

“Beautiful External Life to Watch and Ponder:” Katherine Mansfield
Confronting the Material

By
Ivy McDaniels

A Thesis
submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of the Arts
in English

Victoria University of Wellington

2010

Introduction	2 pg 3
“ <i>Fine</i> down to Every Minutest Particular.” The Fastidious Mansfield	pg 15
“Money Buys Such Really Delightful Things.” Katherine Mansfield’s Cosmopolitan Style	pg 32
“A Divided Being.” The Disconnection between Thinking and Feeling	pg 54
“Is it Only the Result of Disease?” Mansfield’s Multiple Consumptions	pg 70
Conclusion	pg 89
Works Cited	pg 96

Introduction

Now, Katherine, what do you mean by health? And what do you want it for?

Answer: By health I mean the power to live a full, adult, living breathing life in close contact [with] what I love – the earth and the wonders thereof, the sea, the sun. 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. I want, by understanding myself, to understand others...

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 ...

But warm, eager living life – to be rooted in life – to learn, to desire to know, to feel, to think, to act. That is what I want. And nothing less. That is what I must try for. (Notebooks 2:287)

Throughout her famously short, disrupted career, Katherine Mansfield chased the idea of “warm, eager living life,” attempting to translate this vivid experience of being in the world into fiction. This passage, written in late 1922, shows the author focusing on her fascination with vivid, personal interaction with the material world. Mansfield convinces herself that the pursuit of “warm, eager living life” and the experience of submerging herself in it – “to be rooted in life” – is what she must strive for once she regains her health. Unfortunately, Mansfield’s health declined steadily after this passage was written, and she died at the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fontainebleau on the 9th of January, 1923. In addition to various personal possessions, Mansfield left behind a host of written material: personal letters, journal entries and jottings, drafts of stories and poems, and published volumes, which document her attempts at submerging herself in a vividly experienced life. Her stories full of characters self-consciously attempting to anchor their

vague and variable identities in the material world, graphic sensory detail, and ambiguous imagery register Mansfield's determination to describe exquisite, sensible life. Throughout the writing, she displays a keen interest in and fixation on the material world. Mansfield's colonial childhood, her preference for luxury, her feelings of disunity and dividedness, and the fleetingness of her life made more poignant by various levels and types of consumption inform her piercing awareness of the material world. Critical attention to the materiality of Mansfield's writing highlights that this writer, so determined to be "rooted in life," documents everywhere the frail but persistent efforts of characters to find substance in the ephemeral and attach changeable selves to things.

Rich sensory detail, often centering on the joy in physical sensation, appears throughout Mansfield's manuscripts. During one of her many attempts to find a healthier environment for her tubercular lungs, Mansfield travelled to Cornwall with American painter and close friend Anne Estelle Rice in 1918, where she wrote journal entries about summer days spent on the beach painting and writing: "then *She* went off and dabbled her legs in a pool thinking about the colour of flesh under water. And *She* crawled into a dark cave and sat there thinking about her childhood" (Notebooks 2:127). The artists shared an affinity with the sensual world, grounding ideas in their personal interactions with and interpretations of the physical objects around them and using such experience for inspiration. Mansfield often looked to childhood in order to describe material interaction through a clear, unaffected viewpoint.

In a notebook entry from their days in Cornwall, Mansfield mentioned the artists' shared delight in strawberries bought from a local woman: "But what strawberries! Each one was the finest – the perfect berry – the strawberry Absolute – the fruit of our childhood!" (Notebooks 2:128). As Mansfield and Rice rejoice in the berries, this passage highlights Mansfield's unique interest as a writer in the physical, sensual world, an interest she shared with many contemporary visual artists and their immediate predecessors. Julia van Gunsteren notes that Van Gogh's Sunflowers impressed upon Mansfield a sense of

““shaking free,”” a way of looking at the world differently which Mansfield believed informed her fiction (12). Mansfield’s interest in painting and the visual arts has been thoroughly canvassed by van Gunsteren and Angela Smith, who assert attachments to the Impressionists, Post Impressionists and Fauves on Mansfield’s behalf, but this passage merely demonstrates Mansfield’s interest in the material world as inspiration for her writing. The phrase “the fruit of our childhood” makes the quote distinctly Mansfieldian. Mansfield continually focuses on children in her fiction, demonstrating the acute, candid view of the material world she attempts to convey in her writing.

Often the sensuality of Mansfield’s writing hesitates between childish joy in sensation and a darker sexual undercurrent. Even in the strawberry-induced daze she describes while in Cornwall, Mansfield hints at the underlying sexuality in the berries. As the women look over the sea, Mansfield imagines Rice and herself onboard a nearby ship: “the crew lay about, idle and handsome. ‘Have some strawberries!’ we said, slipping and sliding on the rocking decks, and shaking the baskets. They ate them in a kind of dream ... [sic]. And the ship sailed on. Leaving us in a kind of dream, too. With the empty baskets” (Notebooks 2:128). Mansfield describes an ambiguous sensuality, hugging the border of childish delight and darker sexual discovery that leaves the women empty.

Mansfield’s stories are full of this ambiguity, especially in reference to young women on the brink of personal boundary breaking. In several stories, she describes a similar sensual joy in eating fruit to that of her afternoon with Rice on the beach. Pearl Button in “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped” (1910) frightens herself by spilling peach juice on her dress during her stolen time in the idyllic seaside Maori village; the young protagonist in “The Little Governess” (1915) delights in accepting strawberries “so big and juicy she had to take two bites to them” from a stranger, and Hinemoa in “Summer Idyll” (1907) allows the juice to spill over herself while she eats a peach at breakfast after a homoerotic swim with her friend Marina (Stories 119, 172; Notebooks 1:76). The girls break racial or sexual boundaries when they spill the fruit juices, but leave themselves vulnerable to the dark

sexuality Mansfield describes in the handsome sailors. As the little governess accepts the strawberries from the man she imagines as a kind grandfather, her childish sensuality becomes sexualized. The delight in sensation in these stories hugs the border between childish joy and sexualized excitement, and the ability to read them as both, as the little governess indulges in the berries like a child but becomes sexualized by the old man, exemplifies the ambiguity in Mansfield's writing about the material.

Mansfield's writing contains many ambiguous moments that center on physical objects and confuse the protagonists, or leave them with a different impression from those around them. Such acknowledged and intentional ambiguity highlights not only the ephemeral qualities of the material culture Mansfield described but also the inconsistent personalities she developed in her narratives. Many of Mansfield's characters, from Kezia Burnell in her colonial New Zealand stories to Constantia and Josephine in "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," (1920) display the drive for "warm, eager living life" Mansfield searches for in her own, looking towards the material world as a way to anchor this indescribable, unobtainable desire. As her characters attempt to root themselves in what is tangible around them, they attach themselves to ambiguous symbols, which leave room for misinterpretation and confusion.

To a certain extent, Mansfield enacted this process in her own life. Finances, accounts of grocery bills, packing lists, and descriptions of the houses she's lived in populate the *Notebooks*, and Mansfield made favorites of certain objects throughout her life, attaching herself to her possessions. For example, Mansfield kept a Japanese doll named Ribni with her throughout her travels between 1917 and 1918, when she was estranged intermittently from husband John Middleton Murry due to her illness and his dedication to various occupations in London. She imagines the doll as her child and companion, keeping it with her and even adopting its style. When Drey paints a portrait of her and a still life of the doll, Mansfield writes to Murry that "Rib of course – is violently flattered & keeps flattening down his fringe at the thought," though Mansfield's fringe is prominent in her

portrait, as well (Collected Letters 2:203). Lonely and threatened with the chance of missing her “warm, eager life,” Mansfield attaches herself to a physical object.

Mansfield remains famously indefinite and ambiguous on the nature of identity in her writing and personal life, often demonstrating the multiple identities one character may adopt. Personally, she transforms herself from schoolgirl to Bohemian in her early career, performing a variety of constructed personae for particular audiences. Physical objects play a major role in performing these experiments with identity, and Mansfield acknowledges the mutability of their meanings in her stories. Josephine from “Daughters of the Late Colonel” must suppress a giggle when she thinks of her austere dead father’s top hat on the ridiculous head of the porter; Laura from “The Garden Party” feels embarrassed about her hat while in the miner’s cottage, though proud of it at her lavish party; the comfort and sense of security Miss Brill gains from her fur stole is ripped away by the comments of the young couple in the park (Stories 386, 498, 377). As these women attempt to define themselves or others through ambiguous objects, the personal characteristics attached to each object dissolve once the object is taken out of its element.

Like the way in which characters attempt to ground themselves in the material world by attaching their identities to objects, Mansfield used things, like a top hat, a fruit or a pear tree, to ground her narratives, at least in the interest of structure. Smith locates the point in which Mansfield realized this process in her notebooks in late 1922, when she writes that the duty of the artist is not to “reconcile existence with his [the artist’s] vision” but to “single out” the quotidian. Smith identifies Mansfield as one of a number of artists influenced by Henri Bergson who attempted not to replicate reality but to create a world which works as “realistic social criticism” (13). By creating worlds full of indefinite identities and ambiguous material objects in which the characters shift between direct experience and fantasy, Mansfield reveals the inequalities between individuals and the small cruelties in everyday life. The vivid details in her realistic narratives inform Mansfield’s criticism of the actual world in which she lived.

Mansfield displayed an interest in what she calls “real” experience and an exploration of the real in her private life. In his 1994 essay “‘Finding the Pattern, Solving the Problem.’ Katherine Mansfield the New Zealand European,” Vincent O’Sullivan notes the author’s growing interest in the material and the real at the end of her life, when her letters demonstrate an understanding of what he considers existential tenets: “that man no longer moves *meaningfully* within history or even place, that there are no sustaining or metaphysical frameworks, and that true responsibility is grounded, rather, in the structure of personal time” (“Finding the Pattern” 22). Her particular placement, both in time and place as a colonial writer, and her illness contribute to Mansfield’s coming to these conclusions, and O’Sullivan sees her as anticipating Heidegger in her examination of the real through the material. One of her last letters to Murry claims that what she wants most is “*to be REAL*,” though she was attempting to discover what reality actually is (O’Sullivan, “Finding the Pattern” 22-23).

The struggle with the real or the attempt to define the real can be seen throughout Mansfield’s career, though it gains significance towards the end of her life. Just a year before she died, she asked herself: “Why must thinking and existing be ever on two different planes?” (Notebooks 2:267). In her quest to be real, Mansfield looked to fuse the mental and the material, not the material in the sense of the worldly possessions she sheds at the Institute, which leave her all but “annihilated,” but the material in the sense of her physical existence, of simply being in the world (qtd. O’Sullivan, “Finding the Pattern” 23). Mansfield described a physical, subjective, circumstantial, bodily experience of being in the world, an attempt to be “rooted in life” that acknowledges the tragic inability of consciousness to join itself with things, to make herself tangible and anchored. Mansfield could never be wholly “rooted in life,” and she constructed characters that attempt to create ambiguous and fleeting ideological connections to physical objects.

Perhaps the finest example of Mansfield’s concentration on the material and the ambiguity behind a character’s interaction with the material world comes in “The Doll’s

House” (1921). The Burnell children: Isabel, Lottie, and the semi-autobiographical Kezia, receive an elaborate dollhouse as a gift from a family friend and boast about it to the other children at their school. From the beginning, the physical qualities of the house delight the girls and provoke reaction from their older family members. The family keeps the large house outside, “for really, the smell of paint coming from that doll’s house ... was quite enough to make any one seriously ill.” The house was painted “a dark, oily, spinach green, picked out with bright yellow,” had a door “like a slab of toffee,” and the openness of it amazed the children; swinging the front of the house revealed the “drawing-room and dining-room, the kitchen and two bedrooms” (Stories 499-500). Mrs Burnell allows her daughters to bring school friends, a pair at a time, to view the dollhouse in the family courtyard. Soon all the girls at the Burnell’s “mixed” school have seen the house, except the scorned Kelveys. The children despise Lil and ‘our Else’ Kelvey, the daughters of the single, local washerwoman. The Burnells are not allowed to speak to them. Yet Kezia sympathizes with the Kelveys and invites them to see the dollhouse while the rest of the Burnells are entertaining company. Aunt Beryl catches Kezia’s treachery and shoos the Kelveys away just after Kezia opens the miniature house for them to see. On the way home, our Else, previously mute, turns and speaks to her sister (Stories 499-505).

It appears as though our Else has a revelation when she speaks, yet she simply tells her sister that she has seen “the little lamp” on the dining room table inside the doll house, Kezia’s favorite detail. The lamp affects our Else and Kezia more than the other characters in the story. Isabel forgets to describe it when she boasts about the house to the other girls at school. What the lamp communicates to the girls is more than the bits of glass in its construction or its purpose as a realistic decoration in an artificial house. Kezia admires its naturalness:

But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully, was the lamp.

It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite little amber lamp with a white globe. It was even filled all ready for lighting, though, of course, you

couldn't light it. But there was something inside that looked like oil and moved when you shook it.

The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff as though they had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll's house. They didn't look as though they belonged. But the lamp was perfect. It seemed to smile at Kezia, to say, 'I live here.' The lamp was real. (Stories 500)

Contrary to the look of the dolls, which seem unnatural in the little house, the lamp belongs. Its naturalness fascinates Kezia, and she feels as though it is "real." Kezia understands the dollhouse as a miniature of her bourgeois world when she observes the minute details of the drawing room, dining room, and bedrooms. At the same time, she observes the falsity in all but the little lamp. As Kezia directs her thoughts on the authenticity of the lamp, she perceives the lamp as something that belongs in the house, and so it becomes, in her mind, the "best part," the only real part. But the lamp may affect our Else differently. Although her experience with the lamp inspires the otherwise mute girl to speak, Mansfield never discloses our Else's reaction to the little lamp, other than her statement that she has seen it.

To Kezia, the appeal of the little lamp lies in its real-ness, the ability of the lamp to seem as though it belonged where it stood and was true, yet what our Else thinks about the lamp is never stated. In the end, the girls' differences in social standing keep them apart from one another. Contrary to the assumption that the lamp affords Kezia and our Else a shared moment that transcends class, the girls do not and cannot communicate their individual moments with the lamp to one another. The lamp does not signify a common insight or meaning for Kezia and our Else: it simply exists, and has a profound effect on the girls, even though it exists regardless of whether the girls react to it or not.

The little lamp in the doll's house is a realistic miniature of the life Mansfield experienced; the story is an attempt at what Mansfield considered the duty of the artist – to “lift up” or highlight the quotidian in an attempt to critique the world in which she lived. This interest in the material is evident through her stories, journal entries and notebooks. As an adolescent, Mansfield rejected the expansionist attitude of her colonial father, as an emerging artist, she constructed an identity through her wardrobe, as a writer, she focused her narratives around physical objects, and as an invalid she grew concerned with the materiality of her life and body. This study focuses on various aspects of the material world Mansfield registers in her personal and professional writing.

Even in her last few weeks at the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fountainebleau, in which she slowly eliminated frivolous material goods by delegating their disposal to Ida Baker, Mansfield wrote to her friend of the necessity of fine wool and to Murry about her love for the cows the Institute's farm held, both symbols of the pastoral colonial New Zealand of her youth (Collected Letters, 5:339, 325). Mansfield's colonial upbringing afforded her a chance to examine many definitions of materiality, explored throughout her fiction and personal writing. Her father, Sir Harold Beauchamp, was extremely concerned with material possessions. A wealthy businessman, Beauchamp was intricately linked in the development of young New Zealand's economy, and he wrote about his various trades in his autobiography. Yet young Mansfield despised her father for his materialism, even while reflecting a concern for objects in her personal writing. Chapter One distinguishes between the bourgeois colonial materialism Mansfield originally despised, and her own interests in the accumulation of possessions and property, which grew to reflect those of her parents. Concerned with the phenomenal experience of living in the physical world, Mansfield's craving for “warm, eager living life” seems a loftier goal than her father's interest in tangible growth and expansion, yet Mansfield retained her roots in the snobbish, colonial ideology of her father.

Mansfield transplanted her desire for active involvement in the material world outside the colony, all the while retaining the taste for finery instilled in her as a wealthy colonial child. Chapter Two focuses on Mansfield's desire for luxury and status signifiers throughout her life. Mansfield's letters, journals, and stories often involve her own or her characters' treatment of the racialized other, often signalled through worn down, *déclassé*, hybridized clothing and personal possessions. From the discovery of Shakespeare in a Maori home in the Urewera district of New Zealand to observing a Black man in French uniform during World War One, Mansfield maintained a superior attitude to most, though admitting her insecurities as a colonial New Zealander in the heart of the Empire. Her dissatisfaction with racialized or stereotypically other peoples stemmed from her preoccupation with finery and wealth, the "really delightful things" she felt "money can buy" (Collected Letters 5:171-172). Considering Mansfield's taste in luxurious and exotic goods helps define her as a modern cosmopolitan, which recognizes her privileged status as an upper middle-class white woman and the intellectual moment in which she lived.

Chapter Three discusses the ambiguity inherent in material objects and the inability of Mansfield's characters to anchor their personalities to objects. From her early work, Mansfield questioned the fusion of the imaginative and the actual – "Why must thinking and existing be ever on two different planes?" – and constructed characters who attempt to mend this rift (Notebooks 2:267). The climax, or one of the climaxes, in a Mansfield story often centers around moments when a character experiences a nondiscursive, intense reaction to a physical stimulus, such as Kezia and our Else's reactions to the little lamp. In such instances, characters experience or believe they experience a revelation or mini-epiphany, though often the moment confuses the character as much as clarifies a point in the story. Unlike Wordsworth's 'spots of time' or Joyce's epiphanies, these moments show the characters almost forming a connection between the mental and the physical but never attaining their desired transcendence. These gateways hinge on a misinterpreted or ambiguous object, like a fruit or a pear tree. Through the evocation of such moments,

Mansfield highlighted the disconnection between the mental and the physical, and her characters' inability to ground their unfixed identities in the material world.

Mansfield's life was governed by various modes of consumption, demonstrated by the bourgeois consumption of goods by her family in Wellington, her vivid depictions of eating and food in her stories, and the fear of being consumed by emotions and disease ubiquitous in her writing. Chapter four chronicles the multiple consumptions that Mansfield observed and experienced throughout her life, focusing on her turn towards an idealized pastoral at the end of her life. As she was forced to eat a heavy diet of eggs, cream and butter, Mansfield looked back towards the colonial production of her youth in New Zealand. She wrote fondly of gardening, farm work and livestock while at the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, glorifying agriculture as an alternative to effete Western society. Mansfield's experience as a consumptive encouraged the connection between animals and production in her mind, and her fiction reflects the turn towards the pastoral she made at the end of her life.

Mansfield's continual search for "eager, living life" and her later fascination with the 'real,' conceived in terms of active involvement with concrete details of physical objects and a heightened sense of the quotidian, demonstrates the essential struggle in her life. Often seen as a fractured artist developing multiple identities and masks, Mansfield adopted opposing attitudes and appearances in her personal life and writing. She redefined herself constantly, yet no one aspect of her personality can be said to be the essential Mansfield. Her diverse array of objects in her material culture highlights the multiple layers of personality she develops. In attempting to construct an identity, she surrounded herself and her characters with physical, tangible objects that represent abstract and floating personal, familial, and national ideals. This review of Mansfield emphasizes her concern with the sense of being vividly alive, the desire "to be rooted in life" through the attempt to anchor oneself in physical objects.

When Mansfield died in 1923, Ida Baker covered her coffin with a heavily embroidered shawl given to Mansfield some years earlier by Garsington hostess Lady Ottoline Morrell. In her memoir, Baker conflates the coffin with the body it held: “how cold and bare [the coffin] looked. [Mansfield] would have hated that. So I fetched her brilliantly embroidered black silk Spanish shawl and covered her with it. That she would appreciate, I knew; it was somehow right” (Baker 229). Mansfield considered the shawl one of her most valuable possessions, bequeathing it to Anne Rice in her will, and Baker’s assumption that placing the shawl on the coffin made it “right,” reflects the desire to associate a person with their possessions. The shawl not only represents Mansfield’s constant fixation on the material and its ability to anchor transitory meanings for people and characters, but her exploration of the ‘real,’ the relationship between the mental and the physical, and her desire to root herself in the material world. For the shawl remains, if only for a time after Mansfield has ceased to think or exist.

