London represented a space of self-development for Mansfield and was indelibly connected in her mind with the fiercely protected independence she considered necessary for becoming a writer” (Mourant 154).

perpetual feeling of dislocation, and how living life as an exile affects one in every way, especially when determining one's sense of belonging and how one may write about it. In *The Settler's Plot: How Stories Take Place in New Zealand*, Alex Calder⁵ argues the relationship with "place is central to Pākehā⁶ New Zealander's sense of belonging⁷... We feel we have a place to stand, and we have that place because we value nature" (Calder 4). Calder insists that it is difficult for Pākehā to talk about belonging without also talking about nature largely because Pākehā do not have access to another degree of belonging that is available to Maori. Therefore nature – and natural settings – have become central to considerations of belonging in New Zealand fiction. He argues "It's fair to say that the figure of the 'man alone' is a central trope in New Zealand literary studies." Growing up as a New Zealander encompasses a relationship to the land, the sea, to nature, that is in many ways primitive⁸: the land itself is untamed, the sea is sweeping and dangerous, and growing up within it breeds a certain type of rugged independence and resilience. This sense of resilience is often articulated in Mansfield's stories, and is the quality that sets

⁵ Calder's observation on suburbia is also interesting when reading Mansfield. He argues 'the Beauchamps were pioneers of suburban life in Wellington, enabling Katherine to become "one of the first writers in the world to put a new kind of place on the map" (157). However, in many of her best known works, such as "the Garden Party" and "Prelude," Calder believes that Mansfield's interest is primarily on "the gender and intergenerational patterns with which these settings will become associated" (161). In reality, Mansfield was strident in breaking these patterns, both in the smaller domestic space of a home, and in her larger escape from New Zealand itself.

⁶ Pākehā: The term has traditionally been accepted as a Maori name given to white New Zealanders, who are descendants of the early settlers, mainly from the British isles and parts of Europe. However, "Pakeha" in the 1800s is not the same as "Pākehā" in the 21st century, and as a grouping Pākehā are now as diverse as Asian, Pacific Island and other communities, in essence, those who are not Maori.

⁷ Calder uses 'pākehā turangawaewae,' a concept which describes a "standing place from where one gains the authority to belong." This is the original language from the Human Rights Commission's *Te Mana I Waitangi* Project. Turangawaewae is often included in discussions around what it means to be a New Zealander.

⁸I use the word "primitive" in the sense: Original; not developed or derived from anything else; archetypal; essential, fundamental (*OED*)

her work apart; but her finest moments are often the dissections of nature – “delicate” – as Lawrence begrudgingly acknowledges, but also extraordinary.

Take for instance Mansfield’s “At the Bay,”⁹ written in January 1922, just one year before her death. The most revealing moments of Beryl’s life, an otherwise unmarried and lonely sister to Linda Burnell, and aunt to Kezia, Isabel, and Lottie, are told when:

...the beautiful night, the garden, the bush, every leaf, even the white palings, even the stars are conspirators too. So bright was the moon that the flowers were bright as by day; the shadow of the nasturtiums, exquisite lily-like leaves and wide-open flowers, lay across the silvery veranda. The Manuka tree, bent by the southerly winds, was like a bird on one leg stretching out a wing” (*CWKM2*:368).

It is at this moment, in this Antipodean setting, that Beryl imagines a lover calling from outside her window, and contemplates how Beryl Fairfield could ever be forgotten. Then at the point of self-realization we read: “In that moment of darkness the sea sounded deep, troubled...as if it had waked out of a dark dream. All was still” (*CWKM2*: 371). These “delicate” moments in Mansfield’s writing, these moments when characters are faced by truth, however stark, are framed by place. Writing about “At the Bay” in a letter to Dorothy Brett, Mansfield expresses: “...it’s full of sand and seaweed and bathing dresses hanging over verandahs & sandshoes on window sills, and little pink “sea” convolvulus, and rather gritty sandwiches and the tide coming in....It is as good as I can

⁹ “At the Bay” was the conclusion to “Prelude” written in 1917. “Prelude” can be read as an autobiographical sketch of Katherine Mansfield’s childhood in New Zealand. It is drawn partly from memory, partly from imagination. Through the eyes of the children and their dissatisfied parents, “Prelude” describes Mansfield’s move from Tinakori Road, in the city, to a country house, Karori” (Curtis 111).

do and all my heart and soul is in it – every single bit...It is so strange to bring the dead to life again. There's my grandmother back in her chair with her pink knitting, there stalks my uncle over the grass...And then the place where it all happens. You know the marigolds? You know those pools in the rocks?" (CWKM2: 371n1). There is not a native New Zealander who would not read "At the Bay" without conjuring the sights, scents, and sounds of the Pacific Ocean, and a childhood spent on the water's edge. Most critics consider Mansfield's New Zealand stories¹⁰ as her finest, and I while I am partial to so many of her stories outside this realm, I would agree that her mastery of the short story genre truly shines in the tales set within her own birth place – in the place where she can articulate belonging in a way that is very particular to a Pākehā New Zealander.

However, as the aforementioned epigraphs suggest, Mansfield's identity as a colonial writer was not without problems, and she often felt herself an "alien," an outsider in the realms of Literary England.¹¹ Ironically, Mansfield wrote a review for the *Athenaeum* in July 1920, examining how colonial identity may affect an artist's work. Her review, titled 'First Novels,'¹² considered how the language of her compatriot Jane Mander's *The Story of a New Zealand River*¹³ could translate outside its colonial identity.

¹⁰ Kaplan has described Mansfield's earlier work as "raw," sometimes even "patently disturbing" while her later work is considered more psychological in nature. She also argues that her earlier New Zealand stories depict "physical violence and overtly sexual power struggles" (215). "The Woman at the Store" (1912) and "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" (1912) come to mind.

¹¹ In *Modernist Voyages: Colonial Women Writers in London, 1890–1945*, Snaith argues: "These writers experienced disillusionment or alienation, often as a result of their dismissal as 'vulgar' colonials, White, colonial women were often met with assumptions about racial 'taint' or stereotypes about sexual morality. Mansfield was called a 'little savage' while studying at Queen's College." (Snaith 19)

¹² Found in Mansfield's "Athenaeum," *Novels and Novelists*. Ed. J. Middleton Murry. New York: Knopf, 1930. Print.

¹³ Jane Mander's *The Story of a New Zealand River*. New York: John Lane, 1920. *The Story of a New Zealand River* is set in the north of New Zealand in the environment of kauri milling. The book was fairly successful, at least critically, with many reviewers commenting on its maturity and uniqueness as a New Zealand novel. Mander, herself, was also at the heart of controversy in the 1990s with accusations that *The Piano* (1993), a movie directed by New Zealander Jane Campion, borrowed from *The Story of a New*

Obviously, it was a question that concerned her in her own writing. Quoting from Manders to make her point – “Stiff laurel-like puriris stood beside the drooping lace fringe of the lacy rimu; hard blackish kahikateas brooded over the oak-like ti-toki with its lovely scarlet berry” – Mansfield pondered the question of what this may convey outside a New Zealand audience: “What picture can that possibly convey to an English reader?...What emotion can it produce?” As Anna Snaith, in *Modernist Voyages: Colonial Women Writers in London, 1890–1945*, states: “The narrative stoppage occasioned by the Māori words (all trees native to New Zealand) speaks to broader questions about the translatability of culture or the reformulation of colonial identities in the imperial metropolis. The indigenous is made over in the imperial mould: ‘laurel-like’ or ‘oak-like’” (Snaith 110). Attempting to limit her status as a colonial writer, while retaining the qualities of that self-same colonial world was a problem for Mansfield throughout her career, both in her work, and in how others critiqued it.

In reviewing Mander’s work, however, Mansfield seemed to arrive at a fuller understanding of her *own* work, and the translatability of her stories to a British public. As Snaith asserts:

Mansfield’s discussion of Mander ...posit[s] a modernity that fuses experimental aesthetics and a colonial landscape [to merge]...Freed from the constraints of literacy convention...its pared-down modern aesthetic, emerges, almost unconsciously, through a direct treatment of New Zealand life. These issues can be read back into Mansfield’s early New Zealand stories, texts which work around a synthesis of experimental form and colonial content (Snaith 110).

Zealand River without acknowledgement. (Steer, Phillip: “Jane Mander, 1877–1949” *Kōtare* 7, no. 1 (2007), pp. 37–54. <https://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/kotare/article/viewFile/774/583>)

Certainly as early as 1910, Mansfield was experimenting with new form set within a colonial backdrop, and further, reimagining the ‘man alone’ trope in New Zealand literature, into the ‘woman alone.’ However, her work was not engaged with colonial power dynamics, but was more vested in gender dynamics. In *The Lonely and the Alone: The Poetics of Isolation in New Zealand Fiction* Doreen D’Cruz and John C. Ross examine Mansfield’s, “The Woman at the Store” (1912)¹⁴ and “Millie” (1913)¹⁵ – two early stories of Mansfield’s set in the colonial New Zealand backdrop. They argue that the isolated female in both aforementioned stories is able to express facets of herself that have been “denied articulacy,” and that this, in turn, highlights something “simultaneously pitiful and powerful’ in their isolation (31). Mansfield’s aesthetic merging of modernism with her familiar colonial landscape produced the perfect platform for this articulation, and, in turn, resulted in her unique body of work. Nonetheless, while Mansfield’s evocation of New Zealand’s difference, combined with the freedom to embrace new technical devices, produced some of the finest literature of the early twentieth century, her work has often been judged in the context of her person, especially by her contemporaries. As Andrew Bennett argues in *Katherine Mansfield*: “New Zealand – as identity and identification – is a place that defines Mansfield, above all, as displaced, as placeless” (43). The same may be said of her work.

¹⁴ “The Woman at the Store” depicts an encounter between three male travelers and an abused wife, amidst a rural, desolate landscape. The woman has suffered repeated miscarriages at the hands of her husband, and at the end of the story their traumatized surviving child draws a picture of a woman shooting a man. The mother has obviously killed the father. The backdrop – the New Zealand landscape – is both rugged and brutal.

¹⁵ Mansfield’s 1913 story depicts Millie, left alone for the day while the workmen on the farm go off on a hunt for the man who has shot and killed their neighbor, Mr. Williamson. In her solitude she ponders how quickly time has passed, and why she has never had children. Hearing a noise in the garden, she finds a wounded young man, Harrison, the man her husband is hunting. She helps him, and later at night when the men have returned empty-handed and are sleeping off the day’s adventure, they’re awakened by the boy’s escape on her husband’s horse. Millie then cheers on their ensuing pursuit of the boy.

Mansfield in Her Place

We say that an author is original when we cannot trace the hidden transformations that others underwent in his mind; we mean to say that the dependence of what he does on what others have done is excessively complex and irregular. There are works in the likeness of others, but there are also works of which the relation with earlier productions is so intricate that we become confused and attribute them to the direct intervention of the gods.

-Paul Valéry, "Letter about Mallarmé" ¹⁶

Criticism of Mansfield's work has run the gamut from deriding it as derivative to praising it as great. I would argue that her work is unique—while not attributable "to the direct intervention of the gods" – her stories contain an aesthetic beauty. Furthermore, their thematic content is often "excessively complex," while delightfully presented in such small snapshots as a summer's garden party, or a child's dollhouse, or within a box containing an aged, yet invaluable fox stole. Her technique explored the consciousness of characters, and she experimented with interior monologue before other major modernists such as Joyce, or Woolf had published their major works. Mansfield's narratives moved fluidly among the psyches of her characters, presenting multiple points of view, and temporal modernist techniques previously unseen. Yet despite these qualities, Mansfield's work has not always been critiqued impartially; in fact her work has often been minimized as "colonial," "primitive," or "feminine." Historicizing where Mansfield stands in the literary canon is important not only in accurately determining her status, but furthermore it establishes how Woolf, Lawrence and Huxley regarded her work.

¹⁶ Paul Valéry, "Letter about Mallarmé," tr. Malcom Cowley, *Leonardo Poe Mallarmé* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1972)

During the years of modernism, gender, above all, played a part in the acceptance of Mansfield's work. As Bonnie Kime Scott argues in *The Gender of Modernism*: "Modernism was unconsciously gendered masculine... Though some of the aesthetic and political pronouncements of women writers had been offered in public, they had not circulated widely and were rarely collected for academic recirculation. Deliberate or not, this is an example of the politics of gender (2). Mansfield's work while not overtly political, certainly offered a feminist critique of women's historical situation. One certainly finds in Mansfield's fiction her depiction and understanding of alienation and victimization. However, as Kaplan suggests, as Mansfield did not "articulate her social critique of human suffering in recognizably political terms," such as Marxist, her work was not taken as seriously as other male modernists (Kaplan 12-17). Further, Scott asserts: "Typically, both the authors of original manifestos and the literary historians of modernism took at their norm a small set of its male participants, who were quoted, anthologized, taught, and consecrated as geniuses. ... Women writers were deemed old-fashioned or of merely anecdotal interest" (2). No one could accuse Mansfield's work as being old-fashioned, but certainly criticism made aim at the "anecdotal" elements of her work, misinterpreting the importance of such *small* moments in her methodology.

Mansfield's work was often criticized for its preciousness. I would argue that preciousness is one of the finest elements within her work. Mansfield wrote numerous letters citing the importance of editing minute details in her stories: she valued every word, comma, period, every minute detail. Yet, in 1956 Gilbert Phelps wrote that while Mansfield possessed certain qualities that she had learnt from Chekhov – "[she] does possess Chekhov's comprehensive vision of the relation of man to his social background,

and to the vaster backgrounds of Nature” –she did not “possess his fundamental sanity, or his objectivity, or his self-discipline.” Further: “And though she learned a good deal from him it was certainly not from him that she derived the sentimentality, the parochialism, the coyness and preciousity which mar so much of her work”¹⁷ (Phelps 189-90). Mansfield had greatly admired Chekhov’s accomplishments with the short story, but she, in turn, had pushed the genre further. In trivializing her work as sentimental, merely the work of a women writer, Phelps totally overlooked what she had achieved. Mansfield had not, as Phelps asserts, marred the work with her preciousity, she had mastered the work.

Again, even the genre Mansfield used was considered, in her case, a minor art form. Scott asserts: “Marginality by genre afflicted Katherine Mansfield as a writer of the short story” (Scott 12). Critics of her time considered her choice of genre in determining the status of her art. This is particularly ironic given that the short story so often lends itself to depicting forms of exclusion, and further gives voice to the marginalized. As Scott contends: “[the short story’s] technical workings mirror its ideological bias...it is precisely because of this bias that the short story has been a particularly important form for women¹⁸” (Scott 300). Hanson, in rebuking Mansfield’s marginalization, argues she is a “great” writer as she “depicts the domestic world of women and children with at least as much emotional significance as the world of male work or adventure” (303). Invariably the label “minor art form” only extends to women writing the short story; certainly Anton Chekhov, Guy de Maupassant, Edgar Allan Poe, O. Henry (William

¹⁷ Phelps, Gilbert. *The Russian Novel in English Fiction*. California: Scholarly Press 1955, Print.

¹⁸ Katherine Mansfield, Mary Lavin, Eudora Welty, Grace Paley, Alice Munro, to name a few, all made their reputation writing entirely as short story authors. (Scott 300).

Sidney Porter), Ivan Turgenev, and Frank O'Connor have not been marginalized in the same manner.

Frank O'Connor, considered one of the best short story writers of the twentieth century, and also a scholar in the field, devoted a great deal of time to critiquing Mansfield. In 1961, he delivered lectures at Stanford University,¹⁹ which have so endured that the printed collection, *The Lonely Voice* was reprinted in 2011.²⁰ This collection illuminates what O'Connor deemed the necessary traits of crafting a worthy short story, and the accompanying challenge of creating "a whole lifetime [which] must be crowded into a few minutes." On the one hand, O'Connor admits Mansfield is highly accomplished in this regard: she is capable of producing "masterpieces." He remarks that her New Zealand stories are "deliberate acts of magic" (137). Considering the scene in "Prelude" when Pat decapitates a duck, O'Connor writes:

For me this is one of the most remarkable scenes in modern literature... This is the Garden of Eden before shame or guilt came into the world... These extraordinary stories are Katherine Mansfield's masterpieces and in their own way comparable with Proust's breakthrough into the subconscious world... they set out to do something that had never been done before. (136-7)

Yet, on the other hand, this remarkable accolade to her work is undermined by his personal criticism of her. Mansfield is – "girlishly overdramatic" – taken in by "the dreary charlatanism of Fontainebleau" (131, 132). Ultimately, he considers that the

¹⁹ The compilation of these lectures came together as *The Lonely Voice: The Study of a Short Story* in 1963.

²⁰ O'Connor, Frank. *The Lonely Voice*. New York: Melville House Publishing, 2011. Print.

“miracle” of Mansfield is: “the true and moving story of the brassy little shopgirl of literature who made herself into a great writer” (132-3).

These back-handed compliments certainly illustrate the politics of gender, and other male modernists were equally lavish with such remarks. T.S. Eliot in *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* described Mansfield’s work in this manner: “...our satisfaction recognizes the skill with which the author has handled perfectly the minimum material [“Bliss”]...what I believe would be called feminine” (Eliot 35-36). For her part, Mansfield wrote of Eliot: The poems *look* delightful but I confess I think them unspeakably dreary. How one could write so absolutely without emotion – perhaps that’s an achievement...I don’t think he is a poet – Prufrock is, after all a short story. I don’t know these dark young men – so proud of their plumes and their black and silver cloaks and ever so expensive pompes funebres – I’ve no patience.”²¹ One of Mansfield’s “dark young men” was Bertrand Russell, and he wrote in his autobiography that after admitting how Mansfield’s intelligence so fascinated him, he noted too that she was “full of alarming penetration in discovering what [people] least wished known and whatever was bad in their characteristics” (Russell 236).

This strength in “discovering what people least wished known” was, in many respects, the strength in her work. As she so often remarked in her diaries and journals, there was a myriad of selves, and many of them were bad. In fact, as Kaplan asserts: “Katherine Mansfield’s aesthetics are grounded in a precocious recognition of the self as many selves” (169).²² She was “suspicious of the idea of the essential self” and “[h]er

²¹ In a letter to Virginia Woolf [c.12 may 1919] referencing, ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ in *Prufrock and Other Observations*, 1917. (KML 2:318)

²² In a 1908 letter to her cousin Sylvia Pane, Mansfield wrote: “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” (Letters

emphasis on roles and role playing reflects her sense of self as multiplicity, ever changing, dependent on the shifting focus of relationships” (37). Likewise, her characters often displayed many selves, precluding one simple interpretation. In *Katherine Mansfield*, Andrew Bennett argues: “it would seem that the normal protocols of reading which necessarily include certain sympathies, certain identifications and certain ethical judgments are suspended and we are left in a state of hermeneutic, ethical and indeed literary uncertainty” (12-13). This ambiguity on all fronts, is I believe, one of Mansfield’s great strengths. Ironically, the ambiguity within her personal life (her politics and her relationships), influenced much of the criticism directed at her work in the early twentieth century.

Current Mansfield Studies

An interest in Mansfield surged in the 1970s due to two things: feminism and post-colonial studies. However, in terms of post-colonial theory, Mansfield originates from a dominion which adds its own complexity to this type of theoretical reading, and, in many respects her class and ethnicity exclude her from a traditional post-colonial examination. Additionally, there has been a very different global resurgence in Mansfield studies in the past two decades, as far afield as China. There is a continued leaning toward the personal, rather than the professional side of Mansfield’s canon.

Most studies of Mansfield treat Antony Alper’s biography, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* as seminal (this replaced his 1953 version). Although written in 1980, the biography still offers an immensely comprehensive view of Mansfield’s life and her

I, pp. 18-19; qtd. in Kaplan 177). Yet later, in 1920, she reflected on the more frustrating side of experiencing oneself as fragments, pondering the suggestion that one can be “true to oneself”: True to oneself! which self? Which of my many--well really, that’s what it looks like coming to--hundreds of selves? (Journal, p. 205; qtd. in Kaplan 177).

relationships. Jeffrey Meyers' *Katherine Mansfield: A Biography* (1977) borrows heavily from Alpers but does not add much new material. It entails a broader spectrum of Mansfield, but detail is lacking. Gill Boddy's *Katherine Mansfield: The Woman and the Writer* (1988) incorporates many photos and therefore adds a visual dimension to Mansfield's life, but the substance is more of an introductory work. Claire Tomalin's *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (1987) is fairly exhaustive. Her text offers a thorough, often exacting depiction of Mansfield, looking into her relationship with Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence. In *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*, published in 1987, Clare Hanson offers an excellent assessment of the importance of Mansfield's critical contributions to women's writing in modernism. Critical work such as Roger Robinson's edited collection of essays *Katherine Mansfield: In from the Margins* (1994), provides sound reassessment of Mansfield's place in literary history. There is a current interest in Mansfield's relationship to illness studies, but to date no extensive work spent on her time at the Gurdjieff Institute. Jan Pilditch's edited collection, *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield* (1996) offers essays of a very broad range – from chapters entitled “Early years” to “Assessment,” this collection covers much ground from an international body of critics, but none investigates her work, or her person, in terms of its aesthetic influence. Sydney Kaplan's *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (1991) is one of the most convincing recent texts arguing for Mansfield's reconsideration and acceptance as a great modernist author. Jenny McDonnell's *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace: At the Mercy of the Public* looks at Mansfield as a professional writer, restricted by the “popular” and literary marketplace. Angela Smith's *Katherine Mansfield & Virginia*

Woolf: A Public of Two (1999) is a useful text for my work. Smith investigates Woolf's centrality in British modernism, and the critical interest in her since, particularly in feminist criticism. She juxtaposes Woolf's place against Mansfield's, arguing that Mansfield has been ignored and even disdained due to early criticism praising her "femininity." Smith looks at recent feminist criticism which now recognizes the complexity of Mansfield's positioning and the intricacies and similarities between these two female authors. *Katherine Mansfield: The Story-Teller* (2010) by Kathleen Jones interweaves the events of Mansfield's life with Murry's publishing efforts. This text offers some interesting details of publishing events, but as this text is related in the present tense, while innovative, it is disorientating to read. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism* (2011), edited by Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber, and Susan Reid, contains a varied and fine collection of recent essays on Mansfield: from "Katherine Mansfield, *Rhythm* and Henri Bergson," to "Katherine Mansfield's Menagerie." The work is divided into essays on philosophy, self and other, class and gender, and biography. As detailed below, my dissertation offers something new to the field of Mansfield studies.

Chapters

In spite of the evidence in Woolf's personal writing on the significance of her relationship with Mansfield, most of her biographers pay scant heed to it. John Mepham,²³ in *Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life*, refers only briefly to Mansfield, though he asserts that Mansfield was Woolf's closest rival. Even Phyllis Rose in her biography of

²³ Mepham, John. *Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life*. London: Macmillan, 1991.

Woolf, *Woman of Letters*,²⁴ mentions Mansfield only in passing, and yet her argument concerns how Woolf shaped her career as a writer. There is some work investigating the similarities between Woolf's writing and Mansfield's, but I elucidate stronger connections than otherwise suggested. In chapter two: "Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: Unattempted," I scrutinize the personal and competitive differences between Mansfield and Woolf. Illustrating the many examples of literary influence between the "The Wind Blows" and *Jacob's Room*, and "The Garden Party" and *Mrs. Dalloway* I suggest that Woolf was directly emulating Mansfield's style and content. Further, I argue that Woolf's genesis for "Kew Gardens" came directly from Mansfield's correspondence (proving the value of a biographical approach), and, furthermore, *Mrs. Dalloway* was a fuller rendering of Mansfield's "Bliss."

To date, I have found no text examining Mansfield's influence on the work of D.H. Lawrence in the manner I am attempting; and I have read no substantial critical work on the connection between Mansfield and Lawrence's *The Lost Girl*. In chapter three, "Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence: Old Moorings," I appraise the relationship between Mansfield and Lawrence, and suggest that much of Lawrence's canonical work of the early twentieth century, is, in fact, directly related to his rejection, repudiation and retelling of much of Mansfield's own work and personal life. I contend that the "Shame" chapter in *The Rainbow* is a clear characterization of Mansfield's lesbian relationship with Edith Bendall, and that Gudrun in *Women in Love* is not only a characterization of Mansfield, but a commentary on her rejection of Lawrence and his vision for a utopian community. Further, examining Alvina Houghton in *The Lost Girl*, I

²⁴ Rose, Phyllis. *Woman of letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf*. London: Pandora, 1986.

contend that Alvina is modelled on Mansfield, and is also a retelling of the triangular love affair in her life and in her fiction, namely – “Je ne parle pas français.”

Finally, while there are various passing references to Aldous Huxley’s use of Mansfield as a character in *Those Barren Leaves*, and *Point Counter Point*, I have found none that treat his connection to Mansfield in the manner I suggest, and my examination of the similarities in their interest in transcendence, is, I believe unique. In chapter four, “Katherine Mansfield and Aldous Huxley: The Cult of Mansfield,” I analyze Mansfield as the model for Mary Thriplow in Huxley’s *Those Barren Leaves*, and as the deceased character, Susan Burlap, in *Point Counter Point* (1928). Specifically examining Susan’s surviving husband, Burlap, I address Huxley’s repudiation of Murry in his exploitation of Mansfield, commonly referred to as the “cult of Mansfield.”²⁵ Ultimately, I suggest that Mansfield and Huxley, in sharing an interest in transcendence – albeit, Mansfield’s interest is propelled by her impending death, while Huxley’s is a much more developed interest across his lifetime – have more in common than otherwise considered. Scrutinizing Mansfield’s final decision to enter Gurdjieff’s Institute shortly before her death, alongside Lawrence’s essay “Mother and Daughter,” I suggest that Huxley may very well have endorsed Mansfield’s final choice, while Lawrence’s essay was a clear repudiation of such.

In summation, I consider Mansfield’s impact on Woolf, Lawrence, and Huxley, in relationship to their work and raise the question of influence, further probing the question

²⁵ The “cult of Mansfield” is often used by Mansfield scholars depicting the romanticized myth constructed by John Middleton Murry in the biographies of Mansfield, and his erroneous construction of her body of work after her death. While Jeffrey Meyers used the term as early as 1979. This term is also recognized in The Encyclopedia of New Zealand: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3m42/mansfield-katherine> Gillian Boddy. ‘Mansfield, Katherine’, from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 30-Oct-2012
URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3m42/mansfield-katherine>

of gender and women's participation in modernism. Rather than examining the work of these authors in its completed form – as a product – I attend to the complex interactions with Mansfield amid the *process* of their writing. This includes a strenuous study of letters, diaries, and journals. Biographical information for Mansfield, alone, contains five volumes of letters, two dense collections of notebooks, and a journal containing among other things, two novels in preliminary stages. A biographical interpretation of the text adds dimension and significance to this project; only through this biographical approach can one adequately examine Mansfield's interactions with these writers and accurately discern that these interactions can be considered, to varying degrees, as influence.

Addressing influence, this study asserts that Mansfield had impact on the writing of Woolf, Lawrence, and Huxley. Taking into account the many issues that surround the recognition of this, among them: gender politics, colonialism, marginality by genre, and personal relations – these all, to varying degrees, prevented critics from acknowledging that a “minor” modernist author played a role in the undisputed success of three major authors of the twentieth century.

Chapter 2: Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf : Unattempted

Chloe liked Olivia perhaps for the first time in literature. Cleopatra did not like Octavia... Cleopatra's only feeling about Octavia is one of jealousy... But how interesting it would be if the relationship between the two women had been more complicated... So much has been left out, *unattempted*... But how interesting it would have been if the relationship between the two women had been more complicated.

- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*²⁶

The relationship between Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield has, for the most part, been bogged down by conversations regarding the “jealousy” between the two writers. There has been a tendency in literary criticism to accept this simplistic view of their friendship; however, the friendship between Woolf and Mansfield is done a great disservice if one dismisses it so summarily. Their friendship was quite simply more complicated than that, and it was always tempered by their reactions to each other's writing. In the many decades since the death of Katherine Mansfield, the critical and literary analysis of Mansfield's work has become increasingly prolific; nonetheless, amidst this analysis there remains a continued fascination in Mansfield as a woman, as a character, even as a cultural icon, which overlooks the real substance of her *influence* as a

²⁶ Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One's Own*. (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1981), 82.

modernist writer, and, none so as much as in Mansfield's influence on the work of Virginia Woolf.

As Vincent O'Sullivan states: "With Katherine Mansfield, as with her friend and competitor Virginia Woolf, the strands of fiction and biography are not easily unwound. They may be...and for literary assessment must be. Yet for most readers, an interest in one usually takes with it a curiosity about the other."²⁷ My curiosity pertains to literary assessment, but one cannot accurately assess Woolf without dissecting her diaries and letters, as well as her fiction, in order to understand that Mansfield was far more than a friend to Woolf. Amongst Woolf's acquaintances with other modernist writers (including T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, whose work she disliked²⁸ and had refused to publish), Mansfield's work matched Woolf's most closely. From this commonality, their friendship was both enhanced and challenged by their mutual commitment to their work. Despite being hampered by debilitating health problems, they both wrote prodigiously; and despite their economic and class difference, both women fought against their Victorian/Edwardian upbringings to take their writing careers to the forefront of their lives.

Indeed, Woolf recognized that she could learn a great deal from Mansfield. When they first met in the fall of 1917, Woolf had not yet written her major novels and, as Kaplan argues, "had only just begun to experiment with narrative techniques. Mansfield, quite the opposite, was in the midst of her most fully matured stage as a writer. She had

²⁷ Vincent O'Sullivan, quoted in Katherine Mansfield's *The Aloe with Prelude* (Wellington: Port Nicholson, 1982), 7.

²⁸ In a letter to Gerald Brenan, Dec. 1st 1923, Woolf wrote: "I rather agree that Joyce is underrated: but never did any book [*Ulysses*] so bore me." DVW 3: 80

already worked out her method, which flowered in “Prelude.” And was approaching the period of the great, late stories...She was reaching the culmination rather than the formulation of her personal aesthetic theory” (Kaplan 167).²⁹ Woolf clearly recognized this, and what is more recognized that through their bond of female friendship she could communicate with Mansfield in ways she could not with her male contemporaries. Whilst they had many friendships in common, including various members of the Bloomsbury Group and Ottoline Morrell’s Garsington³⁰ set, none of them offered what Woolf needed as a female writer: Mansfield, while, at varying times and degrees both trusted and reviled by Woolf, ultimately became Woolf’s literary mentor.

Ann L. McLaughlin³¹ describes the relationship between Woolf and Mansfield as an “uneasy sisterhood,” while Angela Smith³² suggests their alliance: “...predates Woolf’s relationship with another writer, Vita Sackville-West, and [i]s intellectually and artistically more significant for Woolf.” Uneasy, yes, but ultimately their alliance, which is central to both women, is beneficial to their personal and literary work. Woolf acknowledges the power in her relationship with Mansfield, writing ‘this fragmentary intermittent intercourse of mine seems more fundamental than many better established ones.’ (DVW2:46) Mansfield, though increasingly wary of the Bloomsbury group and

²⁹ Sydney Janet Kaplan. *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction*. (Ithaca: Cornell UP), 1991.

³⁰ Lady Ottoline Morrell (16 June 1873 – 21 April 1938) Society hostess whose patronage helped all of the authors in this dissertation, considerably. Garsington Manor, was a regular gathering for members of the Bloomsbury group, and the circle of intellectuals surrounding the group.

³¹ Ann L. Maclaughlin: ‘An Uneasy Sisterhood: Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield’ in Jane Marcus (ed.), *Virginia Woolf: A Feminist Slant*. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press) 152-61.

³² Angela Smith: *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 63.

their endless gossip, writes to Dorothy Brett³³ in May 1918, "...I saw Virginia on Thursday. She was very nice. She's the only one of them that I shall ever see but she does take the writing business seriously and she is honest about it and thrilled by it. One can't ask more" (*KML* 2:169). Unfortunately, the 'uneasy sisterhood' is continually buffeted by the gossip of their rather small and, oftentimes, vicious circle of friends and, typically, the critical assessment of both authors pays heavy attention to these details rather than the details of their 'writing business'.³⁴

However, the gossip is relevant in how it affects both women's writing and the opinion of each other's writing – by wading through the petty and repetitive, one can assess the merit of both. The first mention of Katherine Mansfield in Woolf's diary is in the fall of 1917: "Clive came & was I thought, very pleasant, easy garrulous; starting a great many hares & chasing them slightly. We gossiped...spun swiftly from thing to thing—Characters, French books, the Mansfield intrigue, & so on" (*DVWI*: 67).³⁵ Just weeks later, Woolf again mentions her brother-in-law, Clive Bell, in which she, "listened to some Garsington gossip" about "K.M." breaking ties with "Ott." (*DVWI*:75). These conversations that Woolf deems important enough to write about in her diary, so often

³³ The Hon. Dorothy Brett (1883-1937), elder daughter of 2nd Viscount Esher, whom KM met in 1915. They became close friends through their visits to Garsington, before sharing an apartment at 3 Gower Street. *LKM*1:321 n1.

³⁴ For examples of such vicious friends, one need only look to Woolf's letters: "Bob Trevelyan dined with us...He is one of our egoists; what's more he manages to be more malevolent than anyone I know, ... So Bob collects every scrap of gossip within reach -- & even stretches after those that are beyond his reach. He told me that "he'd heard I was taking my book about to publishers", who presumably, refuse to take it. Then he lamented the failure of K.M.'s story; accepting my corrections of both statements, but so half-heartedly that he'll repeat them, wherever he goes." (*DVW* 1:169). Robert Calverley (Bob) Trevelyan (1872-1951), poet and classical scholar, brother of the historian G. M. Trevelyan; Trinity College, Cambridge, and an Apostle; in the 1890's he had shared a house with Roger Fry (*DVWI*: 93 n1).

³⁵ This gossip may relate to the 'quarrel with the Murrys', Chapter V of *Ottoline at Garsington*. *Memoirs of Lady Ottoline*, 1915-1918, *DVW* 1:67

begin with the discussion of writing – French authors, fashionable authors, and so forth – but invariably bring her back to Mansfield. Granted, while Woolf partakes in the Mansfield gossip, she is first and foremost interested in the gossip pertaining to Mansfield’s writing and any critical acclaim of Mansfield’s work.

It is hard to deny, though, that Woolf’s interest in Mansfield sours when Mansfield’s success reaches a fever pitch in the early 1920s.³⁶ When Mansfield is receiving critical acclaim for her writing, every success for Mansfield is both noticed and commented on in Woolf’s diaries: “I’ve plucked out my jealousy of Katherine...Her book praises for a column in the *Lit Sup*³⁷ – the prelude of paeans to come. I foresee editions; then the Hawthornden prize next summer. So I’ve had my little nettle growing in me, & plucked it as I say. I’ve revived my affection for her somehow, & don’t mind, in fact enjoy” (*DVW* 2:80); “I’m puzzled to say K.M. (as the papers call her) swims from triumph to triumph in the reviews; save that Squire³⁸ doubts her genius – so, I’m afraid, do I.” (*DVW* 2:87); “K.M. bursts upon the world in glory next week.”³⁹ (*DVW* 2:161); “So what does it matter if K.M. soars in the newspapers, & runs up sales skyhigh? Ah, I have found a fine way of putting her in her place. The more she is praised, the more I am convinced she is bad...She touches the spot too universally for that spot to be of the truest blood” (*DVW* 2:170-71); “Moreover, I can wince outrageously to read K.M.’s

³⁶ To be fair, Mansfield, while not as prolific in her jealous tirades against Woolf does write to Ottoline Morrell in June 1919: “...He (Roger) thinks that Virginia is going to reap the world. That, I don’t doubt, put on my impatience. After a very long time I nearly pinned a paper on my chest, ‘*I too, write a little.*’ But refrained. (*KML* 2:333).

³⁷ Mansfield’s *Bliss and Other Stories* was reviewed in the *TLS* of 27 January 1921. (*DVW* 2:80n)

³⁸ J.C. Squire, literary editor of the *New Statesman*, 1913019. (*DVW* 2:9n)

³⁹ KM’s *The Garden Party and other Stories* was published by Constable in February 1922. (*DVW* 2:161n)

praises in the *Athenaeum*. Four poets are chosen; she's one of them."⁴⁰ (*DVW* 2:28n). It would also seem abundantly clear that Woolf delights in Mansfield's failures: "Then Romer Wilson has brought out a novel – to which Squire will certainly give the Hawthornden prize, thus robbing Katherine of it: so I have some cause for pleasure"⁴¹ (*DVW* 2:116).

