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‘Birds bred in cages’: Katherine Mansfield and the Anxiety of Authority

Jenny McDonnell

A thesis submitted to the School of English at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2005
Declaration

This thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university. I agree that the Library may lend or copy the thesis upon request, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement.

Signed: Jenny M. Dowell

Date: 11/04/06
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Thanks also to my brother, Rory, for his thoughtfulness and humour; and finally to my parents, Eva and Paddy. For their tireless support and infinite generosity, this work is dedicated to them, with love.
For my parents
Summary

This thesis accounts for the growing professionalisation of Katherine Mansfield as a writer between the years of 1910 and 1922, and addresses the ways in which the publication contexts in which her writing first appeared helped shape her career, influencing both the form and content of her literary output. The modes of periodical and book publication with which she engaged over the course of her professional life were vital to her development as an author, while her ongoing negotiations with a series of audiences—editorial, critical and commercial—ultimately coloured her perception of the potentially restrictive environs in which she produced her work. This is captured in her memorable description of her stories as 'birds bred in cages'.

Mansfield’s dealings with such commercial worlds and strategies of publication contributed to what I term her ‘anxiety of authority’, which manifested itself as a tension between her desire to construct her identity as an author, and her apprehensions about the way in which her work was consumed by her various readers. These tensions were enacted within the short stories and critical writing she produced during the years in question, and I argue that an examination of Mansfield’s perception of her role as an author within a number of marketplaces opens up a new interpretative space in which to understand her stories. I posit a reading of her stories that highlights their interrogation of Mansfield’s relationship as author to the strategies and sites of publication with which she was most associated. These themes are discussed in relation to Mansfield’s often neglected earlier work; her reviews for the Athenaeum (which have received scant critical attention); and a number of her most famous later stories.

By locating Mansfield’s work in relation to the publication contexts in which it was produced, I argue for its position within (and enactment of) a complex and commercially aware modernism. This is anticipated in the material discussed in
Chapters One and Two, which consider her earliest attempts at developing a series of authorial personae in the context of two distinct types of periodical publication, the political and cultural weekly the *New Age* and the little magazines *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review*. These chapters establish the importance of the editorial audiences and publication strategies that would shape her career, and provide a context in which to understand her earliest experimentation with narrative and authorial perspective within a variety of prose forms – both fictional and non-fictional. Chapter Three charts her consolidation of this formal development at a time in her career when she was largely unattached to such journals. It was at this time that she wrote *Prelude*, the first story in which she achieved the impersonal narrative style that would inform her mature work. Importantly, this chapter argues that Mansfield’s commitment to a new commercial ambition developed alongside this refinement of a modernist aesthetic for short story production. Chapters Four and Five further trace this fusion of modernism and commercialism throughout the remainder of Mansfield’s career, and argue that she increasingly challenged the distinction between ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ forms, both of fiction and publication. I argue that Mansfield’s career was ultimately characterised by her ongoing attempts at negotiating an uneasy but necessary balance between her ambition to achieve literary credibility and commercial viability. Her awareness of the potential tensions between these two impulses, as well as her anxieties about the ways in which her work was read by a variety of audiences, ultimately contributed to Mansfield’s perception of her ‘sort of authority’ over her work. The thesis concludes with a brief account of how this limited authority has persisted in her literary afterlife.
There's a little bird on a tree outside this window not so much singing as sharpening a note — He's getting a very fine point on it.

Katherine Mansfield to Frederick Goodyear, 4 March 1916
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Introduction

Katherine Mansfield’s career as a professional writer began in 1907 with the appearance of a number of symbolist ‘vignettes’ (influenced by the work of Oscar Wilde) and one short story in E.J. Brady’s short-lived Australian periodical, the Native Companion. In order to make this early appearance in print, she negotiated with three male authority figures: Tom Mills, a journalist on the New Zealand Evening Post who advised her to send her poems (which were subsequently rejected) to Harper’s Magazine and her prose to the Native Companion; E.J. Brady, who reputedly found it hard to believe that an eighteen year old girl had written the material, and wrote to Mansfield for clarification that she was not, in fact, his regular New Zealand contributor Frank Morton in disguise; and finally, her father Harold Beauchamp. Indeed the entire project was apparently intended as a means to persuade Beauchamp that his daughter’s commitment to forging a career as an author was not merely an adolescent fantasy: Mansfield was intent on proving that outside readers would take an interest in her work.

Mansfield replied to Brady’s query about her authorial persona in terms that acknowledged the Wildean tone of her vignettes:

I am sorry that [they] resemble their illustrious relatives to so marked an extent — and assure you — they feel very much my own — This style of

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work absorbs me, at present — but — well — it cannot be said that anything you have of mine is ‘cribed’ — Frankly — I hate plagiarism.

She went on to present herself in terms that she clearly deemed appropriate to the pose of the budding artist that she had begun to adopt:

I am poor — obscure — just eighteen years of age — with a rapacious appetite for everything and principles as light as my purse.

Brady duly responded with a cheque for £2: ‘K. Mansfield’ (as she initially requested to be known) had made her first transaction.

This anecdote is suggestive of her earliest pose as a poverty-stricken ‘artist’ who both invites and resists the commodification of her work. Mansfield began her career by equating poverty with obscurity and by implication with artistic integrity, but her increasing engagement with professional spheres of publication throughout her career necessitated a renegotiation of such simplistic renderings of herself as ‘artist’.

This thesis will trace her development as an author by locating her work in the commercial worlds of British periodicals and book publishing with which she interacted between 1910 and 1922. Rather than viewing her as ‘the brassy little shopgirl of literature who made herself into a great writer’ (as Frank O’Connor has famously described her), I argue that these categories need not be seen as mutually

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4 See Katherine Mansfield: Publications in Australia, 1907-1909, ed. Jean E. Stone (Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1977) for a full account of Mansfield’s early Australian publications. In order of publication, her Native Companion contributions were: ‘Vignettes’, Native Companion, 2.3 (1 October 1907), 129-32; ‘Silhouettes’, Native Companion, 2.4 (1 November 1907), 229; ‘In the Botanical Gardens’, Native Companion, 2.5 (2 December 1907), 265-9; ‘In a Café’, Native Companion, 2.5 (2 December 1907), 285-6. The journal folded at the end of 1907. She also began to appear in print in New Zealand in 1908: ‘Study: The Death of a Rose’ was published in The Triad, a monthly devoted entirely to the arts and published out of Dunedin, on 1 July 1908, and a number of poems and sketches continued to appear in Australian and New Zealand papers after her departure for London on 6 July 1908.
exclusive throughout Mansfield’s career. In fact, the achievement of her literary success was dependent to a significant extent on her willingness to challenge a distinction made by many other ‘modernists’ between the ‘popular’ and the ‘literary’.6

Apparently unbeknownst to Mansfield, Brady also received a letter from Harold Beauchamp around the time that she had told him of her poverty, ‘obscurity’ and the lack of encouragement she had received up to this point.7

My daughter, Kathleen, has shown me the letters you have written in respect of her literary contributions and I desire to thank you sincerely for the practical encouragement you have given her. At the same time, I should like to assure you that you need never have any hesitation in accepting anything from her upon the assumption that it may not be original matter. She herself is, I think, a very original character, and writing — whether it be good or bad — comes to her quite naturally. In fact, since she was eight years of age, she has been producing poetry and prose. It may be that she inherits the literary talents of some members of our family, amongst them being my cousin, the authoress of ‘Elizabeth and her German Garden’, and other well known books.8

Beauchamp’s letter may in part indicate the family’s perception of Mansfield’s adolescent writing as a harmless distraction, not to be taken too seriously; at the same time, he attempts to aid his daughter in achieving her ambition by exploiting the family’s ‘literary’ connections as testament to Mansfield’s ‘pedigree’. This level of accommodation was further evident in Mansfield’s use of Beauchamp’s secretary to type her early work.9 The reference to Mansfield’s literary heritage (in the person of Elizabeth von Arnim) at the end of the letter to Brady, however, counters Mansfield’s own attempts at presenting herself as a poor, unattached ‘artist’ and undermines her

6 This is true of Eliot’s *Criterion*, for example, which aimed for — and achieved — deliberately low circulation figures.
9 See Mansfield’s letters to Martha Putnam of 22 July 1907; October 1907; January 1908, *The Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 23-4; p. 28; p. 36. Mansfield had already begun the habit of referring to her stories as her ‘children’.
attempted representation of the solitary and ‘obscure’ nature of her art. It would take Beauchamp some time to agree to Mansfield’s return to London: to humour his daughter’s flirtation with the written word in New Zealand was one thing; it was quite another to allow her to develop it as a career in London.

This anecdote of Mansfield’s early antipodean publications provides a precursory survey of the key themes and patterns that this thesis will argue were central to her engagement with a variety of publication sites throughout her career in London: her initial romanticised artistic pose (figured here as that of the poverty-stricken, isolated artist), which anticipates the various authorial personae (and later self-promotions) adopted by Mansfield throughout her career; the successful placement of her work within the literary marketplace; the interactions with external authority figures which prefigure the relationships she would form with the editors and publishers (both male and female) that she encountered within literary London; the charge of plagiarism that haunts her early work; and finally, the wider audiences to which her work was addressed. All of these issues shaped the prose that appeared in various forms in Britain between 1910 and her death in 1923, and will figure in the following discussion of the emergence of ‘Katherine Mansfield’ in those years.10 Mansfield’s engagement with these concerns contributed to what I term her ‘anxiety of authority’. This ‘anxiety of authority’ is in part linked to her sense of ‘authorship’ and her development of a series of personae for herself as a writer; it also reflects her uncertainty as to whether the social and cultural authority of her work lies with the author, the editor, or the market/reading public. Her career was marked by an ongoing interrogation of her relationship, as an author, to the various strategies and sites of publication with which

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10 This thesis will focus on Mansfield’s prose writings, and will not discuss her poetry, which she continued to publish throughout her career. In general, her poems are less formally inventive than her short stories and do not interrogate her ‘anxiety of authority’ in the same way.
she engaged throughout her career, and was further driven by a desire to assert control over the composition and publication of her writing.

In a useful essay, Mark Williams has described Mansfield's modernism as 'rebellious, but dependent on the cheques from home', a depiction this thesis attempts to challenge. Although the 'cheques from home' (which continued to arrive throughout her career) may initially have strengthened Mansfield's resolution to prove her credentials as a 'poverty-stricken' artist, this thesis will complicate such a construction by locating her stories in the commercial and publication contexts in which they were produced. This provides a new framework in which to understand Mansfield's stories, and I argue that her continued attempts to negotiate a balance between literary credibility and commercial viability had a direct impact on her writing, both formally and thematically. Throughout her career, Mansfield's work was published in a variety of contexts, both 'literary' and 'popular'. Her active engagement with diverse publication strategies enabled her to develop and refine her theoretical approach to the short story. Indeed, through her increasing renegotiation of the 'literary' and 'popular' spheres, her experimental and commercial tendencies became interdependent, and shaped her mature work from Prelude on.

The approach is indebted to the models presented in Lawrence Rainey's Institutions of Modernism and Mark S. Morisson's The Public Face of Modernism. These surveys of modernist literary elites and little magazines aim (in different ways) to

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counter what Morrisson calls ‘the commonplace of modernism’s inveterate antagonism to mass culture’ and instead to portray modernists as ‘more savvy about self-promotion and audiences than had previously been understood.’ Rainey understands modernism as

more than a series of texts, or the ideas that found expression in them. It becomes a social reality, a configuration of agents and practices that converge in the production, marketing, and publicization of an idiom, a shareable language in the family of twentieth century tongues. To trace the institutional profile of modernism in the social spaces and staging venues where it operated can teach us a great deal about the relations between modernism and popular culture, the fate of aesthetic autonomy, authorial self-construction in advancing modernity, and the troublesome place of literary elites in popular culture (my italics). This thesis aims to position Mansfield in terms of Rainey’s proposed ‘social reality’ by situating her writing in relation to the immediate cultural and historical contexts in which it appeared. This places her within a series of publication modes which aided the development and dissemination of modernist texts throughout the early decades of the twentieth century: the political and cultural weekly, the little magazine, the literary weekly, private/limited editions, magazine and newspaper publication and commercial book publishing. Accordingly, throughout the thesis I focus primarily on the first publication of her stories (except in the cases of stories such as ‘The Garden-Party’, which first appeared in a significantly edited form). In most cases, this approach emphasises the periodical publication of Mansfield’s work, but also accounts for her privately printed stories and her short-story collections.

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13 Morrisson, The Public Face of Modernism, p. 5.
14 Rainey, Institutions of Modernism, pp. 4-5.
15 Rainey places a firm emphasis on modernism’s patron-culture, citing the three figures of the investor, the collector and the patron as key to modernist writers’ engagement with a public sphere. Mansfield’s career does not fit this model precisely, unless those ‘cheques from home’ are seen to function as a patronage of sorts.
Rainey’s study is somewhat limited by its lack of textual analysis. It fails to see
that some modernist works were themselves about – and sometimes bore the scars of –
the very social and institutional processes he describes. My relocation of Mansfield’s
work within these contexts, then, seeks to open up a new interpretative space for her
short stories, and I posit a new reading of her stories’ enactment of authorial anxieties
of audience and production within the marketplace, as well as within the evolving
modernist short story form. These anxieties would eventually lead to her perception of
her stories as ‘birds bred in cages’ at the end of her career.\(^{16}\) The thesis traces this
imagery of birds, both caged and free, throughout Mansfield’s stories, and charts her
developing sense of the production of her work in potentially restrictive contexts, which
contributes to her anxiety of authority.\(^ {17} \) Her anxieties of both audience and production
are established in terms of both her editorial relationships and her engagement with
wider reading publics.

These editorial relationships were glossed over in Murry’s posthumous
presentations of Mansfield, and, although they have been reinstated in biographies and
are often noted in studies of Mansfield’s work, they have not received sufficiently
rigorous critical attention.\(^ {18} \) Moreover, the vital years of 1915-1918 have occasionally


\(^ {17} \) This imagery is notably absent from Chapter Four, which recounts Mansfield’s career as reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, a phase of her career that seems to have invested her writing with a greater degree of confidence.

\(^ {18} \) See Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Viking, 1980); Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (London: Penguin, 1988). Saralyn R. Daly provides an overview of Mansfield’s career and takes particular account of the various journals of her early career in *Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994). Although Daly suggests the influence of the editorial policies of these journals on Mansfield’s early work, she does not demonstrate this in detail: her chapter on the *New Age*, for example, poses the question of A.R. Orage’s influence without ever really answering it. Jeanne Beth Widen’s unpublished PhD thesis ‘Positionings: The Early Work of Katherine Mansfield’ (University of Chicago, 1997) discusses Mansfield’s *New Age* work in terms of the journal’s editorial policy, but primarily emphasises the journal’s influence on the tone of Mansfield’s work, as well as on its feminist content, rather than the forms that this work took. Ronald Cross’s unpublished PhD thesis ‘Edwardian Mansfield: The Forgotten Career of an Early Modernist’ (University of Missouri-Columbia, 1998) discusses Mansfield’s engagement with a series of Edwardian networks and strategies, among them the *New Age*. Although Angela Smith’s recent work has paid
been viewed in terms that are disquietingly similar to the romantic description in
Murry's introduction to the *Journal*:

> When *The Blue Review* died in July 1913, KM had no place to write in. The beautiful story *Something Childish but very Natural*, which she wrote in Paris in December 1913, was refused by every editor to whom she submitted it. No home could be found for any one of her stories till the winter of 1915, when she and D.H. Lawrence and I produced three numbers of a little magazine called *The Signature*, written wholly by ourselves. *The Signature* died within two months, and again KM had nowhere to write, until I became editor of *The Athenaeum* in 1919.\(^{19}\)

This thesis counters Murry's representation by focusing on the professionalisation of Mansfield throughout her career from the *New Age* on, and particularly in the years between the failure of *Signature* and the commencement of Mansfield's work as a reviewer for the *Athenaeum* in 1919.\(^{20}\) The years between 1915 and 1918 were not solely taken up with the composition of *Prelude*, and to date little has been made of Mansfield's reappearance in the *New Age* in 1917. It is part of this project to demonstrate that the role played by Mansfield's re-engagement with the *New Age* at this time was vital, not only to the composition of *Prelude*, but also to its marketing.

The thesis divides Mansfield's career into three phases, with the composition and publication of *Prelude* as a turning point.\(^{21}\) Chapters One and Two detail Mansfield's development of authorial poses and public personae within the contexts of

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\(^{19}\) *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. John Middleton Murry (London: Constable & Co, 1927), p. ix. Critics such as Kate Fullbrook have tended implicitly to replicate Murry's representation of Mansfield's 'homelessness'; although Fullbrook does acknowledge Mansfield's publications between 1915 and 1917, she provides no sense of where the majority of these publications appeared (and does not mention the Hogarth Press, which would publish *Prelude* in 1918). Kate Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986), p. 63.

\(^{20}\) Short stories were first introduced as a weekly feature in the *Athenaeum* in July 1920: Mansfield contributed a number of stories to the journal between that date and December 1920, as is discussed in Chapter Four.

\(^{21}\) This is in keeping with most accounts of Mansfield's development of *technique* and as a writer: for examples, see Sylvia Berkman, *Katherine Mansfield: A Critical Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951); Daly, *Katherine Mansfield: Second Edition*; Fullbrook, *Katherine Mansfield*. 

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the New Age, Rhythm, and the Blue Review, and focus on her various experimentations with form. These chapters establish the editorial relationship and Mansfield's sense of audience as a key influence on the development of a partial authority in her stories throughout 1910 to 1913. This is demonstrated by a reading of her often neglected early work, as well as new interpretations of 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' and 'The Woman at the Store'. The themes, imagery and anxieties established in the first two chapters continue to be explored throughout the thesis with respect to Mansfield's career. These first two chapters detail Mansfield's search for a reading public that will be open to the 'new word' in fiction that she was beginning to develop; the final three chapters detail her refinement of this 'new word' as well as her increasingly complex understanding of her reading publics, which is first evident with the publication of Prelude in 1918.

Chapter Three traces Mansfield's initial consolidation of the techniques and formal variations of the first two chapters to account for the composition of Prelude; in addition, it marks the convergence of her perception of the public nature of her work and the marketability of her fiction. The chapter provides a new reading of this key story in terms of Mansfield's increased understanding of her location within the literary marketplace, which in turn manifests itself as an increased anxiety of audience. The chapter also argues for her awareness of the potential loss of authorial control over her text in delivering it to an audience (both editorial and commercial) and the resultant

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22 In this sense, this thesis is part of an ongoing reappraisal of Mansfield's early work as central to her development of the short story form, also evident in Kaplan's Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction, Mark Williams "The Artificial and the Natural": The Development of Katherine Mansfield's Prose Style", and Smith, Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life. Of the three, only Smith pays any real attention to the journals in which Mansfield's work appeared, in her reading of Mansfield's development of a Fauvist aesthetic in her work from Rhythm on. This thesis is less concerned with Mansfield's earliest New Zealand work (from 1906-1908) than such studies, and focuses only on the British publications from 1910 on, in an attempt to reinstate Mansfield's writing within the development of British modernism and its publication strategies.

23 The phrase is taken from Mansfield's 1920 review, 'Wanted, a New Word', Athenaeum, No. 4704 (25 June 1920), 831-2.
impact on her sense of the autonomy of the text. This is further compounded by her deliberate effacement of her ‘authorial’ voice in her development of narrative technique during these years. Indeed, the trope of authorial erasure is played out in various ways throughout this thesis: in pseudonyms, in narrative voice, and in the delivery of her stories to an audience for consumption.²⁴ Chapters Four and Five trace Mansfield’s achievement of an often uneasy balance between her sense of authority and the necessity of conceding to the commercial in the final phases of her career, and argue for her ongoing reaction against the literary networks in which she had been located since her association with Murry began in early 1912. These themes are developed in new readings of two more of Mansfield’s major stories – *Je ne parle pas français* and ‘The Garden-Party’ – which argue for these stories’ self-conscious engagement with the institutions of production and consumption within which Mansfield’s work appeared.²⁵

Inherent in Mansfield’s anxiety of authority was an anxiety of *form* that persisted throughout her career as a result of her professional commitment to the short story. Although she continued to claim that she intended one day to write ‘a real live novel’ (punctuated by realisations that this project would never reach fulfilment), this study avoids interrogation of such plans, and instead discusses the short story on its own terms, rather than in relation to the novel.²⁶ Dominic Head has provided the best discussion of Mansfield’s technique as it relates to the modernist short story, but it is not part of his project to provide a context for modernist short story *publication*.²⁷

²⁴ The most recent monograph, Andrew Bennett’s *Katherine Mansfield* (Devon: Northcote House, 2004) provides a useful overview of Mansfield’s narrative technique as ‘impersonation’, both in terms of the removal of the ‘person’ of the writer from the text, and the resultant adoption of a series of perspectives, both of narrator and character.

²⁵ The phrase should, of course, read ‘Je ne parle pas français’; however, since the first publication of the story omitted the cedilla, the story will be referred to throughout this thesis as *Je ne parle pas français*.


²⁷ Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Clare Hanson’s historical survey of the short story in *Short Stories and Short Fictions 1880-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1985) acknowledges the form’s links with the popular press but her edited collection allows more room for discussion of what she terms the ‘potentially disabling
Although commentators such as Antony Alpers and Peter Keating have noted the large number of early twentieth century literary journals and magazines that published short stories, both acknowledge the difficulties of placing formally challenging short stories that were encountered by writers in these years. Mansfield’s early story ‘The Tiredness of Rosabel’, for example, is often identified as one of her most assured early works, and it experiments with shifts in time and perspective in ways that anticipate her later work; yet it only appeared posthumously as part of John Middleton Murry’s extended reinvention of Mansfield through the publication of her remaindered material, letters and journals.  

Mansfield’s posthumous reputation has been subject to ongoing reappraisal since the publication of Antony Alpers’ second biography in 1980 in particular, as well as the appearance of a series of ‘corrective’ editions of her work and writings which have effectively displaced Murry’s posthumous editions. A number of these works have facilitated the reappraisal of Mansfield’s writing, which has gained in momentum with rewritings of the modernist canon to include previously marginalised groups such as modernist women writers. The most significant of these works include Antony Alpers’ ‘definitive’ edition of The Stories (which actually omits some of the key texts that this thesis reinstates as central to Mansfield’s development as a professional writer); Vincent O’Sullivan and Margaret Scott’s edition of The Letters (of which the final volume has yet to appear); O’Sullivan’s editions of The Aloe and Poems; and the publication context for the short story: the magazine and journal. See Re-reading the Short Story, ed. Clare Hanson (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 2. See also Peter Keating, The Haunted Study: A Social Study of the English Novel 1875-1914 (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989) esp. pp. 40-2 for an account of early twentieth century short story publication.  

28 See Fullbrook, Katherine Mansfield, pp. 36-8, for an account of the story as a ‘comment on the power of entrenched imaginative forms to control the contents of consciousness [and] an attack on the final cruelty of such images as drugs for the minds of oppressed women’ (p. 37). The story displays a conflicted relationship with popular forms. Its central character scoffs slightly at the popular novel that she notices a girl on the tube is reading, but she subsequently constructs a popular narrative of her own in her fantasy of switching places with the customer she had encountered during her workday: she imagines her transformation from poor working girl to a member of the moneyed leisure class.
Scott’s re-edited Notebooks (which consciously resist the kind of unified approach that Murry previously took with the Journal and Scrapbook). That these editors are all New Zealanders is indicative of the ongoing reconstruction of Mansfield as a local writer, epitomised by Lydia Wevers’ seminal essay “The Sod Under My Feet”: Katherine Mansfield.

Mark Williams’ recent work has also aimed to interrogate Mansfield’s modernism in terms of her national identity. In addition, his essay “The Artificial and the Natural”: The Development of Katherine Mansfield’s Prose Style’ discusses her development of narrative technique in relation to both Wilde and Anton Chekhov. He argues that

[s]he developed her own distinctive voice not by simplifying and excluding but by assimilating different styles, influences, voices. She did not choose one option at the expense of others but synthesized the choices that were available to her. This ability to inhabit a style or manner without wholly committing herself to it, a feature of her personality as well as her work, indicates why she continues to elude her critics, interpreters and biographers.

The terms of his argument, then, are similar to my approach in tracing Mansfield’s development of voice; however, my argument locates her assimilation of different ‘styles, influences, voices’ specifically in relation to her publication environments.

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31 Williams, ‘Mansfield in Maoriland: biculturalism, agency and misreading’.

One of the most neglected of Mansfield’s ‘voices’ to date is that employed in her essays and reviews: this thesis devotes significant space to a discussion of her non-fiction works for *Rhythm* and the *Athenaeum* in Chapters Two and Four respectively. Clare Hanson’s selection of the *Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* remains the only alternative to Murry’s *Novels and Novelists*, which reprints (nearly) all of Mansfield’s reviews for the *Athenaeum*.³³ Hanson’s edition reprints the *Rhythm* essays and a selection of *Athenaeum* reviews (often in an abridged form). These reviews are due a critical reappraisal as Mansfield’s major contribution to early twentieth century letters, and would benefit from a new critical edition. Marysa Demoor’s *Their Fair Share*, which provides an overview of fifty years of the *Athenaeum*’s women and their contributions, describes Mansfield’s association with the journal in excessively simplistic and romantic terms, purely in terms of her relationship with Murry:

[Mansfield] devoted the larger part of the little time she had left to live to raising the quality of the journal which, she thought, would establish her husband’s renommée as an editor and a literary critic.³⁴

Hanson’s account of Mansfield’s career as reviewer at the *Athenaeum* is far more revealing:

While we must acknowledge the reservations she felt about formal literary criticism and the English upper-middle-class male values embodied in it, we must recognise too that her critical writings represent a genuine attempt to take on the literary establishment on its own terms.³⁵

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In addition, Hanson’s introduction to the *Critical Writings* has provided the most useful account to date of the professional nature of Mansfield’s relationship with John Middleton Murry.\(^{36}\) This thesis builds on these works by further reading Mansfield’s relationship with Murry alongside the other editorial and professional figures that played a role in the publication of her work and suggesting that she had actually begun to move away from Murry’s ideological influence even before *Rhythm* had issued its final number. Her ongoing departure from Murry’s ideals is traced throughout the remainder of her career.

My intention in this work is to show that Mansfield’s stories were the product of a complex and commercially-aware modernism. As a result, her career was marked both by her business acumen and desire for literary credibility. By offering a new interpretation of Mansfield’s stories at work within this particular modernist marketplace, the thesis attempts to counter the popular perception of her as a ‘tortured genius’, writing stories against the clock and entirely in isolation from any literary network, especially at the end of her career.\(^{37}\)

As such, this work continues that of such critics as W.H. New and Roger Robinson.\(^{38}\) Robinson’s collection of essays *Katherine Mansfield: In From the Margin* aims to renegotiate the peripheries to which Mansfield has been largely confined:

> she had remained the literary colonial who was never quite accepted in Bloomsbury, the woman author publishing suspiciously popular stories

\(^{36}\) Cherry Hankin’s introduction to her *Letters Between Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1991) also attempts to account for the nature of their relationship as two *writers*, though is presented in slightly idealised terms of ‘the mental companionship, the essential support of one writer for another’ (p. 6).

\(^{37}\) Andrew Gurr describes Mansfield’s late career as moving away from a limited engagement with the public to a complete withdrawal from these networks (including Murry) after the death of her brother, when she ‘gave up all public postures for the ideal of private honesty’, a simplistic representation that my thesis aims to counter. *Writers in Exile: The Creative Use of Home in Modern Literature* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981), p. 56.

on the fringes of a rather male Modernism. Her situation was on the margins, her roles subordinate – as the wife of John Middleton Murry (as her tombstone attests), as an imitator of Anton Chekhov, as the not-quit friend of Virginia Woolf, as the model for a character in Lawrence, as a devotee of George Gurdjieff.  

Although Mansfield herself continued to cultivate the romantic image of the isolated artist at times, this was merely a pose; in general she acknowledged the need for contact with wider literary networks:

I feel I must live alone alone alone – with artists only to come to the door. Every artist cuts off his ear & nails it on the outside of the door for the others to shout into.  

She continued actively to engage with a number of literary communities, while simultaneously expressing anxiety about the nature of her ties to such circles and gradually rejecting them in favour of the greater variety of sites for the publication of her work discussed in Chapter Five. This locates Mansfield within a series of publication contexts – the *New Age*, coterie publication, Bloomsbury, the *Athenaeum*, commercial publishing – and indicates her direct engagement with modernism as it developed throughout the 1910s and early 1920s in Britain. Mansfield’s career effectively ended with the publication – a year before her death – of *The Garden Party and Other Stories* in 1922, the *annus mirabilis* of literary modernism which saw the appearance of *Ulysses* (in book form), *The Waste Land* and *Jacob’s Room*.

Mansfield’s movement away from romanticised constructions of isolated artistic genius is evident throughout her career: the irony underpinning this, of course, is the reinstatement of this construction by Murry’s posthumous ‘editing’ of Mansfield – both

40 9 April 1920, *The Notebooks*, Vol. 2, p. 193. Citations from Mansfield’s published notebooks follow Scott’s lead and do not correct grammatical errors. Underlined words and phrases in quotations from the notebooks indicate Mansfield’s emphasis; this is in keeping with Scott’s practice.
her work and her public persona—which began by the end of 1923. However, it is not part of this project to examine in depth Murry’s role in the process of rewriting Katherine Mansfield: rather, the focus is on Mansfield as a living writer, actively engaged in the commercial literary world. This active engagement has been acknowledged before, as in Angela Smith’s comparative study of Mansfield and Woolf:

Both [Mansfield and Woolf] were part of the busy, pressured world of publishing, editing, reviewing and writing, but both were precipitated out of it at frequent intervals into silence and solitude.\(^{42}\)

My focus throughout is on this ‘busy pressured world’ rather than the withdrawal from it that Smith notes here: in fact, as Chapters Four and Five discuss, the period of Mansfield’s \textit{physical} removal from this world actually saw her most prolonged intellectual and commercial engagement with it. Virginia Woolf retrospectively described her own ‘retreat’ to private publication to Ethel Smyth in 1931:

\begin{quote}
publishers told me to write what they liked. I said no. I’ll publish myself and write what I like. Which I did, and for many years, owing to lack of organisation travellers etc. lost much money thereby.\(^{43}\)
\end{quote}

By contrast, Mansfield courted publicity to such an extent that by 1921 she had begun to welcome ‘contact with the public – even the feelings of being at the mercy of the public is somehow right.’\(^{44}\) In discussing Mansfield’s engagement with the modernist

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Angela Smith, \textit{Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 65.}
\footnote{To Dorothy Brett, 5 October 1921, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 4, p. 292. Woolf expressed uneasiness about Mansfield’s ‘commercialism’, writing in December 1920: ‘Everyone’s book is out – Katherine’s, Murry’s, Eliot’s. None have I read so far. I was happy to hear K. abused the other night. Now why? Partly some obscure feeling that she advertises herself; or Murry does it for her; & then how bad the}
\end{footnotes}
marketplace, her career can be perceived as more than a series of ‘publics of two’. Although these ‘publics of two’ punctuate her career – with Beatrice Hastings, Woolf and Murry in particular – they cannot be read in isolation from the wider circles with which she was associated. Both the ‘publics of two’ and the wider publics with which Mansfield engaged throughout her career suggest her fundamental need for someone to work with and against. These potentially antagonistic relationships will be detailed throughout the coming chapters.

As I have suggested, in order to understand the development of Mansfield’s modernist aesthetic, it is necessary to examine the publication contexts in which it was forged. This aspect of Mansfield’s work has been divorced from her formal development in previous readings of her technique. W.H. New’s Reading Mansfield and Metaphors of Form and Sydney Janet Kaplan’s Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction both provide compelling accounts of her development of a new and challenging aesthetic in fiction; New’s argument provides a useful overview of Mansfield’s manuscript practice in discussing the formal precision of her work; Kaplan locates Mansfield’s work historically in relation to Oscar Wilde’s symbolism and suggests that contemporary literary networks influenced her later work. Another strain of readings of Mansfield’s ‘modernism’ has tended to present her in comparative terms with her contemporaries, most frequently Virginia Woolf. However, neither of these approaches draws sufficient attention to the sites of publication which I argue shape Mansfield’s development of genre.

Athenaeum stories are, yet in my heart I must think her good since I’m glad to hear her abused’. The Diary of Virginia Woolf, 5 Volumes, ed. Anne Oliver Bell, Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth, 1977-1984), 12 December 1920, pp. 78-9.

45 The phrase is taken from Virginia Woolf’s famous summation of her relationship with Mansfield as ‘a public of two’. The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 1, 30 November 1918, p. 222.

46 Smith’s Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two focuses on the textual echoes between the two writers’ work, but does not address the publication of Prelude in detail.
A similar tendency can be identified in feminist and psychoanalytic readings of Mansfield’s work. Mary Burgan and Patricia Moran both offer useful paradigms for an understanding of Mansfield’s writing; Burgan in terms of the influence of illness on the tenor of her work, and Moran’s account of the professional and textual affinities between Mansfield and Woolf, with specific reference to their anxieties as female artists.47 Each of these interpretations is grounded primarily in psychoanalytic theory and focuses on Mansfield’s writing in gendered terms. Moran posits a reading of both writers’ use of imagery of childbirth, motherhood and food to discuss their perceptions of themselves as women writers, in terms similar to Susan Gubar’s reading of Mansfield.48 However, while Gubar traces a developing acceptance of motherhood and childbirth in Mansfield’s mature fiction, Moran argues for her continued anxiety of authority in specific relationship to this overtly feminised imagery. My reading is more in keeping with Moran’s representation of anxiety, but I recast this imagery as less necessarily focused on gender construction. Rather, I read Mansfield’s use of the imagery of pregnancy and childbirth as indicative of her development as an author within a competitive marketplace and as a figurative representation of her struggles to produce her work. This is in turn transmuted into an anxiety over the consumption of her work by a series of readers – editors, publishers and the reading public. The publication of Prelude provides a prime example, and is discussed at length in Chapter Three. Rather than tracing Mansfield’s development of a feminist aesthetic, then, I


argue for her growing sense of herself as ‘a writer first, and a woman after’ by focusing on her engagement with the business strategies of modernist literary publication.\textsuperscript{49}

As this should make clear, my argument is biographically and (more generally) historically and culturally structured, and focuses on Mansfield’s strategies of publication in terms of literary modernism. Each chapter devotes significant space to a discussion of how these important contexts can be seen at work in the writing itself, and my focus is therefore textual as well as historical. It owes a debt to the biographies of Mansfield by Antony Alpers and Claire Tomalin in particular, but emphasises the professionalisation of Mansfield’s work in a way that neither explores in depth. Both biographers acknowledge the relationship with Orage, for example, but neither pursues the implications of this. By reinstating the historical contexts of the production of Mansfield’s writing, this thesis opens up a new and illuminating space for interpreting her stories. In this context we can see that her work is characterised by its enactment of authorial anxiety and uncertainty within the modernist marketplace and in relation to the editorial and publication audiences to which she delivered her work. Mansfield’s ongoing engagement with a variety of publication contexts bears witness to an uneasy but necessary marriage of the literary and the commercial.

The thesis thus provides a new account of Mansfield’s career as a short story writer within the modernist marketplace, and traces her anxieties of authority and genre in this context. By the end of her career, she would increasingly express frustration with her work:

\begin{quote}
I am stuck beyond words – and again it seems to me that what I am doing has no form! I ought to finish my book of stories first and then when it’s gone really get down to my novel Karori.

Why I should be so passionately determined to disguise this I don’t quite know. But here I lie pretending, as Heaven knows how often I
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{49} To Murry, 3 December 1920, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 4, p. 133.
have before, to write. Supposing I were to give up the pretence & really
did try? Supposing I only wrote ½ a page in a day – it would be ½ a page to the good, and I would at least be training my mind to get into the habit of regular performance. As it is every day sees me further off my goal, and once I had this book finished I’m free to start the real one. And it’s a question of money. But my idea, even of the short story, has changed rather, lately.50

Just as Morrisson’s project discusses little magazine as studies of ‘unrealized hopes’, this thesis argues that Mansfield ultimately perceived her career as a disappointment, expressing her sense of disillusionment with what she described as her ‘birds bred in cages’.51 It traces the production of her work within the editorial and publication conditions that she regarded as restrictive throughout her career. I argue that these editorial and publication processes go to the heart of Katherine Mansfield’s writing and cultural identity, and that her fiction self-consciously dramatises these processes and the personal and cultural dilemmas which arise from them. The chapters that follow will negotiate the terms in which Katherine Mansfield established ‘a sort of authority’ within these contexts.52

Chapter One

‘Too sharply modelled’: Mansfield and the New Age 1910-1911

Katherine Mansfield died in January 1923 at G.I. Gurdjieff’s Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fontainebleau. One of her fellow guests at the Institute was her old friend and former editor A.R. Orage, in whose journal the New Age she made her professional debut in print in Britain. Some time after her death, Orage produced ‘Talks With Katherine Mansfield’, one of the few extant accounts of her final months. The essay was first published in November 1924, and details a series of conversations on literature that Orage supposedly had with Mansfield in the months before her death, and places her words in direct quotation marks.1 The article is of particular note because it outlines Orage’s account of the type of work that Mansfield intended to produce once she recovered from her latest bout of ill health. ‘Talks With Katherine Mansfield’ does two things of note, then: it literally constructs a voice for Mansfield by purporting to report her speech, and it constructs a version of her as a writer. In this way, it reflects in miniature the working relationship between Mansfield and Orage that will be established in this chapter.


K. Mansfield sent in by post a manuscript which, like every literary contribution […] was handed over to me. I thought it so clever that I

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asked Orage to write and ask her to come along to see us at the office. Reply: she was at Rottingdean, getting over a fever. I ran down for a day and hunted out from the mountain of balderdash, some of which she later printed in The Blue Review, all the sketches we published under the title ‘In a German Pension’. Some were still only fragments. I told her that I only wanted MSS. of that level. She thought her sentimental efforts better, in her favourite oath ‘balls better’.²

Hastings’ involvement with the New Age has often been undermined due mainly to the publication of and reaction to her memoir The Old New Age: Orage and Others in 1936 which stands in stark contrast to the sycophantic memoirs of Orage and the New Age that began to emerge after his death.³ However, her role in the day-to-day running of the New Age was considerable; between 1911 and 1914, Orage, J.M. Kennedy, A.E. Randall and Hastings wrote approximately one-third of the journal’s contents between them each week.⁴ Accordingly, this chapter will address Mansfield and the New Age, in terms of her working relationships with both Orage as editor and Hastings as literary editor throughout 1910 and 1911.⁵

In 1909, Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp registered in the Hotel Kreuzer in Bad Wörishofen under the name Käthe Beauchamp-Bowden, listing her occupation as Schriftstellerin. The name added the German Käthe and her newly-acquired married name of Bowden to her maiden name of Beauchamp, and was one in a string of pseudonyms with which she had been experimenting since her schooldays and early publications in Australia and New Zealand.⁶ She would publish prose under the names

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² Quoted in Stephen Gray, Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life (Johannesburg: Penguin, 2004), p. 545. The ‘balderdash’ published in the Blue Review possibly refers to ‘New Dresses’ and ‘The Little Girl’, which actually appeared in Rhythm in October 1912. Mansfield’s only contributions to the Blue Review were the ‘Epilogues’ (which recall the ‘Pension Sketches’) and the colonial realist story ‘Millie’ between May and July 1913.
⁵ Gray’s recent biography has presented Hastings’ involvement with the New Age in these terms.
⁶ Mansfield had married George Bowden, a tenor, on 2 March 1909, and left him the same day to join Garnet Trowell on tour with the Moody Manners light-opera company. Although they did not divorce
Matilda Berry, K.M., The Tiger and Lili Heron; friends and relatives would know her variously as Kass, Kassinska, Jones, and Tig. She would, of course, choose to publish primarily under the name Katherine Mansfield, a *nom de plume* on which she had decided much earlier while still in New Zealand, but by which she chose to live and make a living only after her Bavarian experiences.

On her arrival in Bavaria ‘Käthe Beauchamp-Bowden’ afforded her a degree of protection and respectability, allowing her to pass as a conventional married woman, as is reflected throughout the work she would eventually produce for the *New Age*. In ‘The Luft Bad’, for example, which appeared on 24 March 1910, the narrator concludes:

> The umbrellas are the saving grace of the Luft Bad. Now, when I go, I take my husband’s ‘storm gamp’ and sit in a corner, hiding behind it. Not that I am in the least ashamed - -

Here, the narrator self-consciously admits to hiding behind her husband’s umbrella (which might be figured in terms that are both phallic and protective) in order to conceal her embarrassment, just as Mansfield had registered at the spa under the name of Bowden.

More significant than the name she chooses is her description of herself as a *Schriftstellerin* (the German feminine form of ‘writer’). In 1906 Mansfield had resolved to ‘give all [her] time to writing’, and throughout 1907 and 1908 her work began to appear in a number of publications in New Zealand and Australia, usually under the name ‘K. Mansfield’. Her assertion of herself as a *Schriftstellerin* in 1909 until 1918, Mansfield never lived with Bowden for longer than a few weeks after her return from Bavaria in 1910.

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demonstrates the latest step in her development of a writing persona. As Claire Tomalin puts it: 'She had published nothing in her time in London, but the entry [‘Schriftstellerin’] reads like a bold prediction that now at last she is about to find her direction as a writer.' This ‘direction as a writer’ must be read in relation to different editors, and these editorial voices have a direct impact on Mansfield’s sense of authority over her work.

It was not until her return to London from Bavaria at the end of 1909 that Mansfield made a concerted effort to make ‘Katherine Mansfield’ a publishable entity, with the appearance of a number of stories and sketches in the New Age throughout 1910 and 1911, many of which were subsequently included (often slightly revised) in the collection In a German Pension at the end of 1911. It was her estranged husband, George Bowden, who suggested she should submit her work to the New Age. The journal as a rule did not pay contributors, and Mansfield remained reliant upon the allowance provided by her father, which was set at £100 per annum in 1912. If she was to ‘give all [her] time to writing’, she was as yet unable to make a living by it.

Her working relationship with the New Age began in February 1910 with the publication of ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’. This chapter opens with a reading of the story as an allegory of Mansfield’s authorial uncertainty at the beginning of her career, specifically in terms of her renegotiation of Chekhov’s work (in part a Bloomian ‘anxiety of influence’), but more generally in terms of her attempted development of the short story form. This uncertainty continues to manifest itself throughout her work for the New Age in her increasing anxieties about its publication and reception, particularly in relation to her editors, Orage and Hastings. These two relationships

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9 Tomalin, Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life, p. 69.
10 Alpers, The Life, p. 149. Her monthly allowance in 1908 was £8 6s 8d (p.71). By 1920, this allowance had been raised to £300 per annum. All four Beauchamp daughters received this amount (p. 335).
11 The New Age work culminated in the publication of her first collection, In a German Pension in December 1911, for which Mansfield received an advance of £15. Alpers, The Life, p. 129.
provide the main focus for the chapter, and locate Mansfield within the context of the New Age, which ultimately proves a problematic site for her development of a modernist aesthetic in her short fiction.

‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’ and the short story

Mansfield’s early work must be located in two related but ultimately conflicting contexts. The first of these is the developing generic context of the modernist short story, which gained particular prominence throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, with some commentators going so far as to deem it the defining genre of modernism. Second, and more specific, is the historical context of the political and cultural weekly the New Age for which Mansfield regularly wrote throughout 1910 and 1911. To some extent, the two contexts would appear to complement one another. The short story lends itself to journal publication, and critics such as Clare Hanson have drawn direct links between the development of the short story form and that of the popular press. That said, it was not merely the popular press that benefited from the profitability of the short story, and Antony Alpers has noted the preponderance of literary journals that published short fiction during the first decade of the twentieth century. Literary journals and little magazines played an important role in the publication and dissemination of modernist literature and philosophies, from short-lived efforts such as Wyndham Lewis’ Blast to more resilient vehicles such as the Chicago-based Little Review (which began serialisation of Ulysses in 1918 and lasted until the

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12 See Hanson, Short Stories and Short Fictions, p. 57; Head, The Modernist Short Story, p. 1.
13 Hanson, Short Stories and Short Fictions, p. 10. She has argued elsewhere that magazine publication ultimately provided a ‘potentially disabling publishing context’ for the short story, a context that has resulted in the persistent reading of the form as a somewhat devalued, ‘popular’ one. Re-reading the Short Story, ed. Hanson, p. 2.
14 Alpers, The Life, p. 81. Nevertheless, Alpers also acknowledges that the novel continued to be privileged, and even now the short story has not entirely escaped its reputation as what Hanson terms a ‘novelist’s by-product’. Hanson, Short Stories and Short Fictions, p. 9.
censors intervened in 1920). The *New Age*’s place within this tradition continues to be debated, and will be addressed presently; for now, it is necessary to focus on the ways in which Mansfield’s first story for the journal places her in relation to developing renegotiations of the short story form, with specific reference to Chekhov.\(^5\)

The short story that Mansfield could claim as her literary heritage was a young form. Although critics such as Hanson suggest that the form’s antecedents may be traced as far back as Chaucer and Boccaccio, the immediate origins of modernist formal experimentations are most often located in symbolist short fiction of the 1880s.\(^6\) Throughout the early years of the twentieth century a more traditionally ‘plotted’ story (as practiced by Kipling and Wells, for example) remained a popular form, but one with which Mansfield was particularly at odds as Antony Alpers suggests.\(^7\) The material she had published before 1910 in Australian and New Zealand papers consisted primarily of symbolist vignettes. Two early stories, ‘The Education of Audrey’ and ‘The Tiredness of Rosabel’ (both written in 1908, but the latter first published posthumously in 1924), display early evidence of the kinds of formal disruption usually associated with Mansfield’s later work.\(^8\) ‘The Tiredness of Rosabel’ is by far the most assured of her pre-*New Age* material, and its failure to find a publisher is telling evidence of Alpers’ assertion that: ‘There was no place for what Kass Beauchamp wished to do. No place, either, for what young Joyce had been up to, over in Dublin.’\(^9\)

At the time of Mansfield’s earliest appearances in the *New Age*, *Dubliners* was still four

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\(^5\) See Joanna Woods, *The Russian World of Katherine Mansfield* (Auckland: Penguin, 2001) for a discussion of Mansfield’s engagement with Russian literature and culture throughout her life. Chekhov is just one of a number of writers of short fiction who may be said to have influenced Mansfield’s formal development.

\(^6\) Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions* p. 7. See Kaplan’s *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* for a compelling account of the significance of Oscar Wilde in Mansfield’s early work.

\(^7\) Alpers, *The Life*, p. 81.

\(^8\) ‘The Tiredness of Rosabel’ first appeared in the New York paper *Collier’s Weekly* in February 1924; the first British publication was in *Something Childish and Other Stories*, published in August 1924. ‘The Education of Audrey’ appeared in the *Evening Post*, Wellington on 30 January 1909; the first British publication was in *The Stories*, ed. Alpers.

years from publication, and it is apparent that there was no established site for publication of the kinds of material with which Joyce and Mansfield were experimenting. Accordingly, much of the material that appeared in the *New Age* at this time reflects Mansfield's awareness of the possibilities afforded by experimentation with a variety of short forms. Her *New Age* work falls into a number of distinct categories: sketches, stories, poems, dialogues, travel narratives and letters to the editor. Indeed, this sheer variety of form, in addition to being typical of journals in general, is testament to Mansfield's search for a new mode of writing in which to express herself.

Her stories suggest an awareness of novelty of form through their employment of childbirth imagery, a fairly common symbolic trope for the creative process. Four of the five stories that she saw published in the *New Age* between 1910 and 1911 – 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired', 'At “Lehmann’s”', 'Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding' and 'A Birthday' – revolve around imagery of childbirth and motherhood (or fatherhood, in the case of 'A Birthday'). The recurrence of this imagery has been attributed to Mansfield's experiences in Bavaria in 1909, and is often read in terms of her engagement with a form of prototypical feminist discourse under the tutelage of Beatrice Hastings at the *New Age*. Hastings' scorn at the notion that 'motherhood was an ideal that feminists should encourage or pursue' is directly traceable in Mansfield's

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20 Joyce first published three of these stories – 'The Sisters', 'Eveline' and 'After the Race' – in *The Irish Homestead* in 1904.
23 Burgan, *Illness, Gender and Writing*, pp. 68-81. It cannot be ascertained whether or not she was pregnant before her marriage to Bowden, and (as Alpers notes) the lack of a stillbirth record in Wörishofen suggests that it is more likely that she became pregnant after she left Bowden and joined Trowell on tour. A miscarriage would not have been recorded, whereas a stillbirth would have required documentation. Alpers, *The Life*, p. 98.
'Frau Fischer', as the narrator claims to find 'child-bearing the most ignominious of all professions.' However, there is more to Mansfield's presentation of troubled labours and distressed mothers than such political commentary: rather, this imagery can be interpreted as a self-conscious motif used to dramatise her sense of authority in the composition of this work. The link between the acts of giving birth and of writing is made explicit in 'At “Lehmann’s”' (July 1910) in the figure of Hans who claims that his fingernails 'were stained from birth because his mother had always got so inky doing the accounts' and it is in these terms that this recurring imagery should be read. The most interesting example is that of the Child in 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' (February 1910), who is simultaneously an illegitimate child and a surrogate mother. Her illegitimacy can be read as indicative of a sense of anxiety of origins that reflects an awareness of the newness and cultural marginality of the short story form, and hence Mansfield's tentative location within the genre.

More specifically, the Child's illegitimacy may be read as an indirect allusion to the story's relationship to the work of Anton Chekhov. Although no credit was given to him when 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' first appeared in the New Age on 24 February 1910, it is now accepted that the story owes a debt to his 'Spat Khochetsia' (variously translated as 'Sleepy' and 'Sleepyhead'). At best, Mansfield's version has been regarded as a 'free translation', at worst, an act of outright plagiarism. However, neither term adequately accounts for the relationship between the two since both focus

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26 The anxiety of origins also applies to Mansfield's sense of fractured New Zealand identity, which Alpers has suggested should be read alongside Mansfield's chosen form as another de-stabilising factor in her career (Alpers, The Life, pp. 80-1). Frank O'Connor has famously argued that the short story flourishes in marginal cultures, suggesting it is favoured by what he calls 'submerged population groups'. O'Connor, The Lonely Voice, p. 18.
primarily on plot similarities. W.H. New argues convincingly that ‘[t]his critical foregrounding of narrative [...] emphasizes precisely the compositional feature that Mansfield herself dismissed as peripheral to the short story form.’ Moreover, Mansfield’s borrowing of Chekhov’s plot but attempted development of her own technique within this framework might be symptomatic of the preference for plotted stories for magazine and journal publication at the beginning of the twentieth century: J.B. Pinker expressed the difficulties of placing Violet Hunt’s stories in 1908, telling her that ‘most of the magazines exact something more or less conventional in plot and treatment.’

One of the most significant changes Mansfield makes to the story is to do away with the flashback scenes that are central to Chekhov’s version: these temporal shifts function in part as a dream narrative, detailing the death of Varka’s father and her subsequent entrance into servitude. By contrast, Mansfield limits the action to a single day, eliminating the Child’s parents from the narrative (apart from one reference to her mother made by the Frau), and thereby further emphasising her ambiguous derivation. Chekhov’s protagonist spends the first third or so of the narrative drifting in and out of consciousness before meeting with a rude awakening; she does not return to her dream after murdering her charge, but rather ‘sleeps as soundly as the dead child’. Mansfield’s story opens with (or rather in) the Child’s dream from which she is abruptly awakened. Throughout the story, she repeatedly attempts to return to this

28 New, Reading Mansfield and Metaphors of Form, p. 33.
29 Cited in Morrisson, The Public Face of Modernism, p. 44.
30 Such compression of time was typical of Mansfield's work, especially the later stories, for example 'At the Bay' and 'The Garden-Party'.
31 Anton Chekhov, 'Sleepyhead', The Black Monk, trans. R.E.C. Long (London: Duckworth & Co., 1903), pp. 179-88 (p. 188). As Alpers notes, it is certainly conceivable that Mansfield could have read this collection in the reading room of the General Assembly Library in Wellington after her return there from London; although there is no record of her actually borrowing the edition, the library held a copy in 1907. Alpers, The Life, p. 50.
dream state, finally achieving it after the murder of the baby. Thus, Mansfield uses the
dream to frame the story.