Chapter One

“Fine Down to Every Minutest Particular:” The Fastidious Mansfield

Katherine Mansfield returned to Wellington after finishing her schooling in London in December, 1906. Her journal entries about the voyage describe the company on board the ship, a flirtation she entertains with a cricket player, and her frustration at being chaperoned by her parents once again after years of living at boarding school (Notebooks 1:79-80). She railed against her father’s businesslike nature, claiming that his managerial strategies follow him to the dinner table, where “He watches the dishes go round, anxious to see that he shall have a good share” (Notebooks 1:80). Sir Harold Beauchamp’s insatiable appetite at the dinner table, in business, and for the growth of colonial New Zealand caused his daughter to reject him as a teenager, writing scathing journal entries about his materialism and his bourgeois attitudes. Though she expressed an aversion to the bourgeois comfort and consumerism of her parents, even the teenage Mansfield demonstrated her family’s fastidiousness – a quality Ida Baker recognized in both Mansfield and her mother in her memoirs: “Mrs Beauchamp was in many ways like her daughter ... She was sensitive, delicate and fastidious” (Baker 34). Mansfield continually sought refinement, and the uncouth materiality she observes in her parents frustrates the teenager. Yet later in life, she turned towards an idealized pastoral landscape reminiscent of her early days in colonial New Zealand, though her company at the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man was much more effete than her neighbors on Tinakori Road. While she originally rejected the bourgeois materialism of her father in her youth, Mansfield developed a fastidious nature throughout her life and fixated on the material. Her turn towards an idealized pastoral at the end of her life marks this fixation biographically, while her characters’ immense interest in and sensitivity to the material demonstrate Mansfield’s concern with transcribing the experience of being vividly alive into fiction.

Reunited with her family in late 1906, the teenage Mansfield rejected her parents' comfortable lifestyle in Wellington, complaining of their "vulgar" attitudes in diary entries dated from her return voyage to New Zealand and her departure for London in June 1908. She wrote her most scathing comments about Annie and Harold Beauchamp in a shipboard diary of the return trip to Wellington, in which she wrote: "What tedious old bores they [her parents] seem...they discuss only the food" (Notebooks 1:79). Back in Wellington, she claimed that her family and the society of colonial New Zealand stunted her growth as a musician, writer and intellectual; she felt trapped among "fools" when she was "longing to consort with [her] superiors" in London (Notebooks 1:108). Her father became the object of derision in many journal entries, and the aspiring artist felt she must argue against him for his permission and money to leave for London; "I can have courage, face him bravely with my head high, and fight – for Life, absolutely" (Notebooks 1:107).

Though the young Mansfield claims she had no intellectual peers in colonial New Zealand and lamented her time there, other journal entries and the autobiography of her father, *Reminiscences and Recollections*, show she led a comfortable, busy life, which Sir Harold certainly considered suitably entertaining for young ladies at the time. He described the family's second house on Tinakori Road, where Mansfield spent her years leading up to and just after her first years in London in his memoir, focusing on his daughters' developments and their enrolment in a posh private school in Wellington:

Our next visit to the Old Country was in 1898 ... We reached home in November, and took up our residence at 74 Tinakori Road ... The children were now attending Miss Swainson's school in Fitzherbert Terrace, and the elder ones were beginning to appear with their parents in public, and were all busy with their music and other accomplishments. (Beauchamp 86)

Though happy to be considered a fine dancer when she flirts with the cricket player on her return voyage to New Zealand – "Tomorrow night there is to be a ball. Thank Dieu I

know that my dancing is really beautiful” – and making the most of her accomplishments upon her return to London, where she performed at dinner parties for “a guinea an evening,” young Mansfield mocked her family’s lifestyle in the semi-autobiographical unfinished novel from 1906, “Juliet” (Notebooks 1:79, Baker 39). Compare Sir Harold’s cheerful remark on his daughters’ accomplishments to the narrator’s description of Juliet’s home in colonial Wellington:

The days full of perpetual Society functions, the hours full of clothes discussions – the waste of life. The stifling atmosphere would kill me, she thought. The days – weeks- months – years of it all. Her father, with his successful characteristic respectable face, crying “Now is the time. What have I got for my money. Come along – deck yourself out, show the world that you are expensive” ... It was so exactly like him – an undeniable trade atmosphere. (Notebooks 1:67)

Mansfield parodies her family in “Juliet,” exaggerating their bourgeois interest in status markers, such as the family’s second large house on Tinakori Road and the children’s accomplishments. She criticizes her father’s satisfaction in the children’s “music and other accomplishments” by equating their charms with the money used to acquire them, deriding her father for his “trade atmosphere.” The thought of money, or at least the discussion of money and possibility of not having enough to be comfortable, upset the teenage Mansfield. She recoiled from the mention of money in relation to household maintenance, complaining in her October 1907 diary that even when she shuts herself up in her room to read or write, her parents “come outside the door and call to each other – discuss the butchers orders or the soiled linen, and, I feel, wreck my life. It is so humiliating” (Notebooks 1:108). As an aspiring artist, Mansfield naively considered herself above monetary complaint. She blamed the colonial society of New Zealand for being particularly fixated on trade and export instead of high culture.

Though young Mansfield cringed from the material conditions of life in the colony, soiled linen included, the eighteen months she shared with her family back in Wellington

were an academically stimulating time for the young woman. She kept reading lists in her journal, and her records in the General Assembly Library show the teenager reading advanced material – Nietzsche and Ibsen among others (Stafford and Williams 145) Yet she claimed to have felt among fools, to feel a “sense of literary and intellectual isolation in Wellington,” which “produced in Mansfield a response characteristic of later modernist New Zealand writers: she not only exaggerated her apartness as an artist in an unsympathetic environment but also made it the basis of a literary persona” (Stafford, Williams 145-146). As she expanded her intellectual pursuits, the young Mansfield despised the colonial life of her family, yearning to return to what she saw as the epicentre of high culture and artistic opportunity: London.

The aspiring writer considered a return to London the “fulfillment of all my philosophy and my knowledge,” (Notebooks 1:108). Sir Harold claims in his biography, written fourteen years after his daughter’s death, to have agreed. He writes that Wellington had little to offer Katherine in the way of “intellectual companionship or associations,” and that both believed she would benefit by being transplanted to London, the heart of the Empire and high culture (90). The willingness of Sir Harold and his daughter to affirm the status of the Empire as culturally superior to colonial New Zealand reflects the feelings Mansfield held towards her father’s bourgeois materialism. By agreeing that London was the site for “intellectual companionship,” they affirm the status of the colony as less developed and civilized, more materialistic and, to young Mansfield, vulgar.

Yet Mansfield recognized that her return required financial support from her father. In a series of journal entries encouraging herself to stand up to Sir Harold, who appears to have been initially resistant to her inquiries about returning to London, the teenage Mansfield melodramatically constructed her father as a powerful opponent she must defeat in order to survive. She wrote in June 1907 that she wished to gain experience through life in London and requires “Liberty – no matter what the cost, no matter what the trial” to pursue her artistic career. Even in these entries, Mansfield demonstrates an acknowledgement of

material necessity, admitting that “money – money – money is what I need and do not possess” to gain this liberty (Notebooks 1:101-102). Even while she attempted to escape from a money-conscious trade society, Mansfield depended upon her father’s money, which depended upon the colonial trade she despised.

This sentiment echoes one of a number of quotes from Oscar Wilde in the *Notebooks* written between 1906 and 1907, a favorite among Mansfield scholars. Her youthful affiliation with Wilde has been studied for its influence on her artistic style, her mannerisms, at times reckless nature, and its allusion to her ambiguous sexuality. For example, after spending a night in the arms of her friend Edith Bendall in June 1907, the adolescent Mansfield wrote: “O Oscar! Am I peculiarly susceptible to sexual impulse? I must be I suppose, but I rejoice. Now each time I see her I want her to put her arm round me and hold me against her” (Notebooks 1:101). Later that month she wrote about her love for Tom Trowel, aka Caesar in her journal: “I love him – but I wonder, with all my soul – And here is the kernel of the whole matter – the Oscar-like thread” (Notebooks 1:103). Mansfield identified her feelings for Bendall with Wilde, demonstrating her own connection of the author to sexuality, but she also formed a connection between Wilde, the Decadents, and an artistic sense of luxury.

At the same time that Mansfield derided her father for his love of food and money, she quoted Wilde: “And wealth is for brains & the brave; for those who can get it is here to be got. Those who haven’t got it are – generally speaking – fools” (Notebooks 1:98). Wilde touted the value of experience over security, and the luxurious experience he exemplified required considerable wealth. The teenage Mansfield drew heavily upon Wilde, regurgitating his sentiments about the necessity of experience and the desire to “push everything as far as it will go,” but she also copied his desire for and appreciation of the material (Notebooks 1:96). And like Wilde, she maintained a desire for luxury throughout her life.

Writing to Murry in 1918, Mansfield reflected upon her growing desire for finery, which she intrinsically connected with both her writing and inner self: “I wish I was more of a stoic about underlinen, perfumes, little boxes for a toilet table, delicate ribbons & silk stockings. But the older I grow the more exquisite I want to be – *fine* down to every minutest particular, as a writer, as a talker, in my home, in my life and all my ways – to carry it all through” (Collected Letters 3:26). Mansfield attempted to refine the details of her life, to make herself exquisite. She retained this attitude until her death, writing to Ida Baker in 1922: “I do like luxury- just for a dip in and out of” (Collected Letters 5:171). This later taste for luxury recalls both her early interest in Wilde and the Decadents, and the environment in which she was reared as a member of a wealthy colonial family.

Even while she attempted to construct a fine, exquisite persona and writing style, Mansfield understood the necessity of turning a profit with her work. She wrote to Murry in 1918 about his work editing literary supplements: “After all in a supplement you’re out to *sell* – I don’t mean vulgarly – but you’re out to – lets say make a point” (Collected Letters 3:151). She wrote reviews for the Nation and kept an account of the stories her agent J. B. Pinker sold to magazines on her behalf in her journal from 1922 (Notebooks 2:322-324). Despite her youthful, exaggerated revulsion against her father’s obsession with profit, Mansfield adopted the view that her writing could be profitable and displayed a material calculation in the production and placing of her stories.

Angela Smith points out that Virginia Woolf famously connected Mansfield’s commercial success with vulgarity: “‘what does it matter if K.M. soars in the newspapers, runs up sales skyhigh? ... 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 bluest blood’” (qtd. in Smith 2). Smith links Woolf’s account to imperial condescension towards the colonial Mansfield, an element prevalent throughout Mansfield’s criticism by her contemporaries. Yet Mansfield knew she was popular and enjoyed her success, even admitting in her journal: “I ought to write something brief for the Nation today and earn a bit more money: a little

lunch at the club or something of that kind. It's not difficult, in fact its too easy for me" (Notebooks 2:138). Mansfield's constant attention to her material demands, especially during her illness and the expensive treatments she sought, demonstrates her concern with the production of her work for profit, an attitude reminiscent of her father's businesslike mind.

Sir Harold Beauchamp's 1937 autobiography reads like a business journal concerned with the production of goods, the expansion of the colony, and financial and social success. He elaborates on his personal experiences by listing facts and figures about the houses he has lived in, the business adventures he has undertaken, the ships, and tonnages of the ships, that he has travelled upon. Beauchamp describes his marriage by listing the larger and larger houses he and first wife Annie lived in, and even mentions meeting potential business partners on their honeymoon in Otago (81-3). The chapters he writes about his family (the Mansfield chapter was written by a friend, national librarian Guy Scholefield) concentrate on his four daughters' marriages and his family's financial and social success.

Beauchamp listed facts and details throughout the narrative, framing his autobiography with the growth of colonial New Zealand. After Annie died, Beauchamp placidly mentioned marrying her best friend after a short trip to London with Jeanne, in which he boarded the "*Arawa* (10,000 tons)" on the way there and the "*Ormonde* (14,853 tons)" on the return (98). Sandwiching familial and personal matters between dry business details, Beauchamp blended his home and business, a mixture the young Mansfield claimed to have resented. In Beauchamp's words, he listed the tonnages of ships he has traveled in, "not only because as a business man I have been accustomed to such detail, but (as I indicated before) because it is interesting to observe the steady growth in size of the ocean greyhounds" (99). Beauchamp focused on the growth of the "ocean greyhounds," the expansion of colonial New Zealand, and his increasing property and wealth, showcased through his ever-larger houses.

Though the teenage Mansfield claimed to have despised Sir Harold's fixation on material production and wealth, the notebooks contain numerous lists of expenditures and a method of bookkeeping reminiscent of her father. Rejecting his 'vulgar' materialism demonstrated through his love of business and the growth and production of the colony, Mansfield absorbed some of Sir Harold's material impulses. The *Notebooks* are full of shopping lists, expenses and packing lists, noted in a recent essay by Melissa Reimer, "Her father's daughter? Katherine Mansfield's Lists." One of her most detailed account books from 1914 contains fragments of satirical poetry which brings to mind the loud discussions of household materiality that disgusted Mansfield in her parents' home:

Tea, the chemist & marmalade
 Far indeed today I've strayed
 Through paths untrodden, shops unbeaten
 And now the bloody stuff is eaten
 The chemist the marmalade & tea
 Lord how nice & cheap they be! (Notebooks 1:266)

Many of Mansfield's letters contain descriptions of items she covets and things she accumulated throughout her travels in Europe. Ill and lonely in Italy, she wrote to Murry of her desire to settle into a home with him, comforting herself with recently purchased houseware: "I keep pondering over our new treasures, jug, linen and real serviettes. We shall sit at breakfast table, poised on our chairs like two butterflies over a flower garden" (Collected Letters 3:102). Gradually she changed her mind towards the material, especially the secure, comfortable homemaking she planned to do with Murry. From criticizing her parents for discussing "only the food" on board her return vessel to New Zealand to planning a breakfast table with Murry in which she reenacts their posture at table, Mansfield came to accept the bourgeois comfort she claimed to reject as a teenager, though in a luxurious, aesthetic way.

Mansfield's playful letters to Murry depict imaginary scenes of domestic bliss the couple never shared, often in a pastoral setting. She imagined them on an idyllic farm in England, dreaming of an impossible mixture of a sophisticated provincial life in a bucolic setting. Mansfield named this dream farm "Broomies," referring to it in the letters whenever she sees something quaint, rustic and luxurious. She wrote to Murry in 1920 of her desire to "live exquisitely- dress for supper have every possession fine as fine at Broomies" and her joy in finding a "wooly and furry" skirt that "looks the *spit* of Broomies with a very funny hat which might have been made of chopped bracken. It's the best country ensemble I've ever seen because its very amusing but at the same time it is distinguished" (Collected Letters 3:268, 282) As Mansfield connected the luxurious and bucolic, she unwittingly channelled the colonial setting of her childhood in an updated, more expensive model.

Mansfield's father recalled a much less comfortable country lifestyle in his autobiography. Sir Harold Beauchamp migrated to New Zealand with his parents as a child, and the family entered into what he envisioned as a rugged, pioneer style of life characterized by farming, hunting and fishing. From these humble beginnings, which Beauchamp eagerly pointed out in his memoir, he became director of the Bank of New Zealand. Sir Harold constructed his autobiography through the framework of a self-made man, whose family's growth and success mimics that of young colonial New Zealand. He claimed that his family "lived chiefly on fish, mutton, wild pork and birds, such as pigeons, *kakas* and—I blush to say—*tuis*" after first moving to Picton, and mustered their "few sheep...by rounding them up with tincans" (Beauchamp 30). Not only do Sir Harold's memories of settler life in Picton enforce the idea of a self made man, but his shepherding memories denote a particularly kiwi version of this social myth. Even as early as Beauchamp's Picton years, the colony relied on the sheep industry for financial support, and the ideological connection between New Zealand and wool was formed.

Mansfield wrote frequently about being cold, often relating the layers of clothes and “wooly lambs” she wore to her correspondents. Mansfield personified her sweaters as a “wooly lambs,” demonstrating the connections between the sweater she adores, the animals that helped produce it, and the colony with which wool was associated. However, as in her obsession with the “fine as fine” in *Broomies*, Mansfield desired only the finest wool for her wooly lambs, and spurned the thought of cheap wool.

One of Mansfield’s last letters to Ida Baker demonstrates her bourgeois fastidiousness in her personal reaction to cheap wool: “In the course of a week or two I shall [return to]...you the sleeping vests you bought me. I cant wear them. That kind of wool next to my skin brings me out in a rash...I presume of course, it doesn’t you” (*Collected Letters* 5:339). Her snobbery towards Baker stems from her bourgeois desire for finer things, which she originally rejected in her father. Mansfield’s reaction to a less sensually pleasing fabric encourages her interpretation of “that kind of wool” as roughly made, low-class. She recoiled from the idea of low-quality wool, admonishing her friend for her poor taste.

Mansfield also exhibited this snobbery towards mutton, a low-end sheep product, closely associated with colonial life and export. She wrote in 1921: “Above all cooking smells I hate that of mutton chops. It is somehow such an ill-bred smell. It reminds me of commercial travellers and second class N. Z.” (*Notebooks* 2:281). In her rejection of mutton chops, Mansfield reiterated her bourgeois attitudes towards the *déclassé* traveller and colonial. She riled against the thought of cheap wool and mutton chops – both symbolic of the pioneer lifestyle championed by Sir Harold in his autobiography – in favor of an exquisite pastoral, reminiscent of the fastidiousness that Ida Baker noticed in Mansfield’s “fastidious” colonial mother (Baker 34).

Though she exhibited a taste for finery and fastidiousness in her personal life, Mansfield questioned the showy materialism of colonial New Zealand in her fiction, particularly in the story “New Dresses” (1912). The story opens as Mrs. Carsfield and her elderly mother finish sewing two green cashmere dresses for rebellious young Helen

Carsfield and her well-behaved sister Rose. Mrs. Carsfield has exceeded her budget on the material, a fact she feebly attempts to hide from her husband, but justifies the luxury by warning the girls of the material's fragility and value. Mrs. Carsfield wonders about Helen's reckless nature, regretting the purchase on Helen's behalf, but not her sister's. After church, Helen accidentally rips her dress and attempts to hide the fact by giving away the evidence the next day. The family's sympathetic doctor discovers the dress, realizes the child's attempt to cover her tracks, has his sister repair the tear, and returns it to Helen's grandmother (Collected Stories, 453-463). The overriding sentiment in the story is Mrs. Carsfield's pride in the expensive fabric and Helen's rejection of her constricting new dress.

Mrs. Carsfield feels so successful in providing this frivolous luxury for her children that she "could not help thrilling" when she sees her daughters dressed in the green cashmere because "they looked so very superior" (Collected Stories 458). This sentiment, though embraced by Mansfield when she admonished Ida Baker for her selection of cheap wool, reflects the desire of Juliet's father to have his girls "deck [them]selves out ... show the world that [they] are expensive" (Notebooks v1:67). Mrs. Carsfield illustrates the bourgeois concern with status markers, which Mansfield both admonished in her parents and adopted in her own life. Mansfield mocked her father for his showy materialism, though she desired some of the expensive materials that helped shape her bourgeois youth.

Mansfield constructed an alternate connection between colonial New Zealand and wool in "At the Bay" (1921), one of the semi-autobiographical Burnell family stories, Young Kezia recognizes the most physical, material condition of the character's lives, the inevitability of their mortality, through a poignant scene with her grandmother, Mrs. Fairfield. As Kezia lies down to take a nap, she questions her grandmother about death. Mrs. Fairfield sits across the room, knitting. She continues to knit in the background of Kezia's questions:

‘Does everybody have to die?’ asked Kezia.

‘Everybody!’

‘Me?’ Kezia sounded fearfully incredulous.

‘Some day, my darling.’

‘But grandma.’ Kezia waved her left leg and waggled the toes. They felt sandy.

‘What if I just won’t?’

The old woman sighed again and drew a long thread from the ball.

‘We’re not asked, Kezia.’ She said sadly. ‘It happen to all of us sooner or later.’

Kezia lay still thinking this over. She didn’t want to die. It meant she would have to leave here, leave everywhere, for ever, leave – leave her grandma. She rolled over quickly.

‘Grandma,’ she said in a startled voice.

‘What, my pet!’

‘You’re not to die.’ Kezia was very decided.

‘Ah, Kezia’ – her grandma looked up and smiled and shook her head – ‘don’t let’s talk about it.’

‘But you’re not to. You couldn’t leave me. You couldn’t not be there.’ This was awful. ‘Promise me you won’t ever do it, grandma,’ pleaded Kezia.

The old woman went on knitting. (Stories 456)

As Kezia slowly realizes the certainty of her death, Mrs. Fairfield continues to knit, reinforcing her physical presence and her value in the household as a producer. Not only does the wool Mrs. Fairfield knits link her to the expansionist and capitalist advances in colonial New Zealand typified by Harold Beauchamp, but her repetitive, rhythmic knitting highlights the physical, cyclical nature of life in the colonial family. Mrs. Fairfield transforms the raw product of the colony, wool, into useable goods for the family, working the natural product through a rhythmic pattern.