Woolf's diary entries clearly show an impassioned response to Mansfield and her success; however, while Woolf "winces" at the "glory," she also chides Mansfield for her "universal" appeal. There is always the niggling truth in Woolf's reactions that Mansfield has, in fact, accomplished something quite remarkable. Persistently, Woolf derides Mansfield while, in the same sweep of her pen offering faint and guarded praise: "I have been dabbling in K.M.'s stories, & have to rinse my mind – in Dryden? Still, if she were not so clever she wouldn't be so disagreeable" (*DVW* 2:138). Clearly, Woolf's professions not to be jealous of Mansfield, are mitigated by the very frequency of her own writing that suggests otherwise. Certainly, the petty rivalry between the two writers took its toll on what could have been a much more productive professional and personal relationship. Even in the very first diary entry Woolf pens after Mansfield's death she writes how, "fault[s]" they had found with one another and "gossip" they had shared about each other had strained and weakened their friendship (*DVW* 2: 227). No doubt it had; nonetheless, towards the end of Mansfield's life, and the years after her death, Woolf demonstrated increasing compassion and empathy for Katherine Mansfield, far

⁴⁰ "Je ne Parle pas Francais" was reviewed in the *Athenaeum* of 2 April 1920 by J. W. Sullivan under the heading 'The Story-Writing Genius', and compared to Chekhov and Dostoevsky." (*DVW* 2:28n)

⁴¹ Romer Wilson was the pen-name for of Florence Roma Muir Wilson (1891-1930)...On June 29 1921 she was awarded the Hawthornden Prize for her third novel *The Death of Society* (*DVW* 2:116n).

more so, I believe, than most critics have recognized. Critics and biographers such as: Claire Tomalin (1988), Hermione Lee (1996), Angela Smith (2000), Julia Briggs (2005), and Anthony Curtis (2006), have all reached similar conclusions from Woolf's letters, diaries, and fiction –minimizing the genuine affection that Woolf held for Mansfield, and failing to acknowledge that any spiteful and jealous comments in regard to Mansfield, were always driven by Woolf's own insecurities, and her outright competitiveness with the only author she begrudgingly regarded as an equal. So much so, that even after Mansfield's death, Woolf mused: "Now B. [Brett] idolizes her, & invests her with every quality of mind & soul. Do people always get what they deserve, & did K.M. do something to deserve this cheap posthumous life? & am I jealous even now?" (DVW 2:238)

The Civet Cat –Petty & Personal Criticism

The dinner last night went off: the delicate things were discussed. We could both wish that one's first impression of K.M. was not that she stinks like a – well civet cat that had taken to street walking. In truth, I'm a little shocked by her commonness at first sight; lines so hard & cheap. However, when this diminishes, she is so intelligent & inscrutable that she repays friendship.

-Virginia Woolf⁴²

...I am sorry you have to go to the Woolves. I don't like them either. They are *smelly*.

-Katherine Mansfield⁴³

⁴² DVW1: 58

⁴³ Written to John Middleton Murray, 16 and 17 February 1918, *KML* 2:77

On 24 June 1923, Virginia Woolf wrote to Barbara Bagenal remarking on her recent visit to Garsington, where Lady Ottoline Morell, "...completely drew the veils of illusion from me, and left me on Monday morning to face a world from which all heart, charity, kindness and worth had vanished." All that Ottoline left behind, was "the scent of dried rose leaves...a little powder falling on the floor" (*DVW3*: 50). These derogatory remarks were not reserved for Lady Ottoline. Woolf's caustic remarks, often referring to olfactory smells, made their way into many of her letters and diary entries, and oftentimes those critiqued were her closest acquaintances, if not friends. As Vita Sackville-West suggested, in her memorial article about Virginia Woolf, "tenuousness and purity were in her baptismal name, and a hint of the fang in the other." When the fang showed, it could be merciless" (*LVW 2*:xix). Frequently, the "hint of fang" surfaced in Woolf's comments towards Mansfield, and, as in her tone regarding Lady Ottoline, in the worst moments Woolf referred to Mansfield as a civet cat or a street walker.

Although Mansfield was aware of the gossip of her detractors, and keenly aware that Woolf may possibly be influenced by their talk, she did not seem to realize that Woolf, herself, was often the originator of such gossip. Woolf gossiped and, in turn, seemed to relish any derogatory comments towards Mansfield that their friends readily shared. In one such conversation with their mutual friend, Kot,⁴⁴ Woolf places great stock

⁴⁴ Samuel Solomonovich Kotliansky (February 28, 1880 – January 21, 1955): a Russian-born British translator. Although not a creative writer himself, he befriended, and helped publish some of the most prominent people in English literary life in the early twentieth century. He became a great friend of D. H. Lawrence, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and by all accounts was in love with Katherine Mansfield (although this feeling was never reciprocated). For a time, he was business manager of *The Adelphi* (founded by JMM), a prominent literary journal that published works of Lawrence, and Mansfield, and many other British modernists. He was an early translator into English of such Russian authors as Dostoyevsky, and Chekhov.

in his appraisal of Mansfield: "... Kot, he has some likeness to the Russians of literature. He will begin to explain his soul without preface. He explained Katherine's soul, not at all to her credit. Her lies & poses have proved too much for him, nor does he find more than a slight gift for writing in her" (*DVW* 1:108). Further, "I don't know that this last pleases me however, though it sounds as if I wrote it down for that reason" (*DVW* 1:108). And in a remarkably similar vein several years later – "I was happy to hear K. abused the other night. Now why? Partly some obscure feeling that she advertises herself; or Murry does it for her; & then how bad the Athenaeum stories⁴⁵ are; yet in my heart I must think her good, since I'm glad to hear her abused." *DVW* 2:78-9 The delight for Woolf, as previously mentioned, is not for the petty comments on Katherine's soul, or her 'lies and poses,' but rather the remarks where Mansfield's writing is belittled or 'abused.' Between Mansfield and Woolf—the petty jealousies and catty remarks always underlie their real tension surrounding who is the better writer.

Mansfield is clearly aware that her relationship with Woolf is complicated by friends keen to pull them asunder. In an August 1917 letter, written to Woolf she states that on the one hand – "...[w]e have got the same job, Virginia & it is really very curious & thrilling that we should both, quite apart from each other, be after so very nearly the same thing. We are you know; there's no denying it..." (*LKMI*:327). And then on the other – "But don't let THEM⁴⁶ ever persuade you that I spend any of my precious time swapping hats or committing adultery – I'm far too arrogant & proud" (*LKMI*:327).

⁴⁵ The book of KM's is *Bliss*.

⁴⁶ Maynard Keynes and Clive Bell had gossiped with VW about KM (*DVW* 1:67).

Woolf, in her rather sheltered upbringing in London, seemed easily swayed by these colorful stories of Mansfield's youth. While Mansfield had travelled, extensively, and experienced sexual relationships with men and women, the escapades Woolf came to believe Mansfield had committed were vastly exaggerated. Woolf's willingness to believe these exaggerations about Mansfield possibly stemmed from her own limited experience in the world, at least the world outside of Bloomsbury. Even Rebecca West, in an entertaining letter to an American professor wrote: "...you feel uncertain of my status because you are not sure how intimate I was with the Bloomsbury Group. I could not have admired Virginia Woolf more as a writer...But I cannot say I found the company of this group very entertaining. They had a very limited experience ... my husband⁴⁷ and I lived a much more interesting life than they did."⁴⁸ (Scott 473-474) While it is hard to conceive of the Bloomsbury group, and Virginia Woolf, as uninteresting, one can imagine that Woolf's judgmental views on Mansfield's personal life stemmed from her sheltered⁴⁹ existence within the Bloomsbury group.

As Patricia Moran, in *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*, states, "Mansfield moved in what Woolf and her Bloomsbury associates considered a literary underworld" (Moran 12). On the other hand, Woolf belonged to the literary establishment: her father, Leslie Stephen, was a prominent

⁴⁷ Rebecca West's affair with H.G. Wells is well known. However, although they had a son together, Anthony West, their affair only lasted a decade. In November 1930, Rebecca West married Henry Andrews, a banker, who she had met through the writer, Vera Brittain. They were married until his death, November 3, 1968. (Rollyson 139).

⁴⁸ Motley Deakin, American professor at the University of Florida and author of *Rebecca West* (1980). (Scott 473-474) West also commented: "I may be prejudiced on this matter by the fact that any demented lady, even if a genius, is a difficult neighbor in the country; and she was for a summer, when she was really unpardonable." (Scott 474) West was not far from the Woolfs at Monk's House when she rented Old Possingworth Manor, Sussex, in 1939 (Scott 475 n 8)

⁴⁹ Leonard Woolf, meanwhile, had travelled to Ceylon in 1904, becoming a cadet in the Ceylon Civil Service. He returned to England in 1911, and resigned after marrying Virginia in 1912.

Victorian man of letters who educated and trained Woolf in his extensive library. Furthermore, Woolf's brother's university friends provided the core of Bloomsbury, and "the eventual marriages of Leonard Woolf and Clive Bell to Woolf and her sister Vanessa Bell put the two women at the very center of this social and intellectual elite"⁵⁰ (Moran 12). It is true that in so many entries in Virginia Woolf's diaries and letters, she referred to Mansfield and John Middleton Murry together, and separately, as the "underworld." For the most part, critics have considered that Woolf used the term dismissing the Murrys as, "...an oracle in the underworld" – 'Grub Street' hacks (DVW1:156, n. 8).⁵¹ It seems that Woolf originally used this term to mock the Murrys, suggesting they behaved like the rootless rebellious heroes of *Letters from the Underworld*.⁵² Nonetheless, Woolf gradually came to separate the "Murrys" and came to recognize Katherine Mansfield as suffering in her own separate and internal 'underworld,' while Murry flourished in a very superficial, overtly public one. Woolf's diary entries often remark on the shallowness of Murry and his idealization of this exotic bohemian underworld, while her perceiving of Mansfield as a lonely, increasingly isolated individual, living within an internalized underworld, is evident.⁵³

⁵⁰ In *Women Artists and Writers: Modernist (im)positionings* (New York: Routledge, 1994) Bridget Elliott and Jo-Ann Wallace argue that "the specific context of working within Bloomsbury was both enabling and limiting for Woolf and her sister; it was "a relatively private space and an often confining freedom; consequently, their experience of women's modernism was in some ways isolated and anomalous" (59, 58).

⁵¹ 'The Underworld' is a barely definable term used by both LW and VW, roughly equivalent to 'grub street' (the abode of literary hacks), but with a suggestion of social inferiority.

⁵² One of Dostoevsky's short novels, written in 1913 that Murry relied on when preparing his study of the Russian author in 1916.

⁵³ "...I'm dipping into K.M.'s letters...Can't formulate a phrase for K.M. All I think a little posed & twisted by illness & Murry; but agonized, & at moments that direct flick at the thing seen which was her gift – Then all the old Tchekov [sic] stuff about life; & the perpetual rather sordid worries & gibes...& something driven & forced to cram into one years the growth of five or six. So I can't judge..." (DVW 4:315) VW had the Albatross Modern Continental Library Edition (1934) of *The letters of Katherine Mansfield*, edited by JMM and first published in two volumes in 1928. (DVW 4:315n)

But by 1920, Woolf's correspondence regarding the Murrys and the 'underworld' was mainly directed at their failures to respect societal conventions. When Mansfield was not prompt in replying to Woolf's letters, she writes tersely: "The inscrutable woman remains inscrutable...no apologies, or sense of apologies due. At once she flung open her pen & plunged... into the question of Dorothy Richardson; & so on with the greatest freedom & animation ... Perhaps it's I ... think it necessary to answer letters; that would be a proper retort to my jest of the underworld" (*DVW1*:358). Likewise, when Murry failed to print or promptly return one of her stories in the *Athenaeum*, she remarked that he had, "manners of the underworld." (*DVW2*: 70). Eventually, Woolf's criticisms toward the Murrys changed, and while her usage of the term *underworld* seemed less derogatory, Woolf also began to differentiate the ways in which she viewed the Murrys separately, and in their relationship – one-to-the-other. By 1925, Woolf's awareness of the social position for women appears to have developed, considerably, when in an essay on Harriette Wilson,⁵⁴ Woolf acknowledged the injustice of a society in which men pass through the 'under' and 'upper' worlds in discernibly different ways. Whereas Woolf, herself, had gossiped freely about Mansfield's rumored indiscretions in the 'underworld,' Woolf now acknowledged the immunity from criticism that was utterly denied to women, and yet afforded to men, and perhaps because of this she began to see Mansfield in a slightly different light.

⁵⁴ "Harriette Wilson," *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*. Vol. 4 (1994): 254-59.

The Public of Two: Spectators, one of the other.

What a queer fate it is – always to be the spectator of the public, never part of it. This is a part of the reason why I go weekly to see K.M. up at Hampstead, for there at any rate we make a public of two.

-Virginia Woolf⁵⁵

On Monday I paid what has now become my weekly visit to Katherine. Murry was there; which makes it a little stiff, though I like them both, & her better as a wife. He scarcely speaks; makes one feel that most speaking is useless; but as he has a brain of his own I don't mind this.

-Virginia Woolf⁵⁶

The friendship between Woolf and Mansfield has often been considered ambiguous, with little more than a cursory examination. I would argue, that for the time the two women writers were friends – and taking into account the embattled health that plagued both and affected their interactions – their friendship was, while not always solid, most definitely important and extremely significant to Woolf, particularly. When Woolf comments early on in their relationship: “I like her more & more; & think we have reached some kind of durable foundation” (*DVW* 1:291), she is obviously optimistic their

⁵⁵ *DVWI*:222, 30 November 1918.

⁵⁶ *DVW* 1:226

friendship is the beginning of things to come. In the same way, though, that their personal relationship is hampered by petty jealousies and the interference of friends, their professional relationship, and for both women, quite possibly their most important relationship, is hindered and complicated by their involvement in the publication of each other's work.⁵⁷ At various times, their husbands also play an important role as editors in each other's work: Murry edits Woolf for the *Athenaeum*, and Leonard Woolf edits Mansfield for the Hogarth Press. In 1918, when the Hogarth Press was involved in the publication of Mansfield's "Prelude,"⁵⁸ Mansfield writes to Woolf, "...You know Murry has been made editor of the *Athenaeum*; he was wondering whether you'd write for it. I wish you would ---There's a deal to talk over; I wish I were more physically stable -- it's dreadful mizery (sic)" (*KML2*:302). In response, it seems that Woolf is flattered that the Murrays have asked for her work, writing: "...we chattered about the *Athenaeum* mostly, & I was much complimented to hear how much they wish for my writing, in proof of

⁵⁷ On 11 October 1917, Mansfield wrote to Dorothy Brett "...I threw my darling to the wolves 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. What form is it?... Ah, Brett, it's so difficult to say. As far as I know it's more or less my own invention...it's so difficult to describe all this and it sounds perhaps overambitious and vain. But I don't feel anything but intensely a longing to serve my subject as well as I can -- But the unspeakable thrill of his art business. What is there to compare! And what more can one desire..." (*LKM1*: 330) KM had dined with the Woolfs the evening before, and they had reviewed proofs of the opening pages of *Prelude*.

⁵⁸ On Friday 12 July 1918, Woolf writes: "Yesterday & the day before we spent glueing the book, & have now paid all our debts; so that I suppose a great many tongues are now busy with K/M, 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" (*DVW* 1:167). Mansfield had already published enough short stories in various magazines by 1917 for Woolf to take notice of her and to request that her long story "Prelude" become the Hogarth Press's third publication the following year (*LKM2*:87 n. 3, 163). Mansfield's story is the second undertaking of the Hogarth Press though in fact its third publication. It took nine months to produce (*DVW* 1:56). As always, Woolf is swayed by the opinion of Clive Bell as to its merit: "On Wednesday 17th we glued 50 copies of *Prelude*. So far our present supply is ample. It seems doubtful whether we shall sell more than a hundred. Clive (See Clive Bell's letter from Garsington, dated 13 July 1918, MHP, Sussex) writes a tolerant but not enthusiastic letter about it. "Doesn't set the Thames on fire, or turn fastidious head" so he says" (*DVW* 1:169).

which I have a book this morning from Murry. (DVW 1:257-258). Ultimately these business arrangements damage their personal relationship; nonetheless, Woolf perseveres with her weekly visits to Mansfield and these visits prove invaluable to them both.

As Mansfield's health and general isolation became an increasing problem, Woolf's visits are certainly a welcome interlude. On 14 May 1918, Mansfield writes to Virginia Woolf "...I have been 'kept in' ever since the summer I spent with you last week...I have to go away tomorrow. Curse! I feel damned ill in body these last few days. 'My wings are cut I *can*-not fly I *can*-not fly I *can* not fly.' But dear Virginia dear – how I enjoyed my day with you; it's such a lovely memory...." (KML 2:170). Meanwhile in Woolf's diary entries there is a definite theme—a palpable fear that each visit to Mansfield may be the last: "Friday, the 4th, I went to tea with Katherine, since I begin to feel my visits numbered, how seriously I don't know, but once again she gets abroad, what's to bring her back?" (DVW 1:288) Despite the petty ramblings of jealousy, Woolf's time with Mansfield is most assuredly valued:

I lunched with K.M. & had 2 hours priceless talk – priceless in the sense that to no one else can I talk in the same disembodied way about writing; without altering my thought more than I alter it in writing here... this fragmentary intermittent intercourse of mine seems more fundamental than many better established ones. (DVW 2:45-46)

And Woolf found in Mansfield something that was especially lacking in her other friendships, especially those with men: "...I think what an abrupt precipice cleaves asunder, the male intelligence, & how they pride themselves upon a point of view which

much resembles stupidity. I find it much easier to talk to Katherine; she gives & resists as I expect her to; we cover more ground in much less time. (*DVW I*: 265)⁵⁹ The “giving” and “resisting” is the attraction for Woolf. And what she finds with Mansfield is also unique: “And again, as usual, I find with Katherine what I don’t find with the other clever women a sense of ease & interest, which is, I suppose, due to her caring so genuinely if so differently from the way I care, about our precious art(*DVW I*:257). As Kaplan argues, “Woolf and Mansfield know how separate they are from ‘the orthodox masculine thing,’ the given assumptions of traditional phallogocentric criticism...They will not use the old rules of discourse; they will not debate, contest each other... (Kaplan 146).” At its best moments, their relationship always seems to involve their writing: “...As usual we came to an oddly complete understanding. My theory is that I get down to what is true rock in her, through the numerous vapours & pores which sicken or bewilder most of our friends. It’s her love of writing I think” (*DVW I*:150). While there are elements of contest in their personal writings, their face-to-face conversations always leave both women with an aftermath of clarity—on their relationship, and most importantly, on their work.

In many respects, their friendship mirrors their writing: for both women it is experimental. Neither truly understands what the other wants or is attempting; nonetheless, they both recognize their efforts are the same – creating a new kind of fiction in the literature of modernism – in a sphere, until now, dominated by men. They are always self-conscious of their status not just as writers, but as women-writers. In

⁵⁹ In several diary entries Woolf makes similar remarks concerning JMM: “I had tea with Katherine yesterday & Murry sat there mud-coloured & mute, livening only when we talked his shop...I find it much easier to talk to Katherine; she gives and resists as I expect her to...” (*DVW I*:265).

Patricia Moran's *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*, Moran reasserts Woolf's ideas of resistance:

Mansfield and Woolf seem in many ways exemplary and pioneering figures of resistance: both disrupt the romance plot, foregrounding instead the power relations within families and the concomitant constriction of middle-class women's lives; both insist on the creativity manifest in such women's domestic tasks; both challenge the concept of a unified subject in a fluid, impressionistic prose that encompasses multiple perspectives... both experienced conflict with the issues of sexuality, reproduction, body image...and for both these bodily issues became integral elements of their representations of female creativity" (Moran 2-3).

For both women, these struggles were quite personal, and in many respects because of this they had far more at stake than their contemporary male modernists. In each other's company, Woolf and Mansfield reached a clearer understanding of their work, and, in their best moments, they felt empathy and genuine affection for one another.

Influences: Conversation set to Flowers

...Virginia, I have read your article on Modern Novels.⁶⁰ You write so *damned* well, so *devilish* well. There are these little others, you know, dodging & stumbling along, taking a sniff here and a stare there -- & there is your mind so accustomed to take the air in the 'grand manner' -- To tell the truth -- I am *proud* of your writing, I read & I think 'How she beats them.

-Katherine Mansfield⁶¹

Night & Day flutters about me still, & causes a great loss of time. George Eliot would never read reviews, since talk of her books hampered her writing. I begin to see what she meant...But I had rather write in my own way of 'Four Passionate Snails' than be, as K.M. maintains, Jane Austen over again.

-Virginia Woolf⁶²

⁶⁰ Woolf's essay on 'Modern Novels', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 10 April 1919, later collected as 'Modern Fiction' in *The Common Reader*, 1925. (LKM2:311 n. 3).

⁶¹ Written to Virginia Woolf, 10 April 1919 (KML 2:311).

⁶² Mansfield's stinging review on *Night and Day* unsettles Woolf, as we clearly see from this diary entry, Friday 5 December 1919 (DVW 1:315-316).

All of the background to Mansfield and Woolf's friendship, thus far discussed, sets the stage for the most important part of my argument, and that is that Mansfield directly *influenced* Woolf's work. Mansfield's negative review of Woolf's 1919 *Night and Day* had a profound effect on Woolf. When Mansfield complimented the novel for being "Austen up-to-date" it appeared she was critiquing it as being both unoriginal and out-of-date. Further, by remarking on its general vagueness of characters and atmosphere, Mansfield seemed to be comparing it to her own fiction, where interiority had a sharper presence and a clear modernity to it. Ironically, this review provided impetus for Woolf's growth, and her shift into far more experimental works such as *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and *To the Lighthouse* (1927).⁶³ While, thematically, their work was already similar, the drastic stylistic changes of Woolf's work were precipitated by Mansfield's critical assessment that Woolf's work was not honest – and therefore – not modern.

As Louise Bernikow states in *Among Women*, Mansfield and Woolf themselves were highly aware of ...their "affinities of consciousness" (Bernikow 127). As Claire Tomalin has argued in *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, "both...made the fragility of feeling, of happiness and the life itself, into their subject; both felt a degree of antagonism for the male world of action (and for male sexuality); both turned to their childhoods and their dead to nourish their imagination." (Tomalin 201). However, Mansfield admitting,

⁶³ See, for example, Claire Hanson's introduction on Mansfield in the *Gender of Modernism*, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990), esp. 303-4, as well as *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Clare Hanson (London: Macmillan, 1987); Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 249-52; and Kaplan's chapter on Mansfield and Woolf (145-68).

“We have got the same job, Virginia...,” did not mean they were both at the same stage in their job. By 1917, Mansfield had *mastered* their shared interest in the plotless narrative. Both Mansfield and Woolf turned to nature and often a nonhuman framework to elucidate their characters, and both were keenly interested in conveying consciousness through poetic and symbolic means. Nonetheless, Mansfield was always producing the work first, and it is hard to argue that Woolf’s use of images, symbols, even the shape of her sentences, were not influenced, if not out rightly – “borrowed” by Mansfield’s already highly accomplished body of work. The following quotations demonstrate this point:

She was still, listening. All the doors in the house seemed to be open ... Little faint winds were playing chase, in at the tops of the windows, out at the doors. – “The Garden Party,” 1922

Every door was left open. She listened. The drawing room door was open; the hall door was open; it sounded as if the bedroom doors were open; and certainly the window on the landing was open, for that she had opened herself. – *To the Lighthouse*, 1927

Very early morning. The sun was not yet risen, and the whole of crescent bay was hidden under a white sea-mist...there was nothing to mark which was beach and where was the sea. – “At the Bay,” 1921.

The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky... -- *The Waves*, 1931.

The similarities between these works is too close to be overlooked. Both paired

quotations show an interest in boundaries – for the characters themselves and for their perceptions of nature surrounding them. Furthermore, as Moran suggests: “Both “At the Bay” and *The Waves* begin with an evocation of merging ... the gradual emergence of boundaries with the coming of daylight works in both texts to suggest the growing awareness of individuality and separateness in the characters” (Moran10).

In the following two examples, Mansfield and Woolf both use the same allusion – the scene from *Alice in Wonderland* in which a pig grows larger in Alice’s arms, finally turning into a human baby. While “Prelude,” and *Mrs. Dalloway* may appear on the surface to have little in common, these few sample quotations show how they are not just alike in terms of use of allusions, but, far more importantly, how both texts address women’s maternity, and the sense of self related to this.

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...She made a cup of her hands and caught the tiny bird and stroked its head with her finger...As she stroked it began to swell, it ruffled and pouched, It grew bigger and bigger and its round eyes seemed to smile knowingly at her. Now her arms were hardly wide enough to hold it and she dropped it into her lap. It had become a baby. – “Prelude,” 1918.

For she was a child, throwing bread to the ducks, between her parents, and at the same time a grown woman coming to her parents who stood by the lake, holding her life in her arms which, as she neared grew larger and larger in her arms, until it became a whole life, a complete life, which she put down by them and said, “This is what I have made of it!” – *Mrs. Dalloway*, 1925

In these passages we see Bernikow’s “affinities of consciousness.” Additionally, we see the influence of one modernist author on the work of another. Although Woolf may

ultimately surpass her mentor, she remains, I believe, *taught* in the early stages of her professional development by Mansfield.

In Woolf's diary entries and correspondence concerning Mansfield, Woolf is closely following every step of Mansfield's work—its reception, its success and failures, but, most importantly, its construction. Ronald Hayman's "Literature and Living: A Consideration of Katherine Mansfield & Virginia Woolf" asserts that, furthermore, Mansfield was using 'stream of consciousness' a full four years earlier than Woolf.

Together with James Joyce and the novelist Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf is usually given far more credit than Katherine Mansfield for introducing the 'stream of consciousness' to swing the novel's pendulum in another direction. Katherine Mansfield has even been accused (by V. S. Pritchett) of imitating Virginia. Virginia's earliest use of the technique was in her short story's *Monday or Tuesday* which were written between 1917 and 1921...But Katherine started to use the technique in her short story *Feuille d'album*, which was published in 1917, so if Virginia was imitating anyone, it was Katherine (Hayman 16). Early critical assessment of Mansfield's influence on Woolf has been quick in dismissing even the possibility that Frank O'Connor's "brassy little shopgirl of literature who made herself into a great writer" could, in fact, have been one of the primary influences behind Woolf's earliest stylistic moves into modernism. Nonetheless, as I will show in the following analysis there is credible evidence to suggest otherwise.

The Genesis for “Kew Gardens”

In the summer of 1917, Mansfield was not only influential in Woolf’s successful utilization of her own modernist style in creating “Kew Gardens,” but Mansfield’s own letters and conversations with mutual friends clearly provided the germ for Woolf’s short story. In 1917, after a recent visit to Garsington Manor, Mansfield wrote to Ottoline Morrell (August 15, 1917):

...Your glimpse of the garden – all flying green and gold made me wonder again *who* is going to write about flower garden...There would be people walking in the garden – several pairs of people – their conversation their slow pacing – their glances as they pass one another – the pauses as the flowers ‘come in’ as it were – as a bright dazzle, an exquisite haunting scent, a shape so formal and fine, so much a ‘flower of the mind’ that he who looks at it really is tempted for one bewildering moment to stoop & touch and make *sure*. The ‘pairs’ of people must be different and there must be a slight touch of enchantment – some of them seeming so extraordinarily ‘odd’ and separate from the flowers, but others quite related and at ease. A kind of, musically speaking – conversation *set* to flowers...I see the pig of the party – Mrs. Galloway⁶⁴ – rooting in her little dark mind... (KML1:325)

Mansfield had been so moved by Ottoline’s garden, and the creative project it inspired, that she imparted the very same thoughts to Woolf⁶⁵, as we see repeated back in Woolf’s correspondence the same day to Ottoline Morrell: “...Katherine Mansfield describes your garden, the rose leaves drying in the sun, the pool, and long conversations between people wandering up and down in the moonlight. It calls out her romantic side...” (KML

⁶⁴ Here, one is obviously reminded of Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, published seven years later.

⁶⁵ The story, “Kew Gardens” as Alpers points out has obvious similarities to a passage in KM’s letter to Lady Ottoline of 15 August 1917 and also to a letter of KM’s to Virginia which has not survived (Alpers 249).

1:327-28). By 1919, Mansfield's vision was clearly idealized in Woolf's published, "Kew Gardens":

The couple stood still on the edge of the flower-bed, and together pressed the edge of her parasol deep down into the soft earth. The action and the fact that his hand rested on top of hers expressed their feelings in a strange way, as these short insignificant words also expressed something, words with short wings for their heavy body of meaning, inadequate to carry them far and thus alighting awkwardly upon the very common objects that surrounded them... Thus one couple after another with much the same irregular and aimless movement passed the flower-bed and were enveloped in layer of layer of green-blue vapour, in which at first their bodies had substance and a dash of colour, but both substance and colour dissolved in the blue-green atmosphere... shapes of all these colours, men, women and children, were spotted for a second upon the horizon, and then, seeing the breadth of yellow that lay upon the grass, they wavered and sought shade beneath the trees... wordless voices, breaking the silence suddenly with such depth of contentment, such passion of desire, ...and the petals of myriads of flowers flashed their colours into the air." (Dick 325).

While in Mansfield's letter we read "extraordinarily odd," we read "strange" in Woolf's story; the "bright dazzling" in Mansfield, becomes Woolf's "dash of colour;" but most significant – the pairs of people, the slow paced conversation – Mansfield's "conversation *set* to flowers," so closely resembling Woolf's "Kew Gardens." One can only surmise whether Woolf had also read Mansfield's *own* "Kew Gardens," not only visualized long before Mansfield's visit to Ottoline's garden, but begun in 1907. "In The Botanical Gardens" is a short story by Katherine Mansfield where the opening paragraph informs us: "From the entrance gate down the broad central walk, with the orthodox banality of carpet bedding on either side, stroll men and women and children – ... who call to each other lustily, and jump up and down on the green wooden seats... The men and women .. looking reverently, admiringly... spelling aloud the Latin names of flowers" (CWKMI: 84-86). It is possible this also played into Woolf's conception for her

short story. Regardless, Woolf's own Hogarth Press quickly published "Kew Gardens," thus putting Woolf, firmly, on a path toward success. Conversely, at this point in time Mansfield's own path faltered as she began the downhill slide of terminal illness. Her review of "Kew Gardens" was, nevertheless, positive, but one could easily believe her excuses for its brevity were not altogether genuine: "...I have been reviewing your story... You must forgive the review – I can't hope to please you – 'tho I wanted to – For one thing I hadn't enough space..." *KML* 2:324⁶⁶

"The Wind Blows,"⁶⁷ and Jacob's Room

The death of Katherine Mansfield's brother, Leslie, in the First World War in 1915, had the most profound impact on Mansfield's personal and professional life. As Janet Wilson argues in, "Mansfield as (Post)colonial-Modernist: Rewriting the Contract with Death," "...Mansfield's earlier feelings of intimacy with Leslie intensified [after his death], for as Freud writing on melancholia says, the lost object which cannot be relinquished returns as an aspect of oneself, the ghost of the loved becomes inseparable from the self, part of one's interior being."⁶⁸ (Wilson 29-44). Leslie's death was a turning point for Mansfield, in which she began to write as a restorative endeavor. It was the turning point at which in her search for that interior part, which had formed her childhood, Mansfield's writing truly became her own. Writing to Sylvia Lynd, Mansfield remarked: "I find my great difficulty in writing is to learn to submit. Not that one ought

⁶⁶ 'A Short Story,' her review of "Kew Gardens" in the *Athenaeum*, 13 June 1919, in a letter to Virginia Woolf, 4 June 1919.

⁶⁷ The extensively revised version of 'Autumns II', published in the *Signature*, I, 4 October 1915 (*CWKM*2: 229) and rewritten for the *Athenaeum* in 1920.

⁶⁸ Freud 'Mourning and Melancholia', trans. J. Strachey, Pelican Freud Library 14 (Harmondsworth: Penguin), (237-58). In Mansfield's diaries and notebooks, she mythologizes the close relationship she had with Leslie as that of a twinned consciousness: 'we were almost like one child. I always see us walking about together, looking at things together with the same eyes' (*KMN*2:15)

to be without resistance – ...But when I am writing of “another” I want to lose myself in the soul of the other that I am not.”⁶⁹ But by 1915 when Mansfield wrote “The Wind Blows”, she had clearly mastered this difficulty, by combining the effect of Leslie’s death, along with her subsequent emotional ponderings on New Zealand, and the Wellington wind of her youth. Her masterful technique between the conscious and unconscious of her characters, and the interplay of their stories, their lives, was evident. As Kimber and O’Sullivan note: “Already, *how* a story was told was becoming *what* a story was told. Incandescent memories of Wellington were being quarried before Lesley’s death added its imperative. Now more urgently, Mansfield realized as an artist, and not simply as a bereaved sister, that to arrive at more than personal nostalgia called for a ‘kind of special *prose*’ “(KMN2:33). (Kimber & O’Sullivan, 1:xxi)

The kind of special *prose*, mastered by Mansfield in “The Wind Blows,” was also something that Woolf was chasing. As Mark Spilka asserts in *Virginia Woolf’s Quarrel with Grieving* : “....In *Jacob’s Room* (1922), she [Woolf] had employed an experimental method closer to Katherine Mansfield’s than to Joyce’s... As she wrote in her diary in 1920, the danger for her kind of psychological fiction was ‘the damned egotistical self’; it had ruined Joyce and Dorothy Richardson, made them narrow and restricted.” (Spilka 48). Once again, however, there is more than mere similarity in the stories psychological intent and the attempt to remove the self from the text. Woolf’s imagery follows Mansfield’s created five years earlier.

⁶⁹ To Sylvia Lynd (CLKM4:180)

“The Wind Blows” fluctuates between childhood memories of a brother and sister being left behind as a ship sets out to sea and into the dark. The children (supposedly Katherine and Leslie) see themselves on shore as they once were. The story begins with a child’s sudden waking in the wind with a sense of dread.

The wind, the wind. It’s frightening to be here in her room by herself. The bed, the mirror, the white jug and basin gleam like the sky outside. It’s the bed that is frightening. There it lies, sound asleep...Does Mother imagine for one moment that she is going to darn all those stockings knotted up on the quilt like a coil of snakes? She’s not. No, Mother. I do not see why I should...The wind – the wind!
(CWKM2:228)

In Woolf’s third novel, *Jacob’s Room* (1920), a child also takes fright on the beach. Jacob hears his mother’s voice, hears the wind rushing outside where the ships are out on the dark waves. The child’s eye, the floating fragmented narrative and its ingredients, echo Katherine’s story (Lee 386-387). As with Mansfield, the death of Woolf’s beloved brother, Thoby, intensified her writing changing its tone forever.⁷⁰ As Lee asserts: “...the brother she lost was the brother she was always trying to know better. Thoby haunted her: she perpetually remembered and reimagined him. She wrote three versions of him over twenty years, as “Jacob” in *Jacob’s Room*, as “Percival” in *The Waves*, and as himself in her “Sketch of the Past.”(Lee113) Both Woolf and Mansfield recaptured these glimpses of their childhood and their memories of their lost brothers in their work. Their

⁷⁰ Thoby Stephens, after travelling to Greece and Constantinople, contracted typhoid, for which there was no effective treatment at the time. He died November 1904, after an aborted attempt to operate on him (Briggs 13).

sentiments echoed one another, as did their imagery and their fragmented narratives, but it was Mansfield who began the work that eventually Woolf was to master.

Bliss (1918)⁷¹ and *Mrs. Dalloway*

Generally, “Bliss” has been considered by literary critics to be one of Mansfield’s most successful modernist stories. “Bliss,” Moran argues: “... brilliantly exploits the hysteric as a specifically female version of the unreliable narrator... “Bliss”...emerge[s] as a major text of revisionary female modernism, a story that creates and explores its own unmapped continent of female sexuality...where women have no story except for the story of how that absence came to be.” (Moran 21-22) Despite this contemporary critical praise, Virginia Woolf’s response to “Bliss” could not have been more at odds. In an August 7, 1918 entry in her diary, Woolf wrote:

I threw down Bliss with the exclamation, “She’s done for!” Indeed I don’t see how much faith in her as a woman or writer can survive that sort of story. I shall have to accept the fact, I’m afraid, that in her mind is a very thin soil, laid an inch or two deep upon very barren rock. For Bliss [sic] is long enough to give her a chance of going deeper. Instead she is content with superficial smartness; & the whole conception is poor, cheap, not the vision, however imperfect, of an interesting mind. She writes badly too. And the effort was as I say, to give an impression of her callousness & hardness as a human being. I shall read it again; but I don’t suppose I shall change. She’ll go on doing this sort of thing, perfectly to her & Murry’s satisfaction. (DVW1:179)

⁷¹ The August edition of the literary monthly *English Review*, edited by Austin Harrison, contained the first publication of Katherine Mansfield’s “Bliss.”

Woolf's response to "Bliss" was one of her strongest criticisms to Mansfield as a writer.⁷² It is important to reiterate, however, that at this juncture Woolf's reputation as an author was considerably less impressive than it is today, and, indeed, it was Mansfield who had a higher profile than Woolf as an innovative short story writer in cutting edge London literary circles. And, now, at the age of 29, Mansfield made her first contribution to a reputable literary journal – the *English Review*. (LKM2:163). Woolf, meanwhile, although 7 years older than Mansfield, was only starting to make a name for herself in literary London. While Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915) had been received, respectably, the novel had been published with considerable family assistance.⁷³ Furthermore, Leonard and Virginia Woolf's own Hogarth Press had printed her first publication, "A Mark on the Wall," as part of the Hogarth Press inaugural publication in the summer 1917 (DVW1: 31, n. 90). Whereas, Mansfield was increasingly emerging in literary modernist magazines without deep and familial ties to mainstream London publishing, and she was increasingly visible in avant-garde journals and to their mutual body of peers.