Mansfield’s choice to recast Chekhov’s thirteen-year-old ‘Varka’ as the
anonymous ‘Child’ in part establishes the character as a type that can be read as a
symbol of mistreated workers in general, but more importantly it highlights an implicit
contrast between the Child and the three named children – Anton, Hans and Lena – to
whom she acts as caregiver. In an oblique nod to the author of her source text,
Mansfield names one of these children Anton. The nameless Child is subordinate to
Anton and his siblings, just as Mansfield is an unknown author aiming to make a name
for herself in relation to a pioneering exponent of her chosen form.

It is in the imagery of children and childbirth that Mansfield alters the detail of
Chekhov’s story to the most significant effect. Chekhov’s Varka is nursemaid to one
baby; Mansfield’s Child must take responsibility for three young children as well as
one baby, and learns that she will soon become caregiver to another, as the Frau is
pregnant yet again. It is not the Frau’s actual pregnancy that is of prime concern, but
rather the Child’s surrogate pregnancy. Chekhov’s Varka has a vision of herself
shrinking: ‘it seems that her face is sapless and petrified, and that her head has
shrivelled up to the size of a pinhead’. By contrast, Mansfield depicts the Child as a
victim of post-natal drudgery and motherhood, who envisions people and objects
swelling before her eyes, further reinforcing her surrogate pregnancy. The Man and
Frau ‘seemed to swell to an immense size as she watched them, and then become

32 In her PhD thesis, Jean Beth Widen suggests that ‘the tale carries a strong moral about the effects of
social and economic victimization [which] clearly meets Orage’s criteria for the social and didactic
function of literature’. She argues that ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’ ‘contains an original political
content designed to fit the editorial policy of The New Age’. However, this reading is conjectural, since
‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’ was the first story that Mansfield submitted for consideration, although it is
possible that she may have made revisions to suit Orage after that submission. There is no way of
ascertaining the veracity of this claim; accordingly, it will have no bearing on my argument. Widen,
34 Prelude revisits this imagery of swelling, as I will show in Chapter Three.
smaller than dolls, with little voices that seemed to come from outside the window,' and 'the wet clothes flapped in her face as she pegged them: danced and jigged on the line, bulged out and twisted.' Unlike Varka, the Child has a vision of herself expanding in terms that directly invoke a surrogate pregnancy: 'As she walked up and down she saw her great big shadow on the wall, like a grown-up person with a grown-up baby. Whatever would it look like when she carried two babies so!' ('Child', p. 397). It is shortly after this realisation that she murders the baby.

'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' indicates Mansfield's authorial uncertainty in her failure to write something new, independent of external forces. She presents the Child as the failed 'author' of her own narrative (her dream) and of other (unsourced) narratives. The Child repeatedly attempts to tell stories but fails to find a receptive audience. At one point she tells the Man:

Some babies get their teeth without you knowing it [...] and some take on in this way all the time. I once heard of a baby that died, and they found all its teeth in its stomach ('Child', p. 396).

The Man does not take any notice of the Child's story, however, and responds by telling her of his wife's pregnancy. The Child's story-telling takes on a deeper significance a little later when she tries to recall the source of a story that she has heard:

she remembered having heard of a child who had once played for a whole day in just such a meadow with real sausage and beer for her dinner – and not a little bit of tiredness. Who had told her that story? She could not remember, and yet it was so plain ('Child', p. 397).

In this case, the Child acknowledges that her story comes from an outside source but cannot identify it. Similarly, Mansfield fails to acknowledge her story's relationship to

35 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired', p. 397. All subsequent references are to the New Age edition and are cited parenthetically in the text, abbreviated as 'Child'.
‘Spat Khochetsia’, although the Child’s struggle to recall where she originally heard her story might be seen to signal Mansfield’s awareness that her own story also originated elsewhere.

The Child eventually succeeds in narrating a story of her own: it is in an established form, and she shapes it as a traditional fairy-tale, opening with the words ‘Once upon a time there was a little white road –’ (‘Child’, p. 397). She does not need to question its source, as the form in which she narrates it does not require textual location of this sort. The Child can claim her own story, and frames it in a conventional form, whereas Mansfield aims to write a story of her own, within a less established model. Her recourse to Chekhov’s story in this context indicates her anxiety of genre, the desire to write something new but the impossibility as yet of doing so. The framework within which the Child works – the fairy-tale – is a recognized one, but the contents – the dream – are more fluid. Similarly Mansfield’s story is an ‘old’ one if read only in terms of plot (Chekhov’s), but her technique is different, particularly in the introduction of the Child’s dream as a framing device.

The Child looks most often to the baby as a potential audience and twice attempts to tell her charge of the unfinished dream with which the story had opened:

She was just beginning to walk along a little white road with tall black trees on either side, a little road that led to nowhere, and where nobody walked at all, when a hand gripped her shoulder, shook her, slapped her ear (‘Child’, p. 396).

The Child attempts to narrate her story on three occasions, and twice fails. She can only gain the authority to complete her story by silencing the baby. In the New Age version the murder scene is clearly posited as an act of silencing. As the Child tries to calm the screaming baby, she eventually succeeds: ‘Softer the cries – faint – then
Moreover, the Child’s violent act of silencing is the only way in which she can finish her own story; it is only through an act of violence that she can effect a conclusion to the plot and open a sense of textual space for her own, more loosely-constructed dream narrative, from which the fairy-tale framing device is now eliminated:

She heaved a long sigh, then fell back on to the floor and was walking along a little white road with tall black trees on either side, a little road that led to nowhere, and where nobody walked at all – nobody at all (‘Child’, p. 398).

Although the detail of this final paragraph mirrors that of the opening paragraph almost exactly, there is a clear note of closure that was absent from the first account of the Child’s dream. No hand grips her shoulder to interrupt her dream on this occasion; the repetition of the phrase ‘nobody at all’ implies that even the Child is absent at the story’s conclusion. She ends in oblivion, in a non-existent state between waking and sleeping, between presence and absence, and ultimately negates her own identity. Her act of murder is not solely an act of symbolic matricide but one of suicide, since she herself was the target of a similar attack by her own mother. In killing the baby, then, the Child not only gains the opportunity to sleep, but actually completes the job her own mother had begun years before, and commits symbolic suicide.

The Child’s successful production of her narrative begins in an established form but concludes with her self-effacement. Similarly, Mansfield’s use of Chekhov’s story means that her aim to create an original form is compromised, and her authority can only ever be partial. The textual variances between the two stories indicate Mansfield’s success in renegotiating ‘Spat Khochetsia’, and the inclusion of the framing dream

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36 This explicit equation of smothering with silencing is absent in the version that was included in the collection In a German Pension.
37 She’s the free-born one – daughter of the waitress at the railway station. They found her mother trying to squeeze her head in the wash-hand jug, and the child’s half-silly’. ‘Child’, p. 397.
narrative in particular affords her the opportunity to shift the narrative *inwards* to the Child’s perspective. In this way, the final section may actually be read as anticipating a more positive authorial erasure in her development of a narrative voice detailed in Chapter Three, culminating in *Prelude*; her other stories for the *New Age* often employ a similar rudimentary version of the interior monologue.\(^{38}\) Nevertheless, it is clear that the story’s conclusion with the symbolic death of the Child in part mirrors Mansfield’s own self-silencing in her dependence upon the work of another writer. This in turn suggests her problematic relationship with her chosen genre: her ambition for formal innovation, and her sense of the difficulties of achieving this.

In the figure of the Child, Mansfield presents an image of unstable authority, since she can only narrate her dream by killing the baby in an act of symbolic effacement. However, the baby also functions as an *audience* for the Child’s story, and the Child’s violent act towards this audience might be read in terms of Mansfield’s anxiety about the reception of her work. Such concerns about the reception of her work are intimately linked to its publication and in particular to her developing relationships with her immediate readers, A.R. Orage and Beatrice Hastings as *New Age* editors and it can be argued that these authorial and editorial anxieties are played out in her work at the *New Age*.

**A.R. Orage and the *New Age***

Saralyn R. Daly has suggested that the failure to acknowledge Chekhov on the initial publication of ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’ might actually have been an editorial decision on the part of A.R. Orage.\(^{39}\) Clearly, this is conjectural, and casts Mansfield in a better light than other readings have, though it does not account for the failure to

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\(^{38}\) See, for example, ‘A Birthday’ which attempts to represent Andreas Binzer’s account of his feelings while awaiting the birth of his third child.

source the story in subsequent reprints (especially in the collection *In a German Pension* in 1911, which was the only occasion on which the story was reprinted in her lifetime). Nevertheless, there are other aspects that Daly does not acknowledge that might add further credence to an argument for Orage's role in the omission of Chekhov's name. Chekhov was certainly known to Orage and his readers. Arnold Bennett had discussed his work in the *New Age* early in 1909. Throughout 1910 and 1912 the journal published a total of four translations of his stories, in addition to Mansfield's story. This might have provided sufficient grounds to presume that readers of the journal had prior knowledge of the story in question, which had been translated in 1903 in the collection *The Black Monk*. Of all the Russian writers in vogue during the Edwardian era, Chekhov was the only one that Orage professed any appreciation for, which might suggest that he was likely to have been familiar with the story's origins and would not have been fooled by Mansfield passing the story off as entirely her own invention. In the end, there is no way of ascertaining whether or not Orage might have been responsible for the suppression of Chekhov's name when 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' was published. There is a considerably stronger case to be made for his influence on the work Mansfield produced after the publication of 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired', in terms of both its material presentation and content.

By the time Mansfield began contributing to the *New Age* in 1910, the journal had gained a reputation for itself as a leading political and cultural weekly.

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42 Exact figures for the circulation of the *New Age* cannot be established. Stephen Gray has recently claimed that the journal 'never surpassed a circulation of more than 22,000' (Beatrice Hastings: *A Literary Life*, p. 151). While Gray provides no source for this figure, it would appear to be drawn from a *New Age* editorial in November 1908 ('To Our Readers', *New Age* 4.5 (26 November 1908), p. 81). However, it is more likely that the journal's circulation averaged at a few thousand copies per week. In the only book-length study of the *New Age*, Wallace Martin offers a comparative account of the probable circulation of five political weeklies (the *Spectator*, the *Nation*, the *Saturday Review*, the *New Statesman*...
Established in 1894 as a Christian liberal journal, it was not until 1907 that Orage and Holbrook Jackson (as co-editors) bought it out, with Orage finally taking over as sole editor in January 1908 (a position he would hold until his departure from the journal in 1922) and re-fashioning the New Age into ‘An Independent Socialist Review of Politics, Literature and Art’. In the intervening two years before Mansfield’s association with the journal began, Orage steered the New Age to ‘a reputation as an independent forum open to all intelligent opinion’ giving voice to debate among some of the best-known social commentators of the early twentieth century.

Many accounts of Orage’s editorship of the New Age and his work at the New English Weekly in the 1930s focus on his open-minded ‘editorial catholicity’, and he is credited with having launched the careers of a number of fledgling writers. The New Age was the first to publish Mansfield, Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis in Britain, while the New English Weekly has the distinction of Dylan Thomas’s first publication, ‘And Death Shall Have No Dominion’ in May 1933. In the course of her two years at the New Age, Mansfield would come to question the degree of this ‘open-mindedness’ as it related to her fiction, and although a decade later she was to write to Orage and acknowledge the debt she owed him in her development as a writer, her gratitude was expressed in awkward terms:

and the New Age) and concludes that the circulation of the New Age was most likely the smallest of the five, and was certainly less than that of the Nation and the Saturday Review, both of which had an average circulation of over 3,000 between 1907 and 1922. According to Martin, ‘there is no reason to suspect that any political weekly published between 1907 and 1922 had a circulation greater than that of The Spectator – which declined from 22,000 in 1903 to 13,500 in 1922’. The New Age Under Orage, p. 10.

43 It is worth noting that the politics of the journal were constantly evolving, so that the New Age of 1907 is very different to that of 1922. When Orage began his editorship of the journal, he was simultaneously interested in the writings of Nietzsche and the Labour Party movement; by the 1920s, however, a gradual shift to the right is evident in the New Age’s editorial policies and in Orage’s own writing, as Gary Taylor discusses in Orage and the New Age (Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University Press, 2000), p. 26; p. 124.

44 Martin, The New Age Under Orage, p. 26. It would require more space than is here available to detail the full history of the journal from 1907 to 1922; such a history can be found in Martin’s study of the journal.

I want to tell you how sensible I am of your wonderful unfailing kindness to me in the ‘old days.’ And to thank you for all you let me learn from you. I am still – more shame to me – very low down in the school. But you taught me to write, you taught me to think; you showed me what there was to be done and what not to do.

My dear Orage, I cannot tell you how often I call to mind your conversation or how often, in writing, I remember my master. Does that sound impertinent? Forgive me if it does.46

At a very basic level, the letter re-establishes the master/student binary that was central to Mansfield’s working relationship with Orage between 1910 and 1911. The first paragraph presents Mansfield as a subordinate who is privileged to have learned from Orage, and casts her in the passive role: ‘you taught me to write, you taught me to think’. Mansfield is the object of these clauses, Orage the subject. At the same time, the first paragraph’s location in the ‘old days’ suggests this relationship must now only exist in the past, and most of the verbs associated with Orage in this paragraph are in the past tense.

The second paragraph would appear to corroborate this as it shifts to the present tense and casts Mansfield as actively engaged in writing (with the present participle emphasised), while Orage is explicitly invoked as a ‘memory’. In this way, the letter (and the very act of its composition) apparently attempt to signal Mansfield’s current independence of this memory. However, it simultaneously reinstates the very master/student binary of which she claims now to be free. In hindsight, it could be said that Mansfield intuited the complexity of her professional relationship with Orage, and could acknowledge his influence on her development as a writer. Between 1910 and 1911, however, she reacted somewhat differently to this influence. An exploration of Orage’s ideological principles and policies as editor of the *New Age* provides a context for Mansfield’s perceived loss of agency and authority in her work for the journal.

Orage’s role in the material presentation of the work that appeared in the *New Age* varied. S.G. Hobson has claimed that he employed a policy that respected the fact that ‘established writers hate to have their “copy” meddled with’ and would allow articles to run over length rather than cut them. He manufactured debates, as in 1908 when a dispute between Arnold Bennett, G.K. Chesterton, H.G. Wells and Hilaire Belloc ran for several months; Orage prolonged the dispute by encouraging each of the ‘combatants’ to reply and by providing them with advance proofs of each of the latest articles to better facilitate provocative responses. Accounts of his engagement with the work of less established and assured writers, by contrast, tend to focus on the instructional nature of his influence, as in Mansfield’s 1921 letter or Ezra Pound’s account of his influence on the economist C.H. Douglas: ‘Orage taught him to write.’

Wallace Martin has suggested that the majority of his mentoring was of writers of ‘expository prose’ in a ‘sustained effort to raise weekly journalism to the level of literature.’ In general, the majority of material appearing under Orage’s editorship in the *New Age* between January 1910 and the end of 1911 was expository prose covering both politics and the arts, much of which appeared in recurring columns: in Stephen Gray’s terms, ‘the point was the prose, with poems as addenda.’

The two most important political columns were ‘Notes of the Week’ (written by Orage himself), a current affairs column, and ‘Foreign Affairs’ by S. Verdad (J.M.  

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48 For an outline of the details of this debate, see Martin, *The New Age Under Orage*, p. 35.

49 From a 1959 interview with Pound, quoted in Martin, *The New Age Under Orage*, p. 279. Gary Taylor notes that ‘it has been argued that it was only under Orage’s guidance that the ideas of Douglas were presented in a form that could be understood’ (*Orage and the New Age*, p. 106). Taylor’s study demonstrates a recent shift in emphasis in Orage criticism which suggests the degree to which he might have manipulated work that appeared in the *New Age*. This is of most significance in the case of the book *National Guilds: An Inquiry into the Wage System* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1914). Despite the fact that it was the product of what Taylor deems ‘a group of thinkers’, the book was published only under Orage’s name as editor without any mention of the other major contributor, S.G. Hobson (p. 59). Orage further stamped his claim on *National Guilds* by writing an unauthorised preface to the collection.


Kennedy), both of which appeared weekly. A fair amount of the journal’s literary space was devoted to criticism and reviews. The occasional literary supplements (a total of thirteen between 1910 and 1912) consisted primarily of reviews; once this supplement was discontinued in 1912, these reviews were incorporated into the main body of the journal. The other arts were also well covered: Ashley Dukes’ theatre column (which was discontinued in May 1911) and Huntly Carter’s long-running art column (as well as contributions from Walter Sickert on art and in the form of sketches and etchings) were all highly regarded, and Ezra Pound was the journal’s music critic for a number of years. The journal’s interest in the visual arts increased, with a regular art supplement replacing the literary supplement. Although the New Age purported to be ‘An Independent Socialist Review of Politics, Literature and Art’, its most sustained engagement with contemporary literary developments tended to be in theoretical rather than practical terms, and the journal’s debates about modernism are generally more memorable than the fiction and poetry published: therein Pound and T.E. Hulme, for example, first began to establish the terms of Imagism and Vorticism. Nevertheless, Orage expressed what Ann L. Ardis calls a ‘respectful hostility – but hostility nonetheless – toward Pound in particular and the modernist avant-garde more generally’.\(^\text{52}\) This is not to say that the New Age was devoid of poetry and fiction of merit: Ruth Pitter and Harold Monro contributed verse on a regular basis, Pound first published ‘The Seafarer’ in the New Age in 1911, and Beatrice Hastings contributed sketches, short stories and poetry over the years of her association with the journal, as well as three serialised novels and a huge amount of journalism.

On the whole, Orage’s commitment to ‘rais[ing] weekly journalism to the level of literature’ indicates a blurring of boundaries between the two in keeping with what

Ardis identifies as the journal’s ‘refusal to separate the aesthetic from the political sphere’. In Mansfield’s work, this blurring of boundaries is most evident in her two travel narratives, ‘The Journey to Bruges’ and ‘Being a Truthful Adventure’, two of the last major contributions she wrote for the journal (in August and September 1911). ‘The Journey to Bruges’ opens *in medias res* (as do many of Mansfield’s stories) and recounts the various stages of the narrator’s journey to Bruges, beginning with the train journey from London to Dover, and then a ferry to France, and finally another train to Bruges. This apparent linearity is briefly disrupted in the narrator’s account of the sea journey:

In the shortest sea voyage there is no sense of time. You have been down in the cabin for hours or days or years. Nobody knows or cares. You know all the people to the point of indifference. You do not believe in dry land anymore – you are caught in the pendulum itself, and left there, idly swinging.

The dislocation of both time and space (captured in the image of the pendulum) echoes a similar scene in E.M. Forster’s *Howards End* (1910) in which Margaret Schlegel experiences a sense of displacement during a car journey: ‘She looked at the scenery. It heaved and merged like porridge. Presently it converged. They had arrived.’ In this way, ‘The Journey to Bruges’ utilises stylistic devices that are more often identifiable in Mansfield’s later work. At the same time, it is framed within a straightforward travel narrative, and the journey itself is presented as a linear progression from London to

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54 ‘These two travel pieces may be read as semi-fictionalised accounts of Mansfield’s own journey to Bruges in August 1911; in September she wrote to Edna Smith that ‘The people hurt me all the time – They ruined everything. They sprawled over everything – & stayed and remarked and would not let me be’. To Edna Smith, September 1911, *The Letters*, Vol. I, p. 107.
Bruges. The narrator’s arrival in Bruges concludes the narrative, setting the scene for ‘Being a Truthful Adventure’, which continues the story, and is much more static. The narrator’s journey to Bruges is complete and she now travels around the city.

This second travelogue is more straightforward than ‘The Journey to Bruges’. It does not feature the same disruptions in time, and makes explicit its specific location within a recognisable discourse of travel narratives, opening with a quote from the narrator’s guidebook:

“The little town lies spread before the gaze of the eager traveller like a faded tapestry threaded with the silver of its canals, made musical by the great chiming belfry. Life is long since asleep in Bruges; fantastic dreams alone breathe over tower and mediaeval house front, enchanting the eye, inspiring the soul and filling the mind with the great beauty of contemplation.”

During the course of her narrative Mansfield’s narrator increasingly challenges and disrupts this discourse. The narrator’s ‘truthful adventure’ claims a degree of authenticity that is not in keeping with the presentation of Bruges in the pages of the guidebook, and by the end of her account, it is evident that her actual experience of the city deviates dramatically from the narrative established within the guidebook. It is Betty Sinclair (the narrator’s childhood friend) who eschews the empty rhetoric of travel writing at the conclusion of the narrative. The narrative almost comes full circle with this final reference to the guidebook at its conclusion, but the narrator’s rejection of it is complete and she ends the narrative ‘shaking [her] head at the familiar guide book emerging from Guy’s pocket.”

Betty’s language is doubly borrowed from the guidebook and from her husband, who is presented as its keeper. By contrast, the narrator has subverted this discourse in

58 Ibid. p. 452.
her attempt to construct an alternative travelogue of her own. Both ‘The Journey to Bruges’ and ‘Being a Truthful Adventure’ may be seen as the direct product of her apprenticeship at the *New Age*, and in them she successfully achieves the disruption of generic expectations within an established form to generate a different kind of travel narrative. In this sense, the two travelogues provide an example of Mansfield’s active engagement with Orage’s editorial ideology of renegotiating the relationship between journalism and literature. However, her other work for the *New Age* was not necessarily written within such an easily identifiable genre, and was often given shape primarily by *external* formal markers. This is particularly true in the case of ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ discussed at the end of this chapter, but it is also possible to trace such evidence in the ‘marketing’ of her earlier ‘Pension Sketches’.

**‘Pension Sketches’**

The ‘Pension Sketches’ differ from Mansfield’s *New Age* stories primarily in terms of characterisation and narrative voice. Her ‘Pension Sketches’ rely on types rather than the more substantial characters of the stories: the shifting perspectives of the stories are replaced with a first-person narrator’s sarcastic observations of a series of scenes of Pension life. In total, four of these were published under the title ‘Pension Sketches’ between March 1910 and June 1911.\(^{59}\) ‘The Luft Bad’ shares a similar tone and setting; on its initial publication ‘Germans at Meat’ featured a third-person narrator, but was

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\(^{59}\) ‘Pension Sketches I. – The Baron’, *New Age*, 6.19 (10 March 1910), 444; ‘Pension Sketches: The Sister of the Baroness’, *New Age*, 7.14 (4 August 1910), 323-4; ‘Pension Sketches III. Frau Fischer’, *New Age*, 7.16 (18 August 1910), 366; ‘Pension Sketches: The Modern Soul’, *New Age*, 9.8 (22 June 1911), 183-6. The inconsistency of these titles will be discussed later in this chapter. Subsequent references to these sketches will exclude the phrase ‘Pension Sketches’ from their titles, and the phrase is similarly omitted in the bibliography.
recast in the first person for the publication of *In a German Pension* in December 1911. However, neither of these was published under the title ‘Pension Sketches’.

There is an inherent tension in the presentation of these ‘Pension Sketches’ in the *New Age*. On the one hand, their delineation as ‘sketches’ identifies their formal instability, implying they are in an unfinished state. The endings of the sketches are often forced, as in ‘The Sister of the Baroness’, which concludes with a self-consciously theatrical ‘Tableau grandissimo!’ In this way, the narrator attempts to put a shape on her observations, forcing them to a conclusion when, by their very nature as ‘slices-of-life’, they should be open-ended. Within the sketches there is tension between their ‘transitory’ nature and the textual constraints of story-telling. This is further compounded when they are grouped together in the *New Age* and presented as the ‘Pension Sketches’, which implies something akin to a serialised format. The foregrounding of the ‘Pension’ in this phrase serves as a focal point and emphasises the points of reference between the sketches; this counters the narrator’s (already problematic) attempts at giving these narratives a sense of closure. On the one hand, then, the ‘sketches’ should resist a unified reading; on the other, the title ‘Pension Sketches’ invites one. Had the sketches been titled ‘Sketches from a German Pension’, for example, the effect would have been different: placing the emphasis on the form these sketches took (rather than the focal point of the Pension around which they revolve) would be more in keeping with the foreign correspondence that appeared throughout the *New Age*, for example Francis Grierson’s ‘Notes from Paris’ or, indeed, Hastings’ ‘Impressions from Paris’ (May 1914-November 1915) written under the pseudonym ‘Alice Morning’.

60 ‘The Advanced Lady’, first published in *In a German Pension*, also shares a similar tone and setting to the *New Age*’s ‘Pension Sketches’.
Published over the course of eighteen months, the ‘Pension Sketches’ were an occasional series at best, and were presented in an inconsistent manner. The listings in the table of contents of each individual sketch read as follows (in order of publication):

- PENSION SKETCHES - THE BARON. By Katharine Mansfield (sic)
- PENSION SKETCHES. By Katherine Mansfield
- PENSION SKETCHES. III. By Katherine Mansfield
- PENSION SKETCHES: THE MODERN SOUL. By Katherine Mansfield

The seemingly random ways in which these sketches were numbered and sub-titled serve to interrupt the continuity of an already disjointed form. Only the title ‘Pension Sketches’ is consistent, and it is this choice of title that forces them into a serialised format – one that is inappropriate to a form that is not plot-driven, but which relies upon impression and observation for its effect. The presentation of the ‘Pension Sketches’ as a serial implicitly invites readers to construct a coherent, unified plot around these incidental sketches.

Between 1909 and 1912, Stephen Gray identifies six serialisations that appeared in the *New Age*: Hastings’ *Whited Sepulchres* (1909), *The Maid’s Comedy* (1910-1911) and *Pages from an Unpublished Novel* (1912); Richmond Haigh’s ‘Otai sketches’ and *An Ethiopian Saga*, and what Gray calls ‘Mansfield’s short stories from her Bavarian life, to be collected together as her first volume’. In Gray’s reading, *all* of Mansfield’s ‘German’ work for the *New Age* is presented as a unified whole, in terms that are at the very least problematic for the sketches, but wholly unsuitable for the short stories on which his description of *In a German Pension* focuses. The ‘Pension Sketches’ were at least linked by location and theme; by contrast the stories could not

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62 Gray, *Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life*, p. 164. Richmond Haigh was Hastings’ brother. His ‘Otai sketches’ were three pieces featuring the character of Otai, published over the course of three years: ‘My Black Boy’, *New Age*, 3.8 (20 June 1908), 151-2; ‘My Black Boy Again’, *New Age*, 4.1 (29 October 1908), 10-11; and the final instalment, also merely entitled ‘My Black Boy’, *New Age*, 7.18 (1 September 1910), 420-1.
even be grouped under such broad terms, having only an incidental German setting in common, and so resisted the notion of serialisation. With the publication of *In a German Pension* in December 1911, readers were once again invited to make connections across Mansfield’s contributions to the *New Age*, this time irrespective of the formal differences between the sketches and stories collected under a single title. The collection remains something of an anomaly in Mansfield’s oeuvre. Unlike *Bliss and Other Stories* and *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, *In a German Pension* does not boast a title story. The title does not derive its marketability from a single previously published story, but relies instead on the cumulative effect of Mansfield’s German sketches for the *New Age*, and hence of the *Zeitgeist* in the build-up to the First World War.\(^6^3\) The title of *In a German Pension* is actually only appropriate for about half of the collection’s contents, but attempts to impose a sense of unity onto a series of disparate observations and forms, and force the contents into a kind of serial that is simply inappropriate.\(^6^4\)

The setting for ‘A Birthday’, for example, is clearly Wellington, despite its use of German names, and the detail of the story is partly based on the story of Mansfield’s birth (although of course, the story ends with the birth of Binzer’s son rather than a third daughter). Mansfield’s motivation for couching an autobiographical, New Zealand story in German terms has never been adequately explained, and it is certainly conceivable that the *New Age*’s editorial policy may have been a factor. The German

\(^6^3\) There is also a sense in which *In a German Pension* echoes the genteel title of another extremely popular novel at the time, *Elizabeth and her German Garden*, published anonymously in 1898. The author of that novel was Elizabeth von Arnim who, by a happy coincidence, was Katherine Mansfield’s cousin. Of course, it is not certain that a contemporary audience would have made this connection between the two books (let alone the two authors).\(^6^4\) *In a German Pension* was published in December 1910 by ‘Stephen Swift’, or Charles Granville. Granville was a friend of Orage’s; his firm published a good deal of collections of essays and fiction from the *New Age* throughout 1911 including J.M. Kennedy’s *Tory Democracy*, Hilaire Belloc and Cecil Chesterton’s *The Party System*, Beatrice Hastings’ *The Maid’s Comedy* and G.F. Abbott’s *The Philosophy of a Don*, all of which had previously been serialised in the *New Age* throughout 1910 and 1911.
setting of 'A Birthday' may have been indicative of Mansfield's developing status in the *New Age* as a writer of German life, in keeping with the presentation of the 'Pension Sketches', outlined above, and also the original publication of 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' under the additional title 'Bavarian Babies'. Indeed, there is a sense in which she was 'packaged' as a chronicler of German life at a time at which it could only be profitable to do so.

Central to the effectiveness of the 'Pension Sketches' in the years leading up to the outbreak of the First World War was, of course, their setting and their apparently targeted attacks on a series of German institutions and stereotypes; when they came to be collected as *In a German Pension* and published by 'Stephen Swift', it was primarily from this source that they derived their marketability. Diane Milburn's exhaustive catalogue of articles about Germany in the *New Age* throughout its run has demonstrated the impossibility of establishing a unified attitude towards Germany, especially prior to the First World War, and at the time at which Mansfield was actively contributing. The real anti-German sentiment was to be found in 'S. Verdad's' (J.M. Kennedy) 'Foreign Affairs' column, which had replaced 'Stanhope of Chester's' Foreign Affairs column in the first issue of Volume 7 in May 1910, but this only represents one aspect of the journal's stance towards Germany. Elsewhere, various contributors, including Orage himself, drew a definite distinction between Prussia (linked to the dangers of German militarism) and the rest of Germany. This distinction is reflected in Mansfield's 'Germans at Meat', which simultaneously features a character whose stare suggests 'a thousand premeditated invasions' (with obvious overtones of Prussian militarism) and a reference to the cultural centre of Munich.

The latter is more in keeping with the sentiment of G.H. Powell's introduction to the

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second edition of Sir George Chesney's seminal invasion narrative *The Battle of Dorking* in 1914: 'To be at war with the countrymen of Schumann and Beethoven, of Goethe and Ranke, is ... an affliction to the very soul of England.' Overall, the stance taken by the *New Age* was not necessarily Germanophobic at the time of Mansfield's apprenticeship at the journal, in that it discussed in measured, non-sensationalist terms German politics, art, literature, music and philosophy, with the real anti-German sentiment limited to Kennedy's column.

The tone of the 'Pension Sketches' is particularly of note as an indicator of the influence of *New Age* policies on Mansfield's work, although Beatrice Hastings' account of 'discovering' Mansfield indicates that she had already begun to write them before forming an alliance with the journal (though many of them were unfinished). In Hastings' version, Mansfield presented two kinds of work after 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' was accepted for publication: sentimental efforts (presumably akin to 'Mary' which was published in the *Idler* in March 1910) and the sketches which Hastings and Orage favoured, presumably because of their satirical tone. The *New Age*'s preference for satire is evident in one of Orage's major contributions to the journal (and his only foray into a fictional format), the 'Tales for Men Only', five of which appeared during 1910 and 1912; two more were published in 1916. The narrator common to all of the tales wryly comments on the attempts of a number of women to penetrate the

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67 Quoted in Denis Gailor, 'Wells' *War of the Worlds*, the 'invasion story' and Victorian moralism', *Critical Survey*, 8.3 (1996), 270-6 (p. 273). This reference to German culture in 'Germans at Meat' follows immediately after a discussion of Germany as the 'Home of the Family'. This is in direct contrast to the childless Kathleen (the childless narrator in the collection). It may reinforce the concept of Mansfield's anxieties of being an unknown fledgling writer in the face of more established figures (in this case, German 'Kultur').

68 After the outbreak of the war, Orage himself occasionally employed jingoistic language, while at the same time condemning the vilification of Germany.

69 Hastings' review of *In a German Pension* makes this preference for satire clear, while simultaneously indicating the growing antagonism between the two: 'When Miss Mansfield gets quite clear of the lachrymose sentimentality that so often goes with the satirical gift, she will be a very amusing and refreshing writer' (*New Age*, 10.8 (21 December 1911), 188). 'Mary' was published under the name 'K. Mansfield' in the *Idler*, 36.90 (March 1910), 661-5.
circles of a group of ‘intellectuals’. All of them fail. The column later turned increasingly nasty, lampooning Beatrice Hastings after she and Orage parted company, and also Mansfield after her ‘defection’ to Rhythm: Antony Alpers discusses the ‘Fourth Tale for Men Only’ (published under the pseudonym R.H. Congreve) as a direct attack on Mansfield after allegedly ending her affair with J.M. Kennedy in favour of John Middleton Murry.  

The tone of the ‘Tales for Men Only’ was true to a general preference for satire evident in the journal, in both fiction and expository prose. Such renowned satirical social commentators as Wells and Shaw were frequent contributors, whereas J.C. Squire, for example, wrote a recurring series of parodies of contemporary poets and writers. Hastings too was particularly adept at the ‘pastiche’, and would later parody Mansfield in ‘The Changeling’. Hence, Mansfield’s definite inclination towards this kind of writing during her New Age years can be read as indicative of the influence of both Orage and Hastings and it was Mansfield’s ‘abandonment’ of her penchant for sarcasm after she joined Rhythm that met with the most disdain in the pages of the New Age. The ‘Pension Sketches’ were the most sustained example of Mansfield’s development of a satirical voice, but most of her subsequent work for the New Age was similar in tone, with the exception of her short stories. The dialogue ‘The Festival of the Coronation (with apologies to Theocritus)’ used Theocritus’ Fifteenth Idyll as the basis for a satirical take on Londoners’ reaction to the coronation of George V. 

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72 Similarly, when the first six numbers of the Open Window (edited by Alfred E. Randall) appeared in book form in 1911, the New Age derided it for its lack of ‘laughter’ its exclusion of ‘the terrible and the grotesque’, concluding ‘Byronic sentimentality without Byronic satire is symptomatic of imaginative flatulence.’ Mansfield’s ‘A Fairy Story’, published in the Open Window the previous December, was singled out for particular scorn. ‘Literary Supplement to the New Age’, New Age, 9.1 (4 May 1911), 1-8 (1).  
73 Alpers’s discussion of Mansfield’s dialogues (Alpers, The Life, pp. 125-6; 237-40), assumes that Orage first introduced her to the form, and follows T.O. Beachcroft’s identification of Theocritus’ Fifteenth
final three sketches (published in 1912 after her association with *Rhythm* began) were all pastiches; and in May 1911 she co-authored with Beatrice Hastings a similar series of parodies of contemporary authors (including Wells and Bennett) which appeared as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ entitled ‘A P.S.A.’.

It was in one of her satirical sketches that Mansfield first began to suggest her perceived loss of authority in the work she published at the *New Age*. ‘Frau Fischer’ was her last major contribution to the journal before ill health forced her to take a sabbatical in August 1910. As the last of her active contributions to the journal in 1910, it was presumably one of the sketches that had been ‘unfinished’ at the time of Mansfield’s initial meeting with Hastings and Orage, and its conclusion suggests that it underwent some revision and development in the course of her first months at the *New Age* and suggests her evolution as a writer.

The closing stages of the sketch provide an example of Mansfield’s ‘anxiety of authority’. Confronted by Frau Fischer, the narrator invents a fictional husband for herself in terms that closely recall Mansfield’s own act of self-preservation in Bavaria with the construction of ‘Käthe Beauchamp-Bowden’. Mansfield’s narrator chooses the transient image of a sea captain as her husband, a profession ‘as inflammable (sic) as tenor singers’ in Frau Fischer’s words, in a direct reference to George Bowden. The narrator’s fabrication of this figure is a direct attempt to insulate herself from the influence of Frau Fischer. However, in the course of their conversation, she finds it

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Idyll as a neglected model for the modern short story. See Alpers, *The Life*, p. 126; 238. See also Beachcroft’s essay, ‘Katherine Mansfield’s Encounter with Theocritus’, *English* 23: 115 (Spring 1974), 13-19. Reprinted in *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield* ed. Jan Pilditch (Westport, Connecticut; London: Greenwood Press, 1996), pp. 119-27. However, it is impossible to say with any certainty how Mansfield first read Theocritus’ Fifteenth Idyll. Both Alpers and Beachcroft overstate Theocritus’ lack of fashionability at the beginning of the twentieth century. Wilde, Barrett Browning and Langhorne all wrote poems to Theocritus; Tennyson’s *Idylls to the King* were clearly influenced by Theocritus’ Idylls; and Andrew Lang’s translation (which Alpers mentions as the version Mansfield would have read) had been published in 1879. It is certainly conceivable that Mansfield could have come to the Fifteenth Idyll by another route. Hence, this study will not pursue the potential link between Orage and Theocritus.

74 ‘Frau Fischer’, p. 368.
impossible to maintain control over the fiction she attempts to write. Frau Fischer modifies the narrator's fiction by introducing children into the narrative, at which point the narrator begins to sense her loss of control over both her story and her authorial persona:

This husband I had created for the benefit of Frau Fischer became in her hands so substantial a figure that I could no longer see myself sitting on a rock with sea-weed in my hair, awaiting that phantom ship for which all women love to suppose they hunger. Rather, I saw myself pushing a perambulator up a gangway, and counting up the missing buttons on my husband's uniform jacket.75

This version of the fictional husband proves the more vivid, and the sea-captain husband becomes a debased figure, as signified by the buttons missing from his jacket. However, Frau Fischer's suggestion that the narrator should produce 'handfuls of babies' convinces her that she has lost control of her own creation. She responds by modifying her narrative, forcing it to a premature and violent conclusion. Her decision 'to wreck my virgin conception and send him down somewhere off Cape Horn' gives a conventional (and melodramatic) shape to her fiction, in a way that directly recalls 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' where the Child's act of violence becomes necessary in order for her to conclude her story.76 In the case of 'Frau Fischer', the narrator's abrupt conclusion, although intended as a defensive measure (and a reassertion of her own sense of authority), ultimately indicates her concession to Frau Fischer's influence in shaping her narrative.

Mansfield's narrator only demonstrates an awareness of her diminished authorial control once Frau Fischer introduces offspring into the narrative. The narrator is comfortable with her fictional identity as a married woman (and with her fictional

75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
husband) up until this point. By extension, this demonstrates a schism in Mansfield's own sense of authorial identity at this early stage of her career. The construction of 'Käthe Beauchamp-Bowden, Schriftstellerin' had linked her marriage of convenience with her resolution to become a writer, and had been more closely linked to the creation of a writing *persona* (signified in 'Frau Fischer' by the image of the sea-faring husband) than an actual body of work (signified by the 'handfuls of babies'). The narrator's panic at the introduction of fictional children (a direct result of the influence of Frau Fischer on the narrative) effectively suggests Mansfield's own anxieties about the ways in which she was to fulfil her chosen role as a writer, and the nature of the body of work she had begun to produce. These anxieties would persist and escalate throughout the two years she wrote for the *New Age*, especially as she began to question Orage's influence on her work, and her corresponding loss of authority. Throughout 1910 and 1911, Mansfield's working relationship with Orage continued to be in terms of the master/student binary recalled in her 1921 letter to him; by contrast, her relationship with Beatrice Hastings offered more room for collaboration.

**Beatrice Hastings**

Hastings twice claimed responsibility for 'discovering' Mansfield, in the 1932 article in the *Straight-Thinker* with which this chapter opened, and in the pamphlet *The Old New Age*:

> Everyone, without exception, who got a 'start' between summer, 1908 and May, 1914 (and even later, for MSS. were sent to me in Paris) owes that start to me and to no-one else. They count by scores, and many of them have 'made a name'.

> And here I invite anyone to count those who got in after I was no longer even consulted about the editing, end of 1915. Just that.

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77 Ibid.
Orage, who had not a particle of genius, hated 'creative' writers (Hastings' italics).

Although this claim cannot be substantiated, Hastings certainly merits some acknowledgement in a discussion of Mansfield's development as a published writer at the New Age, in part as the journal's de facto literary editor but more importantly as one of only four people with whom Mansfield co-authored various projects throughout her career. Only one piece appeared in the New Age under the names of both Hastings and Mansfield, a 'Letter to the Editor' which consisted of a series of parodies of seven contemporary writers, but Hastings' influence is evident throughout Mansfield's New Age work in her engagement with prototypical militant feminism, as Lee Garver has discussed. Indeed, in many ways it is Hastings who might provide a more obvious role model for Mansfield than Orage between the years 1910 and 1911.

Stephen Gray has suggested Hastings' influence on Mansfield's writing by claiming that both 'The Festival of the Coronation (with apologies to Theocritus)' and 'Along the Gray's Inn Road' display evidence that 'the influence between her [Mansfield] and BH [sic] did decidedly run in the direction of older to younger.' However, the master/student binary is more appropriately applied to Mansfield's relationship with Orage, and it would be more accurate to present her association with Hastings in terms that anticipate her relationship with Virginia Woolf (discussed in

79 She was later to collaborate with Murry on the contributions to Rhythm discussed in the following chapter; Floryan Sobienieowski in 1917 on translations of Stanislaw Wyspiański, which were never published; and S.S. Koteliansky in 1919 and 1920 on a series of translations of Chekhov and Dostoyevsky's letters and journals.
80 See Garver, 'The Political Katherine Mansfield'.
82 Gray, Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life, p. 221. Gray claims Mansfield's image of a barrel-organ in 'Along the Gray's Inn Road' echoes Hastings' 'Oriole Notes', which appeared under the pseudonym 'Beatrice Tina' in New Age, 3.13 (25 July 1908), 250; he notes the recurrence of the image in the parody of G.K. Chesterton in 'A P.S.A.' ('A Pleasant Sunday Afternoon') in New Age, 9.4 (25 May 1911), 93. He also draws attention to the similarities between Mansfield's 'The Festival of the Coronation (with apologies to Theocritus)' and 'Beatrice Tina's' 'Tête a Tête, a la Femme', New Age, 4.22 (25 March 1909), 443-4.

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Chapter Three). Mansfield and Hastings could have made obvious allies as two ‘colonials’ writing and living under pseudonyms, and through their collaboration at the *New Age*, they established (for a time, at least) a ‘public of two’.

The main product of this partnership is the letter published as ‘A P.S.A.’ which proved to be the only collaboration between the two. An uneasy friendship prevailed until 1915, when Mansfield was in Paris working on the earliest version of ‘The Aloe’, but when Hastings wrote to John Middleton Murry in 1920 asking for work at the *Athenaeum*, Mansfield responded to the news as follows:

Yes, it is true, I *did* love B.H. but have you utterly forgotten what I told you of her behaviour in Paris – of the last time I saw her and how because I refused to stay the night with her she bawled at me and called me a femme publique in front of those filthy Frenchmen? She is loathsome & corrupt & I remember very well telling you I had done with her, explaining why & recounting to you how she had insulted and abused me.\(^\text{83}\)

Mansfield’s account of the way in which Hastings had ‘insulted and abused’ her has not survived.

Before that falling out, ‘A P.S.A.’ appeared as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ in May 1911.\(^\text{84}\) The ‘letter’ purports to be the product of a Sunday afternoon in Ditchling-on-Sea on which the two writers, finding themselves without reading material, ‘were driven to rely upon memories of our favourite authors.’ ‘K.M. and B.H.’ proceed to replicate and parody the styles of seven contemporary, established male writers: Bart Kennedy, G.K. Chesterton, Richard Le Gallienne, Alfred Austin, Eden Philpotts, Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells. Among the topics and tones under attack in these parodies were Eden Philpotts’ nihilistic, Hardy-esque provincial melodrama; H.G.

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Wells’ *Ann Veronica* (1909), a ‘New Woman’ novel with controversial ‘feminist’ politics; and the much-maligned and often ridiculous verse of Alfred Austin (misspelled ‘Austen’ in Hastings’ and Mansfield’s texts), the Poet Laureate who succeeded Tennyson, on the topical subject of the death of Edward VII and coronation of George V. Of most interest, however, is the section on Arnold Bennett: Alpers suggests Mansfield was the author of this particular extract.

The sarcastic parody of Bennett masks a serious intent, and anticipates the sentiment of Virginia Woolf’s ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ by some twelve years, although without a similar critical framework. Rather, the criticism of what Woolf would later identify as Bennett’s ‘Edwardian materialism’ is evident in Mansfield’s and Hastings’ mimicry of his prose style to ridiculous effect:

> In Pottinghame High Street, at seventeen minutes past three on a certain Sunday in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety-five, the fine dust was stirring. It was round, grey, piercing, sandy dust that rose and fell with precocious senility; for the month was June, and June is early for dust. Out of one of the vacant-looking, but actually swarming, two-storeyed houses that run monotonously up one side and down the other, a girl leaned. She threw out faded flowers, violets and a wallflower, and disappeared. Her bedroom expressed a character at once original and passive. The neatness of enforced nonconformity ruled her collars and shoes, but a bright blue petticoat, frilled with dyed lace, betokened a side of its owner’s nature, perhaps unsuspected by Pottinghame, perhaps never to be suspected by Pottinghame.*

The repetitive nature of the prose, topped off with a parenthetical ‘to be continued until 1950’, provides an implicit, albeit exaggerated and parodic, judgement on Edwardian literary convention, from which Mansfield was beginning to distance herself with her formal experimentation with the short story. The opening section of this parody of Bennett suggests the character of Susan through a description of her bedroom, in terms

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that would be inappropriate for the characters with which Mansfield populated her
sketches and stories to date: the illegitimate Child whose narrative concludes ‘on a little
road that led to nowhere’; the sparse surroundings of the servant-girl Sabine in ‘At
“Lehmann’s”’; the isolated narrator in an alien German Pension. Mansfield had
already begun to experiment with narrative voice as a different means of presenting
character, as in the interior monologue of Andreas Binzer in ‘A Birthday’ or the
These are in stark contrast to this minute description of a house in Pottinghame High
Street.

These are precisely the terms in which Woolf criticises Bennett, Wells and
Galsworthy (two of whom Mansfield and Hastings parody in ‘A P.S.A.’) in ‘Mr
Bennett and Mrs Brown’. Woolf’s description of Edwardian fiction is as follows:

Every sort of town is represented, and innumerable institutions; we see
factories, prisons, workhouses, law courts, Houses of Parliament; a
general clamour, the voice of aspiration, indignation, effort and
industry, rises from the whole; but in all this vast conglomeration of
printed pages, in all the congeries of streets and houses, there is not a
single man or woman whom we know.  

The collaboration between Mansfield and Hastings, then, is implicitly located within
the development of a modernist aesthetic in terms of a renegotiation of narrative form.
‘A P.S.A.’ can only implicitly criticise contemporary, critically-sanctioned fiction,
rather than present in discursive terms the alternative stance that Mansfield would
refine throughout her later career. She may not have provided an alternative critical
stance at this point in her career, but she attempted an alternative textual one soon after
the publication of ‘A P.S.A’ with ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’, which was also

87 The Collected Essays of Virginia Woolf. 4 Volumes, ed. Andrew McNellie, (London: Hogarth Press,
88 Clare Hanson notes that Mansfield was unable to suggest ‘any new alternative method or stance for the
artist’ at this stage in her career. The Critical Writings, ed. Hanson, p. 21.
published as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ in the *New Age*. ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ relied on a subtle evocation of mood and setting for its effect and was, in short, inappropriate for something as official as a ‘Letter to the Editor’; Vincent O’Sullivan has suggested that the piece was actually submitted as a prose poem. Although there is no definite evidence to support O’Sullivan’s contention, it is clear that ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ is written in a different style to her two conventional letters to the editor, and it is difficult to imagine that it was intended for publication in the same format.  

‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’

The publication of ‘A P.S.A.’ as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ is potentially puzzling, especially since ‘Love Cycle’, a similar series of parodies of four contemporary poets (Katherine Tynan, Mrs. E. Nesbit, Wilfrid Gibson and Laurence Housman) subsequently appeared in the main body of the journal. One possible explanation is that the latter is formally constructed as a cycle of four ‘poems’ that are presented as a musical composition and are recorded in writing by an external narrative voice. By contrast, ‘A P.S.A.’ presents seven parodies of different authors and genres that are not as inherently linked to one another in formal terms. Their publication as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ allows them to be yoked together under the single rubric of ‘K.M. and B.H.’s’ Sunday afternoon entertainment. The publication of these disjointed parodies as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ imposes a rudimentary shape on them. In a similar way, the publication of ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ formalises the piece, but in a less

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89 Mansfield had only made two solo appearances in the correspondence column prior to this: ‘A Paper Chase’, *New Age*, 7.15 (11 August 1910), 354-5 and ‘North American Chiefs’, *New Age*, 7.17 (25 August 1910), 407, commenting on the popular reporting of the infamous Crippen murder case and (in an early example of her disaffection with contemporary popular literature) on the Canadian novelist Elinor Glyn.  
straightforward manner, and ultimately demonstrates the unsuitability of the *New Age* as a forum for Mansfield’s work.

‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ was published towards the end of Mansfield’s working relationship with the *New Age* in October 1911. In contrast to the travelogues discussed earlier, which were designed to subvert an established form from within, the piece resists formal categorisation, as O’Sullivan’s delineation of it as a ‘prose poem’ indicates: it does not fit neatly in either category. It's initial publication forced it into the inappropriate format of a ‘Letter to the Editor’ in what O’Sullivan has termed an act of ‘editorial malice’. In his introduction to Volume 9 of the *New Age*, Robert Sullivan claims this editorial hostility was unlikely, citing the subsequent publication of ‘Love Cycle’ as evidence that relations between Mansfield, Orage and Hastings continued to be friendly. However, since ‘Love Cycle’ comprised a series of parodies, it was more in keeping with the journal’s satirical agenda, and the publication of ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ implies, if not editorial *malice*, at the very least the *New Age*’s inability to incorporate Mansfield’s impressionistic writing.

It is necessary to quote it in full, as it appeared in the *New Age*:

**ALONG THE GRAY’S INN ROAD**

Sir, — Over an opaque sky grey clouds moving heavily like the wings of tired birds. Wind blowing: in the naked light buildings and people appear suddenly grotesque – too sharply modelled, maliciously tweaked into being.

A little procession wending its way up the Gray’s Inn Road. In front, a man between the shafts of a hand-barrow that creaks under the weight of a piano-organ and two bundles. The man is small and greenish brown, head lolling forward, face covered with sweat. The piano-organ is bright red, with a blue and gold ‘dancing picture’ on either side. The big bundle is a woman. You see only a black mackintosh topped with a sailor hat; the little bundle she holds has

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chalk-white legs and yellow boots dangling from the loose ends of the shawl. Followed by two small boys, who walk with short steps, staring intensely at the ground, as though afraid of stumbling over their feet.

No word is spoken; they never raise their eyes. And this silence and pre-occupation gives to their progress a strange dignity.

They are like pilgrims straining forward to Nowhere, dragging, and holding to, and following after that bright red, triumphant thing with the blue and gold ‘dancing picture’ on either side.

Katherine Mansfield.93

The opening paragraph establishes an image of formal restriction that is figured as ‘grotesque’, in Mansfield’s depiction of figures that are ‘too sharply modelled, maliciously tweaked into being’ (a description that might very well be applied to Mansfield’s most popular work for the New Age, the ‘Pension Sketches’, which relied on grotesque caricature for effect and were bitter in tone). In contrast, the writing in ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ is loosely constructed as a series of incomplete sentences and present participles (‘grey clouds moving’, ‘wind blowing’, ‘little procession wending’): the opaqueness of the sky in the opening image is echoed in the language throughout the piece, which is deliberately vague and resists formal resolution.

The second paragraph begins the process of evoking a series of figures that are not sharply modelled but described impressionistically. Whereas the characters in the sketches had been over-determined and relied almost solely on descriptions of corporeality (and corpulence), these figures are under-written: the man is ‘greenish brown’; the woman and one of the children are mere ‘bundles’; the two small boys are not described in physical terms at all. All five figures are united around the central symbol of the piano-organ, ‘that bright red, triumphant thing with the blue and gold “dancing picture” on either side’, which lends colour to the sketch and is twice described (in almost exactly the same terms on each occasion). The specificity of

93 ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’, New Age, 9.23 (5 October 1911), 551.
location in the title contrasts sharply with the destination of the pilgrimage to ‘Nowhere’ with which the piece ends. The word ‘Nowhere’ recalls the Child’s ‘formless’ dream-narrative in ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’ of a road on which ‘nobody’ walks, and the five figures of ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ are located within a similarly formless textual space.