Mrs. Fairfield's calm, rhythmic transformation of wool into goods to be used by the family contrasts with the demanding, manic attempts at order of the Burnell family's patriarch, Stanley. In "Prelude" (1917) and "At the Bay," Stanley obsesses over growth and production, dominating his bedroom and breakfast table with his vitality. He runs the house like a business, remaining dependent on the women and servants to whom he parcels out duties. As he moves the family to a bigger house in the country in "Prelude," commuting to a non-descript office in the city every day, Stanley embraces Sir Harold's enthusiasm for colonial expansion and production (Stories 232).

Stanley concerns himself with tangible measures of production and usefulness, insisting that all members of the household should work, self-consciously resenting sister-in-law Beryl's comment that she has worked hard to help move the family with a "By Jove, if she can't do a hand's turn occasionally without shouting about it" (Stories 230). Stanley believes that rewards, such as unmarried Beryl living in his household, come only to those who work, in the sense that they create tangible evidence of production.

Lydia Wevers has noted Stanley's obsession with growth: "The wealth of the Burnell family is wealth they work for, and its visible dimensions represent themselves as the productivity of the environment, its natural fertility which they have enhanced" (44). Like the way in which Mansfield's father values land only if it is used to forward the growth of the colony, the situation of the Burnells in their landscape increases the value of their land in terms of colonial expansion. Kate Fullbrook notes that the growth Stanley values in the colony lay in the fertility of the colony – its ability to produce goods on an expanding scale (78).

The tendency to interpret Stanley as a fictional Sir Harold is strong, though it is clear that Stanley is a parody of the expansionist colonial drive behind Beauchamp's enthusiasm for the growth of the colony. Cherry Hankin describes Stanley as "a man whose bluff, materialistic exterior conceals emotional insecurity and a childlike need to be loved" (Hankin 246). Gillian Boddy describes him as "paternalistic, self-centered and clumsy in

his heartiness: a man who expects his sugar spooned into his tea, his slippers put out for him each night. He is the epitome of all that K.M. despised and rejected” in patriarchs (Boddy 88). Stanley’s insecurities and constant need to compare himself to others, his desire to be the first man in the sea to bathe in the morning, are satirical exaggerations of the self-made, colonial spirit Sir Harold attempts to construct in his autobiography. Though the similarities between Stanley and Sir Harold are compelling, the main link between Stanley and Sir Harold is their obsession with business, property and the expansion of the colony.

Mansfield demonstrated her ideological connection of her father to business in journal entries, where she imagines him as boss and god. Mansfield also romanticized her father’s embrace of colonial production and expansion, thinking of him when she smells cut timber while in London. A 1914 journal entry reads: “I walked away down some narrow streets, large drops of rain fell. I reached some packing warehouses and the delicious smell of fresh wood and straw reminded me of Wellington. I could almost fancy a saw mill” (Notebooks 1:282). The saw mill in particular marks an embrace of the expansionist spirit behind Harold Beauchamp’s attitude towards Maori land, as well as the ambivalence Mansfield expressed about his materialism.

Though Beauchamp encouraged colonial production, his own ideas about production and expansion were slightly convoluted. He acknowledged and encouraged colonial expansion within New Zealand, though he also recognized the necessity of maintaining good relationships with Maori. He wrote proudly of his father’s opinion of “The Maori War,” which “could easily be terminated by a judicious and honest Native land policy” (26), yet he scorned the idea of “unused” land in “Native hands,” which “was not doing its duty towards the country and never would without an active policy” (91). Harold affectionately used Maori words throughout the memoir and mentions Maori friends during his time in Picton, though he believed land that wasn’t used for colonial production was wasted (Beauchamp 31-33). His material interests in the expansion of the colony and

the production of wealth occasioned by the expansion are more powerful than his sympathy for the disenfranchised Maori. Eventually his material pursuits outweigh his interest in Maori.

One of Mansfield's earliest published pieces, "In the Botanical Gardens," demonstrates a direct rejection of her father's interest in "unused" lands. The narrator begins by describing the dull "orthodox banality of carpet bedding" she sees in the English-style gardens, dismissing the people who enjoy the sight as "meaningless, as lacking in individuality, as the little figures in an impressionist landscape" (Notebooks 1:170). She describes the cultivated flowers impassively, lingering on the "flamelike" rhododendrons and "sinister" anemones (Notebooks 1:171). The narrator leaves the "smooth swept paths" of the gardens, following a stream in the native bush and lying alongside it. As she peers into the water, she imagines spirits in the stream, wondering whether these "vague forms lurking in the shadow" consider her "the thief of their birthright" (Notebooks 1:171). She returns to the gardens, only to continue thinking of the melancholy scene in the bush.

Unlike her father, who preferred tangible colonial expansion typified by the regimentation of the imported plants in the Botanical Gardens, Mansfield created a narrator who prefers the native bush. The spirits she imagines in the water are undoubtedly Maori, to whom the narrator feels more of an affinity with than the other colonists tripping through the gardens. Angela Smith considers the story engaging "obliquely with the nature of colonialism, its repressions and its guilt" as the narrator exposes her preference for the untamed bush to the cultivated gardens (25). Mansfield interrogated the usurpation of Maori land for colonial progress when she writes of the spirits' "birthright," and she felt ambivalent about the placement of the Botanical Gardens, so near the wild bush. The story seems to reject Sir Harold's sentiments about land "doing its duty toward the country" (Beauchamp 91).

Yet both Sir Harold and his daughter demonstrated ambivalence to colonial New Zealand as they simultaneously romanticize the natural beauty of the landscape and

imagine an affinity with the Maori, while exhibiting a preoccupation with wealth, production and the benefits of Western society. One of the most striking features of Mansfield's letters from the last months of her life, just before and after her admission into the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, is her increasing love of the pastoral. The Institute provided an idealized pastoral for Mansfield, in touch with the natural beauty similar to that which she describes in Wellington's Botanical Gardens, but without the "second-rate N.Z." culture or settler guilt for the usurpation of Maori lands. Mansfield shared her space at the "beautiful old chateau in glorious grounds" with other expatriates she describes as painters, dancers, musicians, and singers, people she deems "*real people*" (Collected Letters 5:307, 322, 328). The Institute allowed Mansfield to realize her Broomies dream by providing her with exotic, stimulating company in this idealized pastoral landscape, and allowed her to pursue her love for the pastoral without the drawbacks of settler society.

Mansfield wrote most fondly of the cows the commune kept, and discussed them as idealized pets. She admired the "cowiness" of them, writing to Murry in late 1922: "I must tell you, darling, my love of cows persists. We now have three. They are real beauties – immense – with short curly hair? Fur? Wool? Between their horns" (Collected Letters 5:325). For an author who fled from her largely agricultural colony to one of Europe's largest cities, this turn towards the pastoral seems remarkable. Imagine Sir Harold's surprise when his daughter wrote in her last letter to him "that the people here have had built a little gallery in the cowshed with a very comfortable divan and cushions. And I lie there for several hours each day to inhale the smell of the cows. It is supposed to be a sovereign remedy for the lungs" (Collected Letters 5:344). Mansfield originally rejected the material life she experienced in colonial New Zealand and believed she could escape from its "vulgarity" in Europe, but she remained continually fascinated with the material, coming to embrace the agricultural production typified by colonial New Zealand. Fed on a

steady diet of hot milk, cream and butter during her struggle with tuberculosis, the author turned towards the pastoral as a source of comfort.

Mansfield's fascination with agriculture on the commune at Fontainebleau reflects the desire she cultivated throughout her life, the idea of being "rooted in life," submerged in the material world and the materiality of her existence. Throughout her life, Mansfield demonstrated a preoccupation with vivid sensory experience, yet she cultivated a desire for luxury, selecting only the finest material possessions. She dreamt of an idealized pastoral, in which she might blend her fastidious nature with the physical life on a farm and embrace the cowiness of the cow in acceptable company. Her desire to be simultaneously submerged in the physical world and "*fine* –down to every minutest particular" highlights Mansfield's initial rejection and gradual acceptance of her colonial family's bourgeois attitudes towards wealth and luxury. Mansfield demonstrates an aversion to and a fixation on the material, which was to remain throughout her life.

Chapter Two

“Money Buys Such Really Delightful Things:” Katherine Mansfield’s Cosmopolitan Style

Although Katherine Mansfield turned towards an idealized version of pastoral at the end of her life, the lifestyle she imagined and experienced at the Institute was not the rugged, pioneer lifestyle her father claimed to have led during his childhood in New Zealand. In fact, Mansfield felt alternately affectionate towards and embarrassed by colonial New Zealand, admitting to the “taint of the pioneer” in a poem written in 1909 to commemorate the death of Polish writer Stanislaw Wyspianski (Poems 30). She wrote both affectionately and disdainfully about her homeland, deriding it in her youth for the common materialism of its inhabitants and praising it later in life: “I can’t say how thankful I am to have been born in N.Z., to know Wellington as I do and to have it to range about in” expressing gratitude at having been born in the colony, but dreaming fitfully about being stranded there (Notebooks 2:320). Mansfield retained her ambivalence towards colonial New Zealand throughout her life. This ambivalence, coupled with her unsteady status as a colonial among the literary elite in England, has led critics to focus on Mansfield’s colonial discomfort abroad and her suppression of anything distinctly colonial or reminiscent of the *declassé* status given to her in England as a colonial. However, Mansfield recognized her colonial identity in her work, including a host of cultural signifiers in her personal and private writing. Her fixation on finery in her personal life exhibits a preoccupation with signifiers of class and wealth. Mansfield may have felt uncomfortable about aspects of colonial New Zealand, but she also based some of her best work in the colony. She made distinctions about what to celebrate and what to shun in colonial New Zealand on the basis of class.

After her brother Leslie’s death while in military service in 1915, Mansfield made a conscious, introspective turn in her work towards memorializing the New Zealand she experienced as a child. She had already begun thinking back to their shared childhood

before Leslie's death when he came to visit her in London just before his training.

Afterwards, Mansfield recalled their meetings in journal entries, observing "I feel I have a duty to perform to the lovely time when we were both alive. I want to write about it and he wanted me to" (Notebooks 2:16). She directed journal entries to him after his death, and wrote nostalgically and romantically about the "undiscovered country" of their youth. In 1916 she wrote:

Now, really, what is it that I do want to write? ... Now – now I want to write recollections of my own country. Yes I want to write about my own country until I simply exhaust my store – not only because it is a 'sacred debt' that I pay to my country because my brother & I were born there, but also because in my thoughts I range with him over all the remembered places. I am never far away from them. I long to renew them in writing. (Notebooks 2 32)

Even during her period of mourning after Leslie's death, the romanticized accounts of the Beauchamps' experiences in Wellington betray Mansfield's fastidious eye for detail and appreciation of finery. She describes the family's second house on Tinakori Road, the same house Sir Harold describes in his autobiography while mentioning his daughters' accomplishments, as a "big white painted square house with a slender pillared verandah and balcony running all the way round" with three entrances: "the visitors' gate, the Tradesman's gate, and a huge pair of old iron gates that were never used and clashed and clamoured when Bogey & I tried to swing on them" (Notebooks 2:24). The large, comfortable house reflects Harold Beauchamp's appreciation of tangible signifiers of success in the colony. However, his daughter includes details he omits from his memoir.

Mansfield notes that the neighborhood on Tinakori Road was unfashionably diverse and "trying" for the family (Notebooks 2:24). The grandeur of their large house was diminished by the neighbors, whom she described as "very mixed," including "an endless family of halfcastes who appeared to have planted their garden with empty jam tins and old

saucepans and black iron kettles without lids” down the street (Notebooks 2:24).

Mansfield juxtaposes the position of her wealthy family’s house with the washwoman next door and the “halfcastes” on Tinakori Road, unsettling reminders of both the brutality of colonization and the egalitarian opportunity for growth the colony provided.

Out of this remembered landscape came the complex works about the Burnell and Sheridan families, “Prelude,” “At the Bay,” “The Doll’s House,” “Her First Ball” and “The Garden Party.” Mansfield evokes her childhood in these stories, and even brings Leslie back to life in several. Mansfield’s remembered New Zealand is pastoral and idyllic in these stories, while the complex inner workings of the families retain Mansfield’s characteristic wit and cynicism, noted by Vincent O’Sullivan of her stories based in Europe (O’Sullivan, “Introduction” 2). Beryl Fairfield, the maiden aunt of the Burnell family stories, stands out as an example of Mansfield’s habit of revealing the disquieting reality under seemingly tranquil exteriors. Beryl feels trapped within her family and the comfortable houses of her sister. Restless, Beryl tries to negotiate a path for herself between what O’Sullivan calls “a troubled questioning self and a fabricated display,” to come to terms with her undetermined identity within her rigidly structured society. O’Sullivan considers such indecision about identity “the status of settler society writ small,” because young New Zealand, like young Beryl, had no set identity (O’Sullivan, “Introduction” 12).

Beryl stands in front of a mirror at the end of “Prelude” as she considers her situation. Using this image as a jumping point, O’Sullivan claims that Mansfield “was born into a family, and a country, constantly checking themselves in a mirror” to see if they retained their essential British traits (O’Sullivan, “Introduction” 1). In fact, Beryl embodies “settler society writ small” more often than this one scene, returning in the “Doll’s House” to chase away the unwanted Kelvies. Whether at the mirror or shunning the neighbors, Beryl embodies the attitudes of her colonial society and highlights Mansfield’s fixation on class

in her writing about the colony, though discussion of Mansfield's colonial New Zealand has generally focused on the fledgling national identity of the young colony.

Bridget Orr also examines the desire to retain British colonial identity in New Zealand, noting the uncertain cultural atmosphere in the colony, whose identity was "still in the most elementary stages of national 'self-definition'" during Mansfield's childhood ("Taint of the Pioneer" 453). New Zealand's geographical distance and size increased colonial anxiety about the role the colony played in the Empire and its significance on the world stage. Like O'Sullivan, Orr identifies "the desire to remain 'British'" among many New Zealanders, a drive which encouraged shunning noticeably colonial signifiers in favour of more English habits and objects ("Taint of the Pioneer" 453-4). Orr concludes by suggesting that Mansfield responds negatively to people and objects that highlight her own colonial identity, rejecting the status of other colonial hybrids abroad. This will be argued later in the chapter.

Though both Orr and O'Sullivan recognize loyalty to the empire signalled by degrees of "English-ness" in colonial New Zealand, the tendency to apply the general current of early settler nationalism to specific people, such as Mansfield and her family, can be exaggerated. More recently than O'Sullivan or Orr, Saikat Majumdar has claimed that the community of colonial New Zealand "identified almost completely with the empire to the point it created avowed detachment from any indigenous culture" and that Harold Beauchamp "epitomized the successful colonial merchant not only in his professional career, but also in spirit through his complete identification with England and all things English" (Majumdar 120-1). However, Harold Beauchamp adopted Maori words and phrases enthusiastically, scattering them among his memoirs, and Mansfield has an assortment of Maori objects she kept throughout her travels, recorded in *The Material Mansfield*. It was common for wealthy colonists, Mansfield and her father included, to appropriate Maori phrases and objects in a self-conscious manner.

Mansfield also cultivated the habit of adopting Maori language in her writing. She attempts to copy a Maori proverb in her 1908 journal: “Nau i waka an ate kakahu he taniko taku,” which Margaret Scott notes she mistranslates as “You’ve wove the garment, I put the border to it,” and creates a list of vocabulary words to learn, just as she jotted down German, French and Russian in her journals (Notebooks 1:152, 166). Though these appropriations of Maori culture do not indicate a fulfilling engagement with Maori, neither do they display a rigid attachment to English culture and an “avowed detachment from any indigenous culture” (Majumdar 120). Despite the emphasis on retaining British identity in the South Pacific, many wealthy colonists sought to celebrate and document Maori culture. Though the romantic, preservationist accounts of Maori from Mansfield’s youth generally reiterate colonial stereotypes, they also demonstrate an interest in particularly New Zealand, rather than British, characteristics of the colony.

Early works of Mansfield’s, some published in school papers, colonial publications and journals in London, illustrate the appropriation of characteristically “New Zealand” words and phrases by the young author. Jane Stafford and Mark Williams note the use of Maori signifiers, indicative of contemporary Maoriland writing, beginning with “A True Tale,” the first of Mansfield’s notebook entries to mention Maori. Mansfield self-consciously included Maori words into this generic campfire story: “Many, many miles ago” lived “tall, stately, copper-coloured” people wielding “ake-akes” to signify New Zealand, though her depictions develop over time (Stafford, Williams 143). More mature works such as “In the Botanical Gardens” demonstrate a self-conscious turning towards the more “savage” and naturalistic elements of colonial New Zealand, as the narrator prefers the romantic, wild landscape of the unattended bush to the well-manicured gardens of the title. The idealized, romantic descriptions of Maori women and customs in “How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped” demonstrate the young author’s condemnation of bourgeois New Zealand for its rigidity in favor of an idealized “natural” society.

Photographs of Mansfield often show her in European dress with Maori jewellery, particularly her brother's greenstone pendant that she wore after his death. She also shared a whalebone tiki with her sister, Vera Macintosh Bell. A card from Vera photographed in *The Material Mansfield* claims that the sisters wore the tiki "when as school girls, in LONDON, we wished to be identified as New Zealanders" (Harris, Morris, Woods 43). The use of this object seems not to demonstrate the girls hiding their colonial status or abandoning their New Zealand heritage in favor of something English, but appropriating Maori artefacts in order to highlight their difference from the English tastefully. Neither does the object represent an untouched Maori culture; in fact, the tiki seems to be made for pakeha to appropriate. The description of the tiki reads: "Overall, this tiki has been fashioned in a somewhat casual manner. It shows signs of European tooling and it resembles many of the lesser crafted *heitiki* dating from the late 1800s to about the time of the First World War" (Harris, Morris, Woods 43). While this commonplace object was infused with cultural meaning and used to transmit "New Zealand" to Mansfield's audience, the "tooling" of the tiki described above illustrates the hybrid nature of an early twentieth-century New Zealand identity and the readiness in which pakeha New Zealanders adopted stereotypically colonial objects.

Mansfield's display of New Zealand colonial identity may demonstrate one of the ways in which Mansfield dealt with what Angela Smith calls "unthinking imperial snobbery" during her teens and later career in London and elite literary society (1). Smith notes that both Rupert Brook and Virginia Woolf mock Mansfield's "manners, her passion and the success of her stories," which "all betray her dubious origins" to these highbrow authors (1-2). Garsington hostess Lady Ottoline Morrell also comments on Mansfield's colonial status. Though reasonably wealthy and white, Mansfield could be easily mocked by the inflexible English class system. She expresses feelings of colonial inadequacy and displacement throughout the notebooks, most famously in the poem "To Stanislaw Wyspianski:"

From the other side of the world,
 From a little island cradled in the giant sea bosom,
 From a little land with no history,
 (Making its own history, slowly and clumsily
 Piecing together this and that, finding the pattern, solving the problem,
 Like a child with a box of bricks),
 I, a woman, with the taint of the pioneer in my blood (*Poems* 30)

Mansfield infantilizes colonial New Zealand in the poem, self-consciously emphasizing the youth of her country in relation to the continental Europe of the Polish Wyspianski. Coupled with her ambivalent depictions of the country as she fluctuates between criticizing and admiring New Zealand both within and outside of the colony, Mansfield's status as a pakeha New Zealander has generally been seen as a negotiation between characteristically English and colonial qualities, a rejection or embrace of the cultural blending or hybridity of the colony.

In 1908, writing of her desire to create a novel about a girl from Wellington living a "dual existence" in Europe, Mansfield constructed the semi-autobiographical "Maata." The main character attends school in London, returns to Wellington "utterly disillusioned," then returns "to London, to live there an existence so full & so strange that Life itself seemed to greet her, and, ill to the point of death, return to W. & die," (Notebooks 1:111-112). The back-and-forth movement of Maata from Wellington to London and back again mirrors Mansfield's own life.

Mansfield's status as both an English modernist and colonial New Zealand author has been debated for some time; O'Sullivan highlights this tension in the title of his 1994 essay, "Katherine Mansfield, the New Zealand European." One response to Mansfield's status as a colonial writer in the heart of the Empire and at the outset of the Modernist movement has been to read her texts through a post-colonial lens. Such readings generally give

Mansfield the status of colonial hybrid, taking the term from Homi Bhabha's description of objects created within colonies which work to simultaneously subvert and encourage imperialist ideology as they blend the forces of both the colonizers and the colonized (Bhabha 1175). Linda Hardy uses the term hybrid "to Invoke the work of Homi Bhabha on 'the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority,' emphasizing the heteroglossia created by colonialism and that "meanings and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew" (qtd. in Hardy 419). Orr also considers Mansfield in terms of colonial hybridity, considering the writer as something "between imperial subject and colonial other," or a "creole," and loosely applies Bhabha's term hybrid to the status of a creole ("Taint of the Pioneer" 453).