It is reasonable to assume that professional jealousy contributed to Woolf's strong outburst, and given their relationship and its past rivalry this was no doubt part of the equation. However, there are many references within "Bliss" to suggest that Mansfield's model for Pearl Fulton was Virginia Woolf *herself* – and quite likely Woolf was well aware of this, further complicating her strong response to Mansfield's work. For

⁷² Ironically, Woolf wrote to Mansfield on Dec. 19th [1920] "...I wish you were here to enjoy your triumph – still more that we might talk about your book ["Bliss"] – For what's the use of telling you how glad and indeed proud I am? However, I must to please myself send a line to say just that. Yours ever." (LVW 2:449)

⁷³ Her half-brother's Duckworth & Co. firm had published *The Voyage Out*.

in June 1917, Mansfield wrote to Woolf: “Ever since I read your letter I have been writing to you and a bit ‘haunted’ by you: I long to see you again... Don’t cry me an ardent creature or say, with your head a little on the side, smiling as though you knew some enchanting secret: “Well, Katherine, we shall see”... (*KML I*:313) Rendering herself an “ardent creature” here, Mansfield employs an adjective she will again use repeatedly to describe Bertha when she desires her husband “ardently! ardently!”— “[t]he word ach[ing] in her ardent body!” (*SKM* 348). And if we can read Mansfield as Bertha, we can readily read Pearl as Woolf. Pearl Fulton has a habit of “sitting with her head a little on one side” (*CWKM2*:144, 147), and the silver white Pearl whose “slender fingers . . . [are] so pale” that “a light seem[s] to come from them,” resembles the description of Woolf in a letter from Mansfield. Mansfield laments that the recent epistolary silence must mean Woolf has “finally dispatched [Mansfield] to cruel callous Coventry, without a wave of [her] lily white hand” (*LKMI*:325).

Mansfield’s impression of Woolf had of course existed before she composed “Bliss.” In correspondence with Ottoline, Mansfield remarked that Woolf was “VERY delicate;” furthermore, she had even told Ottoline that she regarded Woolf as “one of those Dostoievsky women whose innocence had been hurt...” and for her part, immediately “understood [Woolf] completely” (*LKMI*: 315). Again, there is the uncanny resemblance between this depiction and how Bertha gazes at Pearl Fulton, feeling that she suddenly “know[s]” her friend is “feeling just what she [is] feeling.” As Pearl Fulton is rather a shallow, duplicitous character, Mansfield may have been reacting to how wronged she felt by seeing Woolf’s draft of “Kew Gardens.” Certainly when Mansfield wrote to Woolf just weeks before “Bliss” was to appear in the *English Review*, she had

described a recent note she had received from Virginia as a “Pearl of a Letter” (LKM2:258). Yet, Pearl – detached and distant – is, within the text, virtually “unreadable.” The timing of the letter, combined with the subtle literary jabs both writers made toward one another, suggest the similarities between Virginia Woolf and Pearl Fulton were far from coincidental.

Whether Mansfield modeled Pearl Fulton on Woolf interests me less, though, than Woolf’s literary response to Mansfield’s “Bliss,” and what I consider Woolf’s fully-fledged adaptation of such – *Mrs. Dalloway*. There are striking resemblances between both texts. Both portray women wandering through London in a giddy, almost hysterical mood, mentally and physically preparing for a dinner party. Bertha and Clarrissa both dress in silver and green for their parties, and while Bertha places great importance in preparing her fruit bowl, Clarrissa attends the same attention to her flowers, decapitated and floating in bowls upon the table. Desire and disappointment are central to both stories, in relation to their husbands, their children, and their fleeting youth. Both texts explore the ways in which the heterosexual romance plot routinely cripples female sexuality and thwarts female expression; both writers develop narrative links between the repression of female desire – Bertha toward Pearl, and Sally toward Clarissa – and their respective frigidity and silence. But whereas most critics conclude that Bertha is Mansfield’s ultimate sacrificial lamb in “Bliss” – alone, disillusioned, and in denial,⁷⁴ Woolf seeks to offer Bertha a more palatable choice—suggesting hope where none exists

⁷⁴ Mary Burgan sees Bertha before her idealized pear tree at the end of “Bliss” as a woman “adrift in her own ignorance” and ultimately unprotected, even, by any “narrative empathy” (Illness 66). See also Hanson and Gurr 64-5; Hankin 147; Fullbrook 101; Meisel, “What the Reader Knows” 116; and Moran 44. Though Saralyn Daly writes that “despite her flaws, Bertha has Mansfield’s sympathy,” she agrees with Berkman that natural beauty “offers no promise” at the story’s end, and apparently considers the heroine diagnosably “hysterical” (77, 78, 73).

in Mansfield's "Bliss." Whereas, as Elaine Showalter suggests in *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, "the heroines of Katherine Mansfield's stories become [the writer's] scapegoats... her fiction is cautionary and punitive; women are lured out onto the limbs of consciousness, which are then lopped off by the author" (246). Woolf's rewriting resists exactly this, and Clarissa is able to rejoin the fray of human connection, substituting Septimus as the sacrificial lamb in her place.

While I agree with Moran's assertion that – "In order to signal alternative plots, plots which by the logic of the real must remain in the realm of the imaginary, Mansfield and Woolf adapt hysterical symptomatology at the level of the plot" – I would disagree that the "uncensored female desire" leads to a story which "remains fragmentary and inconclusive, a result of cultural and personal repression" (Moran 21). I would argue that Woolf's text comes down on the side of hetero-normative relationships, while Mansfield's clearly does not. Bertha admits that "she always did fall in love with beautiful women" and believes what she shares with Pearl "happened very, very rarely between women. Never between men" (CWKM2:144). Likewise, Clarissa "could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly" (MD 50)... "this falling in love with women," Clarissa decides "[i]t was not like one's feelings for a man. It was completely disinterested, and besides, it had a quality which could only exist between women" (MD 50). However, "Bliss" overtly depicts Bertha's attraction to Pearl as a physical one: "What was there in the touch of that cool arm that could fan – fan – start blazing – blazing – the fire of bliss that Bertha did not know what to do with?" (CWKM2:147). Woolf, I would argue, always battling with her own lesbian leaning, deliberately spoke

back to Mansfield by rewriting her *Bertha*, as Mrs. Clarrissa Dalloway, a woman who chose a normative marriage and remained content with her choice.

Death Comes to the Party: “The Garden Party” (1922) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (May 1925)

While I have already argued that *Mrs. Dalloway* was, in part, a reply and a fuller rendering to Mansfield’s “Bliss,” I would further suggest that *Mrs. Dalloway* also derives from another of Mansfield’s well-known short stories – “The Garden Party.” I would add to this that Woolf wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* with Mansfield’s review of her *Night and Day* also in mind.⁷⁵ In a letter to Mansfield in 1920, Woolf writes:

I had my interview with K.M. on Friday. A steady discomposing formality & coldness at first... No pleasure or excitement at seeing me... And then we talked about solitude, & I found her expressing my feelings, as I had never heard them expressed. Whereupon we fell into step, & as usual...A queer effect she produces of someone apart, entirely self-centered; altogether concentrated upon her ‘art’; almost fierce to me about it...Then she asked me to write stories for the *A[thenaeum]*. “But I don’t know I can write stories” I said, honestly enough, thinking that in her view, after her review of me, anyhow, those were her secret sentiments. Whereupon she turned on me – Kew [gardens] the right ‘gesture’; a turning point – Well but *Night & Day*? I said, though I hadn’t meant to speak of it. ‘An amazing achievement’ she said. Why, we’ve not had such a thing since I don’t know when--, But I thought you didn’t like it? Then she said she could pass an examination in it...but what does her reviewing mean there? – or is she emotional with me? Anyhow, once more as keenly as ever I feel a common certain understanding between us - a queer sense of being ‘like’ – not only about

⁷⁵“A Ship Comes into the Harbour” (review of Virginia Woolf’s *Night and Day*) “...It is extremely cultivated, distinguished and brilliant, but above all – deliberate, there is not a chapter where one is unconscious of the writer, of her personality, her point of view, and her control of the situation. We feel that nothing has been imposed on her: she has chosen her world, selected her principle characters with the nicest care, and having traced a circle round them so that they exist and are free within its confines, she has proceeded, with rare appreciativeness, to register observations.” (KM’s *Novels and Novelists*. 112-115)

literature -- & I think it's independent of gratified vanity. I can talk straight to her.”⁷⁶

What is so telling in this diary entry is the conflict and complexity of Woolf and Mansfield's relationship, both personally and professionally. On the one hand, Woolf deems Mansfield's input as crucial, and their connection is as no other; on the other, Woolf is unnerved by Mansfield's criticism of her work. She writes in her diary: “K.M. wrote a review⁷⁷ which irritated me – A decorous elderly dullard she describes me; Jane Austen up to date. Leonard supposes that she let her wish for my failure have its way to her pen...I'm not going to call this a success – or if I must, I'll call it the wrong kind of success” (DVW 1:314-315). What greatly disturbs Woolf, however, is that the underhand compliment – “Jane Austen up to date” – is a critique of Woolf's modernism, and, as Mansfield infers, a resistance to modernist form and content. Even Kaplan argues that while Mansfield “clearly appreciated Woolf's efforts toward a new kind of prose ... she believed that Woolf still held on to an older form of phrasing and diction. Compared with Virginia Woolf's earlier novels – such as *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* – everything Katherine Mansfield wrote seems crisp, pointed, bright, bold...” (Kaplan

⁷⁶ (DVW 2:44-45) “KM had reviewed *Night & Day* in the Athenaeum. Of 26 November 1919. She had written of it to Murry: “I don't like it. My private opinion is that it is a lie to the soul.” (DVW 2:45n)

⁷⁷ After KM's review of *Night and Day* she wrote to JMM: [15 November 1919] “...I managed to get Virginia off yesterday but NOT without a struggle. I wanted to be sincere. I felt I had a duty to perform. Oh dear oh dear! What's it all come to, I wonder?” (KML 3:95) To JMM [26 and 27 November 1919] “...I don't want the Woolfs to have my new work. We really are opposed. I know just how angry Virginia *et cie* are with me. They ought not to be for indeed I tried my best to be friendly & erred on the side of kindness. If you read that book you would realize what I feel...its aristocratic (?) ignoring of all that is outside ...Intellectual snobbery...imagining that England rings with *Night & Day*. Its boundless vanity & conceit – dreadful in woman or man (KML 3:122-23).

151). But this is where Mansfield's diaries and letters really illuminate her criticism of Woolf's work, not, as Kaplan suggests on aesthetic grounds as much as moral grounds.

As Vincent O'Sullivan argues, Mansfield was "moving toward that notion of 'authenticity', the insistence that what one chooses to be is what one is, that was later to characterize the Existentialists" (*KML3*: xii). Mansfield's critique of *Night and Day* was not as much the novel's carefully traditional structure that disturbed her, it was something more essential than an aesthetic judgement. Mansfield's strongest objection was 'the absence of any scars' – the refusal in Woolf to indicate that the novel 'must accept the fact of a new world' (*KML3*: xii). As Mansfield wrote to Murry regarding *Night and Day*: "My private opinion is that it is a lie in the soul. The war never has been, that is what its message is...I feel in the *profoundest* sense that nothing can ever be the same that as artists we are traitors if we feel otherwise..." (*LKM3*: 82). Mansfield's rejection of Woolf's work was for its denial of all the carnage, death, and destruction that the War had brought to soldiers and civilians alike. Mansfield's objections were not per se aimed at Woolf personally. Around the same time, and in a similar vein, Mansfield wrote to Ottoline Morrell, decrying her horror at the victory celebrations after the First World War, 'all these toothless old jaws guzzling for the day – and then all of these beautiful youth feeding the fields of France' while 'I see nothing but black men, black boxes, black holes.'" (*LKM3*: 97, 16 Nov.1919) It was this absence of black boxes, and black holes that she deemed a 'lie' in Woolf's work. Spilka argues that Woolf distrusted militancy and struggled to exclude it from her fiction, and, in effect, Woolf's work then suffered attempting to prevent socially pressing material from spilling over into angry significance (Spilka 113-14). However one reads Mansfield's criticism of Woolf's *Night and Day* is

irrelevant in light of its effect—a literary response by Woolf that fashioned her work most favorably into modernism.

It was this modernism that Mansfield had already created in “The Garden Party.”⁷⁸ Her 1922 story depicted more than the mere garden party, mirrored on her childhood memories in New Zealand and her mother’s ceaseless hosting of Edwardian luncheons and dinners.⁷⁹ It exemplified a style, an honesty, that Mansfield had mentioned time and again in her diaries and notebooks – an urgency where, “One must tell everything – everything”, (KMN2:58) – “That is more and more real to me each day” (KMN2:32-33). There are many parallels between “The Garden Party” and *Mrs. Dalloway* which Woolf would write four years later. Both writers examined the oppressive and shallow world of society, Wellington and London, respectively. Each dealt with the preparations for a grand and rather frivolous party, set against the backdrop of a horrific, tortured death of a man that occurs in the midst of all the celebrations. Accepting Mansfield’s own biographical work and her insistence “on telling everything”, moreover, I would argue that “The Garden Party” is actually closer to war literature, in much the same way *Mrs. Dalloway* is.

Christine Darrohn’s ““Blown to Bits!": Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden-Party" and the Great War," extends arguments made by Margaret and Patrice Higonnet⁸⁰ that

⁷⁸ 1922 23 Feb: *The Garden Party and Other Stories* published by Constable. (Kimber & O’Sullivan, 1:xviii)

⁷⁹ 1907 March: Annie Beauchamp holds a garden party at 75 Tinakori Road, on the same day that a poverty-stricken neighbor is killed in a street accident. (Kimber & O’Sullivan, 1:xiii)

⁸⁰ Margaret R Higonnet and Patrice L.R. Higonnet. “The Double Helix.” *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. Ed. Margaret Randolph Higonnet et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 1987. 31-47.

while “masculinist history has stressed the sharply defined event of war...we [should] move beyond the exceptional, marked event, which takes place on a specifically militarized front...to include the private domain and the landscape of the mind” (Higonnet 46). As Darrohn asserts perhaps because the war is a buried presence in “The Garden Party,” this story is able to encode such a probing meditation on the experiences of war (Darrohn 20). Given, this is rather a unique way to read “The Garden-Party;” nonetheless, in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *No Man’s Land*, “The Garden Party,” is given as an example in which there are female characters “who achieve heroic stature through witnessing or facilitating male death, who feel inexplicably empowered by male deaths, or whose lives yield them fortuitous victories over dead or dying men” (*No Man’s Land* 1:94-95). For Gilbert and Gubar, this trope signifies the empowerment many women experienced during the First World War, feeling their art strengthened, and inspired, by the deaths of male contemporaries. As Gilbert and Gubar suggest, and many other critics would agree, Mansfield’s brother, Leslie, was a muse for Mansfield’s best writing (*No Man’s Land* 2:307) John Middleton Murry claimed “of all Mansfield’s friends who went to war, none returned alive but no death affected her as greatly as the devastating death of her brother (JKM 107).” After Leslie’s death, Mansfield’s journal and diary explode with aching, viscerally haunting writing. It is this writing that flows from personal loss which gives us insight into a key aspect of war, the noncombatant’s experience of death. And it is out of this grief, that we witness truly inspired work.

However, it is unnecessary to concede “The Garden-Party” is war literature in order to see that at the story’s heart there is the tragic image of premature death for the central male character. In 1916, four months after Leslie’s death, Mansfield wrote in her

Journal: “[W]hen I leaned out of the window I seemed to see my brother dotted all over the field – now on his back, now on his face, now huddled up, now half-pressed into the earth. Wherever I looked, there he lay (*JKM* 95). It seems that in “The Garden Party,” Mansfield attempts, successfully I believe, to assuage that horrific image of Leslie, instead transforming him into a picture of still wholeness, quelling anxieties that the war raises for herself, and for post-war society. Hence, Leslie becomes the Carter, but instead of mourning for the premature death of yet another male disfigured and unrecognizable, Mansfield’s Carter is “peaceful” (*CWKM2*:413). To view this body is not awful, instead it is “simply marvelous” (*CWKM2*:413). While Mansfield’s “The Garden Party,” circles around a man’s violent death, it eradicates the traces of injury from his body:

There lay a young man, fast asleep – sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away from them both. Oh, so remorse, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him. He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy ...happy...All is well, said that sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content. (*CWKM2*:413, original ellipses).

As Hubert Zapf states in “Time and Space in Katherine Mansfield’s *The Garden Party*,” – “The impression of restful stillness is accentuated by the contrast between this moment and the ‘quick, incessant, feverishly busy’ quality of the party preparations in the first half of the story (Zaph 47).” One is hard pressed to not see the uncanny similarity, in theme, subject and contrast between Mansfield’s *The Garden Party*,” and Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* – the feverish party plans, the flurried hostess, and the unwelcome interruption of death to the party.

In this final analysis of Mansfield's influence on Woolf's work, I would argue that *Mrs. Dalloway* was an extension of Mansfield's "The Garden Party." Thematically and structurally, the similarities between these two works are too close to have been coincidental. In *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity*, Christine Froula argues: "*Mrs. Dalloway*'s distinction as a war elegy arises from its discovery of the genre's deep resources for dramatizing and mediating violence both psychic and social: the violence intrinsic to mourning, the grief-driven rage that threatens to derail the mourner's progress toward acceptance and consolation" (Froula 87). As already stated, this was indeed what Mansfield successfully achieved in her short story, and now Woolf, through the advantage of space and time to write (Mansfield was a year away from death when she wrote, "The Garden Party"), extended into novel form. *Mrs. Dalloway* embraced the terrible losses of the Great War, through reflection and memories of her two main characters, Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith.

In 1925, Woolf wrote in her essay, "On Not Knowing Greek" (1925): "In the vast catastrophe of the European war our emotions had to be broken up for us, and put at an angle for us, before we could allow ourselves to feel them in poetry or fiction." *Mrs. Dalloway* was surely her embodiment of this sentiment. But Woolf's novel-length work had originally begun as a short story. When a friend of Woolf's, Kitty Lushington Maxse died in October 1922, an apparent suicide, Woolf was working on the short story sequence begun with "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street" (Lee 161). Woolf wrote in her diary: The day has been spoilt for me – so strangely....I hadn't seen her since, I guess, 1908 – save at old Davies' funeral [in 1916]. & then I cut her, which now troubles me –these old friends dying without any notice on our part always ...saddens me...My

mind has gone back all day to her...She got engaged at St. Ives...I keep going over this very day in my mind. (DVW 2:206, 8 October 1922). Then just six days later, in her diary entry Woolf states that her story has “branched into a book; & I adumbrate here a study of insanity & suicide: the world seen by the sane & the insane side by side – something like that. Septimus Smith? – is that a good name? (DVW 2:207-8).

The resemblances between “*The Garden Party*” and *Mrs. Dalloway* are most remarkable when one reads the reactions of the female protagonist to the young men’s deaths. Whilst Septimus has died violently, much like the carter in the “*The Garden Party*,” Clarrissa Dalloway, while first outraged by the intrusion of this bad omen amidst her party –

What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party – the Bradshaws, talked of death. He had killed himself – but how? Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. But why had he done It? And the Bradshaws talked about it at her party! (MD184)

– later views Septimus’ death as defiance, an embrace:

She had once thrown a shilling into the Serpentine never anything more. But he had flung it away. They went on living. They...would grow old. A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death. (MD184)

Clarrissa feels the same connection as Laura feels in “*The Garden Party*” – this same embrace of the beauty in a stranger’s premature death. Septimus had killed himself “but she did not pity him...She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away...He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble.” (*MD* 186) And so like Laura, Clarrissa returns to her party and to her life, that only through such death and sacrifice, has she been made to appreciate.

What Woolf accomplishes that Mansfield, in a short story, could not, is the development of a fully-fledged character, overtaken by his mental instability. While a few short pages only allows us to know Scott as a hard-working carter and provider for his family, Septimus is revealed as a tormented and greatly damaged character. As a young man he is a hero, the first to volunteer, and through the trials of the First World War he has returned as man haunted by loss and the crimes he has committed for his country. Woolf’s novel exemplifies all that Mansfield had critiqued her for *not* doing in *Night and Day*. Through her mastery of stream-of-consciousness, and short stylistic negations, Woolf captures the spirit of modernism to perfection:

Septimus congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. The War had taught him. It was sublime...He was right there. The last shells missed him. He watched them explode with indifference...For now that it was all over, truce signed, and the dead buried, he had, especially in the evening, these sudden thunder-claps of fear. He could not feel...something failed him; he could not feel (*MD* 86-87)...but all the other crimes raised their heads and shook their fingers and sneered over the rail of the bed in the early hours of the morning at the prostrate body which lay realizing its degradation...The verdict of human nature on such a wretch was death (*MD* 91).

Mrs. Dalloway stands as a canonical modernist text, which Woolf wrote with Mansfield's eyes always looking over her shoulder. If there is any doubt that Woolf was not writing in conversation with Mansfield always in mind, one need only read Woolf's diary entry when the last lines of *Mrs. Dalloway* were spelt out:

I did run up stairs thinking I'd make time to enter that astounding fact – the last words of the last page of *Mrs. Dalloway*... "For there she was."...But in some ways this book is a feat; finished without break from illness...Anyhow, I feel that I have exorcised the spell with Murry & others said I had laid myself under after *Jacob's Room*... The thought of Katherine Mansfield comes to me – as usual rather reprehensibly – first wishing she could see Southampton Row, thinking of the dul[l]ness of her death, lying there at Fontainebleau – an end where there was no end, & then thinking yes, if she'd lived, she'd have written on, & people would have seen that I was the more gifted – that wd.[sic] only have become more & more apparent. Indeed, so I suppose it would. I think of her in this way off & on – that strange ghost...K. & I had a relationship; & never again shall I have one like it." (DVW 2:317)

The strange ghost whose praise Woolf still sought even after death continued to undermine Woolf's confidence as the superior of the two writers. As Ellen Bayuk Rosenman asserts in, *The Invisible Presence: Virginia Woolf and the Mother-Daughter Relationship*:

With other contemporaries, Woolf stresses resemblance as a source of support...Woolf's professional regret about Katherine Mansfield's death centered on the loss of a worthy adversary who could spur her own efforts by competition. Woolf's description of that relationship suggests that she lost a source of affirmation as well, of reassurance that a woman writer could find a companion as well as a rival (Rosenman 141).

While it is true that the adversarial and competitive relationship between these two modernist authors was undeniable, when Mansfield died Woolf lost perhaps the only

affirmation in her writing that she truly valued. And, as I have argued, she also lost an influence and mentor in Mansfield. Woolf finally accepted that their relationship was never to be replicated, and as this and future diary entries and letters show, this loss was greatly felt.

Rivalry, Remorse and Recognition

“Nelly said in her sensational way at breakfast on Friday “Mrs. Murry’s dead! It says so in the paper!” At that one feels- what? A shock of relief? -a rival the less? Then confusion at feeling so little -then, gradually, blankness & disappointment; then a depression which I could not rouse myself from all day. When I began to write, it seemed to me there was no point in writing. Katherine won't read it. Katherine’s my rival no longer.” (*DVW2*:226)⁸¹

Immediately after the death of Mansfield, Woolf responded as one might expect when one loses a friend. She was shocked and depressed, and, as always, turned to her diary to work through all of the conflicted feelings she had in her grief. On the one hand – “But though I can do this better than she could, where is she, who could do what I can’t!...Katherine putting on a white wreath, & leaving us, called away; made dignified, chosen...” (*DVW2*:226) and on the other – “Did she care for me? Sometimes she would say so – would kiss me – would look at me as if (is this sentiment?) her eyes would like always to be faithful” (*DVW2*:226). Even after Mansfield’s death there remained the constant nagging uncertainty of who was the better writer, the better friend, and it seems that only after Mansfield was gone was

⁸¹ Mansfield died quickly on the night of 9 January 1923 following a haemorrhage...Copies of 30 of her letters to VW are in MHP, Sussex; the final sentence, omitted by Murry in his edition of his wife’s letters (1928, vol.1, p 75), of one written in July 1917 reads: ‘Do let us meet in the nearest future darling Virginia, and don’t quite forget.’” (*DVW 2*:226)

Woolf able to honestly voice her feelings: “And I was jealous of her writing – the only writing I have ever been jealous of. This made it harder to write to her; & I saw in it, perhaps from jealousy, all the qualities I disliked in her” (*DVW* 2:225-227).⁸² Yet, in the next breath, “For two days I felt that I had grown middle aged, I lost some spur to write...yet I have the feeling that I shall think of her at intervals all through my life. Probably we had something in common which I shall never find in anyone else...” (*DVW* 2:225-227). Judging by her letters and diaries, no-one else in Woolf’s life ever filled the queer gap of friendship and rivalry that she had shared with Mansfield.

Years after Mansfield’s death, Woolf was still processing their relationship. On 8 August 1931, Woolf wrote to Vita Sackville-West: “As for Katherine [Mansfield], ... I was fascinated, and she respectful, only I thought her cheap, and she thought me priggish and yet we were both compelled to meet simply in order to talk about writing” (*LVW* 4:345-66.).⁸³ It was this compulsion that inspired Woolf’s work; and, I believe, it

⁸² There are numerous accounts of Woolf referencing her jealousy toward Mansfield in her diaries and letters: To Roger Fry Sunday [1 August 1920] “...I’m coming up tomorrow to say goodbye to Katherine Murry. She goes away for 2 years. Have you at all come round to her stories? I’m suppose I’m too jealous to wish you to, yet I’m sure they have merit all the same, it’s awful to be afflicted with jealousy. I think the only thing is to confess it. And it’s really irrational for there’s room for everyone, unlike love.” (*LVW* 2:438). To Duncan Grant Wednesday [15 May 1918] “...I had the most satisfactory renewal of my friendship with Katherine Mansfield. She is extremely ill, but is going to Cornwall with Estell Rhys [Rice], a woman painter, whom I’m sure is the worst of woman painters. But all the same Katherine is the very best of woman writers – always of course passing over one fine but very modest example” (*LVW* 2:241).

⁸³ There are dozens of letters where Woolf references the value she placed in her and Mansfield’s shared passion for writing: Letter to Vanessa Bell, Wednesday 27 June 1917 “...I had an odd talk with K. Mansfield last night...I also think she has a much better idea of writing than most” (*LVW* 2:159); “A woman caring as I care for writing is rare enough I suppose to give me the queerest sense of echo coming back to me from her mind the second after I’ve spoken...I said how my own character seemed to cut out a shape like a shadow in front of me. This she understood (I give it as an example of our understanding) & proved it by telling me that she thought this bad: one ought to merge into things. Her senses are amazingly acute...” (*DVW* 2:61-2)

was this compulsion—always to be the better of the “public of two” that influenced Woolf’s direction into full modernism. When Mansfield came to Woolf “... with a little swarm of little stories, and I was jealous, no doubt; because they were so praised...” (LVW 4:345-66), Woolf responded in writing, whether her diaries or letters, by emulating, always with a mind to *bettering* Mansfield’s work. Woolf’s work not only benefitted by her relationship with Mansfield, but “she had a quality I adored, and needed...” (LVW 4:345-66). This recognition Woolf repeated time and again after Mansfield’s death.

Woolf also reflected on their petty differences after Mansfield was gone. She came to realize how much they had both been pawns in the trivial games between the Bloomsbury and Garsington men. As Moran states: “Furthering the division were the men in each circle, who worked hard to ensure that only one woman ‘won.’” In contrast to other networks of women writers in London and Paris, Mansfield and Woolf were relatively isolated in their respective circles (Moran 12-13). As much as each had gleaned from their friendship, Woolf was painfully aware that it could have been so much more – “...it is terrible to me to think that I sacrificed anything to do this odious gossip. She gave me something no one else can” (LVW 3:17-18)⁸⁴ Woolf finally came to realize after her rival had gone, that she had, indeed, sacrificed years misunderstanding Mansfield, and, more importantly, disavowing what their relationship had truly been – “KM always said

⁸⁴ To Dorothy Brett March 2nd [1923] “...It was selfish of me, I felt, to make you talk about Katherine. I have wanted to so much since she died. But it must be very difficult for you. I’ve been looking in my diary and see that I must have written to her sometime in March 1921. From what you say, perhaps she never did get my letter. It makes me sorrier than ever that I did not simply persist – and yet I like to think that she had not, as I thought, taken some dislike to me, or got tired of hearing from me. ...It hurt me that she never answered...” (LVW 3:17-18).

affectionate admiring things to me, poor woman, whom in my own way I suppose I loved” (*DVW2*: 318).

Long after Mansfield’s death in 1923, her memory still haunted Woolf.⁸⁵ According to Hermione Lee, when Mansfield died Woolf claimed that she haunted her “as people we have loved, but with whom we have ‘unfinished business.’” Undoubtedly, their business had always been complicated and often fraught, but it had also been enriching, and each in her own way inspired the other. As Smith has argued, “Mansfield’s independence and sexual freedom enabled her to write the body as Woolf was unable to do...Both recognized in the ‘foreigner’ something that was inside themselves, that they wanted but also despised” (Smith 32). What they shared, most importantly, was a way of seeing the world that was different to their male modernist contemporaries. In Mansfield’s “Psychology” (1920), Mansfield wrote this sentiment into her story, depicting a man’s departure, following an evening of failed communication:

[S]he saw 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

⁸⁵ “...& yet all this part of Hampstead recalls Katherine to me – that faint ghost, with the steady eyes, the mocking of lips, &, at the end, the wreath set on her hair...” Monday 7 December 1925-(*DVW* 3:50); “All last night I dreamt of Katherine Mansfield & wonder what dreams are; often evoke so much emotion, than thinking does – almost as if she came back in person & was outside one, actively making one feel; instead of a figment called up & recollected, as she is, now, if I think of her” (*DVW* 3:187); To Lady Ottoline Morrell Oct 15 [1928] “...I’m reading Katherine Mansfield’s letters and feel desolated by them. What a waste! – and how wretched it is – her poverty, her illness – I didn’t realize how gifted she was either. And now never to – but you will know all I mean...” (*LVW* 3:546).

big and bright with stars. But of course he would see nothing of all this. He was superior to it all. He – with his wonderful “spiritual” vision! (*CWKM2*:197)

One is reminded of Clarissa Dalloway remembering, “however beautiful the day might be, and the trees and the grass, and the little girl in pink – Peter never saw a thing of it all that” (*MD* 9). In many respects, Mansfield and Woolf shared a unique vision that was far more similar than either cared to admit. Woolf had the benefit of living almost two decades longer than Mansfield and in that time, it seems, she came to greatly appreciate her begrudgingly loved rival. Whether intentionally or not, Mansfield’s “Bliss” describes their complex relationship perfectly:

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.

How long did they stand there? Both, as it were, caught in that circle of unearthly light, understanding each other perfectly, creatures of another world, and wondering what they were to do in this one with all this blissful treasure that burned in their bosoms and dropped, in silver flowers, from their hair and hands?

For ever – for a moment? And did Miss Fulton murmur: “Yes. Just that.” Or did Bertha dream it? (*CWKMI*:149)

Chapter 3: Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence: Old Moorings.

Yes, it is something gone out of our lives. We thought of her, I can tell you, at Wellington. Did Ottoline ever send on the card to Katherine I posted from there for her? Yes, I always knew a bond in my heart. Feel a fear where the bond is broken now. Feel as if old moorings were breaking all.

-D.H. Lawrence to Middleton Murry⁸⁶

Of all Katherine Mansfield's relationships, both literary and personal, her relationship with D. H. Lawrence was probably the most fraught and complicated. Though with Woolf, she had shared the similarities in writing, and an interest in common modernist themes – alienation, disassociation, and the postwar world – she did not show much interest in the political arena like Lawrence. Yet, with Lawrence she shared much in terms of life experience. Although they came from different class backgrounds, they were both outsiders in English society – exiles of a sort. While they had both left their birthplaces, however, they never abandoned their origins in their work. Their lives as exiles meant they frequently travelled in search of a “home,” and, more often than not, lived on the verge of poverty. Both physically ill, their lives often mirrored one another – constantly moving from country to country seeking an environment that would not exacerbate their illness. Mansfield and Lawrence shared a strange connection – both driven by “black rages”⁸⁷ – they had more in common than either of them acknowledged. While their friendship was volatile, embittered by personal problems, and inflamed by

⁸⁶ *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. IV, p. 375.

⁸⁷ In KM's *Notebooks*, she wrote that she recognized Lawrence's “black rages” in herself: “My fits of temper are really terrifying...I was a deep earthy colour, & was green with pinched eyes. Strangely through these fits are Lawrence and Frieda over again. I am more like L. than anybody. We are unthinkable alike, in fact” (KMN2:143).

Lawrence's dogmatism, their relationship and their attachment to each other survived, even after Mansfield's death. The old mooring was never completely broken.

Again, as in the previous chapter with Virginia Woolf, it is impossible when discussing these authors to separate the personal from the professional. Whereas Mansfield directly influenced Woolf's literature, she *indirectly* influenced Lawrence's also – through his rejection, retelling, and repudiation of her and her writing, in his work. What began as a promising friendship, one of the closest that Lawrence had ever experienced, became fodder for him in several of his major works and some of his shorter fiction. Mansfield's life is his model for many of his satiric short stories, including: "The Border Line" (1924), "Jimmy and the Desperate Woman" (1924), and as Anabel Wrath in his play *Touch and Go* (1920). Additionally, Lawrence exacts posthumous revenge for Murry's affair with Frieda in 1923 in "The Last Laugh" (1928), and portrays Murry's opportunism after the death of Mansfield in "Smile" (1926). Jeffrey Meyers suggests that Mansfield and Murry "also appear in *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, the second version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, as Jack and Olive Strangeways, who have a stimulating but sado-masochistic marriage (Meyers 245). Mansfield is also depicted in Lawrence's "Mother and Daughter" (1929),⁸⁸ which serves as an allegory of her seduction by the mysticism of George Gurdjieff (Meyers 245). Most significantly: the 'Shame' chapter in *The Rainbow* (1915) is modelled on an episode in Mansfield's life; Mansfield and John Middleton Murry's relationship plays a major role in the construction and finished novel, *Women in Love* (1920); and I argue that Mansfield is the model for the main protagonist, Alvina Houghton, in *The Lost Girl* (1920). These works, together, weave the complicated

⁸⁸ Lawrence's "Mother and Daughter" (1929), and the mysticism of George Gurdjieff, is discussed, in detail, in Chapter 4: Aldous Huxley and Katherine Mansfield.

tapestry of Lawrence's relationship with Mansfield. She was not merely the most well-known Gudrun in *Women in Love*, but someone who Lawrence mentally grappled with over the full extent of their association, and even beyond her death in 1923. In the decade in which he knew Mansfield, Lawrence wrote three major novels, and Mansfield was *central* in the process of all three; hence, a biographical interpretation of these texts adds dimension and significance to these works.

The relationship between Lawrence and Frieda Weekley and Mansfield and John Middleton Murry began in 1913 and a very close friendship quickly formed. Not only was Mansfield close to Lawrence, but most critics overlook the bond shared by Frieda and herself. Mansfield was in fact so trusted by Frieda that in early 1913, Frieda arranged for Mansfield to be the go-between for her son, Monty, and herself (*LDHL2*: 51).⁸⁹ Indeed, by 1914 the friendship between the two couples was so solid that Mansfield and Murry were witnesses at Lawrence's marriage in July, and in October they moved to a cottage near Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, only a few miles from the Lawrences (*LKMI*:139). Their friendship bloomed during this time, and Lawrence, especially, formed not only a genuine fondness for Mansfield, but he understood her, keenly, in ways that Murry did not. When Mansfield was devastated by her brother Leslie's tragic death in Oct 1915, it was Lawrence who comforted her – not, as one would expect – Murry. Lawrence wrote to Mansfield:

Do not be sad. It is one life which is passing away from us, one 'I' is dying; but there is another coming into being, which is happy, creative you. I knew you

⁸⁹ A combination of an acrimonious divorce from Ernest Weekley, and Lawrence's profound jealousy of Frieda's relationship with her children from this marriage, meant Frieda was forced into a clandestine relation with her son, Monty – the oldest of her three small children.

would have to die with your brother; you also, go down into death and be extinguished. But for us there is a rising from the grave, there is a resurrection... You have gone further into your death than Murry has. He runs away. But one day he too will submit, he will dare to go down, and be killed, to die in this self which he is. Then he will become a man: not till. He is not a man yet. (*LDHL2:481*)

This letter depicting a deep closeness between the two, also demonstrates Lawrence's division of "us" – with Murry clearly an outsider. Not yet a man in his empathy or understanding, Murry had yet to "submit." However, in this condolence—so deeply accurate on the one hand – Lawrence was profoundly mistaken in his belief that Mansfield had submitted. Indeed, this realization and disappointment instigated the remarkable backlash – Lawrence's repudiation of Mansfield which would fill his creative work for the next decade.

The breakdown in their friendship was compounded by several things, not least of which were the displays of marital disharmony between Frieda and Lawrence. By May 1916, Mansfield wrote to their mutual friend, Ottoline Morrell: "It really is quite over for now – our relationship with L." (*LKMI:267*). But it was not Lawrence that she blamed as much as Frieda: "The 'dear man' in him whom we all loved is hidden away, absorbed, completely lost, like a little gold ring in that immense German Christmas pudding which is Frieda ... one cannot eat (sic) their way through Frieda to find him. One simply looks and waits for someone to come with a knife and cut her up into the smallest pieces that L. may see the light and shine again"(*LKMI:267*). Oddly, in this same letter Mansfield described, in detail, the physical abuse that Lawrence inflicted on Frieda the night

before.⁹⁰ This letter, while highlighting how disturbed Mansfield was by the abuse within the Lawrence's marriage, also marks the complete betrayal of friendship between Mansfield and Frieda. This is significant for Frieda had been her confidant – in her adventures and, more importantly, in her infidelities. A year earlier Mansfield had written in her notebook: "I tried to write to him [Francis]⁹¹ but my letter broke the bounds of my letters & I couldn't. So I told Jack a little. In the evening we went to the Lawrences. Frieda was rather nice. I had difficulty in not telling her so dreadful did I feel" (*KMN2*: 5). But clearly Mansfield's correspondence with Morrell indicates that the close bonds of a year earlier were torn, and maybe this broken trust contributed to Frieda sharing details of Mansfield's very private conversations with Lawrence. Or maybe Frieda's betrayal came later and was exacerbated by Mansfield's letter to Ottoline. Either way, details of Mansfield's personal life made their way into Lawrence's fictional canon, and these details could have only come from Frieda's private conversations with Mansfield. This may not have been so bad had Lawrence depicted Mansfield fairly. However, his characterization of her in his work is, for the most part, shallow and underdeveloped – as either a representation for the misguided modern woman, or a woman whose substance is solely defined by her relationship to men. Neither approach encompasses Mansfield well. The trouble Lawrence had with Mansfield, or as Lydia Blanchard has called it – "The Savage Pilgrimage of D. H. Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield" – is the substance of this

⁹⁰ This letter has been used by countless critics analyzing Lawrence's relationship with Frieda and the domestic violence that plagued this period in their marriage, and further it has been used by critics examining Lawrence's attitude to gender relations.