Unlike ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’, though, which used a fluid dream narrative as a framework in which to locate a story that was more grounded in social commentary, ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ offers no alternative context in which it may be read. The piece was the most formally disruptive of all of Mansfield’s *New Age* work, but it was published in the most clearly delineated format of all, and this publication as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ suggests the *New Age*’s inability to accommodate Mansfield’s formal experimentation. I would argue that this proved to be the prime motivating factor in her decision to seek alternate sites of publication from the end of 1911 onwards, especially when simultaneously faced with Orage’s apparent preference for expository prose and Hastings’ growing penchant for serialisation of fiction (particularly her own and her brother’s), which Orage, in turn, must have sanctioned. It was primarily Mansfield’s dissatisfaction with the *form* her *New Age* work increasingly took, rather than the satirical content, that prompted her decision to seek alternative sites of publication, further signalled by her failed attempt to employ J.B. Pinker as her agent in 1911. In 1916, Hastings was to find Orage resistant to her own increased experimentation with the short story form (with a series of ‘Feminine Fables’)

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94 Volumes 10 and 11 of the *New Age* (which span November 1911 to October 1912) demonstrate a marked increase in the expository prose which Orage was determined to ‘raise to the level of literature’.
95 This is in direct contrast to Murry’s presentation of events. The first biography of Mansfield, written by Ruth Mantz with John Middleton Murry in 1933, accounts for Mansfield’s break with the *New Age* as follows: ‘I’m not getting on very well with *The New Age* [...] They have a conviction that I can only write satire. And I’m not a very satirical person – really’. This is presented as a direct quote (in conversation with Murry), and is indicative of Murry’s posthumous reconstruction of Mansfield’s voice in much the same way as Orage does in ‘Talks with Katherine Mansfield’. Ruth Mantz with John Middleton Murry, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Constable, 1933), pp. 340-1.
after her ‘Impressions from Paris’ column was reined in: it is my contention that Mansfield was faced with a similar unwillingness to accommodate her experimental fiction as early as 1911.

The opening bird imagery of ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ in this context is telling: as the following chapters will demonstrate, Mansfield employed this imagery throughout her career to express her dissatisfaction with the conditions under which she wrote. By the end of her career, she would lament her ‘birds bred in cages’: at this early stage of her career she merely demonstrates a degree of disillusionment with her evocation of the ‘wings of tired birds’. ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’, then, reads as a fitting conclusion to Mansfield’s active engagement with the New Age in 1911 and an effective introduction to the next phase of her career, with John Middleton Murry and Rhythm.

Conclusion

Katherine Mansfield’s earliest published work in Britain locates her in two contexts which, although related, ultimately proved to be at variance with one another: the modernist short story and the social and political weekly the New Age. Her formal commitment to a renegotiation of the short story, although unrefined in both theoretical and practical terms at this stage in her career, places her within a developing modernist aesthetic. This is further evidenced by her criticism of contemporary Edwardian (male) novelists and poets in the series of parodies co-authored with Beatrice Hastings. Mansfield and Hastings’ parodic text lacks the formality of Woolf’s later ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’, though its publication as a ‘Letter to the Editor’ of the New Age is one of a number of instances that indicate an increasing tendency to relegate Mansfield’s more experimental writing to the journal’s margins (and literally to its small print).
Although the *New Age* was the site of publication of early work by a number of key modernist writers, the majority would achieve their most successful literary experimentation outside the pages of the journal: Mansfield was no exception. The journal certainly featured important debates about modernist literature, and Orage’s column ‘Readers and Writers’ (written under the pseudonym ‘R.H.C.’) subsequently earned him the title of the ‘the best literary critic of that time in London’ in an obituary written by T.S. Eliot in 1934.⁹⁶ Tom Gibbons draws a useful distinction in his account of Orage and the *New Age*:

In his rôle of severe and intolerant critic, Orage fiercely condemned both futurism and imagism. In his rôle of tolerant and broad-minded editor, on the other hand, he was one of the first to publish the work of both futurist painters and imagist poets.⁹⁷

This chapter has complicated this distinction by discussing Mansfield’s experiences at the *New Age*; it has been argued that she encountered Orage in his ‘severe and intolerant’ persona as she began to define the terms of her formal experimentation in prose and attempted to put her theories into practice. Her last story in the *New Age* (‘A Birthday’) appeared in May 1911, although she actively continued to contribute material (sketches, travelogues and parodies) until the end of the year, with ‘remained’ material (mostly pastiches) appearing throughout the early months of 1912.⁹⁸ The satirical tone and politicised nature of much of her *New Age* work is evidence of the influence of Orage and Hastings, both of whom evidently had an impact on Mansfield’s development of an authoritative voice in her writing.

This authority was undermined by Mansfield’s perception of the unstable nature of the short story and sketch as her favoured forms and by the problematic nature of

⁹⁸ Her reappearance in 1915 and again in 1917 will be discussed in Chapter Three.
publication of her more experimental forms in the *New Age*, which is best understood as a journal that favoured the development of an experimental aesthetic in theory rather than in practice. The resultant anxieties were self-consciously played out in the material she produced, from the interrogation of the uncertainties of composition in ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’ to the loss of authorial control enacted in ‘Frau Fischer’. Throughout 1910 and 1911, Orage and Hastings functioned as a rudimentary reading public for Mansfield; she had not as yet begun to interrogate her relationship with a wider audience (or, indeed, her role within the marketplace), instead focusing almost exclusively on her perception of her editors as audience. The publication of ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ as a prose poem directly established Orage in these terms, and clarified the fact that Mansfield’s primary audience was the editorial board. The chapters that follow will trace her increasingly nuanced and complex engagement with the processes of publication throughout her career.

Mansfield’s negotiation of these authorial and editorial factors ultimately proved frustrating, and her formal confidence was as yet insufficiently advanced to overcome the self-conscious anxieties of production and consumption that define so much of the material discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, the *New Age* years provided Mansfield with a site in which to experiment with a variety of forms and techniques. As a result of this, she eventually produced ‘A P.S.A.’ which, although ‘sharply modelled’, may be read as her first formal presentation of a modernist aesthetic. Chapter Two will interrogate her development of this aesthetic in a different context, the little magazines *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review* and will trace her evolving sense of her reading publics through this new association.
Chapter Two

‘An editorial dogfight’: Murry, *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review* 1912-1913

Mansfield’s first appearances in *Rhythm* at the beginning of 1912 met with hostile reviews in the pages of the *New Age*, which accused her of ‘flapping and wappering’ in her poetry and ‘plough[ing] the realistic sand, with no single relief of wisdom or wit’ in ‘The Woman at the Store’. She was particularly admonished for her apparent abandonment of the satirical voice she had honed at the *New Age*:

Aware that Miss Mansfield has, on occasions, a sense of humour, we wonder if it is all a joke; especially as the verse is solemnly asserted to be a translation from the Russian! If no jest is meant, the sickly versifiers whom Miss Mansfield once satirised in THE NEW AGE are avenged. We take it that these frenzies, synapses, and collapses are really arranged to carry out the editor’s notion of rhythm.¹

The only positive remark about Mansfield’s post-*New Age* endeavours came in a notice on the first number of the *Blue Review* in 1913, which singled out her ‘Epilogue: Pension Seguin’ for praise as ‘the best work she has done since she left us for an editorial feather to stitch in her cap.’² This chapter locates Mansfield within these new editorial contexts as writer for and co-editor of *Rhythm*, and traces her further development of a public persona in the context of the little magazine.

¹ ‘Present-Day Criticism’, *New Age*, 10.22 (28 March 1912), 519-20.
² ‘Reviews’, *New Age*, 13.3 (15 May 1913), 64. This commendation was revoked in a notice on the next number of the *Blue Review*: ‘People who dissented from our praise of Miss Mansfield’s sketch in the last number of “The Blue Review” will be crowing over us this month. It seems to be true that women’s talents are as fleeting as their beauty, and as little under their own control. There was in Miss Mansfield’s first epilogue a momentary poise upon the gay good-humour which balanced her best early work; without this quality she becomes as in her two present sketches, either coarsely cynical or coarsely sentimental, inartistic’. ‘Present-Day Criticism’, *New Age*, 13.9 (26 June 1913), 237.
Mansfield’s ‘defection’ was only one potential source of the *New Age*’s antagonism towards *Rhythm*. The latter’s greatest success came with its appointment of J.D. Fergusson as art editor, its commentary on the visual arts and its reproductions of the work of a number of key artists (among them Pablo Picasso and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska); this was at a time of the *New Age*’s increasing commitment to the visual arts (an art supplement replaced the literary supplement in November 1911, as noted in Chapter One). On these grounds, the *New Age* might have viewed *Rhythm* as something of a competitor, although the formats of the two journals were radically different. Whereas the *New Age* was a political and cultural weekly, *Rhythm* was first established as a literary and cultural quarterly (changing to monthly publication in June 1912). Its origins as a little magazine might in turn be seen as a source of the *New Age*’s disdain for *Rhythm*, in a manner that reinforces Ann L. Ardis’ depiction of Orage’s ‘respectful hostility’ towards the modernist avant-garde.³

From its inception, *Rhythm* was intended as an avant-garde little magazine, and was in part inspired by Murry’s encounters with the Fauvist painter J.D. Fergusson in Paris in 1910 and 1911. Murry established the journal with the support of Michael Sadler and Frederick Goodyear while all three were students at Balliol College, Oxford in 1911, and *Rhythm* issued its first number in the summer of that year.⁴ Its professed aim was to publish a variety of material, spanning artwork, original fiction, poetry and drama, as well as literary and cultural criticism, as outlined in its opening manifesto:

‘Before art can be human it must learn to be brutal.’ Our intention is to provide art, be it drawing, literature, or criticism, which shall be vigorous, determined, which shall have its roots below the surface, and

⁴ Sadler began working for the publishing firm of Constable & Co in 1912, eventually becoming its chairman in 1954; after parting company with *Rhythm* in 1912, he changed his name to Michael Sadleir (to differentiate himself from his father, the educationalist Michael Ernest Sadler), and is best remembered as a professional bibliophile and the author of *Fanny by Gaslight*. Goodyear and Mansfield became good friends; he was killed in the First World War in May 1917.
be the rhythmical echo of the life with which it is in touch. Both in its
pity and its brutality it shall be real. There are many aspects of life’s
victory, and the aspects of the new art are manifold.  

*Rhythm* and the *Blue Review* were not politically motivated in the same way as the *New
Age*. *Rhythm*’s first incarnation was as a quarterly, which ran for four issues; it
subsequently changed to monthly publication and ran for another ten issues as *Rhythm*
and three more as the *Blue Review* in 1913. The subtitle of *Rhythm* — ‘Art, Music,
Literature’ — made clear its aesthetic focus, and the journal articulated an often naive
and ill-formed concept of ‘modernism’, with a particular penchant for the philosophies
of Henri Bergson.

This chapter focuses primarily on Mansfield’s developing authorial persona
within *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review*, and shows her developing attitudes to authority
and audience within the publication context of the little magazine. It will be argued
that her first story in *Rhythm* (‘The Woman at the Store’) articulates a complex and
nuanced allegory of authorship that locates it between its various sites of composition
and publication. By comparison, Mansfield offers a much more simplistic
interpretation of the relationship between author and audience in her two collaborative
essays with John Middleton Murry, ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in
Art’. She further developed the terms of these essays in a number of prose sketches
published towards the end of *Rhythm*’s run, and it will be shown that it was through her

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5 The Editor, ‘Aims and Ideals’, *Rhythm*, No. 1 (Summer 1911), 36. The unacknowledged opening
reference is to Synge’s preface to his *Poems and Translations* (published posthumously in April 1909).
The precise quote reads: ‘it may almost be said that before verse can be human again, it must learn to be

6 This was also true of Murry’s editorship of the *Athenaeum* (1919-1921). See his note in the last issue of
the *Athenaeum* before it merged with the *Nation* in 1921: ‘To those of our readers who may, not
unnaturally, hesitate about the expediency of uniting THE ATHENÆUM, which has no politics, with THE
NATION, which is primarily a political organ, the reply is simple. Pure literary criticism is independent of
political philosophies; while, in the case of criticism of words having a political import, it will be found
that the ideal background of writers in THE ATHENÆUM is akin to, if not identical with, that of THE
NATION’. ‘Notes and Comments’, *Athenaeum*, No. 4737 (11 February 1920), 145.
rewriting of a simplistic oppositional relationship between the 'artist' and the 'mob' in her fiction that she began to renegotiate this rudimentary binary, a process that would characterise her later publications.

'The Woman at the Store'

Mansfield's association with *Rhythm* began with the publication of 'The Woman at the Store', a story that continues to articulate the anxieties of genre and production discussed in Chapter One, particularly in relation to 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired'. Indeed, like 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired', 'The Woman at the Store' borrows a scenario from the work of another short story writer, Henry Lawson's 'The Drover's Wife', which centres on the life of a lone woman and her children in the Australian bush, as her husband is away droving sheep. However, whereas 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' is a reinterpretation of its source text, 'The Woman at the Store' merely incorporates a variation on Lawson's story into a larger framework of multiple narratives and interpretations, when the Woman accounts for her husband's absence by telling her 'audience' (Jo, Hin and the unnamed narrator) that he is away shearing sheep. This version of the Woman's story is just one of many narrative strands that are presented throughout 'The Woman at the Store'. The Woman and the unnamed narrator are the two main storytellers within Mansfield's text: the Woman gives an account of herself as a past victim of male violence, which the unnamed narrator in turn presents to the reader. The first-person narrator of 'The Woman at the Store' is a participant within the story rather than an external observer. His/her location *within* the

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7 She also published 'Very Early Spring' and 'The Awakening River' in this number of *Rhythm*, two poems that masqueraded as translations from 'Boris Petrovsky's' originals. *Rhythm*, No. 4 (Spring 1912), 30.

story draws attention to the way in which he/she ‘writes’ the Woman, and it is on this construction of the Woman that interpretation of the story depends.

There are additional versions of the Woman presented throughout the story. The first of these is Hin’s overtly sexualised account of her ‘blue eyes and yellow hair’, ‘pretty as a wax doll’ and knowledge of ‘one hundred and twenty-five different ways of kissing’. This is promptly undermined by the narrator’s subsequent description of her:

Certainly her eyes were blue, and what hair she had was yellow, but ugly. She was a figure of fun. Looking at her, you felt there was nothing but sticks and wires under that pinafore – her front teeth were knocked out, she had red pulpy hands, and she wore on her feet a pair of dirty ‘Bluchers’ (‘Woman’, p. 11).

This interpretation of the Woman is itself displaced further by Jo (whose reaction to her is actually reported by Hin): ‘Dang it! she’ll look better by night light – at any rate, my buck, she’s female flesh!’ (‘Woman’, p. 14). Finally, Els’ pictorial representation of the reason for her father’s absence figures the Woman as a murderer, and is apparently set up as the story’s twist ending: ‘The kid had drawn a picture of the woman shooting at a man with a rook rifle and then digging a hole to bury him in’ (‘Woman’, p. 21). In all of these cases, the mediating narrative voice apparently attempts to offer a synthesis and explanation of these various representations, and the ‘twist’ at the end of the story (which seems to give it its form) hinges on the authoritativeness of this narrative voice. However, throughout the story this frame narrative is presented in unstable terms.

The frame narration is littered with numerous absences and gaps: it is the first day in a month that Jo fails to sing his signature tune, and ‘there seemed something uncanny in his silence’; the Woman’s apparent suppression of the ‘truth’ about her missing husband might in turn be figured as a silencing in death of what Hin describes

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9 ‘The Woman at the Store’, *Rhythm*, No. 4 (Spring 1912), 7-21: p. 8; p. 16. All subsequent references are to this edition unless otherwise stated, and are cited parenthetically in the text, abbreviated as ‘Woman’. 67
as 'a fine, big chap, with a voice on him like a trombone' (my italics); she serves a supper of tongue with scones and boiled cabbages ('Woman', p. 7; pp. 14-15; p. 13). At the heart of the story lies the obvious absence of the Woman's husband, and the story's 'plot' is effectively motivated by a series of supposed revelations about this absent figure – his abusiveness, his absence from home and, potentially, his murder.

The Woman and the narrator are linked both by their roles as storytellers and by their anonymity. Furthermore, their narratives are initially 'authentic': their anonymity is apparently figured as a kind of authorial impersonality and omniscience. The frame narrator seems to be invested with a larger degree of authority since he/she speaks in standardised English, and, as primary narrator, 'writes' the Woman and the other characters in relating the story to the reader. By contrast, the three named characters – Jo, Hin and Els – are all distanced from this authoritative position in various ways. All are linked by the excision of the final 'e' from each of their names, which should properly read Joe, Hine and Else. Although Hin speaks in the narrator's standardised English, his account of the Woman is immediately rewritten and destabilised by the frame narrator; moreover, he is closely linked with Jo.

Jo and Hin are both de-gendered by these names (although the narrator makes their gender clear), and Murry's clarifying editorial effect is evident in the story's posthumous appearance in *Something Childish and Other Stories*, where Hin is renamed a more masculine Jim. In Mansfield's original, however, his name is both feminine and Maori, although the final 'e' is dropped from Hine (a Maori name, meaning daughter). Similarly, the absence of an 'e' from the end of Jo's name might indicate a less rigid construction of gender.10

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10 Pamela Dunbar, *Radical Mansfield: Double Discourse in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 47. The pack-horse is named Poi, again a Maori word that is associated with femininity: poi is the Maori word for ball, used in poi dancing, a female art form.
It is possible that Mansfield drew on Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Catriona* in her choice of names for these two characters, which recall a violent image from early in the novel. In Stevenson’s text, David Balfour sees the corpses of two executed men ‘hanged in chains. They were dipped in tar, as the manner is; the wind span them, the chains clattered, and the birds hung about the uncanny jumping-jacks and cried.’ Inquiring as to their identity of a ‘weird old wife’ that he encounters, Balfour is told that they are ‘Twa joes o’ mine: just *twa o’ my old joes, my hinny dear* (my italics).*

There is an obvious point of comparison here in the use of dialect, with ‘jo’ (pl: joes) in this context meaning ‘sweetheart’ and ‘hinny’ as a Scottish form of honey. Mansfield’s notebooks dating from her return to Wellington after her 1907 trip around the North Island of New Zealand (on which ‘The Woman at the Store’ is in part based) indicate that one of the authors she was reading at the time was Stevenson and, although neither *Catriona* nor its precursor *Kidnapped* are directly mentioned, it is possible that the choice of these two names stems from her reading of this material.\(^\text{12}\)

If we re-instate the missing ‘e’ to Jo’s name, we reveal another clue to his function within the story: ‘Joe’ is a colonial New Zealand term for a cry ‘used to greet, ‘barrack’, or give notice of newcomers or strangers to a diggings; used especially as [a] cry warning of the approach of authorities’.\(^\text{13}\) Jo is marked as a stranger, as ‘other’, both by his name and his use of dialect. Els is more obviously identified as ‘other’ within the story: apart from being an abbreviated form of Elisabeth, ‘else’ is also an element of language, an adverb; in this case, it is debased by the excision of the final

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\(^{12}\) 23 January 1908, *The Notebooks*, Vol. 1, p. 151. Around the same time, Mansfield flirted with the idea of producing a volume of children’s verse (to be illustrated by the Wellington artist Edie Bendall) in the vein of Stevenson’s *A Child’s Garden of Verse*.
\(^{13}\) *Oxford Dictionary of New Zealand English.*
Els’s name and her dialect both mark her as ‘other’: in this way, she is excluded from authorial language, and uses a different medium (her drawing) to express herself.

The lack of name in the cases of the Woman and the narrator serves to push this confusion of gender even further. The discrepancy between Hin’s representation of the Woman contrasts starkly with the narrator’s description of her, as already noted, and the Bluchers she wears effectively symbolise the blurring of gender boundaries.

This is even more evident in the example of the narrator, and is the subject of another posthumous textual revision by Murry in *Something Childish and Other Stories*. In this case, Alpers suggests Murry merely corrected a misprint which ‘had turned the narrator into a man’, and it is true that the later version does seem to make more sense than the original *Rhythm* edition. However, Alpers’ turn of phrase here may not be entirely accurate, since the passage in question is the only occasion in either version of the story that directly marks the narrator’s gender. Rather than the ‘misprint’ accidentally turning the narrator into a *man* the ‘corrected’ version may actually turn the narrator into a woman: it makes explicit the narrator’s gender which is otherwise uncertain throughout the story. The passage in Murry’s ‘corrected’ version reads as follows:

‘[...] I’ll draw all of you when you’re gone, and your horses and the tent, and that one’ – she pointed to me – ‘with no clothes on in the creek. I looked at her where she couldn’t see me from (my italics).’

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14 This echoes Els’s own dialect, as well as her mother’s, which usually sees her dropping the letter ‘h’.


16 These also connect the Woman to the work of Henry Lawson: the strong leather half-boot or high shoe was the subject of his poem ‘To a Pair of Blucher Boots’ (1890). http://whitewolf.newcastle.edu.au/words/authors/L/LawsonHenry/verse/freemansjournal/blucherboots.html [accessed 26 September 2005].


18 Critics often interpret the narrator as male: see, for example, Rhoda B. Nathan, *Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Continuum, 1988); Moran, *Word of Mouth*, p. 100.

In this version, the positioning of the quotation marks at the end of the passage attributes the final sentence to Els, who identifies the narrator as a woman; however, in *Rhythm* the final sentence is attributed, not to Els, but to the narrator:

'[...] I'll draw all of you when you're gone, and your horses, and the tent, and that one' – she pointed to me – 'with no clothes on in the creek.' I looked at her where she wouldn't see me frown ('Woman', p. 16).

In Murry’s ‘corrected’ version, Els’ initial use of non-gender-specific language to refer to the narrator (‘that one’) is apparently displaced in her final sentence. However, in the *Rhythm* version, the ambiguity of the narrator’s gender is upheld throughout. In the absence of a manuscript of ‘The Woman at the Store’, it is not possible to resolve this issue with any certainty. Nonetheless, it is certainly the case that this contested passage is the only portion of the story that makes clear the narrator’s gender, and even in the ‘corrected’ version of the story, this information is withheld until roughly two-thirds in. In a story populated by feminised men and masculinised women, this would seem to be telling.

The instability of this narrative persona ultimately calls into question the authenticity of his/her representation of the Woman. The narrator repeatedly misdirects the reader, by misinterpreting signs throughout the story. This is anticipated by his/her initial misreading of the approaching Woman as ‘carrying what appeared to me a black stick’ (‘Woman’, p. 8) which is subsequently revealed to be a rifle (and, in the version of the Woman related by Els, will be figured as a murder weapon). The narrator is duped into believing different interpretations of the Woman: as a coquette (Hin), as an abused wife (the Woman), and finally as a murderess (Els). The story’s ‘twist’ is only

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21 Angela Smith casts this misreading in terms of the story’s confusion of gender, ‘because the narrator does not associate women with rifles.’ *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life*, pp. 89-90.
ever inferred by the narrator, but by the story's conclusion the apparent authority of this voice has been repeatedly undermined. The narrator takes advantage of this 'twist' to force a conclusion to the plot and to shape his/her narrative, which abruptly ends with the words: 'A bend in the road and the whole place disappeared' ('Woman', p. 21).

This 'twist' cannot be invested with any quantifiable degree of legitimacy and, as W.H. New argues, it is presented as 'little more than narrative suspicion.' Most convincingly, it appears to be another 'fiction' within the story, and hence reads as another potential misrepresentation by an unreliable narrator. The narrator is unable to represent an independent version of the story, and instead forces the narrative to an abrupt end in an attempt at re-establishing a framing authorial voice and achieving a sense of closure. However, the multiple narrations and interpretations have a destabilising effect, and allow for no definitive conclusion to the narrative. The story is characterised by repeated gaps, omissions and silences; this formal 'opening' can be understood by looking at its immediate publication context.

The story was submitted to *Rhythm* only after an unidentified fairy story met with rejection but elicited an invitation to submit something more in keeping with the manifesto that had appeared in the opening number. Although W.L. George, at whose house Mansfield and Murry first met, was instrumental in sending Mansfield's work to *Rhythm* for consideration, it is almost certain that Murry would have come across her work in the *New Age* prior to that. He had already appeared in print in the *New Age* himself, and Frederick Goodyear, co-founder of *Rhythm*, had professed himself to be a fan of the author of the *Pension* sketches. Thematically, some critics have identified 'The Woman at the Store' as an embodiment of *Rhythm*'s proposed commitment to

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22 New, *Reading Mansfield and Metaphors of Form*, p. 25.
23 On 27 January 1912 Murry also suggested Mansfield write one of the 'Criticisms' he intended for inclusion in the next series of *Rhythm*, which he described as 'appreciation with a sting in it'. *Letters Between Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry*, ed. Hankin, p. 10.
'brutality in art' outlined in the opening issue's 'Aims and Ideals'. The idea of 'brutality' in art as presented in Rhythm is ambiguous: it may mean, quite simply, the kind of shock tactics and implied violence of 'The Woman at the Store', or textual 'brutality' in the sense of revolutions in and disruptions of form, which was most evident in Rhythm's commitment to the visual arts and the Fauvist movement in particular. However, since 'The Woman at the Store' was written at the end of 1911, while Mansfield was still officially associated with the New Age, I would suggest that its representation of unstable authorship is best understood in the context of the formal restrictions placed on her New Age work at that time, as discussed in Chapter One with specific reference to 'Along the Gray's Inn Road'.

The opening scene of 'The Woman at the Store' is replete with imagery that actively recalls 'Along the Gray's Inn Road'. The 'opaque sky' and 'grey clouds' recur in the 'slate colour[ed]' sky of 'The Woman at the Store'; the 'white pumice dust' that covers Jo, Hin and the narrator ('like a dry-skin itching for growth on our bodies') has its direct counterpart in the 'little bundle [with] chalk-white legs' carried by the woman in the earlier sketch; and the 'grey clouds moving heavily like the wings of tired birds' of 'Along the Gray's Inn Road' are evoked in the opening paragraph of 'The Woman at the Store': 'Hundreds of larks shrilled - the sky was slate colour, and the sound of the larks reminded me of slate pencils scraping over its surface.' In this way, 'The Woman at the Store' immediately establishes the link between bird imagery and writing, and the larks' singing actually mimics the performance of writing. Moreover, these larks are positively figured both in terms of their flight and their song, suggesting the narrator's

25 See Alpers, The Life, p. 135 and Daly, Katherine Mansfield. Revised Edition, pp. 30-1 for examples of readings of the story in terms of this manifesto.
control in representing the opening impressionistic descriptions of ‘The Woman at the Store’. 26

Through its employment of this impressionistic imagery, ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ presents an apparently formless textual space in its projection of five loosely defined figures ‘straining forward to Nowhere’. The opening paragraphs of ‘The Woman at the Store’ locate its three travellers in a similar space, apparently on a road that is leading ‘Nowhere’, as is evident with the narrator’s statement that ‘I half fell asleep, and had a sort of uneasy dream that the horses were not moving forward at all’ (‘Woman’, p. 8). The narrative shifts away from these descriptive passages and their presentation of a liminal space once the three travellers arrive at the store of the title – which the narrator describes as ‘arriving somewhere’ (my italics; ‘Woman’, p. 8). Once they arrive in this new space, the narrator begins the task of inventing the story’s plot around the Woman, this ‘plot’ is forced to a conclusion by the attempted imposition of a ‘twist’ ending. 27 The narrator’s impulse is to formalise the plotted portion of his/her story by presenting Els’s version of the Woman as a ‘twist’ ending; however, the story does not end with this ‘revelation’. Instead it relocates the narrator and Hin to the less formally rigid space of the opening paragraphs when they leave the store and resume their journey. In this way, the story uses an impressionist text (‘Nowhere’) to frame a plotted, formalised one (‘somewhere’). With the implied return to ‘Nowhere’ at the story’s conclusion, Mansfield seems to suggest the possibility of moving beyond formal restraints (in this case, of ‘plot’) in order to write something new.

This might in turn be read as an image of Mansfield’s career as it developed at the New Age, which was characterised by her ongoing attempts at fulfilling the formal

26 ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’, New Age 9.23 (5 October 1911), 551; ‘The Woman at the Store’, 7.
27 The narrator’s initial description of the Woman as ‘looking like a hungry bird’ suggests the way in which he/she views the Woman as the ‘story’ which must be written, as is subsequently played out in the multiple narrations of the Woman outlined above. ‘Woman’, p. 9.
expectations placed on her work by the editorial relationship. This was aptly summed up in the case of ‘Along the Gray’s Inn Road’ when it was forced into a rigid shape in its publication as a Letter to the Editor, an act which clarified the interpretative role played by the editor as audience for her work. This editorial relationship had coloured much of Mansfield’s work for the New Age, but with the move to Rhythm her perceptions of both editors and audience were to be redefined, and would influence her further attempts at achieving an authority of voice and form.

‘The Woman at the Store’ ultimately provides a complex narrative of authorial uncertainty that is in part dependent upon the site of its composition (the New Age), as is evident in its attempts at imposing a formal structure on the story of the Woman. Since it presents this within a framework that is less rigidly tied to such formal structures, it also anticipates Mansfield’s association with its site of publication (Rhythm). Murry’s journal had openly expressed a commitment to formal experimentation in literature and the arts in its opening number; moreover Mansfield’s first appearance in Rhythm coincided with an announcement that the journal intended to publish a short story in every number. However, the public persona that Mansfield developed at Rhythm from the beginning of 1912 was not limited to her role as a writer of short fiction, but included a new dimension, that of co-editor of the journal. Through the twin editorial duties of assisting in running the journal and collaborating in print with Murry, Mansfield continued to develop her professional persona within the specific context of Rhythm. The following sections will shift focus somewhat, away from the anxieties of production evident in ‘The Woman at the Store’ to her perceived editorial authority in the development of a professional relationship with John

28 Rhythm, No. 4, p. 1.
Middleton Murry, and will finally discuss her reaction to the publication of her work in the context of *Rhythm*.

**The Two Tigers: *Rhythm* and its editors**

Mansfield’s progression from *Rhythm* contributor (early in 1912) to the journal’s assistant editor was rapid. By June 1912, *Rhythm* had changed from quarterly to monthly publication, and Mansfield was named alongside Sadler as assistant editor; by July, she had become the journal’s only assistant editor. She must have been responsible for the introduction of Floryan Sobieniowski (her Polish friend from her Bavarian days) as Polish correspondent in July, although he remained on the books until the demise of *Rhythm*, he contributed only one article to the journal (on Stanisław Wyspiański).  

Her editorial role was diminished with the transformation of *Rhythm* into the *Blue Review* between March and May 1913; Alpers speculates that she may have been edged out in an increasingly all-male environment, leaving her with an assignment to write on ‘dress’ (which came to nothing). She had also relocated from London to Buckinghamshire by the time the first number of the *Blue Review* was issued. Her final editorial act actually represented one of the journal’s major coups with the publication of D.H. Lawrence’s ‘The Soiled Rose’. Lawrence had appeared in the final issue of *Rhythm* with ‘The Georgian Renaissance’, a review of Edward Marsh’s first anthology of Georgian poetry, but there was some dispute over his first appearance in the *Blue Review*, and the correspondence about this marked Mansfield’s last real involvement in the day-to-day running of the journal. Her final ‘business’ letter was to Edward Garnett, who was acting as Lawrence’s literary agent at this time,

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informing him that she had made it quite clear to Lawrence that the *Blue Review* did not offer payment for contributions, after Garnett objected to him providing a story for free. However, Lawrence intervened, claiming that ‘It seemed like a daft paper, but the people seemed nice’ and ‘The Soiled Rose’ appeared in the second issue of the *Blue Review* in June 1913.

In general, Mansfield’s editorial duties seem to have been limited to correspondence such as this exchange with Garnett about Lawrence’s work. A similar letter to John Drinkwater states:

> we quite agree with you that poets ought to be paid for their poetry – all manner of fine and lordlie sums. If only Rhythm will turn into a really big ship on a fair sea – we’ll put our belief into action ... But don’t wait until then before you send us another poem – will you.

These surviving examples of Mansfield’s primarily administrative (and often placatory) role in the running of *Rhythm* are echoed in Murry’s subsequent representation of her determination to secure advertising revenue as a means to keeping *Rhythm* afloat:

> Katherine was far braver at this unholy task than I. Whereas one rebuff would incapacitate me for the business for the rest of the day, she would persevere till she had gone through all the names on her list.

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34 John Middleton Murry, *Between Two Worlds: An Autobiography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), p. 242. Murry’s autobiography only accounts for his life up to the end of the First World War, and he never wrote the second part. This would have necessitated a discussion of his professionalisation as an editor and a critic from 1919 on, when he was appointed to the editorship of the *Athenaeum*. Throughout *Between Two Worlds*, he emphasises his ‘artistic’ sensibilities in terms that are divorced from the commercial aspects of his earliest attempts at publishing and editing *Rhythm*, the *Blue Review* and *Signature*. In this sense, it is in keeping with the distinction between the ‘aristocratic’ and ‘democratic’ artists developed in essays in *Rhythm*, which will be discussed later in this chapter.
Taken together with her surviving business letters, Murry’s account here suggests Mansfield’s business savvy, in keeping with the image of the professional writer that is posited throughout this thesis.

Recent reappraisals of John Middleton Murry have presented him as a skilled and underrated editor and critic, akin to but at odds with the likes of T.S. Eliot. Such studies continue to pay little attention to *Rhythm*, the *Blue Review* and *Signature*, however; instead dating Murry’s career as editor primarily from his appointment to the *Athenaeum* in 1919. His practical editorial skills at the time of *Rhythm* were particularly questionable and he was, by his own admission, ‘a complete ignoramus about printing and publishing’ at the beginning of *Rhythm*’s run. Accordingly, he ordered a printing run of 3,000 copies of the first few issues, of which fewer than 500 were ever sold.

Aside from over-estimating the potential interest in the journal in its early days, he seems to have failed to grasp the concept of ‘sale or return’ and, just as *Rhythm* changed course from quarterly to monthly publication (at the same time as Mansfield joined the editorial board), Murry found himself faced with a hefty printers’ bill. ‘Stephen Swift’, the publisher of Mansfield’s *In a German Pension* in December 1911, took over the publication of *Rhythm* from the St. Catherine Press in the summer of 1912, hiring Murry and Mansfield as editors at a salary of £10 per annum. When Swift fled the country to escape charges of fraud and bigamy, Murry found that the printers’ bill (and hence the debt) had remained in his name all along. Efforts were

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36 Murry, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 203-4. Murry’s self-portrait may suggest he got better, but this is open to debate. Although a critical success, under his editorship the *Athenaeum* lost almost £10,000 in two years, eventually merging with the *Nation*. See Cassavant, *John Middleton Murry: The Critic as Moralist*, p. 20.
38 There is no record of Mansfield receiving payment for her stories for *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review*.
made to prolong *Rhythm*’s run: Mansfield’s entire allowance was paid towards the
debt; Murry struck a new deal with Martin Secker for cheaper publication; it was even
suggested that the journal might be floated on the stock market as a Limited Liability
Company.39 *Rhythm* was forced to cease publication in March 1913, and Murry was
faced with bankruptcy. The *Blue Review* began publication in May and ran for three
issues; this was partially aided by funding from Edward Marsh, whose patronage
helped install Wilfrid Gibson as co-editor.40 This influenced the *Blue Review*’s
increased emphasis on the Georgian poets, while the much-lauded attention to the
visual arts that *Rhythm* had boasted was drastically reduced.41

*Rhythm* had always attracted more favourable notices for its artwork than for its
literary contributions, and Arnold Bennett, under the pseudonym ‘Jacob Tonson’ in the
*New Age*, for example, claimed that:

> The editor of ‘Rhythm’ has tolerably succeeded with his illustrations,
> but not with his verse, fiction, essays, nor criticism. And he has fallen
> into a fault which such a magazine, especially a quarterly, ought to
> avoid – scrappiness.42

Subsequent commentators have laid the blame for this discrepancy squarely at Murry’s
feet, an accusation that gains some credence when one considers that he was not
responsible for material relating to the visual arts, having delegated to *Rhythm*’s art
editor, J.D. Fergusson, the Scottish Fauvist painter. Fergusson has merited some
critical attention as a direct influence on the development of Mansfield’s literary

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39 See Mansfield et al’s letter to Compton Mackenzie of November 1912 outlining this plan: *The Letters*,
Vol. 1, pp. 115-16. Predictably, it came to nothing. Support of some sort did come from Filson Young,
however, who devoted ‘Things that Matter’, his column in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, to *Rhythm* on 23
October 1912.

40 Murry notes that ‘Eddie Marsh gave us £100 to carry on, and suggested that he should pay a small
salary, through us, to Wilfrid Gibson to act as assistant editor (*Between Two Worlds*, p. 236)’. Gibson
was one of the poets that Mansfield had previously satirised in the *New Age*. See ‘Love Cycle’, *New
Age*, 9.25 (19 October 1911), 586.

41 Albert Rothenstein took over from Fergusson as art editor of the *Blue Review*.

aesthetic, and Angela Smith has argued for the impact he and the Fauvist movement had on Mansfield’s work throughout her career. With the exception of Mansfield’s contributions, though, literary critics have found little of note in the pages of *Rhythm*. Towards the end of its run (and throughout that of the *Blue Review*) matters improved with the appearance of work by D.H. Lawrence, John Drinkwater, Walter de la Mare and Rupert Brooke. Significantly, Murry’s name remained as editor, but by this time Gibson and Gilbert Cannan had much more input, so it is possible to credit them, and not Murry, with this upturn in *Rhythm*’s standards.

Mansfield and Murry’s editorship of *Rhythm* has come to be associated with the persona under which they published a collaborative piece under the name ‘The Two Tigers’ entitled ‘Jack & Jill Attend the Theatre’, a dialogue ‘review’ of Synge’s *The Well of the Saints*. The dialogue itself is a curio, and ineffectual as a piece of comic writing, but the presentation of the persona of ‘The Two Tigers’ was an important one in Mansfield’s developing public role, and she subsequently published a solo effort (‘Sunday Lunch’) under the pseudonym ‘The Tiger’. The *New Age* picked up on the image as a means to poke fun at her once more when the *Blue Review* began its run, and a notice in the ‘Review’ column about the first number of the *Blue Review* opened with the question: ‘Can the leopard change his spots?’ The picture of ‘The Two Tigers’ has continued to dominate representations of Mansfield’s earliest working relationship with Murry, partly because of the way in which it gradually mutated into their pet names for one another (‘Tig’ and ‘Wig’). Its origins, though, were professional in nature, and ‘The Two Tigers’ was just one of a number of joint personae under which their work appeared throughout *Rhythm*’s run.

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44 *The Two Tigers*, ‘Jack & Jill Attend the Theatre’, *Rhythm*, No. 7 (August 1912), 120-1.
45 *New Age*, 13.3 (15 May 1913), 64.
CheiTy Hankin has discussed the relationship between Mansfield and Murry in terms of its ongoing engagement with a 'cult of childhood': the origins of this discourse between them may be traced in material that first appeared in *Rhythm*. Mansfield and Murry published two stories in particular which saw them projecting a public persona within a sentimentalised childhood setting. These appeared in issues 7 and 9: ‘The Little Boy’ by John Middleton Murry and ‘The Little Girl’ by ‘Lili Heron’ (one of Mansfield’s many pseudonyms at *Rhythm*). Leonard Woolf has famously described Mansfield as follows:

By nature, I think, she was gay, cynical, amoral, ribald, witty. [...] I think that in some abstruse way Murry corrupted and perverted and destroyed Katherine both as a person and as a writer. She was a very serious writer, but her gifts were those of an intense realist, with a superb sense of ironic humour and fundamental cynicism. She got enmeshed in the sticky sentimentality of Murry and wrote against the grain of her nature.

The ‘sticky sentimentality’ Leonard Woolf identifies is evident in the short stories here discussed, but it would be unfair to claim that Mansfield was immune to such sentimentality before she encountered Murry. Beatrice Hastings’ review of *In a German Pension* had claimed: ‘When Miss Mansfield gets quite clear of the lachrymose sentimentality that so often goes with the satirical gift, she will be a very amusing and refreshing writer’. Hastings’ criticism was in part a mean-spirited dig at Mansfield, since her earliest ‘sentimental’ material had been published outside of the

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47 Murry’s own fictional pieces for *Rhythm* tended towards the maudlin and overtly sentimental, with ‘The Squirrel’ as a fairly typical example: a story of pre-pubescent love across the social barrier of the backyard fence which is sadly interrupted by the untimely death of one of its protagonists. ‘The Squirrel’, *Rhythm* No. 11 (December 1912) 285-9.

48 All in all, Mansfield published under the following pseudonyms during the course of *Rhythm*’s run: Katherine Mansfield, Lili Heron, Boris Petrovsky, The Tiger, and The Two Tigers (with Murry).


50 *New Age*, 10.8 (21 Dec 1911), 188.
New Age (‘Mary’ in the Idler and ‘A Fairy Story’ in Open Window) and was not included in In a German Pension. ‘The Little Girl’ itself cannot be precisely dated, and may well have been written before her association with Murry began. Nevertheless, the publication of the story in such close proximity to Murry’s ‘The Little Boy’ places it in an obvious dialogue with Murry’s story, and this may be read in terms of the sentimental discourse of childhood which both cultivated in their relationship. Moreover, the fact that ‘The Little Girl’ was published under the pseudonym of ‘Lili Heron’ allowed for Mansfield to differentiate between this sentimental persona and her other writing for Rhythm.

Although the plots and protagonists of ‘The Little Boy’ and ‘The Little Girl’ do not bear any direct relationship to one another, there are obvious echoes within the titles of each story, as well as in the emphasis on childhood. Each story establishes an antagonistic relationship between the title character and an oppressive adult figure, Mother Thompson of ‘The Little Boy’ and the father of ‘The Little Girl’. Murry’s story is distinctly framed in excessively pathetic terms: the boy is an orphan, forced into child labour by his caregiver, Mother Thompson, who refuses to offer him a place of refuge when he has a nightmare, instead leaving him to crawl to the basement, break his leg and die (all of which takes place at Christmas). Mansfield’s story is devoid of this kind of attempted pathos, and instead presents a domestic setting that in part anticipates her later stories of upper middle-class New Zealand.

In both stories the child is subjected to a beating by their respective caregivers; each beating is administered as a punishment for some kind of transgression involving

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51 Alpers claims that ‘The Little Girl’ was written before Mansfield’s association with Murry and Rhythm (The Stories, ed. Alpers, p. 552). However, the date of Mansfield’s story cannot be directly established, so it is certainly possible that it was written after meeting Murry, in order to facilitate the projection of this public persona.

52 ‘How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped’, another New Zealand childhood story, was also published in Rhythm under the same pseudonym. Rhythm, No. 8 (September 1912), 136-9.
paper. The boy is delayed in returning home from the butcher's shop because he is distracted by the (oddly-patterned) Christmas paper which covers the meat; the girl inadvertently rips up her father's speech and uses it as stuffing for the pin-cushion she makes him as a birthday present. As a result, she (seemingly inadvertently) silences the male authority figure that had mocked her own uncertain speech, signified by her stutter. Both boy and girl suffer nightmares which bear some relation to a butcher. The boy's nightmares stem from the 'red and yellow and green devils with pitchforks' on the paper in which the butcher wraps the meat, whereas the girl's is a recurring one about 'the butcher with a knife and a rope who grew nearer and nearer, smiling that dreadful smile, while she could not move.'

The girl's anxiety, then, is explicitly figured as a fear of violence, with the butcher as a figure who threatens to carve her up for consumption. The stories conclude on contrasting emotive notes: whereas Mother Thompson rejects the boy and leaves him to die, the girl is comforted by her father, and comes to a new appreciation of him, and her story ends with her telling her father: 'Oh [...] my head's on your heart; I can hear it going. What a big heart you've got, Father dear.'

Mansfield's little girl renegotiates her anxious relationship with her father and comes to a new understanding of his personality, ultimately achieving a partial reconciliation with him. Murry's little boy, however, is destroyed as a result of Mother Thompson's indifference and cruelty. If Mansfield's 'Little Girl' and Murry's 'Little Boy' are seen as self-portraits within the context of *Rhythm*, the representation of Murry's protagonist is telling: he is impoverished, victimised by an uncaring external figure who does not grasp his artistic sensibility (figured in his reaction to the paper), and is ultimately destroyed as a result of this lack of interest. This is precisely the

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53 John Middleton Murry, 'The Little Boy', *Rhythm*, No. 7 (August 1912), 95-7 (p. 95); 'The Little Girl', *Rhythm*, No. 9 (October 1912), 218-21 (p. 220).

54 Ibid, p. 221.
romantic portrait of the artist that Murry presents of himself throughout his critical writing in *Rhythm*, and it is central to the essays ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art’, the final set of collaborations between Mansfield and Murry.

‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art’

In his study of little magazines and modernism’s engagement with the public sphere, Mark S. Morrisson argues against a straightforward conception of little magazines as coterie publications. Since he identifies a commitment to the public function of art as a common dimension to all six of the journals on which his study focuses, he argues that the editors of these particular little magazines actively engaged with strategies of mass marketing and mass publication in order to deliver this art to as wide an audience as possible. In this way, he counters the common preconception of modernism’s antagonistic relationship with consumer culture and mass marketing. Morrisson’s model is useful and his conclusions are persuasive in respect of the specific journals on which the study focuses; however, *Rhythm*’s projected public simply does not fit this paradigm, and it will be argued that this particular little magazine’s imagined audience was conceived in far more elitist terms.

Murry made *Rhythm*’s anti-establishment rhetoric clear in a letter to Philip Landon in April 1911, which announces his intentions that the journal ‘is to be kept absolutely cosmopolitan’ and needs ‘younger men from England—young men in London: who have not gone thro’ the unenthusiastic aesthetic atmosphere of Oxford.’

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56 *Rhythm*’s projection of its reading public is inevitably a fractured one: it is predicated on the notion that an English reading public still exists and that it has crumbled and needs to be rejuvenated. This is central to Frederick Goodyear’s opening essay in the first number, which calls for the re-establishment of the abbey at Thlema as a utopian community, and argues that ‘before our statesmen can build the new Thelema, artists have to create the free minds that may dwell therein’. Frederick Goodyear, ‘The New Thelema’, *Rhythm*, No. 1 (Summer 1911), 1-3 (2).
He invokes the University of Oxford as a site of narrow and outmoded aesthetic values, while London is seen as its polar opposite, providing the possibility for the development of a new set of aesthetics. However, the journal was necessarily dependent on the ‘unenthusiastic aesthetic atmosphere of Oxford’ for its very existence, since it was founded within Balliol College and partly funded by Murry’s scholarship money. The site of the production of the journal, then, might be seen to conflict with Rhythm’s commitment to an avant-garde aesthetic. Murry’s Parisian encounters with J.D. Fergusson further aided him in the establishment of the journal, and particularly influenced his early commitment to the philosophies of Henri Bergson. He makes this apparent in the letter to Landon:

Bergsonism stands for Post Impressionism in its essential meaning — and not in the sense of the Grafton Exhibition: it stands for a certain symbolism in poetry on the one hand, and a certain definite rejection of suggestion on the other.57

Thus, Murry envisioned Rhythm’s contributors and audience as forming a ‘public sphere’ which would oppose the institutional stagnation he had encountered in Oxford.58 Related to this was his apparent dismissal of Roger Fry’s Post-Impressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Gallery, deemed insufficiently radical in Murry’s definition of the term ‘Post-Impressionism’ above: he was subsequently to dismiss Leonard and

57 Quoted in F.A. Lea, The Life of John Middleton Murry (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1959), pp. 24. Landon was another friend from Murry’s time as a student at Oxford. In the letter, he also insists his envisioned philosophy ‘touch[es] politics very very intimately and I am a yellow Syndicalist’; however, Rhythm was never to become an organ for trade unionism. Nevertheless, the journal’s commitment to the public function of radical art was suggested in the opening number — in particular in Goodyear’s essay ‘The New Thelema’ — and this might be read in politicised terms.

Virginia Woolf (who were, of course, close friends with Fry) as belonging to ‘a perfectly impotent Cambridge set’.  

Murry’s first essay in *Rhythm* (‘Art and Philosophy’) established his commitment to a Bergsonian aesthetic, central to which was the belief in the public function of art identified above by Morrisson.  

Bergson advocated a tripartite relationship between the artist, the artefact and the audience in the production of a work of art, emphasising the importance of the audience/spectator in the act of interpretation.  

Murry and his contributors may have subscribed to this belief in the public role of art, but they also envisioned this public in narrow and elitist terms; Murry would subsequently describe *Rhythm*’s function as “‘The Yellow Book” of the modern movement’, tracing its impact on the ‘Bohemian-literary circle’ to which it most obviously appealed.  

Although Fergusson apparently aimed to make the journal accessible and ‘wanted any herd boy to be able to have the latest information about modern painting from Paris’, there is no such appeal for accessibility in the journal’s prose.  

The exclusive nature of the journal is particularly evident in the anti-‘mob’ rhetoric of ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art’, both of which present a simplistic antagonistic relationship between the artist and his public.  

‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ was the first of two collaborations between Mansfield and Murry. In essence, it is a manifesto which declares the journal’s

64 The artist is always gendered as male in these essays, hence my use of gender-specific language throughout this discussion.
definition of the ‘true conception of the artist’, as Murry put it in an essay in the following number.\(^{65}\) The basic premise of ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ is that ‘[t]he History of Art has been the history of a misunderstanding of a minority by a majority.’\(^{66}\) It deliberately utilises the image of the ‘mob’ against which the artist is pitted (the term ‘mob’ is used throughout both this essay and ‘Seriousness in Art’, and is repeated here with due caution). Murry’s terms have been replicated by contemporary critics who set ‘high modernism’ against popular culture, such as John Carey’s view of the conflict between the ‘Intellectuals’ and the ‘Masses’.\(^{67}\) This opposition of a privileged minority and an uncomprehending and unsympathetic majority was consistently employed in various essays published throughout *Rhythm*’s run, primarily those by Murry and Frank Harris, although Holbrook Jackson and Frederick Goodyear also engaged with the concept of the relationship between a new art and audience.\(^{68}\) As Smith has suggested, though, Goodyear engaged more closely ‘with the impetus that drives the artist, instead of whining about the public’s reception of the new art’, as Murry consistently did.\(^{69}\)

Murry’s earlier essays consistently emphasise the artist’s compulsion to produce his art, and both of the collaborations with Mansfield draw a distinction between such artistic compulsion and mere production (often figured in commercial terms). The first essay argues that the ‘incursion of machine-made realism into modern literature’ has resulted in the production of *journalism* and not *literature*, *facts* rather than *truth* (my

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\(^{65}\) Murry, ‘Who is the Man?’, *Rhythm* No. 6 (July 1912), 37-9 (p. 39).


\(^{68}\) See Goodyear, ‘The New Thelma’; Holbrook Jackson, ‘A Plea for Revolt in Attitude’, *Rhythm*, No. 3 (Winter 1911), 6-10; John Middleton Murry, ‘Who is the Man?’, *Rhythm*, No. 6 (July 1912), 37-9; Frank Harris, ‘Richard Middleton: Ad Memoriam’, *Rhythm*, No. 6 (July 1912), 74-84.

\(^{69}\) Smith, *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life*, p. 82.
‘Seriousness in Art’ expands on this with the assertion that ‘the essential distinction between creativeness and mere production, between art and journalism’ is ‘the profound enthusiasm of the artist for his art’. In this construction, ‘journalism’ is associated with commercialism, whereas art should be concerned ‘with the labour and not with the hire’. It will be argued in later chapters that Mansfield effectively challenged this distinction between ‘art’ and ‘journalism’ (or mere production) in her increasing engagement with different strategies of publication throughout her career; however, her collaborations with Murry in 1912 were far less sophisticated in their representation of the relationship between the writer and the commercial realm of publishing.

‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ locates itself further within a discourse in which the journal as a whole was engaged, calling for artistic liberty in terms that reinforce the elitist belief in the antagonistic nature of the relationship between the artist and the ‘mob’: ‘Freedom in the artist is a consciousness of superiority.’ The essay concludes:

Art and the artist are perfectly at one. Art is free; the artist is free. Art is real; the artist is real. Art is individual; the artist is individual. Their unity is ultimate and unassailable. It is the essential movement of Life. It is the splendid adventure, the eternal quest for rhythm.

It is only in the fusion of these three ideals – freedom (to express himself), reality (the ‘truth’ which the artist expresses), and individuality (as distinct from the monolithic ‘mob’) – that the artist and his art can exist, and can overcome the ‘mob’. This straightforward conflict between an idealised artistic figure and an uncaring and

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71 J. Middleton Murry & Katherine Mansfield, ‘Seriousness in Art’, Rhythm, No. 6 (July 1912), 46-9 (p. 46).
73 Ibid, p. 20.
indifferent mass indicates Rhythm’s naïve and romantic presentation of itself as forming a combative counter-public.

‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ invokes the oppositional forces of aristocracy and democracy to represent the artist and the ‘mob’, though this section of the essay is rather confused and fails to establish its terms fully, arguing that the ‘mob’ has misappropriated the term ‘inspiration’ in relation to artistic creation: to talk of artistic inspiration is to rob the artist of the authority of his vision. Instead, the essay presents the idea of the artist as a figure engaged in an active process of creation, though not as a mere tradesman. This is in keeping with Murry’s earlier assertion in ‘The Aesthetic of Benedetto Croce’ that

the old fairy tale of the divine artist, the inspired madman, is a little threadbare. The cult of the genius is on the wane; and the world is brought closer and closer to the truth that art is self-conscious, and that in art it is brains, and not madness, concentration, and not diffusion of personality, that is from first to last essential.74

The ‘new’ ideal artist is impelled to work, then, neither for monetary gain nor for ‘art’s sake’ but to express ‘truth’ to an audience (and not necessarily a paying one). The limitation of Murry’s position here is that it invokes an audience or reading public, but divorces this from the social realities of a commercial publication context. By contrast, Mansfield would at least attempt to account for the implications of the writer’s engagement with his/her audience, by dramatising the relationship in her stories.

Clearly, the Bergsonian slant to ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ suggests the influence of Murry. In stylistic terms too, there are definite echoes between ‘Art and Philosophy’ and ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’, particularly in the invocation of abstractions like ‘Art’ and ‘Life’, and an overall portentous tone (which Clare Hanson

has traced in Mansfield’s early critical writings and early reviews for the *Athenaeum*, citing Murry’s influence as a reason for this). However, since ‘Art and Philosophy’ invokes ‘Art’ as an abstraction, the essay seems to be concerned only with the work of art’s relationship to the artist, rather than to an audience. By ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’, though, the primary concern has shifted to the artist’s relationship to the ‘mob’, and the later essay displays an uneasy awareness of art’s existence in relation to a possible reading public. This may be indicative of Mansfield’s influence on Murry, drawing on her experiences at the *New Age* (and specific problems with her editorial audience there), although of course it is also symptomatic of Murry’s developing sense of *Rhythm*’s audience after a number of issues had been published. Hanson has further suggested that ‘It is fairly clear that, while the phrasing of the metaphysic of these essays comes largely from Murry, the imagery is KM’s.’ However, although Mansfield may have shared (and possibly helped develop) Murry’s beliefs at this point in her career, it is difficult to identify stylistic indicators of her authorship of ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’; by contrast, the imagery of ‘Seriousness in Art’ (her only contribution to *Rhythm* no. 6) displays more obvious signs of her involvement.

In general, ‘Seriousness in Art’ expands on the terms established in ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ in slightly clearer (but no less snobbish) terms, defining the nature of the ‘truth’ that the artist seeks to articulate in his work as ‘an ever more adequate symbolic expression of the living realities of the world.’ The essay explicitly challenges and denounces commercialism in art, if commercial success is all that the artist seeks. The commercial artist, then, is contrasted with the idealised notion of the

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75 Hanson has suggested that Murry’s influence is evident throughout Mansfield’s criticism and reviews in ‘certain turns of phrase and in a kind of portentousness which appears particularly in the earlier reviews’, although her primary concern is with Mansfield’s development of an authoritative voice in her reviews for the *Athenaeum* between 1919 and 1920. *The Critical Writings*, ed. Hanson, p. 4.
76 Ibid., p. 21.
77 ‘Seriousness in Art’, p. 46.
artist who espouses 'truth', as established in 'The Meaning of Rhythm'. This makes for a neater argument than that of the former essay, but it is no less problematic or elitist; indeed 'Seriousness in Art' returns to the terms of the first essay’s argument. The true artist is once more pitted against the 'mob' in an awkward and extended metaphor that presents the artist as a sailor at sea, refusing to land and join the 'tiny folk' that live on the barren shore. Sea-faring imagery was a favourite of Mansfield's in her later critical writing (most notably in her review of Woolf's Night and Day in November 1919, 'A Ship Comes into the Harbour', but also throughout her reviews for the Athenaeum). It had also been used in the New Age sketch 'Frau Fischer' in the narrator's invention of a conveniently absent sailor-husband for herself before deciding, under pressure from the titular Frau, to wreck her fiction 'somewhere off Cape Horn.' It is also present in the letter to John Drinkwater quoted above, in which she speculates about Rhythm's future as 'a really big ship on a fair sea'. She continued to employ this metaphor in letters to Murry about the Blue Review.

I am beginning to 'pretend' that you are a sailor - trading with all sorts of savages from Monday to Friday - & that the Blue Review is your schooner & [Martin] Seeker the Fish Eyed Pilot. Couldn't you write a long-complicated-extremely-insulting-symbolical-serial around that idea with minute, obscene descriptions of the savage tribes...?78

Given her extensive use of this image, the extended metaphor of the artist-sailor in 'Seriousness in Art' may be plausibly attributed to Mansfield.

'Seriousness in Art' explicitly engages with the commercial artist in its opening sentence: 'To-day the craft of letters is becoming a trade instead of an art.' It claims that the majority of contemporary writers are 'intensely serious in their effort to reach a comfortable competence', but that this seriousness is that of 'any tradesman'. To the

78 To Murry, [early May 1913], The Letters, Vol. 1, p. 120. The use of the verb 'pretend' here recalls the narrator's fiction in 'Frau Fischer' and may be indicative of Mansfield's attempts to move beyond Murry's influence at the Blue Review.
commercial writer, literature is 'a somewhat disreputable means to a purely commercial end, means only to be justified by financial success.' The English public only accepts writers as 'serious' when they have adhered to the 'mob's' ideals (identified by Mansfield and Muiry as 'a refined home, a baby in a white perambulator, and a plate-chest'). The commercial artist, then, takes on the attributes of the 'mob', breaking down the binary of 'superior artist' and 'inferior mob'. The two become more closely related in that the motivation of each is to define themselves in terms of material success and achieve respectability and conventionality: 'For the English public a writer becomes serious when he becomes “a gentleman,” organized and respectable.'

Against this, the ‘true’ artist stands alone and idealised in Mansfield and Muiry’s terms. The closing metaphor of the essay re-establishes the conflict between the true and the commercial artist in its image of the artist-sailor at sea in ‘stately golden ships’ as superior to the ‘mob’ on a barren shore, surrounded by an unknown and (to it) frightening sea. In this construction, the image of the ‘mob’ incorporates both the commercial artist and his audience (since these boundaries have been effectively de-stabilised by the introduction of the concept of ‘trade’ to begin with). The overtly romantic conclusion of the essay sees the artist-sailor abused by the ‘mob’ for refusing to come ashore and join the community; however, the artist-sailor cannot hear this abuse, as it is drowned out by the noise of the waves. By contrast, his ‘joyful laughter of serene delight’ does reach the shore, re-establishing a power structure whereby his words are granted authority and an audience, sympathetic or otherwise.

The ‘mob’ is ultimately unable to suppress these voices.

Both of these essays invoke an elitist and often contradictory view of the struggling ‘true’ artist at odds with an uncaring public (yet, at the conclusion of

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79 'Seriousness in Art', p. 46.
'Seriousness in Art', one that continues to preach to this uncaring public from a privileged position of authority). The terms of the arguments are often muddled and over-written, and the arguments problematic and contradictory, perhaps as a result of the collaborative process – if indeed they were collaborations – and perhaps out of sheer youthful exuberance. Ultimately, Mansfield's editorial collaborations with Murry lacked clarity of expression, but these essays stand as her most explicit public expression of her antagonistic relationship with a wide audience. However, when she began to develop these ideas in her fiction, the resultant complication of the relationship between the artist-figure and democratic 'mob' proved far more interesting. In particular, they furthered the expression of Mansfield's anxiety of authority with which the opening reading of 'The Woman at the Store' was primarily concerned, but presented these anxieties in a new context afforded by publication in *Rhythm*. The following sections will focus on two sketches, 'Tales of a Courtyard' and 'Sunday Lunch', to demonstrate her increasing uncertainty about the coterie nature of *Rhythm* and the limited audience it offered her work.

'Tales of a Courtyard'

'Tales of a Courtyard' consists of three sketches which are linked by the courtyard of the title and which apparently play out in reverse from 'Early Spring' to the wintry setting of 'The Following After' and finally 'By Moonlight', which takes place on a summer night. It appeared in *Rhythm* No. 7, the month after 'Seriousness in Art'. To date, it has not been reprinted, and has received little or no critical attention. Alpers elected to exclude the three sketches from his edition of Mansfield’s stories, dismissing them as ‘three short “Russian” imitations, and K.M.’s weakest contributions to the
The first of the three sketches, ‘Early Spring’, has been described by Saralyn R. Daly as a ‘description of the “democratic mob” scorned by the aristocratic artists of “Seriousness in Art”’. Certainly, ‘Early Spring’ might be read as pitching superior artists against an inferior ‘mob’ – the narrative voice is a first-person plural, and hence not an individual voice, but rather the kind of monolithic mass that featured in the essays. This voice clearly introduces the Russian students (who are absent for much of the sketch) as an alien presence in the courtyard, but a presence that dares to be different and not conform to the ‘mob’s’ ideals. The implication is that the Russian students may be read as an image of the superior artist in the terms established in both ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art’. However, ‘Tales of a Courtyard’ abruptly moves on from this relatively straightforward rendering of the antagonistic terms of the two essays, and the remaining two sketches complicate matters. This is particularly true of the final sketch in the tripartite structure, ‘By Moonlight’, which may be read as one of Mansfield’s meditations on her public role at this point of her career. It is ultimately ambiguous in its re-working of the simplifying terms of ‘true artist’ and ‘commercial artist’ proposed in the essays discussed above. This is the first sign of a movement away from the influence of Murry’s ideals evident in ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art’.

‘By Moonlight’ is by far the longest of the three sketches, and it engages specifically with the concepts of the work of art as a commodity, the necessity of an audience for its existence, and the uneasy relationship with the commercial world in the production of art. This is particularly evident in the second half of the sketch, in which Feodor arrives home from a day’s work and begins to compose a poem. Initially, he

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81 The Stories, ed. Alpers, p. 551.
82 Daly, Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition, p. 32.
83 Daly finds little or no merit in ‘By Moonlight’, dismissing it as follows: ‘[t]he influence on plot and psychology is apparently that of Dostoyevsky, in a very much diluted fashion’. Daly, Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition, p. 32.
chooses to ignore the presence of an old man at the other end of the bench on which he
is sitting, but becomes fascinated with him when the old man produces what is
eventually revealed to be a book. Once Feodor discovers that the book contains poetry
(his favoured genre) he begins to read its contents over the old man's shoulder by the
moonlight of the title. When the old man realises that he has an audience, though, he
begins to read the poetry aloud. Both of these forms of audience – Feodor as reader and
listener – are presented in terms that recall 'Seriousness in Art'. The old man is
established as an aristocratic artist: his face 'drenched in the white light of moon looked
unreal, like a face gleaming through water'; his poems are 'like waves beating on warm
sands', evoking the figure of the artist-sailor of that essay.84

Initially, Feodor's reaction to the poetry he first reads and then hears suggests he
has been moved by a confrontation with 'true' art in a way that he has not contemplated
before. When the old man stops reading, Feodor begins to realise a different truth:

Feodor slowly came to consciousness of his surroundings, and with this
consciousness to the realization of his own poverty and helplessness and
of his own longing for a different life – of his craving to go away from
the city – far away – into that country place with fields and rivers and
big yellow haystacks. 'And soon it will all be too late,' he thought,
'soon I shall be sitting on this bench – an old man with white hair – but
with no book of poems – with empty hands I'll be sitting here, and all
will be over.'85

It is as he contemplates his future in these terms that he hears the old man talk to his
book as though it were a 'little child':

'My own, my treasure, core of my heart, I will not part with thee. They
think I am a fool because I am old, but all my years I have longed for
thee and thou art mine for ever. Sell us this, they say, sell us this and

84 'Tales of a Courtyard', *Rhythm*, No. 7 (August 1912), 99-105 (p. 104). The old man is not necessarily
presented as the author of these poems, but in keeping with *Rhythm*'s Bergsonian aesthetic, he may claim
authorship of them by reciting and thereby interpreting them.
85 'Tales of a Courtyard', p.104.
you shall be a rich man for a year. Bah! I spit in their faces. No one shall buy thee. Thou art my all in all until the end.  

It is Feodor’s realisation that the book is valuable that brings him to his senses. He contemplates stealing it, and then asking for it, all as a means to fund his art. It is only when he discovers that the old man is asleep that he decides to steal the book, ultimately (it is implied) bringing about the old man’s death.

Under the construction of the ‘aristocratic’ artist and the ‘democratic mob’/commercial artist established in ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art’, we might expect Feodor’s actions to be condemned. However, interpretation of the sketch hinges on whether or not Feodor is invoked as a commercial artist in relation to the old man’s aristocrat, and this is presented in ambiguous terms. Certainly, the old man is invoked as an example of the aristocratic artist, and his death after the loss of his book would seem to be a telling image of the victory of commercialism over aristocratic art. However, Feodor is not necessarily presented as a misguided commercial (or democratic) artist in the terms established by the two essays, since his intentions to use the profits from selling the book as a means to produce his own art are arguably sound.

Feodor is forced into his actions, and his theft of the book may be read in terms similar to those suggested by Murry’s ‘What We Have Tried To Do’ in Rhythm no. 3. In this editorial, Murry had offered a defensive vindication of the introduction of advertisements to fund Rhythm in its quest to say ‘something [...] that no other magazine has ever said or had the courage to say.’ Rhythm’s concern is with ‘free expression, not on the methods by which that freedom is secured’.  

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86 Ibid.
87 The Editor, ‘What We Have Tried To Do’, Rhythm, No. 3 (Winter 1911), 36. George Lilley identifies this editorial as Murry’s work. A Bibliography of John Middleton Murry (London: Dawsons, 1974), p. 54.
suggest engaging with the commercial world as a means to an end. Likewise, Feodor merely employs one side of the commercial nature of art in order to fund himself in his attempts at producing his own art. His name provides a clue to his function in the sketch: 'Feodor' or 'Fyodor' is the Russian version of 'Theodore' from the Greek meaning 'divine gift' or 'gift from god'. The implication is that Feodor merely chooses to make the most of the opportunity with which he is presented. His act might best be interpreted as a rudimentary example of the kinds of modernist strategies identified by Lawrence Rainey in *Institutions of Modernism*:

Modernism marks neither a straightforward resistance nor an outright capitulation to commodification but a momentary equivocation that incorporates elements of both in a brief, necessarily unstable synthesis.\(^{88}\)

Rainey's interpretation here is a useful one to apply to a journal such as *Rhythm*. Murry's defence of the journal's use of advertisements as a source of funding indicates an acknowledgement of its status as a commodity in the modernist marketplace and its necessary engagement with the more commercially-aware publishing world which he otherwise deems anathema to the artistic impulse.

In producing fictional representations of the themes of these essays, Mansfield effectively complicated the simplistic position here adopted by Murry in particular and *Rhythm* in general. 'By Moonlight' provides a far less clear-cut distinction between the idealised 'aristocratic' artist and vilified 'democratic' artist that had been established in her two collaborative essays with Murry. 'Sunday Lunch' articulates a more complex portrayal of the artist and his audience again, and is clearer in its execution than 'Tales of a Courtyard'. In 'Sunday Lunch' Mansfield details the anxieties of an artistic community, which is presented as a world occupied by back-stabbers and 'cannibals'.
In part, it anticipates Mansfield’s subsequent portraits of Bloomsbury and the anxieties about the judgement and the consumption of her work in that context. In terms of its immediate context in *Rhythm*, though, it can clearly be located within the discourse on the ‘aristocratic’ and ‘democratic’ artists in the essays and sketches already discussed, and suggests that Mansfield’s perceived coterie audience at *Rhythm* might provide a further source of authorial uncertainty.

‘Sunday Lunch’

‘Sunday Lunch’ was published in *Rhythm* in October 1912 under the pseudonym ‘The Tiger’, half of the pen name that was shared with Murry. Like ‘Tales of a Courtyard’, it has received little or no critical attention. Murry reprinted it in the *Scrapbook*, and Daly is once again dismissive, describing it as ‘merely a New Age-like attack on the malice of self-satisfied, materially successful dilettantes who consider themselves artists but are “not real enough to die.”’ Certainly, in tone and setting, it recalls ‘At the Club’, one of Mansfield’s *New Age* pastiches, but there is much more to this portrait of ‘self-satisfied, materially successful dilettantes’. The sketch details ‘the last of the cannibal feasts’ at which a group of artists sit around eating anything but food, instead consuming and criticising the work of an absent colleague, a process which is described as ‘the wild, tremendous orgy of the upper classes, the hunting, killing, eating ground of

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89 ‘The Tiger’ was one of three names under which Mansfield published in *Rhythm*, No. 9 (Katherine Mansfield, Lili Heron and The Tiger).
90 Daly, *Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition*, p. 35.
91 Mansfield’s pastiche ‘At the Club’ appeared in the *New Age*, 10.19 (7 March 1912), 449-50. Hanson has also attributed the unsigned ‘Virginia’s Journal’ (*Rhythm*, No. 12 (January 1913), 360-2) to Mansfield, describing it as ‘a clever parody in the style of the epistolary novel, attacking aspects of London literary life [...] and a clear hit back at the *New Age* and its circle of contributors.’ *The Critical Writings*, ed. Hanson, p. 148. However, Kirkpatrick lists it in his bibliography as a ‘doubtful contribution’, and it is not included in this discussion. Kirkpatrick, *A Bibliography of Katherine Mansfield*, p. 150.
all the George-the-Fifth-and-Mary artists. In this way, the sketch actively establishes the previously idealised concept of the ‘aristocratic’ artist as the target for her satire.

Mansfield’s collaborative essays with Murry had been predicated on the idealised notion of the aristocratic artist as an isolated artist, attempting to preach to an indifferent mass/audience from his elevated position. By contrast, ‘Sunday Lunch’ dramatises Mansfield’s developing acknowledgement that this image of aloofness is an artistic pose that is deliberately cultivated, and the sketch is populated with poseurs who proclaim ‘Look at me! Behold me, I am an artist!’ (‘Sunday’, p. 223) Moreover, the sketch presents these individuals coming together to form a community, but the petty and small-minded backbiting in which ‘The Tiger’s’ cannibals engage bears no relation to the idealised artist of Mansfield and Murry’s essays, or Murry’s earlier editorial in the third number of Rhythm. ‘What We Have Tried To Do’ had presented an idealised image of a literary community: ‘The men who try to do something new for the most part starve. They can only win to success by unity, by helping their best friends and neglecting petty differences.’ By joining ranks in this kind of act of solidarity, Murry implies that these otherwise struggling modernist artists might provide support and an audience for one another, and stand in opposition to the ‘mob’.

The representation of ‘The Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism’ of ‘Sunday Lunch’ posits a radically different take on this notion of an artistic community: The Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism waxes most fat and kicks hardest (strictly under the table) in Chelsea, in St John’s Wood, in

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92 The Tiger, ‘Sunday Lunch’, Rhythm, No. 9 (October 1912), 223-5 (p. 223). All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text, abbreviated as ‘Sunday’.
93 The sketch also presents an image of the ‘mob’ that partakes of Sunday dinner, a ‘perfectly respectable’ meal which ‘has never been known to come to a decided finish, but [...] finally it drops into sofas and chairs and creeps to box-ottomans and beds, with illustrated magazines, digesting itself asleep until tea time’ (‘Sunday’, p. 223). Clearly, this image of passive conformity is presented in a satirical manner, and, prior to this sketch, Mansfield and Murry had frowned upon conformity in the united front put forth in the essays. However, in ‘Sunday Lunch’, this rather gentle dig at the ‘mob’ is limited to the sketch’s opening section, whereas the ridicule of bohemian London is sustained over the entire sketch.
94 ‘What We Have Tried To Do’, p. 36.
certain select squares and (God help them) gardens. Its members are legion, for there is no city in this narrow world which contains so vast a number of artists as London. Why, in London you cannot read the books for the authors, you cannot see the pictures for the studios, you simply cannot hear the music for the musicians’ photographs. (‘Sunday’, p. 223)

This collective society provides an all-too-attentive public for each individual artist’s work, but this perpetuates a constant cycle of consumption and criticism that does not allow either for the development of art or for the dissemination of it beyond these limited circles. The sketch indicates that the members of the Society form an ineffectual audience for one another’s work: ‘however often the Society kills and eats itself, it is never real enough to die, it is never brave enough to consider itself well eaten’ (‘Sunday’, 225).

Their ‘cannibalism’ first manifests itself as an attack on an absentee, James Fanton:

And then, quite suddenly, with most deliberate lightness, a victim is seized by the cannibals. ‘S’pose you’ve read Fanton’s “Grass Widower!” ‘Yes.’ ‘Not as good as the “Evergreen Petals.”’ ‘No,’ ‘I did not think so either.’ ‘Tailed off.’ ‘So long-winded.’ ‘Fifty pounds.’ ‘But there were bits, half lines, you know, and adjectives.’ The knife pauses. ‘Oh, but have you read his latest?’ ‘Nothing. All about ships or something. Not a hint of passion.’ Down comes the knife, James Fanton is handed round. (‘Sunday’, p. 224)

In the middle of their attack on Fanton’s style comes a snide ‘Fifty pounds’. The following paragraph expands on this with a series of statements that read: “...Writing in the Daily Mail ...” “Three to four thousand a year.” “A middle-class mind but interesting” (‘Sunday’, p. 224). The cannibals have apparently chosen Fanton as their victim because they deem him to have become a ‘commercial’ artist: his ‘latest’ is only dismissed as not having ‘a hint of passion’ after the mention of the fifty pounds he had earned. Fanton’s commercial success meets with the disdain of the cannibals, but the
sketch itself does not criticise him in these terms. Rather, 'The Tiger' ridicules the cannibals for their artistic posturing, and their hypocritical attitudes to the commercial realm of publication:

'But if they offered you eighty pounds in America for a short poem, why ever didn't you write it?' 'I think it's brave of you to advertise so much, I really do, I wish I had the courage – but at the last moment I can't. I never shall be able.' ('Sunday', p. 225)

The cannibals are 'guilty' of the same crime of which Fanton stands accused, but criticise those who engage more successfully with these commercial strategies.

Fanton's commercial success is interpreted by the cannibals as the reason for what they see as the decline in the quality of his work; they attack this inability to 'keep the big mould for more than a paragraph', and describe his latest work as being 'all about ships or something' ('Sunday', p. 225). This reference to the 'ship' recalls a central image of 'Seriousness in Art', and might be seen as a deliberate reference to her earlier critical stance in the collaborations with Murry. However, ship imagery was also recurrent in Mansfield's fiction, and might in this context be read as an articulation of her own anxiety of form as a writer of brief sketches (much like 'Sunday Lunch' itself) and short stories; the 'doing to death' of James Fanton suggests her concern about the way in which her own work was consumed by her audience. Moreover, by presenting the cannibals' critique of Fanton in terms of his commercial success, she implicitly acknowledges her anxiety at the prospect of achieving similar success in her own career; in this sense, the sketch anticipates her later challenges to the straightforward representation of a 'mass audience' that had been posited in her collaborations with Murry. Mansfield's subsequent career was characterised by her

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95 Note the significance here that this speaker deems it acceptable to receive payment for work published in America – it is a different market.
development of her brand of modernist short story in publication contexts that saw her move beyond the ‘aristocratic’ mode which *Rhythm* had cultivated, and towards a more active engagement with the commercial world of literary publishing. It was through the act of writing fictional scenarios based around the ‘aristocratic’ and ‘democratic’ artists of her collaborative essays with Murry that Mansfield first began to acknowledge the necessity of an engagement with the commercial realm of publishing in the production of her work.

In the end, ‘Sunday Lunch’ may be read, not as a judgement on the figure of the commercial artist, but as a satirical representation of a literary community which is ultimately ineffectual in its inability (or perhaps unwillingness) to address an audience beyond its immediate members. Moreover, at the time of its appearance in October 1912, Mansfield was engaged in attempts to keep the journal afloat in the face of financial difficulties (so that it might one day become ‘a really big ship on a fair sea’, as she put it to Drinkwater). This found little real support until Marsh responded to Murry’s appeal and fronted the money to fund the *Blue Review*. At the same time, the *New Age*’s continued attacks on Mansfield acted for her as a reminder of the potentially fickle nature of her professional connections. In light of this satire on an insincere community of writers, ‘Sunday Lunch’ might be read as evidence that Mansfield had begun to question Murry’s ideals of a literary community and, by extension, coterie publication. In the sketch, she implies that the ‘support system’ of little magazines and the communities with which they were associated was ultimately problematic.

**Conclusion: The *Blue Review* and beyond**

‘Sunday Lunch’ is a key text in understanding Mansfield’s perception of her developing role as a writer within the marketplace, and it anticipates many of the anxieties of
production and consumption with which she was preoccupied for most of her career. With ‘Sunday Lunch’, Mansfield explicitly figured her anxiety of authority in relation to a bohemian-literary audience as well as a ‘popular’ one: her antagonistic relationship to these various markets will be explored more fully in Chapter Three, with specific reference to the composition and publication of *Prelude* (1918).

‘Sunday Lunch’ might also be read as a turning point in Mansfield’s professional relationship with Murry, particularly in terms of his idealised coterie publication; from this point on her published prose in *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review* may be divided into two main groups. On the one hand, ‘Ole Underwood’ and ‘Millie’ read as somewhat watered-down revisits to ‘The Woman at the Store’, attempts to reconnect with the ‘brutal’ art that the journal claimed to endorse, and to move away from the overt sentimentality of the persona associated with ‘The Little Girl’ (and the poems, which are not discussed here). On the other hand – and exclusively in the *Blue Review* – she attempted a return to her *New Age* style, with the ‘Epilogues’. Her initial move to *Rhythm* had in part been motivated by the fact that it appeared to offer a new site of publication in which she could aim to develop the impressionistic strain of her writing, which had not been fostered at the *New Age*. By contrast, in later years, she would actively return to the *New Age* at a key moment of experimentation with form in 1917, as the next chapter will discuss. In 1913, she may not have reappeared in the *New Age*, but she did re-embrace the satirical persona associated with that journal in ‘Sunday Lunch’ and the ‘Epilogues’. In itself, this suggests that Mansfield was beginning to turn away from *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review*.

Clare Hanson has suggested that Murry’s ‘romantic view of the artist was substantially that of KM, though her idealism was later qualified by a sharp, ironic wit
which seems to have been quite out of Murry's range'. 96 This 'sharp, ironic' wit was actually evident in 'Sunday Lunch', and Mansfield had begun to express a sense of unease with this artistic pose and the bohemian-literary circles with which it was associated before the Blue Review issued its first number in May 1913. It will be argued in Chapter Four that Je ne parle pas français enacts a similar reaction against this self-conscious and hypocritical artist-figure. The themes that are played out in 'Sunday Lunch' at the end of 1912 – the hypocrisies and inadequacies of 'aristocratic artists' and their refusal to engage with the commercial realm of publishing – form a blueprint for her development of a new aesthetic approach in her fiction and a new audience to which it might be addressed, as will be discussed throughout the remaining chapters. Although she did not provide any critical commentary on a movement beyond the naïve terms of her collaborations with Murry at this point in her career, it has been shown that she achieved a more complicated interrogation of these terms in her fiction at this time. This more complex understanding of the relationship between artist and audience would subsequently be played out in her short stories and in her developing publication strategies.

Towards the end of the run of the Blue Review she reacted violently to the suggested excision of one of her satirical pieces, in terms that were to become familiar later in her career:

I've nursed the epilogue to no purpose. Every time I pick it up and hear ‘you'll keep it to six’, I can’t cut it. To my knowledge there aren’t any superfluous words: I mean every line of it. I don’t ‘just ramble on’ you know, but this thing happened to just fit 6½ pages – you can’t cut it without making an ugly mess somewhere. I’m a powerful stickler for form in this style of work. […] I’d rather it wasn’t there at all than sitting in the Blue Review with a broken nose and one ear as though it had jumped into an editorial dog fight. 97

96 The Critical Writings, ed. Hanson, p. 21.
This is the first real instance of a clash with Murry on professional terms, and may be read as a further indication of Mansfield’s early attempts to extricate herself from his influence. Again, while this is not explicitly stated, it is worth noting that she had moved to the country before the *Blue Review* began publication and played a much smaller role in editing this new incarnation of *Rhythm*. Nevertheless, the remainder of her career was punctuated by periods of disagreements with Murry in professional terms, as well as periods of mutual respect and collaboration (most notably at the *Athenaeum*, as discussed in Chapter Four). The *Blue Review*’s demise saw Mansfield practically disappear from public view for nearly two years. Evidently, she wrote little during this time: ‘Something Childish but Very Natural’ was probably written in 1914, but remained unpublished until 1924. It merits mention here for two reasons. The first is its increased length; without a ready-made site in which to publish the story, Mansfield began to experiment more with increasing the length of her stories, which would ultimately contribute to the composition of *Prelude*. Secondly, the story clearly indicates a change in her relationship with Murry, as Daly has noted: it presents an idealised child-love between Henry and Edna, but concludes with Edna’s abandonment of Henry. By the time it was written, Mansfield and Murry’s personal and professional relationship had become closely entwined, as is indicated by the development of ‘The Two Tigers’ into ‘Tig’ and ‘Wig’. Mansfield acknowledged the difficulties of this relationship by the end of

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98 The story first appeared in the New York paper, *Collier’s Weekly* in January 1924; the first British publication was in the *Adelphi*, 1.9-1.10 (February-March 1924), 777-90, 913-22. It was subsequently reprinted in *Something Childish and Other Stories* later that year.

99 Daly argues: ‘not writing for any magazine, limited by neither the demands of space nor editorial policy, Mansfield produced a story more than twice as long as her usual ones, and far more carefully wrought’, ‘I suspect that it was intended as a private message to Murry, immediately responding to her situation in February 1914 in Paris, where she wrote the story’. Daly, *Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition*, pp. 39; 42.
the *Blue Review*’s run when she wrote to Murry complaining of the amount of housework she was expected to do:

> when I have to clear up twice over or wash up extra unnecessary things *I get frightfully impatient and want to be working*. *So often this week I’ve heard you and Gordon [Campbell] talking while I washed dishes.* Well, someone’s got to wash dishes and get food. Otherwise – ‘there’s nothing in the house but eggs to eat.’ *Yes I hate hate HATE doing these things, that you accept just as all men accept of their women.* I can only play the servant with a very bad grace indeed (my italics).\(^{100}\)

The blurring of these boundaries made it increasingly difficult for Mansfield to maintain professional distance from Murry in her work, and the negotiation of the personal and professional sides of the relationship would continue to pose problems for both throughout the remainder of Mansfield’s career. Chapter Three opens in 1915 at another period of disillusionment with Murry and his circle, eighteen months after the demise of the *Blue Review* and at a time of renewed professional frustration for Mansfield.

Chapter Three

‘A sort of authority’: from Signature to the Hogarth Press 1915-1918

After the Blue Review folded in the summer of 1913, Mansfield’s publishing career practically ground to a halt. Between October 1913 and September 1915, she published just one story in Britain, ‘Old Tar’ in the Saturday Westminster Gazette, and only completed one more story (‘Something Childish but Very Natural’). 1 1914 was an unsettled year: she began it with Murry in Paris (escaping from the bankruptcy proceedings that had resulted from their association with ‘Stephen Swift’), before moving back to London and a string of accommodation disasters (a vermin-infested apartment in Chelsea, for example), finally relocating in October to Rose Tree Cottage, near Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire. 1914 would prove to be the least productive year of Mansfield’s career, and her time in Buckinghamshire, surrounded by Murry, D.H. Lawrence, and Gilbert Cannan (all working on novels) and the artist Mark Gertler was particularly stultifying. 2 Only in January 1915 did she complete a story, ‘Brave Love’, the plot of which was in part influenced by her flirtation with Francis Carco, and the story was completed a month before her ‘indiscreet journey’ to join him.

1 ‘Old Tar’, Saturday Westminster Gazette, 25 October 1913, p. 9; the story was also printed in the Westminster Gazette of the same day (p. 2), and was reprinted in the New Zealand Times, Wellington, on 11 December 1913, p. 17, with the sub-title ‘A Karori Story’. Her sole publication of 1914 was in New Zealand, when a private letter to Laura Kate Bright was printed in the Evening Post, Wellington, on 6 November 1914, p. 6: it appeared under a paragraph headed ‘Writing from London to a Wellington resident under the date 21 September, a correspondent says: – “Here, in London, we are in the throes of this frightful war...” See Kirkpatrick, A Bibliography of Katherine Mansfield, p. 115.

2 The Lawrences were living a mile away from Rose Tree Cottage, in what was clearly an attempt on Lawrence’s part to establish his utopian community of ‘Rananim’.
in France. \(^3\) ‘Brave Love’ was never published in her lifetime, and after its composition, it would be another nine months before she reappeared in print. \(^4\) This was in *Signature*, a journal established in the summer of 1915 by Murry and Lawrence, and in part a product of the same stultifying atmosphere that Mansfield had attempted to escape at the beginning of the year.

Mansfield’s *Signature* work appeared under a new pseudonym (Matilda Berry). This new authorial persona served to distance her (briefly) from the name ‘Katherine Mansfield’ and was accompanied by increased experimentation with narrative voice: the end result would be *Prelude*. Whereas the publication of this material under a pseudonym aimed to do away with a previously established authorial persona, her development of narrative voice and use of dramatic forms in this material (and also in rewriting ‘The Aloe’ into *Prelude*) aimed at a more subtle erasure of the author. In *Signature*, this erasure was primarily achieved through the use of an external marker (the pseudonym); by contrast, *Prelude* achieves this effacement in textual terms, by the removal of authorial intrusion.

The composition and publication of *Prelude* mark the beginning of a new phase of Mansfield’s writing career. It is usually identified as the first of her technically ‘mature’ work, in which she consolidated her theoretical approach to the short story form as an erasure of the authorial perspective from the narrative. It also saw her re-marketing as ‘Katherine Mansfield’, her most commercially viable name, in a process which saw a return to an old audience (at the *New Age*) and the cultivation of a new one.

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\(^3\) The story can be dated by Mansfield’s diary entry for 12 January 1915. *The Notebooks*, Vol. 2, p. 35. The ‘awful African woman’ in part anticipates *Je ne parle pas français*, as does the basic scenario of a flight from England and abandonment of spouse, although in ‘Brave Love’ the gender roles are reversed. Whereas Dick Harmon abandons Mouse in the later story, Valerie returns to Evershed at the end of ‘Brave Love’. In this way, the story enacts what Alpers refers to as the ‘Prudent Wife’ theme, also evident in ‘The Swing of the Pendulum’ (1911) and ‘The Black Cap’ (1917). *The Stories*, ed. Alpers, p. 549; p. 557.

through her connections with Garsington and Bloomsbury. The extended length of ‘The Aloe’/Prelude precluded it from publication in the journal format with which she had heretofore been associated, and forced her to seek new avenues for publication; this resulted in her brief foray into private publication with the Woolfs. With this new phase came Mansfield’s maturity as a writer, and she would soon claim, on the completion of Je ne parle pas francais, ‘what [I] felt so curiously as I wrote it was – ah! I am in a way grown up as a writer – a sort of authority (my italics).’ Her technical revolutions with Prelude are indisputable, but equally important is the fact that the composition and publication of the story were in the context of a new awareness of her role as a writer in the marketplace, as continued to be evident for the remainder of her career. Throughout the second half of her career, her movement away from little magazines and private publication was evidently linked to her decision to expand her audience and market, and will be further traced in Chapters Four and Five. In this way, it will be shown that Mansfield’s consolidation of a modernist aesthetic in her fiction coincided with her increasing acceptance of and engagement with the commercial publishing realm.

This chapter discusses Mansfield’s development of ‘a sort of authority’ between the key years of 1915 and 1918, which saw the production of Prelude, her breakthrough story. This sense of ‘authority’ is a tentative one, however: it was achieved through her development of a narrative technique which effectively removed her authorial voice from her stories, and was hampered by her perceived loss of control over her work in the publication process. Her conscious ‘self-silencing’ in her development of narrative voice allowed her to achieve what she subsequently referred to as ‘the defeat of the

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5 The TLS review of both Prelude and Je ne parle pas francais (discussed in Chapter Four) on the publication of the latter in January 1920 described them as ‘two stories of the “awkward” length which, as publishers declare, the public finds too long for a short story and too short for a novel’. TLS, No. 941, 29 January 1920, p. 63.

personal' in her work.\textsuperscript{7} The cultivation of technical 'impersonality' is, of course, identifiable as a narrative strategy in the work of many of Mansfield's contemporaries. This textual 'death of the author' could be seen as existing in an uneasy relationship with Mansfield's ambition to be an author, and accounts for her sense that her 'authority' could only ever be partial. Ultimately, it is in this framework that Mansfield's development of a commercially viable modernist aesthetic is best understood.

'The jam in the golden pill': \textit{Signature}

At the end of 1911, as Mansfield began to disassociate herself from the \textit{New Age}, she had contacted J.B. Pinker and sought his professional representation. Similarly, by the end of 1914, her dissatisfaction with Murry in particular (and Rose Tree Cottage in general) manifested itself not only in her liaison with Carco in February 1915, but also in another failed attempt at engaging a literary agent, Curtis Browne. This provides a clear indication that she intended once more to attempt a new professional direction, further evidenced by the composition of a number of stories in the spring of 1915. The encounter with Carco provided her with copy for a short story ("An Indiscreet Journey"), but more importantly gave her access to his Parisian apartment, and freedom from the stifling atmosphere of Rose Tree Cottage. By 10 March she had written "The Little Governess".\textsuperscript{8} By May, after a number of trips back and forth between Paris and Rose Tree Cottage, she had also written "Spring Pictures" and probably "An Indiscreet Journey" (both of which were published posthumously in \textit{Something Childish and}


\textsuperscript{8} To Koteliansky, 10 March 1915, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 1, p. 153.
Other Stories) and had completed fifty pages of the manuscript that would eventually be published three years later (in July 1918) as Prelude.⁹

It was probably 'The Little Governess' that Mansfield sent to S.S. Koteliansky early in March 1915, with a request that he try to place it for her in the Smart Set: although she and Murry were reconciled at this point, she opted to let Koteliansky represent her on this occasion.¹⁰ He failed to place the story, and it was not published until October/November 1915, in two issues of Signature under the name 'Matilda Berry'. Lawrence and Murry established the journal as a joint venture, although it is evident that Lawrence had the larger stake in it, and used his advance from the publication of The Rainbow to finance the journal.¹¹ Later, in 1925, Lawrence attempted to distance himself from the venture, claiming it had been Murry's project.¹² Nevertheless, his letters of 1915 demonstrate the extent of his contribution, which also involved establishing a discussion group and lecture series as a companion to the journal (taking rooms in Fisher Street for the purposes of holding these meetings) and bringing Koteliansky on board as business manager. It was Lawrence who made a number of attempts to recruit like-minded individuals both as contributors and subscribers, expressing plans to solicit articles by Bertrand Russell and Gilbert Cannan, and subscriptions from Lady Ottoline Morrell, Lady Cynthia Asquith and E.M. Forster.¹³

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¹⁰ To Koteliansky, early March 1915, The Letters, Vol. 1, p. 152. The Smart Set was published in New York; an English edition, featuring additional English material, was edited by H.J. Gillespie.
¹³ At times, his promotion amounted to little more than bullying, as in his letter to Ottoline Morrell: 'Tell those two American ladies near you [Ethel Sands and Nancy Hudson], whom I went to see, that I expect them to have my paper, because of what it says.' D.H. Lawrence to Ottoline Morrell, 14 September 1915, The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, Vol. 2, p. 393. Hereafter cited as DHL Letters II.
Although Mansfield played no direct role in running *Signature* (and never recorded attending Lawrence’s club), the journal’s place in the publication of her work merits more attention than it is usually granted in accounts of her career. Lawrence’s publicity for the journal tended to present Mansfield’s contributions in somewhat patronising terms as in this letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith, which features his habitual misspelling of Mansfield’s name:

> I am going to do the preaching – sort of philosophy – the beliefs by which one can reconstruct the world: Murry will do his ideas on [...] freedom for the individual soul, Katharine [sic] Mansfield will do her *little satirical sketches* (my italics).

This sentiment was echoed in a subsequent advertisement for the journal in September 1915:

> It is proposed to issue a small fortnightly journal, called *THE SIGNATURE*, which will contain a series of six papers on social and personal freedom by D.H. Lawrence and J.M. Murry, and a set of satirical sketches by Matilda Berry; also such contributors as may be found in harmony with the general idea of the journal.

In actuality, Mansfield’s contributions were far from satirical, and the second ‘Autumn’ in particular is often identified as the first of her mature impressionistic work. Moreover, the phrase ‘satirical sketches’ obviously recalls Mansfield’s most famous work to date, the *New Age* ‘Pension Sketches’ (and also, to an extent, the ‘Epilogues’ that were published in the *Blue Review*), but her use of a pseudonym meant that the journal could not have traded on her reputation as a satirist. Since neither the form of

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14 Tomalin in particular presents the journal as primarily Lawrence’s concern, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, p. 139; Angela Smith references *Signature* only once in *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life*, p. 76; Saralyn R. Daly dismisses the journal as ‘a short-lived fiasco’, *Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition*, p. 46.


16 Cited in *DHL Letters II*, p. 393.

these contributions nor the name under which they were published is congruent with her earlier satirical work, the decision to advertise them in such terms is puzzling.

In total, Mansfield saw three stories published in *Signature*: ‘Autumns: I’, ‘Autumns: II’ and ‘The Little Governess’.¹⁸ The journal ran for only three issues, and attracted roughly one fifth of the two hundred and fifty subscribers it would have needed to cover its costs. The death of Leslie Beauchamp and the controversy about *The Rainbow* clearly affected the commitment of both Mansfield and Lawrence to the journal, although Murry hoped to keep it afloat a little longer.¹⁹ He wrote to Mansfield on 15 December 1915: ‘please send me something immediately for *Signature*. You are the real success of it ... we shall eventually pull thro’ with it, trading on your popularity’, to which she replied on 19 December: ‘Ill send you something for the *Signature* but don’t flatter me – Im only the jam in the golden pill – and I know my place, Betsey.’²⁰ Her description of herself at the time as the ‘jam in the golden pill’ provides a spatial metaphor for the layout of each issue of the journal, which opened with Lawrence’s anti-war essay ‘The Crown’ and closed with Murry’s ‘There was a Little Man...’, with Mansfield’s material sandwiched in between. By implication, if the reader can only wade through the Lawrence essay that opened each issue of the journal, he/she will discover something considerably more palatable.

Mansfield’s description of herself in these terms also suggests that she viewed *Signature* as a potentially inappropriate vehicle for the publication of her work: as the ‘jam’ is placed *inside* the pill, the inference is that it is less likely to be consumed by an


¹⁹ See *Between Two Worlds*, p. 373. His proposal to establish a private printing press came to nothing, though it may have provided Lawrence with the inspiration to contemplate the establishment of ‘The Rainbow Books and Music’, with the intention of issuing his work in private editions.

audience more interested in essays by Lawrence and Murry than in ‘Matilda Berry’s satirical sketches’. In this way, she identified that she was peripheral to Signature, and later deliberately distanced herself from it, tentatively criticising one of Murry’s TLS reviews in 1917 as ‘a “Signature” style of writing and its appeal is in some obscure way – to me – mind me – I suppose only to me – indecent.’ Hanson and Gurr note that it was the ‘egotism’ of the material published by Murry and Lawrence in the Signature that Mansfield deemed ‘indecent’, suggesting that it ran directly counter to her own developing authorial distance in her narrative style.

Her use of a pseudonym belies Murry’s description of the journal in Between Two Worlds: ‘the very title which I proposed for it, The Signature, was meant to be an indication that we took no responsibility for one another’s creeds.’ Since Mansfield’s Signature work appeared under the name ‘Matilda Berry’, it served to distance her both from Lawrence and Murry’s ‘creeds’ and from her earlier satirical publications. Although she had published under the name ‘Katherine Mansfield’ in Rhythm and the Blue Review, she had often used a pseudonym for work in different genres and styles. Her earliest contributions to the journal (‘The Woman at the Store’ and the collaborative essays with Murry) and her more episodic work (‘Tales of a Courtyard’ and the ‘Epilogues’) all retained the name Katherine Mansfield, as did her only ‘German’ contribution to Rhythm (‘New Dresses’). However, her sentimental childhood stories (‘The Little Girl’ and ‘How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped’) appeared

21 Lady Cynthia Asquith reacted only to the journal’s essays, and Lawrence’s in particular: ‘I am amused at the sort of stuff I have been circulating. They take such an exalted view about the war – calling it blasphemy, etc. – that I’m not at all sure that technically it doesn’t amount to treason. Certainly it might be said to be discouraging to recruiting. Poor fools, it’s not a good moment in which to hope to found a new religion!’ Cited in Delaney, D.H. Lawrence’s Nightmare, p. 148.
23 Clare Hanson and Andrew Gurr, Katherine Mansfield (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 44.
24 Murry, Between Two Worlds, p. 352.
25 These variations were sometimes minor, as in the case of ‘A Fairy Story’, published in Open Window under the name ‘Katharina Mansfield’.
26 ‘New Dresses’, like ‘A Birthday’, was a Wellington story recast with German names.
under the name ‘Lili Heron’ and many of her poems for *Rhythm* (often masquerading as translations) were published under the name ‘Boris Petrovsky’. The publication of her *Signature* work under yet another pseudonym suggests Mansfield’s renewed attempt at establishing a new authorial persona, associated with the experimental narrative voices evident in the two ‘Autumns’ in particular. In these two impressionistic pieces, she began the process of eliminating an ‘authorial’ narrative voice from her work.

In the ‘Autumns’, Mansfield used two different forms of first-person narrator to express her characters. The first of these maintains a position of authority, as it is related by an adult, first-person narrator who embellishes an image of her past childhood. This narrator has already fallen from the innocence associated with childhood (a process that is symbolically narrated within the story itself) and her reconstruction of her youth permits her to adopt a position of omniscience, allowing her access to her father’s psyche. By contrast, ‘Autumns: II’ attempts to eliminate any possibility of omniscience, as it is narrated in the first person and in the present tense by its adolescent protagonist: the aim is to admit the reader to Matilda’s impressions of events as they unfold throughout her day and within her imagination (in the projection of her departure from her ‘little island’). ‘The Little Governess’ (which was written before the two ‘Autumns’) is the only one of Mansfield’s *Signature* stories to be written in the third-person, although the narrative voice shifts between the perspectives of the titular governess herself and an external, framing, narrative voice which has access to other characters’ consciousnesses. This technique is in part similar to that achieved in *Prelude*. However, while *Prelude* features multiple narrative perspectives,

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27 Likewise, in 1919, her poetry for the *Athenaeum* was published under the name ‘Elizabeth Stanley’.

28 There are occasional moments where this technique seems to fail, for example at the conclusion to the first section where Matilda’s music lesson is brought to an abrupt end when an apparently ironic narrative voice emphasises the insincerity of Mr Bullen’s refrain to each of his pupils to ‘sit in the sofa corner, little lady’. ‘Autumns: II’, p. 21.
it lacks the ‘authorial intrusion’ evident in ‘The Little Governess’, which relies on misdirection and misinterpretation for its effect, and is more akin to the technique of ‘The Woman at the Store’ discussed in Chapter Two. The ‘twist’ ending is only effective if the reader enters into the little governess’s own misreading of the situation throughout the story. The third-person narrator actually offers a number of clear indications that the old man will prove to be more threatening than the little governess perceives, for example, through the overtly sensuous description of her consumption of the strawberries he buys for her. By contrast, Prelude’s various narrators provide space for multiple interpretations rather than misinterpretation.

The three Signature pieces present varying levels of ‘authorial’ interjection within their narrative frameworks, ranging from an attempted effacement of authoritative narrative voice in ‘Autumns: II’ to a vacillation between perspectives in ‘The Little Governess’. These techniques would be built on in Mansfield’s development of ‘The Aloe’ into Prelude throughout 1916, after Signature had folded. By the end of 1915, Mansfield’s brother had died, and she had moved to Bandol in the South of France. She highlighted her new resolution to refine her formal approach to the short story in a series of famous journal entries written shortly after this relocation. Significantly, these entries also linked her commitment to a new form with a determination to make money from writing: thus, her renegotiation of form in 1916 went hand in hand with an increased professionalism about her authorial persona. At the beginning of 1916, Lawrence was considering flight to America in search of a new audience in the wake of suppression of The Rainbow. Mansfield too was determined

29 As Kaplan puts it, ‘In whose mind are these thoughts formulated? Would the little governess have described herself with such sensuous imagery? Would she have moved her gaze from hand to lips to hair?’ Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction, p. 121.
30 Lawrence did not depart for America at this point, but he did begin to consider alternative modes of publication of his work. One suggestion was ‘The Rainbow Books and Music’, a proposed private press to be set up with Murry and Philip Heseltine. At one point, he viewed Mansfield’s ‘novel’ as a potential
to re-market herself at this time, becoming more economically-conscious at the same
time as refining her experimental techniques in her fiction.

**The composition of ‘The Aloe’**

The development of the manuscript of ‘The Aloe’ is most obviously tied to Mansfield’s relationship with her brother, Leslie Heron Beauchamp, although the earliest version of it predates his death by some months. She famously wrote to Murry from Paris in March 1915:

> The Muses descended in a ring like the angels on the Botticelli Nativity roof – or so it seemed to ‘humble’ little Tig and I fell into the open arms of my first novel. I have finished a huge chunk but I shall have to copy it on thin paper for you. I expect you will think I am a dotty when you read it – but – tell me what you think – won’t you? Its queer stuff […] Leaning over the bridge I suddenly discovered that one of those boats was exactly what I wanted my novel to be – Not big, almost ‘grotesque’ in shape I mean perhaps heavy – with people rather dark and seen strangely as they move in the sharp light and shadow and I want bright shivering lights in it and the sound of water.\(^{31}\)

After her return from Paris in May 1915 (with about fifty manuscript pages of what she as yet envisaged as her ‘first novel’), Mansfield spent time in London with her brother, and wrote the two ‘Autumns’, based on the Wellington of her youth, that appeared in *Signature* in October 1915. On 11 October, she received a telegram informing her of Leslie’s death in a training accident four days previously. From November 1915 to April 1916, she was in the south of France where, in a famous journal entry in January 1916, she identified her new-found purpose to write ‘a kind of special prose’ tribute to

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her brother and their New Zealand. This entry was one of a series of meditations on writing recorded in her notebooks throughout January and February 1916.

She began by expressing a desire to break with her writing past:

Now, really, what is it that I do want to write? I ask myself: Am I less of a writer than I used to be. Is the need to write less urgent? Does it still seem as natural to me to seek that form of expression. Has speech fulfilled it? Do I ask anything more than to relate to remember to assure myself? There are times when these thoughts half frighten me, and very nearly convince. I say: You are so fulfilled now in your own being, in being alive, in loving, in aspiring towards a greater sense of life and a deeper loving that the other thing has gone out of you. But no, at bottom I am not convinced for at bottom never has been my desire so ardent. Only the form that I would choose has changed utterly. I feel no longer concerned with the same appearances of things. The people who lived or who I wished to bring into my stories don’t interest me any more. The plots of my stories leave me perfectly cold. Granted that these people exist and all the differences complexities and resolutions are true to them. Why should I write about them? They are not near me. All the false threads that bound them to me are cut away quite (my italics).

The passage sees Mansfield questioning whether or not she still envisions a public dimension to her writing, before concluding in the more famous paragraph that continues this journal entry that it is her duty to ‘make our undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the Old World (my italics)’. She evokes an imagined audience that is partly perceived in terms of national identity and projects her narration of New Zealand within a specifically European context. However, the phrase ‘undiscovered country’ had another resonance for Mansfield, and might be interpreted as a representative image of her formal approach to fiction. A later journal entry from July 1919 makes this clear:

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33 Ibid, p. 32.
I do believe that the time for a ‘new word’ has come but I imagine the new word will not be spoken easily. People have never explored the lovely medium of prose—*It is a hidden country still* (my italics).  

In 1916, she had specifically figured her anticipated expression of this ‘new word’ in terms of a dismissal of ‘plot’ (a rejection that had already begun before Leslie’s death, with the composition of the two ‘Autumns’), and which would find its fullest expression in the use of interior monologue that was perfected in *Prelude*. This interplay between Mansfield’s commitment to a new form and a different audience is key to her re-establishment of herself as a writer within the marketplace throughout 1916 and 1917.