In her brainstorming for the semi-autobiographical novel "Maata," the name of a Maori girl, Maata Mahupuku, with whom Mansfield seems to have had some kind of sexual affair with as a teenager, Mansfield discusses her desire to portray the protagonist as "a half-caste Maori" (Notebooks 1:112). Orr considers "Maata's possession of Maori ancestry and Parisian sophistication" representative of "Mansfield's often painful sense of herself as expatriate New Zealander, *déclassé* colonial hybrid, in an idealized form" ("The Only Free People" 167). Yet the draft of the novel only refers to Maata's race through the eyes of the absurdly dedicated Rhoda, based on Mansfield's friend, Ida Baker. Rhoda watches Maata undress after her arrival back in London: "There was not very much light in the room & Maata's skin flamed like yellow roses. The scent of her, like musk & spice, was on the air" (Notebooks 1:260). Rhoda helps her idol change into a green dress and hands Maata violets, admitting to her joy in the physical presence of Maata: "That merely to see you, to be able to – to put my hand on your coat like that & know it is warm with you" is bliss to her (Notebooks 1:261). Through the eyes of Rhoda, Mansfield describes Maata's race through sexualized, exotic detail.

Maata's cultural signifiers, like the green dress and violets she wears, are feminine and European; only her physical body remains racialized. The "Parisian sophistication" Orr describes marks not only an idealized, cosmopolitan Mansfield, but also the author's already privileged status. Mansfield may have felt at times like a "déclassé colonial hybrid," but her wealth and skin tone encouraged the travel and education she pursued ("The Only Free People" 167). Unlike the fictional Maata, who remains sexualized, even while attempting to pass in European clothing, Mansfield's privilege allowed her to borrow from a variety of cultures.

Although she constantly paid attention to expenses, leaving strict accounts of purchases in her journals, Mansfield often found money to accumulate cups and saucers, teapots, silk chemises, and other household accessories throughout her travels. She delighted in fine taste and luxury, even at the height of her sickness. She wrote to Ida Baker in 1922: "I do like luxury – just for a dip in and out of. Especially in Paris because its made into such an Art. Money buys such really delightful things. And then all is managed so perfectly ... and nobody *fusses*. That's the chief point of money. One can buy that complete freedom from *fuss*" (Collected Letters 5:171-172). Mansfield's desire for luxury, and the ease it provided, can be seen through a number of diary entries. The desire for fine things is also evident in accounts of Mansfield by other people. Ida Baker comments on her fastidious nature, Murry expresses frustration at her expenditures and complaints about comfort, as biographer Claire Tomalin notes that he complained to Lawrence about Mansfield's desire for "'little luxuries'" he could not afford (Tomalin 122). Mansfield may have acquired the taste for luxury in Wellington, but she took this with her throughout her life. She demonstrated this desire for things done nicely and without fuss throughout her writing, and looked down upon anything less.

Mansfield carried this fastidiousness with her throughout her travels, even bringing her discerning taste for luxury into the New Zealand bush. Mansfield's most vivid accounts of travel within New Zealand stem from a camping trip she undertook just before her final

departure from the country during which she and her tour group travelled through the Urewera district of the North Island for several weeks. She jotted down the sights, which include vegetation, birds, and local Maori, for Mansfield displays the colonial gaze often as she looks at and judges the people she sees, in detailed notebook entries. Elated or dejected, entries in the Urewera notebook record the teenage Mansfield's ambivalent and contradictory attitude towards colonial New Zealand and its inhabitants. The only constants among the Urewera notebook are the descriptions Mansfield writes of the physical aspects of the colony and the way in which race and class were signified there and abroad: through physical cultural signifiers.

Mansfield wrote one of the most enthusiastic responses to her experience in the Ureweras just after visiting the house of Mrs Warbrick, the wife of the Maori guide who took them through Umuroa. Mrs Warbrick lived with her husband and their niece, Joanna, in a comfortable house in the Ureweras. Mansfield never specifies Mrs Warbrick's race in the notebook, which possibly means she was pakeha, as Mansfield generally defines racial distinctions on first glimpse: "a beautiful old Maori woman" (Notebooks 1:136), "Post letters there – see Maoris" (Notebooks 1:137), "the Maori women are rather special" (Notebooks 1:138), "Two Maori girls are washing" (Notebooks 1:139), "We pluck 'nga maui with the Maori children" (Notebooks 1:140). The status of Mrs Warbrick, as a pakeha colonial married to a Maori man, would seem to place her among the family of "halfcastes" Mansfield complains about in her remembered account of the house on Tinakori Road. However, Mrs Warbrick's fine house, her husband's occupation as a guide and the hospitality they show Mansfield raised Mrs Warbrick in the Mansfield's colonial gaze. Young Mansfield praises the house and its inhabitants, even adopting some of Mrs Warbrick's noticeably colonial features, learning Maori words from the older woman and buying a "kit" from her when they leave (Notebooks 1:141).

The "clean place" Mrs Warbrick and her niece share impresses Mansfield with the simple comfort and respectability of this home in the bush. It contains "the pictures, the

beds, Byron & the candle-like flowers in a glass – sweet – the paper & pens, photos of Maoris & whites too,” as well as the educated women who act as her hosts. Joanna reads Shakespeare as well as working in the garden and Mrs Warbrick agrees with Mansfield in thinking the people from the impoverished town Mansfield least enjoyed on her trip, were “so dirty” (Notebooks 1:141). The relative luxury Mansfield enjoys in the whare, as well as the shared condescension of Mansfield and Mrs Warbrick, enables Mansfield to feel at “home in the dark” when she spent the night in the house. Mrs Warbrick seems quite a colonial hybrid, living in the blended culture Mansfield despises in her neighbors on Tinakori Road, but what sets Mrs Warbrick apart from the neighbors is her class. Educated and comfortable, Mrs Warbrick seems to run her house without fuss, in the manner Mansfield appreciated. Class mainly determined Mansfield’s reaction towards the cultural blending taking place in colonial New Zealand.

The Urewera Notebooks have been studied as an example of Mansfield’s impressions of the New Zealand landscape and racial climate. Orr examines the links between Mansfield’s depiction of Maori in the Urewera and the noble savage of colonial literature, which exploits Maori because their “independent political history is definitively closed although their potential as an aesthetic resource...is enthusiastically exploited” (“The Only Free People” 166). Picturesque and passé, the noble savage legitimates Western expansion by portraying the colonial other as an already dying race. Coupled with what Orr considers Mansfield’s romantic landscapes in the Urewera Notebooks, the journal entries emphasize the disintegration of Maori while celebrating their “natural” charm and beauty. It shows the “landscape of loss suffering, figuring the current vulnerability of the Maori, reduced to the picturesque aged and infantile” (“The Only Free People” 166). Such romanticism legitimates the disintegration of Maori culture.

Mansfield romanticized Maori at times, especially in an often quoted description of a young girl wearing “a long piece of greenstone” and “long white & red bone earrings,” with a “passionate, violent, crudely savage” face portraying “a tragic illimitable Peace.”

She refers to the girl as “the very incarnation of evening” (Notebooks 1:149). Just before this description, however, Mansfield spies “an old Maori drunk & a little child ... Soon other Maoris come out, help the old man into a ramshackle cart where a white boney horse is very lamed. The child cries & cries, the old man sways to and fro – she holds on to him with a most pathetic gesture. They drive out of sight” (Notebooks 1:148). Mansfield’s conflicting accounts of the state of Maori she witnessed in the Ureweras demonstrate the various ways Maori handled the pressures of colonization, as well as her authorial ambivalence to the conditions of life in the colony. Mansfield describes various states of life in the Urewera notebook, but the romantic depiction of “the very incarnation of evening” is most often used in scholarship.

Mansfield wrote the Urewera notebooks at just eighteen, and her attitudes towards New Zealand changed as often throughout the rest of her writing as they do in this example. Her ambivalence towards Maori, as seen in her shared condescension with Mrs Warbrick and the alternating romantic and impartial accounts of hope and degradation she sees in the region, persisted throughout her life. In a recent article on the Urewera notebooks, Anne Maxwell finds sympathy in Mansfield’s descriptions throughout the Ureweras, claiming that since the author cannot “rescue both the landscape and the Tuhoe from what she sees as the ravages of Pakeha incursion and desecration, she can at least preserve in her writing the idea of the pure Maori” (Maxwell 26). Maxwell reads the evidence of colonialism, like the cart and horse the drunk old man uses, as indicative of the “ravages of Pakeha incursion and desecration,” and assumes Mansfield feels guilt over such incursion. However, Mansfield seems to have enjoyed other markers of pakeha colonial identity in the bush, such as Byron in Mrs Warbrick’s house and her niece’s literary pursuits in her spare time. Mansfield’s reaction to colonialism was mainly concerned with what kinds of cultural markers were exchanged.

Mansfield’s enthusiastic definitions of Maori, including the little girl she named “the very incarnation of evening,” are comprised of physical and linguistic displays of

difference. She reacts enthusiastically to the Tuhoe people, admiring the charmingly limited knowledge of English displayed in their “adorable” pah: “No English ... the child saying ‘nicely thank you.’” Many of the descriptions in this passage focus on the exotic clothing and hairstyles of the women. One woman with a “splendid face & regal bearing” has “photos, a chiming clock, mats, kits, red table cloth, horse hair sofa” in her parlor, another, identified as “a follower of Rua,” has “long Fijian hair & side combs, a most beautiful girl of 15 ... married to a patriarch.” The only Maori man she mentions in this passage is their guide, Mrs Warbrick’s husband, who “stands in the water a regal figure” while crossing a river, whose “voice is so good ... he speaks most correctly and yet enunciates each word” (Notebooks 1:139). Mansfield delighted in these quaint, picturesque images of Maori, admitting afterwards that isolated Umuroa was “fascinating in the extreme” (Notebooks v1 140).

Once the party left Umuroa to travel elsewhere, Mansfield’s entries become disenchanted as she sees more frequent signs of European influence and destruction, rather than lofty cultural exchange. She plays with Maori children and decides they had “queer droll ways.” After spying a man in “a red & black striped flannel jacket” and a little boy “raggedly dressed in brown,” she decides she is “sick of the third rate article. Give me the Maori and the tourist but nothing in between.” Mansfield immediately follows this disdainful comment with a description of their artistically deficient linguistic and physical attributes: “The Maoris here know some English and some Maori – not like the other natives. Also these people dress in almost English clothes compared with the natives [t]here, and they wear a great deal of ornament in Umuroa strange hair fashions. I have found nothing of interest here” (Notebooks 1:140-141). Mansfield’s distress stems from the town’s degradation and poverty, displayed through the shabby clothes and poor English of its inhabitants.

Surprisingly, critical discussion of the poverty Mansfield observes in New Zealand focuses on Mansfield’s works about pakeha hardships, such as the degradation of the

woman and her daughter in ‘The Woman at the Store.’ Maxwell addresses the issue of Maori poverty briefly, claiming that Mansfield sympathized with the malnourished and impoverished people she witnesses in the Ureweras (26). However, Mansfield makes no attempt to atone for the negative effects of colonization, nor even explicitly blames “pakeha incursion” for the poverty she witnesses.

Maxwell goes on to suggest that Mansfield reacted so strongly against the social degradation in parts of the Ureweras because she rejected the cultural blending, or colonial hybridity, of the environment. She claims that Mansfield “despise[d] ... the ‘between’ or ‘hybrid’ state” she finds in Maori outside of Umuroa (Maxwell 26). The shabby state of the flannel jacket on one Maori man and the boy’s Western clothes Mansfield describe are signifiers of such sloppy hybridization, making the degradation of the place clearer to Mansfield. Maxwell goes on to suggest that as a pakeha, Mansfield existed in a similar state of colonial hybridity, and perhaps the recognition of another hybrid is what upset Mansfield.

Bridget Orr makes a similar assumption while discussing an incident that happened much later in Mansfield’s life. Although she enjoyed the transmission of highbrow literature to Joanna in the Ureweras, Mansfield rejected such colonial hybridity in a café in London. Orr recounts a story written by Mark Gertler to Lady Ottoline Morrell, in which Mansfield, after overhearing several uncouth “University Blacks” criticize a book of Lawrence’s in a café, ripped the book from their hands and ran away with it. Orr interprets this scene as a display of racial dominance on Mansfield’s part, as her “appropriation of the high cultural text- the ‘Book’ - from its black readers performed two tasks: at the same time that the gesture confirmed her position as a fit owner/interpreter of ‘advanced’ intellectual property, it marked her distance from other more visibly marginal colonial subjects” (Orr, “Taint of the Pioneer” 456). It is this distance that Orr illustrates, the rejection of the “in between” so often noted in Mansfield’s personal life, that stands out.

Mansfield admired the “high cultural text” while in the pleasant home of Mrs Warbrick in the Urewera, yet she rejected the possession of the Book in the hands of a colonial abroad.

However, it is important to note several facts about the retelling of this incident. One is that Mark Gertler, not Mansfield, recounts the tale and gives the term “University Blacks” to the men who ridicule Lawrence’s book. Another is Mansfield’s attachment to Lawrence, even after their close friendship ended. Although it seems unlikely that the race of the men who poke fun at Lawrence was not taken into account, it is possible that Mansfield simply responded as she would to a verbal attack on a friend. Her short temper is noted in various biographies and displayed in journal entries and letters, and the temptation to read significance in all the aspects of her life that have been laid bare since her death is strong.

No one has manipulated the legacy of Mansfield or read their own thoughts into her documents as much as Murry, who frequently omitted or rewrote parts of his late wife’s work for editorial purposes or simply because he couldn’t decipher Mansfield’s handwriting. He changed the name of an unfinished short story titled “Young Country” in one of its drafts. As Margaret Scott points out, Murry renamed the story “Kezia and Tui,” changing the name of the protagonist from Rachel to the semi-autobiographical Kezia, who appears in the Burnell family stories (Notebooks 2:63). “Young Country” is based in colonial New Zealand and follows the progression of a day in the life of Rachel, who daydreams in school after a fight with her father. Rachel comes home, apologizes to her beloved grandmother for upsetting the household, then runs to her friend Tui’s house, bringing along some cold pudding her grandmother has made. She helps Tui wash her hair and then finds herself at odds with Tui, who grows increasingly conceited and interested in boys. Rachel returns home and stands in the garden, pondering “if there really is a God!” (Notebooks 2:63-66).

The racial signifiers here are distinct, as Orr points out in her discussion of the story. The strong-willed Rachel looks down on Tui and Mrs Bead’s poor housekeeping and their

idea of romantic interior décor, limited to “muslin curtains made out of an old skirt of [Tui’s] mother” and plentiful “pink sateen bows” (Notebooks 1:66). Rachel dismisses Tui’s plans of marrying “a rich Englishman and hav[ing] four little boys with beautiful blue eyes” as she decides she will live with her grandmother and never marry (Notebooks 1:65). She considers Tui “dotty” and rejects the growing difference in their attitudes. Orr has described the story as a contrast between “familiar figures of ‘native’ insufficiency, laziness, incompetence and mendacity” and “disorderly hedonism” with Rachel’s industrious will to own a farm with her grandmother and refusal of patriarchal authority (“Taint of the Pioneer” 459). The frivolity of Tui, her desire for the English and pink sateen bows, characterize her as weaker than Rachel, who stands up to patriarchal, maybe even imperial, authority.

One of the most interesting facts about “Young Country” is Murry’s publication of it under a different name, which conflated the protagonist with the Mansfield-based Kezia until the publication of the Notebooks in the 1990s. Orr refers to the Murry version of the story in her discussion of the text. Like Mansfield, both Rachel, or Kezia in the Murry version, and Kezia in the Burnell stories display an avowed attachment to their maternal grandmothers and rebel against the conventionality of colonial New Zealand. When Orr reads this story as “Kezia and Tui,” she links Mansfield to the protagonist, and Mansfield is perceived as being against Tui’s appropriation of romantic frivolity and desire for an English husband. Perhaps because of Kezia’s link to Mansfield, Orr relates this story to Mansfield’s distaste for anything that reminds her of her colonial hybrid status. The substitution of Mansfield for Kezia, and Kezia for Rachel, transforms the story into a rejection of colonial hybridity.

Though Mansfield wrote with disdain for the slovenly hybridity she noticed in the Ureweras, she appreciated cultural adaptation and blending when it was done with a certain level of finery and class. Yet like the rejection of assumptions about “domination and resistance” as the only forces in a colony that Hardy warns against through Bhabha,

simply to suggest the blending of pakeha and Maori culture, or even white New Zealand colonial and English culture, in Mansfield's writing and life ignores much of her experience and distorts the term hybrid (Hardy 419). Mansfield's travels were often recorded in ambivalent and contradictory journal passages and letters, which never quite match up to the descriptions of places in her stories. She changed her attitude to places according to different contexts, sometimes admiring a place in a letter and deprecating it in her fiction.

O'Sullivan considers "'Europe,' if constructed from Mansfield's fiction, is above all the site of sexual complexity, a complexity that rings the changes on naivety, ethnic resonances, the obsessiveness inseparable from emotional rapport" (O'Sullivan, "Introduction" 2). On a smaller scale, Paris fits this description as the sordid trap for the central female characters in "The Little Governess" and "Je ne parle pas francais." Yet to ignore Mansfield's private writing about France leaves out her multiple responses to the country and simplifies Mansfield's multiple viewpoints. Her visits to Paris and the South of France were frequent and elicited circumstantial responses. The private comment in 1918 "But Lord! Lord! how I do hate the french [sic]. With them it is always rutting time. See them coming dancing and sniffing round a woman's skirts" (Notebooks 2:145) becomes "France is a remarkable country. It is I suppose the most civilised country in the world" in a letter to Dorothy Brett from 1922 (Collected Letters 5:94). Mansfield shows no one reaction to a place, and her travels only multiply the many impressions she writes about.

Mansfield's privileged position as a wealthy pakeha New Zealander encouraged the exchange of traditions from a broad range of places, and her illness necessitated travel throughout her adult life. Always a conscious dresser, writing to her sister in 1908: "Clothes ought to be a joy to the artistic eye – a silent reflection of the soul," Mansfield concerned herself with making and receiving impressions (Collected Letters 1:50). Her class allowed her to choose to wear different cultural signifiers, like the greenstone and tiki,

to buy luxurious objects even while keeping strict accounts in her journals, and to construct a cosmopolitan persona, formed with the sense of fine taste and style she valued. Mansfield was not just a creole or a hybrid from the colony and the empire, but a blending of cultures, from within and outside British rule. Writing to her cousin, Elizabeth, Countess Russel, in December 1922, Mansfield claimed:

When I came to London from Switzerland I did ... go through what books and undergraduates call a spiritual crisis, I suppose. For the first time in my life everything bored me. Everything and worse everybody seemed a compromise, and so flat, so dull, so mechanical. If I had been well I should have rushed off to darkest Africe or the Andes or the Ganges or wherever it is one rushes at those times, to try for a change of heart (One can't change one's heart in public) and to gain new impressions. For it seems to me we live on new impressions – really new ones.

(Collected Letters 5:346)

In this letter to Elizabeth, Mansfield playfully imagines reaching far into the British Empire and outside of its borders in an attempt to “try for a change of heart.” Conscious of her own romanticism, she ridicules the idea that travelling granted the freedom to change oneself, while reinforcing the idea that travel affords new impressions and experiences that enhance one's career. Her disdainful comment about “books and undergraduates” highlights not only her self-awareness in the passage, but the lofty discussion of worldliness and cosmopolitanism shared by men like her husband when they first met.

While proposing the creation of *Rhythm* to J D Fergusson, Murry explains that he feels “It is to be kept absolutely cosmopolitan – no suggestion of connexion with Oxford ... Oxford is almost the negation of our idea” (Lea 24). He rejected the institutionalized nature and iconic status of the University as provincial. However, Murry hoped to find “men over the world with the same enthusiasm and the same disgusts” as himself, men who must understand poetry, art, music, and be familiar with Debussy and Mahler and Fantaisisme

(Lea 24-5). Murry's men remain elite, educated and white. His claim to cosmopolitanism was to be self-consciously aware of European culture and to cultivate an un-Oxford-like, yet highly educated persona.

To say that Mansfield was cosmopolitan in the sense Murry may have meant it acknowledges her privilege as well as recognizing many other cultures she borrowed from in her public and private lives. In her early days in London, she defied dress convention by dressing in what George Bowden described as "more or less in Maori fashion" one day and performing at a dinner party in "a grey silk dress reaching down to the ground, and swathing her young figure" on another (Alpers 87, Baker 39). Her use of Maori words and objects, her Spanish shawl, French stockings, Japanese doll, haircut, have all been influenced by her exposure to different cultures through her status as an upper-middle-class, white colonial abroad. Just as she rejected the "in between" groups in the Ureweras, Mansfield's personal taste in clothing and reactions to racial tensions were contradictory and circumstantial.