⁹¹ The "him" referred to is Franco Carco – born in Nouméa, New Caledonia, as Francis Carcopino-Tusoli. He was a novelist and poet, and for a time was in the French army (Norburn 102). Initially, he was Murry's friend and had been signed up as foreign correspondent for the *Rhythm* in 1911. Mansfield had an affair with him in February 1915. This affair inspired two of her stories: "An Indiscreet Journey" (1915) and "Je ne parle pas français" (1918). He returned the favor with a depiction of their affair in his *Les Innocents* (1916). My assertion is that Lawrence characterized Mansfield and Carco's affair in *The Lost Girl*.

chapter. It is Lawrence's approach to Mansfield, as a woman, and his reaction to her as a writer that is depicted in *his* work to varying degrees of success.

There is no question that Lawrence had limited appreciation of women writers. In April 1916 he wrote to his close friend Catherine Carswell: "I am very glad to hear of the novel (*Open the Door!*)....I think you are the only woman I have ever met, who is so intrinsically detached, so essentially separate and isolated, as to be a real writer or artist or recorder...I believe your book will be a real book, and a woman's book: one of the very few" (*LDHL*2:595). Elaine Showalter highlights the problem with this thinking – this idea of struggle between women's lives as women and as writers. Showalter argues: "Members of a generation of women in rebellion against the traditional feminine domestic roles, they tried free love, only to find themselves exploited; if they then chose marriage, they often felt trapped..." (244). D.H. Lawrence could maintain that the secret of artistic stability was to love a wife. Women, however, found themselves pulled apart by the conflicting claims of love and art. This conflict was clearly something Mansfield battled most of her adult life. As Showalter argues: "Those who fared best were emotional tycoons like Katherine Mansfield...who made their own terms with men and also retained title to the adoration and the services of less-demanding women friends (Showalter 244). It is my assertion that Lawrence feared Mansfield's own terms. While she married Murry, she never completely *surrendered* to him as Frieda had to Lawrence; moreover, she also stood between Lawrence and Murry and his obsessional desire for disciples.

Lawrence mistook Mansfield's independence, as he did with so many of his friends, as a personal rejection of him and his ideas. Accordingly, his criticism of her became increasingly vindictive. By late 1916, Lawrence wrote to Catherine Carswell:

No, I don't like Turgenev⁹² very much: he seems so very critical, like Katherine Mansfield...It amazes me that we have bowed down and worshipped these foreigners as we have. Their art is clumsy, really, and clayey, compared with our own...It seems to me that our English art, at its best, is by far the subtlest and loveliest and most perfect in the world. But it is characteristic of a highly-developed nation to bow down to that which is more gross and raw and affected. (LDHL3:41)

While one could spend time on a post-colonial analysis of this outburst, this letter is little more than classic Lawrence hyperbole –an authorial outburst and reaction, driven by one of his 'dark rages.' But the letter's construction date is important in that he is in the midst of writing *Women in Love*, and from this we may glean his opinions of Mansfield, and her work, were forefront in his mind. Even his dismissal of Turgenev was no doubt in response to Mansfield's fondness for his work, and for her praise for Russian authors, in general. In *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*, Patricia Moran argues: "Similarly, Mansfield repeatedly castigates her male contemporaries for their "peculiar male arrogance" and for committing the artistic "sin" of didacticism. In contrast to Chekhov, for example, whom Mansfield praises for teaching her to "put the question," Lawrence "*begs the question*" when "he gets on to the

⁹² Within this letter, Lawrence also references reading Tolstoi, Dostoyevsky, Maupassant – all presumably clumsy, and clayey.

subject of *maleness*” (16-17).⁹³ For Lawrence, especially during the decade when he and Mansfield were so closely associated, there *was* no separation of his personal ideology and his writing. Mansfield in rejecting his peculiar and pedantic Lawrencian philosophy, along with its didacticism and call for surrender and submission, unleashed a literary backlash: for the next decade this rejection played out in Lawrence’s texts.

Literary Confrontation: Rejection, Repudiation and Retelling

Mansfield’s friendship with Lawrence hit rock bottom in late 1919. Mansfield’s tuberculosis had become crippling, and she moved to Italy hoping that the climate would offer some relief. It was while in Capri that she received the infamous letter from Lawrence, described in a letter to Murry: “Lawrence sent me a letter today. He spat in my face and threw filth at me and said: ‘I loathe you. You revolt me stewing in your consumption ...’”⁹⁴ This bitter feud lasted for several years. In February 1921, Lawrence wrote to Mary Canaan: “The *Nation* said K’s book⁹⁵ [*Bliss*] was the best short story book that could be or had been written. Spit on her for me when you see her, she’s a liar out and out...” (*LDHL3*: 663) Out of context, these vehement outbursts make little sense; however, in light of the diverging paths of these contemporary authors – a path in which the ‘lesser’ of the authors, Mansfield, was on an upward spiral, one can understand Lawrence’s reaction more readily. For while the *TLS* had praised both “Prelude” and “Je ne parle pas français,” commenting: “Mansfield knew what she was about when she

⁹³ For the reference to Chekhov, see (*CLKM* 2:324). For the reference to Lawrence, see letter of March 12, 1921, “Forty-Six Letters by Katherine Mansfield,” *Adam International Review* 300 (1965):112.

⁹⁴ *The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield*, (London: Constable, 1983), p. 268-269n.5

⁹⁵ The anonymous review, “Real Life and Dream Life,” *Nation*, 28 (February 5, 1921), 639-640.

chose these proportions, and in both cases the content fills the mould”⁹⁶ (Blanchard 51), Lawrence’s work was all but swallowed up in publishing deadlock. *The Rainbow* had been suppressed in 1915, and *Women in Love*, due to similar censorship issues, was not published until 1920. One can imagine his frustration, viewing Mansfield as a minor talent and yet witnessing her receiving glowing reviews while his own career was stalled. Their works were hardly comparable making his resentment rather absurd and petty. Yet he persisted in an unrestrained attack against her, personally and professionally, writing to Catherine Carswell that Mansfield “would come in time to find a certain essential falseness so closely entwined with the charm in her literary fabric that she would herself condemn even the charm and write nothing further until she had disentangled herself from the falseness” (Carswell 198).

Ironically, it was Mansfield who offered Lawrence the opportunity to bring his work once more into the public spotlight by including a commentary on *Sons and Lovers* in an Athenaeum review.⁹⁷ However, Lawrence wanted nothing less than to be beholden to Mansfield, and rather than showing appreciation took umbrage at the olive branch. Lawrence now turned his attention from epistolary attacks to a rewriting of Mansfield’s work. Perhaps one of the most evident examples of literary response, and, essentially – repudiation, is seen in Lawrence’s *The Lost Girl*.⁹⁸ *The Lost Girl*’s construction like so many of Lawrence’s novels was plagued by stops and starts. But the work he began in

⁹⁶ “Two Stories.” *TLS*, 29 January 1920, p.63.

⁹⁷ *The Letters of JMM to KM*, ed. Cherry Hankin (London: Constable, 1983), p. 188.

⁹⁸ *The Lost Girl* was begun in 1913 and initially titled ‘The Insurrection of Miss Houghton,’ but was abandoned after the first 200 pages were written. In 1916, Lawrence tried, unsuccessfully, to get the manuscript back from Frieda’s family in Bavaria. It was not until February 1920 that Lawrence finally retrieved his manuscript, and while he salvaged the framework centering on Cullen family (a real Eastwood family), the heroine of his story became Alvina Houghton. The novel was finally published by Martin Secker in November 1920. (*TLG* x-xii).

1913 was greatly dissimilar to the finished 1920 novel. I suggest there are two reasons for this and both involve Mansfield. Not only was the central figure – Alvina Houghton – of *The Lost Girl* clearly modelled on Mansfield, but the novel itself, is, in part, a rewriting of Mansfield's 1918, "Je ne parle pas français."

Lawrence retelling this particular story makes sense in many ways, for "Je ne parle pas français" is modelled on Mansfield's relationship with and between Francis Carco and John Middleton Murry (Dick Harmon in the story). Her relationship with the two men took place at a time when she and Lawrence were most connected, and he was certainly privy to her many trips back and forth to Paris to visit her lover, Franco Carco. Moreover, Lawrence never discouraged Mansfield's escapades to visit Carco in France, but he instead comforted Murry when Mansfield was gone. In many respects, Lawrence, in his retelling, not only rejected her work but essentially rejected this part of Mansfield's personal life. Part of the irony in Lawrence's rejection is that according to Mansfield's biographer, Jeffrey Meyers: "[Mansfield] left Murry for her lover Francis Carco, who *resembled* Lawrence in his ardent self-confidence and warm, high-spirited life" (emphasis added) (Meyers 84). The irony deepens if we consider that– Raoul Duquette – the character modelled on Francis Carco exhorts: "I've no patience with people who can't let go of things, who will follow after and cry out... Let it go then! ...and I don't mean superficially – I mean profoundly speaking...I have made it a rule of life never to regret...Regret is an appalling waste of energy, and no one who intends to be a writer can afford to indulge in it" (*CWKM1*: 115). Lawrence, in relation to Mansfield in particular, could not let go. So Mansfield uses her mouthpiece, Duquette, who just so happens to resemble Lawrence, to deride Lawrence using one of his favorite expressions –

“profoundly speaking.” As a consequence, Lawrence’s persistence in rewriting her fiction only *reinforces* Mansfield’s assertion and her own roman à clef work.

Lawrence’s rewriting of Mansfield’s fiction was not altogether successful, though. The critical reception, discussed later in this chapter, was certainly mixed. The direction Lawrence chose in his retelling certainly diverged from Mansfield’s. Blanchard argues that *The Lost Girl* is a swerving away from Mansfield’s life and the artistic vision of “Je ne parle pas français.” Lawrence objects both to Mansfield’s seeming acceptance of herself as victim – of her separation from Murry and her tuberculosis – and to those stories in which her heroines (like Mouse) accept the role of victim. (Blanchard 54-56). Lawrence’s repudiation is of Mansfield herself, and the choices she made as a women writer. Once again it comes back to Lawrence’s judgement of her and what he perceives to be an ‘essential falseness.’ He is further insistent that this ‘essential falseness’ also existed in Mansfield’s fiction, and Lawrence’s ending of *The Lost Girl* corrects the ending she had chosen in “Je ne parle pas français.” The shortcomings of the novel are certainly due to a degree of hubris on Lawrence’s part, and it is hardly surprising Mansfield vehemently rejected Lawrence’s reading of her in *The Lost Girl*.

Writing to Murry, Mansfield asserts: “...He denies the powers of the imagination. He denies Life – I mean *human* life. His hero and heroine are non-human. They are animals on the prowl...There is not one memorable *word*. They submit to the physical response and for the rest go veiled – blind – *faceless* – *mindless*. This is the doctrine of mindlessness... (LKM4:138). Mansfield took particular exception to scenes of Alvina in labor – “Oh don’t forget where Alvina feels ‘a trill in her bowels’ and discovers herself with child. A TRILL – what does that mean – And why is it so peculiarly offensive from

a man?” (LKM4:138) It is interesting that Mansfield had, herself, used the word “trilling” in “Prelude” which of course is also about pregnancy, but her use of trilling represents the laugh of the unmarried “false” Beryl. It is such a strange word and, again, suggests, that Lawrence is in ‘conversation’ with Mansfield when he chooses his vocabulary for his text. There has been much speculation on whether Mansfield devoted much time to reading *The Lost Girl* and, more importantly, whether she *recognized* herself in the text. However, the 2012 Alexander Turnbull Library Mansfield/Murry Acquisition⁹⁹ settles this speculation. Included in this wealth of correspondence is Mansfield’s handwritten notes on Lawrence’s novel, *The Lost Girl*. As Oliver states: “The tone is critical: ‘the whole is false – ashes’; ‘Earth closets too!’” (Oliver 171) It seems a critical tone is perfectly understandable given the circumstances of *The Lost Girl*’s intent and construction.

Katherine Mansfield as Alvina Houghton in *The Lost Girl*¹⁰⁰

“I’m terrified of my Alvina...I believe neither of us has found a way out of the labyrinth – But my Alvina, in whom the questing soul is lodged, moves towards reunion with the dark half of humanity”¹⁰¹

D.H. Lawrence

The origin of *The Lost Girl* was messy. The original manuscript was left in Bavaria with the manuscripts of *Sons and Lovers* when the Lawrences stayed there in

⁹⁹ The acquisition was purchased from Marie Carty, a granddaughter of Murry, after several years of negotiations. (Oliver 168)

¹⁰⁰ *The Lost Girl* was published on 25 Nov. 1920, and reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 2 Dec, under ‘Postscript or Prelude’, as a study in social realism. Mansfield did not know that the unsigned review was by Virginia Woolf. Murry, in the *Athenaeum*, 17 Dec., under ‘The Decay of D.H. Lawrence’ regarded it as ‘degraded by corrupt mysticism’ (LKM4: 139n1).

¹⁰¹ To Compton Mackenzie, 10 May 1920 (LDHL3:521).

May and June 1913 (TLG xxiv). Lawrence's work had begun as "Scargill Street" and then quickly changed to 'Elsa Culverwell' and then to 'The Insurrection of Miss Houghton;' Lawrence finally wrote *The Lost Girl* devoid of even a single page of 'The Insurrection' manuscript (TLG xx). It is clear that Lawrence simply abandoned writing a continuation of the old novel. In fact he only thought of returning to work again during his time in Cornwall when Mansfield and Murry were his neighbors. While *The Lost Girl* was slow in its inception, it was written swiftly from about 9 March to 5 May 1920. (TLG xxviii). In its final form, *The Lost Girl* now substituted the Houghtons for the original family of the Culverwells, and Elsa became Alvina.

On November 25 1920, *The Lost Girl* finally appeared to the public. *The Morning Post* complained "that the book had no design; there were vivid things in it, 'but as experiences of a girl, Alvina Houghton, they are completely unorganized.'" (TLG xlv) Edward Garnett, of *The Manchester Guardian* wrote: "'*The Lost Girl* is firm in drawing, light and witty in texture, charmingly fresh in style and atmosphere'" (TLG xlv). Arnold Bennett wrote: "it would be great if it had a real theme and some construction. This man is a genius, and is far and away the best of the younger school."¹⁰² Lawrence's American publisher, Seltzer wrote to Lawrence: "Your most popular novel no doubt is *The Lost Girl*. I read it again in page proof and it held my interest and fascinated me. It is a book no other but D. H. Lawrence could write and yet it is so different from anything you did before" (LDHL3: 672). Not surprisingly, according to Carswell: "[John Middleton] Murry had attacked *The Lost Girl* at length under what he designated the 'characteristic'

¹⁰² Letter from Arnold Bennett to J.B. Pinker, 30 November 1920, in *Letters of Arnold Bennett*, ed. J. Hepburn (1966), i. 288. (TLG xlviii. 145).

heading of ‘The Decay of Mr. D. H. Lawrence.’ It was in the *Athenaeum* that such words as ‘tortured’ and ‘neurotic’ were first applied to Lawrence’s work” (158).¹⁰³ For the most part, however, critics were in agreement that *The Lost Girl* was *different* than Lawrence’s previous work, but different was not necessarily better. Virginia Woolf remarked that *The Lost Girl* was “... a stepping stone in a writer’s progress. It is either a postscript or a prelude.” Woolf also criticized Lawrence for his failed use of *satire*. It is important that in one of Lawrence’s many small but dismissive remarks about Mansfield, he wrote: “Katherine Mansfield will do her little satirical sketches [for *The Signature*]” (LDHL2: 386). Lawrence himself had been firm that his novel was not satire and wrote in correspondence that it was ‘meant to be comic – but not satire.’ (LDHL3:495). I would argue that in attempting to make fun of Mansfield in his novel Lawrence missed the mark, resulting in a novel in which the format – comedy or satire – was perplexing to the critics and his readers.

Before attending to the many details within the novel that suggest Mansfield was Lawrence’s Alvina Houghton, I would like to start with the overriding themes of the work. *The Lost Girl* is first and foremost concerned with its protagonist, Alvina, and her search for independence. Alvina represents the modern woman and the dilemma she faces in limited choices: She cannot have it all. The novel attempts, and, I believe fails to offer many choices. Judith Ruderman’s *D. H. Lawrence and the Devouring Mother* claims that *The Lost Girl* shows “the same ‘passionate psychological preoccupation’ with

¹⁰³ The review in the *Athenaeum* was December 17th 1920. According to Carswell, Murry had said that Mansfield was unable to review the work, implying she was too unwell for the task. But she had in fact returned it with several pages of unfavorable remarks. Carswell and Lawrence believed Murry had merely used Mansfield’s comments, with slight paraphrasing. (Carswell 158:1)

maternal destructiveness that marks the entire Lawrence canon” (37). This is true to a limited extent, but it is more encompassing to read *The Lost Girl* in light of Ruderman’s later assertion: “Alvina, of course, has spent a lifetime of conflict between her desire to please ... her desire to cut free ...and assert her independence” (Ruderman 44). Reading the novel with this in mind does allow one to explore how Lawrence’s “lost girl” was most undoubtedly Katherine Mansfield.

When Alvina Houghton, brings her swarthy “other world” lover home to Woodhouse, the small town is shocked and Miss Pinnegar, her beloved nanny, laments: “I believe you’re going out of your senses. I used to think there was something wrong with your mother. And that’s what it is with you. You’re not quite right in your mind. You need to be looked after” (*TLG* 217). However, Lawrence offers few options for Alvina “to be looked after,” or, even more preferable, the choice to look after herself. She may stay put in Woodhouse, or turn her back on family, comfort, convention, and flee to the provincial southern Italian town of Pescocalascio, Naples with her Ciccio. There, she may “worship” her “dark outcast” forever. Alvina’s erratic choices make little sense – her career choices (midwife to theatre troupe), her initial rejection of Ciccio for an engagement to a doctor who adores her, and her abrupt return to Ciccio. Initially, *The Lost Girl* focuses on Alvina’s attempts to escape from patriarchal restrictions, but the novel never carries through on the suggestion. While Lawrence’s novel attempts to navigate Alvina’s self-journey – her discovery of identity through sensuality with the man she loves – her motivations are never clear. Alvina is merely “lost” and then miraculously “found.” But really she isn’t. She is more enslaved than ever in an impoverished matrimonial role. The problems with the novel lie, I believe, in Lawrence’s

perception of Mansfield, his model for Alvina, and, additionally, in his attempts to rewrite Mansfield's "Je ne parle pas français."

As Blanchard suggests: "By following Ciccio, Alvina achieves the promise of Duquette's dream: The little house, the companionship, the return to primitive origins, the shared intimacy with another person" (54). Mansfield's "Je ne parle pas français" succeeds, however, as Mouse is spared the "shared intimacy"—both of her male suitors are essentially the same – cowardly and selfish. Lawrence in rewriting *The Lost Girl* with Mansfield as his model for the protagonist, Alvina, completely discarded his initial intent – "I shall do my work for women, better than the suffrage"¹⁰⁴ This had been his plan for Elsa Culverwell, but Alvina Houghton is certainly not the role model that Elsa may have been. Alvina becomes pregnant, more dependent on Ciccio, and believes that not even war can keep him from her – not if he really loves her: "If you make up your mind to come back, you will come back, we have our fate in our hands" (*TLG* 338). Lawrence would have Alvina waiting, alone and pregnant with a very uncertain future. The ending of *The Lost Girl* is the ending he would have for Mansfield, herself. He repeatedly exhorted Mansfield to stay with Murry, even though, more often than not, this meant being alone. At the end of the novel, Ciccio rejects Alvina's suggestion to go back to England where she may wait for him while he goes off to war. Critics have suggested that Alvina rejects the role of victim, making certain she will not be deserted; I would suggest the opposite is true. There is, after all, no guarantee he will return. In "Caliban in Nottingham: D. H. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl*," Philip Herring considers *The Lost Girl* a failed or immature work by Lawrence. Herring observes the unevenness of the novel,

¹⁰⁴ In a letter to Sallie Hopkin, 23 December 1912 (*LDHLI* :490)

remarking that what “begins as the story of the decline and fall of Manchester House, prophesying the destruction of the mercantile class... ends by dramatizing the way in which extraordinary people escape the prison of environment to build, or begin to build, a society of two” (Herring 11). The confusion of the novel lies in the novel’s intent – Lawrence’s intent – a revision of the past and an ending where Mansfield submits to a society recognizable as Ranamin. Alvina goes after Ciccio in a manner that Lawrence would have had Mansfield go after Murry – losing much of her ‘self’ in the process.

The ‘self’ that is Alvina is, in Lawrence’s words, unconventional, *déclassée*. Alvina grows up in a relatively wealthy household, but her father’s wealth is born of work, not breeding: “James Houghton, Alvina’s father was the “*crème de la crème* of Woodhouse society. The house of Houghton had always been well-to-do: tradespeople acquire a distinct *cachet*” (TLG 2). Mansfield also was considered *déclassée*. Her father, Harold Beauchamp,¹⁰⁵ started his working life as a financial clerk, eventually rising to chairman of The Bank of New Zealand. He was certainly not part of the colonial aristocracy, but rose through the social ranks chiefly due to his commercial successes, and his marriage to Annie Burnell Dyer, the daughter of an Australian pioneer. The Beauchamps eventually became considerably wealthy, and their societal friends even included the New Zealand Prime Minister, Richard Seddon.¹⁰⁶ The pinnacle of his rise

¹⁰⁵ During the early twentieth century Beauchamp served on several directorates. He was also an honorary consul for Chile and a consular agent of France. In his capacity as director and chairman of the Bank of New Zealand, Beauchamp gave many press interviews, and frequently wrote reviews on trade, commerce and finance. He took great pride in his reports and quoted laudatory comments about them in his autobiography, *Reminiscences and recollections* (1937). Katherine Mansfield urged John Middleton Murry to read her father’s bank speeches to win his approval. Roberta Nicholls. ‘Beauchamp, Harold’, from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 5-Jun-2013 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2b14/beauchamp-harold>

¹⁰⁶ Richard Seddon was New Zealand’s PM from 1893-1906. Seddon was a popular PM, who heralded from an English farming family. He made a great deal of money in NZ through mining enterprises, and was a strong advocate for miner’s rights. He is considered the originator of a populist style of prime-ministerial

from financial clerk came in 1923 when he was appointed a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honors.

Mansfield was never particularly close to her father or to the lifestyle that his ‘rise through the ranks’ provided for their family. Nonetheless, as Mansfield’s biographer Claire Tomalin reminds us, Mansfield felt an “ambivalence” toward her wealthy father that “remained throughout her life. He might be vulgar, crass, tight-fisted, but he was also strong, reliable, and magically rich” (12). And this final quality came in handy for his often impoverished daughter. Jeffrey Meyers also aptly describes how Mansfield continually found herself “torn between the bohemian and bourgeois way of life” (Katherine Mansfield 46). Leaving home from New Zealand when she was only nineteen, she led a life of independence that neither her mother nor father ever fully approved of, often living in the most meager of circumstances. In *The Lost Girl*, Alvina abruptly leaves her family home, telling nobody of her whereabouts, and travels through England with a musical troupe, the Natcha-Kee-Tawaras. She returns for a time and trains as a midwife but even this does not please her demanding father: “But – stammered James Houghton...I can’t understand that any young girl of any – any upbringing whatever, should want to choose such a – such an – occupation. I can’t understand it” (*TLG* 30). The one person, who while not completely understanding Alvina, does love her the most is her governess. And Alvina loves her back: “...with grey-white hair and gold-rimmed spectacles...Miss Frost mattered more than anyone else to Alvina Houghton, during the first twenty-five years of the girl’s life. The governess was a strong, generous

leadership in New Zealand. (David Hamer. 'Seddon, Richard John', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 12-Feb-2014
URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s11/seddon-richard-john>)

woman...She must defend the little Alvina, whom she loved as her own, and the nervous, petulant, heart-stricken woman, the mother, from the vagaries of James” (*TLG* 6-7).

Mansfield’s mother, Annie Burnell Beauchamp was also a sickly woman, and her husband was certainly something of a tyrant in the Beauchamp household. She died in 1918, but it was Margaret Mansfield Dyer (Granny Dyer), Katherine’s beloved maternal grandmother who had been her most maternal figure in life, and it was Granny Dyer who was portrayed in so many of Mansfield’s own grandmother figures in her work. There are only a few surviving photos of Margaret Mansfield Dyer, but, unsurprisingly, they show her with ‘grey-white hair and gold-rimmed spectacles.’

There are an abundance of details in *The Lost Girl* that are convincing evidence that Mansfield is the model for Lawrence’s Alvina. While “Alvina had quite a serious flirtation with a man who played a flute and piccolo. He was about fifty years old, still handsome...what a charm he had! – he went and she saw him no more” (*TLG* 119) – Mansfield had her own serious flirtation with a musician. In 1902 Mansfield met two musicians – Garnet Trowell played the violin, and his fraternal-twin, Arnold, was a cellist. In 1908 Mansfield had an affair with Garnet, and through her letters one can see it was both a ‘serious’ and passionate affair. While much of this affair, and the abrupt manner in which it ended is only speculation, it is believed by most biographers that in 1908 Mansfield fell pregnant to Garnet, then hastily left Garnet and married a music teacher, George Bowden¹⁰⁷, eleven years her senior (Norburn 117). The haste of the marriage has fed speculation about Mansfield’s pregnancy. And certainly after Annie

¹⁰⁷ Ida Baker suggests that Mansfield met George Bowden through Margaret Wishart. Bowden was instrumental in introducing Mansfield to Orage. Bowden did not divorce Mansfield until 1917, and on May 1918, Mansfield and Murry married. (Norburn 99-100)

Beauchamp visited her daughter in March 1910 and sent her to Bavaria, Germany, it was clear that Mansfield either went there for an abortion, or she miscarried while there. Either way, immediately after her mother returned home Mansfield was cut from her will, and Mansfield, herself, was no longer pregnant. (Norburn 95).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in the beginning of their friendship when Mansfield and Lawrence were extremely close, Mansfield may have shared many of these very personal details of her life with him, but I think in all likelihood they made their way to him, through Frieda. This is how the details of Mansfield's life so remarkably resembled Lawrence's character, Alvina. Certainly when they lived at Cornwall together, it would have been all but impossible for Mansfield to hide the passion she was feeling for Carco. Her letters at the time show he was constantly on her mind. On 8 January 1915 she wrote in her notebook: "Jack and I were lovers after supper in my room. I nearly 'cut across his line of male by talking of Francis. After I worked & wasted time and went to bed wretched with myself...Wrote and sent a piece of my hair" (*KMN2*: 3), and on 23 January 1915 she wrote: "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. H called 'ma petite cherie' – my little darling. Oh, God save me from this war and let us see each other soon" (*KMN2*: 7). Amidst this emotional turmoil, Murry turned to both Lawrence and Frieda for support, and even stayed with them when Mansfield travelled to Carco in France. Lawrence, meanwhile, suddenly showed renewed interest in a novel he had all but abandoned three years earlier – a novel that more than resembled his young confidant's life.

Ciccio, himself, does not make much sense unless one considers that he is a model for Mansfield's Carco. On 24 June, 1920, Lawrence wrote to Secker stating: 'Cicio is usually spelt Ciccio – short for Francesco. Think it matters?' (*LDHL3*: 555). In September, Lawrence repeated to Secker – "Remember the proper way to spell Cicio is with three c's – Ciccio" (*LDHL3*: 599-600). Secker did not in fact amend the text, but Lawrence's intended spelling was restored in the Cambridge edition of the text. In *The Lost Girl* we are introduced to the character who resembles Mansfield's Francis Carcopino so deftly: "And that is Francesco – Frank – ...He was dark, rather tall and loose, with yellow-tawny eyes...We call him Ciccio" (*TLG* 122). While Ciccio is, in the text, Italian, he more often than not speaks French– "Ciccio meanwhile muttered something in French – evidently something rude – meant for Max" (*TLG* 123). The rather puzzling language changes for Ciccio make more sense if Lawrence is ridiculing Mansfield and her French lover, Franco Carco.

Another source of puzzlement over Lawrence's text has centered on the rather peculiar Natcha-Kee-Tawara Troupe. Some critics have considered it as a strange perversion of a Red Indian name, a pure Lawrence invention that was unprecedented. John Worthen suggests the name is possibly derived from Fenimore Cooper's *Deerslayer* (1841), and the 'Wah-ta-Wah.' (*TLG* 377n 113:2). I would suggest that Lawrence mixes into his Red Indian troupe another indigenous group – the New Zealand Māori. Again, if one reads the text with Mansfield and her origins in mind, this bizarre title makes more sense. In Mansfield's "Je ne parle pas français" Raoul Daguettes reminisces what might have been: "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-foot boy

who runs up from the beach” (CWKM2:134) The girl would have been Mansfield, and Mansfield was very fond of native and ethnic clothing – turbans, capes, Russian gypsy dresses, and “Red Indian” frocks. Mansfield, a native New Zealander, was very familiar with both Māori culture and language. In *Katherine Mansfield: The Story-Teller* Kathleen Jones states: “The Hinterland of Māori culture, ancient and powerful, exerted a strong influence on Katherine. Harold Beauchamp (primarily known as the Chairman of the Bank of New Zealand) learned their language in order to do business with Māori. (21). And while it is the “Tawara” that is the puzzling piece of Lawrence’s troupe, this word does exist in Māori. In Māori, the native tongue of New Zealanders, *tāwara* translates to several words – flavor, taste, and hum. While these may seem unlike, in Māori they refer more accurately to what remains after tasting or hearing. For example: *Ka mau tonu te tāwara o te kai i tōna waha* translates to ‘The flavor of the food remained in his mouth.’ Used within this phrase – ‘He uaua te rongohia o te kaikōrero i te tāwara o te takakī’ – translates to “the hum of conversation made it difficult to hear the speaker.” (Ngata¹⁰⁸ Dictionary). Essentially, what better word to reference Mansfield and Lawrence’s relationship to her—for him, a lingering hum, a lingering taste, remaining long after she was gone.

Finally, towards the end of the novel there is a scene very reminiscent of Mansfield’s New Zealand, and how Lawrence visualized it when he visited there in 1922:

¹⁰⁸ The H. M. Ngata English–Māori Dictionary is the first dictionary to offer an extensive selection of English to Māori headwords, illustrating their use in sentences and phrases drawn from a wide range of contemporary and traditional contexts. It is a concise English–Māori dictionary, which is explicitly, but not exclusively, based on Ngāti Porou and East Coast dialect and idiom. The English–Māori Dictionary complements the use of other dictionaries of Māori and English and glossaries produced by other agencies such as Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission). <http://www.learningmedia.co.nz/ngata/>

The more she wandered, the more the shadow of the by-gone pagan world seemed to come over her. Sometimes she felt she would shriek and go mad, so strong was the influence on her, something pre-world, and it seemed to her now, vindictive. She seemed to feel in the air strange Furies, Lemures, things that had haunted her with their tomb-frenzied vindictiveness since she was a child ...Black and cruel presences were in the under-air. They were furtive and slinking. They bewitched you with loveliness, and lurked with fangs to hurt you afterwards. (TLG 333-34)

In some respects, this tribute to Mansfield's New Zealand is derogatory – yearning for the pre-world, the pagan. However, while Mansfield never returned to New Zealand, she remained forever attached to her homeland in ways that I believe Lawrence understood – that strange loveliness and yet haunting pain. At the end of the novel, we witness Alvina: “Heavy, mute, powerless, there she sat like a lump of darkness, in that doomed Italian kitchen” (TLG 338). It was not a life Mansfield would have chosen, but in a way it was the life she often led. Like many of Lawrence's novels, the ending is ambiguous. Did Ciccio survive the war? And if he did, was it to Alvina that he returned? The *tāwara* seemed to remain after the last word was written.

Ironically, the novel within Lawrence's canon that puzzled critics the most was the only one of his novels to win a literary award. While *The Lost Girl* won the James Tait Black memorial prize for fiction in 1920,¹⁰⁹ the critical reception to *The Lost Girl* has remained ambivalent, ranging from “exhausting” to “marvelous” (TLG xlvii). But in the aftermath of *The Lost Girl*, Lawrence produced some of the finest short stories of the early twentieth century, and went on to write *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, his most famous novel and possibly his finest. Lawrence's work improved once he tackled his complicated

¹⁰⁹ Lawrence wrote to Robert Welch, 9 December 1921: “I have just received your letter of 2nd December, telling me of the James Tate Black Memorial prize for my novel *The Lost Girl*...I am very pleased especially at having at last some spark of friendly recognition out of Britain. It has been mostly abuse” (LDHL4: 146).

relationship with Mansfield, as a friend, but, most importantly, as a fellow writer. As Blanchard asserts: “Mansfield and Lawrence made a significance difference in each other’s development, not through influence so much as through the anxieties they aroused and overcame” (65).

Katherine Mansfield in *The Rainbow*

The Rainbow started out in 1913 as ‘The Sisters,’ becoming ‘The Wedding Ring’ in February 1914, and eventually dividing into two separate novels: *The Rainbow* published in September 1915, and *Women in Love* finished in 1916 and published in 1920. While Mansfield’s part in the construction of *The Rainbow* is limited it still bears some examination. I reiterate that in all likelihood Lawrence was frequently gleaning personal details of Mansfield’s life from Frieda Lawrence, and that he was translating her life experiences into his novels. Lawrence’s depiction of Ursula Brangwen’s distinctly lesbian relationship with the older Winifred Inger in the ‘Shame’ chapter of *The Rainbow* seems in part an imagining of Mansfield and the love affair she had with a young woman artist, Edith (Edie) Bendall, when she was eighteen and Bendall was twenty-seven.¹¹⁰ Evidence for Mansfield’s affair with Bendall was documented fairly extensively in her journal, but one of the longer and confessional entries in June, 1907 is worth noting:

¹¹⁰ Edith Bendall, who later became Mrs. G. G. S. Robison, said that her letters from Mansfield were stolen off the beach while she was on her honeymoon. The fact that she took her letters from her lesbian lover on her honeymoon is fairly telling of the intensity of feeling for one another. There are audio tape interviews with Robison at the Oral History Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Last night I spent in her arms - and to-night I hate her – which, being interpreted, means that I adore her: that I cannot lie in my bed and not feel the magic of her body: which means that sex means as nothing to me. I feel more powerfully all those so-termed sexual impulses with her than I have with any man. She enthalls, enslaves me - and her personal self - her body absolute - is my worship...In my life – so much Love in imagination...never pure spontaneous affectionate impulse...And now she comes – and pillowed against her, clinging to her hands, her face against mine, I am a child, a woman, and more than half man. (*JKM* 12-13).

As Mansfield never wrote about her affair with Edith Bendall anywhere *but* in her journal entries it seems certain their affair made its way into Lawrence's fiction through private conversations between Mansfield and Frieda Lawrence.

Certainly in the winter of 1914, when Mansfield was going through a difficult time with Murry, Frieda became her confidant. When Frieda wrote in *Not I, But the Wind* that Mansfield had 'told me things from her life' (79), the timing coincided with Lawrence reworking his manuscript of *The Rainbow*. While the novel was all but finished he suddenly added a new element into the story: in a chapter titled 'Shame' a lesbian affair was introduced into the text. The addition was intriguing – suddenly in the midst of a hetero-normal text we read, "Ursula found a queer awareness existed between herself and her class-mistress, Miss Inger," and Miss Inger happened to be a "rather beautiful woman of twenty eight" (*TR* 311) – an almost exact characterization of Mansfield's affair with Bendall. Miss Inger was beautiful, a "modern girl," an "independent girl," as was Edith Bendall. Bendall, in a similar fashion to Mansfield, had left her conservative roots in New Zealand for greener pastures, and after studying art in Sydney, Australia, returned to Wellington, New Zealand, resuming the relationship that had begun with Mansfield some years earlier. Mansfield certainly had conflicted feelings towards Bendall. On the one hand writing – "Edie is waiting for me. I shall slip into her arms. They are safest"

(JKM 8); and then on the other – referring to her passion for Bendall as a “crucifixion” (JKM 14). By the end of June 1907, when the girl’s affair was waning, all but over, Mansfield wrote: “E.K.B. is a thing of the past – absolutely irrevocably – thank heaven! It was, I consider, retrospectively, a frantically maudlin relationship *-licentious*.”¹¹¹ Likewise, in *The Rainbow* after Ursula’s fantasies are finally consummated, her feelings once voiced “with blazing heart” and “inflamed bliss” turn to feelings of revulsion and *shame*. A “sort of nausea” begins to wash over Ursula and by the end of the chapter she hates Winifred Inger, referring to her as “ugly, clayey.” Finally, Ursula is relieved that Winifred’s passion turns from her to her Uncle Tom, and in the space of several pages Winifred is engaged to marry Tom Brangwen. Lawrence uses Mansfield’s story, “correcting” her sexual propensity for women, most certainly her bisexuality, and in his version, of *her* life, the robust Tom Brangwen finds “his mate” in Ursula’s former lover.