Mansfield acknowledges a new engagement with the kinds of publics from which *Rhythm* had apparently distanced itself, figured as ‘the mob’ (breadth) and institutional (establishment), as discussed in Chapter Two. She envisions her audience in expanded terms, and the reference to the ‘Old World’ in this context implies both breadth and establishment. At the same time, her commitment to a new form aided in the refinement of her experimental aesthetic, which continued to distance her from both of these audiences. Mansfield’s later career, then, sees her attempting to clarify an aesthetic approach that was simultaneously modernist and commercially viable. 

*Prelude*’s increased length and formal disruptions clearly necessitated a new form of publication, and its first appearance in a privately printed, limited edition located Mansfield in relation to a more select audience than that envisioned in her use of the concept of the ‘Old World’. However, its subsequent collection in *Bliss and Other Stories* allowed her to deliver it to a wider audience.

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34 *Letters and Journals*, ed. Stead, p. 136. This development of a ‘new word’ in fiction will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

35 See Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* (pp. 99-105) for a discussion of the significance of the ‘limited edition’ in a tripartite system of production (journal, limited edition, commercial edition); *Prelude* bypassed the first of these steps because of its increased length.
Mansfield elaborated on her increased sense of professionalism in a journal entry written three weeks after her resolution to create ‘a kind of special prose’: she determines to become a financially successful writer (and by implication re-establish herself as a writer after her most fallow period since her arrival in London in 1909 with her ambitions to become a ‘Schriftstellerin’):

This year I have to make money & get known. I want to make enough money to be able to give Lesley [Moore, or Ida Baker] some. In fact I want to provide for her. That’s my idea & to make enough so that Jack and I shall be able to pay our debts and live honourably. I should like to have a book finished & numbers of short stories ready (my italics).^®

It is only after deliberately invoking an image of herself as a successful and professional writer that, three days later, she identifies ‘The Aloe’ as the means to achieving these ambitions, in terms that present this material (and its proposed sequels) as collaborations with her late brother. Indeed, he is presented as a figure from whom she seeks approval:

I found The Aloe this morning [...] The Aloe is right. The Aloe is lovely. It simply fascinates me, and I know that it is what you would wish me to write. And now I know what the last chapter is. It is your birth – your coming in the autumn, you in Grandmothers arms under the tree, your solemnity, your wonderful beauty, your hands, your head, your helplessness – lying on the earth, & above all your tremendous solemnity. That chapter will end the book. The next book will be yours and mine. And you must mean the world to Linda & before ever you are born Kezia must play with you. Her little Bogey. Oh Bogey – I must hurry. All of them must have this book. It is good, my treasure, my little brother – it is good and it is what we really meant (my italics).^®

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^® 16 February 1916, *The Notebooks*, Vol. 2, p. 60. ‘Bogey’ in this instance is a pet name for Leslie Beauchamp, although Mansfield would soon come to call Murry by the same name.
In identifying ‘The Aloe’ as ‘what you would wish me to write’, Mansfield invokes Leslie as an imagined audience. At the same time, she establishes him as ‘co-author’ of the story when she identifies the manuscript as ‘what we really meant’, so that he functions as an idealised collaborator, as well as providing a receptive (and uncritical) audience. Once she began the process of publishing the story, however, this imagined audience was recast in terms that were less idealised, as will be shown.

When Mansfield returned to England from Bandol in April 1916, she brought with her a ‘complete’ manuscript copy of ‘The Aloe’, which ran to approximately 26,000 words. However, 1916 was to prove another frustrating year. As in 1914, she found herself living with Murry and the Lawrences (this time at much closer quarters, in Cornwall) and once more wrote little and published less. After two months of living in the shadow of the Lawrences’ increasingly volatile relationship, Mansfield and Murry relocated first to Mylor, about thirty miles south of Higher Tregerthen, where the Lawrences’ ‘compound’ was situated, and finally moved back to London in August 1916. By October 1916, Lawrence’s letters to Koteliansky demonstrate the extent of the rupture between the two couples, although he continued to write to Murry in October that ‘one day – before so very long – we shall come together again, this time on a living earth, not in the world of destructive going apart.’

Throughout the end of 1916 and early 1917, Mansfield began to develop a new network of acquaintances, facilitated by another change of address, this time to

Andrew Gurr notes that Mansfield ‘made the memory of her brother into a ghostly mentor, the unique audience and addressee for her most celebrated stories’. Writers in Exile, p. 46.

The Stories, ed. Alpers, p. 555.

D.H. Lawrence to Murry, 11 October 1916, DHL Letters II, p. 662. Mansfield’s relationship with Lawrence would never entirely recover, and she was the target of a letter from him in 1920 that has not survived, but which she records as containing the sentences ‘I loathe you. You revolt me stewing in your consumption’ (To Murry, 7 February 1920, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 209). Lawrence subsequently sent her a postcard from Wellington with the single-word inscription ‘Ricordi’ (remember), and her will requested that he receive a book from her library as a memento. Murry’s subsequent relationship with the Lawrences is well-documented, and he wrote D.H. Lawrence: Son of Woman (1931) shortly after Lawrence’s death (from tuberculosis) in 1930.
Bloomsbury, when she moved into ‘The Ark’, No. 3 Gower Street, a three-storey house
owned by John Maynard Keynes; Dorothy Brett leased the top floor, Dora Carrington
the second, and Mansfield and Murry the ground floor. She also associated
increasingly with Lady Ottoline Morrell (Lawrence would have provided an
introduction) and Garsington, ‘that wartime refuge of the arts and the peaceable
conscience’.

This would lead directly to her meeting with Virginia Woolf. Woolf’s
subsequent request for a story for publication at the recently established Hogarth Press
would prompt Mansfield to turn once more to ‘The Aloe’ and begin the process of
editing it into Prelude, her first book since In a German Pension in 1911.

However, as she prepared the manuscript of Prelude, Mansfield was now faced
with the problem of not having published a substantial body of work under the name
‘Katherine Mansfield’ since the Blue Review folded in 1913, nearly four years
previously. Since Murry was preoccupied with work at the War Office and would not
receive another chance to edit a journal until 1919 when he was appointed to the
editorship of the Athenaeum, Mansfield would have to look elsewhere in 1917 if she
intended to publicise her name prior to the publication of Prelude. It can be
contended that her prime motivation in her choice to return to the New Age in 1917 was
to promote the name of ‘Katherine Mansfield’ once more, and to increase interest in her
second book beyond a Bloomsbury-centric audience automatically provided by a
Hogarth Press publication (as yet a novelty and a fledgling press, and unlikely to make
any money for Mansfield in the short term).

Mansfield’s rewriting of ‘The Aloe’ into Prelude coincides almost precisely with her reappearances in the New Age: the Woolfs

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42 Mansfield and Murry were now living apart, partly because George Bowden had finally initiated
divorce proceedings (so it was advisable for Mansfield not to co-habit with Murry during this period).
43 Edward Wadsworth had used the New Age in a similar way to advertise Blast, publishing vorticist
work that he deemed unworthy of Blast, in order to ‘get a little bit of advertisement (which nobody can
afford not avail himself of)’. Cited in Morrisson, The Public Face of Modernism, p. 117.
requested a story in April 1917, and Mansfield's first published dialogue of 1917 appeared in the *New Age* in May. The final submission of the manuscript to the Woolfs in October coincided with the cessation of her sustained engagement with the *New Age*: ‘A Dill Pickle’ appeared on 4 October 1917.\(^4^4\) By the time *Prelude* finally appeared (nine months later), Mansfield’s *New Age* self-promotion had gone off the boil, however, and ill-health had begun to distance her from the various networks she had been cultivating throughout 1916 and 1917.\(^4^5\)

**From ‘The Aloe’ to *Prelude***

Between April and December 1917, Mansfield contributed six dialogues, three short stories, one translation, and two pastiches to the *New Age*.\(^4^6\) Beatrice Hastings, the journal’s former ‘literary editor’ (and probably the prime literary contributor) had fallen out of favour with Orage by the end of 1916 (although she would make a brief reappearance in January and February 1918, and again in March 1920). In 1917, then, there was space for a new literary contributor, so Mansfield’s return might be seen as opportunistic in part (and Hastings’ biographer Stephen Gray certainly views events in this way). In Gray’s terms, Hastings was forced out after Orage became dissatisfied with her column ‘Impressions from Paris’, which largely opposed British foreign

\(^4^4\) The dialogues and stories were book-ended by two pastiches. The first, a series of six fragments, were published in the ‘Pastiche’ column in the *New Age*, 20.25 (19 April 1917), 595; the second, ‘Miss Elizabeth Smith’, in the *New Age*, 22.7 (13 December 1917), 138.

\(^4^5\) Between September 1918 and January 1923, Mansfield would only spend a total of six months in London; the rest of her time was split between Italy, Switzerland and France.

policy. At the same time, her short stories had begun to display increasingly experimental tendencies that Orage deemed unsuitable for a world at war (flights of fancy, indeed, akin to Mansfield’s own in ‘A Fairy Story’ of 1911, which failed to find an audience with her New Age editors). Although Mansfield’s return to the New Age did see the publication of three short stories, these were formally influenced by her other work of 1917: the dialogues that Antony Alpers and T.O. Beachcroft have deemed essential to her development of interior monologue. Moreover, her New Age dialogues provide some of the only explicit references to the First World War in Mansfield’s literary writing: in this sense, they rank among her most politicised work, and are much more in keeping with Orage’s preferred material.

Mansfield’s use of the dialogue form dates back as far as 1911, with the publication in the New Age of ‘The Festival of the Coronation (with Apologies to Theocritus)’. She returned to the dialogue form once in 1915, and again in 1917, when she also attempted to write a play. Her experimentation with dramatic forms was further endorsed by her Garsington acquaintances, after the performance there of a playlet written to entertain Ottoline’s Christmas guests in December 1916, a fragment of which survives in her notebooks, entitled ‘The Laurels’. It featured such players as Strachey and Carrington. These dramatic forms allowed Mansfield room in which to experiment with narrative voice, culminating in ‘Mr Reginald Peacock’s Day’ in particular, but also ‘A Dill Pickle’ and ‘Feuille d’Album’. She would later recast one of her dialogues (‘The Common Round’) as a short story (‘The Pictures’, published in

47 Gray, Beatrice Hastings, p. 357. Hastings’ absence from the New Age certainly would have facilitated Mansfield’s return.
49 See Mansfield to Ottoline Morrell, 3 April 1917, The Letters, Vol. 1, pp. 304-5: ‘Ive a play half written and God knows how many long short stories and notes and sketches for portraits.’ The play (published posthumously as ‘Toots’ in 1972) is a Chekhovian dramatisation of the Beauchamps around the time of Vere Beauchamp’s wedding. She also, apparently, began work on a translation of a Stanislaw Wyspiański play, in collaboration with Florian Sobieniowski, in 1917: this manuscript has not survived.
Art & Letters in 1919 and collected as ‘Pictures’ in Bliss). It is also evident that this refinement of dramatic form into fiction influenced the ongoing process of recasting ‘The Aloe’ into Prelude throughout 1917.

Mansfield’s reworking of ‘The Aloe’ provides us with a major example of her self-editing at work. ‘The Aloe’ was originally envisioned as the early stages of a novel and is considerably longer than Prelude: it features a number of digressions from the central focus of the family as they settle into their new surroundings. Mansfield eliminated a series of scenes in which Linda Burnell reminisced about her father, and Stanley Burnell’s courtship, for example. The character of Doady Trout, the third Fairfield sister, was entirely cut. Doady’s main function in the narrative was as a self-conscious fantasist, who obsessively composes sensationalist plot-lines of unwritten novels: these usually involve the tragic demise of her family members, or her own death in childbirth. It will be argued that Mansfield aimed for a subtler ‘portrait of the artist’ in Prelude. Characters are revised, so that Linda is more distant and uninterested in her children in Prelude than in ‘The Aloe’, and Kezia is more rebellious and emotional. In Prelude, she reacts to the Samuel Josephs’ taunts by suppressing a tear: ‘she caught it with a neat little whisk of her tongue and ate it before any of them had seen.’ In ‘The Aloe’, however, she avenges herself by tricking them into eating poisonous arum lilies.

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50 For further discussion of the influence of these dramatic forms on Mansfield’s development see J.F. Kobler, Katherine Mansfield: A Study of the Short Fiction (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), pp. 15-17; Daly, Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition, pp. 52-3 and Berkman, Katherine Mansfield: A Critical Study, pp. 81-3.
52 Only one flashback remains in Prelude, and its imagery is key to a recurring theme in the story, which will be discussed in detail: Mrs Fairfield briefly recalls an incident in Tasmania, in which Beryl was bitten by a red ant: ‘And how the child’s leg had swollen!’
53 Prelude (Richmond: Hogarth Press, 1918), p. 10. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.
The main outcome of Mansfield’s revision of ‘The Aloe’ was in what Kaplan identifies as the ‘eliminat[ion] of personal intrusion – the cutting away of the author’s voice’. In effect, Mansfield aimed to replicate in fiction the impersonal narrative stance already achieved in the dialogue form, and to present her characters from within their own consciousness. A textual note that interrupts the manuscript of ‘The Aloe’ (during Beryl’s ruminations on her real and false selves) gives an indication of Mansfield’s envisioned technique:

What is that I’m getting at? It is really Beryl’s ‘Sosie.’ The fact that for a long time now, she really hasn’t been even able to control her second self: its her second self who now controls her. There was [a] kind of radiant being who wasn’t either spiteful or malicious of whom she’d had a glimpse whose very voice was different to hers who was grave who never would have dreamed of doing the things that she did. Had she banished this being or had it really got simply tired and left her. I want to get at all this through her, just as I got at Linda through Linda. To suddenly merge her into herself.

This ‘merging’ of characters with themselves effectively meant a refinement of Mansfield’s use of interior monologue, and elimination of external information that could not have been available to the character from whose point of view the story was narrated.

A passage that was cut from ‘The Aloe’ for the publication of Prelude will illustrate this. Early in the story, Kezia returns to her old home and explores the empty space, eventually stopping in front of the window as dusk falls. ‘The Aloe’ features the following interjection by an external narrative voice, which is privy to information that would not be available to the child from whose perspective the rest of the scene is presented:

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56 The Notebooks, Vol. 2, p. 27.
From the window you saw beyond the yard a deep gully filled with ferns and a thick tangle of wild green, and beyond that there stretched the esplanade bounded by a broad stone wall against which the sea chafed and thundered. (Kezia had been born in that room. She had come forth squealing out of a reluctant mother in the teeth of a ‘Southerly Bluster’. The Grandmother, shaking her before the window had seen the sea rise in green mountains and sweep the esplanade – The little house was like a shell to its loud booming. Down in the gully the wild trees lashed together and big gulls wheeling and crying skidded past the misty window.)

No wonder Kezia squealed.

Daly cites the removal of this passage for Prelude as evidence of Mansfield’s erasure of ‘self-indulgent autobiographical memory’ from the narrative and her corresponding achievement of ‘the objectivity she desired as an artist’. However, Mansfield’s removal of a narrative voice that could introduce this external detail was not figured as ‘objectivity’, which would imply omniscience and distance from the narrative. Rather her aim was established in a letter to Dorothy Brett during the publication of Prelude. Here, she highlights her renegotiation of narrative voice in terms of interior monologue as a kind of heightened subjectivity in which Mansfield is apparently both author and object of her stories; this is also in keeping with the tension between technical impersonality and authorial personality already identified.

It seems to me so extraordinarily right that you should be painting Still Lives just now. What can one do, faced with this wonderful tumble of round bright fruits; but gather them and play with them – and become them, as it were. When I pass an apple stall I cannot help stopping and staring until I feel that I, myself, am changing into an apple, too, and that at any moment I can produce an apple, miraculously, out of my own being, like the conjurer produces the egg [...] When I write about ducks I swear that I am a white duck with a round eye, floating on a pond fringed with yellow-blobs and taking an occasional dart at the other duck with the round eye, which floats upside down beneath me ... In fact the whole process of becoming the duck (what Lawrence would perhaps

57 The Aloe with Prelude, ed. O’Sullivan, p. 35.
59 The removal of this scene of her birth indicates Mansfield’s development since ‘A Birthday’ in 1911, in which she had included the detail of her own birth, but modified the scene to grant Andreas Binzer the son he wanted, in place of the troublesome third daughter Harold Beauchamp had received.
call this consummation with the duck or the apple!) is so thrilling that I can hardly breathe, only to think about it. For although that is as far as most people can get, it is really only the 'prelude'. There follows the moment when you are more duck, more apple, or more Natasha than any of these objects could ever possibly be, and so you create them anew (my italics).\(^6\)

In this way, Mansfield's removal of an external authorial voice is actually envisioned as a new assertion of an internal authorial voice that is capable of expressing multiple perspectives (the duck, apple and Natasha above).\(^6\) She achieves textual autonomy by the subtle assertion of this authorial subjectivity, and maintains her juggling of experimental 'new prose' and more ordinary concerns such as income.

Mansfield's external narrative voices had effectively functioned as authors and readers of the events they presented: the framing narrative voice of 'The Little Governess', for example, provides a subliminal commentary on the events of the story, in an act of authorial intrusion that effectively anticipates the story's 'twist' ending. Similarly, the first-person narrator of 'The Woman at the Store' interprets the Woman in order to 'narrate' her story. By contrast, Prelude's removal of such external voices opens up a new textual space in which Mansfield attempts to subsume herself into her characters, who now apparently speak for themselves: in theory, this would produce an autonomous text. However, this autonomy is challenged once the text is placed in the interpretative space that publication affords. The excision of the framing authorial voice had also removed the story's 'internal reader', but publication will deliver it to an external reader who will play a part in interpreting (and hence re-rewriting) the text.

This accounts for Mansfield's heightened anxiety about the consumption of her stories by a third party that manifested itself during the Woolfs' publication of Prelude (which

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\(^6\) Andrew Bennett links Mansfield's image of the duck in the above letter to the duck in Prelude, describing the 'excision of authorial commentary' as 'auto-decapitation'. Bennett, *Katherine Mansfield*, p. 60.
will be discussed presently). Mansfield’s identification with the duck in the above passage in part identifies this anxiety of consumption (especially given the fate of the duck in *Prelude*), and the following section will interrogate *Prelude*’s place within this framework of authorial anxiety.

**Prelude**

Both Patricia Moran and Susan Gubar link *Prelude*’s presentation of pregnancy, mothering and female sexuality with Mansfield’s representation of the artistic process. Gubar specifically presents the story as a renegotiation of the *Künstlerroman* form, identifying *four* female artists within the story, at varying stages of development. Whereas Moran argues that the story replicates the conflicted attitude to childbirth evident in the ‘Pension’ material, Gubar sees the story as an enactment of Mansfield’s acceptance of motherhood, effectively achieved by her decision to ‘give birth’ – in textual terms – to her dead brother (an act that is never directly achieved within the story). The story implicitly presents childbirth as an analogue for the creative process through the figure of Linda Burnell. At the same time, it provides three more figures that link womanhood and artistry, and there is a sense of linear progression from Kezia to Beryl to Linda and finally to Mrs Fairfield. These characters are variously paired with one another. Linda and Mrs Fairfield are figured as mother-artists (with Linda the most conflicted, and Mrs Fairfield the most content). Beryl and Kezia are potential artists: their artistry is less well-formed and takes a different shape.

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62 Gubar, ‘The Birth of the Artist as Heroine: (Re)production, the *Künstlerroman* Tradition, and the Fiction of Katherine Mansfield’. For a discussion of Mansfield’s tropes of maternity and pregnancy in less positive terms, see Moran, *Word of Mouth*, pp. 87-116.

63 ‘The Aloe’ featured a fifth – Doady Trout.

64 Sydney Janet Kaplan notes that Mansfield’s reunion with Beatrice Hastings in Paris in 1915 (during the earliest stages of the composition of ‘The Aloe’) may have influenced Mansfield’s return to this topic, and further suggests that Mansfield’s ongoing friendship with D.H. Lawrence may have played a role in the story’s concern with gender difference. Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction, pp. 106-8.
(Kezia’s ‘pictures’, Beryl’s fantasies, explicitly figured in her letter-writing scene).

Significantly, the story ends with each of these pairings, of Linda and Mrs Fairfield at the conclusion of section eleven, and Kezia and Beryl in section twelve. Linda and Kezia are also linked throughout, specifically in terms of their common fears and anxieties. This discussion focuses on Linda Burnell, but it can be argued that these four figures are at varying stages of acceptance, not only of the realities of the production of their ‘texts’, but of the publication and consumption of them.

*Prelude* is often identified as Mansfield’s ‘breakthrough’ story, and is seen as the fulcrum on which her career turns, leaving behind her early work and introducing her mature, more sophisticated work. Berkman, for example, argues

Mansfield’s maturing sense of technique [...] was rooted in the principles of clarity, economy, and tonal felicity, of the most suggestive and ‘densest’ dramatic expression; her whole maturing interest in the exploration of the subtleties of inward experience. Her craft by now was largely mastered. The prelude, the time of her apprenticeship, was over.65

In this sense, the premise of the story – the family’s move to a new house – might be read in terms of Mansfield’s intention to break with her writing past and embark on a new path: the impression of expansiveness conveyed within the story might in this sense suggest the context in which it was produced, without any site of publication in mind. Hence it was (as Daly notes) free of any editorial policy.66 However, the ‘portrait of the artist’ and her site of production suggested within *Prelude* is not so clear-cut.

*Prelude* opens with an image of the Burnell family in transit, with Kezia and Lottie ‘all ready for the fray in their coats with brass anchor buttons and little round

66 Daly, Katherine Mansfield: Revised Edition, p. 54.
caps with battleship ribbons' (*Prelude*, p. 7). The family is preparing to depart for a
new house in the country, a move explicitly represented as an escape from a confining
space. Beryl describes the old house as ‘that awful cubby-hole in town’ in her letter
to Nan Pym (*Prelude*, p. 63). The phrase is repeated in ‘The Aloe’ in Linda’s reaction
to the new house’s kitchen and pantries: ‘There’s grandeur, after that bird cage of a
larder in that old cubby hole!’ As W.H. New notes, the Burnells leave behind the
physical *structure* of the old house in the act of moving, but bring with them the
contents (furniture, trappings, etc.): this baggage will be incorporated into a new
setting. Similarly, Mansfield may envision a new framework for her redirection in
fiction, both in terms of the form in which she wrote and the site where the story would
eventually be published, but the contents of the story would not be entirely devoid of
the old ‘baggage’ from her earlier career. The story incorporates techniques she had
used elsewhere (most obviously, the dramatic form) and continues to interrogate the
anxieties of authorship and publication discussed throughout this thesis.

The new home is apparently figured in spacious terms, with expansive grounds
in particular, and most of the story involving the children (in particular Kezia) takes
place outside. However, the new *house* in which the Burnells take up residence is less
obviously liberating than the gardens, and is repeatedly associated with restrictive
images. The caged bird is introduced quite early in the story, in the description of Pat
the handyman in his ‘room behind the kitchen’: ‘From the edge of the blanket his
twisted toes protruded, and on the floor beside him there was an empty cane bird-cage

67 The first description of the new house, however, is in terms that (by the end of the story) will prove
ominous, as they anticipate the description of the second duck in the infamous decapitation scene (‘Pat
gave the white lump into [Pip’s] arms’): ‘The soft white bulk of it lay stretched upon the green garden
like a sleeping beast.’ *Prelude*, p. 51; p. 16.
69 New, *Reading Mansfield and Metaphors of Form*, p. 147.
Pat's protruding toes indicate that he does not quite fit in this new space. Neither do the other adult inhabitants: when Linda and Stanley Burnell walk upstairs together, for example, the narrative reads: 'the stairs were too narrow for them to go up arm in arm (Prelude, p. 41). Moreover, both Linda and Beryl are linked to images of webs. The new house is figured as a potentially restrictive space, then, and is most associated with Linda and Beryl: most of their scenes take place within the house (with the exception of Linda’s two encounters with the aloe, which will be discussed later). Only the kitchen and scullery, controlled by Mrs Fairfield, are free of this sense of restriction.

The sites with which the four 'artist figures' in the story are most identified vary in their degrees of liberation, and the majority of these figures remain linked to the restrictive house. Beryl, for example, twice sings a song the lyrics of which are: 'How many thousand birds I see / That sing aloud from every tree (Prelude, p. 33).’ Her 'freedom' to sing is linked to space: in the first instance, she begins to sing it in the kitchen (Mrs Fairfield’s realm, and a site of production) but stops as soon as she reaches the dining room, a site of consumption. On the second occasion, she is heard to sing it as she approaches the kitchen, although she stops once she enters that space (to admonish Alice, the servant) and recommences her song as she leaves. Even Kezia,
apparently the least confined of the four, envisions her ‘art’ in restrictive terms: the ‘pictures’ (as she calls them) that she makes for her grandmother consist of material she gathers from the garden presented in a matchbox. In an image that anticipates Mansfield’s own later description of her stories as ‘birds bred in cages’, Kezia’s discovery of an empty pillbox in her old house at the beginning of the story elicits the following response: ‘I could keep a bird’s egg in that’ (my italics; Prelude, p. 12). Her impulse is clearly a nurturing one, but misguided: in the inappropriate setting of the pillbox, the bird’s egg will never reach maturity.75

Just as there are three distinct spaces within the story, there are three different levels of bird imagery throughout: wild and caged at either end of the scale, as well as the ducks and fowl cultivated for consumption by the Burnell family. These are granted limited freedom: the paddock in which they are kept gives the illusion of freedom, though in reality they are still ‘caged’ and are victims of the most violent image in the story.76 The decapitation of the duck is explicitly presented as an act of silencing:

\[\text{it began to waddle – with only a long spurt of blood where the head had been; it began to pad away without a sound towards the steep bank that led to the stream…} (my italics; Prelude, pp. 51-2).\]

The duck must be silenced in order to prepare it for consumption, and the violence with which this is achieved indicates Mansfield’s anxieties about losing her own voice in the period between her composition of her work and its publication. In Prelude, this

75 Kezia herself is figured in bird-like terms, as she is (like Els in ‘The Woman at the Store’) both an artist figure herself and the product of another artist, Linda. On her initial arrival at their new home, Kezia and Lottie are both described in similar terms: ‘[Lottie] stood blinking on the lowest verandah step watching Kezia who seemed to come flying through the air to her feet […] Lottie staggered on the lowest verandah step like a bird fallen out of the nest.’ Prelude, p. 16.

76 Both Kezia and Rags react to this scene in interesting ways. Both children are bird-like, and both react to the duck’s head whereas the other children react to its apparently reanimated body. Kezia wants the duck’s head put back on, whereas Rags thinks he can resurrect it by giving it something to drink.
interim period is glossed over: the duck is killed and eaten, but the ritual of preparing it for the dinner table (presumably in the haven provided by Mrs Fairfield in the kitchen) is a notable absence within the story. It is the loss of autonomy as a result of the actions of Pat, Stanley and (implicitly) Alice that is disturbing: the duck is silenced by outside forces. This is in direct contrast to Mansfield’s self-effacement in the composition of the story, and her removal of authorial intrusions from the narrative voice. Mansfield edited her own voice out of the story in the process of rewriting ‘The Aloe’ into *Prelude*, but in the image of the violent silencing of the duck in preparation for its consumption, she further emphasises her anxieties of her loss of authorial representation in the publication process.

The silencing is complete when the duck makes its reappearance in the story, which emphasises the transformative process of its loss:

> The white duck did not look as if it had ever had a head when Alice placed it in front of Stanley Burnell that night. It lay, in beautifully basted resignation, on a blue dish – its legs tied together with a piece of string and a wreath of little balls of stuffing round it (*Prelude*, p. 56).

Stanley’s relish for food (and for the ‘first of the home products’ in this scene in particular) marks him as an all-consuming male, and is usually figured in terms of his sexual appetites and the ramifications these appetites have for Linda. However, it is important to note that, earlier in the story, Stanley had been described in terms that anticipate the fate of the duck: while getting dressed in the morning, he ‘butted into a crisp white shirt only to find that some idiot had fastened the neck-band and he was caught’, to which Linda responds ‘You look like a big fat turkey’ (*Prelude*, p. 25). His relish at consuming the duck, then, is actually figured in terms that are semi-

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cannibalistic, which links him with Mansfield’s earlier representation in ‘Sunday Lunch’ of ‘The Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism’, discussed in Chapter Two. His appetites do not exclusively resonate in an overtly sexual manner, as is further reinforced by his description of the duck as ‘[not] meat at all, but a kind of very superior jelly (my italics)’ – jelly might be tentatively linked here to Mrs Fairfield’s vision of the jam she will be able to make from the new garden, and later to Mansfield’s own description of Prelude as it was published by the Woolfs at the Hogarth Press: ‘I think the Woolfs must have eaten the Aloe root and branch or made jam of it.’

It is through Linda that the imagery of birds and childbirth are most effectively linked, in section five of Prelude, after an extended descriptive passage which is punctuated by the presence of wild birds (and their freedom to sing). The terms of this description are tinged with Mansfield’s own authorial anxiety. Wild bird imagery had first been introduced at the end of section four, shortly after the description of Pat’s empty bird-cage:

In the garden some tiny owls, perched on the branches of a lace-bark tree, called: ‘More pork; more pork.’ And far away in the bush there sounded a harsh rapid chatter: ‘Ha-ha-ha ... Ha-ha-ha’ (Prelude, p. 23).

Section five further emphasises this supremacy of the natural world (in terms that anticipate the opening to Prelude’s ‘sequel’, ‘At the Bay’) with its description of daybreak, and places a particular emphasis on the dawn chorus which apparently has a direct impact on Linda’s dream: the story moves rapidly from this imagery of

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79 ‘The morepork is New Zealand’s only surviving nocturnal owl; the larger native laughing owl is thought to be extinct. “Morepork” is their distinctive cry, and they are effective nocturnal predators.’ http://www.kiwirecovery.org.nz/AboutTheBird/NewZealandsIcon/KiwiCharacteristics/NightNeighbours.html#Morepork [accessed 14 August 2005]
unfettered birds to Linda’s more restrictive fantasy-world.\textsuperscript{80} Her dream explicitly links the bird imagery with which \textit{Prelude} resonates and the notion of childbirth, thus fusing the two key images of creation within the story:

She was walking with her father through a green paddock sprinkled with daisies. Suddenly he bent down and parted the grasses and showed her a tiny ball of fluff just at her feet. ‘Oh, Papa, the darling.’ She made a cup of her hands and caught the tiny bird and stroked its head with her finger. It was quite tame. But a funny thing happened. \textit{As she stroked it began to swell, it ruffled and pouched, it grew bigger and bigger and its round eyes seemed to smile knowingly at her. Now her arms were hardly wide enough to hold it and she dropped it into her apron. It had become a baby with a big naked head and a gaping bird-mouth, opening and shutting} (my italics; \textit{Prelude}, p. 24).\textsuperscript{81}

Linda’s association throughout \textit{Prelude} with swelling – the bird/baby, the aloe itself, and the poppy on the wallpaper shortly after the above dream – is obviously figured in terms of actual pregnancy, but it also places her in a context similar to that of the Child in ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’. The Child’s association with swelling people and objects is linked to her surrogate pregnancy, which I have argued may be read in terms of her developing artistry and authority. In \textit{Prelude}, Linda’s association with such imagery obviously indicates her actual pregnancy (never explicitly identified within the story) but also implicitly marks her as a mother-artist.

The nature of Linda’s anxieties is suggested in a later passage, in which she lies in bed stroking a picture of a poppy on her wallpaper, and envisions it swelling and coming alive:

the strangest part of this coming alive of things was what they did. They listened, they seemed to swell out with some mysterious important content, and when they were full she felt that they smiled. But it was not\textsuperscript{80} In ‘The Aloe’, these wild birds are further empowered by the fact that they ‘[hang] the garden with bright chains of song’. \textit{The Aloe with Prelude}, ed. O’Sullivan, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{81} Her reference to the bird as ‘darling’ here anticipates Mansfield’s description of the publication of the story as ‘throwing her darling to the wolves’. The word would be used again in similar context in ‘Perambulations’, \textit{Athenaeum}, No. 4644 (2 May 1919), 264-5.

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for her, only, their sly secret smile; they were members of a secret society and they smiled among themselves. Sometimes, when she had fallen asleep in the daytime, she woke and could not lift a finger, could not even turn her eyes to left or right because THEY were there; sometimes when she went out of a room and left it empty, she knew as she clicked the door to that THEY were filling it (Prelude, p. 28).

In this passage, it becomes clear that Linda’s anxieties are not merely inspired by the pressures of child-bearing alone, but also in terms of the transformation effected in her creations/visions once she has ‘given birth’ to them and they take on a life of their own. At this point, there is a slight shift in the nature of this imagery, as ‘THEY’ are also figured as a vampiric ‘audience’ that feeds on her imaginative processes: they listen and swell, and their membership of a ‘secret society’ once again recalls the Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism. In this sense, Linda implies that the sources of her anxieties lie, not only in her attempts at production but also in the way in which these productions are consumed.82

Linda’s actualisation of her fear as a mass (‘THEY’) indicates a further dimension to the ‘public’ posited in this passage, suggesting the breadth of this audience in terms that implicitly recall the opposition between the ‘mob’ and the ‘aristocratic artist’ of Mansfield’s collaborations with Murry throughout 1912. Just as Mansfield’s subsequent work in Rhythm had complicated this oppositional relationship, Linda must come to terms with this ‘mob’ in the course of Prelude, a process that is effectively achieved and represented in terms of her changing relationship to the aloe.

Linda’s first encounter with the plant in Prelude is described as follows:

‘Mother, what is it?’ asked Kezia.
Linda looked up at the fat swelling plant with its cruel leaves and fleshy stem. High above them, as though becalmed in the air, and yet holding so fast to the earth it grew from, it might have had claws instead

82 Kezia directly echoes many of Linda’s ‘authorial’ anxieties, and shares a fear of ‘rushing animals’ and swelling imagery, as well as her irrational fear of ‘IT’ which echoes Linda’s fear of ‘THEY’.
of roots. The curving leaves seemed to be hiding something; the blind stem cut into the air as if no wind could ever shake it.

‘That is an aloe, Kezia’, said her mother.

‘Does it ever have any flowers?’

‘Yes, Kezia,’ and Linda smiled down at her, and half shut her eyes.

‘Once every hundred years’ (Prelude, p. 36).  

Linda links the aloe to the two images of creation used elsewhere in the story: it is a ‘fat swelling plant’ and since it ‘might have had claws instead of roots’ is also bird-like. At this point, Linda invests it with a sense of independent authority and autonomy, and views the rarity of its blossoms in positive terms: it is apparently more in control than she is.

Linda’s second encounter with the aloe comes at the end of section eleven of the story, and it is in her changing perception of the plant that her epiphany is introduced, specifically in her vision of *multiple* aloes. This is prompted by her realisation that it is about to bloom, as Mrs Fairfield points out:

‘I have been looking at the aloe,’ said Mrs Fairfield. ‘I believe it is going to flower this year. Look at the top there. Are those buds or is it only an effect of light?’

As they stood on the steps, the high grassy bank on which the aloe rested rose up like a wave, and the aloe seemed to ride upon it like a ship with the oars lifted. Bright moonlight hung upon the lifted oars like water and on the green wave glittered the dew.

[...]

‘I believe those are buds,’ said she. ‘Let us go down into the garden, mother. I like that aloe. I like it more than anything here. And I am sure I shall remember it long after I’ve forgotten all the other things.’

[...]

Looking at it from below she could see the long sharp thorns that edged the aloe leaves, and at the sight of them her heart grew hard .... She particularly liked the long sharp thorns .... Nobody would dare to come near the ship or to follow after (Prelude, pp. 59-60).

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83 Likewise Kezia’s exploration of the garden leads her down ‘little paths [...] with tree roots spanned across them like the marks of big fowls’ feet.’ Linda’s description of the aloe as only flowering once every hundred years suggests that the plant in question is actually the American Aloe, or Agave, although it is a common misconception that this plant flowers so rarely. In Greek mythology, Agave was the queen of Thebes; in Euripides’s Bacchae, she is possessed by Dionysus and kills her own son, Pentheus.
At the beginning of this scene, then, Linda persists in interpreting the aloe as a self-contained entity, and her representation of it as a ship that will bear her away from the restrictive house and the anxieties associated with it throughout the story recalls Mansfield’s collaborative essays from 1912 that posited an image of the artist at sea, separate from the ‘mob’ on the shore. As her attention shifts from the aloe to her feelings for Stanley, she finally achieves a moment of epiphany:

She hugged her folded arms and began to laugh silently. How absurd life was – it was laughable, simply laughable. And why this mania of hers to keep alive at all? For it really was a mania, she thought, mocking and laughing.

‘What am I guarding myself for so preciously? I shall go on having children and Stanley will go on making money and the children and the gardens will grow bigger and bigger, with whole fleets of aloes in them for me to choose from’ (Prelude, p. 62).

This implicitly echoes Mansfield’s resolutions early in 1916 (as she prepared to continue work on ‘The Aloe’) first to continue writing, and then to make money through producing multiple stories (which, in terms of her relationship to the marketplace, encompasses both many individual stories and the multiple copies of them that publication entails) and selling them to a wide audience. In October 1915, Mansfield had asked herself ‘why don’t I commit suicide?’ before answering her question:

Because I feel I have a duty to perform to the lovely time when we were both alive. I want to write about it and he wanted me to. We talked it over in my little top room in London. I said: I will just put on the front page: To my brother – Leslie Heron Beauchamp. Very well: it shall be done.\(^4\)

Mansfield can only fulfil her ‘duty’ by writing ‘The Aloe’ and publishing it – she envisions it as a book with a dedication to her brother. Similarly, Linda’s question –

\(^4\) Late October 1915, The Notebooks, Vol. 2, p. 16.
'why this mania of hers to keep alive at all' – is answered in her vision that replaces one single aloe with a 'whole fleet' (multiple versions of the same 'text'). 85

By the end of the story the autonomous aloe has been replaced by a new image:

She had been walking with her head bent, looking at nothing. Now she looked up and about here. They were standing by the red and white camellia trees. Beautiful were the rich dark leaves spangled with light and the round flowers that perch among them like red and white birds. Linda pulled a piece of verbena and crumpled it, and held her hands to her mother.

'Delicious,' said the old woman (Prelude, p. 62).

In this movement from the autonomous aloe to the multiple aloes and finally to the camellia trees (which produce their flowers in great quantity and with more frequency), the story implicitly acknowledges its own movement from production to publication to consumption. Linda’s movement towards the camellia trees at the conclusion of this section resonates with Mansfield’s expanded sense of her reading public; the contrast between the integrity of the aloe and the multiplicity of the camellia trees indicates Mansfield’s increased awareness that the reading public she addresses cannot be imagined as a monolithic unit; nor can it be neatly divided between ‘mass’ and ‘elite’ markets. Rather, the process of delivering her work to an audience necessitates an acknowledgement of the fractured nature of that audience, and the publication history of Prelude itself bears this out (in its appearance first as a ‘limited edition’ in Bloomsbury, and then in a more widely available and accessible edition in Bliss and Other Stories).

Prelude implicitly enacts an awareness of the impact on the autonomy of the text in the process of its publication. By the erasure of her authorial voice from the narrative, Mansfield had achieved the technique of impersonality within the text that

85 Moran argues that this is a bleak vision, since it ‘destroys her sense of the solitary aloe’s uniqueness’ (Word of Mouth, p. 111); however, I would suggest that when read in the context of Prelude’s enactment of the publication process, it need not be perceived in such negative terms.
might be seen as implicitly in conflict with the act of writing itself. In order to publish (and continue the production of experimental prose within the commercial realm of the marketplace), Mansfield had to reassert her authorial personality, thus leaving herself open to a further loss of textual authority by delivering her work to an audience. In this way, although the story posits an increased awareness and tentative acceptance of her role within the marketplace, *Prelude* ultimately enacts Mansfield's continuing anxiety of authority while dramatising her acknowledgement and acceptance of the necessity of locating her work in a commercial realm. Her professed commercial ambitions during the composition of the story saw her further rejection of the elitist and simplistic constructions of her 'reading public' associated with the little magazine, as discussed throughout Chapter Two. However, the publication of *Prelude* effectively located her within a similarly limited and self-contained circle, and highlights her uneasiness with the Garsington and Bloomsbury circles rather than the wide audience she had apparently invoked in her resolution to reveal her 'undiscovered country' to the 'Old World'. Her relationship to these networks remained a problematic one, and she used one of her *New Age* dialogues ('In Confidence') to poke fun at Ottoline Morrell and the 'intellectual' conversation at Garsington, and provide a self-portrait (the silent Isobel) who is the victim of idle Garsington gossip. Her anxiety of audience in this context was uppermost throughout the publication of *Prelude*, and was ultimately given added urgency by the role played by Virginia Woolf in its production.

**Conclusion: Thrown to the wolves**

In *Prelude*, Mansfield constructs a network of mutually supportive women artists: however, its composition and publication places her in a number of intellectual contexts

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that continued to provide challenges to her sense of authority - her friendship with the Lawrences, the developing network of acquaintances through Garsington and Bloomsbury, and finally her association with the Woolfs. The publication of Prelude provides a useful summary of the themes of this chapter, and is the summation of the various authorial anxieties that manifested themselves throughout its composition.

The most obvious context in which the publication of Prelude needs to be read is her evolving friendship and rivalry with Virginia Woolf.\(^7\) This friendship was most successful on a one-to-one basis, effectively summed up by Woolf as a 'public of two': it was the loss of Mansfield as audience that Woolf mourned in January 1923, questioning the public dimension to her writing just as Mansfield had done in 1916:

A certain melancholy has been brooding over me this fortnight. I date it from Katherine’s death. The feeling comes to me so often now – Yes. Go on writing of course: but into emptiness. There’s no competitor. I’m cock – a lonely cock whose crowing nothing breaks – of my walk. For our friendship had so much that was writing in it.\(^8\)

Their rivalry was only demonstrated publicly on one occasion before Mansfield’s death, when she reviewed Woolf’s Night and Day in the Athenaeum in November 1919.\(^9\) It is primarily in their private writings that their competitiveness was expressed: indeed, Mansfield admitted to consciously editing her opinion of Night and Day for the published review, and wrote to Murry ‘Talk about intellectual snobbery – her book reeks of it. (But I can’t say so.)’\(^10\) This inevitable self-censorship for the review indicates that Mansfield was concerned about the way her reaction to Woolf’s

\(^7\) This relationship has received a large amount of critical attention in recent years. See Margaret M. Jensen, The Open Book: Creative Misreading in the Works of Selected Modern Writers (New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2002), esp. pp. 91-131; Hermione Lee, Virginia Woolf: a Biography (London: Chatto & Windus, 1996), pp. 386-401; Moran, Word of Mouth; Nóra Séllei, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: a personal and professional bond (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996); Smith, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: a Public of Two.

\(^8\) The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 2, 28 January 1923, p. 228.

\(^9\) Mansfield also reviewed Woolf’s short story ‘Kew Gardens’ in the Athenaeum, but in terms that were far more positive. ‘A Short Story’, Athenaeum, No. 4650 (13 June 1919), 459.

novel might reflect on her own professional persona, and also reinforces the fact that her development of the ‘defeat of the personal’ necessarily involved a level of self-censorship.

Woolf limited her accounts of the rivalry to private letters, as in the following to Janet Case in March 1922:

I’ve not read K. Mansfield [presumably *The Garden Party and Other Stories*], and don’t mean to. I read Bliss; and it was so brilliant – so hard, and so shallow, and so sentimental that I had to rush to the bookcase for something to drink. Shakespeare, Conrad, even Virginia Woolf. But she takes in all the reviewers, and I daresay I’m wrong (don’t be taken in by that display of modesty.) Middleton M[urry] is a posturing Byronic little man; pale; penetrating: with bad teeth; histrionic; an egoist; not, I think, very honest; but a good journalist, and works like a horse, and writes the poetry a very old hack might write – but this is spiteful. Do not let my views reach the public. People say that we writers are jealous (Woolf’s italics).91

Woolf’s reference here to the positive reviews *The Garden Party and Other Stories* received on its publication in February 1922 is indicative of the prime focal point of the rivalry between the two: namely the way in which each perceived the public reception of the other’s work. This is again evident in Woolf’s letter to Mansfield of February 1921:

Mr [John Davys] Beresford gave a lecture upon fiction the other day at the 1917 Club – a deplorable exhibition. At the end, up jumped an unshaven Jew and said he had no use for Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf. And then Morgan Forster said that Prelude and The Voyage Out were the best novels of their time, and I said Damn Katherine! Why can’t I be the only woman who knows how to write.92

Mansfield’s anxiety about the way in which Woolf’s work was perceived by a wider public is directly figured as a fear of being silenced, as in her letter to Ottoline Morrell

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in which she describes her reaction to Roger Fry’s praise for Woolf, as an impulse to wear a piece of paper bearing the caption ‘I, too, write a little.’\textsuperscript{93} She does not articulate this directly to Fry in the account, but expresses it through writing, both the actual letter to Ottoline Morrell and the imaginary caption, which might be figured as an act of self-promotion.

Mansfield’s most telling summation of her feelings about Woolf were made as she wrote the review of *Night and Day* in November 1919:

> Virginia’s cry that she is the flower, the fair flower of her age [...] is becoming a mania with her. Intellectual snobbery. She reminds me of Beatrice Hastings who had the same mania. B. saying that her work is the talk of all Paris my dear & Virginia imagining that England rings with Night & Day. Its boundless vanity & conceit – dreadful in woman or man.\textsuperscript{94}

This effectively demonstrates that Mansfield’s antagonistic relationship with both Woolf and Hastings actually manifested itself as an anxiety that their writing would be positively received by an (imagined adulatory) audience; moreover, it indicates that Mansfield’s relationships with ‘literary women’ were often problematic.\textsuperscript{95}

This was especially true of those that played a hand in the publication of her work; hence, it is little surprise that Mansfield’s reactions to the publication of *Prelude* were repeatedly perceived in terms of an anxiety about the way in which the Woolfs as publishers (and hence immediate readers) consumed the story. She expressed numerous frustrations during the lengthy process of *Prelude*’s appearance in print: after her submission of the manuscript, it was nine months before the book was published, and she wrote to Dorothy Brett in May 1918 that ‘My poor dear Prelude is still piping

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\textsuperscript{95} See Moran, *Word of Mouth*, for a discussion of Mansfield’s problematic relationships with female authors, in particular her reading of ‘Bliss’, pp. 61-6.
away in their little cage and not out yet.\textsuperscript{96} The Hogarth Press was a fledgling venture at the time, and \textit{Prelude} ran to 68 pages in total: it was a huge project for a small hand-operated press, and the Woolfs were forced to enlist the help of a local printer.\textsuperscript{97} An error on the running head for pages 7-20 which re-named the story as ‘The Prelude’ was not corrected, and the Woolfs’ distaste for J.D. Fergusson’s Fauvist woodcuts meant that they were dropped from all but a few copies of the story.\textsuperscript{98} Smith suggests that they were influenced in this by their friendship with Roger Fry and personal dislike of Fergusson: however, she argues that this actually had a favourable effect on the edition in the long run, since the woodcuts fixed the aloe as feminine and hence simplified its role in the story.\textsuperscript{99} Discrepancies between Mansfield’s plans for the book and the final version that was dispatched in July 1918 influenced her anxieties about the transformative effects of the publication process, evident in her quip to Ottoline Morrell in February 1918: ‘I think the Woolfs must have eaten the Aloe root and branch or made jam of it’.\textsuperscript{100} Her vision of the Woolfs turning it to jam demonstrates Mansfield’s perceived loss of authorial and interpretative control over her published text.

\textsuperscript{96} To Dorothy Brett, 12 May 1918, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 2, p. 169. Her years at the \textit{New Age} and writing for little magazines would have made her accustomed to a much faster turn-around.

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Prelude} was only the second official publication by the Woolfs. The first \textit{Two Stories}, was published in 1917, and featured one story each by the Woolfs (Leonard’s ‘Three Jews’ and Virginia’s ‘The Mark on the Wall’); a limited edition volume of Cecil Woolf’s poetry was also published privately in 1918, for distribution among the Woolf family (the printing of this edition interrupted the publication of \textit{Prelude}).

\textsuperscript{98} Mansfield wrote to Murry suggesting that the Woolfs ‘had better print both kinds [...] I don’t want not to have the designs at all – after the prospectuses’ (To Murry, 3 June 1918, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 2, p. 214). As Nóra Séllei notes, this concern about the discrepancy between the advertisements for \textit{Prelude} and the finished project reflects her consciousness about the book’s ‘marketability’. \textit{Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Personal and Professional Bond}, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{99} Fergusson was not the only Fauvist artist disliked by Virginia Woolf, and she wrote to Duncan Grant on 15 May 1918: ‘I had a most satisfactory and fascinating renewal of my friendship with Katherine Mansfield. She is extremely ill, but is going to Cornwall with Estelle Rhys [Anne Estelle Rice], a woman painter, whom I’m sure is the worst of woman painters. But all the same Katherine is the very best of women writers – always of course passing over one fine but very modest example’. \textit{Letters VW II}, p. 241.

\textsuperscript{100} To Ottoline Morrell, 22 February 1918, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 2, p. 87.
Mansfield’s anxieties about the way in which her work was consumed resonate throughout Prelude, as in the scenes in which the duck is killed and eaten. This is further reflected in her private writing about the publication of the story. She had consciously linked the role played by the Woolfs as publishers and audience of Prelude from the time she delivered the manuscript in October 1917, telling Dorothy Brett:

*I threw my darling to the wolves* and they ate it and served me up so much praise in such a golden bowl that I couldn’t help feeling gratified. I did not think that they would like it and I am still astounded that they do (my italics).¹⁰¹

The Woolfs’ favourable response would be replaced in Mansfield’s imagination by the following projected reception from a wider audience:

I am having some notices printed and they say it will be ready in June. And won’t the ‘Intellectuals’ just hate it. They’ll think it’s a New Primer for Infant Readers. Let ‘em.¹⁰²

Her focus on the ‘Intellectuals’ response to the story is as a direct result of the more select audience afforded by publication at the Hogarth Press.

The Woolfs hand-printed three hundred copies of the story, and the limited marketing meant that the audience was primarily fixed along Bloomsbury lines. In a letter to David Garnett in July 1917, shortly after the establishment of the Hogarth Press, Woolf gave an indication of its coterie nature in its early days: ‘it’s very amusing to be able to do what one likes – no editors, no publishers, and only people to read who more or less like that sort of thing (my italics).’¹⁰³ In this way, Mansfield’s audience for Prelude would be much smaller than the one she had envisioned in 1916 in her

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¹⁰¹ To Dorothy Brett, 11 October 1917, *The Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 330-1. This extract is taken from the same letter as that cited above, in which she had identified her technique and described her method of ‘becoming’ her subject matter (specifically figured in the image of the duck).


resolution to ‘make her small undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the Old World’; moreover, it was made up of ‘Intellectuals’ who Mansfield feared would dismiss it.\textsuperscript{104} Her anxieties were not unfounded. It was only reviewed in two papers on its initial publication, and Alpers describes the muted reaction to its publication as follows:

For the little blue book called \textit{Prelude} there was no general enthusiasm, no body of allies ready to promote it, and no demand in the bookshops. Few review copies were sent out, and the papers hardly noticed it, for its appearance was unprofessional. [...\textsuperscript{105} Such was \textit{Prelude}’s almost soundless launching on the world.

Mansfield’s focus on the projected response of the ‘Intellectuals’ is in part indicative of her sense that private publication at the Hogarth Press was unlikely to make the story ‘leap into the eyes of the Old World’. This might in part account for her subsequent refusal to publish more material with the Woolfs. Murry wrote to her in November 1919 to inform her that Virginia Woolf had expressed an interest in publishing a collection of Mansfield’s early stories, to which Mansfield responded:

\begin{quote}
They won’t all bear reprinting, Boge. I can’t afford to publish my early Works yet. If you don’t mind I’d rather let them lie & deliver you the new goods in May. In any case I don’t want the Woolfs to have any of my new work.\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

By referring to her work as ‘the new goods’, she explicitly figures them in commercial terms, and her refusal to allow the Woolfs to publish them (even though they had openly expressed an interest in doing so) suggests that private publication was not commercially viable in the way that she now demanded. Moreover, the coterie nature of the early Hogarth Press in part deflected attention away from Mansfield as author.

\textsuperscript{104} By contrast, Mansfield’s first collection of stories in 1911 (\textit{In a German Pension}) had gone through three impressions, probably of 500 copies each, between December 1911 and June 1912.

\textsuperscript{105} Alpers, \textit{The Life}, p. 284.