Mansfield's personal discomfort with cultural signifiers, especially when symbols of the Empire or the elite were usurped by someone *déclassé*, is significant. This aversion has usually been explained as her reaction to other more noticeably 'other' colonials, in that their conspicuous appropriation of English items forces her to think about her own, but it may have something to do with class and style. Inherently linked to class, her emphasis on doing things right, on luxury in everything and especially fine taste establish Mansfield as a modern cosmopolitan, someone wealthy enough select items to appropriate from other cultures and pass judgment on other items.

In a letter to her mother, described by Ida Baker as a very "fastidious" woman, Mansfield recorded her personal reaction to seeing black soldiers "in full French uniform" during World War One (Baker 34, *Collected Letters* 2:17-19). Mansfield claimed that "the sight of these particular ones, [colonial soldiers] in their spruce European clothes gives me an unpleasant turn" (*Collected Letters* 2:17-9). This comment seems to place Mansfield in

the role of uncomfortable colonial hybrid. As she recognized colonial subjects, who, unlike the wealthy, white daughter of a New Zealand businessman, could not pass for European in the heart of the colonial French Empire, her sense of colonial discomfort heightens. These soldiers uncomfortably reflect Mansfield's own attempt at passing in Europe. Orr suggests that Mansfield's usurpation of Lawrence's book in the café was performed for the same reason ("Taint of the Pioneer" 456). Regardless of the reason why these soldiers gave Mansfield "an unpleasant turn" in this situation, she acknowledged and exploited her own discomfort in a story titled "Stay Laces," highlighting the imperial racism of the two female characters when they observe a black man in French uniform and wonder whether they could see themselves romantically attached to such a man.

The most cynical moment in the story about two women's rampant consumerism, which remains undiminished by the war, comes when the protagonist points out an "Indian creature in Khaki" to her companion and asks "Do you think you could ever be attracted to a dark man?" (qtd. in O'Sullivan, "Introduction" 5). Vincent O'Sullivan discusses the 1915 story in terms of the sexualization of the black man, then pushes the meaning of the story past the women's racist implications, further into the empire, considering the man "a figure of tributary loyalty," which he links to Mansfield's brother (O'Sullivan, "Introduction" 5). Yet it is highly unlikely that Harold Beauchamp's only son enlisted for the same reasons as an Indian man during British colonial rule. Mansfield seemed comfortable with the image of her brother in English uniform when he visited her before he attended training in France, yet she expressed discomfort with another colonial, presumably a much poorer one and who has not immediately enlisted as an officer, like Leslie Beauchamp, in "spruce European dress." The difference between the two is not simply the colonies from which they came, but the status of the colonial subjects.

Class also plays a role in the sexualization of colonial others in Mansfield's fiction and personal life. Recall Rhoda's lingering gaze on her friend's skin "like yellow roses" in the unfinished novel "Maata" (Notebooks 1:260). Mansfield reflected this desire for the exotic

feminine other as a teenager. She writes of the real Maata Mahupuku: “I want Maata ... I feel savagely crude, and almost perfectly enamoured of the child” (Notebooks 1:103-4). Her savage crudity echoes Maata’s race and Mansfield’s tendency to romanticize the Maori in the Ureweras. British Imperial authority established a racial hierarchy in the colonies, placing Maori above many more noticeably other colonials due to assumptions based on their skin tone, language and demeanor. Orr describes this phenomenon by quoting from a 1918 work, *A Century in the Pacific*: “Claimed to be an off-shoot of the Caucasian race, the Maoris share a common stock with the Europeans. No such gap exists between the brown and white man as between black and white” (qtd. Orr, “Taint of the Pioneer” 454). Under such policy, the difference between Maata and the black (presumably Indian) soldiers in French uniform Mansfield recalled to her mother is marked. Maata’s wealth, too, comes into play – Alpers notes that she had been to Paris and seen Mansfield in London in their adolescence (Alpers 46). So it is that the “Indian creature in khaki” stimulates and frightens the women in “Stay-Laces,” while Maata is exotic and non-threatening.

Mansfield made distinctions based on race and class throughout her travels, stereotyping Europeans and Asians repeatedly throughout the letters and notebooks. She casts the Swiss as “Young men with red noses & stuffy check suits & feathers in their hats,” “young females in mackintoshes with hats tied with ribbons under the chin,” and a race full of hefty ankles in a letter to Murry (Collected Letters 4:215). Later she mocks provincial French style to her mother: “The mother is very thin, dresses in woolen jackets tied with ribbons and trimmed with swansdown, with short sleeves (the provincial French lady’s idea of a sports coat)” (Collected Letters 2:25-6). She quarrels with an unsophisticated “American millionaire” while staying at the Villa Isola Bella (Collected Letters 3:223). The notebooks contain references to frightening “chinamen,” and she despises a present given to her by her sisters in a 1919 letter to Murry:

After all a birthday present came from C. [Chaddie] & Jeanne together. An ordinary 1d matchbox, enamelled yellow and paint (very badly) with an ugly little Chinaman – oriental department 1/11³/₄ ‘To our darling Katie with our united love & best wishes’ – they couldn’t have said more if it was a carpet. (Collected Letters 3:22)

The description of this present illustrates the distinction Mansfield made between her sense of luxurious cosmopolitanism and inferior colonial trade. Not only did she shun the present for her sisters’ apparent lack of consideration as they sent an inexpensive joint gift, but she hated the matchbox because it was cheap, vulgar, poorly done. The mark hit close to home, but perverted her feeling of high cosmopolitanism to that of the tourist. “They couldn’t have said more if it was a carpet” describes the common Orientalism present during the early-nineteen-hundreds, which Mansfield rejects. For Mansfield, cultural blending required fine taste. Mansfield’s cosmopolitanism displays her colonial heritage and willingness to adopt different cultures, but above all, her still privileged status.

Chapter Three

A Divided Being:" The Disconnection between Thinking and Feeling

Mansfield's class and status may have enabled her to travel and write about different cultures more often, but her nomadic adult life amplified the feelings of isolation and detachment she developed throughout her illness. Towards the end of her life, she demonstrated a fear of being "disunited" in her letters and felt that her illness stemmed not just from physical complaint but from a mental source (Collected Letters 5:304). She writes to Murry of the Institute in Fontainebleau on 2 November, 1922: "I have come here for a cure ... This *is* the place and here at last one is understood entirely, mentally & physically. I could never have regained health by any other treatment" (Collected Letters 5:314). The Institute afforded Mansfield a place to pursue her interest in the pastoral and an appreciation of the material world in a way that brought together abstract ideas and actual experience, connecting her disrupted adult life with her colonial childhood. Her association of physical wellbeing with her mental state late in life echoes the question she posed in her journal in 1921: "Why must thinking and existing be ever on two different planes?" (Notebooks 2:267). Mansfield was always concerned with the incongruity between one's inner life and the exterior world, attempting to link the mental to the physical in order to rectify her sense of dividedness, yet acknowledging the tragic inability of such a connection. Her stories are full of moments when the mental and the physical almost combine for the characters, yet something inside each character prevents them from accomplishing this blending.

Writing to S.S. Kotliansky of her decision to enter the Institute, Mansfield expressed her disenchantment with her current life, hedged in by sickness and convention. She complained of the growing separation of her modern life from the material world and her feelings of incongruity, even within her own character:

"I am a divided being ... I am always conscious of this secret disruption in me ... I mean to change my whole way of life entirely. I mean to learn to work in every

possible ways with my hands, looking after animals and doing all kinds of manual labour ... This world to me is a dream and the people in it are sleepers. I have known just instances of waking but that is all. I want to find a world in which these instances are united ... What is important is to try & learn to live – really live, and in relation to everything – not isolated (this isolation is death to me)”

(Collected Letters 5:304)

Mansfield’s criticism of the isolation afforded by modernity and the restrictive patriarchy and cultural conventions of early twentieth century Western society have already been pointed out with due emphasis. For example, in regards to “How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped,” a 1910 story published in *Rhythm* in 1912, Kate Fulbrook writes that the story “specifically treats the forces that construct stereotyped roles for women and the difficulty of escape from those roles;” Cherry Hankin writes that Mansfield demonstrated carrying “a heavy burden of resentment” towards her family, expressed in Pearl Button’s unhappiness and willingness to abandon her home; and Angela Smith writes that Pearl wishes “to get out of the world for which the gate [she swings upon in the beginning of the story] is a demarcation line, or to admit outsiders to the well-regulated inside world” (Fulbrook 41, Hankin 79, Smith 41). This chapter is not concerned with the society in which Mansfield lived, nor the restrictions her characters face, nor the way in which these restrictions are internalized, but the fact that the internalization of these restrictions limits characters in the way that Mansfield describes. It creates “disunited” beings in that they cannot bridge the gap between the mental and physical worlds, an idea relatively unexplored in Mansfield criticism, with the notable exception of Mary Burgan’s assessment of Mansfield’s illness and the effect of her physical wellbeing on her artistic production.

Mansfield often created characters who come very near to the communion of mind and body she desired through the perception of the physical world around them and active

engagement with their material culture. As detailed in the introduction, Mansfield's sensitive child characters actively submerge themselves in physical life and experience the material on a personal, intimate level. Pearl Button, Hinemoa in "Summer Idyll" (1907) and Kezia Burnell in "Prelude" and "At the Bay" all experience an acute awareness of and sensitivity to their material worlds, demonstrating the heightened sensuality of a child relatively unrestricted by the demands of colonial New Zealand society.

Mansfield's interest in sensuality and the connection between the mind and body can be traced to some of her earliest literary influences. This 1909 journal entry shows her working through some of Wilde, Beardsley and Pater's philosophy and the Decadents' relation of the physical to mental:

To the Italian, Love "Comes from a root in Boccaccio, through the stem of Petrarch, to the flower of Dante." And so he becomes the idealist of material things, instead of the materialist of spiritual things – like Wilde – and after Beardsley the spirit is known only through the body – the body is but clay in the shaping or destroying hands of the spirit. "Soul & sense, sense & soul" – here is the innate spirit of Henry Wotton, here is the quintessence of Wilde's life, of Downson, and of Arthur Symonds two most vitally interesting books of Poems. To Pater this did not so exactly apply, yet there is a very real sensuousness in his earliest Portraits – a certain voluptuous pleasure in garden scents. "Well, nature is immoral. Birth is a grossly sexual thing – – – Death is a grossly physical thing." (Notebooks 1:164-5)

In this passage, Mansfield locates her artistic and personal influences of these artists, specifically Beardsley's sensual work, Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, and Pater's "voluptuous pleasure in garden scents." As an aspiring writer, Mansfield leaned on these influences to help frame her journal entries and narratives. She copied Wilde's style and some of Pater's philosophy, remarking that as she develops she becomes "collosally interesting to myself ... My friend has sent me Dorian" (Notebooks 1:102). Mansfield

conflated her personal growth with her art throughout her life. During her most heavy influence from Wilde, she threw herself headlong into an overtly sexualized late adolescence, acting somewhere between “a self-proclaiming but sexually immature lesbian” and “a knowing, corrupt prostitute who live in the violently heterosexualized body of the adult,” roles that Burgan sees as leading to her “flamboyant self-display, temporary addiction to the barbituate Veronal (and a lifelong addiction to cigarettes), and, almost simultaneously, pregnancy and venereal disease” (Burgan 42). Mansfield’s early attempt to engage actively with the sensual involves a heightened sense of sexuality which she was to regret later.

As Mansfield’s literary outlook expanded through extensive reading in her early adulthood, her affinity with the Decadents waned, yet the major struggle in Mansfield’s artistic career remained the same: to find the meeting point between the spiritual and physical worlds. She developed a personal outlook based around the phrase “Soul & sense, sense & soul,” that a life experienced through the senses could enrich the soul. However, she realized the impossibility of such a fusion – that “thinking and existing must ever be on two different planes,” and her early attempts at fusing the two through overt sexuality led to feelings of guilt and depravity (Notebooks 2:267). Mansfield reflected the inability to merge “sense and soul” in her fiction, reflecting upon the tragic inability of such a communion by structuring these moments to fall short of the epiphany. No breakthrough is achieved for Mansfieldian characters, and the disconnect Mansfield lamented between the physical and mental – her feeling of being “disunited” – remained throughout her life.

Journal entries throughout her career demonstrate Mansfield working through the idea of spiritual and physical connectivity, such as the 1906 Notebook entry Scott has titled “My Potplants.” The similarities between passages of this draft and Pater’s “The Child in the House” are striking. As the narrator of “My Potplants” looks back on her life, she writes: “I thought of the time when I was quite a child and lived in the queer old rambling house... That old house had an extraordinary fascination for me.” (Notebooks 1:41). She

goes on to imagine the house alive, but then the story transforms into a fairy tale. In “The Child in the House,” the main character, Florian Deleal, remembers: “The *old house*, as when Florian talked of it afterwards he always called it, (as all children do, who can recollect a change of home, soon enough but not too soon to mark a period in their lives) really was an old house ... Florian found that he owed to the place many tones of sentiment afterwards customary with him” (Pater 2). As he reflects on the house he has not seen for over thirty years, Florian feels as though the house took part in his development as a human being, just as the narrator in “My Potplants” used to believe the house was her guardian. For both characters, the physical interaction with the house contributes to their image of themselves.

Mansfield’s interest in sensuality, especially in her early fiction, is her most direct influence from the Decadents, often manifested in distinctly Wildean quasi-erotic descriptions of flowers. In “Summer Idyll,” a variation on the Maori legend of Hinemoa, in which a young girl swims across a lake to an island to join her lover, young white Hinemoa and her Maori friend Marina swim to an island together during their morning bathe, diving recklessly into the ocean on their return. The story has heavy racial and sexual undercurrents and shows Mansfield working through the connection of sensuality with identity.

The story begins with Hinemoa’s “awakening” as she imagines the sea breeze kissing her awake. She steals into Marina’s room to wake her. The scent of manuka in the room and the vision of Marina asleep, with “a faint thin colour like the petal of a dull rose [shining] in the dusk of her skin” makes Hinemoa feel as though “she had used too much perfume ... had drunk wine that was too heavy & sweet, laid her hand on velvet that was too soft & smooth” (Notebooks 1:75). As Hinemoa leans over her friend and brushes the dark hair out of Marina’s eyes, Marina awakes and kisses her. The girls throw blossoms at each other before running onto the beach. Like other notebook entries written while

Mansfield was young, including the 1907 “Vignettes” often cited for their Wildean qualities, the language in this piece is lush, stylized, and homoerotic.

Although some of the phrasing seems distinctly Wildean, the sexuality in “Summer Idyll” has racial undertones characteristic of its setting in New Zealand, acknowledging Mansfield’s colonial heritage. Following contemporary colonial discourse, Mansfield constructs Marina as an exotic, sexualized savage, sleeping among manuka flowers, knowledgeable about fern trees, “the rata with his tongues of flame,” and the secret way to “know the sea” (Notebooks 1:75-76). Such exoticism makes Marina dangerous and frightening to the impressionable Hinemoa. Marina bares her teeth while admitting to Hinemoa that she would like to be cruel to her, revelling in this privileged exotic status and exaggerating her difference from her friend by claiming she eats baked kumara for the same reason Hinemoa rejects it – because of its “unnatural” blue color (Notebooks 1:77). Mansfield’s conflation of Marina with heightened sensuality and knowledge of the natural world shows her tendency not only to exoticize and sexualize Maori, but also to identify characters in terms of their perception and engagement with the physical world.

In “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped,” Mansfield created an idyllic escape to a seaside Maori village for the protagonist, a very young white girl. Pearl Button swings on the gate outside her “House of Boxes,” wearing layers upon layers of clothing and watching “two big women” who “had no shoes and stockings on” approach (Stories 118). The women are Maori, and invite Pearl to follow them and leave her pakeha house. Pearl accepts, and the women carry her first to the “long room,” where a man gives her a peach and a pear, then to the shoreline, where a girl “with two pieces of black hair down to her feet” gives her a dinner of meat, vegetables, fruit and milk as one of the women “unbutton...her little drawers for her” (Stories 119-120). The women remove all but Pearl’s petticoat after dinner and take her to the beach, where she blissfully discovers the ocean, which “ceas[es] to be blue in her hands” when she scoops up the water (Stories 120). Policemen “in little

blue coats – little blue men” (Stories 120) shatter her idyll when they come to return her to the house of boxes.

Pearl delights in escaping from her “House of Boxes” full of “nasty things” to the utopian Maori community (Stories 120). In a scene reminiscent of another 1912 story, “The Woman at the Store,” Pearl watches the dust blow across the street outside of her dry, rigidly compartmentalized pakeha home. She moves from this masculinized landscape to inside the dusty whare, where, continuing to adhere to cultural norms, she “sat on her petticoat as she had been taught to sit in dusty places” (Stories 119), then moves to the wet sand of the beach, and finally the water itself. She progresses from familiar, dry, male dominated, interior cultures to a moving, feminine body of water. Like “Summer Idyll,” Pearl Button’s movement to this ultra-feminine environment forces Pearl outside of her compartmentalized “house of boxes.” Pearl escapes restrictive patriarchy to enter this racially naturalized environment, but is captured again by policemen.

Pearl crosses borders in the story, reflected by the opening image of her swinging on the gate to her house. Both Smith and Fulbrook note this imagery, “a sign of vacillation between being shut into or moving out of convention,” (Fulbrook 115). Smith considers Pearl too young to harbour racial prejudice against the women, making the transition between pakeha environments smoother for the little girl (Smith 41). The narrative is third person, but told largely through Pearl’s eyes, which prove unprejudiced vessels for the type of romanticism Mansfield employs when discussing Maori in the Ureweras, discussed in Chapter Two. Mansfield constructed Pearl Button’s acquaintances as peaceful and naturalistic, in tune with the ocean. They almost embody the fusion of mental and physical Mansfield strove for, although her rendering of the Maori women, as affectionate as it is, demonstrates the colonial assumption of Maori as closer to nature and too removed from intellectualism to construct the connection between the actual and the abstract Mansfield sought.

Both Smith and Fulbrook neglect discussion of the climax of the story, which hinges upon Pearl's sensual discovery of the properties of the ocean and consequently, herself. Like Hinemoa, Pearl has an acute encounter with the ocean. Yet unlike Hinemoa, whose dive frightens her, Pearl is too young to fear the sea. Pearl sheds the compartmentalization of her domestic life and embraces the ocean. Without her stockings, Pearl discovers "grass pushing between her toes," and when she scoops up the blue seawater, it ceases to be blue in her hands (120). Pearl reacts joyously and incoherently, kissing the Maori woman closest to her and squealing with delight.

Pearl's gleeful reaction to the feel of the water is the closest moment to the fusion of "sense and soul" in Mansfield's fiction. Just as she slides naturally from the rigid colonial society to an idealized and naturalistic one, Pearl allows the water to slip between her fingers. When she handles the water, Pearl feels the completeness Mansfield desired in her adult life. However, Pearl's ability to feel absolute bliss in the sensation of water in her hands stems from the fact that she is pre-cognitive. Pearl fails to draw the line between the mental and the physical that Mansfield's more adult characters draw, only recognizing the policemen who retrieve her as the "little blue men" intent on "tak[ing] her back to the house of boxes" (Stories 120). When the policemen remove Pearl from the sea, they remove the child from the material world she experiences, encouraging her to compartmentalize her experience like the world from which she came. The "little blue men" establish the boundary between the physical and mental worlds in Mansfield's fiction, forcing her to accept the compartmentalization of colonial society.

The freedom Pearl experiences while at the seaside Maori village is partially to do with the fact that she is pre-cognitive, but also with the race of the adults around her. Mansfield romanticized Maori in the Urewera Notebooks, linking the people to the environment in which she witnessed them. She reinforces this ideology in "Summer Idyll." Hinemoa adores her Maori friend, admiring Marina's "complete harmony" with the sea (Notebooks 1:75, 76). Hinemoa observes Marina's oneness with her environment, reminiscent of the

collision of “sense & soul” Mansfield desired. Yet Marina’s unity lies solely in her race. When Hinemoa claims she “lack[s] that congruity,” which she feels makes Marina so complete, Marina replies “It’s because you are so utterly the foreign element – you see?” (Notebooks 1:76). Marina’s completeness stems from Mansfield’s romanticism of Maori and her equation of the people with the land. As a pakeha colonial, in spite of her name, Hinemoa has no such romantic affinity with the natural world. Instead, she embraces the internal policemen of colonial society.