It seems indisputable that the private conversations between Mansfield and Frieda made their way into a very public arena, not just Lawrence’s novel in fact but the battle for its publication. ‘Shame’ was the chapter particularly objected to by the Bow Street magistrate who, in 1915, after hearing the prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857, subsequently ordered the destruction of the novel (*TR* xxxvii and xlv). It was also the chapter expurgated, extensively, for the first American edition of the text (*TR* lv). Significantly, ‘Shame’ was the chapter that Lawrence fought the hardest to keep, and the chapter he would not cut despite pressure from both sides of the publishing pond. In the introduction to the Cambridge edition of *The Rainbow*, Mark Kinkead-Weekes

¹¹¹ Quoted in Philip Waldron’s ‘Katherine Mansfield’s *Journal*,’ *Twentieth Century Literature*, 20 (1974). Print. 13

writes: “What seems most important is to remain true to the nature of *The Rainbow*, as the work of a continuously revising and re-creating author; whose theory of creativity...was essentially a theory of process, of continuous and organic change, and whose individual works kept evolving out of themselves, continually refusing to be ‘finished.’ (TR lxiv). Ironically, this assessment could equally be applied to Lawrence’s relationship with Mansfield, and his battle to keep the chapter of *The Rainbow* that was undoubtedly modeled on her life is a significant part of his text’s journey.

In *Renewing the Normative D.H. Lawrence*, Spilka argues Lawrence wrote *The Rainbow* “in which the idea of working through emotional conflicts appears for the first time as an articulated possibility... The one problem that runs through all his work, and that he only partially resolved, was his distrust of the affections, the taboo he placed – along with many modern writers – on tenderness.” (Spilka 50). The ‘Shame’ chapter, however, fails in this regard: it does not articulate the possibility of tenderness. I would argue it fails because Lawrence is more interested in depicting Mansfield’s affair with Bendall than he is in examining a realistic love affair between his fictionalized women: what it lacks *is* tenderness. The addition of the ‘Shame’ chapter did not aesthetically improve *The Rainbow*; if anything it was the one weakness in a novel otherwise celebrating the power and independence of female sexuality. Lawrence’s characterization of Mansfield’s life, and in this instance, her sexual proclivities, while a close rendering, did not necessarily make for aesthetically pleasing characterization in a novel.

But Lawrence was far from through with Mansfield, and, as we see in the next section he continued on with her as his model. However, as Marianna Torgovnick argues in “Narrating Sexuality: *The Rainbow*” something had hardened in Lawrence “between

completion of *The Rainbow* and completion of *Women in Love*. He had become in every way a less flexible man and, more important, he had an agenda....sex in *Women in Love* is not integrated into the texture of experience as it is in *The Rainbow*” (37-38).

Torgovnick asserts that the sex between Gudrun and Gerald is abrupt and isolated: “they are marked by the absence of foreplay and postcoital glow, the absence of a spiritual dimension, the absence of family context” (Torgovnick 41). This “lack of spiritual dimension and family context,” however, are complicated terms when applying them to Lawrence. Understanding Lawrence’s definition of “family” leads to a more complex reading of *Women in Love*. Torgovnick was correct. Lawrence certainly had an agenda when constructing one of the most important texts of the twentieth century. Furthermore, his agenda was driven by his personal relationship with Mansfield and Murry.

***Women in Love: Failed Ranamin*¹¹²**

I want to gather together about twenty souls and sail away from this world of war and squalor and found a little colony where there shall be no money but a sort of communism as far as necessities of life go, and some real decency...a community which is established upon the assumption of goodness in the members, instead of the assumption of badness.

D. H. Lawrence¹¹³

“After all, a cottage in the Abruzzi, or wherever it may be, isn’t a new world”

Gudrun – *Women in Love*¹¹⁴

Catherine Carswell’s *The Savage Pilgrimage* is a fairly enlightening text on Lawrence, for while she was a close and sincere friend she was also a frank and honest critic. Writing about his propensity for characterizing ‘friends’ in his work she states: “People gave themselves away to Lawrence in an extraordinary degree...a fact that was by no means lost on the observer and the writer of fiction who lurked with cool eyes behind the poet in Lawrence” (Carswell 207). However, as Carswell further claims: “It was naturally a shock when, out of what seemed a pleasant friendship, there should spring such prodigies as...the figures of Hermione and Sir Joshua in *Women in Love*...one cannot escape from the touch of malice in certain instances...” (Carswell

¹¹² The origin of the name appears to be a Hebrew musical version of the first verse of Psalm 33 (‘rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous’). It may also be connected with the word Ra’annanim, meaning green, fresh or flourishing. (*LDHL2*: 252n3)

¹¹³ Letter written by Lawrence to William Hopkins, 18 January 1915. (*LDHL2*: 259) Lawrence’s plan was to include Mansfield and Murry. His invitations to join Ranamin had been ongoing. He had also invited Huxley on several occasions. During one tea at Ottoline Morrell’s, Lawrence invited Huxley to join his community in Florida.: “If, as seems probable, I go and visit my Texan brother [Julian] next year,” he writes to Lady Ottoline, “I shall certainly join his colony for a bit. I think it might be good to lead the monastic life for a little” (Sexton 21).

¹¹⁴ Ironically, Mansfield’s rejection of Lawrence’s utopian Ranamin is voiced in her character, Gudrun. (*WL* 438).

207). The malice is also evident when examining Mansfield's connection to *Women in Love*, the reciprocal malice between both model and author. For as a direct consequence of their fraught relationship, especially during the construction period for Lawrence's novel, *Women in Love* became one of the most psychologically violent novels of the modernist period, and one of the most profound elements of *Women in Love* is the anger expressed through its mouthpieces – especially Gudrun Brangwen, and Gerald Crich.

In a "Report and letter on 'The Wedding Ring'"¹¹⁵ written November 1914, Alfred Kuttner remarked on Lawrence's 'morbid subjectivism,' especially regarding Gerald Crich raping Gudrun in the boathouse (*TRII* 483-483). In the forever changing genesis of the Brangwen sisters, Lawrence's third version of the 'Sisters' contained a violence only slightly less tempered in *Women in Love*: if we consider Gerald's *attempted* strangulation of Gudrun in *Women in Love* less violent than an actualized rape. In Lawrence's roman à clef novel in which two of the main protagonists are based on John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield – Gerald Crich and Gudrun Brangwen, respectively, one must look outside of the text for the genesis of such violent scenes and violent characters. And why such violence that was first imagined in "The Wedding Ring" –intensified in *Women in Love*.

Lawrence's state of mind is key in understanding his creative motivation and process while writing *Women in Love*. He was living a life of increasing and bitter seclusion. *The Rainbow* had been suppressed just a few short weeks after its September 1915 publication, and Lawrence's frequent opposition to the war, complicated by his

¹¹⁵ According to Mark Kinkead-Weekes: "'The Wedding Ring' (the third version of the 'Sisters') brought the second 'Sisters' much nearer to *The Rainbow* as we have it now."

marriage to Frieda, resulted in official attention from British authorities.¹¹⁶ He was isolated from family, friends, and any sense of community. In May 1914, he wrote to Murry: “Can you really understand how cruelly I feel the want of friends who will believe in me a bit. People think I’m a sort of queer fish that can write: that is all. And how I loathe it. There isn’t a soul cares a damn for me, except Frieda...” (*LDHL2*: 171) While Lawrence was bleeding his heart out to Murry, he was also communicating with Mansfield in the same vein, and Mansfield, in turn, was sharing her letters with Murry: “I heard from Lawrence today. Shall I send you his letter? It left me cold. He wants us to join him, but you know we are not made to do that kind of thing ever.”¹¹⁷ (*LKMI*:233) Lawrence at this juncture was fond of Murry, even considering him his protégé. Writing to Ottoline Morrell that: “Murry...is one of the men of the future – you will see. He is with me for the revolution...At present he is my partner – the only man who quite simply is with me – One day he’ll be ahead of me. Because he’ll build up the temple if I carve out the way – the place” (*LDHL2*: 291).¹¹⁸

The community, the temple, the place, all of these pointed to Lawrence’s vision for Ranamin, a family of sorts. Furthermore, he wanted Mansfield and Murry to share in his vision and in his community. What Lawrence never understood, however, was that Mansfield’s rejection of his utopia had more to do with her failing health than it was a

¹¹⁶ There was an ‘intelligence file’ dating back to 1914 on Frieda Weekley. Public Record office HO45/13944, Minute for the Home Secretary (*TR* xlvii)

¹¹⁷ Lawrence wrote to KM 20 Dec 1915, telling her of the new life they must live, and informing her that after Christmas he and friends were removing to Cornwall: “When you come back, I want you and Murry to live with us, or near us, in unanimity; not these separations. Let us all live together and create a new world. I feel it is too difficult in England, because here all is destruction and dying and corruption, let us go away to Florida: soon” (*LKMI*:233n1).

¹¹⁸ In the novel, Lawrence repudiates the Murry he later comes to know so well: “Gerald narrowed his eyes, his face was cool and unscrupulous as he looked at Birkin, impersonally, with a vision that ended in a point in space, strangely keen-eyed and yet blind” (*WL* 204).

rejection of him. In January 1915, Mansfield wrote in her notebook: “Dined at Lawrences and talked the island.”¹¹⁹ It is quite real except some part of me is blind to it. Six months ago I’d have jumped. The chief thing I feel lately about myself is that I’m getting old...At times the fear of death is dreadful” (*KMN2*: 2). While only twenty-seven years old, Mansfield had already suffered several debilitating illnesses. In 1910, she had an operation removing her left fallopian tube (her earlier miscarriage had already rendered damage), as it was infected with gonococci, and the effects of this disease plagued her for the rest of her life (Norburn 18). Additionally, while not yet diagnosed she was clearly suffering the early stages of tuberculosis.¹²⁰ Lawrence seemed to take none of this into account, and persisted with his increasing pleas for her,¹²¹ at least, to commit to him, writing to her in Dec 1915: “...we want to create a new, good, common life, the germ of a new social life altogether...Murry irritates me and falsifies me, and I must tell him so. He makes *me* false. If that must always be so, then there is no relation between us. But we must try that there *is* a living relation between us, all of us, because then we shall be happy” (*LDHL2*: 473)

¹¹⁹ In JMM’s note to the Notebook: ‘A plan of making a settlement in some remote island. It was probably of the same order of seriousness as Coleridge’s pantisocratic colony on the Susquehannah.’ Lawrence called it Ranamin. (*KMN2*: 2n.2).

¹²⁰ Mansfield was not officially diagnosed with tuberculosis until January 1918, and at this time was warned that if she did not rest in a sanatorium for six months she would certainly be dead within several years. Her TB had been in a latent stage before 1918, however, and she had suffered from many of its symptoms: pleurisy, rheumatism, and digestive problems. (Jones 306, 484n96)

¹²¹ Increasingly, over the years Lawrence’s correspondence was written directly to Mansfield, bypassing Murry: “I also saw the Eastwood friends: one just on the point of dying...Be damned and be blasted everything, and let the bloody world come to its end. But one does not die...We must find some way, next year, of getting *out* of the world: and if Jack doesn’t want to go, let him stay and write for the *Nation*. If we are self-sufficient, a few of us, *what* do we want with the world? (*LDHL3*: 307). To Katherine Mansfield, 5 December 1918: “I begin to despair altogether about human relationships – feel one may just as well turn into a sort of lone wolf, and have done with it. Really, I need a little reassuring of some sort” (*LDHL3*: 303).

He had pleaded with Murry and Mansfield separately, to no avail, so in early 1916 he attempted writing to them as a couple: "I have been thinking with much affection and some longing of you two lately. I feel you are my only friends in the world" (*LKMI*:534). Several weeks later he wrote one of his longer treatises to them, imploring them to jump aboard his ship:

I myself am always on the brink of another collapse. I begin to tremble and feel sick at the slightest upset... Don't get silly notions. I've waited for you for two years now, and am far more constant to you than ever you are to me – or ever will be. ...I believe in you, and that's the end of it. But I think you keep far less faith with me, than I with you, at the centre of things. But faith like everything else is a fluctuating thing. But that doesn't disprove its constancy. I know you will slip towards us...again, however you may slip away and become nothing, or even go over to the enemy. It doesn't make any difference. You will in the main be constant to the same truth and the same spirit with me. The personal adherence, the me and thee business, is subsidiary to that. We are co-believers first. And in our oneness of belief lies our oneness. ...And in this destiny we are together. ...We shall be very badly off soon – and no incomings anywhere. I don't know what we shall do. But I don't bother" (*LDHL2*:549-50)

This particular letter indicates the state of Lawrence's mind while in the throes of writing what he considered to be his best novel – *Women in Love*.¹²² While this letter may indicate the heart and mind of a creative man, seeking like-minded company, there is clearly an element of obsession – "faith", belief in a "shared destiny," and a rejection of this destiny amounting to a "betrayal" – "going over to the enemy." Before the final betrayal came, however, Mansfield and Murry succumbed to Lawrence's pleading, at least for a time. Perhaps sensing Lawrence's utter defeat and despair penned in a letter to Murry in 1916: "I must own to you, that I am beaten – knocked out entirely...it seems as if the twilight of all twilights were drawing on , and one could only watch it and submit:

¹²² To Thomas Seltzer: "I consider this the best of my books – please be careful with the MS" (*LDHL3*:390).

no more hope, nothing further remaining. I could howl with a dog's hopelessness, at nightfall." (LDHL2: 500) – Mansfield and Murry finally acquiesced to joining Lawrence in Cornwall. For his part, Lawrence was convinced they were his "only real friends in the world" (LDHL2: 533). He eagerly made the preparations for their arrival writing to them shortly before their arrival: "I call it already Katherine's house, Katherine's tower...We are so few, and the world is so many, it is absurd that we are scattered. Let us be really happy and industrious together...Let it be agreed forever. I am Blutbruder: a Blutbruderschaft between us all...." (LDHL2:569)¹²³ It is interesting that Lawrence, in all his correspondence, planned for *Mansfield's* arrival – the tower for *her* writing, the refurbished outside water-closet – all thoughtful considerations for Mansfield, not Murry.

Lawrence's eager and childlike preparations were frenzied, perhaps emphasizing little more than his obvious loneliness and isolation at this period in his life. On the other hand, the obsessional tone of his letters indicate some degree of mental instability. Before Mansfield and Murry had even arrived he pronounced: "And no good trying to run away from the fact that we are fond of each other. We count you two our only two *tried* friends, real and permanent and truly blood kin. I know we shall be happy this summer: *so* happy" (LDHL2:576). On the contrary, no happiness would come from this forged and forced Blutbruderschaft. Instead, Lawrence wrote to Koteliensky: "The Murrays are here...It is so difficult to reestablish an old footing, after a lapse during which we have all endured a good deal of misery...I find Katherine simpler and better, but Murry not much

¹²³ In the chapter "Male to Male" Birkin proposes a Blutsbrüderschaft to Gerald, in which two men: "Make a little wound in their arms, and rub each other's blood into the cut?" said Gerald. "Yes – and swear to be true to each other, of one blood, all their lives – That is what we ought to do. No wounds, that is obsolete – But ought to swear to love each other, you and I, implicitly, finally, without any possibility of going back on it." (WL 206-207) In reply, Gerald looks at Birkin and is: "attracted, so deeply bonded in fascinated attraction, that he was mistrustful, resenting the bondage, hating the attraction" (WL 207).

changed in any way” (LDHL2:594). Almost immediately after Mansfield and Murry joined the Lawrences at the Higher Tregerthen cottage near St. Ives in Cornwall, their friendship began to implode. The stresses were many, not the least of which was the financial predicament Lawrence was facing. So he felt pressured into writing another novel, and as he could not retrieve his unfinished ‘Insurrection of Miss Houghton’ from Bavaria, he turned back to The *Women in Love* material.¹²⁴ This version of *Women in Love*, resembled the real experiences of the Cornwall months.

Lawrence’s dream of Ranamin, finally within reach, was predicated on expectations that in reality would never eventuate. Shortly after Mansfield and Murry settled in, Lawrence wrote to Catherine Carswell, “I am a liar to myself about people...I give up having intimate friends at all. It is self-deception” (LDHL2:617). The petty, and sometimes, not-so petty squabbles over both personal and practical arrangements between them all were conveyed in letters to mutual friends such as Kot: “The Murrys accused me of being treacherous and not taking them into the publishing scheme.¹²⁵ I tell them of course they are included, and they are far more treacherous to me, intrinsically,

¹²⁴ In April 1916, Mansfield and Murry stayed at the Tinner’s Arms, Zennor, while they were renovating the cottage Lawrence had rented for them. At this point, Lawrence wrote the opening two chapters of *Women in Love* which were later abandoned (they are Appendix II in the Cambridge edition of *WL*). Entitled: ‘Prologue’ and ‘The Wedding,’ these chapters are interesting in that they show Birkin’s strong attraction to Gerald Crich (Norburn 38, *WL* xxviii). Spilka argues: “What the prologue does make clear, however, as the novel does not, is that Birkin must work through his “living desire” for Gerald, as well as his deathly attachment to Hermione, before he can love Ursula “body and soul” (108). One could argue that the real attraction that Lawrence felt toward Murry diminished swiftly after he had written these chapters, and so the fictionalized account of his feelings were also discarded, leaving the chapters that – while still homo-erotically suggestive – were more ambiguous. However, there is still an obvious attraction between the men that cannot be overlooked: it is clearly homosexual in nature. In the ‘Gladiatorial’ chapter Gerald and Birkin engage in a naked wrestling match: “the two men entwined and wrestled with each other, working nearer and nearer” (270), and in the ‘Prologue’ – Birkin is: “...always drawn to women, feeling more at home with a woman than a man, yet it was for men that he felt the hot, flushing, roused attraction which a man is supposed to feel for the other sex” (501).

¹²⁵ Murry and Mansfield were offended that the “scheme” included John Heseltine, a distinguished collector but not a writer, and a stranger to them both. According to Murry the scheme had been to publish their own books – *The Rainbow Books* – without a stranger’s help. (LKM1:549n1)

than ever I shall be to them” (*LDHL2:554*). Meanwhile, Mansfield wrote to Ottoline Morrell: “What a pity it is that dear Lorenzo sees rainbows round so many dull people and pots of gold in so many mean hearts. But he will never change”¹²⁶ (*LKMI:247*).

Several months into the communal experiment, Mansfield wrote to Koteliensky:

Frieda and I do not even speak to each other at present. Lawrence is about one million miles away, although he lives next door... It is all because I cannot stand the situation between those two, for one thing. It is degrading – it offends one’s soul beyond words, I don’t know which disgusts one worse – when they are very loving and playing with each other or when they are roaring at each other and he is pulling out Frieda’s hair... Lawrence isn’t healthy anymore; he has gone a little bit out of his mind. If he is contradicted about anything he gets into a frenzy, quite beside himself and it goes on until he is so exhausted that he cannot stand and has to go to bed and stay there until he has recovered. And whatever your disagreement is about he says it is because you have gone wrong in your sex and belong to an obscene spirit... He is so completely in her power and yet I am sure that in his heart he loathes his slavery. (*LKMI:263*)

Quite clearly Lawrence’s experiment in Cornwall – a precursor of sorts to a *fully* -fledged Ranamin – was not working for Mansfield. She wrote to Ottoline Morrell: “I have been so frightfully wretched and distracted – and for weeks and weeks I have not been myself at all – hardly for an instant – but just living on a kind of quaking crust with blackness underneath which has paralysed – paralysed me...” (*LKMI:283*). But again, Lawrence, did not appear to notice how unwell Mansfield was during this period. Not only were his fits of temper affecting her nerves, but the cottage, itself was dreadfully damp— the worst living conditions possible for someone with tuberculosis.¹²⁷ Ironically, while this

¹²⁶ ‘Rainbows’ is a reference not only to Lawrence’s novel *The Rainbow*, but to a scheme for a private publishing venture, ‘The Rainbow Books and Music,’ for which Lawrence had sent KM and Murry a circular. The venture was to publish Lawrence’s works, but Philip Heseltine had inserted himself into the discussion and both JMMM and KM were incensed as it was JMM’s idea. (*LKMI:248n2*)

¹²⁷ Lawrence did write to Kot, 24 May 1916: “The Murrays, I think, are going away. They do not like this country, it is too bleak and rocky for them. They want the south side, with trees and gardens and softness. Also the walls of the house are damp” (*LDHL2:607*) But in the usual manner in which he refused to

tumultuous living arrangement seems only to have fueled Lawrence's creativity and productivity, the exact opposite was true for Mansfield: apart from letters and occasional jottings in her notebooks, she wrote nothing in Cornwall, nor for several months afterwards (*LKMI*:260)

By mid-June 1916, the Ranamin experiment was over. Murry for his part was unable to respond to his friend's demands for Blutbruderschaft, and the two men quarreled violently.¹²⁸ Finally Mansfield and Murry moved to Sunnyside Cottage, Mylor, about thirty miles away from the Lawrences (Norburn 38). Several months later, Lawrence wrote to Koteliensky: "They are as mean as they can be to everybody, then they turn around and say: aren't people *vile*. And Katherine never opposes Jack's vileness – ... You know I love Katherine, but I blame her when she believes Jack, when she knows better herself" (*LDHL2*:667).¹²⁹ This to and froing, pleading and rejection, this complex and volatile "friendship" was the fodder for Lawrence's novel. Finally recognizing that Mansfield and Murry had rejected his ideas for a utopian community, Lawrence wrote his sense of rejection into *Women in Love*:

acknowledge his own illness, he refused to acknowledge Mansfield's, or any connection to her health and the dampness in the cottage.

¹²⁸ Ironically, it was postal strikes and mail delays that ultimately damaged the Mansfield and Lawrence friendship irreparably. Articles that Lawrence sent to Murry for the *Athenaeum* were returned, and returned from Mansfield's address in Italy. Lawrence was not aware that Murry had been with Mansfield in late Dec 1919 and early Jan 1920, but not when he had sent Murry the letter. Later, an entirely separate and delayed letter to Lawrence from Mansfield spoke of her illness but gave no mention of the returned articles. Mansfield spoke of her "appalling isolation and her feeling that she "was tainted" because of her disease. (*LKM3*:183) Lawrence assumed that Murry had been with her all along, and that while she had colluded on the exclusion of his articles for the *Athenaeum*, she was begging Lawrence, yet, for sympathy. Contemptuously, Lawrence wrote back: "I loathe you, you revolt me stewing in your consumption. The Italians were quite right to have nothing to do with you" (*LDHL3*:470, Worthen 223).

¹²⁹ Later Lawrence would write to Kot: "I know Katherine is coming to London...I like her better than him. He was rather horrid when he was here...But it wearies me in my soul, this constant breaking with people. – I hope Katherine will keep steady, and quiet. She needs to be quiet, to learn to live alone, and without external stimulant" (*LDHL2*:623).

Gerald was held unconsciously by the other man. He wanted to be near him, he wanted to be within his sphere of influence. There was something very congenial to him in Birkin. But yet, beyond this, he did not take much notice...It was the quick-changing warmth and versatility and brilliant warm utterance he loved in his friend. It was the rich play of words and quick interchange of feelings he enjoyed. The real content of the words he never really considered: he himself knew better.

Birkin knew this. He knew Gerald wanted to be *fond* of him without taking him seriously. And this made him go hard and cold. (WL 59).

The Birkin figure – Lawrence himself – did, indeed, “go hard and cold.” The germ for *Women in Love* was essentially fictional – two couples and their complex interactions in a modern world, but the personal triangular relationship within the text – the Birkin, Gerald, and Gudrun element was closer to fact than fiction. When appraising the construction of the work, and the content, *Women in Love* is best read when one is mindful of Lawrence’s intent and personal connection to the novel. For, in part, his friendship with Mansfield steered the text and certainly enlivened it.

Katherine Mansfield as Gudrun: A Terrible Void

From the first chapter, ‘Sisters,’ Lawrence informs us that the sisters feel:

“...confronted by a void, a terrifying chasm, as if they looked over the edge” (WL 10).

This so closely resembles the real Mansfield, and her life constantly heading toward a chasm: a chasm of literary success, void of romantic fulfillment, and the terrible edge of illness. So much of *Women in Love* is seen through Gudrun’s eyes, and the complexity of the novel, owes, in part, to the complexity of Mansfield’s life. Moreover, we see through Gudrun’s *artist* eyes. Yet her view is often limited and ironic – much in the same vein that Lawrence viewed Mansfield’s writing. Gudrun’s “little carvings *are* strange” and

“full of primitive passion – Isn’t it queer that she always likes little things?...she must always work small things... She likes to look through the wrong end of the opera glasses, and see the world that way” (WL 39). As Jeffrey Meyers contends in *Katherine Mansfield: A Darker View*: “Lawrence transforms Katherine’s delicate art into attenuated preciousness, her satire into corrosion, her reserve into negation, her detached and determined resistance to his demands into arrogance and insolence, her insecurity and loneliness into infantile dependence, her quest for love into destructive sterility, her restless search for health into a rootless outcast life, her illness into evil” (Meyers 94). In short, Lawrence responds with rejection by diminishing Mansfield in his novel: in essence, reciprocating her rejection. And what better way to diminish her than through her art? Birkin, the Lawrence figure in the text, tells Gerald: “She drops her art if anything else catches her. Her contrariness prevents her from taking it seriously—she must never be too serious, she feels she might give herself away. And she won’t give herself away—she’s always on the defensive. That’s what I can’t stand about her type” (WL 94-5). It is not hard to read through the literary dialogue, and distinguish the direct conversation existing between Lawrence and Mansfield. Gudrun represents Lawrence’s gross exaggeration of the negative aspects of Mansfield’s character. Whenever she is given “voice” within the novel, Lawrence negates her message. When Gudrun berates Birkin’s close-mindedness: “He can’t hear what anybody else has to say – he cannot hear...He cannot allow that there is any other mind than his own” (WL: 263) – Lawrence condemns Gudrun’s criticism of Birkin as a lie: “Gudrun would draw two lines under him and cross him out like an account that is settled. There he was, summed up, paid for,

settled, done with. And it was such a lie. This finality of Gudrun's, this dispatching of people and things in a sentence, it was all such a lie" (*WL* 256).

At times the novel, especially the chapter 'Love and Death,' centers on Mansfield's life so closely that it almost reads like a biography, albeit a critical one. When Gudrun is: "Lying awake at night and her past running through her mind," one is reminded of her countless diary entries and letters written in the small hours of the night, as insomnia was always such a problem for her. Writing to Murry, Mansfield states: "I suffer so frightfully from insomnia here and from night terrors...There is a great black bird flying over me, and I am so frightened he'll settle..." (*LKMJMM* 108). In these private and restless hours, Gudrun and Mansfield merge into one: "Conscious of everything, her childhood, her girlhood, all the forgotten incidents, all the unrealized influences and all the happenings she had not understood, pertaining to herself, to her family, to her friends, her lovers...of the sea of darkness...out of the fathomless depths of the past, and still it did not come to an end, there was no end to it ..." (*WL* 346). While in this same chapter – 'Love and Death' – we witness yet another personification of Mansfield, in relation to Murry, Gudrun's Gerald. While Gudrun lies awake, fretting over all the things she did not, or could not understand, Gerald is brought back into life, and also wooed into sleep by making love to Gudrun. He "...plunged deeper into her enveloping soft warmth, a wonderful creative heat that penetrated his veins and gave him life again...she was the great bath of life, he worshipped her. Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and man, received of her and was made whole...like a soft, soothing flow of life itself, perfect as if he were bathed in the womb again" (*WL* 344).

Of great relevance, here, are Lawrence's letters to Mansfield. Once again interjecting himself into the relationship between Mansfield and Murry, Lawrence writes:

I send you the Jung book – beware of it – this mother-incest idea can become an obsession. But it seems to me there is this much truth in it: that at certain periods the man has a desire and a tendency to return unto the woman, make her his goal and end, find his justification in her. In this way he casts himself as it were into her womb, and she, as Magna Mater, receives him with gratification. This is a kind of incest. It seems to me it is what Jack does to you, and what repels and fascinates you. I have done it, and now struggle all my might to get out, in a way, Frieda is the devouring mother.¹³⁰ – It is awfully hard, once the sex relation has gone this way, to recover...I do think a woman must yield some sort of precedence to a man, and he must take this precedence. I do think men must go ahead absolutely in front of their women, without turning round to ask for permission or approval from their women. Consequently the woman must follow as it were unquestionably" (*LDHL3*:302).

Hilary Simpson suggests that while *The Rainbow* was a matriarchal text, "dominated by the image of the womb, and its celebrations of sexuality and fertility are conducted not in terms of phallic power, but the rhythmic cycles of gestation and birth," there was clearly a post-war shift in Lawrence's gender theories elucidated in *Women in Love*... (Simpson 92). In this regard, Lawrence's changing views reveal a great deal concerning his changing philosophy towards gender relationships. I suggest that this is only partially accurate, and in *Women in Love* Lawrence is far more insistent on "correcting" Mansfield's relationship with Murry than expanding his theories on gender. For Gudrun is not at all satisfied with the phallic-absent sex; she is, on the contrary, greatly dissatisfied – "Was she his mother?" (*WL* 466). Gudrun lying awake, unsatisfied, depicts not so much a shift in Lawrence's thinking, but a strengthening in Lawrence's thinking –

¹³⁰ Judith Ruderman's *D.H. Lawrence and the Devouring Mother* (1984) obviously takes its title from this quotation.

to his belief, his fanaticism in phallic superiority. Gerald's infantile dependency on Gudrun leaves him vulnerable and weak: "A strange rent had been torn in him; like a victim that is torn open and given to the heavens, so he had been torn apart and given to Gudrun...where he was exposed, like an open flower, to all the universe...this unfolding of his own covering, leaving him incomplete, limited, unfinished..." (WL 445-46). What Judith Ruderman calls "Lawrence's devouring mother" – is a reckonable force in *Women in Love*.

Not only was Lawrence "correcting" the Mansfield and Murry relationship in *Women in Love*, but, as in *The Lost Girl*, he was again critiquing Mansfield's affair with Francis Carco. Several critics have suggested that Gudrun's affair with the artist, Loerke, in *Women in Love* is based on an event during Christmas 1914, when Mansfield, Murry, Koteliansky, Gertler, Lawrence, and Frieda were all staying at Gilbert Cannan's windmill cottage in Buckinghamshire. When someone suggested putting on an impromptu play, supposedly there was some flirtation between Mansfield and Gertler which led to the Loerke episode in *Women in Love* (Alpers 172-173). However, during the novel's construction Lawrence paid much more interest to Mansfield's affair with Carco, than Mansfield's supposed one night flirtation with Gertler; furthermore, both he and Frieda were concerned that Carco would irreparably damage the already shaky relationship between Mansfield and Murry. What Lawrence knew of the Carco affair, and knew of Carco himself, closely resembles the character of Loerke in the text. Lawrence portrays Loerke as a magical figure, sinister and gifted with special powers. Birkin describes him as "a gnawing little negation, gnawing at the roots of life" (WL 428). Physically, Loerke was: "small, dark-skinned man with full eyes, an odd creature, like a child, and like a

troll, quick, detached” (WL 405). Everything about him is oddly mismatched. He is the “little man with the boyish figure, and the round, full, sensitive-looking head, and the quick, full eyes, like a mouse’s” (WL 405). His “body was slight and unformed, like a boy’s, but his voice was mature, sardonic, its movement had the flexibility of essential energy, and of a mocking, penetrating understanding” (WL 406). Photos of Carco also depict a “small, dark-skinned man with full eyes,” and Mansfield described him as “boy-like.” One may certainly characterize his relationship with Mansfield as suspect: Francis Carco,¹³¹ like Murry, also reaped as many benefits as he could from his attachment to the young and vulnerable Mansfield. And while Loerke is a sculptor in the novel rather than a writer like Carco; so too is Gudrun a sculptress rather than writer. As the affair with Loerke precipitates Gerald’s suicide, it makes more sense that Loerke is modelled on Carco—a veritable threat to Murry, and certainly a threat during the time the novel was constructed.

Another small incident in Mansfield’s life played into an entire chapter in *Women in Love*, and bearing in mind that it took place while her relationship with Lawrence was estranged, it is again clear that Lawrence was still attempting to *retain* Mansfield in his life, if even only as a character. ‘Gudrun in the Pompadour’ is based on an incident when Mansfield was at the Café Royal in London with Koteliansky and the painter Mark Gertler; Koteliansky shared the incident with Lawrence and Lawrence fictionalized the

¹³¹ In “His Last Bohemia: The Novels of Francis Carco,” Kim Davis states: “Carco wrote avowedly and shamelessly from experience. Long passages of his Last Bohemia are given over to confessions of whoring and drinking. Weiner mentions that he was picked up by the police, hopelessly inebriated, celebrating his membership of the Academie Goncourt. In his youth, he descended nightly from the rudimentary but artistic surroundings of the Lapin Agile to the lowest of stews and grog shops. The reality seeps into his prose” (http://www.pinkpignyc.com/at_the_sign_of_the_pink_p/2007/12/a-last-bohemia.html) December 7, 2007. The titles of Carco’s work include: *Depravity*, *Perversity*, *Frenzy*, and he does seem to have an underground cult following of sorts.

event. Apparently Mansfield became enraged when she overheard the novelist Michael Arlen and composer Philip Heseltine publicly ridiculing Lawrence's *Amores*. Gertler, writing to Lady Ottoline the next day, told her how they had to share their table with "two coloured men" and "a long Thin White Herring of a woman." They were horrified when the group produced a volume of Lawrence's poems, *Amores*, and commenced to discuss Lawrence. Suddenly "Katherine leant towards them and with a sweet smile said, 'Will you let me have that book a moment?' ...Imagine their horror and utter amazement when Katherine without a word more, rose from the table, book and all, we following most calmly – most calmly we walked out of the Café!" ¹³²(*LKMI*:281n1, *WL* 571n384:34, Alpers 1980, 216). In the novel Gudrun exits the café with Birkin's letter exclaiming: "Why is Rupert such a *fool* as to write such letters to them? *Why* does he give himself away to such canaille? It's a thing that *cannot be borne* –" (*WL* 385). So Lawrence turns Mansfield's attempt to defend him into an act of pretension – Gudrun is aghast at him sharing himself with the *masses*. Mansfield's selfless act becomes, instead, one of arrogance.

Gudrun is not only depicted as shallow and pretentious in the novel, but she also represents Lawrence's portrait of the destructive side of modern will. Both Gerald and Gudrun are fundamentally destructive individuals, but of the two Gudrun represents destruction in its purest form. In "Modernism and the Contours of Violence in D. H. Lawrence's Fiction," Michael Squires argues:

Gerald has chosen a woman whose appetite for violence matches his. Near the close, a "fine blade" (421) penetrates his heart just as his phallic spur had, reciprocally, penetrated the mare's flesh. As Gerald walks away from social

¹³² Another small twist to the incident was that one of the men was Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, a Bengali Muslim, a law student at Oxford and friend of Aldous Huxley. Huxley also relayed the story to Lady Ottoline, and Ottoline, having heard from Gertler realized they were talking about the same incident.

position, work, and the possibility of love edging toward annihilation-readers recognize a symmetry: that the hands that had earlier gripped the gun are the hands whose “wrists were bursting” with violent power. In the snow, Gerald grabs Gudrun’s throat, and “the more violent [the struggle] became, the greater the frenzy of [his] delight” (472). At the close, the unconscious force of violence has spent itself. As Birkin had said, it all came together “in the deepest sense.” (Squires 104).

While Gerald’s force of violence has been spent, the text suggests that Gudrun’s is gaining strength. David Ellis argues there “is more pathos than tragedy in Gerald’s situation; however, the limitations of his self-understanding often make him seem Gudrun’s helpless victim” (Ellis 14). Constantly haunted by his past, Gerald is a tragic figure. He has accidentally killed his brother, and, I would argue that symbolically this represents Murry killing Lawrence, or, at the very least, “killing” the radical ideas of Lawrence and his exacting demands for disciples. Lawrence believed that Mansfield emasculated Murry: she was the master within their relationship. He wrote to Murry in November 1913: “She doesn’t want you to sacrifice yourself to her, you fool. Be more natural, and positive, and stick to your own guts. You spread them on a tray for her to throw to the cats” (*LDHL2*: 111). Yet, at the end of *Women in Love* Gerald has been sacrificed. He found the small “half-buried crucifix” in the snow and wandered on forward to death (*WL* 473). Lawrence’s opinion of Murry and Mansfield had radically changed in the few months since he had penned his letter to Murry, and one can read Gerald’s death as an indication of that change, now pure disdain – as Torgovnick suggested – Lawrence indeed had an agenda. Hence, Gerald’s death was not planned, or brave, and certainly not decisive. When Gerald’s dead body is brought back, Birkin responds, “And Gerald! The denier! He left the heart cold, frozen, hardly able to beat.”

(WL 480). Ultimately, it was the way Lawrence envisaged Murry dying— an ambiguous death, leaving the heart cold – an ill-planned departure with very little backbone.