\textsuperscript{106} To Murry, 26 and 27 November, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 3, pp. 122-3.
and towards Woolf as publisher of *Prelude*, and Mansfield’s own authority over the finished product, then, was ultimately perceived in ambiguous terms.

Woolf would later write about the virtues of private publication in 1938 in *Three Guineas*:

> the private printing press is an actual fact, and not beyond the reach of a moderate income. Typewriters and duplicators are actual facts and even cheaper. By using these cheap and so far unforbidden instruments you can at once rid yourself of the pressure of boards, policies and editors. They will speak your own mind, in your own words, at your own time, at your own length, at your own bidding. And that, we are agreed, is our definition of intellectual liberty.  

By the time of the publication of *Three Guineas*, the Hogarth Press had long become a successful venture, both critically and commercially. In 1918, however, it was as yet an unprofessional outfit, and Mansfield came to associate Woolf, not with intellectual liberty, but with intellectual snobbery.

Her association with Bloomsbury ultimately positioned Mansfield in a literary community that in part replicated the limitations of a narrow audience that she had begun to associate with coterie publication by the end of *Rhythm*’s run; the anxieties of the ‘Intellectuals’ consumption of *Prelude* echo the representation of the ‘Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism’ of ‘Sunday Lunch’ (October 1912). During the publication of *Prelude*, she wrote *Je ne parle pas francais*, which would also be published by a private press: Murry’s own Heron Press. However, as Chapter Four will argue, *Je ne parle pas francais* completes Mansfield’s process of rejecting limited coterie publication (both little magazines and private presses), and by the time it appeared both she and Murry had become established through their association with the *Athenaeum*. In her new capacity as reviewer for the *Athenaeum* Mansfield would gain

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a greater sense of the relationship between the writer and the marketplace. This in turn would inform the way in which she came to view the inevitability of engaging with such commercial necessities in the publication of her own fiction.
Chapter Four

‘A writer first’: Je ne parle pas francais, the Athenaeum and Bliss 1919-1920

From August 1918 to September 1919, Mansfield and Murry lived in a house nicknamed ‘The Elephant’, at 2 Portland Villas, East Heath Road, Hampstead; it was the first time in seven years that she had spent an entire year at a single address, and it would prove to be her last permanent home in England.1 ‘The Elephant’ provided a stable address for a time; likewise, the Athenaeum provided a secure source of earnings and mode of publication throughout 1919 and 1920. This chapter will trace Mansfield’s developing authorial persona in this context, specifically in terms of her working relationship with John Middleton Murry.

After the publication of Prelude in July 1918, Mansfield had seen only two more stories placed that year: ‘Bliss’ in the English Review in August (edited since 1910 by Austin Harrison, after Ford Madox Ford’s departure) and ‘Carnation’ in the Nation in September. It would be 1920 before she made a sustained reappearance as a writer of fiction, both in journal and book publication. The Athenaeum introduced short story publication in the course of Murry’s editorship, but only from July 1920 on, at which time Mansfield began to juggle her reviewing with the production of short stories. These appearances in the Athenaeum were book-ended by the appearance of two volumes; the privately-printed Je ne parle pas francais in January 1920 and the commercially-published Bliss and Other Stories in December 1920. Significant space is devoted to a

1 From January 1911 to September 1912, she had lived at 69 Clovelly Mansions, Gray’s Inn Road. Murry continued to live in ‘The Elephant’ after Mansfield’s departure for Ospadeletti in September 1919.
discussion of these two publications to highlight Mansfield's increasingly professional attitude to her work.

Mansfield's short story publication in this period may be located to some extent within the tripartite model that Lawrence Rainey establishes in *Institutions of Modernism* as typical of modernist publishing strategies. However, Mansfield never managed to publish one single text in all three formats; instead, her stories combined in a series of double publications. It was usually the case that they appeared first in a journal and then in collected form; the major exception was the publication of *Je ne parle pas francais* in a single-story edition before inclusion in the collection *Bliss and Other Stories*.

Although written in 1918, *Je ne parle pas francais* was not published until 1920, when it appeared in two different forms. This chapter interrogates it in terms of its publication contexts, but deviates from the practice established elsewhere in this thesis by discussing it before looking at Mansfield's career at the *Athenaeum*, and hence slightly out of the chronological sequence of publication. The discrepancy between the dates of composition and publication in this case allows us to highlight the change in Mansfield's professional status between 1918 and early 1920, by focusing on the outcome of her rejection of the 'literary underworld' which is enacted within *Je ne parle pas francais*. By the time the story was published, Murry had (in Clare Hanson's terms) risen 'from the "underworld" to his position as an influential editor'. Mansfield responded to his appointment to the *Athenaeum* with enthusiasm, and the resultant re-engagement with a busy publishing world had a vital impact on her later career.

Although she expressed increasing levels of frustration at the way in which her consumption of vast amounts of contemporary literature distracted from her own attempts at writing fiction, Mansfield's career as reviewer for the *Athenaeum* provides a

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3 *The Critical Writings*, ed. Hanson, p. 33.
useful context for her final work. Over the course of almost two years, she continued to interrogate the conflict between the writer and the marketplace, and developed this theme in her first prose sketch for the *Athenaeum*, ‘Perambulations’. Whereas Hanson views the *Athenaeum* as something of a sequel to the career of ‘The Two Tigers’ at *Rhythm*, I argue that it was through Mansfield’s writings for the weekly that she refined her approach to publication strategies and her perception of her work’s relationship to the literary marketplace. In the process, she finally managed to clarify the ways in which she and Murry differed on these points, and when disputes arose over the publication of *Bliss and Other Stories* at the end of 1920, she was in a position to dismiss him as her representative.

Ultimately, her career at the *Athenaeum* re-established the professional aspect of her relationship with John Middleton Murry as her editor and also (increasingly) her unofficial agent. Mansfield’s growing dissatisfaction with these aspects of the relationship provides the main context for the chapter. By the end of 1920, she had resigned from the *Athenaeum*, telling Murry that

> I am a writer first. In the past, it is true, when I worked less, my writing self was merged in my personal self. I felt conscious of you – to the exclusion of almost everything, at times.⁴

This assertion of herself as a ‘writer first’ provides a statement of authority that ultimately informs her mature work.

*Je ne parle pas francais*

*Je ne parle pas francais* was written in Bandol in the south of France in just ten days in February 1918 during a period which also saw the composition of ‘Sun and Moon’ and

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‘Bliss’, but would not be published until nearly two years later in 1920. It was the second of Mansfield’s stories to be published privately, and was written while the first (Prelude) was being printed by Leonard and Virginia Woolf throughout the first half of 1918. The Woolfs’ project clearly influenced John Middleton Murry in his decision to establish a press of his own, and his dismissal of their first publication (Two Stories) as ‘that tripe of the Woolves!’ is indicative of his competitive attitude towards the venture (Murry’s italics). However, it would be too simplistic to read the establishment of the press merely as an attempt by Mansfield to replicate Virginia Woolf’s secure site of publication, and she does not seem to have taken a particularly active interest in the short-lived Heron Press.

Mansfield was absent from England when Murry decided to establish the press, and she was to remain removed from the venture, which was exclusively operated by Murry and his younger brother Richard. The name given to the press is misleading in this sense: Heron was the middle name of Mansfield’s late brother, and was the name that she intended for her ‘dream-house’. As such, it might conjure up idealistic images of a stable site in which to live, write and publish, but it was to provide no such sense of permanence for her. There are some notable differences between the Hogarth and Heron Presses (besides the obvious success of one and failure of the other). Whereas the Hogarth Press was an independent venture, the Heron Press was affiliated with an

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5 As noted in the Introduction, this phrase should read ‘Je ne parle pas français’ but is here referred to as Je ne parle pas français because the Heron Press omitted the cedilla. Mansfield finished Je ne parle pas français on 10 February 1918, wrote ‘Sun and Moon’ on 11 February 1918, and ‘Bliss’ between 12 and 27 February 1918. Such periods of intense productivity punctuated her final years.

6 He was to reconsider ‘that tripe of the Woolves’ after they began to print Prelude, writing to Mansfield on 18 March 1918: ‘They have done 44 pages of “Prelude” & I must say they have done it very well indeed. There’s no comparison between this piece of printing and their last. And when it’s finished — which, they say will take a good time yet — I am sure you’ll be very pleased. They have used a Caslon fount with the result that there’s nothing shoddy or amateurish about it (Murry’s italics).’ Cited in The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield, ed. Hankin, p. 119.
established publishing house. Moreover the Woolfs were equal partners, with their first publication reflecting this fact: Two Stories features one story each by Leonard and Virginia Woolf. By contrast, the Heron Press's first publication was Murry's Poems 1917-1918 in 1919; Mansfield's Je ne parle pas français followed in January 1920. She responded in relatively muted terms to Murry's proposed establishment of the press: 'Yes, we'll have the press – & well cut down our expenses to the last potato and print our books.' She barely mentioned it in letters to friends and acquaintances on the appearance of Murry’s Poems and Je ne parle pas français. This was to be her last dalliance with private publication, and it will be shown that she responded far more enthusiastically to the opportunities afforded her by Murry's editorship of the Athenaeum from 1919 on.

Mansfield’s composition of Je ne parle pas français coincided almost precisely with Murry’s decision to establish the Heron Press. The day after she completed work on the story, Murry wrote to reason with her about the advantages of printing their own work:

I can see no other way, no other possible way, of making even the scantiest living except by a printing press and a garden. You see I have to face the fact that my novel made £8-10-0; and the typewriting cost me £9-00. Net loss 10/-. I can’t be popular – it's no use my thinking for one moment I can make even £1 a week if I publish in the ordinary way. And, though I think you’re not in quite such an awful case as me, I think it’s really the same (my italics).

His assertion that he ‘can’t be popular’ is predicated on the kinds of elitist rhetoric that both he and Mansfield had employed throughout Rhythm in 1912, and implies that he continued to view himself as a ‘true artist’ at the mercy of an uncaring public at the

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7 Cobden-Sanderson, the firm for which Richard Murry worked at the time, provided backing for the Heron Press, and the firm subsequently published Murry's Evolution of an Intellectual and Cinnamon & Angelica (both 1920).
time of the establishment of the Heron Press: the critical and commercial failure of his novel *Still Life* fed into this. However, Mansfield had long moved beyond such simplistic constructions. The initial publication of *Je ne parle pas français* was pitched to her smallest audience since *Signature* in 1915: as Chapter Three has shown, Mansfield had begun to renegotiate her engagement with such limited audiences from 1916 on.

Murry implicitly acknowledges this in the above letter: his assertion that Mansfield was ‘not in quite such an awful case as [him]’ implies that he recognises her developing acceptance of the necessary engagement with larger-scale strategies of publication and self-promotion than little magazines and private presses. As a whole, Murry’s letter reads as an attempt at encouraging Mansfield to reject this developing business-like approach and to recall her instead to the elitist, anti-‘mob’ rhetoric of *Rhythm* and the *Blue Review*. He goes on to present the projected press in terms of its profitability within the context of a small, select audience, telling her that

> you and I may very well find between us 250 people willing to pay £2 a year each for 4 privately printed books of ours every year, and out of that we could make £300 a year profit.

The envisioned number of readers mirrors the amount that *Signature* would have needed to break even. However, Mansfield’s development of a new *form* in 1916 had coincided with her commitment to establishing a new audience for that form: the Heron Press was unlikely to aid her in fulfilling this long-term resolution to deliver her work

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10 His novel, *Still Life*, had been published in 1916 by Constable. By the time the Heron Press began issuing material, Murry had achieved a way of making more than ‘the scantiest living’ by another means: this was through his editorship of the *Athenaeum*.

11 Although *Prelude* was published privately, I have argued that Mansfield aimed for a still-wider audience throughout that process: in keeping with Rainey’s model, private publication would be followed by commercial re-publication. This would not be achieved until 1920, when both *Prelude* and *Je ne parle pas français* were included in the collection, *Bliss and Other Stories*.

to a wider audience.\textsuperscript{13} *Je ne parle pas fran\c{c}ais* was not widely reviewed, although a notice in the *TLS* on its publication was favourable, and took the opportunity to revisit *Prelude* at the same time, describing both as ‘two stories of the “awkward” length which, as publishers declare, the public finds too long for a short story and too short for a novel.’\textsuperscript{14} At 10s. 6d. it was an expensive publication and only one hundred copies were printed (by hand, by Murry’s brother). Of these, about twenty were spoiled, and of the eighty that were eventually to go on sale, sixty were sold.

While Murry was planning to establish a press with the stated aim of distributing their work to a small, select audience, Mansfield was writing a story that effectively satirised such strategies: *Je ne parle pas fran\c{c}ais* may be read as further evidence of her rejection of her earlier literary association with little magazines and coterie publication strategies. In particular, this involved a rejection of the idealised figure of the artist that had been central to the two collaborative essays with Murry published in *Rhythm* in 1912, ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art’. In *Je ne parle pas fran\c{c}ais*, this is primarily achieved through her presentation of the story’s narrator, Raoul Duquette.

Early in his narrative, Duquette provides a self-portrait that establishes his pedigree as a member of the avant-garde:

\begin{quote}
I write for two newspapers. I am going in for serious literature. I am starting a career. The book that I shall bring out will simply stagger the critics. I am going to write about things that have never been
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} Mansfield requested that an advertisement for the book be placed in the *TLS* in December 1919, with an eye directly on the Christmas book market, telling Murry ‘we must sell it now its been such a labour & thats the only way it will sell. But it [the advertisement] ought to be in by Xmas’ (To Murry, 4 December 1919, *The Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 135). To Richard Murry, who had printed the book by hand, she wrote ‘I hope a little handful of people buys it – for the sake of covering the expense’. To Richard Murry, c. 25 January 1920, *The Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 195.

\textsuperscript{14} *TLS*, No. 941, 29 January 1920, p. 63. On its initial publication in 1918, *Prelude* garnered only two reviews, in the *Daily News* and the *Nation*. It merited something of a reappraisal after the appearance of *Je ne parle pas fran\c{c}ais*. Unsurprisingly, *Je ne parle pas fran\c{c}ais* also received a glowing review in the *Athenaeum*. J.W.N.S. [J.W.N. Sullivan], ‘The Story Writing Genius’, *Athenaeum*, No. 4692 (2 April 1920), 447.
touched before. I am going to make a name for myself as a writer about the submerged world.

His "submerged world" is a version of the "literary underworld" of bohemian café culture. Hermione Lee has discussed Virginia Woolf's association of Mansfield with this underworld, which she saw as being populated with rootless, seedy metropolitan types like Kot and Gertler and Murry, on the make professionally and sexually, who she imagined spent their time in pubs and tea-shops and boarding houses.

Duquette is clearly located within such a context, and the site of narration in *Je ne parle pas francais* is specifically a café. Duquette is a literary poseur, and his construction of a literary pose is developed throughout his narrative, the 'plot' of which begins with his identification of himself: 'My name is Raoul Duquette. I am twenty-six years old and a Parisian, a true Parisian' (*Jnppf*, p. 5). The titles of his published work indicate his falsity: *Left Umbrellas, Wrong Doors, False Coins*. Even the title of 'his' story, *Je ne parle pas francais*, implies a contradictory use of language: the phrase allows its speaker to assert his/her inability (or unwillingness) to articulate him/herself and might be attributed more to his deliberately digressive narrative style than to Mouse's conscious self-silencing.

Sydney Janet Kaplan has provided a useful account of the story as an ironic commentary on what she terms 'the self-centredness of some of [Mansfield's] modernist contemporaries', and discusses Duquette's excessively self-conscious

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15 Katherine Mansfield, *Je ne parle pas francais* (Hampstead: The Heron Press, 1919), p. 6. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text, abbreviated to *Jnppf*. The story did not appear until early 1920, but the date of printing and publication is given as 1919. Murry continued to present a romantic and idealised version of this 'literary underworld' in *Between Two Worlds*. 


18 Perry Meisel describes the story as 'a sort of burlesque on both bad fiction and the pop mythology of the rakish aesthete.' 'What the Reader Knows; or, The French One', *Katherine Mansfield: In From the Margin*, ed. Robinson, pp. 112-18 (p. 113).
'modernist' themes and strategies as evidence of Mansfield's own ironic stance towards, and attempted rejection of, such narrative posturing. In more specific terms, it can be argued that the story enacts Mansfield’s further rejection of her own early associations with *Rhythm* in particular, and coterie publication in general. The biographical resonance between the character of Duquette and Francis Carco is clear; and his description of his relationship with Dick Harmon recalls the early encounters between Murry and Carco in Paris around the time that Murry and J.D. Fergusson decided to establish *Rhythm*. This is evident in Duquette’s memory of their first meeting:

I met him at an evening party given by the editor of a new review. It was a very select, very fashionable affair. One or two of the older men were there and the ladies were extremely *comme il faut*. They sat on cubist sofas in full evening dress and allowed us to hand them thimbles of cherry brandy and to talk to them about their poetry. For, as far as I can remember, they were all poetesses (*Jnppf*, pp. 8-9).

Furthermore, in a direct reference to and apparent dismissal of ‘Seriousness in Art’, Duquette and Harmon are both described as ‘serious’ writers, one a ‘young, serious writer who was making a special study of modern English literature’, the other ‘an Englishman, reserved, serious, making a special study of modern French literature’ (*Jnppf*, p. 9). In this way, both are linked to the figure of the isolated, ‘aristocratic’

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20 Smith reads the story in terms of its Fauvist aesthetic, suggesting that the story enacts Mansfield’s ongoing engagement with the influence of the artists she had encountered at *Rhythm*. My discussion focuses, not on Mansfield’s engagement with these artists, but with the publication strategies associated with the little magazine and from which Mansfield attempted to distance herself throughout this period.
22 In December 1919, Mansfield criticised Murry for his lingering sense of his own ‘seriousness’: ‘I think you are a trifle over-anxious to assure people how serious you are. You antagonize them sometimes or set them doubting because of your emphasis on your sincerity. [...] If you speak for your generation, speak, but don’t say “I speak for my generation”, for the force is then gone from your cry. When you know you are a voice crying in the wilderness, cry, but don’t say “I am a voice crying in the wilderness.” To my thinking (and I am as you know so infinitely incomparably nearer the public than you) the force of either the blow you strike or the praise you want to sing is broken by this – what is it? Is it the most infernal modesty? Innocence?’ To Murry, 5 December 1919, *The Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 141.
artist that had been held up as an ideal by Mansfield and Murry in 'Seriousness in Art', but which Mansfield had tentatively satirised in 'Sunday Lunch'. In *Je ne parle pas francais*, she undermines the pose entirely through her presentation of Duquette as its representative figure: a dilettante who earns his living as a pimp and a gigolo and who lives entirely on credit.

Duquette's pose as 'aristocratic artist' emphasises his links to coterie publication: these are further suggested through his perception of his audience. Although his self-portrait identifies that he 'writes for two newspapers' and the narrative is littered with references to his 'little books' — *Wrong Doors, False Coins, Left Umbrellas* — his narrative is aimed at the narrowest possible group of 'readers'. He interrupts his story at one point to tell himself:

> Enough. Let us leave off there. At the word — tea. For really, really, you've filled your greediest subscriber so full that he will burst if he has to swallow another word (*Jnppf*, p. 18).

Duquette is his own 'greediest subscriber' and narrates the story to himself throughout. Although he talks directly to a 'dirty old gallant' and Madame in the final paragraphs, neither of these has been privy to the story that he has narrated. His 'art' exists in isolation from any audience beyond himself, and in this way he consumes his own story. This is similar to the way in which the members of the Society for the Cultivation of Cannibals of 'Sunday Lunch' constantly feed off one another and never produce anything 'real', as discussed in Chapter Two.

By the time Mansfield wrote 'Sunday Lunch' in 1912, she had begun to express discomfort with the nature of literary coteries and self-contained communities; this persisted throughout the intervening years in the failed 'communes' with the Lawrences at Rose Tree Cottage and Higher Tregerthen (the most lean periods of her career as a
writer of fiction), and further manifested itself in her anxious relationship with the Woolfs as publishers of Prelude. While ‘The Tiger’ of ‘Sunday Lunch’ was arguably a vulnerable figure that had hidden behind sarcastic bravado in an attempt to protect her/himself from the ‘Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism’, Duquette is a scavenging spectator on and participant in circles that are similar to those parodied by ‘The Tiger’. He is constantly on the lookout for copy for his stories, and is a direct descendant of the cannibalistic ‘aristocratic artists’ of ‘Sunday Lunch’. Indeed his name suggests this voracious appetite for prey: Raoul is the French form of Ralph, meaning ‘wolf’. This might in turn recall Mansfield’s anxiety at throwing Prelude ‘to the wolves’ (and specifically to the Woolfs) as discussed in the previous chapter, further reinforcing her sense of the potential limitations of small-scale publishing strategies (both little magazines and private presses). Her attempts at distancing herself from her earlier participation in such networks were in keeping with her recent determination to strike a balance between the commercial and modernist aspects of her work; this had been figured as a resolution to move beyond such self-contained publication networks and to deliver her work to a wider audience.

Dominic Head has described Duquette as ‘a parody of the self-conscious artist and, in part, a self-parody by Mansfield.’ This is best understood in terms of Duquette’s description of the foundation of his ‘art’.

I have made it a rule of my life never to regret and never to look back. Regret is an appalling waste of energy, and no one who intends to be a writer can afford to indulge in it. You can’t get it into shape; you can’t

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23 The characters of ‘Bliss’, written around the same time as Je ne parle pas francais, display similar qualities in their discussions of contemporary poetry and theatre at Bertha Young’s dinner party.
24 This also has some resonance with Mansfield’s translation of ‘La Chevre de M. Seguin’ by Alphonse Daudet which appeared in the New Age, 21.19 (6 September 1917), 411-12. The story is a fable about a goat who runs away from the security of its master and is eaten by a wolf. The name Raoul/Ralph also carries the connotation of ‘counsel’.
build on it; it's only good for wallowing in. Looking back, of course, is equally fatal to Art. It’s keeping yourself poor. Art can’t and won’t stand poverty (Jnppf, p. 4).

The entire premise of his story, however, is precisely such ‘looking back’. This is even central to his invention of a public, artistic persona for himself. His insistence that ‘I have no family. [...] I never think about my childhood’ is immediately countered by his elaborate discussion of his ‘one memory’ (actually a weekly occurrence) of the childhood abuse he suffered at the hands of his African laundress. This memory stands out ‘because it seems to me now so very significant as regards myself from the literary point of view’ (Jnppf, p. 5). It is apparent that his construction of an authorial persona is entirely predicated on ‘looking back’, as is Je ne parle pas francais itself. By extension, the story may be read as Mansfield’s own ‘look back’ at her career to date, and her dismissal of the literary poses associated with Rhythm that have been outlined here. In this way, Duquette is a partial mirror image for Mansfield, as the persona that ‘looks back’ at her when she reflects on her earlier career and identifies her earlier posturing.

It was the rejection of this pose that allowed her to recognise that she was ‘in a way grown up as a writer’ and had achieved ‘a sort of authority’. That authority remained uncertain and partial, as has been discussed in Chapter Three, because of her continued anxious perception of the necessities of publication and engagement with the

26 In a similar impulse, she was wary of republishing her little magazine material in Bliss in 1920, telling Murry ‘I must make very sure of what they collect from Rhythm. The story “The Wind Blows” from the Signature is in the collection. It’s the only one worth reprinting’ (To Murry, 5 February 1920, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 207). Three days later, she expressly stated that ‘I couldn’t have The Woman at the Store reprinted par example’ (To Murry, 8 February 1920, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 212). In the end, no material from Rhythm or the Blue Review was included in Bliss, but one more Signature story – ‘The Little Governess’ – was reprinted.

27 To Murry, 10 and 11 February 1918, The Letters, Vol. 2, p. 66. Kaplan notes that Mansfield did not entirely escape such posturing, citing a 1921 journal entry about KM ‘catching herself preening’ when she finished a story as evidence (Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction, p. 187). Duquette’s failure, however, lies in his refusal to acknowledge his narrative posturing; he chooses to ignore the reflection that speaks to him when he looks in the mirror and which tells him ‘You – literary? you look as though you’ve taken down a bet on a racecourse!’ (Jnppf, p. 13).
marketplace. This is further reflected in *Je ne parle pas français* by Duquette’s assertion that ‘Art can’t and won’t stand poverty’. Nevertheless, the remainder of her career would be characterised by a determination to produce formally innovative work that would be commercially viable, a theme that will be developed throughout the discussion of the *Athenaeum*.

The context in which *Je ne parle pas français* was written was fundamentally divorced from its first publication, to a greater extent than any of Mansfield’s other writings: it was written in Bandol while the Woolfs published *Prelude* and while Murry planned his own private publishing venture, which would eventually print the story. By the time it appeared in the Heron Press limited edition, however, Mansfield’s situation had radically altered. This was primarily as a result of Murry’s editorship of the *Athenaeum* and Mansfield’s weekly review column which sharpened her awareness of the place of literary fiction in the wider marketplace and her perception of the dangers of complacently writing to a pre-ordained audience. Her later work attempted to challenge this notion of a pre-existing audience, and is marked by an increased awareness that the production of her ‘new word’ in fiction would also require a new set of changes in audience expectation and publishing practices. It will be argued that this is central to an understanding of her career as a reviewer between 1919 and 1920.

**The *Athenaeum***

In February 1919, Murry accepted the editorship of the *Athenaeum*, issuing his first number of the journal on 4 April 1919. As a result, Mansfield was apparently once again provided with a stable forum in which to publish her work until the end of 1920 when she effectively ‘resigned’ from the journal. Unlike the previous journals Murry had co-founded and edited, the *Athenaeum* was an established literary weekly, and far
removed from the coterie publications which he had edited intermittently between 1911 and 1915. By the time the Heron Press edition of *Je ne parle pas francais* appeared in 1920, then, the status of both Mansfield as a professional writer and Murry as a critic and editor had undergone a transformation, and both were afforded a new centrality in their movement away from the ‘literary underworld’. First established in 1828, the *Athenaeum* had gained a formidable reputation as ‘the mirror of Victorian culture’ although its impact had waned somewhat in recent years. Funded by the chocolatier Arnold Rowntree, it was to undergo something of a post-war rejuvenation, as Murry and his contributors aimed to restore it to its former status, first returning it to the weekly publication it had been forced to abandon during the First World War. It eventually merged with the *Nation* early in 1921, and was finally subsumed into the *New Statesman* ten years later.

One of Murry’s most significant editorial acts at the *Athenaeum* came in June 1920, with an announcement in the ‘Literary Gossip’ column that ‘It is the intention of the *Athenaeum* to devote a portion of space henceforward to prose fiction’, and from that point on the journal featured a short story or prose sketch in each issue. Prior to this, (as Alpers puts it) ‘short stories were not an accepted ingredient of the serious weekly, they belonged in magazines.’ That said, Mansfield had already published one prose sketch in the *Athenaeum* in 1919 (‘Perambulations’) and one short story (‘Revelations’) the week before the above announcement appeared; a further seven

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28 The *Athenaeum* was the first of his vehicles to feature a correspondence column, for example, indicating its wider appeal. Although Mark S. Morrisson notes that lively correspondence columns were common to many little magazines, Murry’s three previous journals had not featured any such forum for debate. *The Public Face of Modernism*, p. 11.
29 For more detailed accounts of the *Athenaeum* see Leslie A. Marchand, *The Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941); Demoor, *Their Fair Share*.
followed, roughly at one-month intervals.\textsuperscript{32} She also contributed a number of poems under the pseudonym ‘Elizabeth Stanley’ and a series of translations of Chekhov’s letters (in collaboration with S.S. Koteliansky).\textsuperscript{33} Finally, in July and August 1920 (on a return trip to ‘The Elephant’ from Menton) she contributed three unsigned leaders, including one on the arrival of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks in London three months after their wedding.\textsuperscript{34}

In addition to writing for the journal in these various guises, she also adopted the pose of literary hostess, as in the case of an Athenaeum party held in May 1919; this is further evident in a recurring image in her early private writing about the journal, which she figured as ‘Athene’s tea board’ to Ottoline Morrell and ‘Athene’s tea party’ to Virginia Woolf.\textsuperscript{35} Shortly after the re-launched Athenaeum issued its first number, Mansfield described her function within the journal to Ottoline Morrell as being ‘rather like the pink icing butterfly on the dark sumptuous tragic cake – very unworthy.’\textsuperscript{36} The image recalls her description of her function in Signature as ‘the jam in the golden pill’ but is framed in much more positive terms. Whereas Mansfield had in part distanced herself from Murry and Lawrence’s little magazine, she openly identifies with this new

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Koteliansky translated the material, and Mansfield polished his prose. It was intended to collect the material and publish it as a book, but Constance Garnett beat them to it.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Although Mansfield confesses to a taste for ‘flitting into the plush darkness of a cinema’, she is a little bemused by the idolisation of these two particular stars. Instead, she reasons that ‘[h]ad it been Charlie Chaplin it would have been easier to understand, for within his province he is one of the first actors of the world; he has a universal significance. This great little comedian who suggests the background of tragedy is the under-dog, the waif of humanity, the plaything of Fate. That he should be popular is a tribute to the people who love him’. Unsigned, ‘The Stars in Their Courses’, Athenaeum, No. 4705 (2 July 1920), 5. Her other leaders both appeared in August: ‘Stop Press Biography’, Athenaeum, No. 4712 (August 20 1920), 229 and ‘The Critics’ New Year’, Athenaeum, No. 4713 (August 27 1920), 261 (both unsigned).
\item \textsuperscript{36} To Ottoline Morrell, c. 20 April 1919, The Letters, Vol. 2, p. 313.
\end{itemize}
venture, and came to describe it to Murry as 'our paper (our in humility, love – its your hat – yes I know.)' Her perception of herself as the 'icing on the cake' is indicative of this much more active engagement with the journal. At the same time, it continues to articulate an anxiety about the way in which she is perceived by the readers of the Athenaeum: she may be the palatable icing, but this is figured as a frivolous substance and contrasted directly with the serious and solid 'cake' that makes up the rest of the journal.

Mansfield's illness removed her from the Athenaeum and literary London at a time at which she had properly begun to engage with it, but it is likely that, had her health permitted her to remain in England throughout Murry's editorship, she would have played an increasingly central role in its publication. In May 1920, for example, on the same return trip from Menton that saw her contribution of the three leaders, she wrote to Sydney and Violet Schiff, giving an indication of the breadth of her activities at the journal when she was present in London:

this week is already covered under manuscripts to be read, poems, essays to choose 'finally', novels to review, schemes to draft, an article to write on why we intend to publish short stories, and then there's a smashing review to be written for the Nation.

Mansfield was not employed in any official editorial capacity during her association with the journal, but this letter to the Schiffs indicates the diversity of her work when occasion permitted.

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37 To Murry, 10 and 11 November 1919, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 84.
38 To Sydney and Violet Schiff, 10 May 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 8. A subsequent letter to the Schiffs suggests that she played some role in the selection of short stories for publication: 'My private feeling is that the last story in the paper – which reminded me of nothing so much as a galosh or an unclaimed umbrella has disgusted you both. It's useless to pretend I can control what stories we do print. I can up to a certain point (that, of course, makes it ridiculous) but after that Murry says I am 'too precious in my taste'.' To Sydney and Violet Schiff, c. 22 August 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 27. Here, the 'unclaimed umbrella' recalls one of Duquette's 'stories' in Je ne parle pas francais.
Even when she was absent from London, her letters to Murry are filled with commentaries on individual issues of the *Athenaeum*. At the end of 1920 for example, shortly before her resignation from the journal, she outlined a lengthy series of ‘improvements’, before concluding that:

The whole paper needs a stricter form – or could do with one, I feel – a more [stringent] form that is scrupulously adhered to. But I realise the difficulty of this with writers like K.M. & Co. who never seem to learn the length of a page. Still they ought to be hauled over the coals. A big nasty cut now & again would larn em.  

The ‘big nasty cut’ that weighed on Mansfield’s mind had less to do with the *Athenaeum* directly than with the publication of *Bliss and Other Stories*, as will be shown later in this chapter. In general, her involvement with the *Athenaeum* saw her fullest engagement in running a literary journal at any point in her career; these insights into the pressures of producing a weekly paper would have an impact on her evolving sense of the necessities of publication and commercialism for her own fiction. This was central to her first prose sketch for the *Athenaeum*, ‘Perambulations’.

‘Perambulations’ is clearly motivated by Mansfield’s frustration at the lack of an outlet for her work. It was in part written as a response to her failure to secure a contract for publication of a volume of her stories with William Heinemann’s firm; this rejection doubtless influenced the basic premise of the sketch, which details an author’s account of a dream of submitting a manuscript to a publisher and meeting with ridicule. The sketch also recalls the anxiety of publication that had been evident in Mansfield’s relationship with the Woolfs, as discussed in the previous chapter: the author’s dream of ‘taking her darling to a publisher’ directly echoes Mansfield’s

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40 Mansfield’s association with the *Athenaeum* would further frustrate her attempts at writing her own fiction in 1919, since it did not begin the publication of short stories until July 1920.
41 Alpers, *The Life*, p. 291. The sketch actually describes the author’s nightmare about failing to get a *novel* published, which might indicate Mansfield’s continued generic anxiety as a writer of short stories.
description of ‘throwing her darling to the wolves’. However, ‘Perambulations’ is more than a wry response to the rejection of a manuscript, as the sketch enacts Mansfield’s anxiety of audience in terms, not only of her immediate readers, but also of the wider dissemination of her work.

The fate that awaits her ‘darling’ once it is consumed by an audience may provide a starting point for the sketch, but the fundamental problem for the author presented in ‘Perambulations’ is actually her failure to achieve this distribution of her writing. In the author’s dream, she fails to impress her initial audience of the publisher. The sketch begins:

She told me she dreamed she took her darling to a publisher, and, having placed it upon the altar, she made obeisance and waited to hear if it should be found worthy in his sight for a sacrifice. And he asked her how old she was. She had to confess that, though she had seen him quite recently and they had spent a wonderful time together, she never would see Thirty again.

It is not only the author’s novel that meets with rejection, then, but the author herself. The publisher dismisses her delivery of her first novel ‘fourteen or fifteen years’ too late, and at a time when she ‘ought to be either writing [her] memoirs or crackin’ up the new generation. We’ve no use for anything in the creative line that’s not brought to market in the green ear.’ As a result, she sees herself as ‘doomed to pass these delicious hours of our fine flowering not only unwept (which doesn’t matter so much), but quite absolutely unhonoured and unsung — which does.’ Two years later, Mansfield would describe her reaction to publishing a story (on the appearance of ‘At

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43 ‘Perambulations’, p. 264.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
the Bay' in the *London Mercury*) as 'such a queer feeling — after one has dropped a pebble in. Will there be a ripple or not?' In ‘Perambulations’, it is the lack of an audience for her work that preys on the author’s mind; the sketch is clearly a product of Mansfield’s developing awareness of the necessity to engage with the commercial world of publishing. This became more sophisticated throughout her career as a reviewer for the *Athenaeum*.

### ‘A New Word’: Mansfield’s Reviews

Mansfield’s work for the *Athenaeum* was primarily as a reviewer of fiction, and her column quickly became established as a weekly highlight.47 Murry flattered her that ‘[w]hat I feel is, and what a great many other people feel, is that as long as your novel page is there, there really can’t be a bad number of the *Athenaeum*.’48 Her columns occasionally attracted comment in the Correspondence column: although this was not always positive, she was praised in 1920 in a letter that also assumed that she was a man (perhaps inevitably in the slightly stuffy, masculine *Athenaeum* environs):

> The method of criticism employed by your contributor (K.M.) [...] seems to me one of the utmost subtlety and value. If it were not as impertinent to praise as to criticize your contributors on general grounds (animadversion upon specific errors is alone legitimate), I should say he had invented an entirely new method of dealing with modern fiction. In no other reviews of novels is a sense of the quality of the work so precisely given.49

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47 Thus far, Mansfield’s reviews have received relatively little critical attention, although two different collections have been published: Murry’s *Novels and Novelists* reprints practically all of them (with some apparently accidental omissions), whereas Clare Hanson’s *The Critical Writings* reprints a selection of reviews (often extracts) and offers an overview of Mansfield’s career as reviewer and her professional relationship with Murry.
Mansfield wrote and published forty-seven reviews for the *Athenaeum* in 1919 and sixty-eight in 1920. Her first column, ‘Three Women Novelists’ (a review of Patience Worth’s *Hope Trueblood*, Mrs. Victor Rickard’s *The House of Courage* and Dorothy Richardson’s *The Tunnel*) indicates the mixture of material under review, from the ‘high modernism’ of Richardson’s novel to more ‘popular’ forms.\(^5^0\) Throughout 1919 Mansfield produced relatively little fiction of her own, but once the *Athenaeum* began publishing short stories in 1920 there was a marked increase in the number of stories she wrote.\(^5^1\) By the end of 1920, it had become apparent that she could not continue to juggle her short story-writing with the mass of reviewing for the *Athenaeum*; this would be one factor in her resignation in December of that year.

The majority of Mansfield’s reviews for the *Athenaeum* were of contemporary novels, but she also covered a number of short stories and short story collections in the course of her twenty-one months as reviewer; as with the novels, these varied from modernist material like Virginia Woolf’s *Kew Gardens* to more obvious magazine fare such as *A Sailor’s Home* by ‘Richard Dehan’ (the pseudonym of the popular Irish writer Clotilde Graves).\(^5^2\) It was in one of these reviews of short stories that she made her great rallying cry: ‘Wanted, a New Word’. This has been frequently misprinted as ‘Wanted, a New World’ in Murry’s *Novels and Novelists*, Kirkpatrick’s *Bibliography of Katherine Mansfield* and Hanson’s *The Critical Writings* (who uses it as the header for her section on Mansfield’s *Athenaeum* reviews, which makes up most of the study). Whereas Hanson understands the *Athenaeum* as a ‘New World’ made up of Mansfield

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\(^{50}\) Mansfield’s review gives no indication that she was aware of *Hope Trueblood’s* ‘composition’ through spirit writing.

\(^{51}\) In 1919, for example, she wrote ‘A Suburban Fairy-Tale’, ‘See-Saw’ (both published posthumously), ‘Perambulations’, ‘Psychology’ and rewrote ‘The Common Round’ as a short story (‘The Pictures’) for publication in *Art & Letters*; in 1920, in addition to the stories written specifically for the *Athenaeum*, she also wrote ‘Late Spring’, ‘A Strange Mistake’ (both published posthumously and re-titled ‘This Flower’ and ‘The Wrong House’ respectively), ‘The Man Without a Temperament’, ‘The Stranger’, ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, ‘The Singing Lesson’ and ‘Poison’.

and Murry (an updating of the ‘Two Tigers’ from Rhythm), I would suggest that Mansfield’s call for a ‘new word’ suggests something entirely different, not necessarily dependent on the relationship with Murry. Instead it further contributes to her discourse on the necessity of a new form of writing, as discussed in Chapter Three.53

The review has been described by Clare Hanson as ‘virtually the only “manifesto” KM produced for the kind of fiction she herself wrote.’54 It poses a riddle:

I am neither a short story, nor a sketch, nor an impression, nor a tale. I am written in prose. I am a great deal shorter than a novel; I may be only one page long, but, on the other hand, there is no reason why I should not be thirty. I have a special quality – a something, a something which is immediately, perfectly recognizable. It belongs to me; it is of my essence. In fact I am often given away in the first sentence. I seem almost to stand or fall by it. It is to me what the first phrase of the song is to the singer. Those who know me feel: ‘Yes, that is it.’ And they are from that moment prepared for what is to follow. Here are, for example, some examples of me: ‘A Trifle from Life’, ‘About Love’, ‘The Lady with the Dog’. What am I?55

Mansfield does not answer the final question within the review, except to claim that Elizabeth Robins’ The Mills of the Gods does not meet these criteria. Her definition of the ‘new word’ required in fiction is actually presented as a series of negatives.56 She cannot define it in any positive, autonomous terms, and it is only presented in relation to what it is not – a short story or a novel – or in the series of Chekhovian examples with which Mansfield concludes.57 Indeed, a ‘new word’ is needed to describe this new

53 Novels and Novelists, ed. Murry, p. 211; The Critical Writing, ed. Hanson, p. 16; p. 99; Kirkpatrick, A Bibliography of Katherine Mansfield, p. 129.
54 The Critical Writings, ed. Hanson, p. 136.
56 The Critical Writings, ed. Hanson, p. 136.
57 Mansfield is presumably using ‘short story’ here in the ‘plotted’ or magazine sense of the phrase, but she does not make the distinction explicit: indeed, her review of Woolf’s plotless ‘Kew Gardens’ appeared under the title ‘A Short Story’. Hanson uses Mansfield’s ‘manifesto’ to re-emphasise the distinction she makes between short stories and short fictions in Short Stories and Short Fictions 1880-1980. However, since Hanson’s distinction between short stories and short fictions relies primarily on
form. This amorphous definition might, of course, be applied to Mansfield's own fiction, and it is in keeping with her nebulous descriptions of form discussed in Chapter Three in relation to the evolution of *Prelude*.

The publication of *Prelude* was a turning point in Mansfield's career, not least in her increased perception of the location of her work within a commercial realm, and throughout her review columns she further interrogated this relationship. She established the theme in her opening column:

> It is terrifying to think of the number of novels that are written and announced and published and to be had of all libraries, and reviewed and bought and borrowed and read, and left in hotel lounges and omnibuses and railway carriages and deck chairs. Is it possible to believe that each one of them was once the darling offspring of some proud author, —his cherished hope in whom he lives his second richer life?

Mansfield highlighted the tension between the autonomy of a work of art and the necessary reproduction of it in delivering it to an audience at the beginning of her career as reviewer for the *Athenaeum*. She continued to struggle with the relationship between these, writing to Murry in February 1920 in terms that are illuminating:

> I never knew before what killed Dickens. It was money. He couldn't as he grew older resist money: he became a miser & disguised it under a laughing exterior. Money and applause — he died for both. How fearful that is! But still my own precious we must have the books. We must have his complete works...

Mansfield's conflict here is obvious. On the one hand, she suggests that Dickens' location within (and engagement with) the commercial realm of literature and the cult of celebrity fed by an avid paying audience brought about his early death; on the other,

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plot, rather than technique, and since Mansfield used the term apparently indiscriminately elsewhere, this thesis refers throughout to Mansfield's employment of the modernist 'short story' form.

58 Unsigned, 'Three Women Novelists', *Athenaeum*, No. 4640 (4 April 1919), 140.

she implies that this ‘killed’ him in that it affected the image he projected for his public, and influenced the kind of material he produced as his career advanced. Yet commercial publishing had facilitated the continued dissemination of Dickens’ work fifty years after his death, and in Mansfield’s role as consumer of his work and in her desire for his complete works, she must acknowledge her own participation in the very processes which she claims brought about both the commodification of his work and his self-destructive celebrity. Although Mansfield often perceived the problematic nature of her own attempts at employing similar strategies of promoting herself and her work, it is evident that she became increasingly aware of the necessity of such tactics. Indeed, it could be suggested that it was her uneasy relationship with journals and editors that not only taught her the necessity of looking to this commercial realm, but also gave her a means of dealing with it in her fiction. Her immersion in the publishing world of the Athenaeum in particular honed her sense of obligation in engaging with this realm.

To read Mansfield’s reviews from start to finish is to chart her increasing frustration at the array of what she deemed as inferior, formulaic work that found its way into print at a time at which she continued to struggle to publish her short stories. In her first column she noted the increased professionalisation of writing: ‘Reading, for the great majority—for the reading public—is not a passion but a pastime, and writing, for the vast number of modern authors, is a pastime and not a passion.’60 While she did not necessarily condemn this outright at the beginning of her career as reviewer, she became increasingly irritated at what she saw as ‘pastime’ fiction, and her review of Compton Mackenzie’s The Vanity Girl offers an illustrative anecdote:

60 ‘Three Women Novelists’, p. 140.
It was our fortune some time ago to overhear the following conversation:

'Is that a new one, dear?'
'Well, yes, dear, I suppose it is.'
'How far have you got, dear?'
'Chapter twenty-seven.'
'Make room, dear; let’s read the synopsis.'
'Oh, that’s not new, dear. That’s just the same as usual.'

Mansfield’s belief in the necessity of a ‘new word’ meant that she was committed to producing work that could not be described as ‘just the same as usual’; however, she came to recognise that, in order to produce a new form that would have any kind of impact, it was not only necessary to write a ‘new word’ but also, through a more complex engagement with a variety of publication strategies, to address (or establish) a new audience. In essence, Mansfield’s developing perception of her artistic role would mean the production of a new form, and her audience should in turn modify their expectations as readers. In a review of October 1919, she had written of F. Brett Young’s The Young Physician: ‘If only Mr. Young could forget the impatient public and let himself be carried away into places where he thinks they do not care to follow!’ The problem here identified is not so much that the ‘impatient public’ is unwilling to read something new, but that contemporary writers assume this to be the case and fail to challenge their audience’s expectations as a result. By contrast, Mansfield seems to imply that if she is prepared to produce a ‘new word’, her audience will in turn be prepared to consume something other than ‘the same as usual’. This is further evidenced by an examination of Mansfield’s continued challenge to generic expectations in her refinement of her approach to the short story form and its publication.

Murry wrote to Mansfield in November 1919 to tell her that Virginia Woolf claimed that ‘your novel reviews showed that you were not interested in novels. I thought that was a very illuminating remark, illuminating Virginia of course.’ Woolf’s comment may have been linked to her feelings about Mansfield’s less than glowing review of *Night and Day* which had appeared earlier that month. However, the remark is actually quite astute, and in Mansfield’s private writing she had already begun to express a dissatisfaction with contemporary novels which would only escalate with time:

It is an awful temptation, in face of all these novels to cry ‘Woe – woe!’ I cannot conceive how writers who have lived through our times can drop these last ten years and revert to why Edward didn’t understand, Vi’s reluctance to be seduced or (see Bennett) why a dinner of twelve covers needs remodelling. If I did not review novels I’d never read them.

More specifically, Mansfield occasionally used her novel reviews to comment on the pressures of short story publication.

In her published reviews, she attempted to mask these feelings behind humour, as in a review of Compton Mackenzie’s *Poor Relations* and Gilbert Cannan’s *Time and Eternity*:

To be taken seriously in England a novelist must be serious. Poets may be as gay as they please, story-tellers (especially as nobody will publish short stories) as light-hearted as they wish, but if a young man desires to be told (and who does not?) that he is in the front rank, the head of, leading, far outstepping, immeasurably in advance of all other novelists of the day, he must be prepared to father fiends hid in the clouds.

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Inherent in this apparently throwaway remark, of course, is Mansfield's sense that the short story continued to be viewed as a devalued form: the subtext to the statement may be interpreted as 'to be taken seriously in England a writer must be a novelist'. She makes a wryly humorous gesture to the perceived inferiority of the craft of the short story form the following year, in a review of Margaret Symonds' *A Child of the Alps* and Jane Mander's *The Story of a New Zealand River*:

> We question whether anyone who has not himself written the eighty thousand-odd words [that constitute a novel] realizes to the full the grim importance of the fact that a novel is not written in a day. In the case of the short story it is possible to give orders that, unless the house is on fire—and even then, not until the front staircase is well alight—one must not be disturbed; but a novel is an affair of weeks, of months; time after time the author is forced to leave what he has written to-day exposed to what may happen before to-morrow.\(^67\)

Kaplan has argued that Mansfield never accepted the short story as the 'highest form of fiction', and was affected by the Victorian novelists' example of 'greatness' – 'critical acclaim and popular success'.\(^68\) However, this would imply that Mansfield assumed that her audience would not accept the short story as 'the highest form of fiction', which is not in keeping with the reviews already discussed. Her later career was concerned with challenging audience preconceptions generally, and her renegotiation of the short story form was central to her strategic placement of challenging new material which would, by implication, change the way in which the short story was read and perceived.

Her disdain for the increasingly predictable nature of the material she reviewed for the *Athenaeum* was even more apparent in her private writing:

\(^{67}\) K.M., 'First Novels', *Athenaeum*, No. 4706 (9 July 1920), 49.
Im sure I've read 20 novels this autumn by LADY writers that might all be called How I lost my Virginity! If that wasn't bad enough – they never tell the truth – they always tell How I WISHED to lose my Virginity, and in fact I don't believe they ever did lose it.

I wish there were 6 or 7 writers who wrote for themselves and let the world go hang. ⁶⁹

By the end of her stint as reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, Mansfield was evidently disheartened by the continued popularity of 'safe' literary forms, written to a ready-made market. Her brief career at the journal had seen her read and review nearly one hundred and fifty novels and short story collections. The process of wading through this mass of material ultimately sharpened her awareness of the position of literary fiction within the marketplace, but also strengthened her perception of the dangers of complacency and the inadequacies of writing to a pre-approved audience. As a direct result of her career as a reviewer, Mansfield would ultimately aim for a greater sense of accessibility in her art, publishing material in a variety of journals and papers that continued to disseminate her 'new word', but in contexts that were available to a wider variety of reader. This increased experimentation with publishing practices became particularly evident after her break from Murry and the *Athenaeum*, and Chapter Five will discuss her final work in terms of its more sophisticated take on the ways in which genre and audience expectations related to one another.

The reviews proved profitable at a difficult time for Mansfield, increasingly isolated on mainland Europe and with her health in rapid decline: they earned her £100 per year and maintained her links to literary London, but ultimately proved frustrating. ⁷⁰ Once she began to write and publish short stories again throughout 1920, her irritation at the fact that she should feel forced to review what she regarded as

⁷⁰ Her reviewing supplemented her allowance from her father, which had risen to £300 per annum by 1919. Murry's editorship of the *Athenaeum* earned him £800 per annum. Alpers, *The Life*, p. 295.
unchallenging and sub-standard fare at the expense of producing her own fiction
continued to mount:

Its hell to know that one could do so much & be bound to journalism
for bread. If I was a proper journalist I'd give the day to reviewing &
so on - but no! Reviewing is on my chest – AND a sense of GUILT
the whole week! However it can't be helped. I'll win out and then I
don't want to read another novel for ----------- But isn't it grim to be
reviewing [E.F.] Benson when one might be writing one's own stories
which one will never have time to write, on the best showing! (my
italics)71

The pressures of reviewing are equated with the traumas of her illness: both are on her
chest and threaten to suffocate her, just as Dickens' overwork 'killed him'. She finally
resigned from the position in December 1920.

This resignation also coincided with the publication of Mansfield's second
collection, Bliss and Other Stories; in general, her career as reviewer for the Athenaeum
was shadowed by her ongoing efforts at publishing her first collection of stories since
In a German Pension in 1911. It can be argued that the publication of Bliss provided
her with both the means and the incentive to effect the professional break from John
Middleton Murry that had been implied in Je ne parle pas francais, but which was
deferred when his appointment to the editorship of the Athenaeum provided Mansfield
with a useful forum in which to polish her own sense of the professionalisation of her
work.

71 To Murry, 6 December 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 136. Her review of Benson's The Countess of
Lowndes Square; and other Stories appeared in the Athenaeum on 26 November 1920. Mansfield's
resentment at wasting time on Benson's sub-standard stories is clear in her correspondence with Sydney
Schiff: 'I'm tired of extinguishing Benson, especially as he shines as bright as ever the moment after.
Plague take these books. If it wasn't a question of money - what wouldn't I give to leave them alone and
Constable

Mansfield negotiated the publication of her second collection from Menton throughout 1920, but this was achieved without any direct communication with her publishers, since Murry acted as mediator throughout. Evidently, she had already approached William Heinemann as a potential publisher, but met with rejection. Her next choice was Grant Richards, who had six years previously published Joyce’s *Dubliners* after much negotiation. Mansfield wrote to Murry in January 1920 listing the stories she thought it likely she would include in the collection, requesting that he forward the material to Richards. However, Murry failed to do so, instead accepting on Mansfield’s behalf an offer from Michael Sadleir at Constable & Co, the firm which had previously published his novel *Still Life*, and with which Sadleir had begun working after his departure from *Rhythm* in 1912.