Hinemoa experiences the ocean in a vastly different context than Pearl Button, even though both stories contain the romantic conflation of Maori with nature and center around a young white girl’s phenomenal engagement with the ocean. Hinemoa frightens herself when she dives into the sea after Marina’s prompting, swimming to shore and locking herself in her bedroom just after the dive. Hinemoa’s reaction to her dive in the ocean is non-discursive, like Pearl’s. Yet the older girl has already learned to fear experience with the sea, made more frightening by Marina’s exotic sensuality and savagery, as she commands Hinemoa to dive into the ocean after admitting she would like to “be cruel to thee” (Notebooks 1:76). Hinemoa pauses for a moment, then decides to dive:

A flood of excitement bounded to Hinemoa’s brain. She quivered suddenly, laughed again, & then descended. When she came up she caught Marina’s hands. “I am mad – mad,” she said. “Race me back, quickly, I shall drown myself.” She started swimming ... Hinemoa swam on, her eyes wide with terror, her lips parted. She reached the shore, wrung out her braid, & ran back into the house, never pausing to see if Marina would follow. She shut & locked the door, ran over to the mirror & looked at her reflection. (Notebooks 1:76)

The dive frightens and confuses Hinemoa, who can only express herself in terms of an extreme reaction: “I shall drown myself” (Notebooks 1:76). She is unable to comprehend the change that has been made within her by this dive, and so runs to the mirror to see if

she has remained the same. Hinemoa feels reassured by her own reflection in the mirror, dressing in her normal attire and refusing to eat the “unnatural” blue kumara at breakfast. Unlike Pearl Button, Hinemoa’s experience with the sea elicits a willing return to convention. Hinemoa denies the ecstatic abandon of Pearl in favour of the compartmentalization of her colonial society. She moves to an environment in which she is no longer “the foreign element” (Notebooks 1:76). Hinemoa has internalized the policemen and has already removed herself from the physical world.

As established in Chapter Two, Mansfield’s romantic association of Maori with the land and “wild” New Zealand reflects her colonial upbringing and the preservationist spirit popular in contemporary New Zealand discourse. The inability of Hinemoa to lose herself in the ocean and Pearl’s enforced return to the house of boxes highlights the impossibility of the communion of mind and body Mansfield continually sought throughout her life and the compartmentalized, fragmented world of colonial New Zealand that contributed to her feelings of dividedness. Like the little policemen in “Pearl Button,” as colonists attempted to impose order on the colony, they reinforced the boundary between the mental and the physical world, between “soul and sense.” No character embodies the orderly colonial spirit more than the patriarch of the Burnell family, Stanley. The women and servants of the family suffer at Stanley’s constant measuring of their success, even at the dinner table.

Stanley’s appetite for colonial order and production, characterized by the duck he gleefully carves at dinner in “Prelude,” dominates his family, frightening Kezia, the most sensitive of the Burnell children. Kezia, her sisters and their cousins witness the slaughter of the same duck at the hands of caretaker Pat earlier that day. Pat, who, like Mansfield and the Burnells, is colonial, asks the children if they would like to see “how the kings of Ireland chop the head off a duck,” to which the children react hysterically (Stories 247). As the other children squeal with delight at the gore, “Kezia suddenly rushed at Pat and flung her arms around his legs...and sobbed ‘Head back! Head back!’ until it sounded like a loud strange hiccup” (Stories 249). Unable to understand the walking corpse or articulate

her fear, Kezia becomes incomprehensible, her reaction almost an inversion of Pearl's delight in the ocean.

This display of colonial production and dominance terrifies Kezia. With life in the colony comes death, and as Kezia witnesses the death of the duck, confronting, if only for a brief moment, her mortality, the division between her actual and imaginative world deepens. The death of the duck, and the removal of its head from its body, dramatically highlight the division of the mental and the physical worlds that preoccupies Mansfield throughout her life.

However, Kezia quickly suppresses these fears when she notices that "Pat wore little gold earrings. She never knew that men wore earrings. She was very much surprised. 'Do they come on and off?' she asked huskily" (Stories 249). Pat's earrings confuse Kezia as they seem to transgress the rigid gender code of dress she understands, but they also comfort her and restore her sense of normalcy. Kezia swallows her reaction to the dead duck, highlighting her internalization of the boundaries represented by Pearl's policemen.

Kezia's experience with the headless duck emphasizes another aspect of Mansfield's concentration on the material in her writing. Often, Mansfieldian characters find no escape from the material pressures that foretell their mortality, a pressure which Pater discusses in "The Child in the House":

Also, as he felt this pressure upon him of the sensible world, then, as often afterwards, there would come another sort of curious questioning how the last impressions of eye and ear might happen to him, how they would find him—the scent of the last flower, the soft yellowness of the last morning, the last recognition of some object of affection, hand or voice; it could not be but that the latest look of the eyes, before their final closing, would be strangely vivid; one would go with the hot tears, the cry, the touch of the wistful bystander, impressed how deeply on one! or would it be, perhaps, a mere frail retiring of all things, great or little away from one, into a level of distance?

For with this desire of physical beauty mingled itself early the fear of death—the fear of death intensified by the desire of beauty. (11)

In this passage, Pater links the sensation of the material world to the inevitability of the end of that sensation. He recognizes the momentary “impressions of eye and ear” that render the world beautiful, impressions Mansfield expands upon in her stories. Unlike “The Child in the House,” which assumes a “gradual expansion of the soul” through material objects, Mansfield describes fleeting, vivid encounters with the material in her stories, which emphasize the ephemeral qualities of the material world. The fear of mortality amplified by the desire of beauty Pater discusses comes through in many Mansfield stories, especially as she documents the savagery underlying peaceful environments.

The Burnell girls and their cousins return in “At the Bay,” as the family moves to a beach community for the summer, an environment which affords opportunities for the children to experience more of the rural countryside of New Zealand. The story’s imagery encourages reading the summer colony as a transformative jungle: the cat speaks, “weed-hung rocks” appear as “shaggy beasts come down to the water to drink” at low tide, and the children imagine themselves as animals for an entire evening, missing the sunset and frightening themselves when a “pale face, black eyes, a black beard” appears at the window (Stories 442, 454, 462). However, the children understand that their performances are merely a game, and are frightened by the possibility of something being not as it seems when they see Jonathan’s face at the window. The shadowy world of the summer colony disguises the children’s inability to let go, to feel the same communion of mind and spirit Pearl Button feels before the policemen capture her.

The malleability of the colony is false, nothing actually changes in the characters lives, and the internal police are still there. Though the women rejoice when Stanley leaves the house, Kate Fulbrook points out that this feminine utopia and “unity is, after all, only

temporary; nothing essential has changed” for the women of the summer colony (108).

The children’s aunt Beryl feels this pressure the most, dreaming of an escape from her compartmentalized world in her sister’s house.

Beryl feels trapped living with her sister’s family, though her fantasies show her as the most internally policed member of the family. Beryl blends fantasy and reality while she daydreams at her mirror, but the disconnection between her mental and physical world is so great that she imagines a lover only in terms of her emotional and spiritual need. Alone at night, she dreams of a man: “It is lonely living by oneself. Of course, there are relations, friends, heaps of them: but that’s not what she means....She wants a lover” (Stories 476-468). However, Beryl is unsure whether she desires a physical relationship with a man; she craves emotional excitement, crying ““take me away from all these other people, my love. Let us go far away. Let us live our life, all new, all ours”” in her daydream, yet imagines having ““long talks at night”” with this future husband (Stories 458). She desires emotional and intellectual companionship, yet her compartmentalized self cannot attach the support of a husband with a physical relationship. Beryl lives only in the mental, spiritual world, recoiling from the physical.

Impressionable Beryl is both excited and frightened by the Burnel’s scandalous neighbour, Mrs Harry Kember. In a telling scene, Beryl joins Mrs Harry Kember on the beach during bathing time. The women change into their bathing costumes together, and, contrary to Pearl’s altruistic helpers in “How Pearl Button was Kidnapped,” the older woman undresses the younger for her own pleasure. Mrs Kember aggressively coaxes Beryl out of her clothes as she abruptly removes her own. Beryl timidly stands “in her short white petticoat, and her camisole with ribbon bows on the shoulders,” while Mrs Harry Kember watches, calling her friend “a little beauty” and encouraging Beryl to lose her modesty and change completely in front of her (Stories 451).

Mrs Harry Kember’s social deviance excites and frightens Beryl. Her flattery and lack of discretion make Beryl ashamed of her middle-class values: “Beryl was shy. She never

undressed in front of anybody. Was that silly? Mrs Harry Kember made her feel it was silly, even something to be ashamed of. Why be shy indeed! She glanced quickly at her friend standing so boldly in her torn chemise and lighting a fresh cigarette; and a quick, bold, evil feeling started up in her breast” (Stories 451). Beryl self-consciously undresses in front of her friend, feeling a bold rebel. However, when Mrs Harry Kember encourages Beryl to have a “good time” and “enjoy yourself” just after this incident, she quickly swims away and frightens Beryl, who imagines her as a rat and a caricature of Mr Harry Kember (Stories 452). Mrs Kember’s suggestive physicality frightens Beryl.

Hours after Mrs Harry Kember excites Beryl by her homoerotic advances on the beach, the alarmingly handsome Mr Harry Kember, with a face “like a mask or a most perfect illustration” with “black hair, dark blue eyes, red lips, a slow sleepy smile” shows up at Beryl’s window with much more than “long talks” on his mind (Stories 451, 468-469). The man’s suggestive smile and sexual aggression repulse Beryl. Contrary to his wife, who undresses in front of Beryl without fully exposing her desires, Mr Harry Kember reveals too much, and Beryl breaks away from his embrace, disgusted by this crude realization of her dreams for a lover. She denies herself physical experience because of the social danger it affords.

The storyline of “At the Bay” is cyclical – the shepherd and his flock lead the sun into the colony, the men leave after sunrise, the women and children bathe in the late morning, nap in the late afternoon, the children become afraid of the dark just before the men arrive home after sunset, and the sea rolls behind the entire episode. Not only are the individual experiences of the characters fleeting, but they are contained in a cycle which inevitably repeats and is determined by the internal policemen of the colony. And “It was understood that at eleven o’clock the women and children of the summer colony had the sea to themselves” (Stories 449). The cycle of life in the summer colony reflects the regimentation of Pearl Button’s “house of boxes” and brings to mind the ever-present policemen in Mansfield’s stories. Mansfield rejects the cyclical order of the summer

colony in “At the Bay” in a letter to Murry on 10 November, 1922: “One can & does believe that one will escape from living in circles & will live a CONSCIOUS life” (Collected Letters 5:320). Mansfield attempted to break through such cycles by finding a balance between the mental and physical in effort to find a harmony of the two, something her characters never achieve.

Critically, the moments when Mansfieldian characters almost achieve this transcendence have been seen as a variation on what Joyce calls the epiphany. Sarah Sandley addresses these moments in Mansfield’s fiction, referring to them as “glimpses.” She defines a Mansfieldian glimpse as a combination of free indirect discourse and epiphany, suggesting that the interior monologue of a character coincides with an intense moment in the story, increasing the significance of a chance moment (Sandley 70). Sandley writes that glimpses work to “structure the narratives, to bring central themes to a climax, and to express the widest variety of experiences, from intense, nondiscursive ecstasy...to acute nihilistic suffering” (Sandley 71). Their diverse nature, from the suppression of Kezia’s fear of mortality in “Prelude” to Viola’s triumphant rampage in “The Swing of the Pendulum,” allows the glimpse to work on a variety of levels. She describes Mansfieldian glimpses as vague, ambiguous, difficult to determine, and compares them to Joyce’s epiphanies.

However, Sandley fails to acknowledge the way in which Mansfieldian characters achieve these glimpses. Even in Sandley’s definition, the glimpse remains rooted to a physical object or occurrence in the story. Mansfield described the motion of the sea in the passage from which Sandley lifts the term glimpse, remarking that moments like the waves falling provide glimpses into the meaning of life. The sea triggers Mansfield’s thought on the glimpse, though she doesn’t experience the union of physical and mental she constantly searched for.

Through sensational interaction with an aspect of their physical worlds, Mansfieldian characters nearly achieve moments of transcendence from the physical to the spiritual

world, but never accomplish the blending of “soul & sense, sense & soul,” where the physical and spiritual worlds collide. Pearl Button feels a moment of cognitive and physical communion during her escape to the sea, but her joy is immediately hemmed in by the policemen who take her back to her home. The internal policemen of the other characters prevents them from uniting their “disunited” selves. In one of her last journal entries, Mansfield wrote of her desire “to lose all that is superficial and acquired in me and to become a conscious, direct human being,” to submerge herself in the material world, “and out of this – the expression of this – I want to be writing” (Notebooks 2:287). She sought this submersion throughout her life, finally turning to the commune at Fontainebleau as a way to try to rectify her feelings of inner disunity.

During her attempt to connect her thoughts and emotions with her physical existence, Mansfield rejected the orderly manner of life, the “house of boxes” Pearl Button rejects. She wrote to Murry about embracing the disorderliness of the kitchen at the Institute, a far cry from the orderliness observed in her homemaking by Ida Baker: “Wherever she was ... Katherine made and kept her ‘home’ as beautiful and expressive as possible. There was no untidiness or any kind of confusion ... Katherine hated ‘fuzzy edges’” (Baker 85). At the Institute, Mansfield tried to leave behind her sense of order developed in her own houses of boxes, though she continued to feel the constraint of her previous life while in Fontainebleau, keeping orderly lists of expenses and foods in her journal up until her death. Mansfield looked towards a life without constraint, blending together “sense & soul” through the decompartmentalization of physical and mental experience, though she died before completely letting go of the life she used to live.

Chapter Four

“Is it Only the Result of Disease?” Mansfield’s Multiple Consumptions

Katherine Mansfield’s acute awareness of the material world, her sense of propriety and finery in her personal possessions, and her recognition of the tragic gap between the mental and the physical contributed to the multiple kinds and levels of consumption that dominated her life. Her personal and professional writing reflects the various degrees of consumption that affected her, from the conspicuous accumulation of goods displayed by her family to the hearty diet she required while tubercular to the consumption of her own body through disease. Katherine Mansfield’s experience as a consumptive pushed her to write acutely of bodily experience with vivid accounts of eating, food, and the use of food symbolism demonstrate, yet an emphasis on the experience of consuming and being consumed underlies much of her personal and private writing throughout her life.

Mansfield’s contraction of tuberculosis did not of itself force her to reflect upon the material world, something she did throughout her life, but applied new and urgent pressure to the writer. In the 1917 journal entry just after her discovery of blood in her handkerchief, she wrote: “perhaps it is going to gallop – who knows – and I shan’t have my work written. Thats what matters. How unbearable it would be to die, leave ‘scraps’, ‘bits’, nothing real finished” (Notebooks 2:125). One aspect of her disease was to make the threat of mortality more powerful for Mansfield, encouraging her efforts to create a body of work that would last. Walter Pater reflects this sentiment in this passage from *Imaginary Portraits*:

It was legible in his own admissions from time to time, that the body, following, as it does with powerful temperaments, the lead of mind and the will, the intellectual consumption (so to term it) had been concurrent with, had strengthened and been strengthened by, a vein of physical *phthisis* – by a merely physical accident, after all, of his bodily constitution, such as might have taken a different turn, had another accident fixed his home among the hills instead of on the shore. Is it only the result

of disease? He would ask himself sometimes with a sudden suspicion of his intellectual cogency.

(Pater 81-83)

Mansfield's determination to create a body of work demonstrates not only the pressure to race against her disease, but her continual attempts to attach herself to physical objects, to be "rooted in life." As she "lapp[ed] up eggs and cream & butter" to keep up her strength, Mansfield's writing turns more towards a desire to live experientially rather than through self-conscious introspection (Notebooks 2:279). She writes in her diary: "But warm, eager living life – to be rooted in life – to learn, to desire to know, to feel, to think, to act. That is what I want. And nothing less" (Notebooks 2:287). Eating, consuming and being consumed push Mansfield towards her final decision to enter the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, where she felt connected to the familiar material things and processes that sustain her health.

The consumption of the body through emotional turmoil is prevalent throughout Mansfield's writing prior to her diagnosis as tubercular. When faced with personal dilemmas, Mansfield imagined her emotions devouring her psyche. Writing of her anxiety over her affair with Francis Carco in 1915, she claimed to have felt as though "my anxious heart is eating up my body, eating up my nerves, eating up my brain, now slowly, now at tremendous speed" (Notebooks 2:4). Mansfield's tumultuous life provided ample opportunity for crisis, which she often described as consuming her in all other respects.

Mansfield's tendency to use consumption as a metaphor for all-encompassing grief or emotional turmoil reflects her habit of employing food metaphors in her letters. She writes to Murry in 1919 that his letters are "meat and drink" to her and to Arnold Gibbons in 1922 that "we all, as writers ... absorb each other when we love ... Anatole France would say we eat each other, but perhaps nourish is the better word" (Collected Letters 3:173, Collected Letters 5:223). These examples demonstrate her association of physical

nourishment with personal and intellectual fulfillment. Similarly, her fiction uses hunger as a metaphor for emotional and artistic deprivation.

Mansfield described acute hunger and the experience of want in many stories about young women struggling to remain financially independent in cities, which the author may have experienced personally after her return to London. Lack of food and the desire for luxury drive many of these characters to desperation. In “The Tiredness of Rosabel” (1908), the protagonist hallucinates wildly about food and luxury after eating just a “scone and a boiled egg and a cup of cocoa at Lyons” after a full day’s work (Stories 16-17). After an argument with her landlady that leaves her one day until ejection, Miss Ada Moss in “Pictures” (1919) imagines a “Pageant of Good Hot Dinners” floating across her ceiling, complete with a bottle of “Nourishing Stout” (Stories 324). Viola in “The Swing of the Pendulum” (1911) contemplates prostitution when she recognizes her hunger (Stories 83).

Despite a generous allowance from her father, both Mansfield and Ida Baker mention the women’s relative poverty during the period when Mansfield first returned to London in her late teens. Baker recalled designing elaborate dresses with her friend for engagements at dinner parties, in which Mansfield would perform, employing her “great gift for recitation, mimicry and music” for “a guinea an evening” (39). Baker alleges that this money was necessary, “useful in her [Mansfield’s] straitened circumstances”(39). Whether or not Mansfield had the means to live sufficiently in London, she obviously desired more, and this want is reflected in several stories.

Burgan discusses Mansfield’s first few years in London in terms of “the bohemian way of life which Mansfield chose to live” in Europe, of which tuberculosis played a part (125). The romance of tuberculosis in literature and the legacy of Mansfield’s confessed influences Keats and Chekov aside, Burgan notes that tuberculosis was a physical reality for many women during the early twentieth century. She believes that Mansfield’s “erratic schedule with meals on the fly, an addiction to cigarette smoking, and irregular sleep” could have made her more susceptible to tuberculosis (Burgan 125). The framework of

Burgan's book is to view Mansfield through her experience of disease, an approach that emphasizes the material reality of the author's life, but only through various reactions to illness.

Burgan examines Mansfield's clinical history as a way to "expos[e] her urge to inscribe symptomatic sensory detail in her work, locat[e] and historiciz[e] the material base of her resolutely mimetic modernism, and point to the therapeutic aspects of her urge always to write in and of the body, to 'examine' it...and, once the 'diagnosis' had become clear, to inscribe the interpretation in fiction" (xiv). As Burgan reads Mansfield's writing as a reaction to physical stimulus through disease, she highlights the importance of physical experience and descriptions in Mansfield's work, while limiting her analysis to the location and identification of various diseases which influenced Mansfield's perception of the world. Burgan pathologizes Mansfield, locating her desire to be "rooted in life" in a response to psychological trauma and physical illness, instead of the conscious, persistent struggle to vividly experience life, and translate the experience into fiction.

Two of the bodily experiences Burgan focuses on in her study are pregnancy and tuberculosis, both of which demanded an enforced diet. Though the fact of Mansfield's first pregnancy, its duration, and cause of its termination remain disputed, there are passages in the Notebooks that describe the sensations of pregnancy and the loss of a child. Allusions to a vague, nauseating feeling of fullness while travelling to Bavaria and a miscarriage after lifting a heavy trunk in her hotel there are often cited as evidence for her pregnancy by Garnet Trowell. None is more direct than this passage, written in 1919, while Mansfield reflected on the experience: "I lie retracing my steps – going over all the old life before The baby of Garnet's love" (Notebooks 2:188). Whether this statement confirms an actual pregnancy or is metaphorical, Mansfield describes the same heavy, full feeling in some of her characters that experience pregnancy and childbirth.