In some respects, the backbone is allocated to the women in Lawrence's novel, and the physical domination between the sexes is also upended. Certainly, Gudrun is excited by the scenes in which Gerald is his most violent – when his spurs draw blood from his Arab horse, or when he subdues Winifred's rabbit – “with strange, darkened eyes, strained with underworld knowledge, almost supplicating, like those of a creature which is at his mercy, yet which is his ultimate victor” (WL 241-242). However, while Birkin abuses Hermione with words – “If one cracked your skull perhaps one might get a spontaneous, passionate woman out of you, with real sensuality” (WL 42) – many of the extremely violent acts within the text are carried out by women. We witness Hermione smashing Birkin's skull with the ornamental lapis lazuli sphere: “She was going to have her consummation of voluptuous ecstasy at last. . . . Then swiftly . . . she brought down the ball of jewel stone with all her force, crash on his head” (WL 105). Later Gudrun strikes Gerald: “She raised her clenched hand high, and brought it down, with a great downward stroke, over the face and on to the breast of Gerald” (WL 471). In “Violence and Laughter in *Women in Love*,” Joyce Wexler argues: “Parallels between sexual and social hostility in the novel are not so much a diagnosis that one is the cause of the other as evidence that conflict is pervasive” (56). Like all of Lawrence's fiction, the pervasive violence is articulated in sexual terms – “consummation,” and “downward stroke”— ultimately, the aim of the violence is domination, however. As Wexler asserts: “The women's assaults release pent-up emotions that differ in their particulars but are similar in their aim of dominating the other, even if it means destroying him” (56). When Gudrun

considers a life with Gerald, she envisions: “The terrible bondage of this tick-tack of time...eternal repetition of hours and days... too awful to contemplate. And there was no escape from it, no escape” (WL 464). In reality, Mansfield was seldom in “terrible bondage” to Murry’s will. She lived her life as a modern women – taking lovers, rejecting a life of domesticity, and attempting, despite debilitating health, living life on her own terms. She never was Mrs. John Middleton Murry, and Lawrence resented that she never followed his marital advice, fully subjecting herself to Murry. Just as he felt Mansfield had emasculated Murry in life, Gudrun emasculated Gerald in the text – quite to the point where “something broke in his soul” (WL 474). Certainly, much of Lawrence’s novel centered on repudiating Mansfield’s life: her writing, her feelings, her choices.

For her part, Mansfield rejected Lawrence’s work, writing to Ottoline Morrell:¹³³ “Some novels have been flung up our mountain lately. Among them Lawrence’s *Women in Love*...But it is so *absurd* that one can’t say anything; it after all is almost purely pathological, as they say. But it’s sad to think what might have been. Wasn’t it Santyana who said: Every artist holds a lunatic in leash. That explains L. to me (LKM4: 252). Her reaction to his characterization of her was also critical: “You know I am Gudrun? Oh, what rubbish it all is, tho’ Secker is a little fool to publish such STUFF” (LKM4: 252). Predictably, Murry also critiqued the novel, writing in his review, *Son of Woman*: “the language of spite...under the pretence of ‘intellectual sincerity’ was an effort to annihilate” (Carswell 143). The irony is that “such STUFF” that Mansfield condemned,

¹³³Earlier Mansfield had written to Morrell: “I have just had a letter from you about Lawrence’s Book. I *do* hope that you will be able to persuade him *not* to publish it. Another book even anything like *The Rainbow* – (is like *The Rainbow*) would be a disaster for him. I think that living alone engenders in him a real form of madness” (LKM1:288).

and “the language of spite” that Murry wrote *spitefully* was eventually one of Lawrence’s few financial successes. Lawrence believed that *Women in Love* was his greatest work; critics agreed that the strength of the text was due to the Gudrun and Gerald interaction; and the unsuccessful attempt to prosecute the novel boosted the subsequent 1920s sales resulting in Lawrence’s first ever relative financial stability.¹³⁴ However circuitously it may have happened, Mansfield was responsible, in part, for this fortuitous outcome.

In many respects, *Women in Love* was a text where Lawrence worked out many of his resentments with Mansfield, and especially those he deemed, betrayals. His personal relationships were fraught with varying degrees of – what he perceived to be – betrayals. In reality, Lawrence was too exacting of those closely attached to him, demanding all or nothing. As Cockshut argues in *Man and Woman*: “Lawrence’s initiates are few because, like a band of ascetic monks, they are asking more of themselves than ordinary human nature can be expected to give” (Cockshut 160).¹³⁵ Even Lawrence’s relationship with Frieda was founded on his self-centered, and single-minded ambition to do what he felt was in some way – ordained. As Worthen argues: “However much in love Frieda was, she had – a friend remembered her saying – ‘no intention whatever of leaving my husband and children and the comfortable and respectable life I knew to go off into certain social exile and most probable poverty’” (Worthen 385).¹³⁶ It was with this same

¹³⁴ The first edition of *WL* attracted the attention of the secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice (Ellis 17).

¹³⁵ One is reminded of the “last supper” episode in Lawrence’s life when he asked each of his friends to return with him to America: all refused. According to Spilka, he afterward regained some of his lightheartedness, soon discovering that his “militant ideal” was a “cold egg” and that tenderness might better define the future” (Spilka 158).

¹³⁶ Frieda was forced to tell Weekley she was leaving him after Lawrence had preemptively told Weekley of their affair and forced the issue (Worthen 384). This cost Frieda, dearly, and yet Lawrence never acknowledged the terrible loss that ensued for Frieda. In the wake of their affair she lost her children. If things had been handled in the manner that Frieda had desired, she may very well have been able to settle on a custody arrangement that would not have been so brutal.

headstrong disregard for others that threatened many of Lawrence's relationships, especially, and ironically, the relationships of those he cared most about – Mansfield included. Furthermore, most, were summarily dismissed from his life when they weren't willing to offer him their all. But unlike most other people, Lawrence forgave Mansfield for whatever perceived crimes he thought she had committed.¹³⁷

On hearing of Mansfield's death, Lawrence, profoundly saddened, wrote to Murry: "I got your note via Kot about Katherine. Yes, it is something gone out of our lives. We thought of her, I can tell you, at Wellington. Did Ottoline ever send on the card to Katherine I posted from there for her?" (*LDHL4*: 375). Mansfield had received his card. She wrote to Murry: "I had a card from Lawrence today – just the one word 'Ricordi.' How like him. I was glad to get it though" (*LKM5*: 268). It is quite poetic that Lawrence's card was written on August 15, and Mansfield bequeathed Lawrence one of her books in her final will the day before (Harrison 149). The postcard from Lawrence has now been recovered in the 2012 Alexander Turnbull Library acquisition. The discovery adds additional light to the last communication between Lawrence and Mansfield. The postcard itself is quite clearly selected with care by Lawrence. It depicts a Māori family demonstrating the affectionate greeting of a "Hongi" – a traditional

¹³⁷ Mansfield, for her part, also forgave Lawrence, writing to Ottoline Morrell in August 1917: "He has begun to write to me again and quite in the old way – all about the leaves of the melon plant...and all about 'the social egg which must collapse into nothingness, into *non being*'. I am so fond of him for many things – I cannot shut my heart against him and I shall never shall" (*LKM1*:325).

and to Kotliansky in December 1921: "I want to write to you in memory of that other Christmas when Lawrence gave his party...Wasn't Lawrence awfully nice that night. Ah, but one must always love Lawrence for his 'being.' I could love Frieda too, tonight...It is a pity that all things must pass. And how strange it is, how in spite of everything, there are certain people, like Lawrence, who remain in one's life forever, and others who are forever shadowy" (*LKM4*: 343); and again to Kot in July 1922: "I do not go all the way with Lawrence. His ideas of sex mean nothing to me. But I feel nearer L. than anyone else. All these last months I have thought as he does about many things" (*LKM4*: 25).

pressing together of noses and foreheads, simultaneously. Additionally, there is a greeting from Frieda to Mansfield: “We thought so hard of you here!” (Harrison 150) This last correspondence, however brief, symbolizes their relationship in so many ways. Despite all the bitter episodes in the past, their fondness was rekindled in this moment. And it seems fitting that Lawrence’s letter to Murry rekindled, also, what can only be described as the love he felt for Mansfield:

Yes, I always knew a bond in my heart. Feel a fear where the bond is broken now. Feel as if old moorings were breaking all. What is going to happen to us all? Perhaps it is good for Katherine not to have to see the next phase...It has been a savage enough pilgrimage these last four years. Perhaps K. has taken the only way for her. We keep faith – I always feel death only strengthens that, the faith of those who have it. I wrote to Adelphi Terrace the day after I got your letter, and asked Seltzer to send you *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. I wanted Katherine to read it. She’ll know, though. The dead don’t die. They look on and help (LDHL4: 375).

Chapter 4: Katherine Mansfield and Aldous Huxley: The Cult of Mansfield

Katherine Mansfield
Wife of
John Middleton Murry
188-1923
Born at Wellington
New Zealand
Died at Avon¹³⁸

While Mansfield's relationship with Woolf and Lawrence was complex, and well documented by substantial biographical correspondence, her relationship with Aldous Huxley was simpler; however, the outcome of their relationship was not by any means less interesting. Huxley did not know Mansfield as well, nor, it appears, was he as interested in her work as were Woolf and Lawrence. Like Lawrence, and Woolf, Huxley's connection to Mansfield came through Garsington. Commenting on his time there, and how valuable it was for the budding writer, Huxley stated: "...the opportunity which came to me while I was an undergraduate of meeting, at the house of a lady living near Oxford, most of the eminent intellectual figures of the time - Bertrand Russell, J. M. Keynes, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey. Talk with these people was the most liberal of educations" (Qtd Bedford 69). So at some point he counted Mansfield among the intellects of the time. Huxley also appears to have had a great deal of fun with Mansfield, remarking on a Christmas party at Garsington where they had performed "a superb play invented by Katherine, improvising as we went along. It was a huge success with Murry as a Dostoevsky character..." (*LAH* 118). Like

¹³⁸ Epitaph on Mansfield's tombstone, Cimetire d'Avon, France. Ironically, close to Mansfield's grave is that of Georgy Ivanovitch Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff forms a great deal of the latter part of this chapter. Originally, Mansfield was buried in Fontainebleu, though Murry forgot to pay the bill for the funeral. As a result her body was moved to an unmarked pauper's grave until her father heard of it and had her grave moved again, and a tombstone carved.

so many of his contemporaries, Huxley was intrigued by Mansfield – enough so that he characterized her as Mary Thriplow in his novel, *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), and in *Point Counter Point* (1928) further parodied the parasitic nature of John Middleton Murry's mourning for her after her death. As discussed later in this chapter, collectively, these two works reflect on Murry's "cult of Mansfield."¹³⁹

The friendship between Huxley and Mansfield was intriguing. Again, like so many other men in her life, Huxley was both fascinated and perplexed by Mansfield. Writing to Ottoline Morrell, 10 May 1917, Huxley states: "I dined with Katherine last night in her delightful rabbit hutch in Church Street...Katherine was very delightful and amusing, a little less acting a part than usual" (*SLAC* 51). It seems that whenever Mansfield escaped characterization – when men, especially, were unable to pigeon-hole her into their preconceived ideas of what a woman should be – they were somewhat exasperated: she was acting, mysterious, uninterpretable. In a letter to Juliette Baillot, December 1917, Huxley writes: "Last Sunday I looked in on Katherine [Mansfield] in her curious little kennel in Chelsea; all very mysterious, particularly when she suddenly gave a shout in the middle of our conversation and was answered by the sleepy voice of somebody who was in bed behind a curtain..." (*LAC* 140).¹⁴⁰ Certainly the meetings between Huxley and Mansfield were far less of a mystery to her, than him. On 3 July 1917, Mansfield writes to Ottoline Morrell: "Aldous came to see me last Wednesday. He told me more news in half an hour than I have heard for months. At present he seems to be a great social success and 'incredible' things happen to him *at least* every evening. He

¹³⁹ See previous footnote 25.

¹⁴⁰ Mansfield was sharing her flat with Ida Baker, who had a bed in a small gallery curtained for privacy.

spoke of the Isola Bella¹⁴¹ as though it were the rendezvous of Love and High Adventure...I felt my mind flutter over Aldous as if he were the London Mail. There was a paragraph about simply everybody” (LKM 1: 315). A few years later it seems Mansfield was still not enamored with Huxley, writing again to Ottoline Morrell, January 1922: “I haven’t seen Aldous’ book¹⁴² and I do not want to. The idea bores me so terribly that I won’t waste time on it...It gets very awkward if young men are forced to feed out of their friends inkpots in this way. In fact I confess it downright disgusts me” (LKM5: 20). Of course within the space of a few years, Mansfield, herself, was to become the “inkpot” in *Those Barren Leaves*.

Towards the end of Huxley’s life he wrote two letters which summed up this portrayal of Mansfield in *Those Barren Leaves*. In a letter to Myrick Land in March 1962 Huxley wrote: “...for Murry (and Catherine [Katherine Mansfield] too) had a strange way of churning themselves, violently and indefatigably, in the hope of transforming a native inability to feel very strongly or continuously into a butter-pat of genuine emotion, true passion, and unquestioning faith” (LAC 930), and to Allan J. Crane in January 1963: “Yes I knew Katherine Mansfield fairly well, and liked her stories. She was an unhappy woman, capable of acting any number of parts but uncertain of who, essentially, she was – a series of points and arcs on the circumference of a circle that was uncertain of the location of its centre” (LAC 948). Both letters point to Huxley’s inherent mistrust and inability to comprehend who Mansfield was, and it was this Mansfield who was caricatured as Mary Thriplow in *Those Barren Leaves*. When Huxley was interviewed for

¹⁴¹ A popular restaurant at 15 Frith Street, Soho. (LKM 1:315n. 5)

¹⁴² *Chrome Yellow* (1921). Huxley’s satire with its wounding descriptions of “our time at Garsington, all distorted, caricatured and mocked at...horrified...and I [Ottoline] was filled with dismay” (*Ottoline at Garsington: Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell*, ed. Robert Gathorne-Hardy, 1974, 215) (LCM5: 21n.1)

*The Paris Review*¹⁴³ on using real people for his characters, he replied: “I try to imagine how certain people I know would behave in certain circumstances. Of course I base my characters partly on the people I know—one can’t escape it—but fictional characters are oversimplified; they’re much less complex than the people one knows.” This was certainly true of Mary Thriplow; Huxley’s character possessed little passion, genuine affection, or immense feeling than was true of Mansfield, even if he failed to recognize it. As Huxley admitted in his interview: “...I’m not very good at creating people; I don’t have a very wide repertory of characters. These are difficult things for me. I suppose it’s largely a question of temperament. I don’t happen to have the right kind of temperament.” Huxley’s temperament was more inclined to ideas, than people. That is not to say that his people did not advance ideas; nonetheless, Mary Thriplow’s ideas were of course meaningless, shallow.

¹⁴³ (Aldous Huxley, “The Art of Fiction” Interviewed by Raymond Fraser, George Wickes *The Paris Review*, Spring 1960 No. 23)

Katherine Mansfield as Mary Thriplow in *Those Barren Leaves*¹⁴⁴

However thrilling as a first reading, her stories do not wear.

-Aldous Huxley on Katherine Mansfield¹⁴⁵

Huxley argues *Those Barren Leaves* is “a discussion and fictional illustration of different views of life...the mere business of telling a story interests me less and less” (LAH 228). Story aside, the least interesting view of life is assuredly seen through Mary Thriplow’s eyes, Mansfield’s eyes. In Huxley’s seminal biography, Sybille Bedford argues Huxley became irritated when acquaintances tried to pin down who they were in his roman à clef. He did not put “real characters” in his books as much as he used two or three striking aspects of someone’s nature as a starting point. (Bedford 123). This being the case, the most ‘striking aspects’ for Mansfield’s character ultimately depict her nature in an unflattering light – a “master of copy,” and a professional mourner. Mansfield was scarcely two years in her grave when Huxley caricatured her as Mary Thriplow in his satire, *Those Barren Leaves*. His ruthless, and yet oddly sympathetic, caricature may be read as both an aversion to what Miss Thriplow detects in herself – the lonely figure of a gifted, and doomed young writer; but furthermore, a retort to Murry’s simultaneous marketing of Mansfield’s work through a flood of posthumous publications.

¹⁴⁴ The title for *Those Barren Leaves* comes from William Wordsworth’s poem, “An Evening Scene on the Same Subject.” (1798)

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

¹⁴⁵ Aldous Huxley, “The Traveller’s –Eye View,” *The Nation and the Athenaeum*, XXXVII, May 16, 1925, p. 204.

In a novel that strips the pretensions of its characters to the bone, Mary Thriplow is laid bare quite comically. In depicting Mansfield, however, the portrayal is savage, cruel. We first meet Miss Thriplow: "...at once old-fashioned and tremendously contemporary...demure and more than Chelsea-ishly emancipated...the eyes dark brown; and their arched brows looked as though they had been painted onto the porcelain mask by an oriental brush...an inexpressive face, the face of a doll, but of an exceedingly intelligent doll" (*TBL* 3-4). There is no mistaking the real Mansfield, with her Chelsea abode, borderline-anorexia, and an intelligence, often underestimated (even feared), by her contemporaries. There is also no mistaking Huxley's views on her, so similarly described as in his letters – there is no arc in her circumference: "...they like my books because they're smart and unexpected and rather paradoxical and cynical and elegantly brutal...They don't see the tragedy and the tenderness underneath...I'm trying to do something new – a chemical compound of all the categories. Lightness and tragedy and loveliness and wit and fantasy and realism and irony and sentiment all combined" (*TBL* 53). We see a similar juxtaposition of ideas in Philip Quarles's notebook in *Point Counter Point*: "A novelist modulates by reduplicating situations and characters. He shows several people falling in love, or dying, or praying in different ways – dissimilars solving the same problem" (*PCP* 408); however, Mary Thriplow is no Quarles, and in lacking an essential core she is incapable of solving much at all.

Moreover, Miss Thriplow's success as an author, and lover, is in peddling off the unessential: "For Miss Thriplow didn't want to owe any of her success with this young man [Calamy] – and she liked to be successful with everybody – to the fact that she was a female novelist of good repute...with a talent for writing equally fortuitous and

unessential” (*TBL* 5-6). In a novel satirizing the absurd pretensions of society in the early twentieth century, Miss Thriplow is at the core. She represents the inessential, the lack, the falsehood of a world attempting to move on from the aftermath of the war. Surely at no point in history would it be more crucial for a writer to speak directly and truthfully, and yet Miss Thriplow states: “I think it’s difficult to be genuine...I get quite frightened when I see my name in the papers and photographers want to take pictures of me and people ask me out to dinner. I’m afraid of losing my obscurity. Genuineness only thrives in the dark. Like celery” (*TBL* 11). Her words, like her attentions, seem absurd. She is an iconic shell – pretty, famous, and always obscure. Her words and actions are all carefully chosen, with a mind to creating her art; however, her words usually mean the opposite of their intention: genuineness becomes disingenuous, and her obscurity is opaque. Mary Thriplow exemplifies an empty romanticism where she uses her beauty and her art to conceal her emptiness.

Her lover, Calamy, even congratulates her on the success of her subterfuge: “But what are all these compared to the horrors of being understood – completely understood? You’ve given yourself away, you’re known, you’re at the mercy of the creatures into whose keeping you have committed your soul...If I were you...I’d congratulate myself. You have a public which likes your books, but for the wrong reasons” (*TBL* 56). Clearly deriding both Mansfield and her writing, Huxley’s knife digs deep, and always he comes back to her insincerity: “When, as on this occasion, she followed her natural bent towards smartness too far, or when, carried away by the desire to make herself agreeable in flashing company, she found herself saying something whose brilliance was not in harmony with the possession of simple and entirely natural emotions...” (*TBL* 42).

Her person is not natural, nor her writing, not even her grief.

Miss Thriplow offers a new perspective of mourning, where she has made a religion out of grieving for her dead brother Jim: “Darling, darling Jim. How much she had loved him, how terribly unhappy she had been when he died. And she still suffered; still, after all these years. Miss Thriplow sighed. She was proud of being able to suffer so much; she encouraged her suffering. This recollection of Jim when he was a little boy...” (*TBL* 48). This particular characterization of Mansfield uses personal tragedy in a way that is most cutting in the novel. In all likelihood, Huxley’s intentions in portraying Mansfield’s grief as a comedic episode in his satire are directed more at Murry, than her, as Murry was already peddling off her private journals and letters within months of her death. Nevertheless, it is Mansfield’s grief over her dead brother, Leslie, which is satirized. Miss Thriplow’s grief is yet another of Mansfield’s many masks: “[Miss Thriplow], who had always told people she was sensitive, had a deep and quivering heart. This was a proof. Nobody knew how much she suffered, underneath. How could people guess what lay behind her gaiety? ‘The more sensitive one is,’ she used to tell herself, ‘the more timid and spiritually chaste, the more necessary it is for one to wear a mask’” (*TBL* 48). Rendering Leslie’s death as fodder for another ghastly depiction of Miss Thriplow seems rather a savage move on Huxley’s part.

Miss Thriplow’s memory of Jim is hauntingly similar to Mansfield’s journal, and her fond remembrances of growing up with her brother in Wellington, New Zealand. However, when Miss Thriplow’s memories of her dead brother are triggered it always involves some kind of disingenuous performance: “It’s a psychological impossibility – that the barber’s shop at Weltringham (an obvious adaption of Wellington) is a symbol of

her childhood and that the smell of the crushed laurel leaf brought back her dead brother – in the story it would be a brother” (*TBL* 49). For Mary Thriplow, every emotion, every wrench on her heart-strings results in a story: all of life is merely *copy*, a performance of art. In a similar fashion to Mansfield’s personal correspondence, devoid of any real feeling, however, Miss Thriplow laments loudly and repetitively:

Darling Jim, darling Jim. Miss Thriplow had found the form of words for her worship...But did she really care at all?...he had died so long ago; he had nothing to do with her now. Why should she care or remember? And all this systematic thinking about him, this writing of things in a secret diary devoted to his memory – wasn’t all that merely for the sake of keeping her emotions in training? Wasn’t she deliberately scratching her heart to make it bleed, and then writing stories with the red fluid? (*TBL* 81-2).

Here it appears that Huxley is directly addressing Murry who has, indeed, published the very private memories of Mansfield. We read: “Miss Thriplow would have written more on this subject, but she was always apprehensive that somebody might find her note-book and read it. She did not want that to happen till she was dead” (*TBL* 263). While Huxley is certainly taking shots at Murry, there is also a thinly veiled suggestion that Mansfield would not really have objected too strongly at her posthumous popularity. Moreover, Huxley also critiques Mansfield for her insistence on holding on to her grief. There is a certain irony in Huxley diminishing the way she grieved over her brother’s loss – too long and too publicly in his mind – and yet, almost the entirety of Huxley’s literary canon has been grappling to come to terms with the death of his mother, Julia.¹⁴⁶ One might surmise that Mansfield’s expression of grief, struck a nerve at Huxley’s repression of his own.

¹⁴⁶ Julia Arnold Huxley (1862-1908) died when Aldous was only 14. Bedford argues that Aldous never fully recovered from this loss (see Bedford, I, 24-25).

The final sardonicism in *Those Barren Leaves* is that through Miss Thriplow we so often hear a voice that could be addressed to Huxley: “You write sentimental tragedies in terms of satire and they see only the satire” (*TBL* 54). The bigger issues that Huxley reflected on in *Those Barren Leaves* were often overlooked—the postwar world, searching for meaning at a time when there was not one. Commercially, *Those Barren Leaves* was a success. It was well received and sold eight thousand copies in the first year (Bedford 152). However, Huxley wrote to Naomi Mitchison that he was dissatisfied with the work, it was shallow and off the point (*LAH* 242). The main theme, he wrote, “is the undercutting of everything by a sort of despairing skepticism and then undercutting of that by mysticism” (*LAH* 234). It was Miss Thriplow who best personified this: “In the course of the last few days the entries in Miss Thriplow’s note-book had changed their character. From being amorous they had turned mystical. Savage and mindless passion was replaced by quiet contemplation” (*TBL* 356). At the end of the novel, Calamy, Mary Thriplow’s lover, has gone to live in the mountains by himself. Searching for a solution to life through solitude and meditation, he asserts: “The mind must be open, unperturbed, empty of irrelevant things, quiet. There’s no room for thought in a half-shut, cluttered mind. And thoughts won’t enter a noisy mind...If one wants to lure them out, one must clear a space for them, one must open the mind wide and wait. And there must be no irrelevant preoccupations prowling around the doors” (*TBL* 347-48) Mary Thriplow has been the impediment to his search, one of the “irrelevant things;” however, there is almost a poetic and ironic twist to all this. Calamy’s fictional journey is not so very different to the real one Mansfield travelled at the end of her life. On her quest, she, too,

embraces an ending, leaving behind her own “irrelevant things:” at the end of the day, she is closer to Calamy than to Thriplow.

Background to Burlap: The Cult of Mansfield¹⁴⁷

I shall be obliged if the contents of this book are regarded as my private property.

-Katherine Mansfield¹⁴⁸

When they had agreed, with tears, to found a kind of private cult for poor Susan, to raise and keep perpetually illumined and adorned an inward altar to her memory, Ethel had imagined that they were meaning what they were saying...It never occurred to her that Burlap did not.

-Ethel Cobbett in *Point Counter Point*¹⁴⁹

A discussion of the “cult of Mansfield” is important to this chapter, as, while it plays into *Those Barren Leaves*, it is essentially the germ for Huxley’s portrayal of the dead Mansfield (Susan) and her grieving husband, Murry (Burlap), in *Point Counter Point*. Murry’s creation of the “cult of Mansfield” was distinctly unique to modern literature. Using his considerable authority as a critic, husband, literary executor, editor, and biographer, Murry created a misleading picture of her character and, moreover, their marriage. While one is reminded of Sylvia Plath and the posthumous damage of her work by her editor husband, Ted Hughes, this pales in comparison to Murry’s crusade. While Murry established a posthumous reputation far greater than Mansfield had enjoyed in her lifetime, he also published work that she had expressly not wanted to publish –

¹⁴⁷ See footnote 25 for previous discussion on the “cult of Mansfield.”

¹⁴⁸ *Katherine Mansfield’s Notebook 2:1* (Notebook 4) Written on fly-leaf of the notebook, under the name Katherine Mansfield.

¹⁴⁹ *PCP* 234

intrinsically damaging her canon.¹⁵⁰ As Jan Pilditch states: “The publication of the *Journal* and the *Letters* had made a large body of intimate detail about Mansfield which distracted critics from Mansfield’s work for some thirty years after her death, and led them to an engagement with sensitivity, passion, courage, and other like qualities. In the first decade after her death the Mansfield legend had become a cult. (Pilditch xxiii-xxvi) Indeed, the greater part of Mansfield’s work in print – her letters, incidental journal entries, and several of her short stories, were never intended for publication.

Murry’s motives were no doubt complex, but the execution of her will was certainly not what she had wished for. If we consider correspondence between them in 1918, however, his intentions indicate something verging on sinister. After Murry received a letter from Mansfield in 1918 in which she speaks of spitting “bright arterial blood,”¹⁵¹ he writes to her in return with callous regard for her health, but, instead, morbid interest in her letters : “Another thing, if any of my letters are alive still, will you keep them? I have all yours – and I think they may be important to us one day.”¹⁵² It appears, already eyeing his future as a widower, quite calculatingly he aimed to covet Mansfield’s work. There could have been no confusion that he misread Mansfield’s wishes, for time and again she expressed her desires: “Queer, this habit of mine of being garrulous. And I don’t mean that any eye but mine should read this. This is – really private. And I must say – nothing affords me the same relief.”¹⁵³ In the letter that predated her official will by merely a week, she wrote to Murry: “All my manuscripts I

¹⁵⁰ Murry edited and subsequently published the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (1928), *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield* (1929), *The Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield* (1939), and *Katherine Mansfield’s Letters to John Middleton Murry 1913-1922* (1951). He finally published what he called the ‘definitive edition’ of *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* in 1954. (Pilditch xxiii-xxvi)

¹⁵¹ *LKM* 2:79, 19 Feb. 1918.

¹⁵² *KMMML* 130, 10 Mar. 1918.

¹⁵³ *JKM* 255, 14 July 1921.

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?”¹⁵⁴ Certainly, Mansfield’s official will¹⁵⁵ written on 14 August 1922, eradicated any ambiguity as to her intentions: “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” (*LKM4*: 235n1).

Regardless, just five weeks after her death Murry published a lengthy essay on Mansfield in the *Literary Review* of the *New York Evening Post*.¹⁵⁶ His essay contained all the hyperbolic praise that was to become the foundation for the cult he created in her name; furthermore, he laid the foundation of his thoughts and intentions for her work, rarely deviating from them until his death in 1957. Indeed, only three of Mansfield’s books appeared during her lifetime. The remaining eleven were edited by Murry after her death, and when Constable sent Murry a royalty check for a thousand pounds for *The Dove’s Nest* and *Poems* (both 1923), he exclaimed: “It was by far the biggest check I had ever received, and ten times as big as any Katherine had received for her own work” (Lea 124). The posthumous proceeds from Mansfield’s work ensured profitable years for Murry and his family. For within a year of Mansfield’s death Murry married Violet Le Maistre, and he presented her with Mansfield’s engagement ring, bought their house with royalties from Mansfield’s work, and they then proceeded to live on the five-hundred

¹⁵⁴ *KMML* 363, 7 Aug. 1922

¹⁵⁵ Mansfield’s will also bequeathed to D. H. Lawrence – a book, and to S. S. Kot – a carved walking stick (*LKM4*: 235n1).

¹⁵⁶ Colin Murry, *I at the Keyhole* California: Stein and Day, 1975 p. 139

pounds a year royalties from Mansfield's work. In a rather macabre manner, Violet appears to have simply replaced and replicated Mansfield in Murry's life. She looked astonishingly like Mansfield, and imitated her down to her hair style, dress, and mannerisms. While Violet clearly held some pathological attachment to the dead first wife, Murry did not discourage this obsession. Lea argues, Murry, with his incredible obtuseness, took three years to discover that Violet was not Katherine, and admitted, "It never struck me for a moment that there was a great difference between Katherine when I first met her, and Violet now." (Quoted in F. A. Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry*. London: Methuen, 1959, p. 140.)¹⁵⁷

This chapter in Murry's life illustrates, perhaps, that Huxley's portrayal of Murry as Burlap, the child-man, deviates little from the truth. However, Murry's mishandling of Mansfield's body of work is by no means childlike, it is the act of a shrewd man, egregiously ignoring his dead wife's wishes. In deliberately misinterpreting her work, exaggerating the delicate and totally ignoring the earthy, the witty and the bitter side of her writing, he unfortunately damaged her work, and in the wake, her reputation. As her close friend Koteliensky pronounced, when Murry published her letters and journals he "left out all the jokes," to make her an "English Tchekov."¹⁵⁸ Contending that Mansfield was "the most perfect and accomplished literary artist of the generation to which I belong," Murry seemed to overlook that his generation included the likes of Virginia Woolf, Lawrence, Huxley, Joyce, Pound, and Eliot. Further contending that Mansfield

¹⁵⁷ Further, they named their daughter Katherine, and published Violet's stories, as well as Katherine's (posthumously), in his magazine, *The Adelphi*. According to Lea, when Violet contracted tuberculosis, she exclaimed, "O I'm so glad. I wanted this to happen. ... I wanted you to love me as much as you loved Katherine? – and how could you, without this?" (Lea144) After Violet's death in 1931, Murry asked, "Am I attracted only by two kinds of women? – one that I kill, the other that kills me?" (Lea187)

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Beatrice Glenavy, *Today We Will Only Gossip* London: Constable, 1964. p. 69

“has written better stories than Gilbert Cannan or D. H. Lawrence have ever written in their lives, and better than they are ever likely to,”¹⁵⁹ his hyperbole, while ludicrous, changed the trajectory of Mansfield’s place in twentieth century literature, and not necessarily for the better. Not surprisingly, Lawrence criticized Murry for proselytizing Mansfield’s memory, and warned that hyperbolic statements about her would provoke a critical reaction: “You are wrong about Katherine. She was *not* a great genius. She had a charming gift, and a finely cultivated one. But *not more*. And to try, as you do, to make it more is to do her no true service” (Quoted in Carswell 198).

Katherine Porter agreed, astutely proclaiming: “Katherine Mansfield’s work is the important fact about her, and she is in danger of the worst fate than an artist can suffer – to be overwhelmed by her own legend, to have her work neglected for an interest in her “personality” (Porter 435). An example of this is in Edith Sitwell’s essay “Three Women Writers,”¹⁶⁰ which appeared in the popular London journal *Vogue* in October of 1924. It describes her as “exquisite, flawless, narrow, sweet, poignant, and contained within her own limitations.” What Mansfield gives us, Sitwell insists: “is the thing we have known, but have hidden, for fear it should be spoiled.” Sitwell endows Mansfield’s work with a fragile, ethereal quality, a compliment fairly typical for the time, but obviously not a serious critique of her work, with its strengths and flaws. Always caught up in these assessments, were the facts of her life and the untimely tragedy of her death. Nonetheless, Murry had created this feeding-frenzy that picked bare the bones of Mansfield’s life. As

¹⁵⁹ John Middleton Murry, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 317-318.

¹⁶⁰ Edith Sitwell, “Three Women Writers: Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, and Gertrude Stein,” *Vogue* (London) 64, no. 7 (October 1924 81, 114).

Angela Smith has suggested, some of Mansfield's friends regarded her papers as a body which Murry had cannibalized. Sylvia Lynd, referring to Murry's practice of publishing scraps of Mansfield's personal writing and unfinished stories in his own magazine, spoke of Murry "boiling Katherine's bones to make soup,"¹⁶¹ an opinion shared by Leonard and Virginia Woolf." (Smith 66-67)

Lawrence, meanwhile, wrote to Dorothy Brett, "I hear Katherine's letters sell largely, yet Murry whines about poverty and I hear he *inserts* the most poignant passages himself. Ottoline declares that in the letters to her, large pieces are inserted, most movingly" (*LDHL*7: 55). There does not appear to be concrete evidence that Murry inserted passages into Mansfield's work; however, he certainly published stories that she recognized as unworthy for publication; or, at the least, publication without the context of her literary experience, or lack thereof in the case of her earliest stories. Contemporary critics acknowledge the mishandling in Murry's editorial control of Mansfield's canon, and her large body of work has been restored, as faithfully as possible, to something resembling the intent. Murry's intent, however, seems little more than exploitative – disregarding all of Mansfield's final wishes, he relentlessly published much that should have remained private, and in doing so, exposed Mansfield's vulnerabilities, as both a woman and an author. This mythologizing of Mansfield planted the germ for the Huxley's satirical representation of Murry as the loathsome Burlap in *Point Counter Point*.

¹⁶¹ Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (London: Viking, 1987), 241

Point Counter Point: The Burial of Burlap

...she was wondrous beautiful,
And some one with a wizard pen at birth
Had drawn her brows, from some enchanted pool
Had brimmed her eyes, trembling with deeper mirth,
Nearer to profound tears than any of this earth.

-John Middleton Murry¹⁶²

Nothing more powerfully prepares a man's instinctive and unconscious nature for passionate love than prolonged contact with hopeless illness in a loved one.

-John Middleton Murry¹⁶³

The above epigraph might well have been Huxley's genesis for the character of Denis Burlap in *Point Counter Point*, and Burlap was certainly the caricature for Murry. Within early twentieth century literary figures, none so profited from the reputation of a dead spouse as Murry: he quite literally made a living off it – emotionally and financially. While Huxley is less interested in passing judgements on his characters so much as is in illustrating how complicated modern life is, and how we are, ultimately, ill-equipped to prepare for its tragedies and twists of fate – Burlap is undoubtedly the most pitiful example of ill-equipped humanity in the novel. In *Point Counter Point*, Huxley's concern with the dichotomy between passion and reason, suggests, that Burlap has neither. In a novel where ideas are translated through the lives of characters, the scope is even wider

¹⁶² From JMM's "The Opening of a Tale" *Poems: 1916-2013*, published in Mansfield's memory in *The Adelphi* (Jan 1924).

¹⁶³ From J. M. Murry's, *Keats*, 4th ed. (London: Cape, 1955; New York: Minerva, 1968), p. 28.

than *Those Barren Leaves* and infinitely more satisfying. Even Lawrence begrudgingly avowed: “I do think you’ve shown the truth, perhaps the last truth, about your generation, with really fine courage...and if the public knew *what* it was reading, it would throw a hundred stones at you, to one at me. I do think art has to reveal the palpitating moment or the state of man as it is. And I think you do that, terribly” (*LDHL6*: 600).¹⁶⁴ Perhaps the public did not understand they were reading an indictment of their own state. Regardless, *Point Counter Point* was published in October 1928 and was a critical and popular success, selling well on both sides of the Atlantic.

Within Huxley’s canon, *Point Counter Point* is generally considered one of his finest works. Primarily concerned with the duality in human nature, within the text there is the constant to-and-froing between what is said and what is meant, all leading to miscommunication, confusion, and, ultimately, separation. Through his mouthpiece Philip Quarles, Huxley expounds: “the essence of the new way of looking is multiplicity. Multiplicity of eyes and multiplicity of aspects seen...What I want to do is look with all those eyes at once” (*PCP* 266).¹⁶⁵ The novelist L. P. Hartley wrote in his review of the book that *Point Counter Point* “contains all the ingredients of [Huxley’s] former books, but hotter and stronger and in greater abundance. It is an imposing and a dangerous dish, not meant for queasy stomachs” (Hartley 149). Certainly there is no dearth of lust, despair, and desperation in *Point Counter Point*, invariably demonstrated simultaneously,

¹⁶⁴ In this same letter Lawrence proclaims that Rampion is “the most boring character in the book – a gas-bag,” and, of course, he is the Lawrencian figure in the text.