Murry mistakenly believed that Richards had agreed to publish a collection of his wife’s stories *unseen*, and did not realise that Mansfield’s arrangement with Richards had been that she should submit a number of stories for consideration, and he would decide from there whether or not to publish a collection. When Sadleir came through with his offer (including an advance of £40), Murry immediately contacted Richards to see if this offer could be bettered. On hearing that Richards was away and would not return for a number of weeks, he ‘closed with Constable on the spot’, telling Mansfield of his successful negotiations on 4 February 1920. Mansfield’s immediate

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72 To Murry, 26 January 1920, *The Letters*, Vol. 3, pp. 197-8. There was one notable absence from that list: *Prelude* failed to appear. It is not clear whether or not she intended this, but it was Murry who actually drew attention to this notable omission ‘[T]he choice of what is to go in the book rests *entirely* with you, except that *Prelude* must be included. That, I think, is necessary anyhow not only because of filling out the book, but because it shows a side of your work that is extremely important. In other words, it’s necessary for the artistic balance (Murry’s italics).’ 12 February 1920, *The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. Hankin, p. 280. The list included *Je ne parle pas français* so it was clearly not a case of excluding the single-story editions privately published between 1918 and 1920.

reaction to this (if she wrote one) has not survived. Richards was actually holidaying in
the South of France at the time, and was scheduled to meet Mansfield in Menton.74
Murry’s actions must have made for an uncomfortable meeting between the two.

*Bliss and Other Stories* was published on 2 December 1920. The book was the
product of nearly five years’ work (two and a half of which had been dedicated to
*Prelude* alone). Its epigraph, taken from *Henry IV* (Act II, Scene iii) would
subsequently be inscribed on Mansfield’s tombstone just over two years later:

‘...but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle
danger, we pluck this flower, safety.’

In the context of *Bliss* the quotation suggests the conclusion to a traumatic period of
Mansfield’s life, both personal and professional; the stories that follow should represent
the fruits of that trauma.

Of the fifteen stories in the collection, all but one (‘Psychology’) had previously
appeared in print in Britain. Four were first published in the *Athenaeum* (‘Revelations’,
‘The Escape’, ‘Sun and Moon’ and ‘The Wind Blows’), three in the *New Age* (‘Mr
and ‘A Dill Pickle’) and two in *Art & Letters* (‘The Pictures’ and ‘The Man Without a
Temperament’).75 ‘The Little Governess’, which dated back to *Signature* in 1915, was
also included. ‘Prelude’ and ‘Je ne parle pas francais’ rounded out the collection.76
Five of the fourteen stories, then, were first published in journals edited by Murry

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74 Mansfield mentions a ‘very snuffy’ letter she received from Richards in advance of this meeting. To
75 ‘The Wind Blows’ was a rewritten version of ‘Autumns: II’, which was published in *Signature* in
1915; similarly, ‘The Pictures’ originally appeared as a dialogue, ‘The Common Round’, in the *New Age*
in 1917; the definite article was removed from its title for inclusion in *Bliss and Other Stories*.
76 I have chosen to differentiate, where possible, between the Hogarth and Heron Press versions and the
Constable reprints of these two stories. Hence, *Prelude* refers to the Hogarth Press edition and *Je ne
parle pas francais* to the Heron Press publication, whereas ‘Prelude’ and ‘Je ne parle pas francais’ refer
to the 1920 Constable reprints. The Constable reprints reinstate the missing cedilla to ‘francais’ in the
table of contents and title, but not in the running header.
throughout 1915 and 1920, whereas the original *Je ne parle pas francais* was hand-printed at his press. Perhaps for this reason, the volume was dedicated to him. However, tensions between the two were to grow throughout 1920, when a dispute arose over the inclusion of *Je ne parle pas francais* in the book.

Michael Sadleir first requested the excision of certain passages from *Je ne parle pas francais* as early as March 1920. The suppression of Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* and the continued controversies over Joyce’s *Ulysses*, for example, had meant that commercial publishers tended to be reluctant to court controversy, and many attempted to steer clear of sexually explicit material. This was most likely the motivation for Sadleir’s requested cuts. After Murry had settled things with Constable at the expense of Richards, he wrote to Mansfield on 7 April 1920 to outline Sadleir’s requests and concluded:

> I should stick against cutting more than is absolutely necessary. *On the other hand you don’t get the £40 until the MS is satisfactory to them; and the true edition of Je ne p. p. is in existence* (my italics).

Murry’s description of the ‘true edition’ of *Je ne parle pas francais* privileges the limited edition that was distributed by the Heron Press, but the inclusion of the story in *Bliss and Other Stories* practically negated this previous publication. The complete version was not widely disseminated and the suppression of these explicit passages in the Constable edition effectively rewrote the story for over sixty years.\(^{77}\)

Murry wrote again to Mansfield the following day, outlining the cuts that Sadleir had demanded:

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The ground he [Sadleir] takes with regard to these is that they will do positive harm to the sale of the book; that by omitting them you will gain a good deal more than you lose by retaining them.

Honestly, Worm, I think there's something in it. I mean in this way. Yours is essentially an exquisite talent, and one which, I am sure, will be appreciated by many more people than will appreciate the art. I mean people like my mother. She will love the stories, I know & I'm sure there are thousands like her.

Now these people will be shocked by the few things the omission of which is still suggested. I believe that it's bad policy to shock the people by whom, after all, you do desire to be read. And I think that if you compromise to this extent you will never regret it (my italics).

Murry implies that the two different versions of the story appeal to different markets, and his argument is based on the false presupposition that richer buyers were inherently better literary readers. The privately-printed edition will be consumed by readers who are less likely to be shocked by explicit passages, whereas the sales of the commercially-published version might suffer should readers of a sensitive disposition react badly to Duquette's 'underworld'. However, it has been shown that Mansfield's reviews argued that such concessions to an audience were not necessary, since it was through the deliberate production of less conventional material that a new set of audience expectations would be generated; moreover, this audience would not need to be divided along the lines of 'popular' and 'prestige' publication that Murry invokes.

She had given a clear indication that she was not concerned about shocking her readers, when she gave a copy of the story to Jinnie Fullerton in April 1920, a friend of her cousin Connie Beauchamp's and a devout Catholic, the outcome of which Mansfield recorded in her notebooks:

But how could you say that about the Blessed Virgin! said she. It must have hurt Our Lady so terribly. And I saw the B.V. throwing away her

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copy of *Je ne Parle pas francais* & saying 'Really this K.M. is all that her friends say [of] her to me.'

She initially reacted angrily to the news of the demanded cuts:

No, I certainly won’t agree to those excisions if there were 500000000 copies in existence. They can keep their old £40 & be hanged to them. Shall I pick the eyes out of a story for £40. I’m furious with Sadler. No, I’ll never agree. I’ll supply another story but that is all. The outline would be all blurred. It must have those sharp lines. The Times didn’t object. [...] Of course I won’t consent.

Significantly, she provides an alternative image of her readership to counter Murry’s image of his mother above, and invokes the TLS’s favourable review of the story to indicate its appeal: the implication is that, even with the objectionable passages included in the story, the story has already been granted positive word-of-mouth in a major literary organ, so it should not be necessary for her to cut the story (or even to provide a different story in its place).

Having initially reacted so strongly against the suggestion of cutting *Je ne parle pas francais*, however, Mansfield was to write again to Murry, renouncing all rights to the presentation of the story the very next day:

Bogey, I feel I was too undisciplined about my story and Constable. I leave it to you. You’re my Cricket. If you agree to what they say – why then, all’s well. (And I DO want the money.)

Her closing words are most telling. Her financial pressures were increasing, and on closer reflection she may have decided that Jinnie Fullerton’s reaction to the story gave

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81 To Murry, 6 April 1920, *The Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 273. Smith reads this in terms of Mansfield’s Fauvist aesthetic, suggesting that the ‘sharp lines’ that she feared would be blurred may be read in similar terms to the work of J.D. Fergusson. *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life*, pp. 15-22.

an indication that a wider audience might reject *Bliss* outright because of the apparently unsavoury nature of Duquette. Her final word to Murry on the subject comes four days later: ‘Yes, you are perfectly right about the book. Let it be as you wish. I am only too willing to abide by your decision. I am sorry to have given you so much trouble, dearest love.’ The cuts were accordingly made.

The following passages reinstate the material excised from *Je ne parle pas francais* for its inclusion in *Bliss*. They are given in italics, as it is necessary to quote from the rest of the story to make clear the context.

She [the African laundress] took me into a little outhouse at the end of the passage, caught me up in her arms and began kissing me. Ah, those kisses! Especially those kisses inside my ears that nearly deafened me.

> And then with a soft growl she tore open her bodice and put me to her. When she set me down she took from her pocket a little round fried cake covered with sugar, and I reeled along the passage back to our door (*Jnppf*, p. 5).

Later in his narration, Duquette wonders: ‘Curious, isn’t it? *Why should I be able to have any woman I want?* I don’t look at all like a maiden’s dream’ (*Jnppf*, p. 7). The majority of the cuts were made to the closing stages of the story:

> Why, they were suffering ... these two ... really suffering. I have seen two people suffer as I don’t suppose I ever shall see again. ... And.... ‘Good-night, my little cat’ said I, impudently, to the fattish old prostitute picking her way home through the slush.... I didn’t give her time to reply (*Jnppf*, p. 24).

As Murry had reasoned in his letter of 7 April 1920 ‘the virgin’ was indeed deleted:

> And so on until some dirty great gallant comes up to my table and sits opposite and begins to grimace and yap. Until I hear myself saying: ‘But I’ve got the little girl for you, *mon vieux.’* So little ... so tiny. ‘And a virgin.’ I kiss the tips of my fingers – ‘A virgin’ – and lay them

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upon my heart. ‘I give you my word of honour as a gentleman, a writer, serious, young, and extremely interested in modern English literature’ (Jnppf, p. 25).

The final words of the story were the most problematic, and the original ending was absent from the Constable edition:

I must go. I must go. I reach down my coat and hat. Madame knows me. ‘You haven’t dined yet?’ she smiles.
‘No, not yet, Madame.’
I’d rather like to dine with her. Even to sleep with her afterwards. Would she be pale like that all over?
But no. She’d have large moles. They go with that kind of skin. And I can’t hear them. They remind me, somehow, disgustingly, of mushrooms (Jnppf, p. 25).

Without the above italicised passages the character of Duquette actually appears as more sympathetic, or at least less seedy, and the story as a whole reads less as the ‘cry against corruption’ that Mansfield claimed to have intended. In Je ne parle pas francais, that cry was intended against Duquette, and in part against the kind of writer that Mansfield envisioned herself as becoming before she made the breakthrough with Prelude. By cutting the passages that dealt with his worst excesses, Murry and Sadleir effectively silenced Mansfield’s self-critique. It is little wonder that she initially reacted so violently to the request that she should excise the passages quoted above.
Yet it is understandable that she yielded so quickly. In search of a cure for tuberculosis, increasingly in need of money to fund that search, and without a secure site of profitable publication for longer, challenging material like Je ne parle pas francais, she buckled.

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84 Mansfield had famously written to Murry during the composition of Je ne parle pas francais: ‘Ive two “kick offs” in the writing game. One is joy – real joy [...] The other “kick off” is my old original one [...] – a cry against corruption that is absolutely the nail on the head. Not a protest – a cry, and I mean corruption in the widest sense of the word, of course.’ To Murry, 3 February 1918, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 54.
Mansfield was soon to regret the decision to make the cuts that Sadleir had demanded, however. By her own admission, the process of publishing *Bliss and Other Stories* had silenced her, and she could not articulate her dissatisfaction with the situation when writing to Murry in December 1920:

I suppose you will think I am an egocentric to mind the way Constable has advertised my book & the paragraph that is on the paper cover. I'd like to say I mind so much so terribly that there are no words for me. No – I'm dumb!! [...] I was helpless here – too late to stop it – so now I must prove – no – convince people c'est pas moi. At least if I'd known they were going to say that no power on earth would have made me cut a word. I wish I hadn't.  

*Bliss and Other Stories* was advertised in similar terms in the *Athenaeum* in December 1920 as "the "something new" in short stories that men will read and talk about, and women will learn by heart but not repeat." The 'something new' in part recalls Mansfield's own use of the phrase 'a new word' to describe her renegotiation of the short story form, but she reacted with contempt to the way in which this advertisement projected a gendered reception of her work. She specifically dismissed the way in which *Bliss and Other Stories* was marketed as more appropriate to women writers such as Rose Macaulay and Sheila Kaye-Smith (both of whom she had reviewed in the *Athenaeum*). Her anger at being sold to the public in these terms provides a further indication of her increased sense of professionalism and determination to control the marketing of her work and the public representation of her authorial persona.

Significantly, she wrote to both Sadleir and Murry in protest about the photograph which accompanied this text when it appeared in the *Sphere*, in an attempt to prevent the reappearance of such an unflattering portrait, claiming that '[i]nstead of

85 To Murry, 6 December 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 137.
87 Her dismissal of these writers was at a time when her disappointment in contemporary literature was at an all-time high, at the end of her career as reviewer for the *Athenaeum*. To Murry, 6 December 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 137.
advertising Bliss it looked to me as though it ought to describe How I Gained 28lbs. in One Month.88 She wrote to Sadleir as follows:

My press agency posted me today a most AWFUL photograph of myself published in The Sphere. It was like a turnip or even a turnip manqué. Where it came from I don’t know. But only beautiful people can afford to let such frights of themselves be laughed at; plain ones have to be more cautious.89

The phrase ‘press agency’ above is potentially confusing, as Mansfield did not at this stage in her career have any official representation, but it is evident that she was referring to Murry, who was responsible for sending her journals and newspapers and may well have forwarded her the offending issue of the Sphere. She makes his role as ‘agent’ more official, while simultaneously reaffirming her own sense of control over this professional relationship with Sadleir: she attempts to assert herself as a confident and able (and perhaps stereotypically difficult) writer consulting with her publisher without recourse to a mediating agent.

She was apparently at the time unaware that it was Murry who had provided the photo and Sadleir must have replied as such, for her next letter to him reads:

I am sorry I lifted up my voice so loud – and I fully appreciate the position … Perhaps I ought to be thankful that J.M.M. didn’t send you a photograph of a complete stranger – by mistake – whom he’d ‘always thought’ was K.M.!90

This letter to Sadleir demonstrates exactly the degree to which Mansfield viewed Murry’s act as one of betrayal, and her ‘joke’ that Murry might have sent a picture of a

stranger in error is indicative of her sense of the growing distance between them, as well as her awareness of the major change that her illness had effected in her.91

The furore over the way in which Bliss and Other Stories was advertised effectively brought about the breakdown of Mansfield’s professional relationship with Murry. She resigned as reviewer for the Athenaeum within weeks, and dismissed Murry as her agent within days in a letter that is worth quoting at length:

Dear Bogey,

For this one occasion I have the use of the Corona. It’s an opportunity to write you a legible business letter. Will you regard it as such, as just the letter of one writer to another? […] I am more or less helpless over here, as you know. But that has got to be changed. I beg you not to publish one single solitary thing that I may have left in England.

And I want to put my work and publicity into the hands of an agent with whom I shall communicate direct. Is Pinker the best man? I shall be doing a great deal of work from now on, and I want to free myself from journalism, which I hate, at the first possible moment. At the same time I must have money. […]

I can’t write to you personally tonight. The other face gets in the way! Is that the person you’ve been writing to for the last four years? […]Put me out of my anxiety and let me feel that you will always send me a wire – at my expense – before you act for me. Don’t misunderstand your

Wig

Until I do get an agent – you will act for me? I’m sending another story tonight. And I’d be immensely grateful if you’d suggest what I ought to do with it (my italics).92

The letter displays a complex variety of emotions, and effectively establishes the crossover between the personal and professional sides of Mansfield’s relationship with Murry. She acknowledges the division in the nature of their relationship, addressing what she terms a ‘business letter’ to ‘Bogey’ and signing it ‘Wig’, and although she tells him she ‘cannot write to him personally’, the letter is framed by their two pet-

91 Of course, there were other factors in the deterioration of relations between Mansfield and Murry at this time: Mansfield had begun to feel increasingly abandoned in her illness, and rumours and admissions of Murry’s infidelity with Princess Elizabeth Bibesco and Dorothy Brett had also begun to reach her. However, the breakdown in the professional nature of their relationship should not be underestimated.

names, and punctuated with a series of admonishments that are clearly addressed to Murry as her husband and not as an editor or agent. In a complex manoeuvre, Mansfield effectively makes official Murry's role as agent (which he had informally played during her absence in Europe) only in order to dismiss him; but then she concludes the letter by re-hiring him as an interim agent. In this way, the letter provides a useful reference point for Mansfield's professional relationship with Murry as it has fluctuated throughout this chapter, of simultaneously distancing herself from him and relying on him to offer her some kind of representation, both as publisher at the Heron Press and as editor of the Athenaeum.

Conclusion

Mansfield's letter of dismissal was presented in terms that recalled her ongoing dialogue with Murry throughout 1919 and 1920: this oscillated between the high-flown romantic language of their idealised 'child-love' (first established in Rhythm) and the more grounded terms of their professional relationship which have formed the focus of this chapter. She increasingly highlighted the latter aspect of their relationship, as in her response to his play Cinnamon and Angelica in December 1919:

I was thinking over Cinnamon and Angelica in bed last night [...] I am a perfect fiend about this play aren't I and I'm afraid I come as Miss Dane would put it 'savaging your Holy of Holies'. But you know how it is meant. Its what I want you to do to my stories. I feel you ought to have done it more to 'je ne parle pas' – don't, because you're exquisitely tender, spare me. I'd rather not be sporn.93

93 To Murry, 5 December 1919, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 139. Mansfield is referring here to Murry's reaction to Je ne parle pas francais when he read the manuscript at the beginning of 1918 and wrote to her that 'I wasn't prepared for the tragic turn of "Je ne parle pas", and it upset me – I'm an awful child. But it's lovely, lovely. I must read it right through again to taste fully the growth of the quality of that ending out of that beginning'. She had been expecting a more critical response from him. The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield, ed. Hankin, 15 February 1918, p. 121.
It was their inability to negotiate a balance between these two elements of Mansfield and Murry’s relationship that led to her dismissal of him at the end of 1920, and she ended the year declaring herself to be ‘a writer first, and a woman after’.¹⁹⁴

The quarrel over the way in which Bliss was advertised was merely the last in a series of events that suggested Mansfield’s intention to distance herself from Murry in professional terms, and I would suggest that this can be traced back to the composition of Je ne parle pas francais in February 1918. That story enacts a parody on the very publication strategies and romantic pose of the misunderstood artist that Murry continued to cultivate in the establishment of the Heron Press, and away from which Mansfield had begun to move with the composition and publication of Prelude throughout 1916 and 1918. At the same time, she continued to rely on Murry as her primary contact when she was absent from London for feedback on her work and as her unofficial literary representative.

Murry’s appointment to the position of editor of the Athenaeum facilitated a change in his status and a movement away from the narrow coteries that Mansfield had parodied in Je ne parle pas francais; his newly-established literary respectability in turn inspired her to re-engage with him on a professional level, by contributing a mass of material to the Athenaeum and taking a more active interest in its machinations than she had done in any publishing venture to date. This immersion in the professional publishing world had a direct impact on her developing perception of both the obligations and the possibilities that a more direct engagement with the commercial realm would afford her. The change in her attitude to the professionalisation of her work, as well as in her changing insights into generic and audience expectations, were ultimately at variance with Murry’s beliefs that it was ‘bad policy to shock the people

¹⁹⁴ To Murry, 3 December 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 133.
by whom you desire to be read'. Whereas Murry continued to express a belief that both literature and the audiences that read it could be divided along the elitist lines of ‘high’ and ‘low’, literary and popular, Mansfield had begun to renegotiate a less clearly demarcated space between these binaries. However, she acquiesced in her publisher’s demanded excision of the unsavoury passages of Je ne parle pas français for its inclusion in Bliss at the suggestion of Murry, and it would only be in the final phase of her career that she would attempt to challenge the binary of ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ publication, the full implications of which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The excisions made to Je ne parle pas français for its inclusion in Bliss and the marketing of the collection influenced Mansfield’s decision finally to break with Murry on professional terms in December 1920, when she dismissed him as her representative. A month later, she wrote to him to resign as reviewer from the Athenaeum. Since Murry had already decided to give up the editorship by the end of 1920 (in advance of its merger with the Nation in February 1921), Mansfield’s resignation might be read as something of an empty gesture, except in its symbolic enactment of the professional break with Murry. It is another complex letter, written in the third person and apparently averse to confronting him directly on the subject: this is the kind of distance that she could not achieve in her earlier ‘business letter’. It also purports to write on behalf of her reviewing persona of K.M. (the initials under which almost all of her Athenaeum reviews appeared):

It is with the most extreme reluctance that I am writing to tell you K.M. cant go on. The fact is she ought to have given up months ago but money was so urgent that she dared not. I know you suggested a months holiday - but a months holiday doesn’t fit the case. She wont be well in a month. The strain will begin all over again, and I think she has told you fairly often what a strain it is.96

96 To Murry, 8 December 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 142. These references to herself in the third person might further suggest that, increasingly ill, she had begun to take stock of herself and her career.
She expands on the subject two days later:

I do not want to die because I've done nothing to justify having lived yet. But if I had done my work I'd even go so far as to die. I mean to jolly well keep alive with the flag flying until there is a modest shelf of books with K.M. backs (my italics).  

Clearly it was her intention from this point on to devote all of her time to fiction. Between January 1921 and May 1922 she was to publish only one review (in the Daily News) and seventeen stories in six different journals; she further contributed to the production of 'a modest shelf of books with K.M. backs' by preparing The Garden Party and Other Stories for publication, and planning the collection that appeared posthumously as The Doves' Nest and Other Stories. Chapter Five will discuss the final phase of her career in relation to these new publication strategies.

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97 To Murry, c. 10 December 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, pp. 146-7. Tomalin notes Murry's 'sheer capacity for work, for mastering a subject or a language, or turning out a serious review to a deadline; well-informed words poured neatly from his pen'. Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life, p. 97.
Chapter Five

‘Being at the mercy of the public is somehow right’:
The *London Mercury*, the *Sphere* and *The Garden Party*
1921-1922

Mansfield had expressed her dissatisfaction with her working relationship with John
Middleton Murry throughout 1919 and 1920, culminating in the events detailed at the
conclusion of the previous chapter. Nonetheless, throughout those years, her
professional relationship with Murry had almost guaranteed publication of her fiction,
as well as a weekly cheque for her reviews.¹ She had lost the relative security of the
*Athenaeum* as a vehicle for her stories when it merged with the *Nation* and when Murry
resigned at the beginning of 1921.² However, whereas Mansfield had all but
disappeared from public view after the demise of *Rhythm/Blue Review* and *Signature,*
the period after her resignation from the *Athenaeum* and its amalgamation with the
*Nation* was one of the busiest of her career, with seventeen stories appearing in six
different papers by the summer of 1922, and the collection *The Garden Party and
Other Stories* in February of that year.³ In this final phase of her career, then,
Mansfield varied her publication strategies even more by placing her work in ‘popular’
forums such as the *Sphere*, Clement Shorter’s illustrated magazine, and more ‘literary’
journals, such as the *London Mercury*, J.C. Squire’s literary monthly.

¹ Murry was not so generous with everyone; D.H. Lawrence was particularly shunned. According to
Tomalin, ‘Murry’s new position as editor of the *Athenaeum* […] put him in the position of power, with
the power to offer Lawrence work, and the income he desperately needed, or to withhold it. He took one
article, and then turned down every single subsequent piece offered to him by Lawrence’ (*Katherine
Mansfield: A Secret Life*, p. 187). ‘Poison’ was the only story by Mansfield that met with rejection.
² He joined her in Montana at this time, to work on his novel (The Things We Are) and a series of lectures
(collected as *The Problem of Style*).
³ There is a discrepancy between the title of the story and the title of the collection: the former
hyphenated ‘garden party’ whereas the latter did not. Hence, the story will be cited as ‘The Garden-
Party’ and the collection as *The Garden Party*. 192
Mansfield consolidated her role as a professional writer in the final years of her career; she had also achieved a new level of marketability after Bliss was positively received on its publication at the end of 1920. By the time she hired J.B. Pinker as her agent in August 1921, her name had become a more valuable commodity in itself, and afforded her more influence in her negotiations with editors and publishers throughout 1921 and 1922. She had attempted to gain outright control of her work in November 1920 when she dismissed Murry as her agent, and had already begun to place her writing in new journals before hiring Pinker: she had begun to write for the Sphere by July 1921 because, as she told Ottoline Morrell, ‘it pays better than any other paper I know.’

This chapter accounts for the publication of Mansfield’s final stories as a synthesis between a series of ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ sites of publication that attempts to undermine the distinction between these categories. As she openly embraced this wider audience, she came increasingly to prize the accessibility of her stories, telling Brett in 1922 that

the greatest pleasure is all the letters I get from strangers who know nothing whatever about technique but who go through all the stories and say how sorry they are for William and how they understood why Anne laughed at Reggie and so on. I value these letters far more than any review. Its marvellous to feel these people care like that. And its amazing to find how generous they are.\textsuperscript{4}

In this sense, Mansfield’s career runs directly counter to the paradigm discussed by John Carey in The Intellectuals and the Masses and effectively problematises his representation of the antagonistic relationship between ‘high modernism’ and ‘popular

\textsuperscript{4} To Ottoline Morrell, 24 July 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 252.
\textsuperscript{5} To Dorothy Brett, 30 March 1922, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 255.
Indeed, Mansfield took a similar approach to her fiction as that taken by Rebecca West to her career generally, as Lyn Pyckett has argued: ‘West deliberately sought a wider audience (as well as larger financial rewards) by moving out from a small-circulation ‘coterie’ publication such as the Freewoman to write for Fleet Street daily newspapers and for wide-circulation general interest magazines in Britain and America.’

Many of the stories that Mansfield wrote in 1921 were exclusively intended for publication in the Sphere. This material has gained an excessively negative reputation, but Mansfield herself did not view these stories as ‘hackwork’. She would occasionally express her frustration at having to break off working on one story in order to meet a deadline, telling Brett in August 1921 that:

I am at present imbedded in a terrific story [possibly the unfinished ‘A Married Man’s Story’] but it still frightens me. And now I have to emerge & write some special things for the old Daily Chronicle who [is] going to make a feature of ‘em.

On the whole, though, the discipline and focus required to meet her Sphere deadlines in particular probably contributed to her composition of the famous mature New Zealand stories (‘The Garden-Party’, ‘At the Bay’ and ‘The Doll’s House’). For the first time in Mansfield’s career, it seems that she actually responded in positive terms to external pressures.

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6 Carey, The Intellectuals and the Masses. Mansfield’s status as a woman writer in a male-dominated publishing world might further account for her movement towards a wider variety of publication strategies in an attempt at establishing an independent authorial persona and achieve recognition as a writer on a wider scale. For a similar take on the careers of what she terms the ‘Women of 1928’ (Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West and Djuna Barnes), see Bonnie Kime Scott, Refiguring Modernism, in particular her discussion of their increasing engagement with the ‘Woman’s Market’, pp. 232-6.


8 To Dorothy Brett, 29 August 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 271. Nothing came of the planned series for the Daily Chronicle, one of Pinker’s first suggestions of possible work after Mansfield had hired him.
Mansfield’s challenge to the binary of ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ allowed her to continue the process of subverting generic expectations in the composition and publication of her stories. She reacted with scorn to a request for a technically ‘marketable’ story in November 1921, telling Dorothy Brett:

I ate such a stupid man with my tea – I can’t digest him. He is bringing out a book of Georgian Stories and he said the more ‘plotty’ a story I could give him the better. What about that for a word? It made my hair stand up in prongs. A nice ‘plotty’ story, please. People are funny.9

As Chapter Four has argued, Mansfield had begun to dismiss the idea of such concessions to a set of predetermined audience expectations; rather she endorsed the idea that the composition of a ‘new word’ should in turn generate a new audience. In the material discussed in this chapter, she put this belief into practice.

Mansfield explicitly articulated an acceptance of her public role as a writer within the marketplace in October 1921, in a letter to Dorothy Brett:

Dont you think an artist ought to have a show at least once a year? It seems to me almost as necessary as for a writer to produce a book. That sort of contact with the public – even the feelings of being at the mercy of the public is somehow right. After all, we express these things because we want a bigger audience than ourselves – We want to reveal what we have seen.10

Her acceptance of being ‘at the mercy of the public’ finally captures her simultaneous desire and ambition to be a professional writer and her ongoing anxiety about the way in which this left her exposed to her editorial, critical and reading publics: these related impulses ultimately shaped her career.

9 To Dorothy Brett, 2 November 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 311.
10 To Dorothy Brett, 5 October 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 292.
Mansfield had begun 1921 with a renewed commitment to short story writing after her resignation from the *Athenaeum*. This would specifically see her revisit the terms of her 1916 resolution to ‘make her undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the Old World’ and would be the phase of her career in which she wrote her most famous New Zealand work and explored what she had termed in July 1919 the ‘hidden country of prose’. Since the death of Leslie Beauchamp in October 1915, and her resolution in 1916 to recreate in fiction the land of their shared childhood, she had actually written relatively little to fulfil that pledge, with the notable exception of *Prelude*. The composition of the stories that appeared in *Bliss* ranged from 1915 to 1920; she had failed to produce enough work after writing *Je ne parle pas francais* and ‘Bliss’ in 1918 to prevent her from quarrying her *Signature* publications of 1915.

By contrast, Mansfield’s output between the second half of 1921 and the first half of 1922 was probably the most prolific of her career, and the rate at which she worked increased dramatically. Moreover, she managed to sustain her frequent bouts of activity over longer periods of time: ‘At the Bay’, a story of similar scope to *Prelude*, was written in six weeks (and was left aside at least twice for the composition of ‘The Voyage’ and ‘Marriage à la Mode’); ‘The Garden-Party’ and ‘The Doll’s House’ were written in six and seven days respectively; ‘A Cup of Tea’ was written in the space of four or five hours.¹¹ Her letters and journals repeatedly express a fear of

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¹¹ To be fair, she did attribute at least some of her renewed ability to write during this time to her reunion with Murry in Switzerland, which recalled her to their time in Bandol at the beginning of 1916 when ‘The Aloe’ was completed. See for example her letter to Murry of 15 May 1921 which presents an idyllic picture of the two of them living and writing together in the Swiss Alps (at the time, Mansfield had travelled to Paris for treatment for her tuberculosis, leaving Murry behind in Switzerland): ‘I see a small chalet with a garden, near the pine forests. [...] There are our books. [...] You are in your room writing. I in mine’ (*The Letters*, Vol. 4, p. 224). However, the distance in their relationship is evident even in this vision, since they occupy separate rooms: in Bandol, they had worked at opposite sides of one table. Moreover, the idyll did not last, and Mansfield wrote on 7 February 1922: ‘I now know that I must grow a shell away from you. I want, “I ask for” my independence. At any moment in the future you may suddenly leave me in the lurch if it pleases you. It is a part of your nature. [...] But my very soul rebels against when its fine you prefer your work & your work is more urgent than this affair in
dying and leaving her work unfinished, telling Anne Drey ‘I do hope Ill be able to keep in it for long enough to do some really good work. Im sick of people dying who promise well. One doesn’t want to join that crowd at all.’

The wide range of journals in which her work appeared throughout this fifteen-month period (in both England and the United States) was partly due to the guidance of Pinker, the literary agent who could count Henry James, Joseph Conrad and D.H. Lawrence among his most famous clients. As mentioned in Chapter One, Mansfield had previously approached him to act as her agent in 1911 before she first began collaborating with Murry, at a time when she was seeking to place her work somewhere other than the New Age; this was at a time when she had resolved to earn her living from writing, but just before the appearance of her first collection. When she approached Pinker in 1921, however, she was in a much stronger position as the author of two collections of stories and two privately printed single-story editions, as well as being a highly regarded reviewer who had written regularly for the Athenaeum. The final phase of Mansfield’s career was characterised by this new sense of her authority as an established writer.

Between November 1920 and August 1921, however, she had produced relatively little work. By December 1920 she had already cited this as her reason for failing to contact Pinker, expressing herself in language that suggests her increased business-like approach to her work:

Ive not written to Pinker yet, for the reason that I have not any reserve stock to offer him. I hope after Xmas to have at least 3 stories ready. But it only confuses things to get into touch with him & not have the goods (my italics).

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To Anne Drey, 19 May 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 231.

To Murry, 6 December 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 137.
When she did finally contact him, Pinker would successfully place Mansfield's work in both England and America until his death on 8 February 1922 (the same month that saw the publication of *The Garden Party and Other Stories*), at which time his son, Eric Pinker, took over the business. Indeed, within a month of hiring him Mansfield was to tell Ida Baker that her new agent had got her 'work which will keep me busy until Christmas at earliest'.

Her relationship with Pinker was not without its disagreements. On one occasion he requested that she cut 'A Cup of Tea' for publication in the *Sketch*. She responded in terms that recall the sense of being silenced inherent to *Je ne parle pas francais*: 'I am afraid I cannot cut that story. If I took such a dreadfully big snip off its tail there would be no mouse left (my italics)'. The threatened erasure of 'mouse' was more significant than Pinker could have realised, recalling the suppression of the 'unsavoury' passages of *Je ne parle pas francais*, as orchestrated by Murry and Sadleir the previous year. 'A Cup of Tea' eventually appeared (uncut) in the *Story-Teller* in May 1922, and Mansfield wrote a shorter piece ('Taking the Veil') for the *Sketch* instead.

She also remained adamant with Eric Pinker (under ongoing pressure from Michael Sadleir at Constable and also from Murry) on the subject of *In a German Pension* as late as May 1922:

I think it would be very unwise to republish it. Not only because its a most inferior book (which it is) but I have, with my last book, begun to persuade the reviewers that I don’t like ugliness for ugliness sake. The intelligentsia might be kind enough to forgive youthful extravagances of expression and youthful disgust. But I don’t want to write for them.

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14 To Ida Baker, 7 September 1921, *The Letters*, Vol. 4, p. 276. By March 1922, however, she would tell Brett that her agent 'wants far more than I can do'. To Brett, 30 March 1922, *Selected Letters*, p. 255.
16 'Taking the Veil', *Sketch*, 22 February 1922, p. 296; 'A Cup of Tea', *Story-Teller* (May 1922), 121-5.
And I really can't say to every ordinary reader 'please excuse these horrid stories. I was only 20 at the time!' (my italics)¹⁷

This is the clearest indication given by Mansfield of a perceived split in her potential audience, between what she terms the ‘intelligentsia’ and the ‘ordinary reader’. This is presented in similar terms to those used after the publication of Prelude, when she had expressed her anxiety that the ‘Intellectuals’ would be ill-disposed to the story. Rather than rejecting outright either the ‘Intellectuals’ or the ‘Masses’, however, Mansfield’s changing publication practices throughout 1921 and 1922 actually indicate her location between these variant marketplaces, as will be discussed presently.

There was one potential source of serious dispute between Mansfield and J.B. Pinker. This centred on the periodical publication of ‘At the Bay’ and ‘The Garden-Party’ which appeared in the London Mercury and the Westminster Gazette respectively.¹⁸ Mansfield had been anxious that the length of ‘At the Bay’ might prove problematic, telling Violet Schiff in October of a forthcoming story that was ‘terribly long. Too long for the Mercury’.¹⁹ She informed Pinker of her further concern that:

There is no chance – is there? – of the typist correcting my spelling in the long story At the Bay. There are several words which appear to be spelt wrong – i.e. emerald for emerald, ninseck for insect and so on. These words are not in inverted commas, so the typist may just think its wanton ignorance on my part. But my hand on my heart I mean every spelling mistake! It interferes with the naturalness of children’s or servants’ speech if one isolates words with commas or puts them in italics. Thats my reason for leaving them plain.²⁰

¹⁷ Unpublished letter to Eric Pinker, 3 May 1922, Katherine Mansfield Papers, Midwest Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago. Hereafter cited as MS Newberry Library. The previous month she had told Pinker ‘I haven’t any desire to be fashionable and exclusive or to write for the intelligentsia only.’ Unpublished letter to Eric Pinker, 2 April 1922, MS Newberry Library.

¹⁸ Mansfield had initially considered placing ‘The Garden-Party’ in the London Mercury, but the journal rejected the story – presumably because the lengthy ‘At the Bay’ was already due to appear in January 1922 – and the story went to the J.A. Spender’s Liberal newspaper, the Westminster Gazette instead. Mansfield had previously published one story there in 1913 (‘Old Tar’), at a time when Murry had been employed as a reviewer for the paper.

¹⁹ To Violet Schiff, 24 October 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 303.

The length of the story did not prove problematic, but the version that appeared in the
\textit{London Mercury} was littered with typographic errors. Many of these were punctuation
errors; some of Mansfield’s deliberate misspellings were also corrected, for example
the substitution of ‘dozing’ for the colloquial ‘dozzing’. She had returned corrected
proofs to Pinker in November 1921 and complained that ‘the typist has made mistakes
which make nonsense of the text.’\textsuperscript{21} These proofs must have been for the forthcoming
collection rather than the \textit{London Mercury}, and the errors were corrected when ‘At the
Bay’ was included in \textit{The Garden Party}.\textsuperscript{22}

Mansfield’s anxiety about the possibility that mistakes might be made by a
typist working with the fair copy of ‘At the Bay’ was evident even before she received
the error-ridden proofs of the story; accordingly, she requested that Murry type ‘The
Garden-Party’ before sending it to Pinker.\textsuperscript{23} On 18 October 1921, she posted two
copies of the story to Pinker (one for serial publication and one for Constable), asking
that he have another copy typed to send to Knopf, her American publishers. Hearing
that the \textit{Westminster Gazette} had accepted it, and wary after the treatment ‘At the Bay’
had received, she wrote to Pinker from Paris, where she was about to begin a radical
treatment for her tuberculosis:

\begin{quote}
Will it be possible for me to see a proof? I ask because I know there is
an error in the typing which makes nonsense of the sentence. In case
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{21} To J.B. Pinker, 12 November 1921, \textit{The Letters}, Vol. 4, p. 320.
\textsuperscript{22} For the American edition of the book, Mansfield made another change, siphoning off the final
paragraph into a separate numbered section; in the American edition (and in Alpers’ \textit{Stories}), ‘At the
Bay’ is divided into thirteen sections (unlike \textit{Prelude} and ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, both of
which have twelve); in the Constable edition and Murry’s reprints, there are twelve sections. Otherwise,
the text in both remains the same.
\textsuperscript{23} 16 October 1922, \textit{The Notebooks}, Vol. 2, p. 290. As her health deteriorated in Menton, Mansfield
occasionally got Murry to type work on her behalf: some typed letters to Pinker bear Mansfield’s
signature in Murry’s hands (see the letter to J.B. Pinker of 14 September 1921, MS Newberry Library).
Indeed, some were handwritten by Murry (see the letter to Pinker of 13 September 1921, MS Newberry
Library). Moreover, some stories were dictated to Murry. Her notebook records that on 12 January
1922 ‘Jack and I “typed”. I hate dictating but the story still seems to me to be good. Is it?’ It is unclear
which story this was, though it is likely to have been ‘A Cup of Tea’ which had been written the
there is no time for this, I enclose a sheet of paper in which I have tried to explain to the proof reader what that error is.

The ‘sheet of paper’ for the proof reader (clearly Murry) read as follows:

At, I think the bottom of page 2 there is a half sentence missed. I have not the mss with me but as far as I remember it ought to [read] ‘Laura wished now she was not holding that piece of bread and butter. But there was no-where to put it…..’

Will you please accept this very cursory explanation and find my MSS. Sign for me if there is no time for me to see a proof.

Mansfield probably thought it preferable to ask him to follow her instructions than risk publication of an unproofed version of ‘The Garden-Party’. Pinker clearly sent the copy to Murry, who proofed ‘The Garden-Party’ in February 1922 and returned the manuscript directly to Pinker, who in turn passed it on to the Westminster Gazette. The version of the story that appeared in the Westminster Gazette, however, was (in Alpers’ words) ‘savagely cut to save space’. Neither Mansfield nor Murry could claim responsibility in this case.

‘The Garden-Party’ was published over three weeks in the Westminster Gazette, during which time the newspaper changed its name: the first two parts appeared in the Saturday Westminster Gazette and the final part in the Weekly Westminster Gazette. There are textual variations in punctuation between the Westminster Gazette version and the version included in The Garden Party and Other Stories: in addition, two extended passages were cut in the first instalment in the Westminster Gazette. The passage following Laura’s debate with the workmen about where best to place the

24 Unpublished letter to J. B. Pinker, 31 January 1922, MS Newberry Library: the square brackets around ‘read’ above indicate that the word is illegible in the original.
26 Naomi Royde-Smith was editor of Westminster Gazette from 1912 to 1922.
marquee for the garden party was omitted: this eliminated the main indication of the story’s New Zealand setting (the karaka trees), and perhaps more importantly, Laura’s romantic and idealised notions of class camaraderie with the workmen. The second passage that was cut further simplified the story’s interrogation of class, by deleting Jose’s bossiness to the servants (as well as her song). The omission of these two passages of class commentary effectively simplified Laura’s reaction to the death of Scott (which was revealed only at the beginning of the second instalment), and ultimately reinforced the very simplistic sense of cross-class camaraderie which the uncut version of the story effectively undermines.

‘The Garden-Party’ appeared in a complete form in the collection to which it gives its name, published in February 1922. Like Bliss, the volume was dedicated to John Middleton Murry. Unlike Bliss, all fifteen stories that appeared in The Garden Party had been written within two years of the collection’s publication. Six had been previously published in the Sphere, four in the Athenaeum (under Murry’s editorship) and one in the Nation & the Athenaeum, three in the London Mercury and one in the Westminster Gazette. The title story was actually a late addition to the collection, which was originally to have been called ‘At the Bay and Other Stories’. However, Mansfield wrote in October to both Sadleir and Pinker requesting the change, specifically invoking the book’s marketability as a justification:

I feel the book needs one more substantial story & a title that is solid. At the Bay now seems to me flimsy and vague. One forgets it – it doesn’t carry and the other is a more ‘compelling’ (horrid word) title on a bookstall. 28

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28 To J.B. Pinker, 10 October 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 293. To Sadleir she wrote that ‘I received yesterday two letters about the story At the Bay & in both cases the title was wrong, i.e. In the Bay and On the Bay. That seemed to me a bad lookout.’ To Michael Sadleir, 10 October, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 293.
Her determination to see this title story published before the appearance of the collection provides a clear example of her self-promotion; the story’s serialisation over three weeks in the *Westminster Gazette* (even in an abridged version) in the same month effectively provided extra publicity.\(^{29}\)

Reviews were favourable overall, although some suggested that the collection failed to build sufficiently on the success of the earlier book. Edward Shanks’ review in the *London Mercury* compared the two collections as follows:

> Those early stories, unsatisfying as they were, had a conquering glitter and variety. Now, either these qualities have faded or I have grown used to them. Perhaps the second alternative is the true one. They are like drugs; if they are to have the same effect the dose must be increased […] I think there are two or three things in this book which are almost infinitely better than anything in *Bliss*, though their superiority is not immediately obvious.\(^{30}\)

One of the ‘two or three things’ Shanks suggests outstrip Mansfield’s work in *Bliss* is ‘The Stranger’; the publication of that story had marked the beginning of her association with the *London Mercury* early in 1921, the journal of which he was assistant editor.

**The London Mercury and the Sphere**

Mansfield had finalised the publication of *The Garden Party and Other Stories* by collaborating and corresponding with J.B. Pinker from August 1921 on, and the volume appeared two weeks after his death in February 1922. However, she had begun the

\(^{29}\) She would subsequently express dissatisfaction with the level of publicity *The Garden Party* received, writing to Eric Pinker on 4 April 1922 that ‘I feel I might do better with a change of publisher’ since the book ‘might have sold more if it had been more advertised’. Unpublished letter to Eric Pinker, MS Newberry Library.

\(^{30}\) *London Mercury*, 5.30 (April 1922), 658-9. The review features the frequent misspelling of Mansfield’s first name as ‘Katharine’. Princess Elizabeth Bibesco’s *I Have Only Myself to Blame* was reviewed in the same article, with Shanks implying that Bibesco would do well to follow Mansfield’s lead in the art of the short story, which would probably have gratified Mansfield. Perhaps unintentionally, Shanks cites an example from one of Bibesco’s stories which details her brief fling with Murry.
process of placing her work in a variety of periodicals from the beginning of 1921, some eight months before employing Pinker as her agent. In total, seventeen different stories appeared in seven different journals, magazines and newspapers between January 1921 and May 1922. Although the final number of the Athenaeum in February 1921 had announced that the new Nation & the Athenaeum would continue to feature Mansfield’s short stories, she would only publish four stories there between February 1921 and April 1922; three of these were in 1922, under a new contract to its editor, Henry William Massingham. The vast majority of her work in 1921, however, appeared in one of two arenas: the literary monthly, the London Mercury, and the illustrated paper, the Sphere.

The first number of the London Mercury had appeared in November 1919, and initially Mansfield had not been impressed, either with the journal or its editor J.C. Squire (whom she had previously known in her New Age days). She wrote to Murry:

What a piece of grocery prose is his editorial. Hes a rat. But the lack of style, poise, dignity – the boosting of his own shop the crying down of the wares of the gentleman over the way – good God! His ‘fungoid’ writers and ‘sterile’ young men and so on – I take a deep malicious delight that his vulgar literary Harrods should be so bad. I had thought it would be a great deal better.

The London Mercury had become something of a rival publication to Murry’s Athenaeum, although Squire’s journal was more closely associated with Georgian poetry, a movement of which Murry was highly critical; his negative review of the latest volume of Georgian Poetry had appeared in the Athenaeum in December 1919, and contributed to the decline in popularity of Edward Marsh’s series of anthologies. In this sense, it is possible that Mansfield’s first appearance in the London Mercury in

32 John Collings Squire had previously edited the New Statesman between 1913 and 1919.
33 To Murry, 10 and 11 November 1919, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 84.
early 1921 may have been intended, in part, as a rebuke to Murry following their disputes at the end of 1920, as discussed in Chapter Four. ‘The Stranger’ appeared in January 1921, despite the concern expressed by Squire over the ending of the story, which prompted Mansfield to defend her case at length before concluding: ‘I cannot hope to change your opinion. But I’ll be awfully sorry if this point prevents you from publishing my story.’ Squire published the story unaltered, a sign that Mansfield had achieved a significant professional standing by the time of this exchange with Squire at the end of 1920.

Clearly, Mansfield felt that he was now predisposed in favour of her work, and later claimed that she had written ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ exclusively for the London Mercury. The validity of this statement is, however, questionable; she had certainly begun work on ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ by the end of 1920 before Squire received – let alone accepted – ‘The Stranger’, telling Murry in December of a story she had prepared which was very long [and] which I want to get published serially. Its supremely suitable for such a purpose. And it would bring me in money. Its form is the form of The Prelude BUT written today – not then. The Prelude is a child’s story. But I shall not sell it unless I am offered a good deal of money.

However, she had returned to it on December 13, after Squire’s acceptance of ‘The Stranger’; her last minute rewriting of the story may have been with this specific site of publication in mind. The story appeared in the London Mercury in May 1921.

Formally, as she identifies, ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ is similar to Prelude: both are divided into twelve segments, with the action switching between

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36 To J. C. Squire, 10 April 1920, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 204.
sections without any real exposition. Moreover, it is the product of a time which had seen Mansfield theorising about the short story form more explicitly than at any time since her breakthrough with ‘The Aloe’ in 1916. Throughout 1920 and 1921 she continued to express her preoccupation with what she refers to as ‘technique’. Her correspondence with artist friends, especially Richard Murry and Dorothy Brett, is particularly illuminating on this topic. She wrote to Richard Murry in early 1921:

> your longing for technical knowledge seems to me profoundly what an artist OUGHT to feel today. Its a kind of deep sign of the times – rather the Zeitgeist – thats the better word. [...] You see I too have a passion for technique. I have a passion for making the thing into a whole if you know what I mean. Out of technique is born real style, I believe. There are no short cuts.  

To Dorothy Brett she laments that it is ‘the perpetual work at technique which is so hard. Its not enough to know what you want to say – but to be able to say it – to be equipped to say it! That is a life’s work.’

‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ continued to consolidate the technique which Mansfield had employed in *Prelude*, but deviated from that story in its presentation of the trope of writing. Both *Prelude* and *Je ne parle pas francais* had used characters’ writing to illustrate the inauthenticity of their public personae; this was particularly true of Beryl Fairfield and Raoul Duquette. By contrast, in ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, writing is reserved for truth and sincerity, as in Jug’s letter-writing scene:

> Josephine had replied to them all [letters of condolence], and twenty-three times when she came to ‘We miss our dear father so much’ she had broken down and had to use her handkerchief, and on some of them even to soak up a very light-blue tear with an edge of blotting-paper. Strange! She couldn’t have put it on – but twenty-three times.

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Even now, though, when she said it over to herself sadly ‘We miss our dear father so much,’ she could have cried if she’d wanted to.40

Because Jug genuinely feels this to be true (despite the difficult nature of her relationship with her father), she is able to invest each individual letter with an emotional integrity. Her message remains constant and valid even when ‘mass-produced’ for numerous recipients because of the original integrity of that message. This is in stark contrast to the letter-writing scene of Prelude, for example, in which it is Beryl Fairfield’s ‘false self’ that actually writes the letter, and might be taken as an indication of Mansfield’s increased sense of authority over her own writing in this period.

After ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’, Mansfield returned once more to the form and setting of Prelude for her final story in the London Mercury, ‘At the Bay’ which was a sequel of sorts to Prelude.41 ‘At the Bay’ removed the Burnell family from the new family home on which Prelude had centred, to a holiday home by Day’s Bay. This might read as indicative of the greater sense of impermanence in Mansfield’s later career without a secure site of publication, but the story actually celebrates this unstable site in much more positive terms than the reactions of both Beryl Fairfield and Linda Burnell to the new home within Prelude. Mansfield had begun to thrive in her new context without a permanent site of publication: ‘At the Bay’ was written immediately after fulfilling her contract for the Sphere, and in the middle of a period of prolonged productivity that would also produce ‘The Garden-Party’.

It has been argued that Prelude is shaped by Linda Burnell’s ongoing re-evaluation of her role as ‘artist’. This is reflected in her ultimate interpretation of the aloe as an autonomous entity that is ‘reproducible’ (signified by her vision of multiple

41 ‘At the Bay’, London Mercury, 5.27 (January 1922), 239-65.
aloes). Linda’s acceptance of this transformation in the aloe is framed in terms that acknowledge the necessity of ‘mass-production’ in order for her to fulfil and accept her role as an ‘artist’. In this way, the story enacts Mansfield’s own awareness that her role as author is dependant on achieving publication of her work.

These themes are revisited in ‘At the Bay’, and are focused once more on Linda Burnell, in her famous scene in the story in which she connects for the first time with one of her children. The scene is book-ended by two images of impermanence. The first of these, the manuka flowers, replace the aloe of Prelude as a representation of Linda’s ‘artistry’. Like the camellia trees associated with Linda at the end of Prelude, the manuka is figured as being abundant:

She looked up at the dark, close, dry leaves of the manuka, at the chinks of blue between, and now and again a tiny yellowish flower dropped on her. Pretty – yes, if you held one of those flowers on the palm of your hand and looked at it closely, it was an exquisite small thing. Each pale yellow petal shone as if each was the careful work of a loving hand. The tiny tongue in the centre gave it the shape of a bell. And when you turned it over the outside was a deep bronze colour. But as soon as they flowered, they fell and were scattered. You brushed them off your frock as you talked; the horrid little things got caught in one’s hair. Why, then, flower at all? Who takes the trouble – or the joy – to make all these things that are wasted, wasted…

This is in part a meditation on mortality, but it is also linked to Linda’s anxiety of creation in her role as mother: the manuka flowers bother her in much the same way as her children had done throughout Prelude and ‘At the Bay’ up to this point, and as the passage continues Linda begins to ponder her fate as wife and mother once more.

This is interrupted by her moment of connection with her son:

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42 ‘At the Bay’, The Garden Party and Other Stories (London: Constable, 1922), pp. 7-67 (p. 31). Since Mansfield expressed her dissatisfaction with the London Mercury version of the story, all references to ‘At the Bay’ will be to its second publication in The Garden Party and Other Stories.
43 Moran interprets these multiple manuka flowers in terms similar to the multiple aloes of Prelude, claiming that ‘mass-production’ destroys their meaning (Moran, Word of Mouth, p. 111); however, I argue that both Prelude and ‘At the Bay’ may be read in more positive terms, as an acceptance of this kind of ‘mass-production’.
Linda was so astonished at the confidence of this little creature ... Ah no, be sincere. That was not what she felt; it was something far different, it was something so new, so ... The tears danced in her eyes; she breathed in a small whisper to the boy, 'Hallo, my funny!'44

It is at this moment that Linda finally embraces her roles as wife, mother and artist, and she achieves for the first time authority in the relationship with her ‘art’ (her son). However, this is fleeting and comes to an abrupt end: Linda’s son is immediately distracted, and turns away from her. This suggests that Linda’s ‘authority’ can only ever be partial.