The protagonist of the semi-autobiographical "Juliet" solidifies this feeling of heaviness. Seduced and abandoned, Juliet succumbs to the consumption of her body through

pregnancy. She imagines herself “like a dead body ... All the six undertakers couldn’t lift her now” (Notebooks 1:65). Juliet predicts her end in this passage; she dies due to complications of childbirth at the end of the story, and the heaviness of pregnancy literally transforms her into a corpse.

Linda Burnell in “Prelude” reflects this fear in a nightmare. In the dream, her father holds up a baby bird, which swells into an alarming size once Linda touches it. The bird transforms into a half human “baby with a big naked head and a gaping bird-mouth, opening and shutting” (Stories 233). The baby, handed to Linda by the patriarchal figure in her dream, moves its mouth in hunger. Linda fears it will consume her as she lies in bed recollecting the dream, enacting Juliet’s fear of becoming a corpse through childbearing. In Linda, Mansfield elaborated upon the fear of being consumed by other people: the children who depend upon her for initial physical and later emotional health, and the father who encourages production for the continuance of his family line. Like the monster baby, Linda recognizes the swelling and transformation of her body time and again through pregnancy, and rejects her girl children throughout “Prelude.”

Mansfield herself was often concerned with the manipulation of the body through will or disease. She wrote often about her weight, expressing embarrassment over her figure as a child. She writes to her sisters in 1921: “And why was I stuffed – why wasn’t I given lean meat & dry toast – so that I looked less like the Fat Girl from Fielding. Even my curls were like luscious fried sausages” (Letters 4:266). Mansfield’s difference in appearance, from what Smith refers to as her “chubby and healthy youth in New Zealand,” to the years after becoming tubercular is certainly noticeable in photographs taken throughout her life (Smith 30). Yet it is clear from photographs that she had been losing weight throughout her young adulthood, and references to body image in other letters demonstrate her constant preoccupation with weight and physical appearance. Her attention to dress and appearance may link back to her mother, a fashionable colonial woman always smartly arranged in photographs.

Mansfield's relationship with her mother was tenuous, particularly after her first marriage to George Bowden and simultaneous, unconfirmed pregnancy by Trowell, when Annie Beauchamp cut Mansfield from her will (Alpers 95). Burgan notes Annie Beauchamp's coldness towards young Mansfield in an often-quoted account of their reunion after months of touring Europe without her children. Allegedly, the first words Annie spoke upon arrival in Wellington were: "'Well, Kathleen,' she said, 'I see that you are as fat as ever'" (qtd. in Burgan 24). Burgan interprets young Mansfield's weight psychoanalytically, linking her attachment to her grandmother, who she claims fed her exceedingly, to her unfulfilling oral relationship with her mother during her early childhood.

Burgan concentrates on Mansfield's issues with her mother and attachment to her grandmother throughout her study, constructing the two women as near opposites. Whereas Annie Beauchamp ridiculed young Kathleen and encouraged her to be "fastidious" in nature and appearance, Grandma Dyer encouraged the girl to eat and comforts her when her mother is otherwise occupied (Burgan 3). Although Mansfield writes idyllically of her maternal grandmother, she refrains from building such a binary between her mother and grandmother. Mansfield's own accounts of her mother vary; yet many of them mention food rather than the rigid denial Annie Beauchamp seems to embody in Burgan's accounts.

Mansfield recoiled from her parents' middle class materialism as a teenager, as discussed in Chapter One. She complained of their vulgarity, focusing on the fact that "they discuss only the food" on board their return ship to New Zealand (Notebooks 1:79). Like the way in which she came to embody some of their hearty colonial materiality later in life, she shared recipes with her mother in letters. In 1918 she commented on an illustration of a jam tart in her mother's previous letter, which she claimed "made my mouth water; especially did my eyes pop at the button of sugar on the top" (Collected Letters 2:1918). Mansfield connected her mother with food as well as her grandmother,

though she demonstrates ambivalence to her mother's bourgeois 'vulgar' yet 'fastidious' attitude to food.

Like her daughter, Annie Beauchamp Dyer experienced an adult life comprised of various physical afflictions. Her vaguely indifferent attitude to her children is well noted, as is her response to Kathleen after the birth of her ill-fated younger sister. Writing of her experience as a child witnessing death firsthand, Mansfield portrayed her grandmother as the center of comfort and her mother as a withdrawn invalid: "Her name is Gwen, said the grandmother. Kiss her ... Now go & kiss mother said the grandmother. But Mother did not want to kiss me. Very languid, leaning against the pillows she was eating some sago" (Notebooks 2:96). As Annie eats the sago, a food given to invalids and prescribed to breast feeding mothers, she acts out the eating that Burgan terms "an act of servitude to the physical order of life" (Burgan 3, 70). Mansfield questions this servitude in many of her stories, despite yearning for children throughout her adult life.

Mothers in Mansfield's fiction often resent the sacrifice of their bodies and appetites for their children. The woman in "The Woman at the Store" sums up such resignation when she tells the travellers about her ordeal: "It's six years since I been married, and four miscarriages ... Over and over I tells 'im – you've broken my spirit and spoiled my looks, and wot for ... Oh, some days – an' months of them – I 'ear them two words knockin' inside me all the time – 'Wot for!'" (Stories 114-115). For the woman, the only escape from her warped cycle of pregnancy, miscarriage and childrearing is by murdering her husband.

The violence exemplified in "The Woman at the Store" highlights the sexual violence underlying the story, a common theme for Mansfield. As she created characters that are trapped under "servitude to the physical order of life," she explored the savagery of sexuality (Burgan 70). Often, the sexual aggressor is portrayed as somewhat cannibalistic, glancing at their prey and smiling slightly. As early as his 1975 discussion of "Summer Idyll," O'Sullivan has noted such smiles as an indicator of dangerous or perverse sexuality.

Angela Smith updates this observation, noting that Mansfield often describes sexuality as a form of cannibalism, of “eating and being eaten” (106). She highlights the vampiric qualities of sexual aggressors in other sexually explicit stories, such as Raul Duquette’s African laundress and Dick Harmon in “*Je ne parle pas français*” (1918). The image of the bride as a cake waiting to be served to her new husband in “Frau Brechenmacher” (1910) highlights such violent sexuality and Mansfield’s fears of being consumed by other people. On a slightly less aggressive scale, Smith interprets the nervous meeting of a man and woman in “Psychology” (1919) as sexual tension. Over an awkward tea, the man “insists that generally food is just there to be devoured, not savoured. When he asks if this shocks her, she replies ‘To the Bone’... suggesting that she would yield to being devoured” (Smith 118). Mansfield creates characters that display a fear of being consumed by the aggressive sexuality of themselves or others.

The link between eating and sexuality is evident in “Bliss,” Mansfield’s most cynical portrait of modernist society. Sydney Janet Kaplan has noted that Mansfield uses the narrative to “satirize the London avant-garde,” especially “the absurd young poet Eddie” reminiscent of Eliot (77). The cartoonish Mrs. Norman Knight, or “Mug” to her husband, imagines being devoured by a stranger on her way to the Youngs’ dinner party. She tells the company at the party that the man “simply ate me with his eyes ... just stared – and bored me through and through” (Stories 309). However, Mug’s delight in the incident draws attention to her attempt to appear avant-garde in a conspicuous orange coat with “a procession of black monkeys round the hem and up the fronts” (Stories 209). Mansfield constructed these self-consciously eccentric characters to ridicule the elite literary society of London who aspired to the avant-garde, of which she often had outsider status due to her colonial heritage.

As discussed in Chapter Two, accounts of imperial prejudice against Mansfield’s “savage” colonial background abound. In “Bliss,” Mansfield transplanted the fear and glamour of colonial savagery within English society. Mug thrills at the prospect of being

devoured, reflecting the colonial fascination with the racialized exotic, and “Bliss” is full of moments of savage cruelty and fetishized sexuality between these members of the upper class. Kaplan focuses on Bertha’s mysterious anxiety throughout the story, which she eventually locates in sexual desire for her husband: Bertha’s “unrecognized or at least undefined sexual restlessness” (Kaplan 70). Instead of depictions of cannibalism in the backblocks of colonial New Zealand, where notorious and nearly contemporary accounts of Maori cannibalism abounded, Mansfield highlighted the cannibalistic and sexual savagery in “civilized” life. The savage cannibalism Mug desires exists within the city.

Like his guests at the dinner party, Harry Young wishes to see himself as shocking, aggressive and modern. He delights in hurrying and appearing full of energy. As he eats his dinner with gusto, his wife Bertha comments: “It was part of his – well, not his nature, exactly ... to talk about food and to glory in his ‘shameless passion for the white flesh of the lobster’ and ‘the green of pistachio ices – green and cold like the eyelids of Egyptian dancers’” (Stories 311). He likens his food to women’s bodies in overtly sexual, exotic language. He demonstrates a “passion for fighting,” arguing a point even after he knows he’s wrong (Stories 310). He explains the characters of his acquaintances through frank assumptions about their physical ailments, reflecting the vulgar interest in physical complaints Mansfield chronicled in the “German Pension” stories. Before Bertha learns of their affair, Harry attempts to convince her that Pearl Fulton is “dullish, and ‘cold like all blonde women.’ Bertha admires his disdainful comments about their mutual friends which allow isolated physical complaints to stand for their entire personalities: “‘liver frozen, my dear girl,’ or ‘pure flatulence,’ or ‘kidney disease,’” (Stories 307-308). Harry self-consciously constructs an interest in the physical, sensual world, believing that his way of indulging in luxury and extramarital affairs make him exciting and shocking. Yet as Mansfield demonstrated throughout the story, the carefully crafted, artificial world of the Youngs and their artificial friends is hackneyed and out of date.

Throughout “Bliss,” Bertha cannot see through Harry’s disguise and is attracted to the contrived sophistication of his physical appetites, delighting when he compliments her soufflé. She believes that Harry’s opinions really are new and exciting and is shocked when she discovers his affair with Pearl Fulton. Bertha remains removed from her body throughout the story, partially aided by the luxury in which she lives. The soufflé is actually made by the cook, a nurse takes care of her only child, her husband fulfills his sexual demands outside of the marriage, and she never feels the want that other young city women feel in Mansfield stories. Bertha remains separated from her body and attracted to the way in which Harry expresses his materialism. When she is confronted with the physical reality behind his love of the material, his extramarital affairs, Bertha turns to the pear tree, projecting onto it her excess of energy from this revelation and her inability to grasp what she felt while speaking to Pearl earlier in the evening. As the most naïve and gullible character in this satire of avant garde London, Bertha’s construction of the tree as a symbolic locus of feminine sexuality and frustration begs questioning. The ambiguity of the tree stems from the unreliability of its observer and interpreter, and the only conclusive idea about the tree is that it remains a living, growing source of food, indifferent to Bertha’s attempt to make it signify.

Bertha’s projection onto the blank tree reflects her husband’s attempt to create synecdoche between the personalities of his friends and isolated bodily complaint, both of which show Mansfield’s disdain for artless, contrived symbolism. Harry’s self-conscious attempt to attach personality traits to segments of the body perverts Mansfield’s desire to connect “sense & soul,” transforming her lofty goal to the fusion of personality and base bodily symptoms. Mansfield parodied this connection in the “German Pension” collection. In many of these stories, the antics of over-enthusiastic German patients at health spas disgust the delicate narrator under the care of the same health regime that personifies illness and encourages the invalid’s fixation on bodily symptoms.

The invalids in the “German Pension” stories focus on the materiality of their bodies, indulging in large dinners and steam rooms to cure various physical complaints. In “Bains Turcs,” (1913) the cynical narrator describes the scene inside the “Warm Room” of the baths. She feels the sauna infantilizes the women, as she undresses “feeling like one of a troupe of little schoolgirls let loose in a swimming-bath,” though the spa, full of languid women and “shabby fashion journals,” lacks the enthusiasm of childhood (Stories 147). The narrator encounters a German woman characterized by the crude materialism of many characters in the “German Pension” stories. Obsessed with her husband’s opinion, rearing children and preparing food, the German woman unwittingly torments the narrator with her bourgeois vulgarity as she dismisses the malicious laughter of two younger women, calling them “street women” and fixating upon their lack of maternal skills (Stories 149-150). She continues her tirade until the end of the story, looking “like a hungry child before a forbidden table” as the two women pass (Stories 150).

Again Mansfield uses eating as a metaphor for want, an unappeased appetite for some kind of experience, and this reinforces the dilemma of the self caused by bourgeois divisions of “sense & soul.” The German woman attempts to convince herself that her children and husband fulfil her, claiming that the blonde women lack the character to uphold such middle-class values. She immerses herself in the grossly material world of wife and mother, signalling her bourgeois respectability by wearing a Mackintosh cap even while in the sauna, and appearing in “a blue and white check blouse and a crochet collar” outside of the spa (Stories 149-150). However, the German woman’s forlorn glance towards the blonde women at the end of the story highlights her unhappiness in such a regimented life.

Instead of hunger in some of the German Pension stories, Mansfield uses over-indulgence to highlight the faults the narrators see in Germans. The most notorious for its caricature of German table manners, “Germans at Meat” (1910) highlights the over-indulgence and obsession with digestion the vegetarian narrator observes at dinner in her hotel. Much to the dismay of the delicate narrator, the German characters discuss their

methods for purification at the health spa while waving their silverware about the table, cleaning their ears with their napkins, and eating soup, veal, sauerkraut, potatoes, beef, red currants and spinach, black bread, stewed apricots, and cherry cake with whipped cream (Stories 28-31). The narrator continually cuts off the conversation of her fellow diners as they all steer towards discussion of their digestive tracts or pregnancies. Burgan has noted the characters' obsession with evacuations of the body "of food or of child, and in either case of a by-product whose bodily elimination repairs overindulgence" (76). The narrator's displeasure in the details of unrestrained consumption and evacuation are reflected in Linda Burnell, as she fears her husband's appetite for a growing family.

Young Sun Choi has recently applied critical attention to Mansfield's use of food in these stories, correctly identifying Mansfield as a writer with "a keen interest in gastronomy personally and professionally; and her oeuvre is pervaded by the obsession with food and engulfment, material and metaphorical alike" (2). Choi discusses "Germans at Meat," detailing the large dinner of the party at table. However, her study lingers on the cultural and social aspects of food and consumption at the expense of specific literary discussion of Mansfield's work, and limits her study to the "German Pension" stories.

In "The Baron," another 1910 "German Pension" sketch, the narrator feels pity for a solitary Baron staying in the same hotel. Again discussions of the food and health habits of the inhabitants abound. One fellow guest informs the narrator: "Of course this is a *very fine house*. There was a lady from the Spanish Court here in the summer; she had a liver" (Stories 32). The Baron seems to be the only guest uninterested in discussing "the day's 'cure'" among others, as he steals in and out of rooms carrying a mysterious black bag. Eventually the narrator happens upon the man in a rainstorm and they share an umbrella. The Baron informs the narrator that he eats dinner "'alone that I may eat more,' ... 'my stomach requires a great deal of food. I order double portions, and eat them in peace.'" When she asks him what he does all day, he replies "'I imbibe nourishment in my room,'" (Stories 34). The seriousness of the Baron's eating habits contrasts with the excitable

discussions of the “cure” the rest of the guests participate in, yet his constant need for “a great deal of food” shows he shares the invalids’ obsession with food and cures, the same methods of sacrifice and bodily manipulation Mansfield disdains throughout the “German Pension” stories.

These stories about life inside health spas reflect Mansfield’s distaste for a culture of sickness and cures, and may have influenced her decision to attempt life outside of a sanatorium after her diagnosis as tubercular.

Tuberculosis melted Mansfield’s extra pounds quickly, and she, too, required ‘a great deal of food’ only a few years after writing this satirical sketch (44). Her experience as a consumptive forced her onto a strict diet of rich, heavy food. Frequent mention of comestibles in her letters seems to suggest that her correspondents inquired about her meals nearly as often as they did her health, and both seemed to irritate her occasionally. She wrote about her diet most often to Murry during their frequent separations. In 1918 she expressed concern for his health as she attempted to recover in the South of France after her diagnosis with tuberculosis, stating: “I set sail across tureens of nourishing soup stagger over soft mountains of pommes purees and melt in marmalades. So you see how well I am looking after MYself” (Collected Letters 2:30). A year later she seems to grow annoyed with his constant questions about her consumption: “Anyhow I EAT & I got up this morning & came straight outside & here I am resting in lovely weather, repairing – so don’t you worry. Im a kind of doctor, you know” (Collected Letters 3:42). One of her last letters to him from the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in 1922 betrays her irritation with his dietary queries: “As for the food [at the Institute] it is like a Gogol feast. Cream, butter – But what nonsense to talk about the food. Still its very important, and I want you to know that one is terribly well looked after, in everyway” (Collected Letters 5:305). From the moment of her diagnosis to the end of her life, Mansfield needed to pay careful attention to her food, and to eat heartily.

As usual in her writing, Mansfield described her own hearty diet with wit and vivid detail. She wrote to Murry that her doctors have her “snapping up fishes like a sea lion and steaks like a land lion” and that she eats so much fish she imagines herself a mermaid (Collected Letters 2:84). In a 1919 letter to Murry’s brother Richard, she described dinner while living in the Mediterranean. They ate “macaroni in all the most fantastical shapes and devices – in letters and rats’ tails and imitation lace and imitation penny stamps and triangles and shavings ... I wonder why they don’t have an Animal Series, camels, frogs and Nelephants in one’s soup would be particularly nice” (Collected Letters 3:95). She wrote playfully of her diet at times, although journal accounts and letters show her often strained attitude towards such constant attention to her diet. Her stories reflect the careful attention to food and the delight in sumptuous foods, often through the eyes of children, such as the “inward look” the girls in “The Garden Party” (1921) display after eating cream puffs just after breakfast or Sun’s attachment to the ice cake in “Sun and Moon” (Stories 490, 301).

In “Sun and Moon,” the little boy’s delight in an ice cake, “a little pink house with white snow on the roof and green windows and a brown door and stuck in the door there was a nut for a handle” is destroyed by his parents and their guests as he sees the ravaged house after a spectacular dinner party the couple throw (Stories 301). The delicate ice cake was doomed from the first time Sun laid eyes on it. His childlike attachment to such a transient, frivolous thing highlights Sun’s naivety, but also reinforces the fleetingness of material encounters. The decadent cake provided Sun’s parent and their dinner guests with pleasure for a short time that evening, and the consumption of such a lovely thing by his parents cause him to view them as villains.

Sun’s attachment to the delicate cake mirrors Mansfield’s desire to lose the sense of dividedness she feels is the root of her problems and become complete. His disappointment in the materiality of the cake, of its function as food and its ravaging by his parents, poignantly highlights the inability of a person to anchor themselves through material

objects. Like the ice cake, Mansfield felt herself melting away during the last years of her life, and the decomposition of the ice cake reflects her fear of consumption.

Despite her egg and cream filled diet, Mansfield lost weight continually from 1917 until her death in 1923. Gradually she came to despise the heavy diet and seclusion prescribed to her throughout her illness. She expresses frustration at their constant estrangement and her mandated diet in a draft of a letter to Murry in 1918:

I have discovered the ONLY TREATMENT for consumption It is NOT to cut the malade off from life: neither in a sanatorium nor in a land with milk rivers, butter mountains & cream valleys. One is just as bad as the other. Johnny Keats anchovy has more nourishment than both together. DON'T YOU AGREE??? (Collected Letters 2:230)

Though she desired to live in the thick of things, alongside Murry and without restraint, her illness forced Mansfield to live relatively “cut off from life” for most of her final years. For an author who desired to be “rooted in life,” the emotional stress caused by the constant isolation in search of a cure was intense and detrimental. Mansfield recognized this, and drew the link between physical and spiritual illness in her letters to Murry. Mansfield convinces herself that the Institute could help her find a cure for her sense of dividedness in this 1922 journal entry:

Bogey says ‘Manoukhin is a scientist. He does his part. It’s up to you to do yours.’ But that is no good at all. I can no more cure my psyche than my body. Less it seems to me. Isn’t Bogey himself, perfectly fresh and well, utterly depressed by boils on his neck? think of five years imprisonment. Someone has got to help me to get out. If that is an expression of weakness – it is ... And who is going to help me? ... Do I believe in medicine alone? No. never. In science alone? No. never. It seems to me childish and ridiculous to suppose one could be cured like a cow if one is not a cow. 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? (Notebooks 2:286)

Mansfield joined the commune in Fontainebleau in hope of finding purpose and direction in her thinking, which she believed would help her develop the healthy psyche she desired in order to produce more work. She used her months at the Institute to concentrate on the quotidian, finding joy in the mundane materiality of her life there. She wrote of her condition just before her death in January 1922: "I have a suspicion like a certainty that the real cause of my illness is not my lungs at all. But something else & if this were found and cured all the rest would heal" (Notebooks 2:319). She was to die before assuaging these feelings of emotional imbalance, mental insecurity and spiritual lack, but her notebooks and letters leave an account of the way in which Mansfield attempted to rectify what she considered was her "illness," and the life she desired to live.