¹⁶⁵ Huxley as Quarles ponders: “After a few hours in Mark Rampion’s company he really believed in noble savagery; he felt convinced that the proudly conscious intellect ought to humble itself a little and admit the claims of the heart, eye and the bowels, the loins, the bones and skin and muscles-to a fair share of life. The heart again!” (*PCP* 270). Multiple aspects of experience are explored in *Point Counter Point*, where Huxley is ultimately looking for a fusion, or an end to duality, which I believe he finally realizes, might only be found in mystical consciousness.

and often involving Burlap. In fact, the only healthy characters¹⁶⁶ in the novel are Mark (the writer and artist) and Mary Rampion, modelled on the Lawrences. Mark Rampion is an outspoken intellectual, writer, and artist who comes from a working-class family in the Midlands. While Huxley subsequently stated that Lawrence's character was "incomparably queerer and more complex," he conceded that Rampion was the "mouthpiece" for some of Lawrence's ideas (Smith 339-40). Other despicable forms of humanity, displayed often through their strange sexual predilections, come in the character of sensualists like John Bidlake, who has engaged in a life-long series of extramarital affairs; adulterers like Walter Bidlake; sexual predators in the form of Lucy Tantamount (modelled on Nancy Cunard); there is Maurice Spandrell the immoralist suffering from ennui; there are fascists, even murderers, but really none so despicable as Burlap – the anguished *moralist* whose penchant is for seducing his assistants by wallowing in grief.¹⁶⁷

Denis Burlap, who the Lawrence figure, Rampion, so aptly describes as a "little stink-pot of a St. Francis" is the editor of a literary paper (based on the *Athenaeum*), and Burlap attracts the attention of female readers in a most perverse way – through his mourning. Unlike St. Francis, however, Burlap's spirituality is carnal—all about the flesh. Burlap, who idolizes St. Francis and is in the process of writing a full-length study

¹⁶⁶ *Point Counter Point* is in part a roman à clef: Philip Quarles is, for the most part, Huxley; Burlap is John Middleton Murry; Beatrice Hastings is based, in part, on Dorothy Brett; Lucy Tantamount is Nancy Cunard (with whom Huxley had a very brief but emotionally debilitating affair prior to writing *Point Counter Point*); Oswald Mosley seems a partial portrait of Everard Webley, the head of the "Brotherhood of British Freemen;" Mark and Mary Rampion are portraits of Lawrence and his wife Frieda.

¹⁶⁷ As early as 1918, Murry had been lamenting to his friends his poor lot in life – his work-load, and of course the stresses of caring for an ill spouse. As Woolf observed in a diary entry, Monday 18 March 1918: "Poor Murry snarled and scowled with the misery of his lot. He works all day, and writes when he comes home. Worst of all, K.M. has been very ill with haemorrhage from the lungs, out in France, & has to be brought home, wh.[ich] is difficult, in order to see how bad she is" *DVW* 1:129.

of the Saint – *St. Francis and the Modern Psyche* – is , in fact, everything the saint despised: lascivious, greedy, without any virtue whatsoever, despite having dedicated his life to “devotion.” Burlap has, however, mastered the art of “sympathizing.” Like the real Murry, Burlap is enigmatic: “You never knew where you stood with him. Either he loved you, or he hated. Life with him was a series of scenes – scenes of hostility or, even more trying...scenes of affection. One way or the other, the emotion was always flowing” (*PCP* 62). Huxley scrutinizes the disjunction in Burlap’s persona. He, like Murry, is not merely a weak, passive, suffering man, but rather a powerful man capable of manipulating and destroying the lives of his employees. Huxley was Murry’s assistant editor at the *Athenaeum*¹⁶⁸ in 1918, and using this experience he ridicules Murry professionally, and personally. Personally, Huxley had an axe to grind. For aside from a novel designed to comment on the downfall of society, he also had a personal stake in defending a friend, and that friend was Lawrence. Over the years, Murry had treated Lawrence quite appallingly, at least in Huxley’s eyes, and so the despicable Burlap, alongside the Rampion who comments on the destructive form of human nature, especially the sexual, is quite a personal indictment thinly veiled in Huxley’s roman à clef.

Of the three world views or philosophies within *Point Counter Point*, Spandrell’s is essentially one of rejection, Rampion embraces at least a degree of health and sanity, while Burlap represents the perverse – a complete inversion of St. Francis. Like the real

¹⁶⁸ Woolf, is both critical of Murry’s editorship at the *Athenaeum* but also jealous. Perceptively, however, she writes: “Success has already begun to do for Murry what I always said it would do...Why, he chuckled like a schoolboy; his eyes shone; his silences were occupied with pleasant thoughts...not that he would admit that to edit the *Athenaeum* was much more than preferable to a place in a government office...I suspect his boast will come true; the *Athenaeum* will be the best literary paper in existence in 12 months (*DVWI*: 256).

Murry, he is duplicitous and untrustworthy. Regurgitating his own editorials, he theatrically role-plays a part that is intrinsically inauthentic: “When Susan died Burlap exploited the grief he felt, or at any rate loudly said he felt, in a more than usually painful series of those always painfully personal articles which were the secret of his success as a journalist” (*PCP* 229). The major prop in all of his role-playing is Susan Burlap. Susan (Mansfield) is a fictionalized version of the deceased wife; she merely authenticates Burlap’s narcissism – child-like, saint-like, the prop for the widower’s devout admiration and eternal suffering.¹⁶⁹ Wallowing in grief has its benefits, however, and for Burlap it serves as a tool for seducing women both before and after his wife’s death: “He was, however frequently unfaithful; but he had such a pure, child-like and platonic way of going to bed with women, that neither they nor he ever considered that the process really counted as going to bed” (*PCP* 232). His anticipatory grief is healed by acts of unfaithfulness, and when Susan eventually dies: “...he plunged into an orgy of regrets...repentances, excruciating for being too late, of unnecessary confessions and self-abasements” (*PCP* 233). Turning his grief toward Miss Ethel Cobbett, Burlap is: “A broken-hearted child in need of consolation, he would have liked to lure his consoler, ever so spiritually and platonically, into a gentle and delicious incest” (*PCP* 234).

¹⁶⁹ In reality Murry was very much the absent husband, as illustrated in this letter by Mansfield to JMM [30 November 1919] “...How I envy Virginia; no wonder she can write. There is always in her writing a calm freedom of expression as though she were at peace ...and her man somewhere within call. Boge what have I done that I should have *all* the handicaps” (*KML* 3:128-29). As Burgin asserts: “The comparison of Virginia Woolf’s conjugal situation with her own was painful. Whereas Leonard Woolf managed, perhaps dictatorially, to shield his wife from the distractions of outside life when she was suffering her bouts with mental illness, Murry did not have the same unswerving dedication, nor did he exercise the same will to protect Mansfield” (Burgen152).

Emotionally impotent, all he leads Ethel toward is suicide, a consequence of his rejection of her in favor of Beatrice Gilray.

Ethel Cobbett had been at school with Susan Paley, the Susan Paley that Burlap remembered as: "...the realest Susan, the little girl who survived so beautifully and purely in the woman, to the very end; the lovely child that in spite of chronology she always was, underneath and parallel with the physical Susan living in time" (*PCP* 229). When Burlap is not engaging in seduction, he is writing copious "pages of a rather hysterical lyricism about the dead child-woman" (*PCP* 229-30), to which: ". . . at the end of some few days of incessant spiritual masturbation, he had been rewarded by a mystical realization of his own unique and incomparable piteousness. . . ." (*PCP* 231). The satiric portrait of Burlap's mourning depicts Huxley's scathing critique of Murry in the aftermath of Mansfield's death. However, in the process of deriding Murry's myth-making and his ghoul-like scavenging off the bones of his dead wife, Huxley also reinforces how devastating the consequences of Murry's myth-making are for posterity. For Huxley never associates Burlap's wife, Susan, with literature. In fact, he effectively indicates how Mansfield, the accomplished woman writer has disappeared behind the angelic figure of the Mansfield Myth in fictional depictions of critical and cultural debate. In many respects, the warning that Katherine Porter portended—the danger of the myth engulfing Mansfield – is seen in Huxley's novel.

When the novel ends, we are reminded at how quickly Burlap recovers from all things, including his grief. Summoning up his courage to finally get rid of Ethel Cobbett, the novel culminates with Burlap discovering his ideal partner – Beatrice, who takes part willingly in his game of childlike innocence. As Meckier asserts:

When Beatrice and the despicable Burlap take their baths together in the novel's final scene, Huxley passes stern judgement on the moral stature of his contemporaries. The novel's concluding exclamation: 'of such is the Kingdom of Heaven' (601), a sarcastic invocation of the Beatitudes, means its opposite. *Point Counter Point* defies the reader to construct a heavenly kingdom from its characters and proclaims itself, as well as the London it describes, a modernized, parodic version of Dante's *inferno*. (CEAH 18)

As Meckier contends, Huxley's novel is of course primarily concerned with the larger depiction of humanity in a period of crisis. Burlap, as a character, moreover, sums up accurately the extent of all that is wrong in human-kind, and it is relatively easy to discern so much of the man, Murry, in Huxley's depiction. For the most part, Murry was a disingenuous friend, an ineffectual husband, and certainly a macabre opportunist. Ironically, however, in being all that Murry was not, Huxley used *Point Counter Point* to nobly refute Murry's attacks on his friend, Lawrence, and, in so doing, he overlooked the greater victim – Mansfield herself. While unintentional, in depicting her as merely the dead invisible wife, he further marginalized her memory as a writer.

Re-creating Susan: In search of a *Good Death* –Gurdjieff’s Embrace

Tonight when the evening star shone through the side window and the pale mountains were so lovely I sat there thinking of death, of all there was to do – of Life which is so lovely – and of the fact that my body is a prison.¹⁷⁰

-Katherine Mansfield

In *Point Counter Point*, Burlap remarks to Ethel that Susan (Mansfield): “could never quite get it out of her head that she was a little girl playing at being grown up” (*PCP* 230). Burlap’s “hysterical lyricism about the dead child-woman” is then incorporated into his article – “Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven” (*PCP* 230). Given that the real Mansfield died at 34 years of age, after a decade of debilitating illness, she had very little time on this earth to *play* at anything. For the last five years of her life Mansfield began the protracted decline toward her death in 1923. Sadly, as Mansfield began to blossom as a writer and receive recognition for her work, her health faded away. She never ceased working, however, even writing for Murry’s *Athenaeum* more than a year’s worth of reviews that form a body of criticism on the nature of the fiction of her day (Burgin 118-19).¹⁷¹ Possibly the press of mortality made her reach for perfection and spurred her toward achieving all she might, for during this time Mansfield wrote most of the fiction that has marked her work as a remarkable model for the modern short story. While she was desperately ill she wrote: “Bliss,” “the Doll’s House,” “At the Bay,” “The

¹⁷⁰ *KMN2*: 291

¹⁷¹ Woolf, in considering how her own break from writing during her infirmity had actually been healing for her, remained mindful of how an ailing Mansfield had continued sending Murry reviews for the *Athenaeum* despite her ill health and her belief that such work was mere scribbling (*DVW2*: 125).

Garden Party,” and “The Daughters of the Late Colonel.” “Prelude” is, in fact, the only New Zealand story written before tuberculosis turned Mansfield into an invalid. As Woolf observed, Mansfield had long been “glaring” at death, and having been “forever pursued by her dying,” she had been forced to “press through stages” in writing “that should have taken years in ten minutes,” and to “cram into one year of growth five or six” (LVW4:366, DVW4: 315). As Burgan posits in *Illness, Gender, and Writing: The Case of Katherine Mansfield*: “she would have written without mortal disease, though I suggest that she would have written differently...her writing was always gendered but never eccentric; always personal but never obscure. It reached towards a clear understanding with her readers, and her need for understanding was, as I say, intensified by the rapid approach of her death.” (Burgan xvi). It is ironic that for so many years since Mansfield’s death, while her work has never been viewed as obscure, or misunderstood, it has often scrutinized as secondary to her person. Her person, and the choices she made in the last years of her life, meanwhile, has been unfathomable to many, including Huxley and Lawrence.

Really, there is very little mystery to the choices Mansfield made in her final years, particularly if one considers her health. Woolf, reminiscing on Mansfield’s illness after a prolonged bout of her own mental illness, recalled how fortunate she was to have Leonard, servants, and friends around her at her Rodmell country estate, unlike Mansfield who described receiving very little comfort in Italy as she lay in bed alone all day with a pistol by her side (DVW2:45, DVW2:126). Certainly, Huxley’s portrayal of Murry as Burlap in *Point Counter Point* – the absent husband, the self-serving husband – was by far closer to truth than merely a satirical rendering of Murry. As Woolf observed, when

Mansfield was in one of her darkest hours, seeking assurance from her absent husband, she had instead received a balance sheet of his accounts in reply (*DVW2*: 46).¹⁷² What Mansfield's letters and diaries illustrate is a timeline of deteriorating health, faced by a woman who is primarily alone. In 1918 Mansfield stated: "What happens is that I come in absolutely exhausted, lie down, sit up & sit in a daze of fatigue – a horrible state until 7 o'clock. I can barely walk, can't think. Don't dare to go to sleep because if I do I know I'll lie awake through the night & this is my horror" (*KMN2*: 129). By 1920, her disease was only relieved by rest and constant care: "Foster came. Says my lung is remarkably better but must rest absolutely for 2 months & not attempt to walk at all. I have got a 'bigger chance.' ... My life pains me. Cannot get a move on" (*KMN2*: 188).¹⁷³ Mansfield also voiced an increasing amount of frustration with the conventional medical profession:

¹⁷² Woolf was more aware than anyone of Mansfield's failing health. Years of their correspondence are littered with references to illness: To Virginia Woolf [c. mid-November 1918] "...I have just bade goodbye to Doctor Stonham – who – oh dear! – says I must expect to be an invalid until I have been in Switzerland a *year* or *so* – He says both my lungs are rather badly affected – This is very tiresome, Virginia – but he is sending me roots and herbs, & he was awfully kind" (*KML2*: 289).

To Virginia Woolf [September 1918] "...We have not been able to go away. At the very last moment I was afraid of the strange hotel and having to look after myself – and now I *couldn't* go anywhere. The weather caught me and I'm not well. I do nothing but cough and rage – and I'm allowed to do nothing than be still. So the weekend I looked forward to *more than I can say* must be a dream for this year. I cannot say how sorry I am. Forgive me..." (*KML2*: 276)

To Virginia Woolf [1 November 1918] "...I meant to answer your letter but my strong right arm refused to obey me – I should *love* to see [you] one afternoon next week. ...I am a very dull dog, and in bed – but I try to look as though I were there for pleasure & not from necessity" (*KML2*: 285-86).

Saturday 9 November 1918: "Katherine was up, but husky & feeble, crawling about the room like an old woman. How far she is ill, one can't say. She impresses one a little unfavourably at first – then more favourably. I think she has a kind of childlikeness somewhere which has been much disfigured, but still exists. Illness, she said, breaks down one's privacy so that one can't write – The long story she has written breathes nothing but hate" (*DVW 1*:216).

¹⁷³ There are many entries in Mansfield's journal and notebooks illustrating how deathly ill she had become: "I cough and cough and at each breath a dragging, boiling, bubbling sound is heard. I feel that my whole chest is boiling. I sip water, spit, sip, spit. I feel I must break my heart...Life is – getting a breath: nothing else counts" (*KMJ* 207). "My spirit of life is so starved that it's just not dry. Nearly all my improved health is pretence – acting. What does it amount to? Can I walk? Only creep. Can I do anything with my hands or my body? Nothing at all. I am an absolutely hopeless invalid. What is my life? It is the existence of a parasite" (*KMN2*: 285). "Felt ill all day...rather like a beetle shut in a book, so shackled that one can do nothing but lie down – and even to lie down becomes an agony. The worst of it is I have again lost hope...I have got off the raft again and am swept here and there by the sea" (*KMN2*: 326).

“Saw the fool of a doctor today, diddle-dum dum de! Cod is the only word!...Liar” (KMN2: 192). By Oct 11, 1922, Mansfield reached a turning point – both an acceptance of death and a new outlook on death. She wrote to Murry: “I feel the only thing to do is to get the dying over – to court it, almost...And then all hands to the business of being reborn again...I have to face everything as far as I can see where I stand – what *remains*” (LKM5: 294). Essentially, this letter marked a new phase in Mansfield’s life, and her choice to actively look beyond traditional forms of medicine and healing, for her remaining days, baffled her friends, and the critics henceforward.

Ironically for all of Huxley’s satirical diminishing of Mansfield as Mary Thriplow in *Those Barren Leaves*, in reality he and Mansfield were closer in their philosophies than ever he and Lawrence were.¹⁷⁴ In fact, one could very well argue that Mansfield’s final quest for understanding existence was similar to Huxley’s, but apprehended forty years earlier. Her journey of course was precipitated by her impending death: it was propelled by urgency. Huxley, on the other hand, devoted his search to decades. Jerome Meckier argues: “Nowhere else in American fiction will one find an equivalent for the duration and intensity of Huxley’s eschatological satire. In novel after novel, he depicts

¹⁷⁴ By 1934, Huxley has adamantly rejected Lawrence’s blood-philosophy. In *Beyond the Mexique Bay: A Traveller’s Journal* (1934), Huxley describes re-reading Lawrence’s *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), and comes to the following conclusion: The advance from primitivism to civilization, from mere blood to mind and spirit, is a progress whose price is fixed; there are no discounts even for the most highly talented purchasers. I thought once that the payment could be evaded, or at least very greatly reduced; that it was possible to make very nearly the best of both worlds. But this, I believe, was a delusion. The price that has to be paid for intellect and spirit is never reduced to any significant extent. To Lawrence, it seemed too high, and he proposed that we should return the goods and ask for our money back. When man became an intellectual and spiritual being, he paid for his new privileges with a treasure of intuitions, of emotional spontaneity, of sensuality still innocent of all self-consciousness. Lawrence thought that we should abandon the new privileges in return for the old treasure. But he was reckoning without himself...In practice, he found that it was psychologically impossible to return the new privileges or be content with the primitivism that had been paid away for them. It was even impossible for him to make a fictitious personage do so, at any rate convincingly. (BMB 314-15)

ludicrous deaths before trying to imagine what exemplary death would be like” (197).¹⁷⁵

In fairness, Mansfield simply did not have time to definitively exemplify what the perfect death may entail; however, it indubitably resembled the words of Huxley in *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945): “Man’s final end, the purpose of existence, is to love, know and be united with the immanent and transcendent Godhead. And this identification of self with the spiritual not-self can be achieved only by ‘dying to’ selfness and living to spirit” (PP 38).

In *The Perennial Philosophy*,¹⁷⁶ Huxley anthologized the mystical writing of all religions, illustrating his quest and increasing involvement with mysticism. Gerald Heard¹⁷⁷ called Huxley “The Poignant Prophet,” ushering in a new way of thinking, a new age. Heard assuredly played a part in Huxley’s quest, furthermore, he filled the void after Lawrence’s death in 1930, becoming Huxley’s best friend and confidant. Heard’s thinking was far closer to Huxley’s than Lawrence’s, believing that humanity was a spiritual species, gone astray from its spiritual roots. He reaffirmed and reignited Huxley’s interest in mysticism.¹⁷⁸ After Huxley moved to Hollywood in 1938, he and

¹⁷⁵ In Jerome Meckier’s “On D. H. Lawrence and Death, Especially Matricide: *Sons and Lovers*, *Brave New World*, and Aldous Huxley’s Later Novels” *Aldous Huxley Annual*. Vol. 7. (2007) pp. 190-221.

¹⁷⁶ In the introduction to *The Perennial Philosophy* one reads: “If one is not oneself a sage or saint, the best thing one can do, in the field of metaphysics, is to study the works of those who were, and who, because they had modified their merely human mode of being, were capable of a more than merely human kind and amount of knowledge” (PP xi).

¹⁷⁷ In 1950, Christopher Isherwood wrote that “Gerald Heard is one of the few who can properly be called philosophers; a man of brilliantly daring theory and devoted practice. I believe he has influenced the thought of our time, directly and indirectly, to an extent that will hardly be appreciated for another fifty years” (The Heard Collection, UCLA). E. M. Forster called Heard one of the “most penetrating minds in England” (Nigel Nicolson, ed., *Diaries and Letters of Harold Nicolson*, New York, 1967, II, 87).

¹⁷⁸ I suggest Heard “reignited” Huxley’s interest, as he was quite disillusioned in mysticism by the mid-1920s. After returning from his travels to India and Southeast Asia from September 1925 to April 1926, he wrote to Mencken: “I’m entering the USA by the back door. . . from the Orient, where I have been spending some months to satisfy myself empirically that all this rigmarole of Light from the East etc. is genuinely nonsense. Having done so, I am now on my way home” (Sexton 171).

Heard studied Vedanta,¹⁷⁹ collectively based on the ancient Hindu scriptures, the Bhagavad-Gita and Upanishads (Nance 12). Mansfield's letters and notebooks indicate she was studying the Hindu scriptures as early as 1921, but her intentions differed from Huxley. Whereas he was always concerned with the collective, humanity in its entirety, Mansfield was searching for something less abstract—simply a good death.

What appeared to be a rather naïve, if not altogether, misguided and impetuous interest in the spiritual nature “of being” perplexed both Mansfield's friends and critics. In 1937, Katherine Porter, one of the aforementioned critics proclaimed: “She had, then, all her clues; she had won her knowledge honestly, and she turned away from what she knew to pursue some untenable theory of personal salvation under a most dubious teacher... Her decision to go to Fontainebleau¹⁸⁰ was no whim, no accident. She had long been under the influence of Orage¹⁸¹...and he was the chief disciple of Gurdjieff in England.”¹⁸² Arguing that Mansfield “deliberately abandoned writing for a time and went

¹⁷⁹ Vedanta is one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy based on an intuitive belief in human beings' integral mystical spirituality, which remains dormant until each individual chooses to awaken it. In earlier writings, Sanskrit 'Vedānta' simply referred to the Upanishads, the most important and philosophical of the Vedic texts. However, in the medieval period of Hinduism, the word Vedānta came to mean the school of philosophy that interpreted the Upanishads. The Vedas are the oldest and most authoritative scriptures of Hinduism. (http://www.ramakrishnavivekananda.info/vivekananda/volume_1/lectures_and_discourses/the_vedanta_philosophy.htm).

¹⁸⁰ The Château Le Prieuré at Fontainebleau-Avon is where Gurdjieff founded The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in October 1922.

¹⁸¹ Alfred Richard Orage (who is generally only referenced by his last name) bought the small London weekly, *The New Age*, in 1906. Until 1922, when he relinquished the paper and went to Fontainebleau where Gurdjieff had his headquarters, Orage made journalistic history. Orage was remarkable for finding and mentoring new writers, among them Mansfield, who acknowledged her great indebtedness to him as a literary mentor. *The New Age* was more than a literary review – it also showed vested time in British political and economic movements. Orage wrote one book, *Consciousness: Animal, Human and Superman*, which hinted at the mental exercises he practiced to enlarge and elevate consciousness. T. S. Eliot called Orage the finest critical intelligence of his generation, which suggests that Orage was extremely educated toward his excursions into mysticism. In 1922, Orage cut all ties in England, and went to Gurdjieff at Fontainebleau-Avon. There, alongside Mansfield, he set to digging trenches and washing casseroles.

¹⁸² Porter, Katherine Anne. “The Art of Katherine Mansfield”, in *The Nation*, 145, October 23, 1937. 435-6, reprinted in *The Days Before*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1952.

into retirement at Fontainebleau,” Porter completely misunderstood Mansfield’s intentions and predicament. Far from abandoning her writing, or choosing retirement, Mansfield was simply dying and she was in search of a good death, on her own terms. Porter’s final words – that Mansfield “died suddenly and unexpectedly on the night of January 9, 1923. And so joined that ghostly company of unfulfilled, unhappy English artists who died and are buried in strange lands” – are quite inaccurate. For not only was Mansfield not English, but, conceivably, the last months of her life were the most fulfilling, the happiest of her very brief thirty-four years.

Mansfield’s decision to move to Fontainebleau was, in fact, not a rash decision. It was a choice made when all others had failed. A year before her death, Mansfield was investigating alternative therapies for her tuberculosis. In January 1922, she and Ida Baker¹⁸³ traveled to Paris in order for Mansfield to be treated by Dr. Manoukhin who claimed to have cured thousands of cases of tuberculosis with X-rays (Meyers 229). While offering temporary improvement, the radiation sickness from the treatment was intolerable to her. Not only that, but her illness was complicated by her extremely ineffectual husband, Murry. When Ida Baker returned to England, leaving Murry to take care of Mansfield, not only was Murry characteristically self-absorbed, but through his neglect Mansfield’s health worsened exponentially under his watch. Mansfield realized that she simply could not survive without Baker, and, as always, Baker returned to do all the things that Murry should have. By August, Baker aided her dying friend back to London, and it was at this juncture that the path to Fontainebleau began.

¹⁸³ Refer to footnote 1 for a fuller description of the Mansfield/Baker relationship.

While staying in Dorothy Brett's house in Pond Street, Mansfield spent much time in contemplation, seeing very few of her friends. She began an earnest search for a new approach to her tribulations of body, but, more significantly, also spirit. It was here, in London, that Mansfield was reunited with her old friend and editor, Orage, and it was Orage¹⁸⁴ who introduced Mansfield to the theories of Georges Ivanovitch Gurdjieff. Again, Mansfield was particularly receptive to suggestion, as almost any adjustment would have been better than the life she was presently leading – deathly ill, and alone again, Murry having abandoned her for his work. The natural recourse may have been to go to a sanatorium in Europe, but she could not tolerate the exclusive company of consumptives and believed a sanatorium would extinguish her creative inspiration. Her very poignant review of R.D. Prowse's *A Gift of the Dusk* (1920), is revealing of her mindset regarding her disease and sanatoriums as treatment. Considering Prowse's novel, a fictionalized account of life in a sanatorium, Mansfield observed: "The peculiar tragedy of the consumptive is that, although he is so seriously ill, he is – in most cases – not ill enough to give up the precious habits of health... Thus the small stricken company, living its impersonal life together among the immense mountains, is forever mocked by the nearness of those things which are forever out of reach."¹⁸⁵ At once, a very sad observation of her own condition.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Perhaps because Orage was a mentor to Mansfield for many years, their interests often seem to take the same direction – particularly their interest in the metaphysical. Ida Baker indicates that in Mansfield's *Journal* from November 1921 there are several entries discussing a book, *Cosmic Anatomy; the Structure of the Ego* by M. B. Oxon. She was fascinated by this book which "outlined a compact model of the Universe, providing a framework in which to see man, his place in this universe, science and religion in a new way" (Baker 173). This, too, is a text that is often mentioned by Orage, and it is conceivable that he introduced Mansfield to Oxon's work.

¹⁸⁵ *KMM Novels and Novelists* 1930, Boston, 1958 p. 282.

¹⁸⁶ Mansfield's view of her disease was quite different than that of Lawrence. As Huxley asserts: "Like a great many tuberculosis people, he was convinced that climate had a great effect on him – not only the temperature, but the direction of the wind, and all sorts of atmospheric conditions. He had invented a whole

Moreover, however, it represents an increasing trend in Mansfield's correspondence toward both recognition and resolution concerning her demise. In a notebook entry more than a full year before her death, Mansfield considered Gurdjieff's theories: "I can no more cure my psyche than my body....Someone has got to help me to get out....Do I believe in medicine alone? No. Never. In science alone? No. Never...And here, all these years I have been looking for someone who agreed with me. I have heard of Gurdjieff who seems not only to agree but to know infinitely more about it. Why hesitate? " (*KMN2*: 286). Further, she laments that Murry cannot help her – "remember Switzerland" – a very telling remark, indicating how useless Murry had been in any part of her rehabilitation, and a reminder that his help had, in fact, worsened her medical condition. Then, finally, a moment when her very conscious choice is revealed, not abrupt, or ill-conceived, but a decision to take control of the life that remains:

But perhaps to people who are not ill all this is nonsense. They have never travelled this road. How can they see where I am? All the reason to go boldly forward alone. Life is not simple. In spite of all we say about the mystery of life when we get down to it we want to treat it as though it were a child's tale...All that we mean when we speak of the external world. I want to enter into it, to be part of it, to live in it, to learn from it, to lose all that is superficial and acquired in me and to become a conscious, direct human being. (*KMN2*: 286-87)

For Mansfield, while not entirely sure of Gurdjieff's exact philosophy, he offered some form of hope. As Tomalin asserts: "Gurdjieff's theory that "civilization had thrown men and women out of balance, so that the physical, the emotional and the intellectual parts had ceased to work in accord" appealed to her. Writing to Murry in early October she was convinced Gurdjieff offered hope: "I am going to Fontainebleau next week to see

mythology of climate." *LAH*: Cambridge, 5.632; Quoted in Brewster's, *Reminiscences and Correspondence*, p.171; Aldous Huxley, *Writers at Work: The "Paris Review" Interviews: Second Series* (New York, 1963), p.210

Gurdjieff...from all I hear he is the only man who understands there is no division between body and spirit, who believes how they are related. You remember how I always said doctors only treat half. And you replied it's up to you to do the rest. It is. That's true. But first I must learn how. I believe Gurdjieff can teach me" (*LKM5*: 296). Subsequently, she joined Gurdjieff and about sixty of his believers at Fontainebleu on October 17, 1922, just three days after her thirty-fourth birthday. (Tomalin 232) While away from Murry, Mansfield seemed to achieve a sense of peace at the Institute that she had never felt before in her life. In fact, her enjoyment of life at Fontainebleau never wavered in its enthusiasm, and her letters describe her absolute faith in Gurdjieff.

While Huxley may not have so swiftly embraced the rather unclear concepts of Gurdjieff, he would most certainly have embraced his ideas concerning there being no healthy division between body and spirit. In *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*, Nicholas Murray asserts: "Until [Huxley's] death he was preoccupied with the relationship of mind and body, with the way in which the body often hampered and constrained the mind – but also how the mind needed to discover the right sort of relationship with the body, 'How senseless psychological and moral judgements really are apart from physiological judgements!'" (*LAH* 372-3).¹⁸⁷ Having spent most of his adult life deciphering the relationship between mind and body, and whether the better path would be mysticism or humanism, Huxley was, nonetheless a self-confessed "unmetaphysically-minded person." Julian Huxley contends that Aldous was: "never a mystic in any exclusive...sense, though he was keenly interested in the facts of mystical experience. He was equally fascinated ... by scientific discovery and the new clarity of understanding which they

¹⁸⁷ Written to his lifelong friend Naomi Mitchison in 1933. (*LAH* 372-3)

provided. But science abolishes only the false mysteries of mere failure to understand how existence works.”¹⁸⁸ To a degree, it was Huxley’s experiments with psychedelic drugs that widened his perception as to how a higher existence might be experienced.¹⁸⁹

Writing in *Heaven and Hell* (1956), that – “For most of us most of the time the world of everyday experience seems rather dim and drab. But for a few people often, and for a fair number occasionally, some of the brightness of visionary experience spills over, as it were, into common seeing, and the everyday universe is transfigured” (76) – it is evident that Huxley’s experiments with mescaline¹⁹⁰ or LSD had been instructive, if not transforming. He recognized, however, that mescaline was merely one way to trigger a biological glimpse into another, higher consciousness. Huxley was far more interested in the suggestion of hypnosis, and also deep meditation techniques. Again it is rather ironic that the character of Mansfield in *Those Barren Leaves* —Mary Thriplow – also partakes

¹⁸⁸ Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume, ed. Julian Huxley. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

¹⁸⁹ Huxley’s experiments grew out of conversations with medical and psychiatric practitioners at the time. Writing to Dr. Osmond¹⁸⁹ in April 1953, Huxley asserted: It looks as though the most satisfactory working hypothesis about the human mind must follow, to some extent, the Bergsonian model, in which the brain with its associated normal self, acts as a utilitarian device for limiting, and making selections from, the enormous possible world of consciousness, and for canalizing experience into biologically profitable channels. Disease, mescaline, emotional shock, aesthetic experience and mystical enlightenment have the power, each in its different way and in varying degrees, to inhibit the functions of the normal self and its ordinary brain activity, thus permitting the ‘other world’ to rise into consciousness...” (LAH 668-69). Henri Bergson (1859-1941) was a French philosopher whose international fame reached cult-like heights during his lifetime, however, his influence decreased notably after the WWII. While such French thinkers as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Lévinas explicitly acknowledged his influence on their thought, it is generally agreed that it was Gilles Deleuze’s 1966 *Bergsonism* that marked the reawakening of interest in Bergson’s work. Deleuze realized that Bergson’s most enduring contribution to philosophical thinking is his concept of multiplicity. Bergson’s concept of multiplicity attempts to unify in a consistent way two contradictory features: heterogeneity and continuity. (Lawlor, Leonard and Moulard Leonard, Valentine, “Henri Bergson,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/bergson/>>.

¹⁹⁰ Mescaline, a mind altering drug, derived from the Mexican root peyote. Its ingestion leads to hallucinations, visions, and dreams. It was first classified in the 1880s by the German pharmacologist, Louis lewin. It was synthesized about 1918. By the 1950s mescaline experimentation was limited, and Huxley offered himself as a new subject. His reasons for doing so are laid out in this letter. (Bedford 525)

in a form of meditation, or at least, an attempt at meditation. Lying in bed, hardly breathing, we find Miss Thriplow: “empty, she said to herself every now and then, quite empty. She felt wonderfully tranquil. God was surely very near. The silence grew more profound, her spirit became calmer and emptier” (*TBL* 360). But with true Huxley panache, in the next moment, her worries finally fade, even God fades and “Miss Thriplow [falls] into a profound and tranquil sleep (*TBL* 361).

One senses that Gurdjieff, Mansfield’s holy man, would have made a remarkable character in one of Huxley’s satires. Effortlessly, Gurdjieff attracted a following of disciples who were fiercely loyal and dedicated. As a figure, he was assuredly one of the more colorful and enigmatic spiritual leaders of the twentieth century. Whether a charlatan, a fraud, or a seer, he was certainly remarkably charismatic, with, what appears to be a genuine life-long compulsion to understand the significance of human life. Born in 1877, in Alexandropol (and whether this town was proper to Armenia or Georgia, the Ottoman sultanate or Tsarist Russia, seems to have been a vexed question), he spoke Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and Russian, was highly intelligent and captivating, wrote several lengthy books,¹⁹¹ and even excelled as a chef (Lachman). Gurdjieff’s theories are far too long and complex for the scope of this chapter, but, at the heart of his ideology is the idea of being “conscious in Essence:” it appears to have been a mixture of mysticism, theosophy, and the metaphysical. Gurdjieff appealed to many of the great thinkers of his

¹⁹¹ Gurdjieff’s works: *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1950, and *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, New York: Dutton, 1963.

Gurdjieff’s “unity of being” From *Beelzebub’s Tales* constitutes:

Faith of consciousness is freedom; Faith of feeling is weakness; Faith of body is stupidity.

Love of consciousness evokes the same in response; Love of feeling evokes the opposite; Love of body depends only on type and polarity.

Hope of consciousness is strength; Hope of feeling is slavery; Hope of body is disease.

time—among these, Orage, as aforementioned, and additionally, Peter Demianovich Ouspensky.

While Gurdjieff was the master, Orage and Ouspensky were his leading disciples.¹⁹² Ouspensky¹⁹³ had aided Gurdjieff in 1921, initiating groups in London for the study of the Gurdjieff system.¹⁹⁴ Both Orage and Mansfield had attended these lectures, and it was certainly Ouspensky that provided the final impetus Mansfield needed to move to Fontainebleu. Ironically, Ouspensky was to become acquainted with Huxley as well, although not in a manner that he had desired. In an attempt to extricate himself from Gurdjieff in the 1930s, Ouspensky began courting the great minds of his contemporaries – among these, Aldous Huxley.¹⁹⁵ According to Gary Lachman, in his *In*

¹⁹² One year after Mansfield's death in 1923, Gurdjieff came to America with forty pupils—English and Russian—and gave public demonstrations of dervish and temple dances. Orage came along but did not perform the movements, although he had practiced them for a Paris demonstration. When Gurdjieff and his pupils sailed for France, Orage was left in New York to organize groups for the study of Gurdjieff's system, and for the next seven years he was engaged in this task. (Lachman)

¹⁹³ Peter Demianovich Ouspensky (March 4, 1878–October 2, 1947) was a Russian mathematician and esotericist known for his exposition of the early work of George Gurdjieff. Ouspensky studied with Gurdjieff for ten years, from 1915 to 1924. Around 1930, Ouspensky moved to London where he began to teach the Fourth Way. Throughout the rest of his life, Ouspensky continued to promote Gurdjieff's system as the practical study of methods for developing consciousness. His best known works include: *Tertium Organum: The Third Canon of Thought, a Key to the Enigmas of the World* (1920), *A New Model of the Universe: Principles of the Psychological Method in Its Application to Problems of Science, Religion and Art* (1931), *In Search of the Miraculous* (1949), *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* (1950), and *The Fourth Way* (1957).

¹⁹⁴ As explained by Ouspensky, there were three main ways to a higher development of man: the way of the fakir who struggles with the physical body, the way of the monk who subjects all other emotions to the emotion of faith, and the way of the yogi who develops his mind. But these ways produce lopsided men; they produce the "stupid fakir," the "silly saint," the "weak yogi." There is a fourth way, that of Gurdjieff, in which the student continues in his usual life-circumstances but strives for a harmonious development of his physical, emotional and intellectual life—the non-monastic "way of the sly man." The accent was on harmonious, all-around development.