‘At the Bay’ continues the production of a ‘new word’ in fiction that Mansfield had begun to formulate with the composition of Prelude. It has been argued that this ‘new word’ also necessitated the formulation of a new audience. Mansfield partly achieved this through her association with the London Mercury, but realised this ambition more fully in her other publications of 1921. By the time she completed work on ‘At the Bay’ in September 1921, she had already fulfilled a contract for six stories for the popular illustrated paper, the Sphere. Clearly, she could not make enough money from stories like ‘The Daughters of the Late Colonel’ and ‘At the Bay’, the length of which limited her choice of publication avenues: these were the longest stories that Mansfield had ever seen placed with a journal in England. If she were to earn a living by story-writing alone (without having recourse to ‘journalism’ or reviewing again), she would need to produce more cost-effective stories, and this was clearly her main motivation in agreeing to a contract with Clement Shorter at the Sphere. Shorter had previously edited the London Illustrated News, and founded the Sketch in 1892, in the process ushering in ‘a revolution in the whole of illustrated journalism, transforming it entirely, separating the old from the new by a great gulf’, as

44 Ibid, p. 35.
he would later claim. In 1900, he founded the *Sphere* (of which he was editor until his death in 1926) and in 1903 established *Tatler*.

After the appearance of 'The Singing Lesson' in April 1921, Mansfield was commissioned to write six more stories for the paper, at ten guineas per story. She had written all six by the end of August: these appeared between August and December, all but two accompanied by illustrations by W. Smithson Broadhead ('Sixpence' and 'Her First Ball'). Mansfield explained her motivation for writing for the *Sphere* to Ottoline Morrell in July 1921:

> I have been doing a series for *The Sphere*, because it pays better than any other paper I know. But now they are done I don’t believe they are much good. Too simple. *It is always the next story which is going to contain everything*, and that next story is always just out of reach. One seems to be saving up for it (my italics).

Mansfield’s sense that ‘the next story’ will ‘contain everything’ does not imply that she viewed her magazine stories purely as a means to fund her work for other, more ‘literary journals’; rather it further suggests an egalitarian approach to her fiction. Her comment that she does not believe the *Sphere* stories to be much good ‘now they are done’ cannot really be taken as evidence of anything other than her persistent sense that her ‘good work’ was as yet unrealised. She invariably expressed dissatisfaction with

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46 'The Singing Lesson: A Story', *Sphere*, 23 April 1921, pp. 96, ii (sic); ‘Sixpence’, *Sphere*, 6 August 1921, p. 144; p. ii (sic); ‘Mr and Mrs Dove’, *Sphere*, 13 August 1921, pp. 172-3; ‘An Ideal Family’, *Sphere*, 20 August 1921, pp. 196-7; ‘Her First Ball’, *Sphere*, 28 November 1921, p. 15; p. 25; ‘The Voyage’, 24 December 1921, pp. 340-1; ‘Marriage à la Mode’, *Sphere*, 31 December 1921, pp. 364-5; p. iv (sic).

47 These illustrations met with Mansfield’s active disapproval, likening them to catalogue or advertising forms to Dorothy Brett: ‘My stories for the Sphere are all done, thank the Lord. I have had copies with ILLUSTRATIONS! Oh Brett! Such fearful horrors! All my dear people looking like – well – Harrods 29/6 crepe de chine blouses and young tailors gents. And my old men – stuffy old wooly (sic) sheep.’


her work once she had finished it, describing 'The Garden-Party' for example as only 'moderately successful'.

Although Mansfield's association with the Sphere led to Wyndham Lewis's dismissal of her as 'the famous New Zealand Mag.-story writer', the work that she produced for the magazine did not necessarily merit such disdain. Saralyn R. Daly correctly notes that 'clearly Mansfield took the Sphere stories as seriously as her important "At the Bay".' None of the Sphere stories were especially 'plotty' (as Mansfield had described the request she received for a contribution to a book of Georgian stories in November 1921); nor did they feature particularly happy endings (as Alpers implies in his edition of the Stories). 'Her First Ball' was published in the Sphere's Christmas number for 1921; presumably Mansfield was asked to provide something festive for the occasion. This she duly did, by choosing the ball as a setting for the story. However, Leila is confronted with the inevitability of mortality in this context of her first ball, and the story in part anticipates Laura Sheridan's similar epiphany in 'The Garden-Party'. Similarly, 'An Ideal Family' ends with old Mr. Neave's realisation that life has passed him by, whereas 'The Voyage' concludes with young Fenella's initiation into an adult world, governed by the sign that sits above her grandfather's bed:

Lost! One Golden Hour
Set with Sixty Diamond Minutes.
No reward is Offered
For It Is GONE FOR EVER!

Mansfield subsequently chose to include in The Garden Party and Other Stories five of the six stories written for Shorter (as well as 'The Singing Lesson', which was not

50 Wyndham Lewis to Violet Schiff, c. 20 September 1922, BL. Cited in Alpers, The Life, p. 372.
52 The Stories, ed. Alpers, p. 568.
53 'The Voyage', p. 341.
written directly for the Sphere but was placed there and brought about the request for six more stories); initially all six of the contracted stories were to be included, but Mansfield herself wrote to Sadleir at the end of November 1921 asking him to remove ‘Sixpence’ from the collection because ‘I have a horrible feeling it is sentimental & should not be there.’ This would imply that she had faith that the other Sphere stories were at least good enough to remain in the collection. Moreover, after her first selection of stories for the Sphere, she wrote ‘At the Bay’, ‘The Doll’s House’ and ‘The Garden-Party’, the three main mature New Zealand stories which (besides Prelude) fulfilled her resolution to reveal her ‘undiscovered country’ to the Old World.

Ultimately, it is too straightforward to dismiss the Sphere material outright as inferior to Mansfield’s other late work: to do so is to invoke a binary of ‘high’ and ‘low’ literary values that Mansfield actually attempted to renegotiate by varying the sites of publication of her late work between the London Mercury, a literary journal, and various magazines and newspapers such as the Sphere and the Westminster Gazette. In this way, Mansfield’s late career was characterised by her efforts to overcome the tension between popularity and literary respectability by actively embracing popular cultural forms as a means to self-promotion and increased authority, in a way similar to that discussed by Mark S. Morrisson in relation to little magazines.55 The relative success of Mansfield’s attempts to achieve a balance between these various sites of publication will be discussed in relation to ‘The Garden-Party’, an example of her continued employment of new narrative forms within a ‘popular’ framework.

54 To Michael Sadleir, 29 November 1921, The Letters, Vol. 4, p. 327. Alpers notes that the story’s ‘totally uncharacteristic opening sentence [‘Children are unaccountable little creatures’] betrays unease’ (The Stories, ed. Alpers, p. 569). By contrast, the five remaining contracted stories feature Mansfield’s usual abrupt openings, so it is likely that she did attempt something new and more appropriate to popular publication with ‘Sixpence’, but returned to her more established forms for the other contract stories.
55 Morrisson, The Public Face of Modernism, p. 5.
‘The Garden-Party’

In ‘The Garden-Party’, Mansfield offers an oblique commentary on the story’s location within a popular marketplace. The story was written in October 1921, two months after fulfilling her Sphere contract, and one month after completing ‘At the Bay’. ‘The Garden-Party’ recounts Laura Sheridan’s apparent progression from her sheltered existence as an idealistic but naïve adolescent girl to the more enlightened figure that emerges after her ‘epiphany’ about Scott, the carter whose death almost interrupts the Sheridans’ garden party. Laura’s ‘epiphany’ is represented as a renegotiation of the relationship between the upper-middle and working classes, and invokes death as the great leveller. In a similar way, Mansfield’s experimentation with a variety of sites of publication sees her challenging the categories of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture. Laura’s opening negotiation with the workmen as to where best to place the marquee – in other words to establish the space in which the ‘garden party’ will take place – might be seen as mirroring Mansfield’s own negotiations of the space in which her ‘Garden-Party’ should be published so as to hit her reader ‘bang slap in the eye’. However, the irony of the first publication of ‘The Garden-Party’ in the Westminster Gazette was that two passages that were apparently peripheral to the ‘plot’ of the story were cut to save space, yet these very passages are central to the narrative’s interrogation of class strictures. The omission of these passages effectively simplified the story’s commentary on a straightforward distinction between the upper-middle and working classes, and by extension undermined Mansfield’s renegotiation of the distinction between ‘popular’ and ‘literary’ publication.

56 ‘The Garden-Party’, in The Garden Party and Other Stories, pp. 68-93 (p. 70). Since the first publication of the story was in an incomplete form in the Westminster Gazette, all references to ‘The Garden-Party’ will be from its second publication in The Garden Party and Other Stories. All subsequent references are to this edition, and are cited parenthetically in the text, abbreviated as ‘Garden’.
Laura is established early on in the story as another of Mansfield’s artist figures, when her family describes her as the ‘artistic one’ as her name, which echoes ‘laurel’, further suggests (‘Garden’, p. 69). Her artistic tendencies earn her the duty of negotiating with the workmen, which sets in motion the interrogation of class constructs and boundaries on which ‘The Garden-Party’ is predicated. ‘The Garden-Party’ demonstrates an extreme sense of class-consciousness throughout the narrative, not only with the emphasis on the cottages down the hill, but also within the Sheridan household itself: the kitchen is controlled by Cook, not the Grandmother of the Burnell stories, most notably in Prelude.

Laura begins the scene with a self-conscious sense of propriety: her questioning of the appropriateness of the workmen talking to her about ‘bangs slap in the eye’ indicates her discomfort with their variant speech registers (‘Garden’, p. 70). It is possible to draw a comparison between these registers and the diversity of formats in which Mansfield had begun to place her work. Laura responds by trying to make herself appear more authoritative, like her mother. In an act that anticipates her subsequent acceptance of the gift of the hat, she pretends to be ‘a little short-sighted’, and tries to mimic her mother’s way of speaking:

Away Laura flew, still holding her piece of bread-and-butter. It’s so delicious to have an excuse for eating out of doors, and, besides, she loved having to arrange things; she always felt she could do it so much better than anybody else.

Four men in shirt-sleeves stood grouped together on the garden path. They carried staves covered with rolls of canvas and they had big tool-bags slung on their backs. They looked impressive. Laura wished now that she was not holding that piece of bread-and-butter, but there was nowhere to put it and she couldn’t possibly throw it away. She blushed and tried to look severe and even a little bit short-sighted as she came up to them (‘Garden’, p. 69).

Similarly, the Sheridan children were forbidden to go to the houses down the lane ‘because of the revolting language and of what they might catch’. ‘Garden’, pp. 81-2.
Having agreed on a location for the marquee (and hence a placement for the garden-party) her attitude towards the workmen changes: she begins to interpret them as sensitive souls with an appreciation for lavender, responds playfully to their speech registers, and convinces herself of her affinity with them as she moves towards a dismissal of these absurd class distinctions. Well, for her part, she didn't feel them. Not a bit, not an atom.... And now there came the chock-chock of wooden hammers. Someone whistled, someone sang out, ‘Are you right there, matey?’ ‘Matey!’ The friendliness of it, the – the – Just to prove how happy she was, just to show the tall fellow how at home she felt, and how she despised stupid conventions, Laura took a big bite out of her bread-and-butter as she stared at the little drawing. She felt just like a work-girl (‘Garden’, p. 72).

In this way, her interaction with the workmen early in the story is figured as a series of different poses (as a version of her mother and as a work-girl), and the story traces the gradual erasure of these poses in her movement towards dealing with the death of Scott. However, since Laura cannot represent Scott fully, these poses can only be partially erased; Laura’s ‘narrative’ of Scott is as yet incomplete.58

The story’s interrogation of class has led to multiple interpretations of it as an oblique commentary on the First World War.59 Christine Darrohn’s essay is particularly useful, and locates Laura’s reaction to the death of Scott in terms of what she calls ‘the Great War’s fuelling of both desire for and anxiety about a projected classless community.’60 Darrohn’s discussion tends to over-identify Laura’s voice with Mansfield’s, and she suggests that the story ‘is pervaded by an unmistakable nostalgia for the beauty and safety of [Laura’s] world’, and that it cannot escape the temptation to

58 In this sense, Laura’s partial representation of Scott might be linked to Mansfield’s ongoing sense that ‘the next story will contain everything’ and that her ‘good’ work lay in the future.
59 See, for example, Christine Darrohn, “‘Blown to Bits!’ Katherine Mansfield’s “The Garden-Party” and the Great War’ in Modern Fiction Studies, 44.3 (1998), 513-39; Ariela Freedman, Death, Men and Modernism: Trauma and Narrative in British Fiction from Hardy to Woolf (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).
60 Darrohn, “‘Blown to Bits!’ Katherine Mansfield’s “The Garden-Party” and the Great War’, 533.
'reconstruct' a pre-war idyll through its emphasis on Scott as a beautiful corpse. However, I would suggest that there is some distance between Laura's perspective (which is uppermost in the description of Scott) and that of the ironic narrative voice. Laura's attempts to reconstruct Scott may be read as an example of the kinds of post-war nostalgia that Darrohn identifies in her essay; however, it will be shown that the representation of Laura within the story fundamentally challenges these nostalgic tendencies.

The image of the garden party is one with both personal and political resonance for Mansfield. The incident described in the story has some biographical basis (it is based on a similar occurrence in the Wellington of her youth, but it was her elder sister, Vera Beauchamp, not Mansfield, who was sent with the basket to the house of the dead man). Moreover, it was a loaded image in the Edwardian era, and Samuel Hynes in particular has examined the conception of the era as 'a long garden party.' Mansfield was well aware of its significance and had employed it before, albeit in a specifically colonial context in 'Millie', which had appeared in the *Blue Review* in 1913. In that story, a faded picture of an Edwardian garden party sits on the wall of Millie's house in the harsh New Zealand rural landscape. The garden party subsequently became a favourite ironic image of hers in writing about the war. Her review of W.B. Maxwell's *A Man and His Lesson* published in the *Athenaeum* on 26 September 1919 in particular draws on the image and all its implications.

But in that dark hour the housemaid brings in the *Daily Mail* – and war is declared between England and Germany. Hurrah for August, 1914! He is saved. Off he goes to be honourably killed. Off he goes to the greatest of all garden parties.  

61 Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: University Press, 1968), p. 4. The implication is that this most English of things cannot be replicated in the harsh landscape Mansfield had seen on her Urewera trip in 1907; the concept must be reduced to a two-dimensional image in a faded picture.  
Mansfield satirically celebrates the fact that the novel’s hero gains the opportunity to redeem himself by accepting his invitation to the longest and greatest garden party of them all. In ‘The Garden-Party’, Mansfield invokes the image as an ironic representation of a world at war, but this time focuses on the ‘domestic front’ by using the death of Scott as a symbol of the impact of the war on those who did not fight in it; in this sense, the story attempts to challenge a more traditional association of the garden party as an idyllic and nostalgic representation of the world before the war.

The story opens with a clear indication of the rupture that it will eventually detail, with the image of the mown lawns and the absence they now contain: ‘the dark flat rosettes where the daisy plants had been seemed to shine’ (my italics; ‘Garden’, p. 68). The wild flowers must be sacrificed in favour of the socially acceptable roses, which are in full bloom, and hence at their full potential. Yet even these roses hint at death: they can only fade from this point on. The only flowers that will not die in ‘The Garden-Party’ are the false daisies on Laura’s hat, since they were never alive to begin with. These fake daisies replace the mown wild-flowers of the opening paragraph; their presence on Laura’s black (mourning) hat indicate the co-existence of social trivialities and death in Laura’s world after the death of Scott, and it is for the daisies that she must actually apologise.

Laura’s initial reaction to the news is that it is not possible to continue with the party with a ‘man dead just outside the front gate’, especially when he is ‘nearly a

Similarly ‘Bliss’, written three years earlier, features Bertha Young’s perfect pear tree, with not a single bud on it: it has reached its full potential in a way similar to that of the roses in ‘The Garden-Party’. The pear tree reflects Bertha’s situation, whereby she realises that she physically desires her husband for the first time in their marriage, only to discover his infidelity moments later. ‘Bliss’, English Review 27 (August 1918), 108-19.

In a similar way, Woolf represents Clarissa Dalloway’s association of cut flowers with death: roses, which are the only socially acceptable flowers in Mansfield’s story, are the only cut flowers that she can bear. Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (1925; London, Penguin, 1992) p. 132.
neighbour’ (‘Garden’, 83). This is the kind of cross-class camaraderie she imagines in her interactions with the workmen, yet her apparent sympathy for the working classes implicitly reinforces her perception of the difference between the two. Mrs Sheridan responds to Laura’s news by arguing that the family should go ahead with the party as planned – a reaction which might be read as a figurative denial of the war. Mansfield had become disillusioned with such attitudes throughout 1919 and 1920, and addressed them on more than one occasion throughout her reviews and her private writing. This manifested itself most famously in her description of Woolf’s *Night and Day*, as ‘a lie in the soul’.

Laura is distracted from her good intentions by her mother’s gift of a hat. The hat with its false daisies (suggestive of the triviality and superficiality of her society) encourages her to ignore Scott’s death and embrace the garden party. Hence, she might be seen as joining the rest of her society in ignoring the war. ‘And the perfect afternoon slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed’ (‘Garden’, p. 86). To protect itself from the night, the flower closes its petals; to protect itself from the harsh reality of the co-existence of life and death in a post-war world, the Sheridans’ society closes in on itself. However, Laura seems to redeem herself and to step out from her sheltered existence as she stands by the corpse of Scott, facing mortality, and realising the trivial nature of the events that have led her to this moment. She questions: ‘What did garden parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him?’ (‘Garden’, p. 92). She must apologise for her hat, a statement which seems trivial and childish at first, but in light of all that the hat symbolises, takes on much significance.

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66 Such cross-class relations disturbed Virginia Woolf during the war: she identifies in her diary ‘the horrible sense of community which the war produces, as if we all sat together in a third-class railway carriage.’ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 1, 5 June 1918, p. 153.

Laura’s perspective dominates the narrative throughout her encounter with Scott and her subsequent epiphany. This is particularly pertinent when Scott apparently speaks to her. It is, in fact, Laura who constructs his voice here, and he is not only ‘blind under the closed eyelids’ but also mute (‘Garden’, pp. 91-2). In addition, she describes him as a beautiful corpse, implying that her epiphany is as yet only partial: she remains unable to accept the reality of death, and cannot articulate what she has learned. The key imagery in this case is to be found in the use of flower symbolism, in particular that of the lily. The story begins with canna lilies, which are delivered to the Sheridan house for the garden party, ‘big pink flowers, wide open, radiant, almost frighteningly alive on bright crimson stems’ (‘Garden’, p. 74). These are flowers cut in their prime; they seem alive but are dead. Their crimson stems hint at the bloody war which had cost so many lives, Leslie Beauchamp’s among them.

The story later replaces these canna lilies with the funereal arum lily, traditionally associated with the remembrance of the dead. It is suggested that Laura should bring a bunch of arum lilies to the Scott household, but she fails to do so because, as Jose points out, ‘the stems will ruin her lace frock’ (‘Garden’, p. 88). By not bringing the lilies, Laura refuses to acknowledge the dead, and the reason for her refusal is a trivial one. Moreover, the white lily is associated, not only with remembering the dead, but more specifically with their resurrection. Laura manages to overcome her initial failure to remember the dead at the moment of her epiphany, and so she apologises for the hat on which false daisies (and their associated trivial social niceties) brighten up the mourning black. She fails, however, to realise the concept of resurrection as defined by Mansfield in a letter to Murry in 1919:

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it's as though, even while we live again, we face death. But through Life: that's the point. We see death in life as we see death in a flower that is fresh unfolded. Our hymn is to the flower's beauty: we should not make that beauty immortal because we know.

Laura represents Scott in the manner that is most comforting to her: hence, she constructs him in a way that envisions life in death, not death in life as advocated by Mansfield. For Laura, Scott seems merely to be sleeping. In Laura's vision, then, Scott still lives, and so it is Laura that actually engages in the sort of post-war myth-making that Darrohn discusses. Laura cannot articulate her lesson because she cannot fully comprehend it. The best she can do is to apologise for her hat and to begin to gesture towards question about what life may be.

Mansfield defined the role of the artist in a letter to Dorothy Brett a month after finishing 'The Garden-Party': '[t]he artist takes a long look at Life. He says softly, “So this is what Life is, is it?” And he proceeds to express that. All the rest he leaves.' Laura, ultimately, cannot say what life is; she can merely begin to question what it might be. Mansfield identifies the lesson that Laura must learn in a letter to William Gerhardi of 13 March 1922, as an awareness of:

[t]he diversity of life and how we try to fit in everything, Death included. That is bewildering for a person of Laura's age. She feels things ought to happen differently. First one thing and then another. But life isn't like that. We haven't the ordering of it. Laura says 'But all these things must not happen at once.' And Life answers 'Why not? How are they divided from each other.' And they do all happen, it is inevitable. And it seems to me there is beauty in that inevitability

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71 The ideal of the artist 'putting the question' recurs throughout the Chekhov letters Mansfield had translated with Kotelsky for the *Athenaeum*; she drew attention to these throughout her correspondence with Virginia Woolf (To Virginia Woolf, c. 27 May 1919, *The Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 320). See Smith, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two*, pp. 154-5.
72 To William Gerhardi, 13 March 1922 in *Letters and Journals*, ed. Stead, p. 259.
For Mansfield this lesson is key, and she had expressed her own awareness of it in a letter to Murry of November 1919 when she discussed the ‘tragic knowledge’ of the co-existence of death and life that the war had taught her. In ‘The Garden-Party’, she implies that the world must be born again after 1918, a little older and wiser, and transformed, having learned a lesson similar to that learned by Laura.\(^73\)

Laura’s apology for her hat is merely a first step to artistic maturity. The unfinished question (‘Isn’t life—’) is the next important step, but is incomplete (‘Garden’, p. 93). Laura at least confronts the trauma when she ‘writes’ Scott, but she is ill-equipped as yet to do so completely: because she cannot actually deal with this trauma, she must invent a mythology around the dead man. When Laura and Laurie meet one another on the borders of their safe world at the conclusion of the story, Laura becomes a representative of the post-war artist who must articulate that which has emerged from the war. Laura is unable to articulate her experience. As Dominic Head puts it, she has

\[
\text{arrived at the brink of a vision, but her Sheridanese is inadequate for rendering the experience. [...] It is only a partial vision, mediated and compromised by a restricted language.} \quad \text{\textsuperscript{74}}
\]

Laura must find a new form in which to express herself, but she must also find a new audience, and in this sense Laura’s deferred ‘epiphany’ may be related to Mansfield’s resolution to forge a ‘new word’. Laurie’s empty response to Laura’s attempts at ‘posing the question’ – ‘Isn’t life’ – is merely to repeat her words: ‘Isn’t it, darling?’

\(^73\) In this sense, Mansfield’s story may be linked to her review of Woolf’s Night and Day. Mansfield wrote to Murry as she wrote the review that she believed in the necessity of ‘new expressions, new moulds for our new thoughts and feelings’. (To Murry, 10 and 11 November, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 82). She specifically linked this commitment to formal experimentation to her belief that ‘the novel cannot simply leave the war out.’ Her review of Night and Day suggested that she regarded its formal conservatism as an outdated form: ‘we had never thought to look upon its like again!’ (‘A Ship Comes into the Harbour’, 1227). She ultimately dismissed the novel as ‘a lie in the soul’ (To Murry, 10 November 1919, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 82).

\(^74\) Head, The Modernist Short Story, p. 136.
Laurie seems unwilling even to attempt to articulate Laura’s question, and the story ends on a note of deep irony.75

Laura’s ‘narration’ of Scott suggests what Mansfield had come to see as the post-war tendency to invent comforting myths to make one feel more at ease with the horror of war, and to idealise death. Darrohn rightly identifies the fact that Scott is presented as a beautiful corpse with no visible scars, but if these scars are hidden, it is only because it is more comforting for those who are attempting to pick up the pieces to conceal them.76 Moreover we are presented only with a description of Scott’s head. The ‘whole man’ is not the issue here, but instead the fragmentation of the human body. The Great War literally blew people to bits (the phrase was used by Mansfield herself to describe Leslie Beauchamp’s death). However, Mansfield’s story is not so much an attempt to put those people back together, as a criticism of a society which attempts to do so, a society which nostalgically attempts to glorify a more ‘simple’ time. The biting irony of the final words where Laurie ‘quite understands’ feeds into Mansfield’s critique of post-war society. It becomes, then, a story about nostalgia (‘the pastness of the past’) and a society that idealises it, and not merely a nostalgic piece itself.77 The story deliberately attempts to ‘carry one back to all one’s garden parties’ (‘Garden’, p. 79) in order to capitalise on the nostalgic undertones of the image which had begun to emerge in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. Mansfield had elsewhere

75 Ostensibly, Laurie is the Leslie Beauchamp figure of ‘The Garden-Party’, as evident in the similarity between their names. As with the other major New Zealand stories that are supposedly elegies for Beauchamp, the character that seems representative of him is one very much marginal to the action of the story, but central to the plot. Laurie Sheridan is a catalyst of sorts in ‘The Garden-Party’. His words, which close the story, demonstrate that Laura cannot articulate her lesson, and indicate the degree of disillusionment that Mansfield felt in a society that could ignore the war.
76 Darrohn, “‘Blown to Bits!’”; p. 521.
termed the war ‘the greatest of all garden parties’, and in this story she criticises her society’s apparent inability to recognise its most devastating effect.78

‘The Garden-Party’ may ultimately be read as an allegory of post-war society’s reluctance to come to terms with the remembrance of its dead; its publication in a ‘popular’ format in part re-inscribes Rhythm’s old commitment to the public function of art, but does so in oblique terms and on a much larger scale.79 The story as it appeared in the Westminster Gazette may have dulled Mansfield’s sharp address to the public to which she presented the story, but its placement there was still significant from the point of view of her self-promotion. After completing the story in October 1921, Mansfield had seen ‘The Garden-Party’ as sufficiently important, not only to merit last-minute inclusion in her new collection, but also to supplant ‘At the Bay’ as the title story. Its publication in the Westminster Gazette in the same month as the appearance of The Garden Party and Other Stories further advertised both the story and the collection.

Mansfield began 1922 with the publication of The Garden Party, and had already begun planning her next projects as early as October 1921. Her notebooks and letters outline her plans for her next collection of stories, most of which would never be completed.80 The fatigues of periodical publication were beginning to show, and she recorded receipt of a request from the Sketch for work with a telling ‘I must obey’.81 Nonetheless, she intended to continue her working relationship with the Sphere for the

79 The oblique nature of the story is in keeping with Mansfield’s assertions in 1919 (in part inspired by her reading of Woolf’s Night and Day) that the war must inform any literary work produced in its wake. This was coupled with her insistence that ‘I don’t want (G. forbid!) mobilisation and the violation of Belgium.’ To Murry, 10 November 1919, The Letters, Vol. 3, p. 82. The technique was used to memorable effect in ‘The Fly’ in 1922.
80 See for example her entry for 27 October 1921, which lists eight stories (the settings of which alternate between London and New Zealand) under the heading ‘Stories for my next book.’ One of these, ‘At Karori’, became ‘The Doll’s House’. The note for the unwritten ‘Lives Like Logs of Driftwood’ is intriguing for its description: ‘This wants to be a long, very well written story. The men are important, especially the lesser men. It wants a great deal of working … newspaper office.’ The Notebooks, Vol. 2, p. 297.
first half of 1922; Shorter had proposed she write a serial for the paper as early as October 1921, and Mansfield wrote to Elizabeth von Arnim:

> he stipulates for thirteen ‘curtains’ and an adventure note! Thirteen curtains! And my stories haven’t even a wisp of blind cord as a rule. I have never been able to manage curtains. I don’t think I shall be able to see such a wholesale hanging through.\(^2\)

An agreement was not reached until after the publication of *The Garden Party*, when Shorter offered her £150 for a twelve-story serial.\(^3\)

She was never to write this serial, but in May 1922 she outlined a complete plan for it, and recorded her decision to use the Sheridan family as the protagonists.\(^4\) It is unlikely that her projected story of ‘the three girls and the brother and the Father and Mother and so on, ending with a long description of Meg’s wedding to Keith Fenwick’ would have had much of an ‘adventure note’, as Shorter had originally requested.\(^5\)

Just as ‘At the Bay’ and ‘The Doll’s House’ form part of a series with *Prelude*, these last six stories that she planned to write for the *Sphere* would have continued the story of the Sheridan family who had first appeared in ‘Her First Ball’ but whose most famous appearance was in ‘The Garden-Party’. Some fragments of unfinished stories which would probably have eventually formed part of it survive.\(^6\) The fact that she intended to use the Sheridans as the focus for the proposed serial for Shorter suggests it is likely that these stories would not merely have continued the ‘plot’ of the Sheridan family, most memorably encountered in ‘The Garden-Party’. Rather, it is plausible that

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\(^3\) Unpublished letter to Eric Pinker, early March 1922, MS Newberry Library.  
\(^6\) ‘Late Afternoon’ reads as the opening story that Mansfield had outlined above, whereas ‘A Family Dance’ revisits the themes of ‘Her First Ball’ and the unfinished fragment ‘By Moonlight’ (both of which were precursors to ‘The Garden-Party’). Murry called the story ‘The Sheridans’ in *The Scrapbook*, as did Ian A. Gordon in *Undiscovered Country*. See *The Notebooks*, Vol. 2, pp. 306-8 for drafts of ‘Late Afternoon’ and ‘A Family Dance’.
Mansfield would have used them to further the destabilisation of the categories of ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ which ‘The Garden-Party’ itself had enacted.

In effect, it was the publication of *The Garden Party* and its title story in February 1922 that ultimately marked the culmination of Mansfield’s career as a professional writer, the development of which has been traced throughout this thesis. The story’s authorial impersonality and epiphanic structure is evidence of her continued consolidation of a modernist technique, while its dual publication in both a newspaper and a commercially-backed collection demonstrates her ongoing renegotiation of publishing strategies of ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ culture; indeed, the story itself provides an oblique commentary on this subject.

Once the collection was completed, though, Mansfield expressed her characteristic sense that it fell short of her expectations, writing to Dorothy Brett in November 1921 that

> speaking dead seriously, I could do with a great deal less praise than I get. Its ... frightening, and I feel with all my heart I want to have another two years work done at least before I'm worth talking about. However, I am certain my new book will be a failure, There will be a reaction against it. I count on that, so I mean to make the next one really as good as I can.  

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Mansfield’s career had been shaped by this constant drive to improve on what she had done before and to ‘make the next’ piece of writing better, but after the publication of

The Garden Party in 1922 there would be no ‘next book’ of her own. Between January and July 1922, she only completed five more stories.

By May, she had made her last published appearance, and throughout July and September 1922 she engaged in a series of leave-takings, both personal and professional, before entering G.I. Gurdjieff’s Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fontainebleau in October. From here she wrote to Murry that she has finally ‘exhausted her store’ – just as she had previously wished in 1916 (although not necessarily for the reasons she would have cited then):

As for writing stories & being true to one’s gift, I couldn’t write them if I were not here, even. I am at the end of my source for the time. Life has brought me no flow. I want to write but differently – far more steadily.

Her final story was ‘The Canary’, written in July 1922. By this time it was apparent that she was unlikely to recover from the ill-health that had overshadowed all of her mature work. The story features Mansfield’s final dramatisation of herself as a professional author, and constitutes an effective summation of her career.

Conclusion: ‘The Canary’

Mansfield had first expressed her intention to write ‘The Canary’ in February 1922 (the month in which The Garden Party and Other Stories first appeared). She had promised a story to Dorothy Brett, telling her

88 Orage’s description of her career reads as follows: ‘she was always dissatisfied and always improving herself. From the age of about twenty-one, when she showed me her first sketch, and I published it in the New Age, to her death at thirty-three (sic), at a moment when she was planning to write again after some month’s rest, she worked, as few writers work, to develop and perfect her style in the agony of conviction that so far it was only embryonic.’ ‘Talks With Katherine Mansfield’, p. 125.

89 Four of these were published in her lifetime: two appeared (‘The Fly’ and ‘Honeymoon’ in the Nation & the Athenaeum; ‘Taking the Veil’ in the Sketch (another one of Clement Shorter’s illustrated papers); and ‘A Cup of Tea’, Mansfield’s final published story, in the Story-Teller.

90 To Murry, 25 October 1922, Selected Letters, p. 275.
I think my story for you will be about Canaries. The large cage opposite has fascinated me completely. I think & think about them – their feelings, their dreams, the life they led before they were caught, the difference between the two little pale fluffy ones who were born in captivity & their grandfather & grandmother who knew the South American forests and have seen the immense perfumed sea ... Words cannot express the beauty of that high shrill little song rising out of the very stones. It seems one cannot escape Beauty – it is everywhere.91

In this description of the canaries, Mansfield implies their continued ability to sing in terms that would later recur in ‘The Canary’. However, her representation of their lives before their capture and confinement is also illuminating, and suggests her growing sense of not fulfilling her own potential as a writer. As her illness continued to take hold, these concerns escalated, and in May 1921 she had claimed that ‘I simply can’t afford to die with one very half-and-half little book and one bad one and a few ---? stories to my name’.92 A few months later, in November 1921 she recorded her exhaustion after writing ‘At the Bay’, ‘The Garden-Party’ and ‘The Doll’s House’:

My deepest desire is to be a writer, to have a ‘body of work’ done, and there the work is, there stories wait for me, grow tired, wilt, fade, because I will not come. When first they knock how fresh and eager they are. And I hear & I acknowledge them & still I go on sitting at the window playing with the ball of wool (my italics).93

The representation of her stories as lying in wait until she realises them is key, and suggests she had come to fear that she would not achieve this ‘body of work’ as a writer.

Mansfield had further anticipated the tenor of her final story in November 1920, in a review of Manhood End by Mrs Henry Dudeney. The passage merits quoting at length:

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91 To Dorothy Brett, 26 February 1922, Selected Letters, p. 248. Mansfield wrote to Brett from her hotel in Paris: there must have been an empty birdcage within sight of Mansfield’s room there.
a talent is not—as Mrs. Dudeney seems to believe—a kind of glorified toy. One may perhaps play with it—but warily—as one would play with a young lion without a keeper rather than a mechanical canary. That is not, however, nor has it been, Mrs. Dudeney’s way, and the result is that after eighteen years, after so prolonged a diet of hard bright seed, chickweed and sugar lumps, nothing remains of her lion but the colour of his feathers—he is turned into a very canary of canaries. As such he shakes, shrills, quivers, flirts through ‘Manhood End’ without a break, without a pause, until we cannot hear the characters speak. Even when they do they partake of the general jerkiness. Even the plot itself is affected, and hops from perch to swing until the reader is dizzy.

[...] It is melancholy to remember, when laying aside ‘Manhood End’, how, years ago, when the canarification of her talent was still far from complete, we looked forward to a new book by Mrs. Dudeney.94

The presentation of the career of Mrs. Dudeney as a process of the ‘canarification of her talent’ may be located in relation to Mansfield’s Athenaeum reviews generally, and their representations of what she regarded as the complacency of contemporary writers who refused to challenge either their audience or themselves in writing. Mansfield implies that Mrs. Dudeney’s professional complacency has directly brought about the deterioration (or ‘canarification’) of her talent. Her symbolic description of Mrs. Dudeney’s career trajectory as a transformation from a vital and potentially dangerous young lion to a mechanical canary bears some surface similarities to Mansfield’s own career from Rhythm on, which had seen her self-promotion as ‘The Tiger’ and ended with the composition of ‘The Canary’ (first published posthumously in 1923). However, Mansfield’s application of the symbol as a summation of her own career functions in a slightly different way.

It has been shown that Mansfield’s engagement with a variety of publication strategies in the final phase of her career allowed her to challenge the categories of

94 K.M., ‘Old Writers and New’, Athenaeum, No. 4725 (19 November 1920), 694-5. This ‘mechanical’ canary carries two connotations, of going through the motions in writing, as well as the idea of the ‘mechanical reproduction’ of art.
'literary' and 'popular' publication. In this way, Mansfield's engagement with the literary marketplace aided her consolidation of a commercially viable modernist technique, and she had continued to challenge audience and generic expectations throughout her final work. Thus, it would be too straightforward to suggest that Mansfield viewed her own career as a process of 'canarification' in precisely the same way as that described in the 1920 review. Mrs. Dudeney’s talent has turned into a mechanical canary as she goes through the motions of producing unchallenging work; by contrast, the canary in Mansfield's final story is a real one who sang his songs from within his cage, but who is now dead. Moreover, whereas the review of Manhood End suggests that Mrs. Dudeney's talent had shown promise but had then transformed and dwindled, Mansfield's representation of herself as a caged bird – one that had never known the freedom of the wild – would seem to imply a talent that had never achieved its potential.

The story is narrated by his former owner, who recalls the bird's talent at singing 'whole songs, with a beginning and an end to them'. As an artist-figure within the story, the canary is presented as a constrained figure, but one whose life was characterised by a persistence in singing his songs despite the cage. In a similar way, Mansfield’s editorial and commercial relationships, as well as her ongoing construction of and renegotiation of her reading publics might be construed as the potentially restrictive conditions in which she continued successfully to produce her work. She wrote to Murry in December 1915 of being 'so tied and bound so caged that I know I'll sing. Im just on the point of writing something awfully good, if you know that feeling.' This was just before her development of 'The Aloe' into Prelude, and ironically was at a time when she worked outside of any external editorial forces.

95 'The Canary', Nation & the Athenaeum, 33.3 (21 April 1923), 84.
Hanson and Gurr have interpreted Mansfield’s ‘cage’ here as ‘the cage of circumstance and contingency, common to all men who have intelligence enough to see the boundaries and limitations of existence. It is this awareness which makes man able, and which impels the artist, to “sing”.’\(^7\) However, Mansfield’s self-portrait as the canary at the end of her career suggests that the image of the cage bears a more direct relationship to her perception of the production of her work; a perception that this thesis has attributed to the editorial and publication circumstances under which her work was produced.

As an overview of her career, Mansfield’s image of herself as the canary suggests an awareness that her work was produced within the ‘cage’ of publication, and her career was shaped by her attempts to come to terms with what might in part be seen as the restrictive context of the commercial realm of publishing (both ‘literary’ and ‘popular’). Nonetheless, the narrator’s memory of the songs that the canary managed to produce within this context is positive. It might ultimately be argued that Mansfield recognised the necessity of these strictures to the production and refinement of her work: these culminated in the commercially viable modernist aesthetic which informs her work from *Prelude* on. Moreover, the fact that the narrator still remembers the canary’s song possibly indicates Mansfield’s wish for a kind of literary afterlife, as will be discussed further in the Afterword.

Mansfield’s account of the canary is tinged with disappointment and suggests a sense of her own failure to fulfil her potential in writing; this might better be understood in relation to her awareness of the impact of her illness on her professional career. She frequently used bird imagery when referring to her illness, and came increasingly to describe her lungs as her wings; disease had grounded her. In February 1922 she would write:

\(^7\) Hanson and Gurr, *Katherine Mansfield*, p. 57.
It’s exactly like being in prison and hearing somehow that there is a chance you may be let out. Now I know what a prisoner’s dreams must be. I feel inclined to write a long story about a gaol bird. But I shouldn’t know how to end it.  

In June 1922, after suffering a relapse, she was to tell her cousin:

perhaps the truth is some people live in cages and some are free. One had better accept one’s cage and say no more about it. I can – I will. And I do think its simply unpardonable to bore one’s friends with ‘I can’t get out’.

Disease both grounded and caged Mansfield’s career to the point where she stopped producing stories in July 1922: her illness was a ‘cage’ in which she would finally be unable to write.

Her canary is ultimately her most lasting self-portrait, suggesting her compulsion to continue writing under the restricted circumstances of publication and its corresponding anxieties. One of her final letters (to Elizabeth von Arnim in December 1922) expresses her belief that ‘I am tired of my little stories like birds bred in cages.’ Alpers has suggested that this refers only to her attempts at work in 1922, but this chapter (and the thesis as a whole) has argued for her career-long exploitation of the metaphor as a commentary on her publication limitations and successes. Mansfield’s description of her stories as ‘birds bred in cages’ at the end of 1922 should be read as her final comment on her professional development from 1910 onward. The ‘cages’ that may be associated with the production of her work – the journals, editors, and presumed audiences – influenced her unshakeable sense that she must do better in her next work, and led her to explore new and more varied contexts for her work, both

\[^{98}\text{To Elizabeth, Countess Russell, 8 February 1922, Selected Letters, p. 243.}\]
\[^{99}\text{To Elizabeth, Countess Russell, 6 June 1922, Selected Letters, p. 262.}\]
\[^{100}\text{To Elizabeth, Countess Russell, 31 December 1922, Letters and Journals, ed. Stead, p. 285.}\]
\[^{101}\text{The Stories, ed. Alpers, p. 578.}\]
'literary' and 'popular'. As a result, Mansfield managed, by the end of her career, to achieve a balance between formal experimentation (and achievement) and commercial awareness. Her final summary of her stories as 'birds bred in cages' acknowledged the potential restrictions placed on her as a writer in a series of publication environments, but nonetheless implied the possibility of achieving 'a sort of authority' within these confines.
Afterword

Katherine Mansfield’s career was characterised by an uncertain sense of her own authority as a published and professional writer. The process of publishing her work — of throwing her ‘darlings’ to the wolves — necessitated an engagement with journals, editors, book-buyers and imagined audiences. This thesis has demonstrated, however, that her involvement with and challenges to these potentially limiting publication contexts furthered her developing aesthetic and her professionalisation as a writer. From the prose poem published by A.R. Orage in 1911 as a letter to the editor, to the bowdlerisation of *Je ne parle pas francais* in 1920 and the significant excisions from ‘The Garden-Party’ in 1922, Mansfield’s publication career was marked by the influence of external forces. These, however, are merely the cases that most obviously detracted from the formal impact of her work. Her entire career can in fact be viewed as an ongoing and increasingly subtle renegotiation of various sites of publication; indeed, it was largely this sense of restriction imposed by editorial, commercial and generic demands that fuelled her unending need to improve herself as a writer, and led her eventually to explore new contexts for her work.

If Mansfield’s stories were indeed like ‘birds bred in cages’ (as she suggested ten days before her death), the ‘cage’ of publication must be seen as integral to the ways in which her writing was shaped and her career developed. I have argued that her authorial anxieties about these ‘cages’ were played out in her fiction, both thematically and technically. Furthermore, I suggest that in dramatising her uneasy sense of what it meant to be an author in potentially limiting publication contexts, Mansfield effectively came to terms with her own professionalisation, and concluded her career by actively embracing her role as a writer within the literary marketplace.
It becomes clear that her mature work (from Prelude on) witnessed a fusion of her formal experimentation and her commercial impulses. By the end of her career, she had concluded that ‘being at the mercy of the public is somehow right’, simultaneously summing up both her ambition to be an author and her anxiety about ‘being at the mercy’ of the editorial, critical and reading publics that influenced her professional development. In this way, Mansfield finally acknowledged and accepted her belief that her authority would only ever be partial; her achievement was to produce formally challenging and commercially viable work by embracing what she referred to as ‘a sort of authority’.

Her immediate posthumous reputation and publication have come to be construed as another kind of loss of authorial control, with John Middleton Murry’s ‘rewriting’ her as an idealised figure. In Kate Fullbrook’s terms, Murry ‘sanctified’ her early death and ‘told the story of their life together on any occasion that could bear it (and some that could not) for over thirty years’.¹ In Between Two Worlds, Murry claimed that there were two Katherines: ‘one cynical, but wonderfully brave, ready to risk anything for the sake of an “experience”, and to keep smiling when it failed her’; the other was ‘truly childlike and sensitive like a child’.² Elsewhere, he would claim that

If I had to choose one adjective to describe the essential quality of what she did and what she became, it would be the adjective ‘serene’. And it seems to me that those who are responsive to her writing recognise this serenity – the serenity of a rainbow that shines through tears – and know that it comes from a heart at peace ‘in spite of it all’.³

¹ Fullbrook, Katherine Mansfield, pp.4-5.
² Murry, Between Two Worlds, p. 321.
³ Murry, Katherine Mansfield and Other Literary Portraits (London: Peter Nevill, 1949), p. 66. See Hankin, ‘Katherine Mansfield and the Cult of Childhood’; Tomalin, Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life (pp. 239-42) for reactions to these constructions of Mansfield.
It was this serene and sensitive Mansfield that he proceeded to market over the course of three decades, through his editing and publication of a series of short stories and fragments in periodicals and collections, letters, journals, biographies and critical works – both his own essays on Mansfield and Mansfield's own reviews.4

Murry's actions have often come in for criticism and ridicule, from D.H. Lawrence's reaction to the publication of *The Doves' Nest and Other Stories* in 1923 ('I think it's a downright cheek to ask the public to buy that waste-paper basket') to the satirical representation of Murry as the fawning Burlap in Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928) and beyond.5 Criticism of Murry in many contemporary and subsequent accounts has often focused on the perception that he sought financial profit from his publication of Mansfield's work; his thirty-year career as curator of her posthumous reputation certainly earned him healthy royalty cheques. His biographer F.A. Lea quotes Murry's words on the purchase of a farm in the 1940s: 'It is Katherine who has bought this farm for us, and Violet [le Maistre] who has stocked it'.6 Sylvia Lynd described his generation of a Mansfield industry as 'boiling Katherine's bones to make soup', while Lawrence claimed he 'made capital out of her death'.7 While Murry's actions leave him open to a range of ethical accusations it

4 Murry edited and published the following British editions of Mansfield's writing, all published by Constable: *The Doves' Nest and Other Stories* (1923); *Poems of Katherine Mansfield* (1923); *Something Childish and Other Stories*, (1924); *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* (1927); *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 2 volumes, 1928; *The Aloe* (1930); *Novels and Novelists* (1930); *The Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield* (1937); *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (1945); *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield to John Middleton Murry* (1951); *The Journal of Katherine Mansfield. Definitive edition* (1954). In addition, he published Mansfield's work in the *Adelphi* between June 1923 and January 1931; the first number of the journal featured 'The Stanley Josephs' (a portion of 'The Aloe' that had been cut in its reworking into *Prelude*); the second number featured a poem to Leslie Heron Beauchamp, the first of the extracts from Mansfield's journals and a drawing.


6 Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry*, p. 300. The royalties on Mansfield's books at this stage earned him an average of £500 per annum; Violet le Maistre, his second wife, was also a short story writer, and also died of tuberculosis. Murry was still drawing on le Maistre's annuity at this time. The 'us' Murry mentions would appear to be a reference to his relationship with Mary Gamble, who would subsequently become his fourth wife.

should also be clear from this thesis that Mansfield had herself attempted to ‘make capital’ throughout her career. Moreover, her provisions for the posthumous treatment of her remaining manuscripts were arguably open to interpretation. These provisions were outlined on two occasions, the first in a letter to Murry of 7 August 1922, and the second in her will, written and witnessed on 14 August 1922. Both documents enact what Tomalin describes as ‘just that ambiguity that so often appears when people are giving final instructions’. However, the ambiguous tenor of Mansfield’s requests for the destruction of her papers may be more directly linked to the anxiety of authority that informed her entire career, and which has been traced throughout this thesis.

The private letter to Murry requested that he destroy most of her correspondence and all of her papers, and in light of this, his subsequent editions of Mansfield’s letters, and the construction of three different versions of her disparate and disordered notebooks into the Journal, the Scrapbook and the ‘definitive’ Journal might be deemed questionable at the very least. However, Mansfield’s letter was less explicit when it came to her manuscripts:

All my manuscripts I leave entirely to you to do what you like with. Go through them one day, dear love, and destroy all you do not use. Please destroy all letters you do not wish to keep and all papers. You know my love of tidiness. Have a clean sweep, Bogey, and leave all fair – will you? (my italics)

The letter clearly gives Murry authority to use the manuscripts ‘as he liked’.

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8 As Tomalin has suggested, Mansfield ‘saw herself as a professional, writing for money, always trying to learn from the work of other writers, aware of her own limitations and dissatisfied with her own best efforts’. Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life, p. 241.
10 Fullbrook is again critical of Murry here suggesting that the excess attention paid to Mansfield’s journal and letters as a result ‘deflected attention away from her art and onto her life’. Fullbrook, Katherine Mansfield, p. 5.
11 To Murry, 7 August 1922, Selected Letters, p. 267.
Her will was even more conflicted: it left ‘all manuscripts notebooks papers letters’ to Murry, stating:

I should like him to publish as little as possible and tear up and burn as much as possible he will understand that I desire to leave as few traces of my camping ground as possible.¹²

If the letter obliquely implies the possibility of the posthumous publication of her stories, both complete and incomplete, the will explicitly anticipates the likelihood that her fiction would continue to be published after her death. Her will may indeed request that he publish ‘as little as possible’, but it is, nonetheless, a request to publish. In both documents, Mansfield simultaneously acknowledges and resists her projected literary afterlife, as captured in her instruction that Murry should ‘destroy all [he did] not use’. Murry began the process of publishing Mansfield’s stories, fragments and poems within five months of her death.

Mansfield’s career was shaped by her anxiety of authority and authorship in relation to a series of publics, and her provisions for her afterlife fundamentally replicated the very ambitions and resultant uncertainties that had characterised and influenced her writing from her earliest associations with the *New Age* to her final work. It has been demonstrated that she accepted the inevitability that she would only ever achieve ‘a sort of authority’ over her own work; likewise she was aware that even this partial control would be relinquished entirely with her death. Given this awareness, her failure to destroy the material herself facilitated Murry’s posthumous publication of the ‘manuscripts notebooks letters papers’ over the course of the coming years.¹³ It would seem, then, that just as her career was driven both by an

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¹³ Tomalin notes that ‘Had she given the instruction to Ida [Baker], there is no doubt that it would have been carried out, and we should now know less about her, and less of her writing; but it is also worth
ongoing desire to ensure that her work was read by a number of pubhcs and an anxious relationship with those pubhcs, her will and the letter to Murry suggest her simultaneous wish for, and fear of, a continuing posthumous reputation. In essence, Mansfield attempted to claim authority over her remaindered material by requesting it be destroyed, while also, in deferring to Murry’s judgement, acknowledging the possibility – and even desirability – of future editions of her work.

Although Murry published multiple editions of Mansfield’s manuscripts, letters and papers, he did not, in his arrangement of this material in a coherent and unified form, include everything; nor did he ‘destroy all [he did] not use’. In this way, although he omitted many passages that did not fit with his projected image of Mansfield as a saintly innocent, his efforts preserved material that would otherwise most likely have been destroyed. This has enabled the ongoing rewritings of Mansfield through the publication of re-edited versions of the letters and journals, as well as the growing body of fictionalised and dramatic interpretations of her life. These attempts at reconstructing ‘Katherine Mansfield’ are predicated on the need to ‘correct’ Murry’s romantic imagining of Mansfield after her early death at the age of thirty-four. It is an impulse that may be traced in biographical and critical studies, which have aimed to reclaim her variously as a nationalist; a feminist; a lesbian; a modernist. Such reinventions, of course, have followed trends in twentieth- and twenty-first century literary criticism, and are informed by post-colonial, feminist,

reflecting that she could have destroyed her papers herself and insisted on Murry returning her letters, had she really been set on their destruction.’ Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life, p. 227.

14 In addition to Lawrence’s Women in Love (which partly used Mansfield as a model for the character of Gudrun Brangwen), see the following novels: C.K. Stead, Mansfield: A Novel (London: The Harvill Press, 2004); Janice Kulyk Keefer, Thieves: A Novel of Katherine Mansfield (2003; Sydney: HarperFlamingo, 2004). See also the plays: Vincent O’Sullivan, Jones and Jones (Victoria: Victoria University Press, 1989); Claire Tomalin, The Winter Wife (London: Hein, 1991); Brian McNeill, The Two Tigers (Wellington: Price Milburn, 1973); Alma De Groom, The Rivers of China (Sydney: Currency Press, 1988). In addition, see Leave All Fair, a French-New Zealand co-production that features Sir John Gielgud as an elderly Murry and Jane Birkin in a dual role as Mansfield and a young New Zealand woman, Maria, who gradually discovers the truth about Murry’s ‘editing’ of Mansfield and her work (Leave All Fair, Dir. John Reid. Pacific Films. 1985).
queer and post-structuralist theories. Certainly, these accounts have contributed to a fuller understanding of Mansfield and her work. However, throughout her career, Mansfield reiterated her desire to be understood as 'a writer first', and this account has provided a framework in which to understand her development as an author in a modernist marketplace. By accounting for the editorial and publication contexts of her writing, this thesis has opened a new interpretative space in which to appreciate not only the development of Mansfield's authorial personae throughout her career, but also the stories she described in the days before her death as 'birds bred in cages'.
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