Mansfield's turn towards the pastoral, detailed in the previous chapter, was encouraged by Gurdjieff, who designed a loft above the cow stables for Mansfield to rest in while breathing in their smell. Writing to Murry about this plan, she describes a conversation between Gurdjieff and herself in December 1922 about her health: "'Now,' he said 'you have two doctors you must obey. Doctor Stable and Doctor New Milk. Not to think, not to write .. Rest. Rest. Live in your body again.' I think he meant get back into your body. He speaks very little English but when one is with him one seems to understand all that he suggests" (Collected Letters 5:337). The idea of "getting back into your body," in contrast with the withdrawal of her mother, the "cures" of the spas in the "German Pension" stories, and the seclusion of the invalid in Europe, was a prescription Mansfield was all too willing to obey.

The Institute provided Mansfield an opportunity to relive the savagery of the colonial pastoral she knew as a child, recorded in the headless duck incident from "Prelude." Writing about the English Christmas feast Gurdjieff had planned for the inhabitants, she

described the slaughter of a pig and several fowls: "I attended the obsequies of the pig this morning. I thought I had better go through with it for once & see for myself. One felt only horribly sad ... and yesterday I watched Madame Ouspensky pluck singe & draw our birds. In fact these have been 2 gory days, balanced by the fairy like tree" (Collected Letters 5:338). Consumption for Mansfield was quite like these two days for her. Simultaneously unveiling the violence inherent in sexuality, her disease, and the act of eating itself, Mansfield's writing contains both the goriness and the beauty she sees in this celebration. Her experience at the Institute, in tune with the cows she loved and needed to sustain her existence, was the closest to the communion of mind and body Pearl Button experiences, and that Mansfield sought all her life.

The double edge of consumption for Mansfield, as both nourishment and the fear of being consumed, is demonstrated in a poem written just after her brother died, often referred to as "Dead Man's Bread:"

Last night for the first time since you were dead
 I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.
 We were at home again beside the stream
 Fringed with tall berry bushes, white and red.
 "Don't touch them: they are poisonous," I said
 But your hand hovered, and I saw a beam
 Of strange bright laughter flying round your head
 And as you stooped I saw the berries gleam
 "Don't you remember? We called them Dead Man's Bread!"
 I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar
 Of the dark water tumbling on the shore.
 Where - where is the path of my dream for my eager feet
 By the remembered stream my brother stands

Waiting for me with berries in his hands

"These are my body. Sister, take and eat."

This poem demonstrates the multiple meanings of the word consumption in Mansfield's writing and life as it typifies the preoccupation with cannibalism and the fear of being consumed by emotions, by others, and by disease present throughout many images of eating and sexuality in Mansfield's fiction. If the persona eats the poisonous berries offered by their dead brother, their poison may consume her life, making her savage-like and cannibalistic. Yet the brother offers his body as nourishment for the persona, exemplifying the sacrifice Mansfield's brother believed he was making when he enlisted for the army, and the way that Mansfield believed people "nourish each other when we love" (Collected Letters 5:223). As consumption gradually took over her body, Mansfield turned towards nourishment through ideas, experience, and the people around her.

Mansfield believed that she needed to find a cure for her unhealthy state of mind in order to get physically well, writing in 1922: "My spirit is nearly dead. My spring of life is so starved that it's just not dry. Nearly all my improved health is pretence ... I can no more cure my psyche than my body. Less it seems to me ... Someone has got to help me to get out" (Notebooks 2:285-286). She turned towards the Institute as a way to find a total cure. While deciding to enter the Institute, Mansfield lists two goals in her journal, alongside a chant copied from *Cosmic Anatomy*:

- 1 To escape from the prison of the flesh. To make the body an instrument, a servant.
- 2 To act and not to dream. To write it down at all times and at all costs. (Notebooks 2:311)

She desired to move past the illness that limited her physical experience of being in the world and to develop a more holistic conception of identity. Generally Mansfield's move towards Eastern philosophy and ideology has been seen as a last-ditch

attempt at salvation through the highly exoticized and denounced teachings of Gurdjieff.

Anthony Alpers has described her feelings of emotional and spiritual disease as a belief “that the health of the body is inseparable from the health of the spirit or moral nature,” but her interests in Fontainebleau seem more to do with active engagement in the material world and the opportunity it provided to aid the mind than moral penitence or understanding (Alpers 106). Mansfield immersed herself in a life full of kitchens, dancing, and livestock in an attempt to engage actively with the world around her, attempting to connect the actual and the abstract in her understanding. At the Institute, Mansfield confronted her constant struggle – to experience life more deeply and fully and to translate the experience into fiction, a struggle made more pressing and urgent as her body was consumed by disease.

Conclusion

Katherine Mansfield's writing reflects a deep sense of inner disunity and incongruity, especially in the last years of her life, when the pressure for her to write was increased by illness. She believed that the Institute in Fontainebleau was the place for her to mend her fractured sense of being, hoping to find a total cure by immersing herself in the material, nurturing her mental as well as physical self and, above all, finding some means to fuse them together. She experienced a novel sense of belonging and community while on the commune, writing to Murry from the Institute in late 1922 that "There is so much life here that one feels no more than one little cell in a beefsteak – say. It is a good feeling" (Collected Letters 5:338). The interconnectivity she witnessed at the commune highlights Mansfield's constant struggle: to experience life vividly and purposefully, to submerge oneself in life, and to translate the experience into fiction. However, the vagueness of the term "life" riddles her writing on the subject.

As her stories full of misunderstood characters and objects demonstrate, an all-encompassing definition of "life" was impossible for Mansfield. She yearns for the vague experience of intensely living, of "warm, eager, living life," yet her definitions of life change over time. Initially she wrote of the desire for vivid sensory experiences, writing in 1907 in distinctly Wildean style "I purchase my brilliance with my life. I am unlike others because I have experienced all there is to experience" (Notebooks 1:110). As a teenager, Katherine Mansfield sought to accumulate experience, naively delighting in the rebelliousness she exhibited while pursuing "Life, absolutely" in Wellington and London (Notebooks 1:107). As she matured, Mansfield shifted her definition of life from vivid personal experience to a more spiritual, though no less sensual, interaction with the material world. She wanted to encounter "the earth and the wonders thereof ... all that we mean when we speak of the external world" and to describe the experience in her fiction (Notebooks 2:287). However, her experiences with the physical world were circumstantial and inconsistent.

The constant in Mansfield's fiction is the idea of being acutely alive, vividly witnessing and taking part in the material world through subjective personal experience, yet the subjective nature of her writing has helped to create an easily manipulated body of work. Mansfield's writing is approachable and inconsistent, leaving plenty of room for interpretation. O'Sullivan noted in 1975 the tendency to lift quotations from different periods in Mansfield's life: "The crudity of cutting a sentence from here, lifting a paragraph from there, in the body of these stories and private papers, is not the most subtle of literary procedures" (O'Sullivan, "Magnetic Chain" 131). While he admits his own guilt in this practice, O'Sullivan warns that splicing Mansfield's personal and private writing from her childhood, young adult and adult life constructs a different Mansfield for each study, reworking her image into each critic's view. When a new study of Mansfield comes along, the facts, and sometimes the rumors, of her life are moved in a different combination to create a new side of Mansfield.

For the greater part of the twentieth century, Murry had sole control of Mansfield's work, editing his late wife's manuscripts and manipulating her image into that of a childlike angel. Her biographies all demonstrate the malleability of her character. Like a patient father, Anthony Alpers suppresses unseemly facts about Mansfield's life in the 1953 biography so as not to offend any living connections and publishes an expanded biography in 1980, acknowledging the scandals in her career with a hearty chuckle. He refers to the author as a "little monkey" when she abandons lover Floryan Sobienowski in Paris to move in with husband George Bowden in London (Alpers 105). Claire Tomalin focuses on the repressed in Mansfield's life, bringing to light other motivations for Mansfield's erratic behaviour, especially during the turbulent year 1909. Tomalin identifies Mansfield's contraction of gonorrhea and the painful, unsuccessful procedure she underwent to treat it just before moving back with Bowden (Tomalin 75). While both biographies prove useful for study, the specific approach of each author limits the outcome.

To a certain extent, critics mimic this tendency to linger on specific facts without acknowledging others. Cherry Hankin finds biographical roots for Mansfield's "confessional" stories, whereas Mary Burgan locates the stories in Mansfield's illness; Julia van Gunsteren locates her Impressionist tendencies, whereas Angela Smith considers Mansfield Post-Impressionist; Sydney Janet Kaplan fixes Mansfield into the modernist literary canon, whereas Kate Fulbrook attaches her to feminism; Vincent O'Sullivan notes her European influences, whereas Bridget Orr sees her as a colonial creole; Lydia Wevers, Mark Williams and Jane Stafford see her as a colonial writer, whereas Anne Maxwell attempts to apply post-colonial theory to Mansfield. The nature of literary criticism is to isolate and define distinctive aspects of a writer's work, and, when applicable, their life. With Mansfield, one runs into the problem of conflicting narratives, shifting motives, and alternate meanings. Her inconstant letters, journal entries, drafts of her stories and published material can be easily manipulated to create almost any construction of this multi-faceted writer.

Mansfield's fiction leaves no doubt that her own real life encounters, especially between people, informed her writing. She writes of Ida Baker: "Ah, why can't I describe all that happens! I think quite seriously that L.M. and I are so extraordinarily interesting ... Have I ruined her happy life?" (Notebooks 1:278). Ida, and the guilt Mansfield feels towards her, appear in various forms throughout the stories. Baker's coddling of the sick Mansfield – "If I sigh I know that her head lifts" – what Mansfield perceives as her large appetite – "She has large appetites" especially "in the soup tureen. Then she could – oh! She would eat for ever" – and her constant fumbings as housekeeper frustrate Mansfield, triggering harsh satires of Baker in journal entries and stories (Notebooks 2:231, 139). As mentioned in Chapter Two, Baker provided the basis for Maata's devoted friend Rhoda Bendall, the name a combination of Baker's place of origin and another of Mansfield's childhood friends, Edith Bendall.

As O'Sullivan and Scott note in Volume Five of the Collected Letters, Baker and her colonial family provided the basis for the story "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," in which a demanding military father dominates his daughters' wills, even after his death (264). The meek daughters Constantia and Josephine are based on Baker and her sister, but also have roots in Mansfield's devout Catholic cousin Connie Beauchamp and her friend Jinnie Fullerton, with whom Mansfield spent time at the Villa Isola Bella in 1920. "Con" and "Jug" shirk from their priest when he offers them Communion in their home: "But the idea of a little Communion terrified them. What! In the drawing-room by themselves – with no – no altar or anything!" (Stories 390). The daughters are exaggerations of the neglected, under-stimulated women Mansfield knew throughout her life.

Con and Jug have been continually forced to suppress themselves, afraid of giggling while in mourning at the beginning of the narrative (Stories 386). Like Baker for Mansfield and her Catholic cousin, the sisters give up their lives in obedience to their father. They live without comfort, company or stimulus, scrimping on their allowance to afford cakes when their nephew comes to tea (Stories 395). The sisters are isolated in their flat after the death of their father and removed from the "warm, eager living life" Mansfield desired (Notebooks 2:287). Both feel the loss of active engagement with the world around them. When she hears sparrows chirping outside, Josephine "felt they were not sparrows, not on the window ledge. It was inside her, that queer little crying noise ... Ah, what was it crying, so weak and forlorn? ... The rest [of her life] had been looking after father, and at the same time keeping out of father's way. But now? But now?" (Stories 401-402). Constantia feels the emptiness of her life, suspecting her true self to be, at least briefly, rooted in the actual and momentary: "There had been this other life, running out, bringing things home in bags, getting things on approval ... It wasn't real. It was only when she came out of the tunnel into the moonlight or by the sea or into a thunderstorm that she really felt herself. What did it mean? What was it she was always wanting? What did it all lead to? Now? Now?" (Stories 402). After so many years of nursing their father, the sisters

cannot imagine how to begin to take charge of their own lives and engage with their surroundings.

Mr. Pinner's gloom lingers in the flat after his death, frightening Josephine and Constantia when they try to "go through his things" in his former room (Stories 291-292). The sisters fear their father in everything he touched. When she accidentally leans against the chest of drawers, Josephine "had the most extraordinary feeling that she had just escaped something simply awful. But how could she explain to Constantia that father was in the chest of drawers? He was in the top drawer with his handkerchiefs and neck-ties, or in the next with his shirts and pyjamas, or in the lowest of all with his suits" (Stories 393). The spirit of their father pervades the entire flat, like his rage and unhappiness concentrated in the one glaring eye with which he last stared at the sisters. In contrast to the ever-present gloom of their father, Josephine wonders why "so little remained of mother, except the ear-rings shaped like tiny pagodas and a black feather boa" while looking at a faded photograph of their mother, dead long before the story is set (Stories 401). What remains of both parents are their possessions, imbued with the significance the sisters give them.

Perhaps more all-encompassing than their father's ill humour and gloom is the presence of death for the sisters who sacrificed their youth in order to care for their father. Mansfield expressed guilt for Ida Baker's sacrifice of time and energy to her friend; likewise, she sympathized with the sisters. She wrote to William Gerhardt in 1921 that many readers "thought [the story] was 'cruel'" and that she ridiculed the sisters cowering under the influence of their dead father, when she felt that she "bowed down to the beauty that was hidden in their lives." She claimed her goal was "to discover that was all my desire ... All was meant, of course, to lead up to that last paragraph, when my two flowerless ones turned with that timid gesture, to the sun. "Perhaps *now*." And after that, it seemed to me, they died as truly as Father was dead" (Collected Letters 4:249). The sisters' identities

were so wrapped up in their father's life that they cease to exist afterwards: they disintegrate after the death of their father.

Mansfield was continually concerned with identity and the construction of identity. Her characters attempt to find themselves in their surroundings: in a little lamp, a house, a hat, the sea, a blue "koumara" [sic], a pear tree, in other people. She expresses the desire to define oneself in a notebook entry, probably from 1920:

Is it not possible that the rage for confession, autobiography, especially for memories of earliest childhood is explained by our persistent yet mysterious belief in a self which is continuous and permanent, which, untouched by all we acquire and all we shed, pushes a green spear through the leaves and through the mould, thrusts a sealed bud through years of darkness until, one day, the light discovers it and shakes the flower free and – we are alive – we are flowering for our moment upon the earth. This is the moment which, after all, we live for, the moment of direct feeling when we are most ourselves and least personal. (Notebooks 2:204)

Mansfield acknowledged that such a moment is "mysterious," unattainable. The closest any character comes to this impersonal realization of the self is the pre-cognitive Pearl Button, as she rejoices in the feeling of water in her hands. The physical nature of Mansfield's writing and the actual objects left by her after her death encourage reading into her experiments with identity and mark her as a person attempting to live with and describe an acute, vivid sense of the world around her. She wished for a connection with this world, a way to feel the "green spear" push "through the leaves and through the mould ... years of darkness," and form a complete identity, if only for a moment. She strove for the "moment of direct feeling" throughout her life.

When examining the material Mansfield, borrowing the term from the aptly-named collection of her material culture, one witnesses the persistent efforts of a writer to vividly experience and document a life she felt was slipping away. In *The Material Mansfield*, one

views a collection of Mansfield's most cherished and significant possessions – her Spanish shawl, whalebone tiki and typewriters included – alongside seemingly inconsequential objects, such as thimbles, bed shirts and pill bottles. This study has attempted to amass a collection of descriptions of Mansfield's material world in order to look at the author as a loosely articulated whole, a collection of different elements that both clash and work together.

Mansfield's colonial childhood, her preference for luxury, her feelings of disunity and dividedness, and the fleetingness of her life made poignant by various levels and types of consumption inform her acute awareness of the material world. Mansfield left tangible evidence of a lifelong attempt to anchor the abstract self to the actual world, an attempt to immerse oneself in "warm, eager living life" and document the experience. Her body of fiction illustrates the impossibility of such a moment, as her characters attempt to attach fragile, flickering identities to ambiguous objects, failing to construct solid personalities. The focus on the material is ubiquitous throughout Mansfield's writing, and she constantly explored with a resigned, tragic hopefulness, the possibility of being "rooted in life."

Works Cited

Alpers, Antony. *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*. New York: The Viking Press, 1980.

Baker, Ida. *Katherine Mansfield The Memories of LM*. London: Michael Joseph, 1971.

Beauchamp, Harold. *Reminiscences and Recollections*. Ed. Guy Scholefield. New Plymouth: T. Avery, 1937.

Boddy, Gillian. "Frau Brechenmacher and Stanley Burnell: Some Background

Discussion on the Treatment of the Roles of Men and Women in the Writing of Katherine Mansfield." *The Fine Instrument*. Eds. Paulette Michel and Michel Dupuis. Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989. 80-94.

Bhabha, Homi K. "Signs Taken for Wonders." *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Eds. Rivkin, Julie, Michael Ryan. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd: 2004, 1167-1184.

Burgan, Mary. *Illness, Gender, and Writing: The Case of Katherine Mansfield*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Choi, Young sun. "Writing Food (for Thought): Katherine Mansfield's *In a German Pension*." *Journal of Post Colonial Studies*. 1 (2010) 2-10.

Fulbrook, Kate. *Katherine Mansfield*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986.

Gunsteren. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Impressionism*. Atlanta: Amsterdam, 1990.

Hankin, C.A. *Katherine Mansfield and Her Confessional Stories*. London: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1983.

Hardy, Linda. "The Ghost of Katherine Mansfield." *Landfall* 43 no. 4 (1989): 416-32.

- Harris, Laurel, Mary Morris and Joanna Woods. *The Material Mansfield: Traces of a Writer's Life*. Auckland: Random House, 2008.
- Kaplan, Sydney Janet. *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Lea, Frank Alfred. *The Life of John Middleton Murry*. London: Methuen, 1959.
- Majumdar, Saikat. "Katherine Mansfield and the Fragility of Pakeha Boredom." *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*. 55 (2009) 119-141.
- Mansfield, Katherine. *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*. Eds. O'Sullivan, Vincent and Margaret Scott. 5 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984-2008.
- Mansfield, Katherine. "New Dresses." *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*. Wordsworth Editions. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2006.
- Mansfield, Katherine. *Poems of Katherine Mansfield*. Ed. O'Sullivan, Vincent. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Mansfield, Katherine. *The Stories of Katherine Mansfield: Definitive Edition*. Ed. Alpers, Anthony. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Maxwell, Anne. "Encountering the Cultural Other: Virginia Woolf in Constantinople and Katherine Mansfield in the Ureweras." *ARIEL: A Review of English Literature*. 38 (2007): 19-40.
- Pater, Walter. "The Child in the House." *Selected Writings of Walter Pater*. Ed. Bloom, Harold. New York: Signet Classics, 1974. 1-16.
- Pater, Walter. "Sebastian Van Storck" *Selected Writings of Walter Pater*. Ed. Bloom, Harold. New York: Signet Classics, 1974. 64-84.
- Orr, Bridget. "The Only Free People in the Empire: Gender Difference in Colonial Discourse." *De-Scribing the Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*. Eds. Tiffin, Chris and Alan Lawson. London: Routledge, 1994. 152-171.
- Orr, Bridget. "Reading with the Taint of the Pioneer: Katherine Mansfield and Settler

Criticism.” *Landfall* 43 no. 4 (1989): 447-61.

O’Sullivan, Vincent. “Finding the Pattern, Solving the Problem: Katherine Mansfield the New Zealand European.” *Katherine Mansfield – In from the Margin*. Ed.

Robinson, Roger. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994. 9-24.

O’Sullivan, Vincent. “Introduction.” *Katherine Mansfield: New Zealand Stories*. Ed.

O’Sullivan, Vincent. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997. 1-14.

O’Sullivan, Vincent. “The Magnetic Chain.” *Landfall* 29 no. 2 (1975): 95-131.

Sandley, Sarah. “The Middle of the Note: Katherine Mansfield’s Glimpses.”

Katherine Mansfield – In from the Margin. Ed. Robinson, Roger. Baton Rouge:

Louisiana State University Press, 1994. 70-89.

Scott, Margaret. *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*. 2 Vols. Wellington: Lincoln

University Press, 1997.

Smith, Angela. *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.

Stafford, Jane and Mark Williams. *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature 1872-1914*.

Wellington, NZ: Victoria University Press, 2006.

Tomalin, Claire. *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*. London: Viking, 1987.

Wevers, Lydia. “The Sod Under My Feet: Katherine Mansfield.” *Opening the Book:*

New Essays on New Zealand Writing. Eds. Williams, Mark and Michele Leggott.

Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995. 31-48.