¹⁹⁵ There are two links between Huxley and Ouspensky—the first being Robert S. de Ropp, a biochemist who, in the 1930s, was involved in the pacifist group, the *Peace Pledge Union*, along with Huxley and Gerald Heard. In the 1960s he became a counterculture figure with his book, *Drugs and the Mind*. The second link is through Huxley's brother, Julian. In 1922, John Godolphin Bennett (1897-1974) was in London to help expound Gurdjieff's plans for the *Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man*. Bennett also met with the American biologist, T. H. Morgan, and through him met Julian Huxley (Bennett 95). Bennett mentions: "I first met Aldous in the thirties, when he and Gerald Heard used to come regularly to Ouspensky's meeting in Colet Gardens" (Bennett 342). Bennett was a British scientist, mathematician and philosopher who integrated scientific research with studies of Asiatic languages and religions.

Search of P.D. Ouspensky: The Genius in the Shadow of Gurdjieff, Huxley and Heard met with Ouspensky in 1939. After a day in his company, where they had all shared their pessimism toward the impending war, Ouspensky found them both to be “useless for his work,” and Huxley, for his part, remarked he had found the teaching “was a mixture of nirvana and strawberry jam” (Lachman 239).

It seems apparent that while Ouspensky may been much of the theory behind Gurdjieff, he did not have the charisma needed to carry a movement: Gurdjieff had no shortage. Furthermore, Gurdjieff had the cunning ability to read human nature and its weaknesses, keenly anticipating the needs of his disciples, at precisely the right moment. Mansfield’s need was unique. Certainly, she did not believe that she would be cured while at Fontainebleu; Mansfield had accepted she was on the verge of death and went there to die a good death. Gurdjieff also knew this. He moved her to the finest wing, and she was instructed to eat much, and enjoy the gardens, and always Gurdjieff advised: “rest, rest, live in your body now,” and several women—Olgivanna¹⁹⁶ and Adele Kafian¹⁹⁷ – were assigned to watch over her. In many respects, Mansfield had found a

Throughout his life, Bennett travelled widely and met many little-known but important spiritual leaders. In the early 1920s, he was introduced to G.I. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky, who both became central guiding forces in his life. Bennett wrote various books on spirituality, among them: *Long Pilgrimage: The Life and Teaching of Sri Govindanda Bharati, Known as the Shivapuri Baba*. As a further side note, Huxley wrote the forward to a book called *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (1965), an English translation of the aforementioned sage’s work.

¹⁹⁶ Olgivanna- Olga Ivanovna Lazovich Milanoff Hinzenberg- (Mrs. Frank Lloyd Wright), was one of the principals in the ‘sacred dances’ at Gurdjieff’s Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, and she was with Mansfield when she died. She described her last days with Mansfield as a heady mixture of love, idolatry, and outright mysticism: “she stood in the doorway of our main dining-room and looked at all and each with sharp, intense, dark eyes. They burned with the desire and hunger for impressions... I asked whose that wonderful face was...I told Gurdjieff what a lovely face she had and how much I liked her ... When I left her room I leaned against the wall for a few seconds. Why had she to die...Something became outlined in my mind. I understood her need” (6). She told Mansfield: “There is no death for one like you who perceives the possibility of sweeping death aside when the time comes as a necessary phase to go through” (8). “The Last Days of Katherine Mansfield,” *Bookman* (New York), 73 (Mar. 1931).

¹⁹⁷ Adele Kafian in “The Last Days of Katherine Mansfield,” describes one of the stranger myths surrounding Mansfield’s time at Fontainebleau, where it has generally been believed that she endured the physical discomforts of hard work, poor diet, little sleep, cold rooms, and bad air. The myth contends,

family. Most notably, after all the disappointments with men in her life – from her father, to her lovers, to Lawrence, and certainly Murry, who, in the end, so closely resembled Huxley’s satirical version of him as Burlap¹⁹⁸ – Mansfield had found the man who she would trust enough to lead her through death. While much has been made over the fact that Mansfield essentially turned her life over to Gurdjieff, she was very cognizant that she had very little life left. What she discovered with Gurdjieff was what she needed – “joy—real joy— . . . that sense of being in some perfectly blissful way at peace” (*LKMJMM* 107). More than anything, I believe Fontainebleu provided a space for Mansfield to be loved and nurtured, without judgement and without expectation, as is seen in her letter to Murry shortly after her arrival: “It is great happiness to be here. Some people are stranger than ever but the strangers I am at last feeling near and they are my own people at last. So I feel. Such beautiful understanding and sympathy I have never known in the outside world” (*LKM5*: 309). It was, assuredly, a strange place and full of strangers, and yet the cacophony of space, filled with music, dance,¹⁹⁹ laughter, life and

Gurdjieff decided to give Mansfield the benefit of some traditional Caucasian remedy for tuberculosis. He told the workers to build a special platform for her above the cow’s stall, and ordered her to spend several hours each day inhaling the exhalations of the beasts. Kafian explains that the tiny wooden balcony, “artistically designed,” was constructed so that Katherine could “renew her strength through the radiation of animal magnetism, or perhaps simply for the healthy smell of fresh manure” (Kafian 36). Adele Kafian, “The Last Days of Katherine Mansfield,” *Adelphi*, 23 (1946). In reality, the area was a fully built loft, lavishly decorated with a bed—it appears to have been comfortable and warm and was constructed at Mansfield’s whim. In several of her last letters to JMM, she writes about enjoying being among nature, the animals, and particularly the cows.

¹⁹⁸ In Mansfield’s letters, the extent to which Murry failed her is all so evident: “I have managed this badly for this reason. I’ve never let you know how much I have suffered in these five years. But that wasn’t my fault. I could not. You could not receive it, either. And all 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, and I want to try and escape from my terrible illness. What again you can’t be expected to understand. You think I am like other people - I mean - *normal*. I’m not. I don’t know which is the ill me or the well me. (*LKM5*: 309- 24 Oct 1922)

¹⁹⁹ The dances were an integral part of Gurdjieff’s philosophy. The dance represented a standing between the material and cosmic worlds. It was a sacred ceremony in which they rotated in a precise rhythm, representing the earth revolving on its axis while orbiting the sun. The purpose of the ritual was to empty oneself of all distracting thoughts, and to enter a trance. This was coupled with a very exact method for breathing (similar to yoga). Combined, the movements would lead to a better understanding of body, mind

all the elements of one of Mansfield's own stories was exactly what she needed – a story, no doubt, that she would have loved to write if only time had allowed.²⁰⁰

Tragically, the one thing Mansfield did not have was time. After four months apart, Gurdjieff allowed Murry to visit her on January 9, 1923 and he described her as “very pale, but radiant.” That same evening, while climbing the stairs on her way to bed, Mansfield suffered a massive tubercular hemorrhage and died. Four years after her death, Virginia Woolf wrote a tribute to Mansfield in *The New York Herald Tribune*, titled, “A Terribly Sensitive Mind.” In it Woolf writes:

Under the desperate pressure of increasing illness she began a curious and difficult search, of which we catch glimpses only and those hard to interpret, after the crystal clearness which is needed if one is to write truthfully... She wanted health, she wrote; but what did she mean by health? ‘By health’, she wrote, ‘I mean the power to lead a full, adult, living, breathing life in close contact with what I love – the earth and the wonders thereof – the sea – the sun. ... Then I want to work. At what? I want so to live that I work with my hands and my feeling and my brain. I want a garden, a small house, grass, animals, books, pictures, music. And out of this, the expression of this, I want to be writing. (Though I may write about cabmen. That’s no matter).’ The diary ends with the words ‘All is well.’ And since she died three months later it is tempting to think that the words stood for some conclusion which illness and the intensity of her own nature drove her to find at an age when most of us are loitering

and emotions and generate a form of energy difficult to find elsewhere. The dance was mathematical in nature, where the bodies of the dancers were shaped in geometrical patterns, designed to remove individuality and thus create a collective. As peculiar as this might sound, I would suggest this is maybe not so different from the “Dance of the Shiva” that Huxley’s describes, quite beautifully, in a recording available on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1kmKpjk_8E&feature=youtu.be) As Huxley states: “The Shiva is a comprehensible symbol—cosmic, psychological, and spiritual. Comparing this with the cross, he suggests the latter is inferior as a symbol for it doesn’t take into account: “Mass energy, space, and time.” In many respects, Gurdjieff’s dance is an enactment of the Shiva symbol.

²⁰⁰ Mansfield wrote in her letters: “Nina, a big girl in a black apron – lovely, too – pounds things in mortars. The second cook chops at the table, bangs the saucepans, sings; another runs in and out with plates and pots, a man in the scullery cleans pots – the dog barks and lies on the floor, worrying a hearthbrush. A little girl comes in with a bouquet of leaves for Olga Ivanovna. Mr. Gurdjieff strides in, takes up a handful of shredded cabbage and eats it ... there are at least 20 pots on the stove. And it’s so full of life and humour and ease that one wouldn’t be anywhere else.” Observing the dervish dances, one in particular – ‘The Initiation of a Priestess: a Fragment of a Mystery’ she writes: “There is one which takes about 7 minutes and it 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. There was even room for Flaubert’s *Coeur Simple* in it, and for Princess Marya... Mysterious” (*LKMJMM* 387).

easily among those appearances and impressions, those amusements and sensations, which none had loved better than she.”²⁰¹

As Woolf remarked, the words did stand for some conclusion, and I believe Mansfield found most of the things she yearned for at Fontainebleau. The last months of her life, there, served as a marvelous conclusion to an existence that, until then, had been relatively devoid of what she wanted, and more importantly, needed.

Different Disciples: Mansfield, Lawrence, Huxley

1. To escape from the prison of the flesh – of matter. To make the body an instrument, a servant.

2. To act and not to dream. To write it down at all times and all costs. What is the universal mind?

OM. “Kratu smara Kritam smara Kratu Smara Kritam smar.”

From the Isha Upanishad

-Katherine Mansfield²⁰²

That’s one of the questions the Buddha always refused to answer. Believing in the eternal life never helped anyone to live in eternity. Nor, of course, did dis-believing. So stop all your pro-ing and con-ing (that’s the Buddha’s advice) and get on with the job...Everybody’s job – enlightenment.

- Susila in *Island*.²⁰³

I was seeing what Adam had seen on the morning of his creation – the miracle, moment by moment, of naked existence... “Is it agreeable?” somebody asked. “Neither agreeable or disagreeable,” I answered. “It just *is*” ...²⁰⁴

-Aldous Huxley

²⁰¹ Virginia Woolf, “A Terribly Sensitive Mind,” *The New York Herald Tribune*, September 18, 1927, vol. 125, p. 716.

²⁰² From *KMN2*: 311, January 1922. Murry’s note in *KMN* reads: “‘Quoted from *Cosmic Anatomy* (p106) where the author says: “The accepted translation is ‘Om (my) mind, remember (Thy) acts, remember (O) mind, remember (thy) act remember.’” *Cosmic Anatomy or the Structure of the Ego* by M. B. Oxon, a Theosophist. Murry described it as a ‘book of occult doctrines’ and reacted strongly against it, while KM found it contained much food for thought. (*KMN2*: 311n. 262). See previous note 38.

²⁰³ Aldous Huxley: *Island*. Chatto & Windus, 1962. p. 243

²⁰⁴ Huxley’s account of his state of mind after ingesting four tenths of a gram of mescaline. From Aldous Huxley *The Doors of Perception*. Chatto & Windus, 1954. Print.

Lawrence's final repudiation, and final chapter, in what had been his strange obsession with Mansfield, came in the form of a relatively lesser-known short story written in 1929. Lawrence's "Mother and Daughter," bitterly satirized Mansfield's choice to accept Gurdjieff's mysticism in her final days. In his acidic tale of a young woman attempting to escape from a domineering mother, there are unmistakable similarities between Virginia Bodoïn and Mansfield; moreover, Mrs. Bodoïn is characterized as Mabel Luhan, Henry Lubbock is Middleton Murry, and Arnault is Gurdjieff. Lawrence's characterization of Virginia Bodoïn depicts his distaste of Mansfield's relationship with Murry, her disease,²⁰⁵ and her submission to Gurdjieff, symbolized by exchanging her deadly existence with her mother for yet another form of death – as Lawrence would say – a self-surrender. Porter, astutely, points to what may be the genesis and driving force behind Lawrence's bitter and continuous repudiation of Mansfield, unmistakably seen in "Mother and Daughter." Porter contends:

But the point is, [Mansfield] believed she could achieve a spiritual and mental rebirth by the practice of certain disciplines and the study of esoteric doctrines. She was innately religious, but she had no point of reference, theologically speaking...now for help and counsel in this weighty matter she had all about her, at different periods, the advice and influence of John Middleton Murry, A. R. Orage, D. H. Lawrence, and, through Orage, Gurdjieff....In that rather loosely defined and changing 'group' of variously gifted persons with whom Katherine

²⁰⁵ Lawrence was always critical of Mansfield "succumbing" to her disease. He spent the latter part of his years *denying* that he was dying. In a letter to his sister Ada, however, there is a rare glimpse into how sick he really was: "I've been through it these last three years – and suffered, I tell you. But now I feel I'm coming through, to some kind of happiness. It's a different kind of happiness we've got to come through to – but while the old sort is dying, and nothing new has appeared, it's really torture. But be patient, and realise it's a process that has to be gone through...and I hope one day we may all live in touch with one another, away from business and all that sort of world, and really have a *new* sort of happiness together...This is the slow winding up of an old way of life. Patience – and we'll begin another, somewhere in the sun" (LDHL7:186-87).

Mansfield was associated through nearly all her working years, Lawrence was the prophet... Lawrence, whose disciple she was not, was unjust to her as he was to no one else and that is saying a good deal. He did his part to undermine her. (Porter 435-436)²⁰⁶

Lawrence, as shown in the previous chapter, did not take kindly to rejection. For a man who spent his life staunchly rejecting “self-surrender,” the evidence suggests he did, indeed, want Mansfield to enact some form of surrender – but to him, alone.

Certainly the vitriolic depiction of Mansfield in “Mother and Daughter,” makes more sense if read in this light. In the text, Virginia Bodoïn is: “lavish, elvish and weak...reducing [Lubbock]²⁰⁷ to nothingness...[eating] his marrow,” and amidst her mother’s stifling luxury, Virginia: “longed again for a Soho restaurant and her two poky, shabby rooms.”²⁰⁸ Virginia is: “... oddly clever, and not clever. She didn’t really know anything, because anything and everything was interesting to her for the moment, and she picked it up at once. She picked up languages with extraordinary ease.... [But] her cleverness was amazingly stupid when it came to life.” One sees the obvious similarity in Mansfield’s own journal entry: “Though fluent in French, German, and Italian, asks, “Is there another grown person as ignorant as I?” (*KMJ* 56). Furthermore, caustically referencing her tuberculosis, Lawrence writes: “poor Virginia was worn out. She was thin

²⁰⁶ Porter, Katherine Anne. “The Art of Katherine Mansfield”, in *The Nation*, 145, October 23, 1937. 435-6, reprinted in *The Days Before*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1952. Porter also claimed: “She possessed, for it is in her work, a real gaiety and a natural sense of comedy; there were many sides to her that made her able to perceive and convey in her stories a sense of human beings living on many planes at once, with all the elements justly ordered and in right proportion. This is a great gift, and she was the only one among them who had it, or at least the only one able to express it.” This, too, may have contributed to a professional jealousy on Lawrence’s part.

²⁰⁷ Lawrence depicts Henry Lubbock in much the same fashion as the real Murry: “Henry made other alliances, got a good hold on elsewhere, and gradually extricated himself. He saved his life, but he had lost, he felt, a good deal of his youth and marrow. He tended now to go fat, a little puffy, somewhat insignificant. And he had been handsome and striking-looking.”

²⁰⁸ All quotations from “Mother and Daughter” are from <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks04/0400311h.html>.

as a rail. Her nerves were frayed to bits...She would come home at teatime speechless and done for.” In “Mother and Daughter,” Lawrence satirically presents his view that Mansfield’s physical exhaustion and ensuing need for security, made her particularly vulnerable to Gurdjieff’s allure and seduction.

Lawrence depicts Arnault, the Gurdjieff figure, in disparaging middle-eastern clichés: “Mrs. Bodoïn, who barely tolerated him, and could never get his name, which seemed to have a lot of bouyoums in it, called him either the Armenian, or the Rahat Lakoum, after the name of the sweetmeat, or simply The Turkish Delight.” Mrs. Bodoïn looks on the: “Armenian as one looks on the fat Levantine in a fez who tries to sell one hideous tapestries at Port Said.” Mansfield once commented that Gurdjieff resembled “a carpet dealer from the Tottenham Court Road,”²⁰⁹ and in her final descriptions of the Prieuré at Fontainebleau she remarks on all the fine carpets that Gurdjieff had brought into the institute.²¹⁰ In the physical descriptions of Arnault there is no mistaking Gurdjieff:

He was a man of about sixty, a merchant, had been a millionaire, was ruined during the war, but was now coming on again...The Turkish Delight was sixty, grey-haired and fat. .. He had a grey moustache cut like a brush, and glazed brown eyes over which hung heavy lids with white lashes... He had his tribe...He spoke bad English, but fairly fluent guttural French. He did not speak much, but he sat. He sat, with his short, fat thighs, as if for eternity, *there*. There was a strange potency in his fat immobile sitting, as if his posterior were connected with the very centre of the earth.

²⁰⁹ Quoted in Anthony Alpers, *Katherine Mansfield*. London: Cape, 1954, p. 347.

²¹⁰ Gurdjieff had extraordinary good taste and was very fond of luxurious furnishings. The Prieuré at Fontainebleau, which had once belonged to Madame de Maintenon, the mistress of Louis XIV, had several rooms with beautiful furniture and French engravings. Mansfield occupied one of these rooms.

When Arnault shows interest in Virginia, Mrs. Bodoïn remarks: “I think the Armenian grandpapa knows very well what he’s about. You’re just the harem type, after all.” While the Prieuré at Fontainebleau was certainly not a harem, it was a commune of sorts.

Granted, whether Gurdjieff was quite as calculating as Lawrence might suggest, Mansfield was, as Arnault avows, “useful to him.” For much interest in Fontainebleu can be attributed to Mansfield’s highly publicized death there in January 1923. Lawrence was quick to point out that Gurdjieff had propagandized Mansfield’s death to advertise his community. His hostility to the ideas of Gurdjieff and his principal disciple, Ouspensky, were even more complicated, however, than merely Mansfield’s surrender and death at Fontainebleu – for other of Lawrence’s acquaintances were also connected to Gurdjieff. Mansfield had, after all, been introduced to Gurdjieff by A. R. Orage, her former editor at the *New Age*, and yet another of Lawrence’s rivals. Then there was Mabel Luhan, who had pressured Lawrence for years to visit Gurdjieff. Lawrence wrote to Luhan, January 9, 1924: “I have heard enough about that place at Fontainebleau where Katherine Mansfield died, to know it is a rotten, false, self-conscious place of people playing a sickly stunt. One doesn’t wonder about it at all. One knows” (Luhan 134).²¹¹ Eventually when Luhan announced her intention to see Gurdjieff and be “saved,” Lawrence warned her about the danger of submitting her will to such a destructive discipline: “In the end, if you Gourdjieff (sic) yourself to the very end, a dog that barks at you will be a dynamo sufficient to explode your universe. When you are final master of yourself, you are

²¹¹ Letter to Mabel Luhan, 9 Jan. 1924, contained in *Lorenzo in Taos*, by Mabel Dodge Luhan, pg. 134. Luhan gave Lawrence a copy of Ouspensky’s *Tertium Organum* (1920), which he annotated extensively and which has been preserved in the Taos Public Library. Lawrence strongly disagrees with nearly everything Ouspensky says, and the essence of his rejection of the book is: “Bosh and casuistry,” “Nonsense...Rubbish,” “Don’t believe this.” (See E. W. Tedlock, “D. H. Lawrence’s Annotations of Ouspensky’s *Tertium Organum*,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 2 (1960), 209, 212, 213.)

nothing...But the fact that your I (sic) is not your own makes necessary a discipline more patient and flexible and long-lasting than any Gourdjieff's" (Luhan 295). This letter elucidates Lawrence's staunch belief in spontaneity, freedom, and individual truth. Believing that one could, in fact, become a "final master of one's self" by self-surrender, Mansfield had succumbed to all that Lawrence despised.

In *Apocalypse*, Lawrence's last and significant work, he summarized much of his life-philosophy:

What man most passionately wants is his living wholeness and his living unison, not his own isolate salvation of his 'soul.' Man wants his physical fulfillment first and foremost, since now, once and only once, he is in the flesh and potent. For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. Whatever the unborn and dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look after the afterwards. But the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the incarnate cosmos. (*Apocalypse* 199-200)

In her final years, Mansfield had vigorously contemplated death, but it must have been entirely impossible to accept Lawrence's "vast marvel to be alive," not in a body that was rotting away. Eventually, her journey centered on "escaping the prison of the flesh" (KMN2: 311). What Lawrence rejected as surrender, she embraced as transformation. In *The Mourning-Liberation Process*, George Pollock contends that the afterlife paradigm provides escape from the demands of a reality that insists on detaching the lost object, allowing the subject to view death "as a transformation with continuity" rather than as a final destruction of Object.²¹² (Pollock 462) He argues: "as death is not an end in and of itself, personal mourning need not occur, for the ideal has not been lost; indeed, it has

²¹² Pollock, George. *The Mourning-Liberation Process*. Madison: International Universities Press, 1989.

been attained” (Pollock 462). This is, I believe, what Mansfield came to accept, and she found the place for attainment at Fontainebleu.

Ultimately, Huxley, merely used Mansfield as another voice portraying the larger issues in his texts. The “congenital novelist,”²¹³ however, misread her. Ironically, when he depicted her as Mary Thriplow in *Those Barren leaves*, she was, in reality, much closer to Calamy than he realized. Jerome Meckier asserts: “Most novelists of consequence, Huxley realizes, have ideas to propose. But none of them becomes the mind of the age simply by voicing his own necessarily incomplete attitudes towards modern life. To do so is merely to augment the babel of competing voices in an era of contrapuntal value systems. Forging the conscience of one’s race entails being a judge or referee” (CEAH 12). While Huxley may have considered himself as such – a judge, a referee, I would suggest that forging the conscience of a generation should entail also invoking empathy. Without the added empathy invoked in stories such as Mansfield’s, surely life would be little more than “...a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.”²¹⁴

²¹³ For Huxley’s concept on the novel of ideas, See Meckier’s “Aldous Huxley and the Congenital Novelists: New Ideas about the Novel of Ideas,” *Southern Review*, 13 (1980), 203-22, reprinted in *Critical Essays on Aldous Huxley*, ed. Jerome Meckier, New York, 1996, 5-23.

²¹⁴ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 5.5.26-28.

Chapter Five: Conclusion: the Taint of the Pioneer²¹⁵

“Literary criticism as I attempt to practice it, is in the first place literary, which is to say personal and passionate. It is not philosophy, politics, or institutionalized religion. At its strongest...it is a kind of wisdom literature, and so a meditation on life. Yet any distinction between literature and life is misleading.”

Harold Bloom²¹⁶

In the foreword to Brenda R. Silver’s *Icon: Virginia Woolf*, Catherine Stimpson writes: “Virginia Woolf was born in 1882. She became a writer. She died in 1941. These are the barest of factual bones. Since her death, she has become more and more famous” (Silver x). One might supplant Mansfield for Woolf and arrive at the same conclusion. How has this happened? Again, what Stimpson contends for Woolf may also apply to Mansfield – “No god, no omnipotent master of the universe has made this happen. Her cultural legatees have. What we have done to this greatly creative writer is an important story, not only about her but about us and the relationships that we have bred and breed” (Silver xiv). Mansfield’s struggle for cultural authority and legitimacy, has not so much been opposed, as transposed. Silver uses the concept of “versioning” where the many responses to a text defeat any effort to impose a single unitary, dominant interpretation. Assuredly, there are few authors that have been quite so “versioned” as Mansfield: Colonial or British writer, high culture or popular, heterosexual or homosexual, marginal or canonical, major or minor.

²¹⁵ Mansfield’s poem, “To Stanislaw Wyspianski,” (1910) in *The Poems of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Vincent O’Sullivan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 30. In this poem, a tribute to Wyspianski, a noted Polish poet who died in 1907, Mansfield salutes the history of New Zealand, and proclaims herself as a “tainted pioneer,” one of a horde of lawless intruders. This poem was printed as a limited edition, with merely 100 copies. Floryan Sobieniowski probably introduced her to the works of Wyspianski.

²¹⁶ Bloom, Harold. *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life*. New York: Yale University Press, 2012. Print.

As early as 1911, Beatrice Hastings wrote a review in *The New Age* stating that Mansfield's short stories were "definitely belonging to the make-up of one of the most promising of young writers," while Malcolm Cowley wrote in the *Dial* in 1921 that Mansfield had "got hold of a new and necessary form."²¹⁷ In *Great English Short Stories*,²¹⁸ Christopher Isherwood argued that while a great deal of her work has been published posthumously it revealed the most important work, asserting: "...for it revealed the personality of Mansfield herself – it is as a personality, quite apart from her stories, that many readers have come to admire and love her. I myself felt a strong personal love for her at one time in my life, and it seems a little strange to me, even now, that we never actually met. She was so very much one of my circle of friends" (233). By the time of her death in January 1923, Mansfield was recognized and mourned all over the world. However, as Jan Pilditch states: "The early critical response to her work was testimony to her promise, but her varied life and her tragically early death from tuberculosis ensured that the growth of her reputation was tempered by the growth of a legend" (233).

It was, in part, this legend, and Murry's part in the creation of this legend, that directed the ways Lawrence and Huxley, in particular, not only rendered her into their work, but also how they overlooked the real quality within her work. While all of the authors I have examined explicate the historical and cultural reaction, even shock, to the first decades of the twentieth century, Mansfield's reaction was unique. The shaping force of her life, her New Zealand birthplace and upbringing, meant she brought her own preoccupations and interrogation to her work, however, to the London metropolis of

²¹⁷ Mansfield's *Bliss and Other Stories* was reviewed by Cowley in *The Dial*, 71 (September 1921), p. 265.

²¹⁸ Christopher Isherwood, ed. *Great English Short Stories*, New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1957. Print.

literary modernism that embraced and rejected her, nurtured and misjudged her, she never entirely escaped the “taint of the pioneer.” Her odd mix of disaffection with her homeland and yet liminality in Europe, forged her stories in unique ways. While Mansfield did not articulate her stories in recognizably political terms, like Lawrence and Huxley, she was, nevertheless, most determinedly critiquing the human condition, and its suffering. While Huxley, as Meckier asserts: “...brought his precocious sensitivity to bear on subjects that soon turned controversial: drugs, population control, the planet’s dwindling natural resources...”(CEAH 12), Huxley did not elucidate that small moment of individual human suffering as illustrated in “A Doll’s House,” when we hear Else’s small voice: “I seen the little lamp,” or the heartbreaking moment when Miss Brill deposits her ragged fur-stole back into its box, signifying the last time she will pretend she is actually *connected* to anything, anyone. This literary skill was unique to Mansfield, and perfected by her.

Much of her work, like Woolf’s was devoted to emphasizing the disenfranchised, particularly the oppression of women. Ironically, however, feminist criticism has devoted limited time to Mansfield; for oddly she was not viewed as a neglected women writer needing reclamation, as Murry’s “cult of Mansfield” ensured she did not disappear. However, this iconic status created a problem unto itself, resulting in her work being treated in isolation from its social and political intent.²¹⁹ Mansfield’s work, while damaged by Murry’s misrepresentation of her personally, has further been historically trivialized by the nature of academic tradition. As Sydney Kaplan argues: “The crucial,

²¹⁹ As parochial as New Zealand may have been viewed by Mansfield’s counterparts, politically it was incredibly progressive, the first country in the world, in fact, to emancipate women in 1893, and including women in the political process from then onward.

the vital link between experimentation and the need to express a definite sense of *women's* reality either went unnoticed or was patronizingly trivialized – or even willfully denied...” (Kaplan 6). This, I believe, is exactly what happened to Mansfield. Further, her work, so intensely vested in expressing outrage against a society that is so indifferent to the misery of *individual* suffering, was subsumed into the postwar culture, and larger concerns with destruction and victimization on a grand scale. As Kaplan contends: “If one considers the works of other modernists who have been considered “major” writers in the canon – Lawrence, Pound, Woolf, Eliot, Stein – only Mansfield centers her work so deeply on the victimization of individuals” (Kaplan 191-192).

This was Mansfield’s unique gift. What Huxley, Lawrence, and even Woolf addressed on a grand scale, she inscribed to the individual. Taking this into account, combined with the myriad of issues that surround Mansfield’s work – gender politics, colonialism, marginality by genre, and personal relations – these all, to varying degrees, prevented critics from acknowledging that a “minor” modernist author played a role in the undisputed success of three major authors of the twentieth century. The degree and manner to which Mansfield impacted the aesthetic work of Woolf, Lawrence, and Huxley, was, nonetheless, primarily tempered by their own world views. Woolf’s world view, not surprisingly, was the closest to Mansfield’s. However adversarial their friendship sometimes was, Woolf recognized Mansfield as her contemporary, an equally talented writer. She not only borrowed and emulated Mansfield’s work, she was essentially mentored by her. In “Modernism and colonialism,”²²⁰ Boehmer and Matthews

²²⁰ Their essay questions whether the “apparently definitive two-pole Anglo-American interrelationship encompasses the greater part of the cross-border interaction, and exploration of contact zones and liminal spaces, that were going on in the period” (284).

suggest: “If we suspend the allegedly axial relationship, and consider Modernism in its high period, 1910-30, in a wider transnational, even world-scale context – a context shaped by colonial, and incipiently global, forces – could Modernism be said to have been informed by colonial experiences and energies?” (284).²²¹ As I have argued in the Mansfield and Woolf chapter, there is ample evidence suggesting Woolf was, indeed, informed by Mansfield – by her experiences and energies. Mansfield provoked her into modernizing her work – cutting her ties, cleanly, from the traces of Jane Austen. One recognizes direct literary influence in their professional relationship. Showalter argues the fiction of Mansfield and Woolf “created a deliberate female aesthetic, which transformed the feminine code of self-sacrifice into an annihilation of the narrative self...” (Showalter 33-34). In the several decades after them, women writers continued to work, conservatively, untouched by modernism or the personal experimentation of Woolf or Mansfield. Adrian Mitchell called this phenomenon “the disease of the British artist since 1945.” There was a “compulsion to stay small, to create perfect miniatures, to take no major risks.”²²²

One could never accuse Lawrence of not taking risks: his entire canon was built on risk, especially in terms of content. He was, of course, also a very passionate individual who, one could contend, failed miserably in separating life from fiction. Huxley wrote that while “stimulating,” Lawrence was “difficult to get on with, passionate, queer, violent” (Bedford 186).²²³ Huxley was one of the very few who

²²¹ Ellerke Boehmer and Steven Matthews, “Modernism and colonialism,” *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, 2nd Edition. Michael Levenson ed. 2011. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, Print.

²²² Quoted in Bernard Bergonzi, *The Situation of the Novel*, London, 1979. P.79.

²²³ Furthermore, Huxley avowed: “He was perfectly extraordinary as a human being. He was extremely fascinating, and he was always stimulating. A little alarming to be with ...” (Bedford 210).

Lawrence did not at one time or another have a quarrel with (Bedford 179).

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of his friendship with Mansfield. Lawrence, so caught up in all the petty differences in their friendship, depicted her as “petty” in his novels. He diminished her work as an artist, and undermined her as a woman in his texts. Ultimately, he was so transfixed by her that he risked the publication of *The Rainbow*, by refusing to remove the chapter characterizing Mansfield and her real-life lesbian experience. If anything, Lawrence’s repeated repudiation of Mansfield in his work, diminished his own. Certainly Gudrun and Gerald’s relationship in *Women in Love* voices, tediously and relentlessly, Lawrence’s opinion of Mansfield and Murry, and it does so at a cost. In an insightful interview Huxley states: “One reason [Lawrence] was forever moving on is that his relations with people would become so complicated that he’d have to get away. He was a man who loved and hated too intensely; he both loved and hated the same people at the same time.”²²⁴ How aptly this applies to his relationship with Mansfield.²²⁵

Huxley, on the other hand, primarily interested in the major themes of the twentieth century, rather than the petty quarrels and paybacks aimed at friends, treated Mansfield purely as a character, at least in *Those Barren Leaves*. The same, of course, cannot be said of *Point Counter Point* in which he so markedly turned a personal grievance with Murry into a rather vindictive representation of him in the form of Burlap.

²²⁴ Aldous Huxley, “The Art of Fiction” Interviewed by Raymond Fraser, George Wickes *The Paris Review*, Spring 1960 No. 23.

²²⁵ Mansfield, for her part, forgave Lawrence, writing to Ottoline Morrell, 24 April 1917: “I heard Lawrence was in London...I found some letters of his the other day – and re-reading the one I set to wishing that he hadn’t ‘Changed’. Lawrence was one of the few real people – one cannot help loving the memory of him.” (*LKMI*:306).

Having said that, a pertinent remark in *Point Counter Point* could so seamlessly be addressed to Mary Thriplow in *Those Barren Leaves*. Writing in his notebook Philip Quarles asserts: “Novel of ideas. The character of each personage must be implied...in the ideas of which he is the mouthpiece. In so far as theories are rationalizations of sentiments, instincts, dispositions of soul, this is feasible. The chief defect ... is that you must write about people who have ideas to express – which excludes all but about .01 per cent. of the human race” (*PCP* 409-10). Mary Thriplow, Huxley’s author, is clearly not a novelist of ideas, but neither does she possess ideas to express in the inferior literature that she does create. Meckier asserts: “*In Point Counter Point* Huxley sits in judgement on the procrustean theories and eccentric behavior of the scientists, artists, politicians and their patrons who bestow directing ideas on British society. By criticizing this often misguided and irresponsibly percentile of the human race, novelists of ideas... ‘keep the world safe for intelligence’” (*CEAH* 6). Mary Thriplow is the very artist who Huxley sits in judgement of. However unintentional his depiction may have been, Mansfield did not fare well in his roman à clef. Huxley’s derision of Mansfield as a writer, ultimately, was a far crueller measure than even Lawrence rendered in his dismissive characterizations of her as an artist creating “small” things.

Though the extent to which the literary community responded when Mansfield died, suggests that many of her contemporaries did not consider her in this same diminutive fashion. Her loss was revealed in so many of the epistolary remains of her generation. Rebecca West wrote to Murry: “I would like to tell you how deeply I feel the loss of Katherine Mansfield. It has meant more to me (and many of our generation) than I would have thought any but a personal bereavement could mean. She gave one the

pleasure of feeling absolutely unstinted admiration” (Scott 57).²²⁶ Woolf, in one of her most remarkable letters pronounced: “A certain melancholy has been brooding over me this fortnight. I date it from Katherine’s death. The feeling so often comes to me now – Yes. Go on writing of course: but into emptiness. There’s no competitor.” (D VW 2:228-29). Whereas, in response to speculation about what Mansfield might have done had she lived, Edward Wagenknecht insisted she had propelled the art of the short story: “...to the highest point of perfection it has yet attained” (273).²²⁷ While she was remarkably gifted, she regrettably lacked so many of the elements needed to grow into a major writer in the same fashion as Woolf, Lawrence, and Huxley. She simply did not have tolerable living conditions in which to create, and she was constantly burdened by a terminal illness in which her husband was so ineptly capable of easing. Ultimately, she needed time in which to work, and her death at thirty-four years of age was a tragic loss to the literary community.

In her final years of writing, Mansfield returned to her origins – in her subject-matter, and in her articulation of self. She wrote to Sarah Gertrude Millin,²²⁸ in March 1922:

I am a ‘Colonial.’ ...I longed for “my” kind of people and larger interests and so on. And after a struggle I did get out of the nest finally and came to London, at eighteen, *never* to return, said my disgusted heart. Since then I’ve lived in England, France, Italy, Bavaria. I’ve known literary society in plenty...But for the last four – five years I have been ill and have lived either in the S. of France or in

²²⁶ Scott, Bonnie Kime. ed. *Selected letters of Rebecca West*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2000. Print. To: John Middleton Murry, 30 May 1923. Further, West writes: “No one felt more seriously the importance of writing than she did. In all the pages of her journal, instinctive, rapid as they are, her attitude toward her work is admirable, sane, caustic, and austere. There is no literary gossip; no vanity, no jealousy. Although during her last years she must have been aware of her success she makes no allusion to it. Her own comments upon her work are always penetrating and disparaging.”

²²⁷ Edward Wagenknecht, “Katherine Mansfield,” *English Journal*, 272-284, 1928. (Wagenknecht was an American Literary critic and teacher).

²²⁸ Mansfield had warmly reviewed the South African writer’s first novel, *The Dark River*, in the *Athenaeum* (20 Feb, 1920). (LKM5: 81n1).

a remote little chalet in Switzerland...It's only in those years I've really been able to work and always my thoughts and feelings go back to New Zealand – rediscovering it, finding beauty in it, re-living it...Really, I am sure it does a writer no good to be transplanted – it does harm. One reaps the glittering top of the field but there are no sheaves to bind. And there's something, disintegrating, false, *agitating* in that literary life. It's petty and stupid like a fashion.. I think the only way to live as a writer is to draw upon one's *familiar* life..."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 it were their own." (LKM5: 79-81)

Ironically, in a sense, she rejected the literary community that had been so intrigued by her. Examining where she belonged within this community is a complicated task. My hope is that by contextualizing Mansfield in a more complex way within British literary modernism, I illustrate that the "pioneer" from Tinakori Road impacted the modernist canon in quite remarkable ways. Her part in the construction of the works I have included within this study – major works which contributed to literary and cultural thought in the early twentieth century –further support my assertions. Finally, Mansfield's own revolutionary literary innovations in her short stories, employed even earlier than her contemporaries, indicate she was not peripheral to modernism, but at the very center.

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